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Role of Ayurveda and Yoga in Lifestyle Disorders: An Integrative Review

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Abstract

Lifestyle disorders have become the biggest health headache of our time. Think about it—we're sitting around way too much, eating junk, constantly stressed, and barely sleeping. No wonder we're seeing crazy rates of obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart problems, and depression popping up everywhere. Lifestyle disorders, or non-communicable diseases (NCDs), have emerged as the most significant public health challenge of the 21st century.

Here's where things get interesting: India's got these incredible ancient health systems—Ayurveda and Yoga—that might be the perfect antidote. They're not just about treating symptoms, but about examining the entire human experience. Ayurveda is all about balancing your body's internal systems, while Yoga connects your physical, mental, and spiritual sides.

What's particularly noteworthy is how these practices extend beyond simply addressing problems. They're about creating a lifestyle that keeps you healthy from the start. We're talking daily routines, seasonal adjustments, and practices that help you stay in sync with your body's natural rhythms. By understanding and applying these principles, we could totally transform how we approach health, preventing chronic diseases before they even start, and achieving a more balanced, wholesome way of living.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Yoga, Lifestyle Disorders, Non-communicable Diseases, Agni, Prakriti.

Introduction

Lifestyle disorders are the inevitable outcome of continuous deviation from natural living. In the contemporary era, rapid urbanization, mechanization, and technological advancement have transformed human lifestyles. Sedentary habits, irregular dietary patterns, mental stress, and lack of physical activity have contributed to the rise of diseases that are not infectious in origin but are the direct consequence of unhealthy living. Lifestyle disorders are basically what happens when we stray too far from how humans are meant to live. In today's world of constant technology and urban living, our entire way of life has undergone a dramatic shift. We're sitting around more, eating weird schedules, stressed out, and barely moving - and that's creating a whole bunch of health problems that aren't caught from germs, but from simply living unhealthily. Think obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart issues, and stress-related conditions - what doctors call non-communicable diseases (NCDs). The World Health Organization points out that these diseases are responsible for over 70% of global deaths, which is pretty scary when you think about it.

According to Ayurveda, those diseases may be due to pragyaparadha (intellectual blemish) or asatmya indyarthasamyoga (unhealthy sensory perception), which results in disharmony in the body, either as an increase or a decrease of

Dosha are the lifestyle diseases.

Ayurveda, the ancient science of life, emphasizes living in harmony with nature. Derived from the Sanskrit words 'Ayu' (life) and 'Veda' (knowledge), Ayurveda encompasses knowledge of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. It defines health not merely as the absence of disease but as a state of dynamic equilibrium, as stated in *Sushruta Samhita*:

“समदोषः समाग्निश्च समधातुमलक्रियः ॥
प्रसन्नात्मेयमनाः स्वस्थ इत्यभिधीयते ॥su.su.15/42॥

A person will be considered as Swastha, i.e., healthy, only in the presence of the below-mentioned conditions (in him) –

- Sama dosha – equilibrium of doshas
- Sama agni – normal and balanced digestive fire
- Sama dhatu – equilibrium of tissues,
- Sama mala kriya – timely and proper excretion of excreta and their balance in the body
- Prasanna atma, indriya, mana – pleasantness/calmness of soul, sense organs, and mind

Ayurveda is basically this incredible ancient wisdom about living in sync with nature. It's way more than just treating sickness - it's about the total well-being of body, mind, and

spirit. There's this amazing old Sanskrit description that basically says being healthy means having perfect balance in your body's energy systems, metabolic processes, and mental state.

Yoga, another ancient Indian discipline, complements Ayurveda by providing tools for self-regulation and inner balance. As described by Maharshi Patanjali in the *Yoga Sutras*,

"Yogah Chitta Vritti Nirodhah" — Yoga is the cessation of mental fluctuations.

It offers a systematic path comprising ethical practices (*Yama* and *Niyama*), postures (*Asanas*), breath control (*Pranayama*), concentration (*Dharana*), meditation (*Dhyana*), and ultimate self-realization (*Samadhi*). The regular practice of Yoga enhances body flexibility, improves circulation and respiration, reduces stress, and stabilizes the mind—making it an effective discipline for the prevention and management of psychosomatic and metabolic disorders.

Ayurveda and Yoga, though distinct in their approach, share a common philosophical foundation rooted in the principles of balance and harmony. Ayurveda primarily focuses on maintaining physical and physiological homeostasis through appropriate diet (*Ahara*), lifestyle (*Vihara*), and mental discipline, whereas Yoga emphasizes the regulation of the mind and consciousness. When integrated, these two systems create a holistic health model that addresses the root causes of lifestyle disorders by modifying diet, behavior, and thought patterns.

In today's fast-paced world, where chronic stress, irregular eating habits, and sedentary behavior have become the norm, the combined application of Ayurveda and Yoga provides a time-tested, natural, and sustainable solution. Their preventive, promotive, and curative principles are not only relevant but essential for restoring balance and enhancing quality of life in the modern age.

Aim

To dive deep into understanding how Ayurveda and Yoga can help tackle lifestyle disorders, we will look at both ancient wisdom and current scientific insights.

Objectives

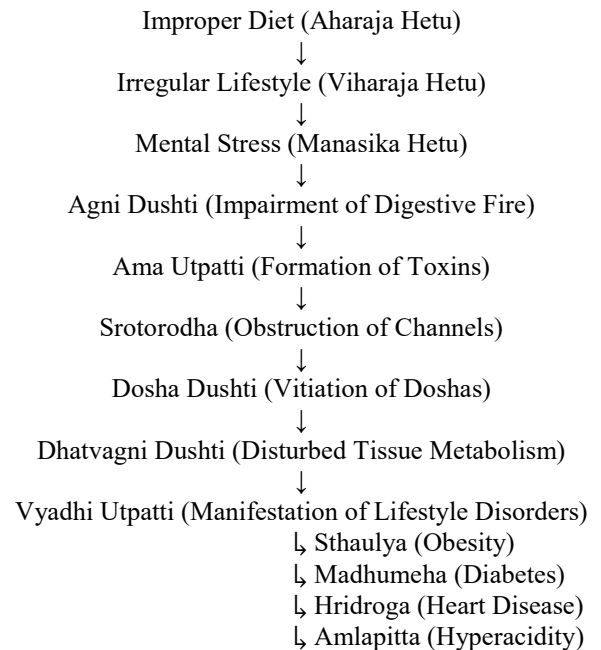
- To define and classify lifestyle disorders from both Ayurvedic and modern medical viewpoints.
- To analyze the Ayurvedic concepts of *Nidana* (etiology), *Samprapti* (pathogenesis), and *Chikitsa* (management) relevant to lifestyle-related diseases.
- To elucidate the role of Yoga—including *Asanas*, *Pranayama*, *Dhyana*, and ethical disciplines—in restoring physical, mental, and emotional balance.
- To identify integrative approaches combining Ayurvedic regimens (*Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Ahara-Vihara*) and Yogic practices for the prevention and control of common lifestyle disorders such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and stress-related conditions.
- To propose a holistic lifestyle model based on Ayurveda–Yoga integration for sustainable health and wellness in the modern era.

Conceptual Understanding of Lifestyle Disorders in Ayurveda

Ayurveda identifies improper diet (*Aharaja Hetu*), behavior (*Viharaja Hetu*), and mind (*Manasika Hetu*) as causes of disease. These lead to *Agni Dushti* and *Ama* formation, initiating the pathogenesis (*Samprapti*) of chronic disorders

like *Sthaulya* (obesity), *Madhumeha* (diabetes), and *Hridroga* (cardiovascular diseases).

Ayurvedic Pathogenesis of Lifestyle Disorders



Preventive Approach in Ayurveda

It gives more focus to *Swasthavritta*, *Dinacharya* (daily regimen), *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen), *Ahara* (dietetic regime), and *Sadvritta* (code of conduct). You can add practices like *Ushapana*, *Abhyanga*, and *Vyayama* in your daily routine in order to set body rhythms and prevent diseases.

Therapeutic Approach in Ayurveda

Panchakarma and *Rasayana* for Health & Longevity. *Panchakarma* and *Rasayana* are both core treatment regimes. *Panchakarma* helps in detoxifying the body by processes such as *Vamana*, *Virechana*, and *Basti*, while *Rasayana* increases immune power and rejuvenates tissues with the help of herbs like *Amalaki*, *Guduchi*, and *Ashwagandha*.

Yogic Approach in Lifestyle Disorders

Yoga involves daily exercise or practice in the morning. This routine helps to maintain lung efficiency, improves circulation by clearing blockages, and prevents digestive issues. Yoga promotes weight loss through calorie burning and the development of lean muscle mass. By improving body composition, regular yoga practice reduces the risk of obesity and related conditions. Yoga contributes to mental well-being by lowering stress levels and promoting relaxation. As a result, it can help prevent mental health conditions like depression and anxiety. Yoga's breathing techniques, or *Pranayama*, expand the lungs and enhance respiratory function. This can be beneficial for individuals with respiratory disorders like asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Integrative Model: Ayurveda and Yoga for Holistic Health

Integration of Ayurveda and Yoga provides preventive, curative, and rehabilitative benefits. *Dinacharya* and *Asanas* together improve physical health; *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* and *Dhyana* promote mental balance; and *Rasayana* with

Pranayama support longevity and vitality.

Discussion

Lifestyle disorders, often termed *non-communicable diseases* (NCDs), arise due to continuous deviation from natural living. Modern factors such as sedentary behavior, irregular food habits, chronic stress, and disturbed sleep cycles have disrupted the natural equilibrium of the human system. Ayurveda and Yoga together offer a profound, time-tested, and evidence-based framework for restoring this lost balance.

1. Ayurvedic Perspective

According to Ayurveda, health (*Swasthya*) is defined as a state of equilibrium among *Doshas* (Vata, Pitta, Kapha), *Dhatus*, *Agni*, and *Malas*, accompanied by a state of mental and spiritual well-being (*Prasannātmendriya Manāḥ*). Lifestyle disorders are primarily caused by continuous exposure to *Aharaja Hetu* (dietary causative factors), *Viharaja Hetu* (improper lifestyle and habits), and *Manasika Hetu* (mental factors).

These etiological factors lead to *Agni Dushti* (digestive/metabolic imbalance) and *Ama* (toxic metabolic residue) formation, initiating the *Samprapti* (pathogenesis) of chronic diseases. The accumulation of *Ama* obstructs *Srotas* (channels), aggravates *Doshas*, and ultimately manifests as *Vyadhi* (disease). Disorders like *Sthaulya* (obesity), *Madhumeha* (diabetes mellitus), *Raktagata Vata* (hypertension), and *Hridroga* (cardiac disease) arise from this disturbed homeostasis.

Ayurveda emphasizes the correction of lifestyle through *Dinacharya* (daily regimen), *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen), *Sadvritta* (ethical conduct), and individualized dietary principles (*Ahara Vidhi Vidhan*). Restoring *Agni* through appropriate diet, *Langhana*, and *Panchakarma* helps eliminate *Ama*, thereby addressing the root cause instead of merely managing symptoms.

2. Yogic Perspective

Yoga complements Ayurvedic management by targeting the *Manasika* (mental-emotional) component of disease. As mentioned in *Patanjali Yoga Sutra* — “*Yogah Chitta Vritti Nirodhah*” — Yoga aims to control the fluctuations of the mind, thereby establishing harmony between the body and consciousness.

Through *Asana* (physical postures), *Pranayama* (breath regulation), *Dhyana* (meditation), and *Yama-Niyama* (ethical observances), Yoga improves both physiological and psychological resilience.

- *Asanas* enhance flexibility, stimulate metabolism, and promote blood circulation.
- *Pranayama* regulates the autonomic nervous system, enhancing parasympathetic activity and reducing stress-induced sympathetic dominance.
- *Meditation* has been scientifically proven to lower cortisol levels, reduce anxiety, and improve insulin sensitivity.
- *Yama* and *Niyama* cultivate discipline, self-control, and mindful behavior — essential for breaking unhealthy lifestyle patterns.

3. Integrative Approach: Ayurveda–Yoga Synergy

While Ayurveda focuses on physical and metabolic correction, Yoga refines mental and emotional dimensions. Their combined effect enhances metabolic efficiency, neuroendocrine stability, emotional balance, and spiritual

awareness. The integration of these systems promotes:

- **Regulation of Agni and Doshas:** Through a balanced diet and routine (*Ahara–Vihara*).
- **Reduction of Oxidative Stress and Inflammation:** Via *Pranayama* and *Dhyana*.
- **Behavioral Transformation:** By inculcating mindfulness and self-awareness.
- **Improved Circadian Rhythm:** Through *Dinacharya* and Yogic sleep discipline.
- **Enhanced Cardiac and Metabolic Profile:** As shown in clinical research.

Recent studies published in the *Journal of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine* (J-AIM) and the *Indian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology* reveal that integrated Ayurveda–Yoga interventions significantly reduce fasting glucose, triglycerides, BMI, and stress markers among patients with metabolic syndrome, hypertension, and Type 2 diabetes. These outcomes validate classical Ayurvedic concepts such as *Agni Deepana*, *Srotoshodhana*, and *Manas Prasādana* (mental cleansing).

4. The Holistic Outcome

The ultimate goal of Ayurveda and Yoga is not merely the absence of disease but the promotion of *Swasthya Rakshana* (maintenance of health). This holistic model aligns with the modern concept of *Preventive and Lifestyle Medicine*. It addresses:

- **Physical Dimension:** correction of metabolism and body composition.
- **Psychological Dimension:** reduction of stress, anxiety, and emotional turbulence.
- **Spiritual Dimension:** promotion of inner peace, self-awareness, and positive living.

Thus, the Ayurvedic–Yogic model emerges as a sustainable, self-empowering, and non-pharmacological approach for both the prevention and management of lifestyle disorders. It bridges ancient wisdom with modern science, offering an integrative model of holistic health for the global community.

Conclusion

Ayurveda and Yoga form a powerful and sustainable framework for maintaining health and correcting lifestyle choices. There is a great need for time of globalization of Ayurvedic principles of *charak*, *Sushrut*, and *Vagbhatta* in the references to prevent and cure lifestyle disorders. In the *charak samhita* section, *sutra sthan* fully describes “*swastha chatuska*” personal hygiene for maintenance of positive health, including *matrasitiya* chapter (*ahar* description), *tasyasitiya* (*ritucharya*), *naveganna dharniya* (should not suppress natural urges) & *indriyopakramaniya* (*sadvrat*) are completely related to a healthy lifestyle, which is most important to an ayurvedic physician.

By embracing *Dinacharya*, which refers to the daily routine prescribed in Ayurveda, individuals can promote balance and well-being through consistent practices. This involves rising early, engaging in cleansing rituals, and following a structured daily schedule that aligns with natural rhythms. In addition, adopting a mindful diet—emphasizing whole, organic foods tailored to one's dosha (body constitution)—can dramatically shift one's lifestyle from creating conditions that foster illness to nurturing overall health.

Integrating Yoga practices like *asanas* (postures), *pranayama* (breath control), and meditation not only enhances physical

strength and flexibility but also fosters mental clarity and emotional stability. Yoga offers a comprehensive approach to prevent and treat diseases associated with a sedentary lifestyle. By reducing stress, improving flexibility, strengthening muscles, and aiding weight loss, Yoga can lower the risk of conditions like diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and hypertension. Regular yoga practice not only enhances physical health but also improves mental and emotional well-being, leading to increased life satisfaction. Ayurveda presents Together, these holistic approaches contribute to the overarching goal of 'Health for All' as advocated by the World Health Organization, paving the way for a more resilient, disease-preventive lifestyle that benefits individuals and communities alike.

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