



A BOOK REVIEW ON CHIKITSANUBHAVAM

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ABSTRACT

The textual tradition of Ayurveda contains the basic principles evolved from the clinical observations of ancient Ayurvedic physicians. There are many senior physicians who bear such treasures of knowledge and can share their valuable experiences. Ashtavaidyan Vaidyamadam Cheriya Narayanan Namboothiri has been considered as one among such scholarly physicians and Chikitsanubhavam is a collection of his clinical experiences. The book “Chikitsanubhavam” elaborates many formulations including preparation which are not in the current practice, it explains clinical manifestation and treatment approaches for diseases mentioned in classics and practical implementation of treatment procedures with their outcome. The book contains 45 chapters and in each chapter the author shares one or more of his experiences. The book covers treatment experiences of all type of disease, exclusive kerala formulations and preparations, experiences in rare procedures like *Avapeetaka snehapana*, *rasayana* therapy etc. It gives an insight to the effective formulations from classical as well as regional texts which are unknown to the current community. By going through the book, the curiosity of reading regional texts and familiarity with traditional knowledge will be enhanced which ultimately may be reflected in their practice. In addition to the details of disease wise management, few chapters project the authors close relationships with famous personalities

Key words: Chikitsanubhavam, book review, Vaidyamadam Cheriya Narayanan Namboothiri

INTRODUCTION: Ayurvedic texts are based on the principles derived from clinical observations made by wise physicians. Earlier physicians were able to explain the presented clinical conditions of their era in relation to the principles mentioned in texts. But during the course of time, many of their observations became obsolete due to the non-efficiency of practitioners and lack in documentation of clinical manifestations and treatment of diseases. Thus, many formulations and treatment procedures were disappeared from the practice. Still, there are many senior physi-

cians who bear such treasures of knowledge and can share their valuable experiences. Ashtavaidyan Vaidyamadam Cheriya Narayanan Namboothiri has been considered as one among such scholarly physicians and Chikitsanubhavam is a collection of his clinical experiences. His articles written in Malayalam language, *Ayurvedavum deergayusum* (Longevity in Ayurveda), published in Mathrubhumi weekly (A Malayalam magazine) were being compiled as Chikitsanubhavam. It includes chapters both projecting management of specific diseases as well as the fa-

mous personalities who received his treatment.

The book was first published by Mathrubhumi printing and publishing company limited, Calicut in July 2002. In this review its 5th edition has been taken which was published in May 2019. The book contains 174 pages and its price is rupees 200.

Ashtavaidyan Vaidyamadam Cheriya Narayanan Namboothiri was born in 1930 in famous Vaidyamadam family, the only one family belonging to Bharadwajeeya group of Ashtavaidya families. It is believed that this family was brought in Kerala as *Saala Vaidya* (physician at vedic ritual) by famous Mezathole Agnihotri who re-established Vedic karma and Yagnya culture in Kerala. His father was Vaidyasastra Mahodhadhi Ashtavaidyan Valiya Narayanan Namboothiri and grandfather was Ashtavaidyan Vaidyamadam Valiya Narayanan Namboothiri from whom he studied Ayurveda. Both of them were very eminent physicians of the time. The author has written and translated many books which includes Malayalam translation of first 14 chapters of Ashtangahridaya entitled as *Ayurvedathinte Prathama Padhangal* (Basic Lessons of Ayurveda), Palakapyam (treatise on Ayurvedic treatments for elephants), Garga Bhagavatam and Adhyatma Ramayana. His contribution includes a collection of essays - *Ayurvedavum deergayusum* and collection of articles appearing in local newspapers and magazines - The tradition of Ayurveda in Kerala. He was awarded Kerala government's Ayurveda Acharya in 2010 and Vazhakunnam Award in 2009.

The book "Chikitsanubhavam" elaborates many formulations including preparation which are not in the current practice, it explains clinical manifestation

and treatment approaches for diseases mentioned in classics and practical implementation of treatment procedures with their outcome.

Body

The book contains 45 chapters and in each chapter the author shares one or more of his experiences. The first chapter mentions the use of *Chaga kareesha Gulika* (a tablet formulation). In the second chapter clinical presentation of *Bahyayama* (convulsive disorder) along with treatment of *Unmada* (insanity) is explained. In third chapter along with *Pradara* (vaginal discharge), *Akshepa vata* (convulsive disorder) is elaborated. Effective emergency management of *Moorcha* (syncope) associated with *Pakshavadha* (hemiplegia) is also explained in this chapter. The fourth chapter is about *Vidradhi* (abscess) and chapter explains about effect of *Marma* (vital point) involvement in pathogenesis. In the fifth chapter, the clinical presentation of bursted *Antharvidhradhi* (internal abscess) is told. Sixth chapter details his treatment experience in *Sannipatha jwara* (type of fever) of a patient of two years of age. The eighth chapter gives a brief description of *Rasayana prayoga* (rejuvenation therapy) for *Sarvanga vatha* (quadriplegia). Along with this treatment of dysphagia and hernia is elaborated. Ninth chapter mentions about the usage of *Bhukthanjari Gulika* (a tablet formulation) and treatment of jaundice. Treatment of psoriasis and *Urusthamba* (numb and immobile thigh) can be seen in 10th chapter.

Uterine prolapse is elaborated in 11th chapter. Here usage of *Sphuta kashayam* (a type of decoction) can also be seen. In chapter 12, he explains how Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar, renowned classical music singer regained his

sound by his treatment. 13th chapter describes about the practical method of application of *Kuteepravesika rasayana* (type of rejuvenation therapy). Some conditions like purgation or vomiting is seen in the course of *rasayana*. Chapter 14 is a brief note on treatment of liver cirrhosis. In chapter 15 *vayalchulli prayoga* (*Hygrophila auriculata*) in *Vrana* (ulcer) is explained along with treatment experience on diarrhoea and psychic symptoms due to *Dhatura* (*Datura metel*).

Chapter 16 describes the treatment of *Moothrakrichra* (dysuria) *Unmada* and *Indralupta* (alopecia areata). Next chapter is the treatment experience on memory loss. Chapter 19 elaborates sciatica and *Pindikodweshtanam* (calf muscle cramp). In chapter 21 importance of *Avagaha* in *Apana vayu vaigunyam* (sitz bath in abnormal movement of apana vata) is described. In chapter 22, the way by which he treated Thirunnavaya Mooss (a famous traditional physician in Kerala) is described. Chapter 23 deals with treatment experience on constipation and a physician suffering from tuberculosis. He also describes how he treated a doctor with fever and diarrhoea which was not managed by Allopathic system. Chapter 24 explains the treatment of paralysis of upper part of esophagus and *Vardhamana pippali prayoga* (sequential increase of dose of *Piper longum*) in *Pleehodaram* (splenomegaly). In 25th chapter, *Agni visarpa chikitsa* (type of erysipelas) is told.

In chapter 26 importance of drug *Sigru* (*Moringa oleifera*) in nephritis and its treatment is described. Next chapter provides the clinical presentation of *Kala meha* (alkaptonuria). 29th chapter describes the death of an obstructive jaundice patient. The clinical presentation of *Gulma* (phantom tumor) is also elaborated in this

chapter. In next chapter treatment and cure of a brain tumor patient is told. In chapter 31, he describes how he treated leukemia by considering it as *Paithika Pandu* (a disease of blood). In chapter 32 he elaborates the effectiveness of *Manthra chikitsa* with *Oothu* (blowing with chewed medicines at vertex and ears) and *Balikalalay* (a ritual procedure). In chapter 33 he describes his experience of treating hemiplegia patient who is a renowned Kathakali artist and helps him to restart the stage program. In 35th chapter he describes the effect of withdrawal of medicines and cites the importance of reducing by *Padaheena krama* (method of accustomization) and in the next chapter he cited his experience in stopping a steroid drug without complication.

In chapter 38 he elaborates the treatment of *Annanala arbuda* (esophageal carcinoma) and the use and preparation of *Sphuta kashayam*. In next chapter he describes the usual pattern of usage of *Thaila* (oil) in *Pizhichil* (oil pouring procedure) for 7 or 14 days. Along with this he is telling usage of *Brahmeevasadi leham* (linctus preparation) told in *chikitsa Manjari* for *Adhoga Rakta pitha* (bleeding disorder). In chapter forty two he introduces a medicine called *Churnarajan* (type of collyrium) and describes treatment of *Thuni* (a *Gulma* variant). He also tells his experience in understanding *Rishta lakshana* (death signs) in *Chinna swasa* (Cheyne-Stokes breathing). He also mentions the order of different *Swasa* (dyspnea) before death. In the 44th chapter he explains the practical usage of *Avapeedaka snehapanam* (type of internal oleation method) and the complete cure of urinary incontinence by its usage. In chapter 45 he elaborates the importance of *Pariharakala*

(post evacuation recovery period) with his experience.

Analysis

The choice of selection of classical medicines in the market is getting reduced day by day due to lack of awareness and specific usage by physicians, rather majority rely on newly introduced patent medicines. This book gives an insight in to the effective formulations from classical as well as regional texts which are unknown to the current community. Rare preparations like *Sphuta kashayam* are also mentioned in the book. This documentation helps to preserve the knowledge about effective formulations and procedures. By going through the book, the curiosity of reading regional texts and familiarity with traditional knowledge will be enhanced which ultimately may be reflected in their practice. The need for such formulations from physician's community will definitely reflect in their market availability.

Emergency management is one of the least explored areas in ayurvedic practice. Due to this there is loss of confidence among Ayurveda physicians in this area. This book elaborates emergency management with Ayurvedic medicines and therapies. One such instance is the management of fainting in *Pakshavatha* by *Nasya* (nasal instillation).

Ayurveda explains disease as a group of clinical manifestations. But due to lack of proper elaboration and difficulty in understanding the exact contextual word meaning, identification of clinical condition becomes difficult. The clinical presentation of diseases in this book will help in identification of clinical pattern and some complications which will persist if vital points of body are affected. Eg: *Vidradhi*. Cancer is one of the most challenging area to the current medical fraternity which is

not mentioned as such in classics. In this book effective treatment of different types of cancers are mentioned. One such instance is the treatment of leukemia considering it as *Paithika Pandu*. The elaboration will help to understand the treatment approach.

In addition to the details of disease wise management, few chapters project the authors close relationships with famous personalities like Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar who got cured by his treatment. As most of them are well known figures of that time, reading of the book will build confidence among the new generation.

Rasayana therapy is one of the most promising areas in Ayurveda. But it is not practiced widely due to lack of experience and fear of adverse reactions. This book provides documented practical utilization of *Rasayana* therapy including *Kuteepravesika vidhi*. It also mentions the adverse reactions happened during therapy which will help to understand the event evaluation of treatment course. The author describes about the effectiveness of *Manthrachikitsa* although it may not be accepted by scientific community.

The author mentions about *Oothu chikitsa* and *Balikalayal*. Protocol for usage of oil for *Pizhicil* for 15 days is explained. This seems to be an adaptation to community fiscal status. Popped rice, rock salt and bran can be seen as ingredients in Pottali preparation. Few effective treatments are also mentioned for specific clinical presentation from which the site of action of medicine can be analyzed, for example *Avapeedaka Snehapanam* for urinary incontinence.

The death signs include dyspnea and hiccup as per classics. This book shows clinical presentation of death signs

and order of appearance of different types of dyspnoea during death. This signifies the importance of detailed understanding of *Rishta lakshana* (death signs) told in classics which is mostly neglected by current practitioners.

Integrative medicine is the recent approach in medical field. Medicines and treatment procedures of various system are combined to provide better result. Wide spectrum usage of medicines increased iatrogenic diseases and medicine dependency. Methodology to avoid dependency is told in classics. This book elaborates its practical application on steroid withdrawal.

Even though the contents are highly relevant; book shows a scattered arrangement which could have been made better. It can reach to the whole Ayurvedic physicians community if translated to common language.

CONCLUSION

Chikitsanubhavam provides information about clinical manifestation of diseases and elaborates their management including emergency management using various formulations and *rasayana* therapy. It describes management approach of diseases which are not mentioned as such in classics and method to avoid drug dependency while treating such diseases. It also helps to understand death signs. Hence, this book can be considered as a guiding light for practitioners.

Reference

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