

**A LIGHT ON ROLE OF AYURVEDA IN PREVENTION OF  
CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE: A LITERATURE REVIEW****<sup>1</sup>Dr. Dhanshree P. Bhamode\* and <sup>2</sup>Dr Jayashree Katole**

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**ABSTRACT**

In the recent year there has been significant increase in incidences related to heart diseases in young age in every part of the world among all races, ethnic groups and cultures. This is due to changing in life style, diet patterns, lack of exercise as well as psychological factors like mental stress and strain. According to the World Health Organization, cardiovascular disease causes 12 million deaths in the world each year. Even with all the advancements in medicine, the management of CVD's are yet to be redefined. Though modern medicine provides effective emergency management, it lacks behind in the effective preventive care and avoidance of recurrence. Heart is one of the Trimarmas in the human body and Ayurveda has emphasized

that special care (Marmaparipalana) has to be given for the protection of this organ. Heart diseases are described in Ayurveda under the heading of Hridroga and treatment protocols have been explained for its management. As, 'Prevention is better than cure.' The importance given by Ayurveda for prevention is immense when compared to any other medical sciences. Ayurveda has employed various preventive measures in the form of Dinacharya (daily regimes), Ritucharya (seasonal regimes), Ratricharya (Night regimen), Sadvrta (Right code of conduct), Herbs and dietary supplements to prevent Cardiovascular diseases through lifestyle modification. 'Swasthasya swasthya rakshanam, Aaturasya vikara prashamanam.' is the aim of Ayurveda. So, Ayurveda focus more on prevention of disease rather than curative aspect. In this article a honest attempt has been made to gather scattered information regarding prevention of heart disease.

**KEYWORDS:** Ayurveda, Hridroga, prevention, cardio-vascular disorders.

## INTRODUCTION

Cardiovascular diseases comprise the most prevalent serious disorders in industrialized nations and are a rapidly growing problem in developing nations. Today, CVD accounts for approximately 30% of deaths worldwide.<sup>[1]</sup> Hridaya is a speculated topic in Ayurveda. As it is one of the vital organ or maha marma special emphasis of hridroga has been done in Trimarmiya Chikitsa Adhyaya of Charaka Samhitha.<sup>[2]</sup> Charaka has mentioned 5<sup>[3]</sup> types of Hridroga based on the doshic dominance. Whereas Acharya Sushruta has dedicated a separate chapter for Hridroga. Heart is the unique seat of Sadhaka Pitta, Avalambaka Kapha, Vyana Vayu and Para oja, all together governs the functions of not only circulatory system but also emotional aspects and is explained as the seat of manas. Though there are various modalities of treatment explained for hridroga, there is equal importance for the preventive aspects also.

Our modern day to day life and lifestyle, erratic eating habits, stress, inadequate sleep, metabolic disturbances, inadequate exercise, smoking and drinking habits etc predispose to the manifestation of cardiovascular diseases or Hridroga. Prevention concepts for CVD is based on the realization that this group of diseases have multifactorial etiology and therefore their prevention demand a complex mix of integrated interventions. Simple life style modification coupled with technologically advanced detection and intervention procedures are therefore recommended for implementation as an important arm of public health care.

In Ayurvedic samhitas, Acharyas have described various measures like nidanparivarjan along with natural medicinal plants, Dincharya, Rutucharya, yoga, dietetics and sadvritta which will look towards the positive health care as well as prevention of disease.

## ETIOLOGICAL FACTORS OF HRIDROGA

Ayurveda emphasizes multiple causative factors for hridroga. As per Ayurveda, nidanas for swatantra hridroga are vyaayama, excessive usage of tikshna aahara, virechana, basthi or vamana. Hridroga can occur as a paratantra vyadhi to certain diseases leading to emesis, emaciation, excessive worry, stress or fear. A direct abhigaatam to hridaya may also lead to Hridroga. Gadaatichara as – “Rogaanam Asamyak Upachara”, that means improper treatment to a Vyadhi. By analyzing the nidanas, it can be inferred that the precipitating factor of hridroga are concerned with an excessive loss (due to vamana, virechana, basthi, exercise, trauma) or reduced intake of water and nutrition(due to emaciation, stress, fear, worry). All these lead to kapha kshayam along with rasa kshayam leading to a compromised functioning

of hridaya.<sup>[4]</sup> The suppression of natural urges cause distorted functioning of Vata which may ultimately and insidiously lead to hridroga.

Factors implicated in CAD are some of modifiable & non modifiable factors. Non Modifiable factors include- Age, Sex, Family History, Genetic factor, Personality while Modifiable factors include Cigarette smoking, High Blood Pressure, increasing level of serum cholesterol, diabetes mellitus, obesity, sedentary habits and stress.

### **SAMPRAPTI OF HRIDROGA**

- 1) Doshas become vitiated by continuous cycle of incorrect lifestyle and diet.
- 2) Accumulation of vitiated doshas and vitiated Rasa dhatu in the heart.
- 3) Development of obstruction in the heart and impairment of physiological function of the heart.

Thus, due to the impairment of nutrition of the cardiac muscle (by Rasa) the outcome is some sort of cardiovascular diseases.<sup>[5]</sup>

### **PREVENTION OF CARDIAC DISEASES – AYURVEDIC WISDOM**

Intake of wholesome and unwholesome diet is responsible for prevention and manifestation of various clinical conditions. It is estimated that 90% of cardiovascular diseases are preventable. One should have to follow a daily diet with the rules for food intake by considering aahara vidhi mentioned in classics, which is the cardinal aspect of preventive medicine. The preventive approach to cardiology can be categorized under - Population strategy, primordial, Primary & Secondary prevention.

- **Population strategy:** Preventive approach is directed towards whole population not merely in individuals. Ayurveda principles such as nidan parivarjan, daily routines which includes regular physical exercise, proper control of sareera as well as manasa vegas, sadvritta ( following the right conducts of life) and dietary rules can be propagated to society through public awareness at all levels commencing from the primary education itself.

Nidan parivarjan includes oja parirakshan, strotas prasadanm, nidan parivarjan of manas hetu, viharaj hetu and aaharaj hetu. Hridaya is site of para oja<sup>[6]</sup> and is the base of life. It can be protected by administration of rasayan to body. Aachar rasayan should be implemented in day to day life. Dravyas cleaning strotas and preventing pore clogging of strotas which is

helpful in preventing atherosclerosis are the strotas prasadanam dravyas. Ex.: Rasona is helpful in lowers cholesterol and triglycerides.

Avoidance of manas hetu like chinta, bhaya. Increase self confidence of person also increases the positive thinking towards life. Meditation is also helpful to decrease the stress level and improve positive thinking. Aasanas like Padmasana, Siddhasana, Simhasana, Shavasana, Sooryanamaskar help to strengthen heart muscle and regulate blood circulation.<sup>[7]</sup> Yogamudra like Hridaya mudra, Shoonya mudra, Aakasha mudra, are helpful in cardiac diseases.<sup>[8]</sup> Excessive physical exertion increases heart rate. It may cause atrial fibrillation. So proper exercise should be done.

Ayurveda samhitakaras have described 13 Adharniya vega.<sup>[9]</sup> Out of these 13 Adharniya vega, 9 vegas – udgara, kasa, shrama shwasa, trishna, bashpa, adhovata, mutra, shakrita (faeces), shukra shows symptoms related to Hridaya like Hridroga. So, one should avoid suppression of natural urge for healthy life. The pathogenesis of CVD can be avoided by healthy diet, plenty of fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains, eating food which is low in saturated fat and cholesterol and high fibre can help prevent high blood cholesterol. Limiting salt in diet also lowers blood pressure. Hridya dravyas help to strengthen the heart, cardiovascular system and mind.

➤ **Primordial Prevention:** The constitutional based lifestyle and seasonal modification in the living is the key concept of primordial prevention for cardiac diseases. Ayurveda has enough choices to regain the true rhythm of nature by synchronizing it with that of the nature. Proper administration of Dinacharya, Ritu charya and Sadvritta as well as Aachara rasayana which includes personality development and mental health care aids to this primordial prevention level by prevention of the possible risk factors.

Here the administration of Dinacharya includes, regular exercise, prayer, meditation and wholesome diet, Ratna Aabhushan Dharana<sup>[10]</sup>, Snana<sup>[11]</sup> (bath), which are balya for heart and ojavardhak. Ritu charya i.e the seasonal purification. Panchakarma modalities like Snehan, Swedan, Vamana, Virechana, Basti and Nasya are indicated in proper sequence according to the requirement and season, so that the alleviated Dosha can be pacified. In the months of March – April(Vasanta), July – August (Varsha) and October– November(Sharada), one should administer the elimination therapies – Vamana for Kapha<sup>[12]</sup>, Basti for Vata<sup>[13]</sup> and Virechana or Raktamokshana for Pitta<sup>[14]</sup> respectively.

➤ **Primary Prevention:** Incorporating dietary changes like reduced intake of salt, increased consumption of vegetables, fruits, pulses and cereals and lifestyle modification like daily exercise, control hypertension, avoidance of alcohol and smoking etc. lies at the level of primary prevention by delaying or preventing the onset of disease. This is very much significant in those with family history of CVD.

➤ **Secondary Prevention:** The aim of secondary prevention is to prevent the recurrence and progression of the disease. Ayurveda explains different herbs which helps the better functioning of hridaya at the optimum level. It is also important to treat the Khavaigunya in a person who has had a Hridroga so as to prevent the recurrence, for which Hrudya Aushadi, Pathya- Apathya and Rasayana Prayoga are helpful. Ayurveda suggests aahara, vihara including psychological factors and continuous use of appropriate medicines. In classical texts, several ganas such as Hridya mahakashaya (dashemaani) by Charaka, Parushakadi gana by Susruta and Vidaryadi gana by Vagbhata are aimed at better management of the conditions of hridaya.

Ayurveda recognised Amla rasa as having cardio protective actions.<sup>[15]</sup> Specifying this point, Charaka identified a group of ten natural substances with amla rasa as hridya.<sup>[16]</sup> Hridya is a term that is always associated with hridaya which is said to be congenial for hridaya- “hridayaya hitham”. Ahara and Aushadi dravyas that are having qualities beneficial to hridaya are Vilepi (thick rice soup), Panaka (sweet drink), Rasona, Dadima, Saindhava, Yavakshara (Potassium carbonate), Souvarchala (Black salt), Haritaki, Nagara, Manda (Supernatant rice water). Ayurveda offers diverse herbal medicines which can play a role in managing and preventing several aspects of CVD these are Rasona, Gokshura, Arjuna, Guggulu, Amalaki which have Anti hyperlipidemic property, inhibits platelet aggregation, lowers blood pressure, antiatherogenic and cardioprotective properties.

## DISCUSSION

Ayurveda that provides prime importance to prevention emphasizes on Prakriti (individual traits), Dinacharya (daily regimes), Ritucharya (seasonal regimes), Ratricharya (Regimen followed at night) and Hitaahara Sevana. Thus Ayurveda deals with a comprehensive outlook on the care of Hridaya. Here attempt is made to avoid modifiable risk factors so as to prevent CVD. In Ayurveda it is explained that nidan parivarjan is the best treatment to be disease free.<sup>[17]</sup> as prevention is better than cure.

Today's erratic life style, improper dietary habits, stress have lead to increase in the incidence of cardiac disease in the society. Ayurveda consider the function of heart and mind is inter-linked. Disturbance in one affects the other. Therefore patients having heart disease are advised to refrain from anxiety, worry and do regular practice of pranayama, aasana, meditation which helps in reducing stress level.

Ayurvedic principles of diet and life style modification (Aahar, Vihar) are very effective in prevention of heart disease. Regular exercise helps to maintain healthy weight and lower cholesterol and blood pressure. Unavoiding of natural urge helps to maintain doshas in same level. Taking panchakarma treatment in proper ritu helps to maintain heart healthy by strotas purification. Administration of Hridya dravya, strotoprasadan dravya and proper healthy diet help to support treatment and maintain health.

Thus in an Ayurvedic way the Preventive Cardiology Should be explored to live happy, healthy and long life.

## CONCLUSION

Cardiovascular diseases are discussed and addressed under the context of Hridroga in Ayurveda. The eternity of Ayurveda is in the sense of the great affection that it has in its approach to the diseases, people and life as a whole.

Despite spectacular advancements in the knowledge, technology and devices the morbidity and mortality in CVD's remain high, moreover after angioplasty and even coronary bypass surgery the chances of recurrence remain high, because these are only masking the symptoms and not the root cause. Rather they leave the Khavaigunya (defect in the Srotas) in place. This is where Ayurveda has a lot to offer in the field of cardiology. All the food and regimes that are suitable to the Prakriti (individual traits) especially the use of Hridya ahara provides the preventive care. An integrated approach with emergency management of contemporary science according to the condition of the Vyadhi can provide solution to avoid the recurrence. In prevention of cardiovascular disease proper diet, regular exercise, meditation, sadvritta palan have major role.

So by considering the Ayurvedic siddhantas- "Swasthasya swasthya rakshanam" and "Sankshepatah kriya yogo nidaanam parivarjanam" I think minor changes in life style may help our Heart for become young forever.

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