

Ayurveda's Influence in the Face of COVID 19: An Overview

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Short Communication

COVID-19 is a highly contagious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which can cause severe respiratory distress and problems in certain patients. Researchers throughout the world are working hard to develop efficient antiviral medicines, immune modulators, and vaccinations, but a cure is not yet in sight. There is little evidence to support the usefulness of repurposed antiviral medicines, antimalarials, steroids, and plasma treatment in reducing illness severity or improving clinical outcomes. As the pandemic spreads over the world, health-care systems, even in industrialised countries, are becoming overburdened by a rising number of patients. The COVID-19 pandemic has emerged as a huge global concern, particularly for the health-care industry. In the current circumstances, where the number of positive COVID-19 patients outnumbers available healthcare facilities, an economically viable therapeutic option is necessary. Strategies that can increase immune surveillance and resilience by lowering inflammatory indicators and increasing the activity of specific immune cells involved in the development of COVID-19 are urgently needed.

Ayurveda, a traditional medical system, began in India around 3000 years ago. Ayurveda is derived from the Sanskrit terms ayur (life) and veda (science) (science or knowledge). The classic Ayurvedic literature Charaka Samhita discusses epidemic management and defines immunity as the ability to prevent and stop disease progression in order to maintain balance. Ayurveda places a greater emphasis on developing mental and physical fortitude to deal with a variety of stressors, including infection. The Ayurvedic idea of immunity is similar to the concepts of inherent and acquired immunity. Ayurveda offers numerous therapy approaches for boosting immunity against respiratory infections, including immunomodulators (known as Rasayana), local and systemic therapies. In Ayurveda, local prophylactic techniques such as herbal decoctions, hot water ingestion, gargling with medicated water, and steam inhalation are described for respiratory disorders. These interventions can be done rapidly and on a broad scale, with the benefits of simplicity, affordability, and acceptability. It is established that such traditional interventions can have a good impact on mental health and immunological function by modifying psychoneuroimmune pathways. Ayurvedic Science has immense potential for providing learning and novel ideas, and clinical investigations with sufficient documentation are required. This will aid in distributing findings to researchers and policymakers in a scientific manner, allowing them to draw lessons from the world's pluralistic knowledge systems. Several attempts have been launched in India to harness the immense potential of Ayurveda in this pandemic. The Ministry of Ayush, a nodal Ministry of Complementary and Alternative Medicine, has issued a set of instructions for improving immunity and self-care activities

based on Ayurvedic principles.

The term Janapadodhwasa (epidemic diseases) has been used in Ayurvedic texts to denote epidemics/pandemics caused by polluted vyu (air), bhmi (land), jala (water), and kla (water) (vitiated seasons). These are seen as the results of 'prajnapardha' (crime against wisdom) and 'adhama' (Unrighteousness). The concept of skshmakrmi/bhta has been discussed in Ayurvedic texts (organisms invisible to naked eye). To characterise diseases caused by them, the word bhtabianga (exogenous cause) has been employed. Every individual possesses innate strength that rejects disease appearance and avoids its recurrence. In yurveda, this natural strength is known as Vydhikhamatva. This natural strength is determined by an individual's genetic, epigenetic, and behavioural factors. Ojus (essence of seven tissue elements) is the primary contributor to the maintenance of vydhikhamatva. The idea of immunity in Ayurveda is classified as Sahaja (constitutional), Klaja (chronobiologic), or Yuktikta (acquired strength) in pandemic-like scenarios, optimal immunity is critical for preventing/reducing the odds of infection. The yurvedic approach to immune promotion includes the use of Rasyana, which consists of suitable daily regimens, seasonal regimens, and the ingestion of medicinal herbs that promote tissue regeneration. Kmya Rasyana, in particular, is taken to promote longevity and intelligence, while Ajsrika Rasyana, taken on a regular basis, aids in immune system optimization. SARS-CoV-2 enters the host through the respiratory system, where it first targets airway and alveolar epithelial cells, vascular endothelial cells, and alveolar macrophages. Because they express ACE2, these cells are the first targets for early infection and subsequent replication. Observations like the COVID-19 disease course, indicating that the lung is the major tropism of SARS-CoV-2.

According to Ayurveda, the principal location of the sickness is Pravaha srotas, which comprises both the upper and lower respiratory tracts. Several therapies are mentioned in Ayurveda that can increase the innate immune responses of respiratory epithelium, perhaps preventing virus transmission to the lungs. Daily regimen methods such as Uha pna (drinking water stored in a copper jar), gargling, nasal installation, and ingesting hot food and water may be effective in preserving respiratory health, which plays an important part in the host defence mechanism against viral infections. Rajkumar stated that during the current pandemic, 28% of the screened respondents (general population and healthcare professionals) exhibited stress, anxiety, and depression symptoms. A meta-analysis of 300 research found that prolonged stresses impair the host's cell-mediated and humoral immunity. Reduced stress hormones, psychological stress, anxiety, and sadness, on the other hand, are connected with improved immune system performance. This highlights the need of addressing mental health issues amid the present pandemic. Physical and psychological illnesses can both have mutual impacts on one another.

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