



Mini-review article

Role of *Pathya-Apathya* and its impact on common neurological disorders in children

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is an age-old practice of ancient Indian medicine methodology. A profuse number of varying neurological disorders are cited throughout the *Charak indriyasthanana* in a dispersed manner. The present study attempts to screen various references pertaining to the study of *pathya apathya* and its role in neurological disorders. The concept of *pathya* and *apathya* itself emphasizes the treatment of various disorders. It has been mentioned in the *Samhitas* that *vata dosh* plays a crucial role in these disorders and various neurological disorders come under the group of *vata vyadhis*. Among the *tridoshas*, the supremacy of *vata dosha* is explained by *Acharyas* as *vata* plays a vital role in various neurological disorders. No medicine is needed if *pathya apathya* is followed properly and also there is no use of medicine if *pathya-apathya* is not followed properly. Various neurological disorders include cerebral palsy, autism, ADHD, epilepsy, dyslexia, etc. and the healing science of Ayurveda with the impact of *pathya* and *apathya* for improvement of these disorders becomes more important. Therefore, with the help of this paper, the scientific evaluation of *pathya-apathya ahar-vihar* mentioned in Ayurvedic literature for neurological disorders in children is discussed in detail.

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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the science of life that focuses on diet and lifestyle. To overcome diseases and also to maintain good health are the two main *Prayojan of Ayurveda* (Shukla and Tripathi, 2019-i). *Aahar* and *Vihar* are significant parts of human life of which *Aahar* gives a significant mention to *pathya-apathya*. *Pathya-apathya* is responsible for preventing illness and promotion of health. In *Ayurveda* three *Sharirik Doshas* (*Vat, Pitta, Kapha*) and two *Mansik Doshas* *Raja* and *Tama* are described as the basis of all the bodily functions and also for the manifestation of diseases (Shukla and Tripathi, 2019-ii). *Vata dosha* controls and stimulates the mind. It is capable of vitalating all other factors and also responsible for many diseases (Shukla and Tripathi, 2019-iii). In *Ayurveda*, *trayopasthamba* consists of *aahar, nidra*, and *brahmacharya* amongst *aahar* stands for balanced diet and is the foremost pillar of *Ayurveda* (Shukla and Tripathi, 2019-iv). According to *Acharya Kashyapa* food is the supreme medicine of the body because food *pathya* (wholesome diet) and *apathya* (unwholesome diet) are responsible for happiness and misery.

The food which is not harmful to the *strotasas* of the body and is also beneficial for the mind, in this way such diet which is beneficial for the body and the mind is called *pathya*. On the contrary, the diet which is harmful to the *strotasas* of the body and the mind is called *apathya* (Shukla and Tripathi, 2019-v). That is if a patient consumes a wholesome diet (*hitkar ahar vihar*) then only

medicine will show its effect, on the other hand, one can be healthy if consumes *pathya* (wholesome diet) with medicine whereas, with an unhealthy diet (unwholesome food), taking medicine is useless.

SPECTRUM OF PATHYA-APATHYA

- *Ahar-Vihar*
- *Dincharya*
- *Ratricharya*
- *Rutu sandhicharya*
- *Balcharya/Vrudhacharya*
- *Achar Rasayan*

IMPORTANCE OF PATHYA-APATHYA IN AYURVEDIC TEXTS

Acharya Charak mentioned that when channels of circulation become hard by aggravated *doshas* and *pathya* helps to soften the *strotasas* and alleviate vitiated *Dosha*. *Acharya Sushrut* detail described *hita ahitiya adhyay* in *sutrasthan*. *Acharya Kashyapa* describes the therapeutic potential of *ahar* (food) and its preventative health benefits he emphasises that food is the most effective medicine no drugs can match the benefits of food and in a diseased state, only wholesome food can keep a person healthy.

Acharya Harit emphasized the importance of *pathya apathya* by stating that if a person ignores the concept of *pathya apathya* and consumes *apathya* illness will never leave the body. According to *Yogratnakar* the etiology of the

disease, the drug to be used, the *pathya* has three important aspects that should be investigated prior to beginning treatment. Yogratakara compares a progressive form of the disease this *ankura* will be dry and destroyed if it is not nourished by water similarly disease will be destroyed if a patient consumes *apathya ahar* and *vihar*. It is been found that the diet along with various *pathyas* has been a key factor in structuring the evolution of the brain and its cognitive capacities for thousands of years (Rathi and Rathi, 2021).

RECOMMENDED AHAR-VIHAR IN DIFFERENT NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS

Dyslexia

Pathya Aahar: Old wheat, (*purana gehu*), Redfirewood rice (lalahagani chaval), Sathi rice, Ghrut, Mango (*Aam*) *Mrudu Veerya Padartha*.

Pathya Vihar: Maximum care, pay attention to the depressed child, moderate exercises especially mental games along with physical games, mental support to a child, imparting patience, ways to increase *Satva Guna*, preaching self-knowledge, doing *Abhyang*, talking bath with *Sukoshna Jal Snan*, practising sitting sleeping, applying cool Sandal paste.

Apathya Aahar: *Viruddha aahar*, *Ushna Aahar*, vegetable with bitter taste pre-dominance, *Palash* seeds, bitter guard (*tikta ras*).

Apathy Vihar: Suppressions of natural urges of sleep (*nidra vegvidharan*), suppression of natural urges of hunger and thirst.

Epilepsy

Pathya Aahar: Old rice (purana shali), 60 day rice (*shashtik shali*), wheat (*godhum*), green gram soup (*mugdha yush*), cows ghee (*goghru*), pomegranate (*dadimb*), *gooseberry* (amalki), *Balvacha*, coconut filled with milk, dry grapes, Amla, bramhni leaf (Shukla and Tripathi, 2019-vi).

Pathya Vihar: *Snan* with *sukhoshna jal*, *abhyang*, Soothing music (*manmohit karani*), Rest (*Vishram*), avoiding excessive stress, family support, positive reinforcement, coping skills for social interaction, *Achar Rasayan*.

Apathya Aahar: Unholy food (*apavitra bhojan padarth*), meat of fishes, opposite combination of food (*viruddha aahar*), spicy, hot slow digesting food (*tikshna, ushna aahar*), all types of *patra-shaka*, *Palash* seeds, *kundru*.

Apathya Vihar: *Jal Avgahan*, anger (*krodh*), fear (*bhaya*) suppression of hunger, sleep and thirst (*kshudha, nidra, trushna vegdharan*).

Cerebral palsy

Pathya Aahar: *Panchmul siddha dugdha*, citrus food, pomegranate, meat juices (*mansaras*), *ghee*, gruel.

Pathya Vihar: Natural sleep at night, bath with *koshna jal, pravaran, nirvat* place, *tail ghrut mardana*, bonfire (*atap sevan*), *mrudu shaiyya*, steam (*swedan*).

Apathya Aahar: Cold food (*shit aahar*), less quantity of food (*alpa ahar*), excessive consumption of *tikta katu Aahar*, fasting in excess (*kshudhanigrahan*).

Apathya Vihaar: Exposure to excessive cold

Autism

Pathya Aahar: Food should be given to children which is light, delicious, nutritious, vegetable *patol, shalishashtik* (60-day rice), *moong, bramhni, kushmand, kapittha*, grapes, milk, ghee.

Pathya Vihaar: Pay attention with maximum care, good sleep, good parenting, soothing music, methods to incorporate *satva guna, yoga-Bhramari* Pranayam, do follow *Achar Rasayan*.

Apathya Aahar: Food with pungent, *vidahi, Abhisyandi* qualities, eating meat, consumption of *tikta ras*.

Apathya Vihar: Suppression of urges, excessive *aatap sevan*, care must be taken not to disturb the mind, pungent odour (*tikshna gandha*).

ADHD

Pathya Aahar: *Ghee* (ghrut), oil, fat marrow (*tail, vasa, majja*) (Shukla and Tripathi, 2019-vii), flavoured water (*swadu jal*), new Sesame (*naya til*), wheat, one-year-old *shali* rice, *sathi dhanya, kulthi* gruel, dried grapes (*manuka*), coconut milk.

Pathya Vihar: Good sleep, exercise, stress-free environment, adapting social skills.

Apathya Aahar: Opposite combination of food (*viruddha aahar*), dry meat (*shushka mas*), bitter juices, and drinking contaminated water.

Apathya Vihar: Anxiety, suppression of natural urges, cold water (*shit aahar*), excessive consumption of *tikta-katuras* (Shukla and Tripathi, 2019-viii).

PERSPECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Hence, the role of *pathya apathya* is significant in various neurological disorders in children like dyslexia, cerebral palsy, autism, ADHD, epilepsy, etc. Soothing therapy in children with autism defects may improve motor planning, coordination and communication skills. It may facilitate learning and provide an emotional experience. Consumption of *Bramhni* in cerebral disorders may enhance memory, and recalling capacity, and delay cognitive decline (Shastri, 2001).

Sleeping for proper hours is necessary however not getting enough sleep drains mental abilities. It is rightly said that consumption of ghee enhances mental and

physical well-being and also since time immemorial it the part of *satvik bhogjan* that helps to annihilate the side effects of sickness from the body (Shukla and Tripathi, 2019-ix).

Likewise, parenting is the process of supporting and promoting a child's physical, emotional, mental, and social development. Quality of instructions, cognitive stimulation, physical care, parent-child synchrony, sensitivity, and positive responsiveness are dimensions of parenting and are interrelated with the child's cognitive development. Mainly, research focuses on increasing parental support and responsibility to develop children's cognitive abilities, thus providing sensitive caregiving effects on children's cognitive development (Lanjekar et al., 2022).

On the other hand, the use of yoga among children may assist their development, increase their well-being, reduce everyday stress, and mitigate emotional and behavioural problems, aside from being a supplement to improve focus and attention. The evidence of yoga practice among children indicates improved benefits in concentration, stress alleviation, self-awareness, consciousness, self-regulation, behavioural and emotional maturity, and self-confidence in everyday life. There are also some proofs that yoga has worked as an adjunct to the medical treatment of mental illness with positive effects (Hagen and Nayar, 2014).

A study from the USA showed that massage therapy reduced spasticity and arm hypertonic muscle tone and improved fine and gross motor functioning in children with cerebral palsy (CP). Several studies have reported that massage leads to enhanced alertness, as shown by increased cognitive scores in preschool children (Shailaja et al., 2014).

CONCLUSION

Pathya-apathya concept is most important in neurological disorders. Treatment of neurological disorders in children along with *pathya-apathya* has a beneficial role in management. *Pathya-apathya* needs to be followed to boost the treatment of neurological disorders. More research should be focused on *pathya-apathya* concept of Ayurveda to generate evidence in the treatment of neurological disorders to explore the exclusive concept of Ayurveda.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author(s) declare(s) no conflicts of interest.

DECLARATION

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