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Nidan panchak and its contemporary relevance, a review

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Abstract:

In today's day-to-day life, the health aspect of human beings has been at stake. The increasing work hour, unhealthy food habits and sedentary lifestyle have resulted in many health conditions. The evaluation of these health conditions in accordance with preventive as well as curative aspects is the need of the hour.

Here the concept of Ayurveda, Nidan panchak with its contemporary part can be reviewed. Nidan panchak can be stated as steps for thorough diagnosis. These steps are aimed at understanding the root cause of the illness by examining various factors. Nidan, purvarupa, rupa, samprapti and upashaya have been explained in detail by Acharya. These techniques not only tell us about the disease but its thorough course right from causative factors, signs and symptoms, pathogenesis and treatment response. Here an attempt is made to review these diagnostic steps in detail.

Keywords: *Nidan panchak, Nidan, purvarupa, rupa, samprapti, upashaya*

Introduction:

Ayurveda, an ancient system of natural healing, utilizes a comprehensive approach to diagnose health conditions. The diagnostic process in Ayurveda is known as *Nidana* which refers to the identification of the cause or root of a disease. *Nidan Panchak* is a concept used in Ayurveda to refer to the five methods or steps of diagnosing a disease. *Nidan* here can be referred to as diagnosis or the identification of the cause of illness, and *Panchak* means five. The *Nidan Panchak* plays a crucial role in the Ayurvedic diagnostic process, helping us assess not just the symptoms of a disease but also its origin and underlying imbalances. *Nidana* (cause), *Purvarupa* (prodromal symptoms), *Rupa* (manifestation of disease), *Upashaya* (remedy or therapeutic response), and *Samprapti* (pathogenesis or disease process). These five components help us to trace the origin, development, and progression of a disease, leading to a more effective treatment strategy tailored to the patient.

***Nidan* (etiological factors)**

The word *Nidan* had been referred in two contexts in classics,

Diagnosis of disease and etiological factors.

According to *Madhukosh* this factors are been categorized in four types,

Sannikrishta Hetu, Viprakrishta Hetu, Vyabhichari Hetu and Pradhanika Hetu

In all these comprises the causative factors as well as the factors directing to the diagnosis of the disease. Some contemporary factors can be briefed as follows,

Environmental Factors - the impact of climate, pollution or geographical location on health.

Dietary Habits - improper diet or food choices contribute to imbalances in the body.

Lifestyle and Stress - sedentary behavior, poor sleep or excessive mental strain affect overall well-being.

Toxins and Poisoning - environmental toxins (like heavy metals, pesticides) or emotional toxicity (negative emotions).

Inherited Factors - Genetic predispositions to certain health conditions or imbalances.

Purvarupa (Premonitory Symptoms)

The preset accumulation of *Dosha* in the body exhibits these symptoms and are termed as *Purvarupa*. These are of two types, *Samanya* and *Vishishta*. Although these pre symptoms direct us towards the *Dosha* imbalance and involved *Dushya*, we can consider following contemporary aspect to it.

Subtle Signs - early warning signs such as fatigue, irritability, changes in skin appearance or mild digestive issues.

Imbalance of *Doshas* - imbalances in the three *Doshas* (*Vata, Pitta, and Kapha*) manifested as mental, emotional, or physical disturbances.

Ayurvedic Pulse Diagnosis - pulse analysis to detect subtle imbalances before they manifest as clear symptoms.

Disruptions in *Agni* (Digestive Fire) - shifts in appetite, thirst, and digestion as early clues to a potential illness.

***Rupa* (Signs and Symptoms):**

These refers to the clear signs and symptoms which are exhibited by the occurrence of specific disease. These are the confirmatory signs of vitiated *Dosha* and the *Sthana* or *Dushya* involved. It direct us to the specified *Dosha Bheda* and *Dushya* or *Strotas*. Following contemporary aspect can be considered for *Rupa*.

Physical Symptoms - Detailed analysis of present symptoms such as fever, pain, swelling, bloating or rashes.

Mental/Emotional Symptoms - Assess signs of mental disorders like anxiety, depression, or confusion.

Imbalance in the *Doshas* - Determine which *Dosha* is primarily affected (*Vata*, *Pitta*, or *Kapha*) and how it is manifesting through signs like dry skin, irritability, or lethargy.

Ayurvedic Examination Techniques – Nidanor Pariksha Vidhi – Trividh Pariksha, Ashtavidh Pariksha. Use techniques such as tongue diagnosis, observation of excretions (urine, stool), and body odor to gather clues.

***Samprapti* (Pathogenesis or Disease Progression):**

The progression or how the disease evolve is considered under *Samprapti*. It is the evolution of disease which is studied stepwise. The overview of the stages are been considered in *Samprapti*. These are of two main types, *Samanya Samprapti* and *Vishishta Samprapti*. Understanding this overview in contemporary method can be undertaken as follows,

Understanding Disease Development - Track the sequence of events that led to the disease's progression. It include *Shatkriya Kala – Sanchaya, Prakopa, Prasara, Sthansanshraya, Vyakti* and *Bheda*. This includes the vitiation of respective *Dosha* to its circulation, site of accumulation, appearance of clear sign and symptoms along with complications.

Accumulation of Toxins (*Ama*) - Recognize how toxins accumulate in the body and contribute to the disease's pathogenesis.

Dysfunction of the *Doshas* - Focus on how the imbalance in *Doshas* disrupts the natural flow of bodily functions and leads to disease. It can be correlated to *Margavrodh* caused due to diseased condition.

Impact of Mental Imbalance - Investigate how mental factors, like unresolved emotional trauma, aggravate physical symptoms. This are also mental or emotional *Ama* which causes psychosomatic signs and symptoms.

***Upashaya* (Treatment Response or Therapy)**

The literal meaning of *Upashaya* is relevance from ongoing pain or suffering caused due to disease. In complicated diseased conditions the knowledge of *Upashaya* guide us to the proper treatment modality. Here the day to day aspect of *Upashaya* is briefed.

Therapeutic Diet and Lifestyle - Customize dietary and lifestyle changes based on the patient's *Doshic* imbalances.

Herbal Remedies - Suggest specific herbs, oils, and teas to restore balance to the affected *Dosha* and promote healing.

Detoxification (*Panchakarma*) - Plan appropriate detoxification therapies to remove toxins from the body.

Mind-Body Techniques - Recommend meditation, yoga or breathing exercises to address emotional and mental imbalances.

Rasayana (Rejuvenation) - Implement rejuvenating therapies to promote long-term health and vitality.

Inference:

By integrating these steps into a holistic approach, *Nidana Panchak* can offer a comprehensive view of the disease process, helping us to identify effective treatments and personalized solutions for their patients. In contemporary science, the importance of *Nidana Panchaka* lies in its holistic approach to health. This method resonates with the current shift toward personalized medicine and preventative healthcare. The holistic nature of *Nidana Panchaka* considers not only physical symptoms but also emotional, environmental, and lifestyle factors, making it an essential tool in modern diagnostics. **Samprapti**—the understanding of disease development—aligns with modern pathophysiological models that focus on understanding the complex interactions of genetics, environment and lifestyle in disease processes. The incorporation of the principles of *Nidana Panchaka* can enhance our diagnostic accuracy and treatment strategies, promoting a more integrative and patient-centered approach to healthcare.

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