



## BASIC DIMENSIONS OF QUALITY HEALTHCARE IN ANCIENT SYSTEM OF INDIAN MEDICINE: A CUE FOR CURRENT PRACTICE

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### ABSTRACT

Health is one of the basic and important requirements of every individual in the world. The health and its care is a complex phenomenon which can be managed by self or by health care professionals as per the conditions. Now a day's several healthcare institutions are budding up however it is not ensured that everybody will get the kind of treatment they require. The main reason for this situation is lack in the quality and ethics in healthcare management. Healthcare system needs highly qualified doctors, paramedical staff and medicines which are critical for producing effective management and helps in high-quality outcomes, otherwise poor-quality care adds significantly to the costs of patients and sometimes results in delay in recovery from the disease or lead to major loss. Hence it is one of the very strong issues in health management in the present materialistic world. *Ayurveda* is a very distinct Indian medical science and has some unique qualities in catering the health service and management for the needy, based on the *Chatushpada* (four pillars of treatment) theory. It consists of *Bhishag* (physician), *Upastha* (medical attendant), *Rogi* (patient) and *Dravya* (medicine). These four factors are mutually dependant on each other and its proper employment gives good outcome of *Chikitsa* (treatment). Each of the four factors possesses four qualities essential for a treatment to be successful. In absence of any one of these, the treatment may not be successful. However among these four pillars, physician has got prime importance since in any case treatment is not possible in his absence.

**KEYWORDS:** *Chikitsa Chatushpada, Bhishag, Upastha, Rogi, Dravya*, Quality Healthcare.

### INTRODUCTION

Medicine is a divine field and earlier doctors were recognised as a God.<sup>[1]</sup> The doctor- patient relationship was very pure and people used to pray doctors for their work towards humanity. But later on tremendous commercialization occurred in medical field where patient have to spend huge amount of money for better health services. However considerable number of medical negligence cases were recorded and started to come in limelight. Simultaneously there was increase in awareness among the people for better services in respect to their payment. Since medical profession came under consumer protection act which gives patient a right to ask for better services.<sup>[2]</sup> As a result patients have become customer and doctors have become service providers. This ultimately hampered doctor patient holistic relationship. The basic factor which played major role for such situation was lack of quality in various aspects of field of medicine. Hence there is an urge to improve the quality in every aspect of healthcare delivery to people. It is also necessary to win the confidence of the patient towards healthcare professionals and to regain that lost divine touch by improving the quality of healthcare system. It would also help to improve doctor patient relationship. However these things were very well taken care in the ancient system of Indian medicine.

*Ayurveda* is one of the most ancient medical sciences of the world.<sup>[3]</sup> The main aim of *Ayurveda* is to maintain the health of healthy persons and to eradicate the

disease of patients.<sup>[4]</sup> It has given ample emphasis on preventive as well as curative aspect for various kinds of diseases. In this condition proper *Chikitsa* (treatment) is very necessary to eradicate the disease *as well as to bring the Doshas* to homeostasis.<sup>[5]</sup> Generally *Chikitsa* is a process of management which involves multi factorial issues and persons. In *Ayurveda*, however the success of *Chikitsa* depends mainly upon four factors which are known as *Chikitsa Chatushpada*. These *Chatushpada* includes *Bhishag, Upastha, Rogi* and *Dravya*.<sup>[6]</sup>

In modern era the healthcare management has evolved materialistically in many folds and has become complex system. There are two main broad domains of healthcare management viz. Clinical and Nonclinical. Clinical management includes those domains of hospital management which are directly related to health of the patient like medical and paramedical staff management, hospital infection control, quality of drugs given to patients and management of diagnostic procedures. It also includes various other categories like pharmacy, inventory management, biomedical waste management, medical record management etc. However this advancement is compromising many times in the care of the sufferer as the whole management is involved in maintaining the system. In ancient days of Indian system of medicine the clinical management was not so complex but simple and effective as it was having patient at centre of the care which is based on *Chikitsa Chatushpada*. In this regard, National

Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare providers (NABH) is established under quality council of India to assess and certify the quality of services provided by the hospitals and healthcare providers. This board has given standard framework viz. Patient centred standards and organisation centred standards to focus on patient's safety and quality of care.<sup>[7]</sup>

### Chikista Chatuspada

#### 1. Bhishag (Physician)

Ancient Indian literature praised a physician (*Vaidya*) like a god.<sup>[3]</sup> The same literature defined a physician as "one who studied medicine with extensive practical experience at the same time able to cure the diseases and save the life of the mankind in all conditions".<sup>[8]</sup> *Acharya Sushruta* has mentioned qualities like a physician should be firm, brave, possessing all equipments and drugs required, to be intelligent enough to manage any situation, ingenious, skilful, well-versed (in precepts and practice), adhering to truth. *Acharya Sushruta* while describing *Chatuspada* has given great importance to the physician. Further he illustrated brilliantly the same as "if three limbs endowed with good qualities are available then forth limb "the physician" possessing good qualities, will be able to cure even a great disease within short time. However without physician the other three limbs, though having all good qualities are futile, just like *Udgatra*, *Hotra*, and *Brahma* (these are priests of *Samaveda*, *Rugveda* and *Atharva veda* respectively) without the *Adhvaryu* (priest of *Yajurveda*) has got no importance in a sacrifice. Similarly a physician possessing good qualities alone can save the patient always, just as the navigator alone can save the boat in water even without other assistants with oars".<sup>[9,10]</sup> In this regard *Acharya Charak* has explained about four ideal qualities which every physician should possess as mentioned below.<sup>[11,12]</sup>

#### Shastra (knowledge about science)

A physician should have detailed knowledge of theory and practical about various diseases along with their treatment procedures. In this context *Acharya Sushruta* explained that one who practices medicine, after learning the science from preceptor and engaged constantly in recapitulating it can only be called as best physician whereas all others are impostors. Further illustrated that donkey carrying a bundle of sandal wood understands only its weight and not the sweet smell of sandal wood.<sup>[13]</sup>

#### Drushtakarma (Skills)

It means a physician should have extensive practical experience in respective domain. In this regard *Acharya Sushruta* has explained that a physician who knows either theoretical or practical aspect of science becomes confused on approaching the patient just like a coward in a battle field and a bird with only one wing respectively.<sup>[14]</sup>

#### Daksha (Alertness)

Physician should be alert or should have dexterity. He must critically analyse the progress of disease and its ongoing treatment. In this context *Acharya Sushruta* has mentioned that Medicine is like nectar, but when used by

ignorant, acts like a sharp weapon, fire or poison, hence such physicians should be kept apart.<sup>[15]</sup>

#### Shuchi (Purity of Body and Mind)

The physician should be impressive which can be expressed by Purity various things and sufferer gains the confidence to get treatment. Among those maintaining the personal hygiene and dress code are very important otherwise physician can be infected or becomes source of infection. In current practice all over the world lot of emphasis has been given on Hospital Acquired Infections Control so as to prevent them.

Moreover in ancient classics of *Ayurveda* described that *Shuchi* is also related to purity of the mind which is a spiritual quality needed to develop holistic approach for delivering ethical medical services to the society. Further in the classics physicians were recognised by various names and posts based medico-legal and professional aspects as mentioned below. These special kinds of physician attribute some unique qualities like specialized Physician in present period.

- A. **Qualities of Raja Vaidya:** The physician is fit to be appointed as a *Raja Vaidya* (royal physician) who possesses the six qualities, viz., keen knowledge of the science, critical approach, sharp memory, promptness and perseverance, he can never miss the target.<sup>[16]</sup>
- B. **Qualities of Pranabhisara Vaidya:** *Vaidya* who are born in noble (respectable) family, well read, having sufficient practical experience, skilful, pure, having all equipments and endowed with healthy sense organs, having presence of mind, acquainted with the anatomy and physiology of the entire body is known as the *Pranabhisara Vaidya*.<sup>[17]</sup>
- C. **Mahanasa Adhikari Vaidya** (Physician as a Kitchen Superintendent): In earlier days Kings were under threat of being killed using poisons by those of wicked mind who developed hatred towards the king. Hence they used to appoint a physician as a Royal Kitchen superintendent known as *Mahanasa Adhikari Vaidya*.<sup>[18]</sup>

#### 2. Guna of Upastha<sup>[19]</sup> (Qualities of medical attendant/ Para medical staff)

According to *Acharya Charak*, the attendant attending the patient should possess following four qualities.

**Buddhiman:** *Upastha* should be intelligent enough to understand the physician's instructions and act accordingly.

**Daksha:** *Upastha* should be alert and active to inform all complaints of patient and observations to the physician.

**Anurakta:** *Upastha* should have affection or attachment towards patient with empathetic approach.

**Shuchi:** *Upastha* should also have purity of mind and body which is very important while taking care of patients.

#### 3. Guna of Rogi<sup>[20]</sup> (Qualities of Patient)

The core of any treatment is patient and a lot of things depend on the nature of patient as mentioned below in classics of *Ayurveda*.

**Jynapaka:** Patient should have good memory so that he would remember all the things related to his illness and

also the instructions given to him by *Vaidya*. Clinical diagnosis of any disease is based on the *Lakshanas* (symptoms) of the patients. Whenever a patient fails to explain his symptoms and course of illness then it becomes a tough job for a physician to make correct diagnosis of the disease. It may results in increase in unnecessary investigations ultimately increasing course of disease and the total cost of treatment.

**Bhishagvashya:** Obedient to his physician means he should take medicines as prescribed and should follow the instructions given by the Physician.

**Satvavaan:** A patient should have good physical and mental strength to tolerate disease and treatment. It is good to have a patient with courage and fearlessness.

**Aaddhya:** A patient should be capable of paying for the expenses incurred in his or her treatment. Management of some diseases require substantial amount of money and inability to pay the expenses leads to failure of treatment.

#### 4. Guna of Aushodhi<sup>[21]</sup>(Qualities medicine)

The success of any physician depends on good quality of drugs. A physician without good quality drugs is as helpless as a brave warrior without weapons. Hence no matter how perfect a physician is in diagnosing and treating any disorder but he is helpless without good quality and effective medicines.

According to *Acharya Charak*, the *Aushodhi* to be administered to the patient should possess the following four ideal qualities.

**Bahuta:** A medicine should be available in abundant quantity.

**Yogyatam:** A medicine should be effective and well tolerated by patients.

**Aanekvidha kalpana:** An ideal medicine is one which is available in various pharmaceutical forms and has multiple use or indications.

**Sampat:** A *sampat* drug is having richness in efficacy or potency.

#### DISCUSSION

A good management of healthcare plays a crucial role in successful treatment of the various diseases. This mainly involves skilful, semi skilful or unskillful people. In existing period healthcare management is specified with various rules and regulations. But these are materialistic which measures with infrastructures and professional level only. In this regard some organisation like NABH has given some principles to assess the quality of services provided by the hospitals and healthcare providers. However relationship between patient and people involved in health care services is deteriorating as it has not been given ample emphasis and consideration as compare to other parameters like infrastructure and technological advancements. Further the rights of patients are taken into consideration but their qualities are not discussed anywhere which may be one of the causes in failure of treatment. Therefore old classics mentioned that the holistic approach is needed and physician is a god to the patient similarly physician should also sense patient as a God and these things can be practiced if *Chikista*

*Chatuspada* principles implemented in present health services.

#### CONCLUSION

The four limbs of treatment are the base of management of hospital service quality having physician as the chief of the system and patient at the centre of care. The successful treatment of any disease is the result of efforts put in by good quality physician, paramedical staff with the help of medicine and also the result of genuine qualities of patients they got. Hence it is important to give more stress on these four basic factors (limbs) to improve the quality of services in health sector particularly in developing countries like India where there is scarcity of resources. This would ensure the integrity of quality in services of health sector and will help to improve and strengthen the relationship between patients and healthcare providers.

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