

CHARKOKTA ARISHTA LAKSHANAS AND CONTEMPORARY SIGNS OF DEATH

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ABSTRACT

The science of disease diagnosis and assessment are best described in *Ayurved*. Though the ancient Acharyas had no tools or instruments, they had a keen sense of to observe, on assess and to arrive at a proper prognosis. Amongst all the signs and symptoms of *Arishta Vigyan* (definite signs indicating death) is very unique and sometimes beyond normal perception.

Keywords: *Arishta, Marana*, ominous signs

INTRODUCTION

Arishta Lakshana are those signs and symptoms which herald the oncoming death just as flowers indicate the next oncoming fruit, the smoke indicates fire and clouds indicate rain¹. There is no death without *Arishta* and there will be no life after their appearance. Hence physician should acquire thorough knowledge of *Arishta*. According to *Ashtang Hrudaya*, the *Chikitsa* depends on *Ayu* hence if there is increased *Ayu* there will be good *phala*. If person is not having residual *Ayu* then the *Arishta* will be *Vyakta* and if such a person is treated there will be loss to *Vaidya* in terms of his *Dhana*, *Yashas*. People may start doubting the *Shastra Jnana* of *vaidya*. The *mana* of his *ayu* depends on *prakruti* and

vikruti. As *sarva padartha* in this universe are *nashwara*, *vinasha Kriya* always happens and *marana* is *swabhavika Kriya* and hence the *vaidya* should be aware of *marana kala*.

Aim and Objectives:

Comparison of *Arishta lakshanas* to signs of death according to modern science.

Methods:

In above article the signs of death are studied and compared to *Charkokta lakshanas* of *Arishta* which are mentioned in *Charak samhita*.

Definition:-

According to *Sushruta*, abnormal changes happening in the body, temperament and constitution are in brief called as *Arishta*².

According to *Charaka*, Dangerous and Ominous symptoms suggesting definite death of a patient is *Arishta*³.

Critical illness is a condition associated with many variables and unpredictable factors. In critical illness assessment of prognosis is required for prompt intervention. *Ayurveda* explains about prognosis with aspects viz *sadhyaadhyata* of *vyadhi*, *arishta lakshana*, *ojokshaya* etc.

Factors to be examined for assessment of Arishta:

Varna, swara, gandha, sparsha, chakshu, shrotra, ghraana, rasana, sparshana, mana, bhakti, shaucha, sheela, achara, smriti, aakruti, prakruti, bala, medha, harsha, ruksha, sneha, tandra, gourava, laghava, ahara, vihaara, aaharparinama, upaya, apaya, purvaroop, rupa, vedana, upadrava, chaya, pratichaya, swapna, bheshyaja, are the criterias in which *Arishta* has been explained in our *samhitas*.

Duration specific *arishta*, Disease specific *arishta*, *arishta* related to *purva rupa* are explained in *Indriya sthana* of *Charaka samhita*.

Death:-

Death is defined as the cessation of all vital functions of the body including the heart beat, brain activity including the brain stems and breathing⁴.

What signs indicate impending death?

Hospice care provides relief from pain and symptoms at the end of life. The following provides an overview of the signs and symptoms

indicating death is near. Please remember each patient's experience is unique, and these may vary.

1. Ominous signs one to two days prior to death-

The death signs are mentioned in our *samhitas*. Changes in breathing, decrease in blood pressure⁵ these symptoms can be co-related with the *lakshanas* mentioned in the sixth chapter of *Charak samhita Indriyasthana* as, that man who feels great pain in the upper region of his chest while speaking⁶.

Difficulty or inability to swallow⁷ is a symptom which can be co-related with the *lakshanas* mentioned in *Charak Indriyasthana* as a patient, who vomits the food eaten and whose ingested food is not digested even if retained⁸.

Congestions or respiratory secretions, restlessness, sleeping most of the time, mottling-blotchiness to skin, surge of energy or alertness⁹ these symptoms can be co-related with the *lakshanas* mentioned in *Charak Indriyasthana* whose strength wanes quickly¹⁰.

2. Ominous signs one to two weeks prior to death-

Sleeping most of the time, but can be roused¹¹ symptoms can be co-related with the boastful patient who faints every time that he is raised in his bed, will not survive even for a week¹².

Continued decrease in food and fluids symptoms¹³ can be co-related with the *lakshana* as if a man, afflicted with disease, is emaciated, eats very little¹⁴.

Decreases in blood pressure, changes in breathing¹⁵ symptoms can be co-related with the *lakshana* as if the strongly provoked *vata* seizing both groins and the pelvic region of a man causes dyspnoea¹⁶.

3. Ominous signs one to three months prior to death:-

May withdraw from friends and family spends more time sleeping¹⁷ symptoms can be co-related with the *lakshana* as who develops body tremors, stupor, gait and speech resembling those of an intoxicated man¹⁸.

4. Ominous signs three to six months prior to death:-

Increased oedema or ascitis, progressive weakness or fatigue, change in level of consciousness, increased confusion¹⁹ symptoms can be co-related with the *lakshanas* as, if the man of poor complexion, vitality and digestive power develops swelling in the hands, feets, genitals and the abdomen²⁰

Ominous signs urinary function:

Possible urinary incontinence, concentrated urine²¹ symptoms can be co-relate with the *lakshanas* passes condensed urine²².

Ominous signs respiratory function:

Retention of secretions in the pharynx and to upper respiratory tract symptoms²³ can be co-related with the *lakshanas* as in a person who develops inspiratory dyspnea and is overwhelmed with phlegm²⁴.

Ominous signs of Dyspnoea:

Shortness of breath²⁵ symptom can be co-related with the *lakshanas* in a person whose respiration is either too long or too short as²⁶.

Ominous signs of Cheyne stroke breathing:

Notable changes in breathing²⁷ symptom can be co-related with the man having breathed out a long expiration followed by a short inspiration and faints²⁸.

Ominous signs of food and fluids:

Decreased interest in food and fluid²⁹ symptom can be co-related with emaciated, eats very little³⁰.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Charkokta arishta lakshanas which are mentioned in *Indriyasthanas* can be co-related with the signs of death in modern science. This article helps us to appreciate the science of *ayurved* and *acharya Charak* as a foreseer of death with the imminent signs right before death as well as up to six months prior to death.

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