



Quadrant-I

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Description of Module

Items	Description of Module
Subject name	Social Medicine & Community Health
Paper name	Health Care Delivery System
Module name/Title	Indigenous System of Medicine
Module Id	SMCH/HCD/23
Pre-requisites	Understanding of health seeking behaviour of population.
Objectives	To know about the different types of Indigenous System of Medicine in India.
Keywords	Psychosomatic Constitution, Exercise Endurance, Izalae Sabab, Yoga.



Introduction:

India has a unique distinction among different countries of the world in having at least 6 different recognized branches of Indigenous systems of Medicine. These branches are better known as the AYUSH system of medicines in India, Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy. Although, all of the indigenous systems did not originate in India but all of them have assimilated in the Indian culture to such a great extent that it is difficult for lay people to acknowledge the fact that many of them were developed in different countries. Homoeopathy came to India in 18th Century; it completely assimilated in to the Indian culture and got enriched like any other traditional system hence it is considered as part of Indian Systems of Medicine¹. Apart from these systems- there are large numbers of healers in the folklore stream who have not been organized under any category².

Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion this module, the reader will be able to:

- Enumerate different types of Indigenous Systems of Medicine in India
- Describe medical system of Ayurveda
- Describe detailed Practice of Yoga
- Mention about the System of Unani Medicine
- Mention about Siddha System of indigenous medicine
- Describe Homeopathy system of indigenous medicine

Main Text

1. Different types of Indigenous Systems of Medicine in India

The branches of the Indigenous System of Medicine are better known as the AYUSH system of medicines in India. They are Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy.

2. Ayurveda

Ayurveda is a Sanskrit word meaning life-knowledge. It is said to have originated in prehistoric times and some of its concepts have been discovered since the times of Indus Valley Civilization³. Ayurveda names three elemental substances, the *doshas* (called Vata,



Pitta and Kapha), and states that a balance of the doshas results in health, while imbalance results in disease. Ayurveda is considered not just as an ethnomedicine but also as a complete medical system that takes in to consideration physical, psychological, philosophical, ethical and spiritual well being of mankind. It lays great importance on living in harmony with the Universe and harmony of nature and science². There are three principal early texts on Ayurveda include the Charaka Samhita, the Sushruta Samhita and the Bhela Samhita. The Charaka Samhita was written in 6th century by Charaka and Suchruta Samhita by his student Sushruta. The Vhela Samhita is attributed to Atreya Punarvasu.

2.1.Diagnosis and Treatment in Ayurveda

The philosophy of Ayurveda is based on the theory of Pancha bhootas (five element theory) of which all the objects and living bodies are composed of. Ayurveda has eight ways to diagnose illness, called Nadi (pulse), Mootra (urine), Mala (stool), Jihva (tongue), Shabda (speech), Sparsha (touch), Druk (vision), and Aakruti (appearance). The general examination is known as ten-fold examination- through which a physician examines the following parameters in the patient²:

- Psychosomatic constitution,
- Disease susceptibility,
- 3. Quality of tissues,
- Body build,
- Anthropometry,
- Adaptability,
- Mental health,
- Digestive power,
- Exercise endurance and
- Age.

In addition to this, examination of pulse, urine, stool, tongue, voice and speech, skin, eyes and overall appearance is also carried out. The treatment or Upakarma in Ayurveda is shown in Figure 1.

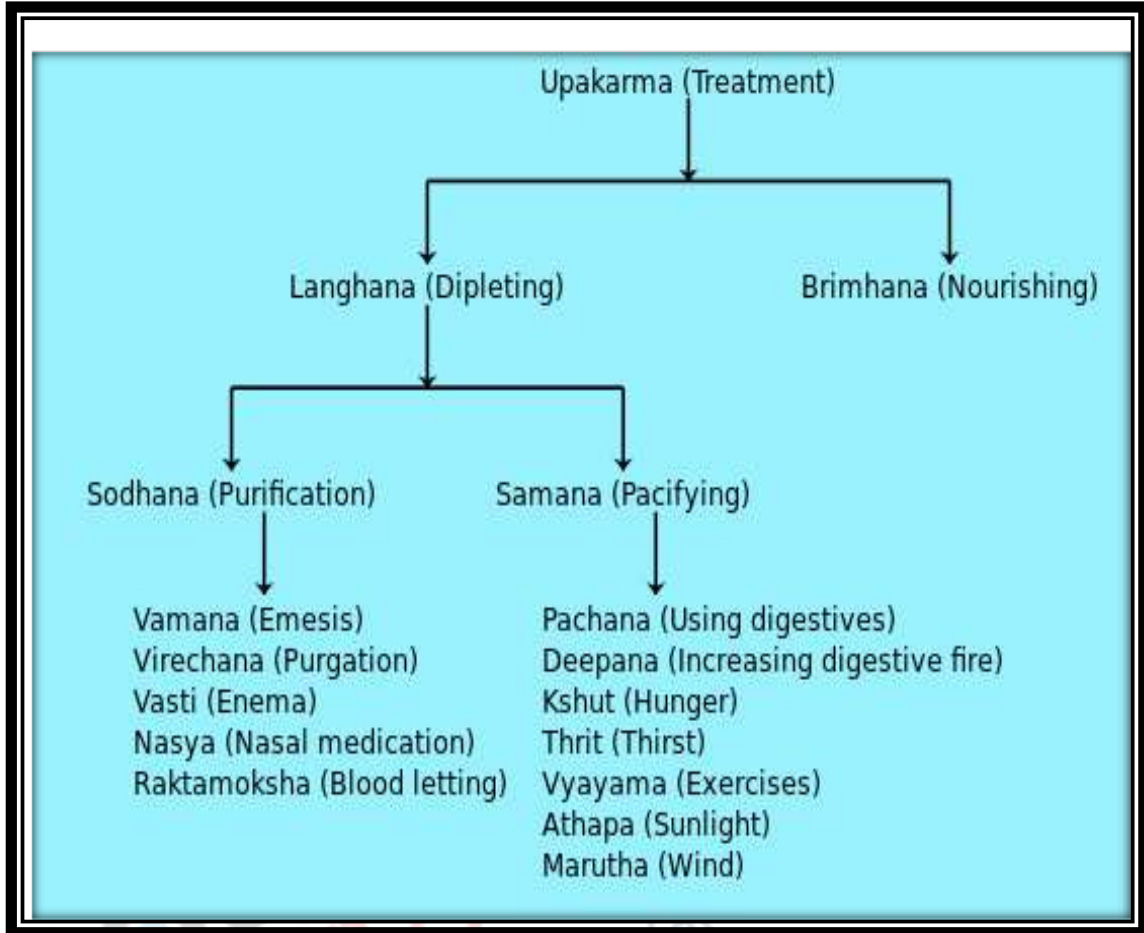


Figure 1. Upakarma (Treatment in Ayurveda)

2.2 Specializations in Ayurveda

Ayurveda is known as Astanga Ayurveda- means that which is made up of eight parts.

The eight major divisions of Ayurveda are as follow as (Ravishankar and Shukla, 2007):

- 2.1. Kayachikitsa (Internal Medicine)
- 2.2. Kaumar Bhritya (Pediatrics)
- 2.3. Bhootavidya (Psychiatry)
- 2.4. Shalaky (Otorhinolaryngology and Ophthalmology)
- 2.5. Shalya (Surgery)
- 2.6. Agada Tantra (toxicology)
- 2.7. Rasayana (Geriatrics) and
- 2.8. Vajikarana (Aphrodisiacs and Eugenics)

2.3. Benefits and criticism of Ayurveda

Ayurveda advocates holistic medicine. Though Ayurveda is an age old practice, it lacks firm scientific basis. Its researches have been called and characterized as pseudosciences. In India, research in Ayurveda is undertaken by the Central Council for Research in Ayurveda and



Siddha (CCRAS), through a national network of research institutes. There have been evidences of presence of Toxic metals in Ayurvedic preparations in the past⁴and therefore, in India, the government has ruled that Ayurvedic products must be labelled with their metallic contents⁵.Ayurveda can contribute more to the practices of Medicine to a great extent in future, in the spirit of scientific enquiry and scrutiny.

3.Yoga

Yoga comes from the sanskrit word meaning Union. Yoga is considered a mind body therapy and is a way of life, which has the potential for improvement of social and personal behavior, improvement of physical health by encouraging better circulation of oxygenated blood in the body, restraining sense organs and thereby inducing tranquility and serenity of mind. The practice of Yoga is dated back to Indus Valley Civilization. Yoga Sutras of Pantajali, constitute classical Ashtanga Yoga (the eight limbs), also called Raja Yoga.

They are

3.1.Yama : The five Abstentions:

- a. Ahimsa (Non Violence)
- b. Satya (Truthfulness)
- c. Asteya (non stealing)
- d. Brahmacharya (Celibacy)
- e. Aparigraha (non- possessiveness)

3.2.Niyama: The five observances:

- f. Sauca (Purity)
- g. Santosha (Contentment)
- h. Tapas (Persistent Meditation)
- i. Swadhyaya (Self Reflection)
- j. Ishvara-Pranidhana (Contemplation of God)

3.3.Asana: meanins Seat, referring to seat used for meditation.

3.4.Pranayama: meaning suspending breath for control of life force.

3.5.Pratyahara: meaning Abstraction: Withdrawal of the sense organs from external objects.

3.6.Dharana ("Concentration"): Fixing the attention on a single object.

3.7.Dhyana ("Meditation"): Intense contemplation of the nature of the object of meditation.

3.8.Samadhi ("Liberation"): merging consciousness with the object of meditation.



Yoga has become a popular form of physical exercise all across the world. Its benefit in curing low back pain and other physical or orthopaedic ailments have been found effective by Research¹². To further popularize Yoga, the Indian Government's efforts have led to the UN approval for June 21 to be celebrated as International Yoga Day.

4.Unani

Avicenna, one of the earliest and greatest proponents of Unani Medicine defined it as "It is the science in which we learn various states of body in health and when not in health and the means by which health is likely to be lost and when lost, is likely to be restored"¹³. Unani medicine came from ancient Greco-Egyptian medicine made popular by arabic scholars like Ibn Sina (Avicenna). In India it arrived in the 12th century after the establishment of Delhi Sultanate and was patronized by the kings and thus became popular. Unani medicine is based on the concept of the four humours: Phlegm (Balgham), Blood (Dam), Yellow bile (Şafrā') and Black bile (Saudā').

4.1. Diagnosis

The diagnosis of any cause and or factor is countered by Quwwat-e-Mudabbira-e-Badan (the power of body responsible to maintain health), the failing of which may lead to quantitatively or qualitatively derangement of the normal equilibrium of akhlat (humors) of body which constitute the tissues and organs. This abnormal humor leads to pathological changes in the tissues anatomically and physiologically at the affected site and exhibits the clinical manifestations.

4.2. Treatment:

After diagnosing the disease, Usoole Ilaj (principle of management) of disease is determined on the basis of etiology in the following pattern:

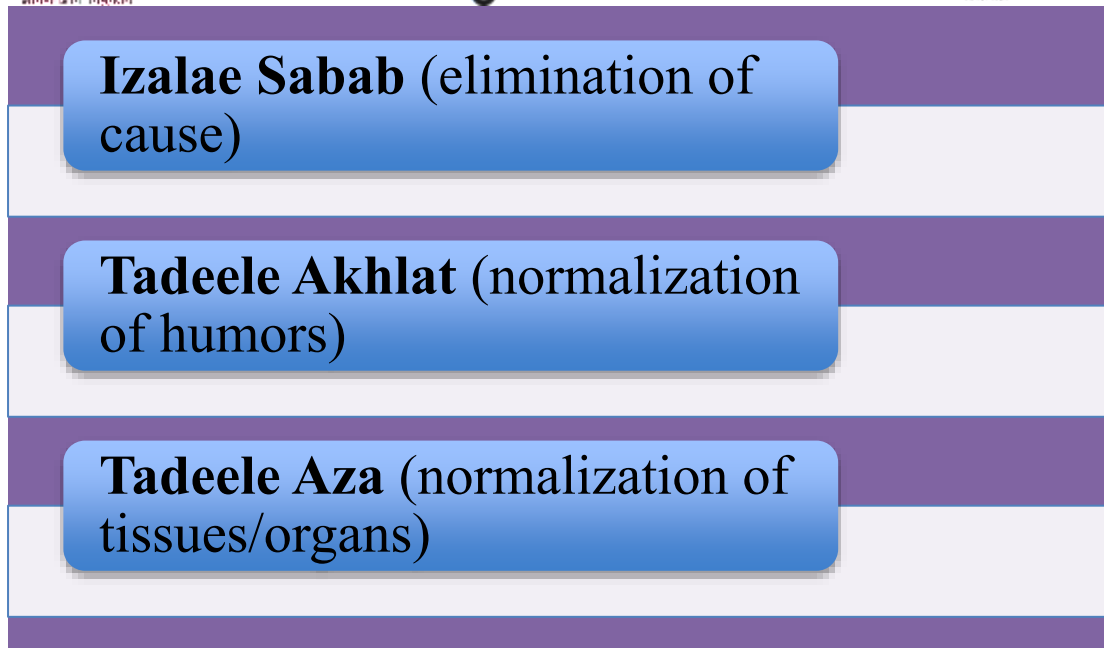


Figure 2: The Usoole Ilaj (Principles of Management) in Unani Medicine.

The treatments in Unani Medicine are of these 3 types:

- Ilaj-Bil-Tadbeer wa Ilaj-Bil-Ghiza (Regimenal Therapy).
- Ilaj-Bil-Advia (Pharmacotherapy).
- Ilaj-Bil-Yad (Surgery)

The Unani Medicine is presently practiced in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, China, Iran, Iraq, Malaysia, Indonesia, Central Asian and Middle Eastern Countries. In India the system has been developed scientifically, nurtured and systematically integrated into healthcare delivery system over the years. Unani system of medicine also benefited from the native medical systems in vogue at the time in various parts of Central Asia. That is why this system is known, in different parts of the world, with different names such as Greco-Arab Medicine, Ionian Medicine, Arab Medicine, Islamic Medicine, Traditional Medicine, Oriental Medicine etc¹³.

5.Siddha

Siddha is a system of traditional medicine that originated in Tamil Nadu in South India. The word Siddha comes from the word Siddhi which means an object to be attained perfection or heavenly bliss. Siddha focused to "Ashtamahasiddhi," the eight supernatural power. The concept of disease in Siddha system is when the normal equilibrium of the three humors — Vaadham, Pittham and Kabam — is disturbed, disease is caused. The factors assumed to affect this equilibrium are environment, climatic conditions, diet, physical activities, and stress. Under normal conditions, the ratio between Vaadham, Pittham, and Kabam are 4:2:1, respectively¹⁴.



5.1. Diagnosis

In diagnosis, examination of eight items is required which is commonly known as "*enn vakaith thervu*". These are:

- Na (tongue): black in Vaatham, yellow or red in pitham, white in kabam, ulcerated in anaemia.
- Varnam (colour): dark in Vaatham, yellow or red in pitham, pale in kabam.
- Kural (voice): normal in Vaatham, high-pitched in pitham, low-pitched in kabam, slurred in alcoholism.
- Kan (eyes): muddy conjunctiva, yellowish or red in pitham, pale in kabam.
- Thodal (touch): dry in Vaatham, warm in pitham, chill in kapha, sweating in different parts of the body.
- Malam (stool): black stools indicate Vaatham, yellow pitham, pale in kabam, dark red in ulcer and shiny in terminal illness.
- Neer (urine): early morning urine is examined; straw color indicates indigestion, reddish-yellow color in excessive heat, rose in blood pressure, saffron color in jaundice, and looks like meat washed water in renal disease.
- Naadi (pulse): the confirmatory method recorded on the radial art.

5.2. Treatment:

The drugs used by the Siddhars could be classified into three groups: *thavaram* (herbal product), *thadhu* (inorganic substances) and *jangamam* (animal products)–(Murugan). The Thadhu drugs are further classified as: *uppu* (water-soluble inorganic substances or drugs that give out vapour when put into fire), *pashanam* (drugs not dissolved in water but emit vapour when fired), *uparasam* (similar to *pashanam* but differ in action),

loham (not dissolved in water but melt when fired), *rasam* (drugs which are soft), and *ghandhagam* (drugs which are insoluble in water, like sulphur).

6. Homeopathy

Homeopathy was founded in 1796 by Samuel Hahnemann based on his doctrine of *like cures like* (*similia similibus curentur*), whereby a substance that causes the symptoms of a disease in healthy people will cure similar symptoms in sick people¹⁵. It came to India in late 18th century and is now an established indigenous system of medicine in India. Homeopathic pills are made from an inert substance (often sugars, typically lactose), upon which a drop of liquid homeopathic preparation is placed and allowed to evaporate. Homeopathy is a popular form



of medicine in India but has invited a lot of criticism from the scientific community and assessments by the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council and the Swiss and British government health departments have each concluded that homeopathy is ineffective, recommending against the practice receiving any further funding¹⁶.

Summary

Apart from the scientific based medicine known as allopathic medicine, in India many traditional system of medicines are practised together called as AYUSH, which is now being integrated into the public health system. Every traditional system is based on its own principles & forms health care & treatment options for a large group of population.

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