



Review Article

Importance of Vimanasthana of Charaka Samhita: A Comprehensive Review

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Abstract

Charaka Samhita is one of the three principal classical texts (Brihatrayi) of Ayurveda and comprises eight Sthanas, each addressing a distinct aspect of Ayurvedic science. Among these, Vimanasthana occupies a pivotal place because it provides the methodological framework for clinical practice, including principles of dietetics, diagnosis, prognosis, physician ethics, epidemiology, disease classification, and therapeutic planning. The eight chapters of Vimanasthana guide physicians in the systematic examination of diseases and patients, emphasizing evidence-based clinical reasoning within the Ayurvedic paradigm. This review critically evaluates the significance of Vimanasthana, highlighting its role in Ayurvedic education, preventive medicine, clinical practice, and contemporary healthcare. The concepts described in this section remain highly relevant for modern evidence-based Ayurveda, personalized medicine, and public health.

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KEYWORDS: Charaka Samhita, Vimanasthana, Ayurveda, Rogi Pariksha, Srotasa, Janapadodhwamsa, Clinical Methodology.

1. INTRODUCTION

Charaka Samhita, attributed to Acharya Charaka and later revised by Dridhabala, is one of the most authoritative classical texts of Ayurveda. It contains 120 chapters arranged into eight Sthanas, with Vimanasthana serving as a methodological bridge between fundamental principles and practical medicine. It addresses physician training, ethics, pathology, nutrition, epidemiology, prognosis, and methods of clinical examination, making it indispensable for Ayurvedic education and patient care.

AIM

To review the importance of the Vimanasthana of Charaka Samhita and its relevance in present-day Ayurvedic practice and research.

OBJECTIVES

1. To describe the concept and structure of Vimanasthana.
2. To analyse the clinical significance of each chapter.
3. To explain its contribution to diagnosis and treatment.
4. To evaluate its relevance in modern healthcare.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present review is based on classical Ayurvedic literature, including Charaka Samhita with Chakrapani commentary, and standard Ayurvedic textbooks. Relevant published review articles and secondary literature were also consulted to interpret the concepts in the context of contemporary healthcare.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Meaning of Vimana

The term Vimana denotes specific knowledge, systematic exposition, or scientific measurement. Vimanasthana explains the standards required for accurate diagnosis, rational treatment planning, and ethical medical practice.

It consists of eight chapters:

1. Rasa Vimana
2. Trividhakukshiya Vimana
3. Janapadodhwamsa Vimana
4. Trividha Roga Vishesha Vijnaniya Vimana
5. Srotovimana
6. Roganika Vimana
7. Vyadhita Rupa Vimana
8. Rogabhishagjitiya Vimana

Importance of Individual Chapters

1. Rasa Vimana

This chapter elaborates the six tastes (Shadrasa), dietary principles, food quality, food quantity, and compatibility. It establishes the scientific basis of Ayurvedic nutrition and preventive medicine.

Clinical Importance

- Personalized nutrition
- Prevention of metabolic disorders
- Diet planning according to Prakriti

2. Trividhakukshiya Vimana

Describes the proper method of food intake, digestion, incompatible diet (Viruddha Ahara), and dietary discipline.

Clinical Importance

- Prevention of Agnimandya
- Digestive health
- Lifestyle disease prevention

3. Janapadodhwamsa Vimana

This chapter explains epidemics caused by contamination of air, water, land, and seasonal disturbances, reflecting an early understanding of public health and environmental medicine.

Modern Correlation

- Pandemic preparedness
- Community medicine
- Environmental health

4. Trividha Roga Vishesha Vijnaniya Vimana

Provides the systematic approach to disease diagnosis using Nidana Panchaka and emphasizes detailed clinical examination.

Clinical Importance

- Differential diagnosis
- Clinical reasoning
- Disease assessment

5. Srotovimana

Explains the concept of Srotasa, their physiological functions, and Srotodushti.

Clinical Importance

- Understanding disease pathogenesis
- Systemic disorders
- Functional diagnosis

6. Roganika Vimana

Deals with disease classification based on etiology, chronicity, and prognosis.

Clinical Importance

- Disease categorization
- Therapeutic planning
- Prognostic evaluation

7. Vyadhita Rupa Vimana

Describes disease manifestations and progression.

Clinical Importance

- Clinical staging
- Monitoring disease progression
- Outcome prediction

8. Rogabhishagjitiya Vimana

Discusses the ideal physician, patient, medicine, and attendant (Chatushpada), emphasizing ethics, competence, and professionalism. It also includes guidance on medical education and debate among physicians.

4. DISCUSSION

Vimanasthana serves as the methodological foundation of Charaka Samhita. It integrates principles of nutrition, pathology, diagnosis, physician ethics, epidemiology, and clinical decision-making. The concepts of Janapadodhwamsa are especially relevant in understanding epidemic diseases, while Srotovimana provides insight into systemic pathology. Rogabhishajitiya Vimana highlights professional conduct, patient confidentiality, and lifelong learning, values that continue to underpin modern medical ethics.

5. CONCLUSION

Vimanasthana represents the scientific and clinical core of Charaka Samhita. Its teachings on dietetics, diagnosis, physician competence, disease classification, epidemiology, and ethics remain highly relevant to contemporary Ayurvedic practice. Integrating these principles with modern scientific research can strengthen evidence-based Ayurveda and improve patient-centred healthcare.

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