Manifestation of Ayurvedic Dravya (Pharmacology) in the West

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Abstract
Pharmacology is the study of the interactions between a living entity-human or animal and resultant biochemical activity of substances with therapeutic properties. In Ayurveda, the Sanskrit term is Dravya Guna Vijnana. Dravya is the therapeutic substance we call herb. Guna is the qualities of the substance and Vijnana is the science and knowledge behind it. Ayurvedic Pharmacology in India is used to its full capacity for both treating and curing disease. However, in the west Ayurveda is a different modality. It is a complimentary medicine that is not allowed to treat, cure, or prevent any disease. In this scenario, the objective of Ayurvedic Pharmacology in the west changes to an adjuvant support system that can address symptomatic side effects of western drugs, or support general discomfort, and be integrated with the Ayurvedic dietetics of following correct Pathya and avoiding Apathya (Activities and Dietetics that are indicated and contraindicated).

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Introduction
In ancient times, Vaidyas (Ayurvedic Practitioners) used to personally collect the herbs, process it and prepare the formulations to ensure the maximum benefit. However, that is not possible in a modern world. Urban Ayurvedic Practitioners mainly depend on various commercial firms for their herbs and formulations. This has led to many problems like Adulteration of traditional formulas with non ayurvedic herbs or chemical contamination, Substitutions of one herb with another, Premature harvesting of herbs with another. In Ayurveda, the Sanskrit term is Dravya Guna Vijnana. Dravya is the therapeutic substance we call herb. Guna is the qualities of the substance and Vijnana is the science and knowledge behind it. Ayurvedic Pharmacology in India is used to its full capacity for both treating and curing disease. However, in the west Ayurveda is a different modality. It is a complimentary medicine that is not allowed to treat, cure, or prevent any disease. In this scenario, the objective of Ayurvedic Pharmacology in the west changes to an adjuvant support system that can address symptomatic side effects of western drugs, or support general discomfort, and be integrated with the Ayurvedic dietetics of following correct Pathya and avoiding Apathya (Activities and Dietetics that are indicated and contraindicated).

In this scenario, the objective of Ayurvedic Pharmacology in the west changes to an adjuvant support system that can address symptomatic side effects of western drugs, or support general discomfort, and be integrated with the Ayurvedic dietetics of following correct Pathya and avoiding Apathya (Activities and Dietetics that are indicated and contraindicated).
contain combination of herbs (even up to 20-30 herbs in single formulation) [5]. This make a powerful combined action formula. Example is tonifying kalapanas like Chyavanprasha for energy support, or, Agastyas Rasayana for respiratory support. Another phenomenon that Ayurveda uses just like Pharmacokinetics (Science of drug delivery) is how and where to deliver the herb. This delivery system is called Anupana [6]. Anupana may assist as both adjuvant, as well as a vehicle that carries the chief therapeutic dravya deeper into the tissues, or, helps the herb to go where it needs to go. An adjuvant may be aloe, or madhu (Honey). Madhu is yogavahini, easily digested, can help transport the ingredient in its sappy layers and augments and increases the efficacy of what it carries within in it. Hence it is both a vehicle and adjuvant. Sometimes, Ayurvedic herbs are used for lubrication on skin, other times as nasya for application in nose, sometimes as herb infused oils for processes like Shirodhara, Karnapurnam (ear treatment) or oil pulling in the mouth.

Classification of dravya

Based on their source dravyas are classified into two types. These are listed below. Jaṅgama-Animal source (milk, honey) Aubidha-plant source. Aubidha is subdivided further into 4 types- Vanaspati-fruit without the flower, Vānaspatya-fruit and flowers, Auśadha grains (die after one eating) Virūdha climbers/creepers [7]. Depending upon their morphological structure, dravyas are classified into 4 types Trṇa- Grasses like Dūrva, lemon grass, Gulma-Shrubs like Tulsi, rose, Vṛkṣa-Trees like Arjuna, Amalaki Valli-Creepers and climbers like Marića, Ayurvedic Herbs are also classified based on five mahabhutas or great elements. These are classified below. Parthiva Earth Element, Apa-Water, Element, Teja-Fire, Element, Vayaviya Air Element Akashiya-Space Element Herbs also get classified based on habit, family of plant and morphology: Sthalaja Plant that grow on the ground, Jalaja- They need medium of water to grow. Vṛkṣa-Non-Parasitic plants that live on a tree, however, their own nutrition. Vṛkṣadana Parastic plant that’s live in a tree and source their nutrition from the tree itself. Herbs can also be classified based on their effect on doshas and dhatus. Herbs that pacify doshas-SAMANA herbs, or SODHANA (remove doshas) Herbs that vitiate the dhatus- Dhatu-Pradushana. These are KOPANA herbs that maintain wellness Svastha-hita. Last, but, not the least the effect the herbs have on different systems of the body. Some examples are mentioned below. Annavaha Srotas (Digestive channels, Gastro Intestinal Tract) Agni dipana (kindles agni), pachana (digestive ability), vamana (emetic), virecana (purgative), grahi (absorbs excess water from intestines). Raktavaha Srotas (Blood) - shonitsthapan (Maintenance of blood cells) Pranavaha Srotas (Respiratory Channels) kasa (cough support), svasa (breathing support). In conclusion, we have talked about how Ayurvedic Herbs are complex and powerful, can be made into powerful formulas called Kalpanas, and, have different effect on different systems of the body.

References