Pain Management through *Ayurveda* – Need of Consolidation

Pain is one of the primary reason for which a patient visits a physician or hospital. It is thus obviously incumbent upon the physician to relieve the patient by managing the pain. Since pain is a self perceivable factor, the relief achieved by the management can be clearly assessed by the patient. It is commonly assumed that the conventional system of medicine is more successful in managing both acute and chronic pain. Public belief tends heavily towards the opinion that *Ayurveda* can not manage the acute pain effectively and even in the case of chronic pain the patient has to learn to live with the pain till the underlying cause if managed to the non-pain threshold level. Unfortunately, this is far from truth. *Ayurveda*, like any other health care system aims to relieve the patients of the pain both on immediate and sustainable basis. The definition of *Roga* itself states that it is state wherein the person in some sort of pain and *Arogya* means to relieve the person of this pain. Therefore, the approach of *Ayurveda* can never ignore pain management.

Being a holistic system of medicine and pain being the symptom of some underlying cause, the focus in *Ayurveda* management becomes the underlying pathology rather than pain. Ironically, the patient can feel the pain but mostly can not see the underlying pathology however severe that might be. Therefore, if we do not provide relief in pain, then the patient can not appreciate the efforts we are putting in and the possible results thereof. Conventional medicine with their target oriented molecules have been largely able to suppress acute pain but these molecules are also not that effective in managing chronic pain or the risks of their long term use significantly outweigh the benefits. But owing to the results perceived in the acute pain management, conventional medicine is the preferred choice for pain relief.

*Ayurvedic* management does offer both acute and chronic pain relief. In the ancient times, *Ayurveda* was the only available system of medicine wherein epic and manual battles were fought involving huge armies. The wounded were managed by the *Vaidyas* to enable most of them to commence fighting next day morning. But with time, both the practice and continuous process of contemporary innovation was intermittently halted due to various reasons. This has resulted in a perception that *Ayurveda* is not good in acute pain management. A lot of patients do visit *Ayurveda* for chronic pain and not that few even visit for acute pain. What *Ayurveda* lacks is a systematic target oriented approach, observation based thereon and collection of data accordingly. There are many herbs like leaves of Datura metel, Ricinus communis, Vitex negundo, Adhatoida vasica which offer good pain relief when applied locally. The systemic pain killers were originally developed from plant. The procedures of *Panchakarma* offer significant acute pain relief. Thus, we in *Ayurveda* do not necessarily require to do anything totally new to remove the perception gap that we can not manage acute pain. Only we need to be focussed, target oriented and smart research followed by effective communication of the benefits to the public. Such consolidation of facts will enable *Ayurveda* to meander its way towards effective pain management through *Ayurveda*.

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