

REVIEW OF *CHIKITSA* AND ITS CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO *AYURVEDIC*
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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine, emphasizes maintaining and restoring balance among the *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala* for overall health. In *Ayurveda*, the idea of *Purusha*—the conscious being made up of the soul (*Atma*) and the five elements (*Panchamahabhuta*)—is naturally prone to illness. The *Shatdhatvatmaka Purusha* is a main focus of treatment in *Ayurveda*. The concept of *Chikitsa* (treatment) is the center of focus in *Ayurveda*, and it extends beyond the use of medicines. It also includes dietary changes, lifestyle modifications, cleansing procedures, and mental therapies, aiming for complete healing and disease prevention. This review explores how classical *Ayurvedic* texts conceptualize *Chikitsa* and its different forms, highlighting their continued relevance in managing diseases. In this article, there is a mention of *Eka-vidha Chikitsa*, *Dwividha Chikitsa*, *Trividha Chikitsa*, *Chatur-vidha Chikitsa*, *Panchavidha Chikitsa*, *Shatvidha Chikitsa*, *Ashtavidha Chikitsa* and *Dasha-vidha Langhana Chikitsa*. The study also discusses specific disease management approaches, including *Trividha Krimi Roga Chikitsa*, showing its detailed and practical approach to health. Overall, these principles show that *Ayurveda* focuses on prevention, body cleansing, rejuvenation, and even surgery, providing a complete system for health and disease management that can be understood and used along with modern medical views.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda*, *Chikitsa*, *Dosha*, *Vyadhi*.**INTRODUCTION**

Ayurveda, the traditional system of medicine from India, is built upon concepts that focus on the balance and harmony of the human body, mind, and spirit. In classical *Ayurvedic* texts, *Chikitsa* is defined as the process that helps restore the balance of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala*, thereby reversing the disease process and restoring health¹. In the *Charaka Samhita Chikitsa Sthana*, several synonyms of *Bhesaja* are mentioned². These include

- *Chikitsa* – that which alleviates disorders
- *Vyadhihara* – that which eliminates disease
- *Pathya* – diet or lifestyle beneficial for health and disease management
- *Aushadha* – that which is prepared from herbs
- *Prayaschitta* – corrective or reconciliation measure
- *Prashamana* – that which pacifies or balances disturbed states
- *Prakritisthapana* – restorer of natural equilibrium or health
- *Hita* – that which is beneficial to the body

These synonyms show that *Chikitsa* in *Ayurveda* is not limited to just medicines but also includes diet, lifestyle, purification methods, and supportive practices aimed at complete healing and maintenance of health.

Understanding the definition and various dimensions of *Chikitsa* is crucial for practitioners and scholars aiming to apply *Ayurvedic* principles in both preventive and curative healthcare.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To explore how *Ayurvedic* texts define the concept of *Chikitsa*.
2. To outline the main categories of *Chikitsa* explained in classical *Ayurvedic* literature.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This article's content is compiled from *Ayurvedic* texts and their commentaries such as *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya* and from various authentic sources and articles.

Chikitsita is derived from the verbal root 'kita' in the sense of alleviating disorders. Thus, *Chikitsita* means the means for alleviating disorders.^[3]

TYPES OF CHIKITSA

1. *Eka-vidha Chikitsa*

1) *Nidana Parivarjan*

In *Ayurveda*, the first and most important step in treating any disease is to find out and avoid the root causes. This idea is deeply connected with the well-known saying "Prevention is better than cure." *Acharya Sushruta* has clearly explained this while describing the treatment of eye diseases (*Netra Noga Chikitsa*).

In short, the main line of treatment is to stay away from the causes of the disease.^[4]

2) *Pathya Sevana*

Pathya refers to both food and medicinal substances that are beneficial to the body's channels (*Srotas*) and mind (*Mana*).^[5] In contrast, *Apathya* refers to those that cause harm or imbalance. Consuming *Pathya* and avoiding *Apathya* is a primary principle in *Ayurveda* to maintain health and prevent diseases.

2. *Dwividha Chikitsa*

1) A) *Shodhana* refers to cleansing or purification therapies aimed at eliminating the vitiated *Dosha* (toxic imbalances) from the body.^[6]

B) *Shamana* means pacification or alleviation therapy, which aims to reduce or balance aggravated *Dosha* without expelling them from the body. *Shamana Chikitsa* is of 7 types. It includes methods such as *Ama Pachana*, *Dipana*, *Kshudha*, *Trishana*, *Vyayama*, *Atapa* and *Maruta*.^[7]

Sharirika Dosha Chikitsa^[8]

Dosha Shodhana Shamana

Vata Basti Taila Pita Virechana Ghrita Kapha Vamana Madhu

2) A) *Swasthy urjaskara*: Medicines that tone up the health of a healthy person. Medicines belonging to this category that invigorate a healthy person are mostly aphrodisiacs and rejuvenators. To some extent, they also help in the alleviation of diseases.^[9]

B) *Arta Roganut*: Medicines that are used for curing the diseases of a patient. These medicines are specifically useful for treating conditions like fever, but at the same time, they also possess aphrodisiac and rejuvenating properties. For example, the formulation *Yograj*, which is used in the treatment of *Pandu Roga*, also acts as a rejuvenator. Similarly, *Agastya Haritaki*, recommended in *Kasa*, also has rejuvenating effects.^[10]

3) A) *Santarpana* refers to a nourishing therapeutic approach, which is often associated with *Brimhana*

therapy.^[11] It is considered an effective treatment, particularly for conditions like *Karshya* (emaciation), as it promotes strength and nutritional replenishment of the body. This therapy enhances *Bala* (strength) and *Pushti* (nourishment) of the tissues. In contrast

(B), *Apatarpana* denotes a depleting or reducing treatment, commonly associated with *Langhana* therapy.^[12] It is ideally employed in managing *Sthoulya* (obesity) and focuses on promoting lightness (*Laghuta*), improving sensory functions (*Vimala Indriya*), and facilitating removal of bodily wastes (*Mala Visarga*), as well as enhancing appetite (*Ruchi*).^[13]

4) *Sheeta Upachara and Ushna Upachara*

An intelligent physician manages disorders caused by heat with cooling measures, while those arising from cold are treated with warming therapies. This follows the fundamental *Ayurvedic* concept of restoring balance by applying opposing qualities (*Sheeta and Ushna Upachara*).^[14]

In *Ushnata janya vyadhis* (diseases caused by excess heat), cooling foods and therapies should be used. For example, *Chandanadya taila* in *Daha Jwara*.^[15]

In *Sheeta janya vyadhis* (diseases due to excess cold) warm food and therapies should be recommended. For instance, *Agurvadya taila* is indicated in *Sheeta Jwara*.^[16]

3. *Trividha Chikitsa*^[17]

1) A) *Daiva-vyapashraya*: Spiritual therapies are incantations of *Mantras*, *Aushadha* (use of amulets), *Mani* (wearing gems), *Mangala* (auspicious ceremony), *Bali* (auspicious offering), *Upahara* (gift), *Homa* (oblations), *Niyamana* (observance of scriptural rules), *Prayaschita* (atonement), *Upavasa* (fasting), *Svastyayana* (chanting of auspicious hymns), *Pranipata* (obeisance to the God), *Gamana* (going on pilgrimage) etc. The *Sharira dosha* are pacified by Divine & Rational therapies (*Daiva and Yukti-vyapashraya chikitsa*), while the *Manasa dosha* can be treated with *Jnana*, *Vijnana*, *Dhairya*, *Smriti* & *Samadhi*.

B) *Yukti-vyapashraya*: Administration of proper diet and medicinal drugs by proper planning.

C) *Sattvavajaya*: Withdrawal of mind from harmful objects constitutes psychic therapy.

2) Three types of therapies (Based on route of administration)^[18]

A) *Antah parimarjana*: Administration of medicines internally to promote healing from within.

B) Bahi parimarjana: External application of medicines such as *Abhyanga*, *Svedana* and *Lepa* to treat ailments from outside.

C) Shastra Pranidhana: It includes various surgical procedures such as excision, incision, puncturing, rupturing, suturing, probing, and other operative techniques used when internal and external treatments are inadequate.

3) Trividha Krimi Roga Chikitsa^[19]

A) Apakarshana: *Apakarshana* (extraction) is removal of *Krimi* by hand, with or without the use of necessary instruments. The *Krimi* located in particular places are extracted with properly planned drugs and medicaments. This type of extraction is of four types i.e. *Shirovirechana*, *Vamana*, *Virechana* and *Asthapana Basti*.

B) Prakruti Vighata: *Prakruti Vighata* (destruction of source of their origin) is done by prescribing *Katu Tikta*, *Kashaya*, *Kshara*, the other substance of *Ushna Virya* and also the substances contrary to *Shleshma Purisha Krimi*. According to *Chakrapani Datta*, the *Prakruti Vighata* is the cessation of *Dosha* vitiation by avoiding supportive factors.

C) Nidana Parivarjana: Abstinence from etiological factors and also other similar causative substances should be given up.

4. Chatur-vidha Chikitsa

1) A) Manas (mind) and *Sharira* (body) are the seats of diseases. Methods for controlling or curing diseases include the proper administration of *Samshodhan* (purificatory therapies) and *Samshaman* (palliative therapies), as well as the appropriate use of *Ahara* (food) and *Achara* (activities or conduct). These four—*Samshodhan*, *Samshaman*, *Ahara*, and *Achara*—are considered the *Nigraha hetavah* (means of restraint or control) of diseases (*Vyadhi*)^[20]

2) B) Management according to state of *Doshas* as Explained by *Acharya Shushruta*^[21]

- 1. Brimhitavya:** To restore diminished *Doshas* by increasing them back to their normal levels.
- 2. Prashamayitavya:** Contrary to *Brimhitavya*, to reduce the excess *Doshas* and bring them back to equilibrium.
- 3. Nirharatavya:** To eliminate aggravated *Doshas* from the body.
- 4. Paripalya:** To maintain and preserve the *Doshas* that are already in a balanced state.

5. Panchvidha Chikitsa

1) A) According to Acharya Charaka, the *Panchvidha Chikitsa* (five types of cleansing treatments) are

- 1. Vamana** (therapeutic emesis)
- 2. Virechana** (therapeutic purgation)
- 3. Niruha Vasti** (decoction enema)
- 4. Anuvasana Vasti** (enema)
- 5. Nasya** (nasal insufflation or administration of medication through the nasal route)

2) B) According to Acharya Sushruta, the list of five *Shodhana karmas* or cleansing therapies is slightly different and includes:

- 1. Vamana** (emesis)
- 2. Virechana** (purgation)
- 3. Niruha Vasti** (decoction enema)
- 4. Shirovirechana** (inhalation)
- 5. Raktamokshana** (bloodletting or therapeutic bloodletting)

The excellence of *Samsodhana Chikitsa* lies in its ability to eliminate the disease from its root, thereby effectively preventing its recurrence. This treatment approach not only provides a permanent solution to the disease but also increases the possibility of leading a disease-free life.

6. Shatvidha Chikitsa

Ayurvedic therapeutics are categorized broadly under two main categories, like *Apatarpana* (depletive therapy) or *Santarpana* (nourishing therapy).

It is further classified into six types^[22]

- *Langhana* - *Brimhana*
- *Rukshana* - *Stambhana*
- *Swedana* - *Snehana*

- 1. Langhana** – Therapy that promotes lightness in the body by reducing excess bulk or heaviness.
- 2. Brimhana** – Therapy aimed at increasing body mass, muscle bulk, and strength.
- 3. Rukshana** – Therapy that induces dryness and roughness, reducing excessive moisture or sliminess.
- 4. Snehana** – Therapy that imparts softness, unctuousness, lubrication, and moisture to tissues.
- 5. Swedana** – Therapy to relieve stiffness, heaviness, and coldness by inducing sweating and promoting warmth.
- 6. Stambhana** – Therapy that arrests or controls the flow of *Doshas*, helping to stabilize and prevent further imbalance.

7. Ashtavidha Chikitsa

Eight types of surgical procedures mentioned by *Acharya Sushruta* in *Agropaharaneeya Adhyaya*.^[23]

- 1. Chedana** Excision (eg: *Arshas*)
- 2. Bhedana** Incision (eg: *Vidradhi*)
- 3. Lekhana** Scrapping (eg: *Rohini*)

4. *Vedhana* Puncturing (eg: *Sira Vedhana*)
5. *Eshana* Probing (eg: *Naadi*)
6. *Aaharana* Extraction (eg: *Sharkara*)
7. *Visravana* Blood-letting (eg: *Vidradhi*, *Kushta*)
8. *Seevana* Suturing is performed in such diseases which, after being punctured and treated, by the *Lekhana karma* procedure, leave nothing behind.

8. *Dasha – vidha Langhan Chikitsa*^[24]

The four types of elimination therapies *Vamana* (emesis), *Virechana* (purgation) *Shirovirechana* (inhalation), *Niruha* (type of enema). Control of thirst, fasting, exposure to the wind and sun, intake of substances that stimulate digestion and physical exercise constitute reducing therapy. This therapy produces *Laghuta* in the body.

DISCUSSION

Chikitsa is not just a set of treatments but a thoughtful approach to restoring health by focusing on the root cause of illness and supporting the overall well-being of a person. This holistic approach ensures that the physical, mental, and even spiritual aspects of a person are looked after, rather than just focusing on symptoms. Today, this ancient knowledge is still important because medicine worldwide is moving towards more personalized and combined approaches that address the whole person. One essential part of this tradition is the concept of prevention, known as *Nidana Parivarjana*, which means avoiding factors that can cause illness. This focus on prevention helps people maintain good health and reduces the need for more complex treatments later. By encouraging lifestyle choices and habits that prevent disease, *Chikitsa* offers a sustainable path toward long-term health and balance. This synthesis aids practitioners and scholars in understanding and applying traditional *Ayurvedic* therapeutics integrated with modern healthcare perspectives.

CONCLUSION

The idea of *Chikitsa* in *Ayurveda* offers a comprehensive approach to treating diseases and promoting overall health. It includes different types of treatments, such as cleansing the body through *Samsodhana Chikitsa*, strengthening the body, and balancing the mind and all *Doshas*. These treatments help manage and improve different health conditions. This ancient knowledge highlights *Ayurveda's* focus on treating the whole person, making it valuable in both traditional and modern healthcare systems.

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