



IMPORTANCE OF SEASONAL REGIMEN WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO IMPACT ON PHYSIOLOGICAL PARAMETERS

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ABSTRACT

Season is divided into six parts and each part consists of two months. Seasons also classified to eliminate the morbidity of Doshas in the respective seasons. Strength of the person is highest in visarga kala in comparison to adana kala. Different life style and dietetic regimen advised for each seasons. Time of seven days at the end and commencement of the season is known as ritusandhi. It is critical period in which previous regimen should be discontinued gradually and that of subsequent season should be adopted gradually. Seasons influences on body humours resulting into aggravation, accumulation and pacification. Hence one should prescribe appropriate biopurificatory procedures, collect drugs etc. to lead a healthy life.

Keywords: Season, Adana kala, Visarga kala, Disease, Doshas.

INTRODUCTION

Ritu means mausam¹, fixed time, time appointed for any action, right or fit time, kala, season². Year is divided into six ritu (seasons) and each ritu (season) consists of two month such as magha-falguna make shishira (late winter), chaitra-vaishakh make vasanta (spring), jyestha-ashadha make greeshma (summer), shravan-bhadrapada make varsha (rainy season), ashwina-kartika make sharad and margshirsha-pausha make hemanta (early-winter).^{3,4}

Ritu (Season)	Hindi months	English months
Shishira (late winter)	magha-falguna	Jan-Feb
Vasanta (spring)	chaitra-vaishakh	March-April
Greeshma (summer)	jyestha-ashadha	May-June
Varsha (rain)	shravan-bhadrapada	July-Aug
Sharad (autumn)	ashwina-kartika	Sep-Oct
Hemanta (early winter)	margashirsha-pausha	Nov-Dec

Ritu (season) is further divided as hemanta (early winter), greeshma (summer) and varsha (rainy) season, characterized by cold, heat and rain. In between them pravrit(early rain), sharad (autumn) and vasanta (spring) ritu are also described⁵. This division is made for specific purpose of elimination of Doshas.

Shishira, vasanta and greeshma are known as adana (uttarayan) when the sun takes north way course. Other three seasons varsha, sharad and hemanta is considered as visarga with the sun following its southern course.⁶ Visarga is saumya due to dominance of soma (moon) and adana is agneya due to predominance of sun and wind. Thus the sun, the wind and the moon are responsible for appearance of time, season, rasa, dosha and bodily strength to the nature.³

Bala (Strength) during different Seasons

Strength of the people will be maximum in hemanta and shishira ritu, moderate in sharad and vasanta ritu and poor

in varsha and greeshma ritu.^{3,6} Charaka has described that during adana kala sun draws up unctuous portion of nature and due to drying by sharp and rough wind, roughness is produced in shishira, vasanta and greeshma in progressive order. Due to getting tikta, kashaya and katu rasa (having roughness), causes weakness in human being. While in varsha, sharad and hemanta seasons moon is having unhindered strength, as a result of heavily water, temperature of nature having been cool down. The amla, lavana and madhura rasa increases which leads to support of strength in human being.⁷ Ayurveda has also mentioned different types of diet and lifestyle according to season.

Hemanta Ritucharya

Ritucharya means 'mode of living in different season'. Describing hemanta (early winter) ritucharya Charaka has mentioned that in strong person the agni becomes stronger and capable of consuming even those articles which are heavy in nature and quantity. When winter begins one should avoid/ minimize vata increasing factors, light food and drinks, intake of cold drink and strong wind.³

Shishira Ritucharya

Hemanta and shishira ritu (late winter) have minor difference (shishira has more roughness). Hence regimen of hemanta is applicable to shishira also³. Mild massaging of body, wrestling with the trained wrestlers to half of its strength is advised.⁷ Butter milk (takra) has been recommended in cold (shishira and hemanta) season.⁸

Vasanta Ritucharya

Due to strong rays of sun in vasanta ritu (spring) vitiation of accumulated kapha causes many diseases. Hence during this season evacuating procedures like vomiting etc. should be applied. Diet which is heavy, sweet, sour, fatty and sleeping during day time should be avoided. For the duration of vasanta one should use exercise,

medicated smoking (dhumpana), gargle and bath with warm water.³

Greeshma Ritucharya

During greeshma (summer) ritu sun draws up moisture of nature that's why sweet, cold, liquid, fatty food and drinks are useful. Day sleep may be advised. Wine is indicated in small quantity with plenty of water or should be avoided. Excessive salt, sour, pungent, hot things, physical activity and sexual intercourse should be avoided.³

Varsha Ritucharya

During varsha ritu (rain), due to earth vapour, humidity and amla paka of water, digestion becomes poor and vata is aggravated. During this period one should use diet having predominance of sour, salted and fatty articles, and should eat old barley wheat and rice. Use of food and drink mixed with honey is also indicated. Person should avoid cold drink, day sleep, dews, river water, physical exercise, exposure to sun and sexual intercourse³.

Sharad Ritucharya

Due to dominance of pitta in sharad (autumn) one should advice to take sweet, light, cold, slightly bitter and pitta pacifying food, drinks and hansodaka (type of water). Ghee medicated with bitter drugs, purgative and bloodletting is advised. During sharad ritu fat, oil, dew, meat of aquatic and marshy animals, alkali, curd, day sleep and exposure to eastern wind should be avoided.³

Curd's (dadhi) characteristics, its indications and contraindications in different seasons have been also described.⁹ Buttermilk (takra) should not be taken in hot season and autumn.⁹ Sidhu and arishta should be taken in winter and spring. Cooled milk after boiling is advised in summer. In early rain meat soup, vegetarian soup in rainy season and in autumn cold water should be taken. These regimens have been described for healthy and in diseased it should be based on conditions of doshas and food taken.¹⁰ In this way what one should use and avoid in every season is described in different Samhita. Person who follows this regimen in each season never suffers from severe disorder caused by seasonal factors.¹¹ In Ashtanga Sangraha during description of ritucharya, it is mentioned that the rules and regimen described for each season is meant only for healthy person.⁶ The effect of day and night on body has been also mentioned in Ashtanga Sangraha.¹²

Exercise (Vyayam) according to Season

Sushruta has mentioned to practice exercise only up to half of the strength daily. Exercise is especially beneficial during sheeta and vasanta seasons.¹⁰ Vagbhatta has explained that in sheeta and vasanta seasons individuals should practice exercise up to half of the strength while in rest of the seasons one should practice it minimally.¹³

Ritusandhi

Time of seven days at the end and commencement season is known as ritusandhi. During this period regimen of previous season should be discontinued gradually and that of subsequent season should be adopted gradually.^{6,7}

Yamdanstra

Sharangadhara has mentioned that movement of sun from one stellar constellation to other makes for the six seasons during which tridosha undergo accumulation, aggravation and pacification.¹⁴ The last eight days of kartika and the

first eight days of agahana is described as yamdanstra kala, during this period it is advised to strictly follow seasonal regimen and should take small quantities of food.¹⁴

Tridosha and Season

Tridoshas(vata, pitta and kapha) are described as tristambha (basic humors) of body, but accumulation, vitiation and pacification of vata, pitta and kapha occurs in different season.^{15,16} This conditioning is expected by effect of season. In brief these three doshas destroy, sustain and maintain the body when they are abnormal and normal respectively.¹⁷

Dosha	Chaya	Prakopa	Prasamana
Vata	greeshma	Varsha	sharad
Pitta	varsha	Sharad	Hemanta
Kapha	shishira	vasanta	Greeshma

Charaka has mentioned that one should evacuate accumulated doshas in first month of vasanta (spring), varsha (rainy season) and sharad (autumn). After who have got body oiled, fomented should administer emetic, purgative and enema; and after that one who knows time should administer rasayana and aphrodisiac preparation, so that dhatus having been stabilized in normal condition and diseases do not arise.¹⁸

Sushruta also has also mentioned that kapha should be eliminated in spring while pitta in autumn and vata in rainy season prior to emergence of disorder.⁴ Sushruta has also described that the day and night also shows features of year; as forenoon having features of spring, mid day like summer, in after noon those of early rains, in early night like rainy season, midnight those of autumn and at dawn like early winter. This day night also follows the pattern of accumulation, aggravation and pacification of doshas.⁴

Charaka has divided bala as sahaja, kalaja and yuktikrita bala. Yuktikritabala is due to division of season and different stages of life (balyavastha, yuvavastha, vridhnavastha).¹⁹ Charaka has also described trividha rogayatan (causes of disease), which consist of excess of specific character of indriya, karma and kala(season) and also deficient occurrences and perverted occurrence of indriya, karma and kala.¹⁹

Relation between Blood and Ritu (Season)

Blood plays important role in homeostasis of body. During sharad ritu (autumn) blood becomes naturally impure.^{20,21} Gangadhara has explained it and said that the defect of blood means abnormality in its normal composition, diminution or aggravation. Sushruta has stated that in cloudy, wind and cold weather blood become thick and not comes out or comes in small quantity on shiravedha (bloodletting).²²

Characteristics of Rain water according to Season

The characteristics of fresh rain water have been also described in Ayurveda e.g. rain water of autumn season is indicated even in delicate person and king.^{23,24} Sushruta has described that in rainy season or in spring water of rain should be used as it has great merit. He has also recommended that in autumn season all types of water may be used because of being purified. Water of lake and tank should be used in early winter. In spring and summer

water from well or waterfall should be used. Water from shallow well, old tank and lake should not be taken in early rain⁸. In rainy and autumn season water should be taken in small quantity, during winter and spring hot water and in summer cold water should be taken as desired. In rainy season, one who dips into water infected by putrefactions of insects, urine, feces etc. or drinks dirty, poisoned or fresh water is attacked by external disorder (like skin disease) and internal disorders (like udara-roga) etc; they are caused respectively by bath and drinking⁸. Harita has also described the characteristics of water fallen with rain along with indications and contraindications.²⁵

Snehapan according to Season

Ghrita is indicated in sharad (autumn), vasa and majja in vaishakh and taila in pravrit ritu. Sneha should not be taken in seasons of extreme cold and hot.^{26,27} Sushruta has advised to take sneha in pravrit, sharad and Vasanta.¹⁰ One who has predominance of vata-kapha and in cold season sneha should be taken in day time. While in hot season and in abundance of vata-pitta it should be taken in night. If these indications are not followed it may lead to different complications.^{28,29}

Season and Purification

The season having common character (sadharana ritu) is important because evacuation therapy such as emesis etc. should be applied in these seasons, due to moderate cold, heat and rain the season having common character are most convenient and unharmed to body and drugs. While due to excessive cold, heat and rain other seasons are inconvenient and harmful to body and drug. Therefore the evacuation therapy like emesis etc. are stopped in season ending with early winter, summer and rainy season except in case of emergency. In emergency therapy should administer carefully after modifying the seasonal effects by artificial means.^{5,30} The physician should manage evacuating remedy taking into account of season in case of healthy person and in disease according to morbidity.³¹

Nasya karma (Nasal medication) and Season

Nasyakarma (time for nasal medication) is also indicated according to season as Vagbhata has advised to take nasyakarma in forenoon during autumn and spring season, during mid day in cold season, during evening in summer, and during rainy season when there is cloud free atmosphere.^{32,33} It is also mentioned that anjana (colirium) should also be used according to seasons.^{34,35}

Effect of Visha (Poison) according to Season

At some stage in description of visha (poison) it is mentioned that due to watery source it gets liquified and flows like jaggery in rains and then it is destroyed by emergence of agastya constellation in sky and turn into mild in action after rainy season.³⁶

Bandha (Bandage) and Season

Ayurveda has described that bandage should be removed on third day in early and late winter and in spring while in autumn, summer and rainy season it should be done on second day.^{37,38}

Agni Karma (Cauterization) and Season

Agni karma (cauterization), an important measure in shalyakarma (surgery) advised in all seasons except autumn and summer.³⁹

Rakta Vishravan (Blood-Letting) according to Season

Rakta-vishravana (blood-letting) is also contraindicated in conditions like cloudy weather, cold and direct exposure to wind; because blood being thick and does not come out.^{22,40} If blood-letting performed in too hot season and after excessive sudation it may lead to massive blood flow which can give rise to headache, defect in vision, convulsion, burning sensation, hemiplegia, localized disorder etc. which finally may leads to death. Therefore blood-letting should be performed in moderate season.²² Suitable time for vein puncture are during rainy season in sunny day, in summer when heat is least and in noon throughout winter. Shargadhara has advised bloodletting in sharad to be free from skin disease. Shargadhara has contraindicated bloodletting during cold season, very hot season, before sudation therapy and after excessive sudation.²¹

There is description of aggravation, accumulation and pacification of doshas according season in different ayurvedic literatures. By aggravation, doshas produces needling pain, movement of wind in bowels, acidity, thirst etc.⁴¹This can be used as diagnostic tools in treatment. The physician who follows the method based on time steadily eliminates the group of disorders.⁴²

Time of Food taken according to Season

Season in which night is longer one should take food consisting of plenty of its contraries in morning itself. In longer day one should take food prescribed in that season in afternoon. In which season day and night are of equal duration one should take food in evenly divided in day and night.⁴³

Collections of Medicines according to Season

Charaka has mentioned that one should obtain the fruits grown in proper time, mature rasa and potency, relished with sun, air, shade, and water in respective season.⁴⁴

Relation of Disease and Season

In different samhita there is description of different diseases which are influenced by season. Fever (kaphaj jwara) aggravates during autumn.⁴⁵ The natural fever arising in spring and autumn can be treated easily. Pittaja jwara get aggravated in spring, vataja jwara in rainy season. In kapha dominating jwara (in spring) fasting is indicated. The intelligent physician should treat the case of fever in autumn and spring taking in consideration of potency and weakness of doshas.⁴⁶

In vasanta ritu kaphaja disease, during sharad ritu pittaja and in duration of varsha ritu mainly vataja disease takes place.⁴⁷ During rainy season, autumn and spring fever arising from vata, pitta, kapha respectively are natural while other are unnatural and difficult to cure.^{48,49} In rainy season vata produces fever supported by pitta and kapha, in autumn season pitta produces fever supported by kapha. So if patient does not take any food there is no harm.⁴⁹

The commencement and exacerbation of all fever happen at their particular time when the dosha causing fever is predominant i.e. particular period of the day, night, season, digestion of food etc.⁴⁸

Kalpa (Formulations) according to Season

Different kalpa (formulations) for purgation is described according to season and some other formulations are prescribed for all season.⁵⁰ Different types of virechana

kalpa (purgatives) according to seasons are also described.⁵¹ Six different mukhalepa kalpa (face pack) according to season is also described in Ashtanga Hridaya.⁵²

CONCLUSION

Season influences greatly on body humors resulting into aggravation, accumulation and pacification in respective seasons. Hence wise man should adopt strict seasonal regimen to regain perfect and sound health. These are certain purification measures mentioned in respective seasons to eliminate the unwanted toxins. Ayurveda greatly believes in adopting the daily regimen, seasonal regimen etc. to lead a healthy life.

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