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TITLE

The 'Four' Stratagem of Traditional Indian Medicine – Ayurveda

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The 'Four' Stratagem of Traditional Indian Medicine – Ayurveda

Ayurveda stresses upon preventive care followed by curative care. For best curative results, it has been mentioned that the excellency of the four components named '*Chikitsa Chatushpada*' are necessary. *Bhishak* (Physician), *Dravya* (Medication), *Paricharaka/Upasthata* (Assistant) and *Rogi* (Patient) are those four components. [1, 2] The excellent qualities of each component has been described in the classical textbooks of Ayurveda. Qualities of a treating physician, medication which should be used for treatment and the assistant who is supposed to help the physician as a nurse, technician or in any role can be comprehended by any common man. But the reverent sages of Ayurveda have gone a little forward to explain the qualities of a patient in whom treatment will be effective because of his own merits or qualities. It is said that the better the *Chatushpada* the more successful will be the health care.[3]

Obviously the treating physician has been given utmost importance among the four. Many qualities of him/her have been specified in various classical texts of Ayurveda. In brief, the one who possesses excellent knowledge in medical science, good practical knowledge, reliability, cleanliness, empathy towards everyone, intelligence, professional ethics and is presentable, unbiased, prudent and well equipped with all necessities for health care is said to be the best clinician. It is also specified that he/she should not be dejected, covetous, panicky, short-tempered and having any addictions. [4, 5] At present, it is the necessity of every medical practitioners to understand and follow these qualities of a clinician for being successful in the profession.

The best qualities of medicine which are specified in Ayurveda can be briefed in simple words that it should be with multiple pharmacological actions, which can be made into different types of formulation, not causing another illness, not causing any fatigue, manufactured as per standards and widely available. [6, 7] These qualities may seem to be very specific to Ayurveda medicines but on actual scrutiny these are applicable universally. If a medicine which is used for of a diseases produces another illness in the body it will be like risking the self for cure of a disease which applies to any system of medicine.

To be more precise, Ayurveda explains that a person who wants a successful treatment, should be having proper memory, able to follow the instructions given by the treating physician, courageous to withstand the disease/pain and understand the disease. [8] In another quote even ability to afford medical care is also mentioned as one quality of a patient. [9] These qualities of a person seeking health advice need to be discussed in detail. In the advancing techno driven world, stating the qualities of a patient may create many more controversies and criticism. But a factual thinker will be able to analyse the traditional wisdom in a very practical way that Ayurveda do not favour wealthy or educated people for health care. Traditional wisdom is having the farsightedness which could sense the necessity of knowledge, will power and good financial conditions of a patient not to be deprived of good and advanced medical care and therapies. It is a fact that cost of medical care is one of the most alarming financial concern of any individual. The rate of people who get medically insured are also increasing day by day which shows their concern about financial stability for prospective medical care.

A good understanding and faith in the treating physician play a major role in cure of a disease. In current world population, knowledge of medicines and procedures have significantly changed than before. But has this knowledge lessen the faith in treating physician or medical system? In contrast, to be more precise it is leading to more queries or controversies in medical care given to them. Now days, patients come pre occupied with so many ideas about their own disease, its management, side effects of drugs used and even research findings. The quality of patient is mentioned as understanding the disease condition, related regimen of diet and life style are also highly substantial in management of a disease. If this is not the condition, it will lead to no adherence to the given treatment which in turn will increase the severity of the disease and financial burden in a patient. Thus individuals should be health literate which involves the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.[10]

Most of the individuals in the society, starting from a child to his/her grandparent become so delicate that even a mild pain/discomfort cannot be borne by them even for a short period of time. Lack of courage to withstand the diseases and their treatment can be a major cause for failure of treatment. It also leads to incomplete treatment or temporary relief from the complaints. Memory which is an essential factor for every individual also has its role to play in medical care. A patient who cannot remember the instructions given by the doctor properly fails to avail the apt benefits of the treatment. It does not mean that Ayurveda denies medical care to those who suffer from dementia. It is just emphasising the importance of memory in recollecting the drugs used, the regimen to be followed and the treatment protocols underwent.

Ayurveda is a science which believes in cure of a disease from its roots. A proper medical care along with good diet and lifestyle modifications are important aspects of treatment in Ayurveda. Such type of medical care can be provided successfully only when the four factors of treatment possess their supreme qualities. At the end, it is also specified that if none of the three stratagems are fulfilled, utmost consideration should be for the *Bhishak* who must possess the desired qualities without which treatment can never be successful. Physician is the person who can have control over rest of the three factors and lead them effectively. Hats off to those great physicians of Ayurveda who could judge the best possible standards of medical care in a very systematic way.

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