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## COVID-19 Pandemic and Indian Ayurveda

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### Abstract

Wuhan city in China experienced a sudden increase of pneumonia cases in Dec 2019. In the beginning, its human to human transmission was not adjudged. As a result, this communicable disease leads to a pandemic. World Health Organisation (WHO) named this viral disease COVID-19 caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Corona virus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The count of infected people worldwide is continuously increasing even today. Different prophylaxis and therapeutic strategies have been exercised worldwide to curb this menace. In the present study, an Indian way of addressing this pandemic is reviewed. Success of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) to address this pandemic has been reported. In ayurveda, an elaborate causation and management of epidemics (*Janapadodhwamas*) is discussed in detail. Accordingly, Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yog, Unani, Shiddh, Homeopathy), Government of India has issued preventive advisories and their follow ups are monitored nationwide through medical and paramedics. In ayurveda, suggested preventive measures can really play a vital role to curb the spread of this COVID-19.

**Keywords:** TCM, Ayurveda, COVID-19, AYUSH.

### 1. Introduction

Wuhan city in China experienced a sudden increase of pneumonia cases in December 2019. On 31st December 2019, World Health Organisation (WHO) office in China was reported about this ailment by the Chinese authorities. In the beginning, the human to human transmission of this respiratory disease could not adjudge. Hence, soon the communicable nature of this disease leads to a pandemic. Almost every country of world got infected by this disease. The novel corona virus disease covid-19 caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome corona virus- 2(SARS- CoV-2). The spread of this covid-19 affected the whole globe with approximately 6.982 million confirmed cases, 4.022 million deaths and 3.413

million recovered cases as on 07 June 2020, which is an alarming figure. This count is continuously increasing with alarming rate despite the sincere rigorous efforts to contain it. Different prophylaxis and therapeutic strategies have been continuously undertaken to curb this menace. In this article, an Indian remedy this pandemic is reviewed. In Ayurveda, an elaborate causation and management of epidemics (*Janapadodhwamas*) is discussed in detail. It is worth to notice that the China has almost controlled it and epicenter of this disease has been shifted to Europe, USA and other Asian countries from the place of origin of this covid-19. It has been reported that Traditional Chinese Medicines (TCM) in which traditional herbs are prescribed for prevention and treatment has played significant role parallel to other therapeutic trials. It has also been reported that these traditional medicines were successfully used to treat about thousands of cases in China. Earlier also, TCM has helped significantly in treating the patients of SARS COV, influenza AH1N1, influenza AH7N9 and Ebola virus. The Qing Fei Pai Du decoction has been demonstrated to be 90% effective in treating covid-19 patients.

## **2. Discussion and Results**

In line with TCM, ayurvedic way of treatment must be looked into to address this quickly communicable pandemic. In ancient India, ayurveda had successfully managed the epidemics spreaded time to time. Ayurveda stresses about mental, physical and social well being of the patient for his comprehensive remedy. Ayurvedic line of treatment actually maintains equilibrium among different body organs and tissues. As per Ayurveda, the spreading of any disease should be stopped at the earliest possible stage (Sanchaya & Prokapa). In case of infectious or communicable diseases, it is always recommended that stopping the further progression is the most ideal for controlling the disease. At the same time, immunity of the whole community, whether innate or acquired should be boosted by various means as suggested. These preventive measures and immunity boosting therapies ultimately ensure, that even with the exposure of the infectious disease pathogens, disease is not going to be manifested in the body.

Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India has issued preventive advisories to boost one's immunity against this pandemic. Indeed, we should take this situation as an opportunity to spread and rely on our own well-established AYUSH therapies. Here in this article, Ayurveda has been reviewed as a therapy to mitigate the spread and effect of this pandemic and convey the strength of AYUSH to curb such epidemics. It is found as per covid-19 epidemiology and pathogenesis that about 80% of the reported cases require only primary medical treatment.

Out of remaining 20%, 15% require immediate attention with secondary healthcare facilities; only 5% patients are critical who require intensive care with tertiary healthcare facilities including ICU and ventilators. Proposed Ayurveda interventions in COVID-19 outbreak and their rationale is given below-

(Source: [https:// doi.org/10.1016/j.jaim.2020.04.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaim.2020.04.002))

### **3. Unexposed Asymptomatic Group**

Common health keeping approaches of Ayurveda including healthy diet, healthy life-style, adequate sleep, physical activity, good conduct, cares for retainable and non-retainable urges, and avoidance of disease causing factors (excessive cold and exposure to pollutants). In addition, Chyavanprasha, Brahma Rasayana, Amrit Bhallataka, Sanjeevani vati, Swarna prashan.

### **4. Exposed Asymptomatic (Quarantined)**

Sanjeevani vati, Chitrakatdi vati, Chyavanprasha, Brahma Rasayana, and decoction of a combination of herbs, Tinospora cordifolia, Zingiber officinale, Curcuma longa, Ocimum sanctum, Glycyrrhiza glabra, Adhatoda vasica, Andrographis paniculata, Swertia chirata, Moringa oleifera, Triphala and Trikatu.

### **5. With Mild COVID-19 Symptoms**

Pippali rasayan, Go Jihvadi Quath, Kantakari Avaleha, Chitrakadi vati, Vyaghri haritaki, Dashamul kwath, Sitopaladi, Talishadi, and Yashtimadhu etc.

### **6. With Moderate to Severe COVID-19 Symptoms**

Pippali rasayan, Laghu Vasant Malati, Sanjeevani vati, Tribhuvan Keerti rasa, Brihata Vata Chintamni rasa, Mrityunjaya rasa, Siddha Makardhvaja etc.

**Note:** <sup>a</sup>The proposed interventions are supposed to be practiced under the supervision of authorized Ayurvedic practitioner without compromising the conventional advisories by government authorities including frequent hand-washing with soap till 20 s, cough and sneeze etiquette, physical distancing and universal mask usage.

<sup>b</sup>Dosage of individual formulations are to be judged carefully by an experienced Ayurvedic physician on the basis of roga and rogi bala with an utmost care for vulnerable population like children, pregnancy and elderly. In almost all cases hot water may be considered as preferred anupan (post drink) during the treatment.

In those 5% critical cases, it takes 9 -10 days to reach to Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS). This syndrome may be followed by an uncorrectable hypertensive shock,

multi organ failure and eventually death. It has also been observed that people with older age, who are diabetic, hypertensive or having cardiovascular problems, are more susceptible to reach to ARDS.

In ayurveda, regular care of individual lifestyles including food habits are elaborated in a very articulate manner. These recommendations strengthen and rejuvenate our immune system. Since, an extremely poor number (approximately only 0.015 percent of total population) in India is covid-19 positive as on 07th June 2020, shows that our most of the population is healthy. Hence, ayurvedic recommendations to keep them healthy even under this critical situation of pandemic must be followed. These are very helpful to these apparent healthy people for enhancing their immunity so that infection related pathogenesis can be suppressed. These recommendations include Healthy lifestyle, adequate physical activities such as yoga, pranayam, asanas etc. and keep distance from infected persons. Fumigation of home by different ayurvedic herbs such as garlic peel, turmeric powder, ajwain seeds and loban (resin of *Styrax Benzoin* and *Boswellia* species) are very useful to disinfect our living areas. It has also been reported that community-based Swarnaprashan ( i.e. oral intake of Swarna bhasma ) and mass prophylaxis through Rasayan (Brahma Rasayan and Chyawanprash) having predominant effect on respiratory tract are very useful. Rasayan acts as anti-stress, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial and boost immunity against diseases. According to ayurveda, Rasayan therapy along with distancing from infected people not only constitute a core strategy to curb communicable diseases but also saves any asymptomatic healthy person from infection. Actually, most of the world population belongs to this unexposed asymptomatic group only. Hence, these recommendations are really effective to curb this pandemic. However, exposed asymptomatic (quarantined) group with mild covid-19 symptoms and with moderate to severe symptoms are to be treated as per the above prescription given under the guidance of authorised ayurvedic practitioner. It has also been reported that for unexposed asymptomatic group of people haridra with cow milk (5 gram haridra boiled in 250 ml of milk and reduced to 200ml) and chyawanprash avleh 10 gram once before breakfast is very effective on everyone to combat this infection after improving one's immunity.

## **7. Conclusion**

With the review of literature published to address present situation arose with Covid-19, it is well understood that prevention is the only solution available for this pandemic as there is no approved medication available at present. It has been observed that preventive measures

taken in consonance with Ayurveda which include both intake of suggested herbs, decoction etc along with yogic exercises are one of the best available option to curb the spread of this virus. With the ayurvedic prescriptions, even if someone gets infected, he can recover faster. The credit of faster recovery in India may be attributed to Indian ayurveda. At present, it appears inappropriate and premature to recommend any therapies for COVID-19, however, immunity of the healthy person and immune compromised can be enhanced with these recommended ayurvedic line of action to defend against this pandemic.

Indian ayurveda has potential to curb and treat such epidemics and pandemic provided sincere efforts are to be made from the authorities to identify the potential of AYUSH. Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India should take appropriate initiatives to promote and feed these indigenous health services in India and abroad. This will not only keep the population healthy but also give opportunities to young medical practitioners to incline towards these noble ways of treatments for both practicing and research.

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