Concept of Ahara W.S.R. incompatible foods; ayurveda and modern perspective

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ABSTRACT

Samhita is considered as most important classical text of Ayurveda, used since 4th B.C. Samhita encompasses various concepts related to diseases and their treatment. Samhita offers different principles towards the maintenance of health status of whole mankind. These basic principles suggests us how to maintain good health as well as mental status, rules of Samhita emphasises different aspects related to diseases and their treatment. Ayurveda believe in prevention than cure therefore in this regards Ayurveda mentioned some pillars of life for healthy well being and Ahara is one of them. Ahara if consumed in proper manner then it will help to remain away from disease while inappropriate dietary pattern may lead pathological conditions. Considering Ahara as important aspect of healthy life further Ayurveda described termed “Viruddha-Ahara” which means incompatible foods responsible for pathological initiation. Incompatible food is one of the important concepts of medical science and it is believed that consumption of incompatible foods may lead various pathological manifestations. It is believed that opposite properties of wrong food combination, wrong processing, excess food consumption, consumption of food in wrong time and seasonal diversity may leads Viruddha-Ahara. Present article described ayurveda as well as modern perspective of Viruddha-Ahara/incompatible foods in a view to explore understanding of food originated diseases.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Viruddha-Ahara, Incompatible foods, Samhita-Siddhant.

Introduction

Ayurveda the Indian medical science offers various approaches towards the maintenance of good health status. Ayurveda emphasized that one should consume suitable foods according to his/her Prakriti, seasons, age and strength etc. The disciplinary dietary pattern avoids complications such as; food poisoning, diarrhea and dysentery etc. The nutritional values of Ahara not only support physical health but also boost mental status. Ayurveda described Ahara as one of the prime factor essential to promote growth. Ayurveda believe that appropriate choices of food combinations along with proper cooking methods offer proper nutritional value. The food consumed properly considering all aspects help to balances Dosh, Dhatus and Agni etc.

Ayurveda mentioned that consumption of incompatible foods (Viruddha Ahara) leads initiation of pathological conditions. Consumption of foods having incompatible combinations, foods cooked in wrong way, eating foods in excess or low amount and inappropriate eating time, etc. are some common aspects of incompatible foods.

Viruddha-Ahara may have opposite properties thus affects body constituents; Dosh, and Dhatus, etc. therefore may possesses some unwanted effect on the body. Ahara incompatible to Desha [place] termed as Desha Viruddha-Ahara, Kala Viruddha means food incompatible to eating times, Agni Viruddha denotes Ahara inappropriate to digestive power, inappropriate amount of diet termed as Matra Viruddha Ahara, food which vitiate Doshic balances termed as Dosha Viruddha-Ahara, food prepared in wrong manner considered as Sanskar Viruddha-Ahara, Koshtha Viruddha-Ahara means foods opposite to stomach capacity, diet inappropriate for specific age groups comes under Avastha Viruddha-Ahara, Upachar Viruddha-Ahara indicates wrong therapeutic effects of food stuffs, inappropriate combination of food stuffs described as Samyoga Viruddha-Ahara, inappropriate way of eating considered as Vidhi Viruddha-Ahara. These aspects of Viruddha-Ahara sometimes cause various ailments and care must be taken to prevent chances of such ailments.
Diseases associated with Viruddha-Ahara

The literature study confirmed that Viruddha-Ahara if consumed regularly then it may lead various disorders even sometimes death. The effects of incompatible foods may be acute (Aashukari) or chronic (Chirakari). Fainting, intoxication, stiffness in neck, abdominal distention, anemia, diarrhea, skin diseases, dysentery, gastritis, fever and rhinitis may be seen as acute manifestation of Viruddha-Ahara, while impotence, Visarpa, blindness, bullus, inanity, fistula in ano, infertility, diabetes and obesity are chronic manifestations of Viruddha-Ahara. Frequent consumptions of Viruddha-Ahara affect Indriya, Bala & Virya thus suppress immune response and make person susceptible for infectious diseases. Mandagni, Madhyamkoshtha & malnutrition are other aspects of Viruddha-Ahara.

Pathological Attributes of Viruddha-Ahara

Incompatible foods vitiate three Doshas, Dhatu and Mala, these vitiated Doshas accumulate continuously and this imbalance produces Ama-Visha which possesses slow poisoning effect. The further consequence of Viruddha-Ahara creates impairment in Rasas and Rakta. Contradictory foods if consumed repeatedly it exerted load on digestive system thus accumulation of toxins takes place. These toxins affect Doshas as well as Rasa Dhatu, later on other Dhatu also get affected and vitiated Dosha and Dhatu travels from Koshtha to Shakha. While travelling throughout the body these toxins initiate pathogenesis of disease in various body organs.

Chikitsa-Siddhant of Viruddha-Ahara:

- Shodhana therapies including Vamana and Virechana helps to eliminate toxin accumulated after consumption of Viruddha-Ahara.
- Shamana therapy help to pacify Doshic imbalance associated with consumption of Viruddha-Ahara.
- Drugs possess Deepana & Pachana properties boost Agni and offer improvement in disease symptoms arises after consumption of Viruddha-Ahara.

Table 1: Some examples of Viruddha-Aahara in specific category:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Incompatible foods</th>
<th>Types of Incompatibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fish with milk</td>
<td>Veerya-Viruddha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hot water after consuming honey</td>
<td>Krama-Viruddha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hot honey</td>
<td>Sanskar-Viruddha</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fruit salad or milk with sour fruits</td>
<td>Samyoga-Viruddha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Honey and ghee in equal proportion</td>
<td>Matra-Viruddha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cold substances (like ice-cream) in winter</td>
<td>Kala-Viruddha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cold water after taking hot tea</td>
<td>Parihar-Viruddha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gangasagre et al.

- The drugs such as; Shunthi, Musta, Trikatu & Haritaki act as Amapachana thus remove toxins from body.
- Vata vitiation associated with Viruddha-Ahara may be treated using Haritaki and Shunthi together.
- Marich, Pippali & Chitraka recommended for Srotoshodhana thus help to clear Ama from body which may be accumulated due to the consumption of Viruddha-Ahara.
- Drugs which are qualitatively possesses opposite property to Viruddha-Ahara help to combat habitual consequences of Viruddha-Ahara.
- Gradual shift from unworthy diet to wholesome diet help to reduces consequences of Viruddha-Ahara.
- Good conduction of Ahar-Vidhi, obeying rule of Dincharya & Ritucharya along with disciplinary life pattern helps to prevent any consequences of Viruddha-Ahara.

**Suggestion to avoid foods incompatibility**

- Cold substances like yogurt should be avoided in Anupa place.
- In Jangala dry and hot substances should be avoided.
- Dry and cold foods to be avoided in winter season.
- Hot and pungent foods should not be consumed in summer.
- Oily and heavy foods are contradictory when Agni is low.
- Person involving in heavy manual work should avoid dry and cold foods.
- Food before attending to nature calls not to be recommended.
- Food not cooked properly due to faulty methods of cooking including inappropriate methods of roasting, frying, baking and heating etc. improper cooking destroys Prana from the food hence eating of such uncooked or overcooked foods must be avoided.
- Eating hot substances just after cold substances should be avoided.

**Conclusion**

Ayurveda mentioned Ahara as one of the important factor of life and proper consumption will help one to remain away from disease while inappropriate dietary habits may lead various disease conditions. Ayurveda described termed “ViruddhaAhara” which means incompatible foods responsible for pathological condition. Incompatible food involves wrong food combination, wrong processing, excess food consumption, consumptions of food in wrong time and seasonal diversity, these all alone or together creates complications of Viruddha Ahara. Article concluded that understanding of Viruddha Ahara help one to remain away from disease conditions. Therefore we can say that food originated diseases may be prevented by taking care of various aspect of Viruddha Ahara.

**References**