CARDIAC DISEASES AND AYURVEDA - A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The incidence of heart diseases is increasing at an alarming rate in our society due to change in concept of diet and life style as an impact of western culture and civilization. According to latest data of American heart association, cardiovascular disease including heart attack & stroke, remain the No. 1 killer of men & women causing 36 percent of all the deaths per year. Changes in diet pattern, dietary habits and life style, lack of physical exercise, increased mental & physical stress, certain social and environmental changes (e.g. Pollution) has lead to us in the era of Hypertension, Hyperlipidemia, obesity, cardiac diseases and many more diseases. Though, in this era of modern medicine, various advance diagnostic techniques and modalities of treatment are available for the patients of cardiac diseases but these all measures put a lot of mental, physical & financial pressure on the patients and their family. There are a number of drugs and medicinal preparations described in the texts of Ayurveda like Arjuna (Terminalia arjuna), Tagar Valeriana welchi), Haritaki (Terminalia chebula), Tambula (piper betel), Brahmi (Centella asiatica) etc, having wonderful effects in Hypertension Hyperlipidemia, Angina pectoris, IHD etc. Various techniques of Yoga like various Asna (Postures), Pranayama (Breathing practices), Spiritual upliftmen (Sattavayjaya) are having wonderful preventive and therapeutic effects on Anxiety, Hypertension, Hypercholestremia, Atherosclerosis etc which are main risk factors of heart disorders.

Key Words: Hypertension, IHD, Atherosclerosis, Hridroga, Rasayana, Arjuna, Pranayama

INTRODUCTION

The incidence of heart diseases is increasing at an alarming rate in our society due to change in concept of diet and life style as an impact of western culture and civilization. Every year 1.5 million Americans suffer from heart attack. In India, study of current trend, reveals that the cases of CVD may increase from about 2.9 crore in 2000 to about 6.4 crore in 2015. The prevalence is more in urban population and in rural population will reach 13.5% in 2015. The prevalence rate among younger population 40 or above are also likely to increase. The cardiovascular diseases has largest share in non-communicable diseases (31%).¹

Changes in diet pattern, dietary habits and life style, lack of physical exercise, increased mental & physical stress, certain social and environmental changes (e.g. Pollution) has lead to us in the era of Hypertension, Hyperlipidemia, obesity, cardiac diseases and many more diseases.² ‘Ayurveda’ as known from...
the ancient times is serving the society not only by its specific measures of cure but by its most powerful aspect of ‘Swasthya-rakshanam’ and this is exactly applicable in the context of cardiac diseases and its associates. Ayurveda teaches & enriches us with such a wonderful diet and Living pattern (Ahara- Vihara, dincharya, Ritucharya) and Codes of conduct (Achara Rasayana) that are very effective in prevention of heart diseases. The term ‘Hridroga’ is described in the Ayurvedic texts but it seems that many cardiac diseases have been included in the description of Shwasa roga and Shotha roga . Hrid- Gulma ‘is a unique concept of Ayurveda medicine where the underlying pathology of the Cardiac distress or symptoms remain obscure, the basic cause is Gulma formation is Hrid-Pradesha. So, the treatment on the principles of Gulma Chikitsa provides relief to the patient.

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### Comparative study of the Pathogenesis Of Hridroga (Ayurveda VS. Modern Science)

**Kulaja Vikara (Familial factors)**
- Samchya
- Prokopa
- Prasara
- Sathanasamshryachayam

**Mithya Ahara – Vihara (False diet & lifestyle)**
- Hypercholesteremia (Ama formation & Rasa – dushti)
- Atherosclerotic Changes (Sroto sanga / Dhamni – Pratichayam)

- Lead to Hypertension , Coronary artery disease
Vyaktavastha  
Hridroga (Cardiac diseases)  

Updrava

‘Ama’ (comparable to Hyperlipidamia, toxic complexes etc.) plays an role of important risk factor in the pathogenesis of heart diseases by causing Srotosanga and Dhammadpratichya (Arteriosclerosis, Atherosclerosis) which are important pathological factors for the development of cardiac diseases like Ischemic heart disease or coronary artery disease. Acharaya Charaka has described specific pathogenesis of Krimija Hridroga. The etiological factors produce a Granthi (nodule) in the heart. Vitiated Rasa lead to the formation of Kleda in that (Granthi) resulting into the development of Krimi (microorganisms), later they attack on the entire Heart.

General Symptoms of Hridroga
Vaivarnaya (Cyanosis / Pallor), Murcha (Syncope), Javara (Fever), Kasa (Cough), Shwasa (Dyspnoea / Orthopnoea), Hikka (Hiccup), Ruja (Pain / Angina), Trisha (Excessive thirst), Utklesha (Nausea), Chardi (Vomiting), Aruchi (Anorexia), Asyavairasaya (Bad taste)

Types of Hridroga and their Specific Symptoms – 5 types

- Vataja Hridroga - Different types of pains — Stretching/tearing/Crushing/pricking pain and Palpitations
- Pittaja Hridroga - Excess thirst, Fever, Burning pain, Fatigue, Dryness of mouth
- Kaphaja Hridroga – Heaviness, Anorexia, Nausea, Excessive salivation, Indigestion
- Sannipataja Hridroga – Mixed symptoms
- Krimija Hridroga - Sharp pain, Edema, Nausea, Anorexia, Itching, giddiness.

Complications of cardiac diseases

PREVENTION OF HRIDROGA (CARDIC DISORDERS)

Ayurveda mainly rely upon the principle of ‘Prevention is better than cure’. So, the preventive aspect of the diseases has given first & prime importance in the management of all the diseases including Hridroga as well.

1. ‘Pariharya Visheshen manso-dukha hetavah’- The deep vision of Acharaya Charaka has laid the prime importance on avoidance of the factors that cause Emotional and mental upsets i.e supression of dharmiya mansika vega like anger, fear, worry etc.

2. ‘Tat-Tat Sevayam Praytnena Prashmo Gyanmev Cha’ - The second most important factor for the prevention of cardiac and associated problems like Anxiety, Controlling the Lust / desires (Indriyajaya) and spiritual enlightenment (Satyabuddhi / Gyan) of self.

3. Ahara (Diet) & Vihara (Life style) modifications – Avoiding the etiological factors

4. Rasayana Drugs for the prevention of cardiovascular diseases

Specific Rasayana drugs for heart (Naimittika Rasayana) like Arjuna twak, Pushkarmula, Tambula have cardioprotective and cardiotonic properties thus their daily use decrease the tendency to develop cardiac diseases. Drugs like Amlaki, Haritaki have antihyperlipidemic & anti hypertensive property which are important risk factors for Coronary artery disease, ischemic heart disease and heart attack. Beneficial Rasayana preparation for prevention of cardiac diseases are Amalaki Rasayana, Brahm Rasayana.
Ayurvedic Principles of Management of Cardiovascular diseases

1. **Nidana parivarjana** - Avoiding the aetiological & risk factors (Diet and lifestyle modification). Reduction of weight in obese patients is important.

2. **Samshodhana (Purification) Therapy**
   - **Vamana Karma** – Though it is contraindicated in heart diseases but can be induced in Kaphaja Hridroga and strong patients.
   - **Virechana Karma** – Beneficial in Hyperlipidemia, hypertension and Krimija Hridroga
   - **Basti** therapy –
     - **Lekhana Basti** - Hyperlipidemia, Obesity
     - **Tikta Basti** – Hypertension, Ischaemic heart diseases, CHF
     - **Brinhana & Ksheera basti** – Cardiac arrhythmias

3. **Shamana (Pacifying) Therapy**
   - **Vataja Hridroga** - Tailapana – Oil cooked with drugs like Sauviraka, Takra, Gomutra, Lavana, Bijaura nimbuka rasa is beneficial.
   - **Pittaja Hridroga** – Ghritapana – Ghee cooked with Draksha, Madhuka, Sugar, Honey etc pittahara drugs and Sheeta Parisesheka- With Ghrita or decoction of Pittashamaka drugs has been indicated.
   - **Kaphaja Hridroga** – Langhana, Ama- Pachana, Use of Katu Drugs
   - **Vamana Karma**
   - **Krimija Hridroga** – Virechana, followed by use of Krimihara drugs like vidanga is indicated.

**Group of Drugs useful in the treatment of cardiac diseases**

- **Hridya Mahakashya** - Amra, Amrataka, Laksha, Karmarda, Vrikshamala, Amlavetras, Badra, Dadima & Matulunga. These drugs are rich source of Vitamin C and have antioxidant and cardiotonic properties

- **Agnideepana and Vatanulomana drugs** - Improves digestion and pacifies vata, effective in hridgulma & CAD - Ajmoda (carum roxburghii), Hingu ( Frula northax), Pipal (Piper longum) i, Shunthi ( Zinziber officinalis), Chitraka (Plumbago zeylinica).

- **Lekhniya Drugs** - Useful in Hyperlipidemia, Obesity and Atherosclerosis e.g Vacha (Acorus calamus), Haridra (Curcuma longa), Daruharidra (Barberis aristata), Mustaka (Cyprus rotundus), Cow urine & Gugglu (Commiphora wightii)

- **Other beneficial drugs** - Gokshura (Tribulus Terrestris), Pushkaramula (Inula receemosa), Arjuna (Terminalia arjuna), Tambula (Piper betel), Tagara (valeriana welchii), Brahmi (Centella asiatica), Karvira (NERium indicum), Hritipatri (Digitalis purpurea), Punarnava (Boerrhavia diffusa), Gugglu (Commiphora wightii) & Shilajit (Asphaltum punjabinum).

Some important formulations (Yoga)


Yoga has an important role in the prevention and management of cardiovascular diseases. Yoga influences the Hypothalamus directly, which controls the endocrine activity. The circulation is controlled by the autonom-
ic nervous system and endocrine system. Yoga practices enhance cardiac health, lower B.P, reduce chronic stress, boosts the immune system and enhances the cognitive ability. Yogic exercises give a good massage to the heart.¹⁰

**DISCUSSION**

Today’s life style has led to the increase in the incidence of cardiac diseases in the society. Hyperlipidemia, Obesity & Diabetes mellitus being the main risk factors for the development of cardiovascular diseases. ‘Ayurveda’ because of its most powerful aspect of ‘Swasthya-rakshanam’ has a big role to play in prevention of cardiac diseases. Ayurvedic principles of diet and Living pattern (Ahara- Vihara, Dincharya, Ritucharya) and Codes of conduct (Achara Rasayana) that are very effective in prevention of heart diseases. Ama and Srotosanga are pathological basis for these conditions described in Ayurveda texts. Changes in diet & life style according to Age, seasonal & geographical variations, avoiding suppression of natural urges(Vega), regulation of negative emotions, use of certain Rasayana (antioxidants) drugs in daily routine etc. are helpful for overcoming the burden of cardiovascular diseases worldwide. Ayurvedic texts described a number of drugs od different groups like Hridya (Cardiotonics), Lekhana (Hypolipedemic), Deepana & Amapachana (Bitter tonics & Digestives) Rasayana (Antioxidants) etc. which are promisingly effective in various cardiac diseases as mentioned above in detail. Various researches had been showed the hypolipidemnic effects of Gugglu¹¹ cardioprotective effect of Pushkarmula¹² and many other drugs mentioned in Ayurvedic texts.¹³ Moreover Yoga practices has an important role in the prevention of cardiovascular diseases.

**CONCLUSION**

Ayurvedic principles of diet and life style modification (Ahara- Vihara, Dincharya, Ritucharya) and Codes of conduct (Achara Rasayana) that are very effective in prevention & cure of heart diseases. The drugs as described above are being effectively used by Ayurveda physicians for a long time are now being proved to be effective for cure on the modern parameters also. Moreover these Ayurvedic remedies are cost effective and safe too.

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