

# Concept of prakruti and its contribution towards globalization of ayurveda.

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## Abstract

Ayurveda is one of the oldest health sciences with concepts of tridoshas and prakruti. Unique concept of prakruti makes this science a step forward towards personalized approach of treatment. Prakruti is one of the 10 ways of assessing a patient from Dashavidha Atur Pariksha. The prakruti is quite capable of providing a fair indication of physiological strengths and weaknesses, mental tendencies and susceptibility to illness of various types.

Uniqueness of ayurveda comes into the form of prakruti i.e. once an individual's prakruti is detected, and then we can be able to prevent and cure the disease by managing the aahar-vihara of the patient according to the predominant dosha. The description of features clearly suggests that the innate dosha prakrutis represent the phenotypes. This is necessary to personalize treatment in accordance with the basic principle of ayurvedic therapeutics.

Since aahar is also considered as a type of chikitsa, a particular diet is suggested to be followed by the patient according to his/her own prakruti to prevent or cure the vyadhi. So the concept of prakruti finds a base role on which the whole skeleton of personalized treatment is framed.

**Keywords:** Ayurveda, Health sciences, Prakruti.

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## Introduction

### *Hipocrates*

Medicine today targets therapy to broadcast patient population, i.e. "One Drug Fits All" approach, but the importance of personalized medicine has been long understood in medical profession like Ayurveda.

Ayurveda, the ancient Indian holistic medical science, practiced since 1500 B.C deals with body, mind and spirit and aims at preservation-promotion of health and prevention-cure of diseases. One of the key fundamental theories of Ayurveda involves a system of understanding health and disease known as the tridosha [1-3]. This concept of tridosha involving the three doshas of vata, pitta, and kapha is a central principle of Ayurveda and followed by all the texts of Ayurveda. The ancient texts of Ayurveda mention numerous properties of doshas and how they affect a human being's physiology or prakruti based on the dominance of one or more doshas. The prakruti of a person is quite capable of providing a fair indication of physiological strengths and weaknesses, mental tendencies, and susceptibility to illnesses of various types. Ayurveda emphasizes the treatment of disease in highly individualized manner as it believes that every individual is unique having different constitution. Ayurveda classifies all individuals into different prakruti types based on the theory of

tridosha and each type has varying degree of predisposition to different diseases. This is independent of racial, ethnic or geographical considerations and may provide appropriate means of classifying genotypes to be considered collectively for genotyping. The association of prakruti with metabolism, chronic disease, individual strength and behavioral aspect is very well mentioned in different Ayurveda text. The knowledge of which can be used for maintaining health of individual.

## Literature Review

The literature search was performed using the following electronic database: Google, Google Scholar, PubMed, Science Direct, Cochrane Library, Different Research Journals using keywords like prakruti, dosha, prakruti genotypes, prakruti chronic disease, prakruti metabolism, prakruti personalized medicine, Ayurveda prakruti, Articles containing research done on prakruti and its relation to dosha and body were reviewed, screened and used for deriving conclusion in this article.

### *Selection criteria*

Prakruti: According to ayurveda, the constitution or dosha of your mind and body is decided at the moment of conception. Depending upon the predominance of the five basic elements, three doshas and mental qualities in sperm (Shukra) and ovum (Shonita) at the time of conception, the individual prakruti is

decided. As a result, you are born with a unique or distinctive combination of the vata, pitta and kapha doshas that remains exactly the same during your lifetime. This is known as *Prakrut* –a Sanskrit word which means nature or the original creation [1-3].

There are a large number of recognizable phenotypic features described for the prakruti types. The key features include the following [1-3]:

### **VATA**

1. Thin body frame, does not gain weight
2. Skin dry, rough, dark complexion, cracked
3. Quick performance of activities
4. Variable and/or poor appetite.
5. Physical working capacity less, resistance to disease usually poor
6. Prefers warm or hot food and climate.
7. Scanty perspiration, variable thirst
8. Tendency for constipation
9. Light sleep with many dreams
10. Prone to anxiety, worry and depression, unpredictable nature

### **PITTA**

1. Medium body frame
2. Skin delicate, reddish complexion, warm to touch
3. Good/excessive appetite
4. Feels warm/hot sensation
5. Prefers cold food and climate, intolerance to hot food and climate
6. Tendency for loose motion
7. Excessive thirst and perspiration
8. Bright eyes, reddish sclera, yellow iris, sharp penetrating vision
9. Hair soft, premature graying, baldness

### **KAPHA**

1. Large, board body frame, tendency to gain weight
2. Skin thick, soft, smooth, firm, glossy, fair complexion
3. Good stamina but slow in physical activities
4. Deep and pleasant voice
5. Moderate appetite
6. Moderate perspiration, low thirst
7. Deep and sound sleep

8. Large eyes, calm, stable with whitish sclera
9. Hair thick, oily, wavy dark coloured
10. Calm, cool, joyful, polite good nature.

### **Importance of prakruti**

Prakruti finds a base role on which whole skeleton of personalized medicine is framed. Prakruti assessment is a part of Dashvidha Pariksha and is considered in totality with understanding of other minimum of 9 other aspects.

Prakruti is decided before birth of an individual based upon:

1. Shukra and shonita
2. Panchamahabhuta predominance
3. Matura ahara-vihara
4. Satva, raja, tama

Hence, prakruti of an individual does not change throughout his/her life. So according to the prakruti, the individual should be subjected to suitable ahara for prevention of vyadhi as ahara is also considered as chikitsa.

### **Prakruti and metabolism**

Prakruti or constitution of body consists of the tridoshas (vata, pitta, and kapha). The three striking constitutions of prakruti (vata, pitta, and kapha) present a set of metabolic tendencies which help in determining the reaction of body and mind when confronted by a stimulus. Generally, there is a natural predominance of one or more doshas in an individual. Each prakruti has specific physical, physiological, and psychological attributes (gunas) which totally depends upon involvement of each dosha in an individual. Every individual must maintain their balance of doshas as determined by their prakruti in order to remain healthy.

*Vata, pitta, and kapha prakruti* are found to have unique metabolic activities. According to Ayurveda, *kapha* is slow, *pitta* is fast, and *vata* is considered to have variable metabolism. Various studies have tried to establish correlation between specific *prakruti* types and different metabolic activities occurring in the body [4]. One more study describes the concept of prakruti in aging stating that the pitta predominance prakruti type individuals have high basal metabolic rate (BMR) and energy consumption leading to tissue destruction and premature aging and average life span, while kapha predominance prakruti type have a tendency to delayed manifestation of aging and longer life span [5]. Ghodke *et al.* demonstrate a probable genomic basis for metabolic differences attributed by *prakruti* and concluded that *pitta prakruti* are fast metabolizers and *kapha* ones are slow and are influenced by different doses of CYP2C19 substrates. Thus it was apparent from this study that fast and slow metabolism was one of the major differentiating phenomena with respect to correlations between CYP2C19 genotypes and *prakruti* [6].

There are number of studies have demonstrated or hypothesized the links of the Ayurvedic tridosha theory with various metabolic [4]. However, a number of these associations need to be further verified by more direct evidence.

### **Prakruti and chronic disease**

Prakruti or a person's constitution of his/her tridoshas also has a clear link to the susceptibility one has for chronic diseases [1-3]. This is quite widely known in Ayurveda, but is also now becoming more apparent in the wider knowledge scape of health in the light of recent evidence from modern or current health science.

Based on the properties of the three body types, the diseases which can affect the person in his life span can be predicted. The predominance of kapha body types for gaining weight is quite well known. This propensity to gain weight and for obesity is in turn linked with a number of chronic diseases such as heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes; all of which are increasingly viewed collectively as metabolic syndrome. Similarly looking at the properties of pitta body type it can be predicted that such individuals can have a propensity to develop ulcers, bleeding disorders, and skin disorders more common. Vata body types can have propensity to develop neurological problems, dementia, movement and speech disorders, arrhythmias, and related chronic diseases as well [7-9]. However, of the three body types, classical texts suggest that vata type individuals will have maximum propensity for chronic disease [8-10].

### **Discussion**

The concept of personalized medicine has been around for as long as people have been practicing medicine. Based on prakruti type the person differs in terms of their body structure, mental makeup, and tolerance to various types of food and environment, and susceptibility to various diseases including the prognosis [11]. It is also well known that a person's prakruti is considered to be normal for that person and any derangement of the doshas of the person's constitution leads to diseases. The prakruti of a person is quite capable of providing a fair indication of physiological strengths and weaknesses, mental tendencies, and susceptibility to illnesses of various types [12-13]. Since prakruti is related to certain physical and mental tendencies that determine susceptibility to diseases, the ancient texts of Ayurveda also provide guidelines for maintaining lifestyles in accordance with one's prakruti for continued healthy living in a personalized manner. Every individual must maintain their balance of doshas as determined by their prakruti in order to remain healthy [14-15].

By understanding the individual combination of doshas, gives best guidelines related to Aahara (food habits), vihara (practice and habits) on which lifestyle is based.

### **Conclusion**

Lifestyle modification and intervention based on concept of prakruti is helpful to maintain health of individual and

prevention of illness. Based on the concept of prakruti the line of treatment and the combination of medicine and drugs can be modified for better and fast results. It acts as a personalized prevention and personalized medicine and thereby helps to overcome various health problems and also to cure diseases in better way and also to overcome lifestyle disorders.

Even though the concept of prakruti is well explained in the Ayurveda texts, there is the need of standardization of concept of prakruti as per the modern terms which will be suitable in modern world. But there is a wide scope in this field for research and further study.

Therefore, if we can standardize this concept of prakruti and propagate it worldwide, it can be used globally; people can be suggested with regimes and routines most suitable for their healthy life.

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