

Heart: Protection is the Top Priority: The Concept Before Thousand Years

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Abstract

The heart is occupying an important place in medical science. Top priority is given to the heart by the experts of all discipline of medical science. A healthy heart is the key of long life and sound health. Any defect in the heart may lead to even death of an individual. Many facts regarding the heart has been explored by the modern scientists. A tireless effort is on to learn more about this miraculous organ.

Enthusiasm is a natural Human character. Since the beginning of the human society there was tremendous effort to crack the secrets of the nature. What is there with the heart to work as the life of an individual was tried to understand by the scholars of ancient life science "Ayurveda". They acquired some valuable informations and included in their books (samhitas).

They gave the name "HRIDAYA" to this important organ and explored many important facts about it which are mentioned in Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Sangraha and Ashtanga Hridaya.

A study of the facts about the heart mentioned in the Ayurvedic classics may help a lot to the scientists to learn about this important organ.

Keywords: Heart; Hridaya; Secrets of the Nature; Ayurvedic Classics

Introduction

Heart is unanimously accepted as a vital organ of the human body. It is described in different way in different references. Not only in the present time but also in the past, before 5000/6000 years of christ the human beings (the vaidyas- physicians) identified that, there is an organ in the body that receives the blood from the whole body and then again distributes to each and every part. This organ was identified as the seat of life and named as "HRIDAYA".

The importance of knowledge of this organ was discussed in all the 8 branches of Ayurveda vividly and advised to learn this important organ properly to acquire success in medical field. Discussion on the concepts of the Ayurvedic scholars on heart can be considered fruitful as it may give many clues for the researchers of modern era also.

Aim of the Study

The study was conducted with an aim to explore the concept of the Ayurvedic classics on heart.

Methods

The ancient Ayurvedic classics, viz. Charaka Samhita, Susruta Samhita, Ashtanga Sangraha and Ashtanga Hridaya were studied and the concept on the importance of the heart were collected.

Observations and Result

Study of the concepts of the Ayurvedic classics reveals the following facts on heart:

1. Due to entry of vitiated body humors into the heart causes a condition named “Mada” (a condition when the person loses his sense) [1].
2. Vitiated body humours, when take shelter in heart, can cause a condition named “Sangnyasa” when the person becomes like dead. At this state if quickly effective treatment is not applied the person dies. This is a stage of deep coma when recovery cannot be expected without appropriate resuscitatory measures [2].
3. There are 10 seats of “Prana” (life) (Pranayatana). Among these 10 heart is also considered as an important one [3].
4. The heart is the seat of the soul, mind, memory, intelligence, sensory activities etc [4].
5. The heart is considered as the root of all the functions of the body [5].
6. Any injury to the heart can produce fainting (Murcha) and death (in case of injury of more intensity) [6].
7. Heart is the seat of the essence of life (para oja). It is also the shelter of all important and vital functions [7].
8. 10 big blood vessels arise from the heart. They carry the essence of the body (Oja) to each and every part and keep them alive [8].
9. There are two types of “Oja”. Both are staying in the body since birth and keeping the body alive. Destruction of it causes destruction of the person. The heart gives shelter to this important component and keeps all the parts alive by circulating it to all the parts [9].
10. The heart should be protected and saved from all harmful aetiologies by following the beneficial rules of diet, regimen etc. as it is the seat of life [10].
11. When an individual’s body humours become vitiated and enters into the heart (seat of wisdom –intelligence) then, if the person is weak by mind, can cause Insanity (Unmada) [11].
12. When heart is effected with vitiated body humours then the person may suffer from transient attack of senselessness (a condition like epilepsy) [12].
13. Heart is the seat of mind, Wisdom, sensory faculties, soul, vitality, fluid portion (rasa dhatu), humours (dosha) etc [13].
14. There are 107 nos. of vital points in the body. Among them 3 are identified as most important and heart is one of them [14].
15. The 107 number of vital points of the body are closely related with sense (chetana). Among all the vital organs of the body the heart is considered to be an important one. Any injury to it may cause excessive pain to the patient [15].
16. Heart is containing the blood vessels, mind, sense etc. It is like the wheel of a chariot [16].
17. If any injury occurs to any of the three most important vital organs (heart, urinary bladder and brain) then death is sure. Hence one should always be cautious in saving these three important vital organs [17].
18. Life is sheltering in the three organs viz. heart, urinary bladder and brain. Hence one should always protect them with topmost priority [18].
19. When vitiated dosha (Vata) moving towards upwards enters into the heart and temporal region of the brain causes convulsion and breathing difficulty followed by senselessness which is a serious condition [19].
20. When an individual takes sweet, slimy, heavy food in excess and gets exposure to grief, disease etc. then the vitiated humour enters into the heart and causes one condition where the person’s speech, physical activities etc. become sluggish [20].

Discussion

The study conducted on the topic aiming to explore the concepts of the ancient scholars of health science (Ayurveda) on heart clearly reveals that, the father of medicine, Charaka mentions many facts regarding the role of the heart in maintenance of health. As mentioned by him the heart has important role in keeping an individual alive and healthy. It is considered as the shelter of consciousness, intelligence, memory, stability, sleep, awake etc. Any deviation of its anatomical/physiological integrity can lead to serious conditions (diseases) like disturbance in consciousness, co-ordination, convulsion, serious type of breathing difficulty and even death. It can easily be assumed that, there was extensive study and research on anatomy, physiology and pathological states of the heart and stress is given on appropriate maintenance of cardiac health. The concepts carry scientific reason on which sufficient scope is there to work.

Summary and Conclusion

As summary and conclusion it can be said that, the ancient Ayurvedic scholars were the flag bearers of scientific research. With extensive observation and experience they wrote their samhitas. There are many hidden facts in those books which are till now beyond our knowledge and understanding. Effort and dedication on study and re-evaluation of the ancient classical facts may contribute a lot to the society.

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