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Research Article

Physiological Understanding of Dhatu Poshan Nyaya in Ayurveda

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Abstract

Ayurveda explains the nourishment of body tissues (Dhatus) through the fundamental concept of Dhatu Poshan Nyaya. This concept describes how nutrients derived from digested food are transformed and distributed sequentially to sustain the structural and functional integrity of the body. Classical Ayurvedic texts propose different models of tissue nourishment, namely Ksheera-Dadhi Nyaya, Kedari-Kulya Nyaya, and Khale-Kapota Nyaya, each explaining specific aspects of nutrient transport and metabolism.

From a physiological perspective, these models can be correlated with modern concepts such as digestion, absorption, circulation, cellular metabolism, and tissue-specific utilisation of nutrients. The present study aims to analyse Dhatu Poshan Nyaya and interpret its relevance in the light of contemporary physiology. Understanding these principles provides a strong foundation for explaining health, disease progression, and tissue metabolism in Ayurveda.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda considers the human body as a dynamic system maintained by the equilibrium of Dosha, Dhatu, and Mala. Among these, Dhatus represent the structural and functional units of the body. Proper nourishment (Poshan) of Dhatus is essential for maintaining health.

The process of Dhatu nourishment depends on Agni (metabolic fire), which governs digestion and transformation. The concept of Dhatu Poshan Nyaya explains how nutrients derived from food are distributed to different Dhatus in a systematic manner. This concept not only reflects classical Ayurvedic understanding but also aligns with modern physiological processes such as metabolism and tissue nutrition.

2. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Aim:

To explore the physiological understanding of Dhatu Poshan Nyaya in Ayurveda.

Objectives:

To describe classical concepts of Dhatu Poshan Nyaya

To analyse different Nyayas of Dhatu nourishment

To correlate these concepts with modern physiology

To highlight their clinical significance

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a conceptual and literary review study based on classical Ayurvedic texts and modern physiology references. Primary sources include Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya, while secondary sources include standard textbooks of physiology.

CONCEPT OF DHATU POSHAN

Dhatu Poshan refers to the nourishment and maintenance of body tissues through nutrients derived from digested food. After digestion, Ahara Rasa is formed, which circulates throughout the body and nourishes successive Dhatus.

The process is governed by:

Jatharagni – primary digestion

Dhatvagni – tissue-level metabolism

Srotas – channels of transportation

Thus, Dhatu Poshan is a continuous and dynamic metabolic process.

TYPES OF DHATU POSHAN NYAYA

1. Ksheera-Dadhi Nyaya

This analogy explains the sequential transformation of Dhatus, similar to the conversion of milk into curd, butter, and ghee. Each Dhatu is formed from the previous one through metabolic transformation.

Physiological correlation:

Sequential metabolism

Enzymatic transformation

Tissue differentiation

2. Kedari-Kulya Nyaya

This model compares nutrient distribution to irrigation channels supplying water to fields. Nutrients are transported through Srotas and distributed according to the needs of tissues.

Physiological correlation:

Blood circulation

Nutrient transport via vessels

Perfusion of tissues

3. Khale-Kapota Nyaya

This analogy describes selective uptake of nutrients by tissues, similar to pigeons picking grains from a field.

Physiological correlation:

Cellular uptake

Selective absorption

Receptor-mediated transport

PHYSIOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

Dhatu Poshan Nyaya can be understood through modern physiological processes:

Digestion (Jatharagni) → Breakdown of food into absorbable nutrients

Absorption → Entry of nutrients into circulation

Transportation (Srotas) → Distribution through blood and lymph

Metabolism (Dhatvagni) → Tissue-specific utilization

Cellular uptake → Selective nourishment of tissues

Thus, Ayurveda presents a comprehensive model of metabolism integrating digestion, transport, and utilization.

CLINICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Improper Dhatu Poshan leads to:

Dhatu Kshaya (tissue depletion)

Dhatu Vriddhi (excess)

Metabolic disorders

Chronic diseases

Understanding Dhatu Poshan helps in:

Disease prevention

Nutritional planning

Personalized medicine

Ayurvedic therapeutics

4. DISCUSSION

Dhatu Poshan Nyaya provides a multidimensional view of physiology, integrating structural, functional, and metabolic aspects. Unlike modern physiology, which often studies systems in isolation, Ayurveda offers a holistic approach where digestion, metabolism, and tissue nourishment are interconnected.

The three Nyayas collectively explain sequential transformation, transportation, and selective utilization of nutrients. These concepts closely resemble modern ideas of

metabolic pathways, circulatory dynamics, and cellular physiology.

Thus, Dhatu Poshan Nyaya can be considered an early conceptual framework of systems biology.

5. CONCLUSION

Dhatu Poshan Nyaya is a fundamental concept in Ayurvedic physiology that explains the nourishment and maintenance of body tissues. Its correlation with modern physiological principles highlights its scientific relevance. Understanding this concept enhances the integration of Ayurveda with contemporary biomedical sciences and provides a strong foundation for research and clinical practice.

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