

# Vedic Quality Standards of Aetiology, Symptoms, Spread, Prevention and Treatment of COVID-19: Ayurvedic Prospective

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## ABSTRACT

The pandemic COVID-19 was caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS CoV 2) and is unique in various facets. The earlier experience from the past severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) epidemics seems to be insufficient, and there is a need for better strategies in public health and medical care. Ayurveda is well known for its preventive and therapeutic aspects, but not getting utilized for prevention by the COVID-19 crisis may also be helpful as a supportive therapy with a current line of management. This paper aimed at understanding the almost 5000-year-old Ayurvedic perspective of prevention and treatment of COVID – 19 may be helpful to the world today. Sushruta Samhita and Charka Samhita are the major sources for data collection and also electronic databases PubMed, Google Scholar used in this review. Study selection based on Ayurvedic Literary review of Aetiology; Causative Factor; Symptoms; Biological weapon, Spread; Prevention and Intervention of COVID – 19.

**Keywords:** Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), COVID-19, Sushruta Samhita, and Charka Samhita.

The large family of viruses' coronavirus is common in people and many different species of animals, including bats, cattle, camels, and cats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people and then spread between people with MERS-CoV, SARS-CoV, and now with this new virus (SARS-CoV-2) [1]. Like MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV the SARS-CoV-2 virus is a betacoronavirus. The origins of all three of these viruses are from bats. Various therapeutic measures have been deployed to prevent and treat the infection, but formal trials of known Ayurvedic formulations have not been done. The Govt. of India has not included Ayurvedic formulations in their recommendations for clinical management of COVID-19 [2].

The Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha & Homeopathy) has come up with recommendations for prevention (through boosting immunity) and symptomatic treatment of the disease [3]. The current SARS-CoV-2 epidemic crushed healthcare infrastructures globally. No effective pharmaceutical treatments are available at present, many

of the nations have adopted preventive measures, including social distancing measures, contact tracing, quarantine, and nationwide lockdowns to control the spread of coronavirus. The epicenter of the coronavirus had shifted to the USA and Brazil after the initial outbreak in China. Countries like China and South Korea took aggressive preventive measures to contain the rapid spread of the virus. The Centre for Disease Control (CDC) observed that among hospitalized COVID patients, 81% of cases fell in the moderately symptomatic category [4]. It has demonstrated that upper and lower respiratory tracts were the main targets of the novel Corona Virus [5].

The sequences initially posted by China are similar from U.S. patients, the recent emergence of this virus from animal reservoirs suggesting a likely single. Suggesting animal-to-person spread, early on, many of the patients at the epicenter of the outbreak in Wuhan, China, and Hubei Province had some link to the live animal market and seafood. Later, indicating person-to-person spread, a growing number of patients reportedly did not have exposure to animal markets. Person-to-person spread was

subsequently reported outside Hubei and in countries outside China [6]. The Ayurvedic system of medicine, recommends a variety of herbal formulations (*Dasamoolkaduthrayam Kashaya, Guluchyadi Kwatham*) for the treatment of diseases affecting the respiratory tract that were considered useful for COVID-19 patients. COVID -19 is the burning issue of today and the epidemic diseases causing death in multiple countries but, it has routes in Ayurvedic classics from its causative factors, symptoms to spread, and even cure. Ayurvedic classics Sushruta Samhita and Charka Samhita have mentioned COVID-19 in detail.

**METHODS**

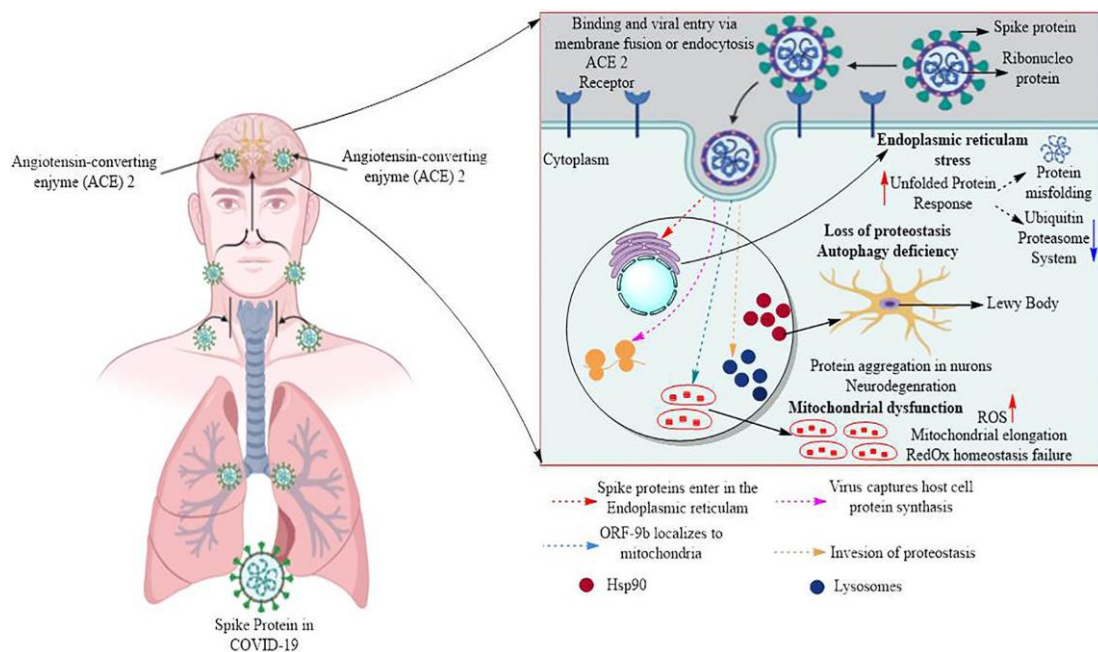
This review was based on the search of electronic databases PubMed, Google Scholar and to study the literary review of COVID-19 from Sushruta Sanhita and Charka Samhita.

**Etiology According to Ayurveda:** अरोचकं प्रतिश्यायं गुरु शुष्कं प्रकीर्तितम् । विषव्याधिहतं मृत्युं बालं छर्दिं च कोपयेत् ॥127॥ कासश्वासकरं वृद्धं त्रिदोषं व्याधिदूषितम् । क्लिन्नमुक्त्वलेशजननं कृशं वातप्रकोपणम् ॥128॥ [7]. Sushruta Samhita in Sutra Stahana tells those properties of various meats which were अरोचकं प्रतिश्यायं गुरु शुष्कं प्रकीर्तितम् ( Dried Meat is heavy and causes Anorexia and Coryza), बालं छर्दिं च कोपयेत् (meat of too young induces vomiting), कासश्वासकरं वृद्धं (meat of old produces cough and dyspnoea), विषव्याधिहतं मृत्युं (meat from killed with poison and disease causes death), त्रिदोषं

व्याधिदूषितम् (meat of diseased animal vitiates tridosha - three fundamental energies), क्लिन्नमुक्त्वलेशजननं कृशं वातप्रकोपणम् (moistened meat causes nausea) and कृशं वातप्रकोपणम् (meat of debilitated aggravates Vata).

**Causative Factor and Symptoms According to Ayurveda:** कदाचिदव्यापन्नेष्वपि ऋतुषु कृत्याभिशापरक्षः क्रोधा धर्मे रुपध्वस्यन्ते जनपदाः, विषौषधिपुष्पगन्धेन वा वायुनोपनीतेनाक्रम्यते यो देशस्तत्र दोषप्रकृत्यविशेषेण कासश्वासवमथु प्रतिश्याय शिरोरुग्ज्वरे रुपतप्यन्ते, ग्रहनक्षत्रचरितैर्वा, गृहदार शयना सनयान वाहन मणि रत्नोपकरणगर्हितलक्षणनिमित्तप्रादुर्भावैर्वा ॥19॥ [8].

Causative factors and symptoms of epidemic diseases like Covid-19 are. कदाचिदव्यापन्नेष्वपि ऋतुषु (inappropriate seasons), कृत्या (wrong deeds), अभिशाप (curse of animals and kinds), राक्षस (demons like viruses, bacteria), क्रोध (disrespectful for nature), अधर्म (Compromise in diet, regimen, personal and Social ethics), रुपध्वस्यन्ते जनपदा (breakdown living culture), वायुनोपनीते तेनाक्रम्यते (vitiated air like substance and it creates effect to), यो देशस्तत्र दोषप्रकृत्यविशेषेण (convert or mutant to the nation by nation) SARS-CoV-2 enters the host via the respiratory tract, airway, and alveolar epithelial cells, vascular endothelial cells and alveolar macrophages are among their first targets of viral entry. Subsequent replication due to the expression of ACE2, these cells are the initial targets for early infection. Suggesting that the lung is the primary tropism of SARS-CoV-2 observations emulating the disease course of Covid-19.



**FIGURE 1: The Mechanisms of COVID-19 Infections and Neurological Damage Caused by COVID-19**

According to the Ayurveda, the disease site is *Prāṇavaha srotas*, which include upper and lower respiratory tracts. *Āyurveda* mentions several interventions that can improve the innate immunological responses of respiratory epithelium and thus may prevent the virus transmission to the lungs. In maintaining respiratory health that plays a key role in host defense mechanism against viral infections the daily regimen measures gargling, *Uṣha pāna* (drinking water retained in the copper vessel), nasal installation, and consuming hot food and water [8,9,10]. Medicated hot water (*Sadaṅga pānīya*) may help in improving digestion and balancing of *vāta*, and *Kapha dosha* plays a major in the manifestation of respiratory conditions such as rhinitis, cough, and breathlessness [11]. Produce symptom complexes like कास (coughing), श्वास (breathlessness), वमथु (vomiting), प्रतिश्याय (running nose), शिरोरुग (headache), ज्वरै (fever) रुपतप्यन्ते and विविधरोगप्रादुर्भावो "मरको" वा भवेदिति (Various disease and epidemics manifested).

Clinical symptoms reported by Huang et al., from heavily affected places of COVID-19 suggest, 44% had myalgia (*aṅgamarda*) and fatigue (*tandrā*), 76% had a cough (*kāsa*), and 98% of patients had mild to moderate fever (*hwara*). Among those who developed pneumonia, 99% had fever (*hwara*), 70% had fatigue (*tandrā*), 59% dry cough (*vātikakāsa*), 40% anorexia (*aruci*), 35% had myalgia (*aṅgamarda*) 31% had dyspnea (*swāsa*) and 27% had sputum production (*kaphajakāsa*) [14]. COVID-19 can consider as a *Kapha-vātasamsargajhwara* (a febrile condition with a predominance of *Kapha* and *vāta*) by considering all these factors [12], with pitta association, in the initial stages. Overt *sannipātajhwara* (a febrile condition with a predominance of all *tridoṣaḥ* viz., *vāta pitta* and *Kapha*-a disease involving all *tridoṣaḥ* in its pathophysiology) acquires at the advanced stages which had described in Ayurveda as difficult to cure [13].

**COVID 19 - A Biological Weapon:** तथाशस्त्र प्रभवस्यापि जनपदोद्ध्वंसस्या धर्मएवहेतु भवति। येऽतिप्रवृद्धलोभक्रोधमोहमानास्ते दुर्बला नवमत्यात्मस्वजन परोपघाताय शस्त्रेण परस्परमभिक्रामन्ति, परान् वाऽभिक्रामन्ति, परैर्वाऽभिक्राम्यन्ते ॥21॥ [15]. A sinful act is at the root of the destruction of a country by armaments. Because of increased greed, anger, attachment, and ego, some people may start fighting among themselves with a view of killing their people or enemy looking down upon them as weak persons. They may get attacked by the enemy or may attack them.

**Spread of Covid-19:** तत उद्ध्वंसन्ते जनपदाः स्पृश्याभ्यवहार्यदोषात् ॥20॥ [16]. The उद्ध्वंस (spread) of (जनपदाः) epidemic diseases like Covid-19 is through स्पृश्या

(touch) and अभ्यवहार्यदोष (contamination of food and articles of daily uses by the virus.) According to Ayurveda classics, the term *Janapadodhwamsa* (epidemic diseases) has been used to describe epidemics/pandemics which manifest due to polluted *vāyu* (air), *bhūmi* (land), *Jala* (water), and *kāla* (vitiated seasons). These are considered to be consequences of 'prajñaparādha' (crime against wisdom) and 'adharmā' (Unrighteousness) [12]. The concept of *sūkshmakṛmi/bhūta* (organisms invisible to the naked eye) has been described by Ayurveda classics. To describe diseases caused by the term *bhūtabiṣanga* (exogenous cause) has been used [13].

The conditions explained during the epidemics/pandemics are similar to fever due to *bhūtabiṣanga*. The terms such as *samsargaja* and *upsargaja* have been used to indicate transmission from infected to the healthy through contact include exhaled air explained in the Ayurveda context of epidemic diseases. The modes of spread in *janapadodhwamsa* have been described as through *gātrasamsarsā* (touch), *niṣwāsa* (inhalation), *sahabhojana* (eating together), *sahāsana* (sleeping together) and *sahagandhamālyānulepana* (use of infected articles) [17]. Interestingly, Susruta has also described a condition that mimics all symptoms of an influenza-like illness such as the current COVID-19 viz., *hwara* (fever), *swāsa* (difficulty in breathing), *kāsa* (cough), *siroruk* (headache), *pratisyāya* (common cold), *gandhaajñana* (anosmia), *bhrama* (giddiness/postural instability), and *vamathu* (vomiting) [18].

**Prevention of COVID-19:** तत्र, स्थानपरित्यागशान्ति कर्मप्रायश्चित्त मङ्गलजपहोमोपहारेज्याञ्जलिनमस्कारतपोनियमदयादानदीक्षाभ्युपगमदेव तब्राह्मणगुरुपरैर्भवितव्यम्, एवं साधु भवति ॥20॥ [19]. Prevention of COVID 19 is शान्तिकर्म (work and maintain peace), स्थानपरित्याग (return to home/Isolation), मङ्गल (Being prosperous), प्रायश्चित्त (ready to pay for penalty/sacrifice), जप (keep mind Busy), होम (ritual habits like hand wash, etc.), उपहारे (Gift right scene), ईज्याञ्जलि (sacrifices), नमस्कारः- folding hands or avoiding physical touch to an infected individual, तपो (Austerity), दया (kind towards living beings), अभ्युपगम (acceptance), दान (contribution for managing the sick), नियम (make and follow rules of personal and social hygiene), दीक्षा (purpose of purifying world), and देवताब्राह्मणगुरुपरैर्भवितव्यम् (pray together to god).

**Treatment of COVID 19:** अपतर्पणमपि च त्रिविधं- लङ्घनं, लङ्घनपाचनं, दोषावसेचनं चेति॥43॥ तत्र लङ्घनमल्पबलदोषाणां [1], लङ्घनेन ह्यग्निमारुतवृद्ध्या वातातपपरीतमिवाल्पमुदकमल्पो दोषः प्रशोषमापद्यते; लङ्घनपाचने [2] तु मध्यबलदोषाणां, लङ्घनपाचनाभ्यां हि सूर्यसन्तापमारुताभ्यां पांशुभस्मावकिरणैरिव चानतिबहूदकं मध्यबलो

दोषः प्रशोषमापद्यते; बहुदोषाणां पुनर्दोषावसेचनमेव कार्यं, न ह्यभिन्ने केदारसेतौ पल्लवाप्रसेकोऽस्ति, तद्वदोषावसेचनम् ॥44॥ [20]. The treatment of COVID - 19 is divided into three type *dosavasecana* (elimination of dosas) *Langhana* (fasting), and *Langhanapachana* (fasting and administration of such medicaments as would help in bringing out the maturity of dosas). When the vitiation of dosas is mild, *langhana* (fasting) is suitable. By fasting, there is an aggravation of Agni (power of digestion) and Vata. A small quantity of water gets absorbed by wind and heat. Similarly, dosas get subsided by an aggravation of Agni and Vata due to fasting. *Langhanapachana* (fasting and administration of such medicaments as would help to bring out the maturity of dosas) is suitable when the vitiation of dosas is moderate.

Exposure to sunray, wind, and a sprinkling of ashes and dust-dry up water at moderate quantity, similarly *langhana* and *pachana* cure the dosas moderately vitiated. If the aggravation of dosas is strong, then it is necessary to eliminate them. Without breaking the boundary wall, it will not be possible to dry up a pond, similarly is the case when the dosas are exceedingly vitiated. Ayurveda, an alternative medicine rooted in India, has been suggested to be an effective therapeutic intervention against COVID-19 [21]. Ayurveda broadly comprises three types of therapeutic interventions, which act as its three pillars: *Rasayana*, local and systemic prophylaxis [22]. Local and systematic prophylaxis includes warm water gargling, nasal oil application, etc., and meditation, diet, and other lifestyle measures, respectively, to block physically viral infection and improve immunity. Active compounds in *Ashwagandha* and *Amritaballi* block the viral entry by destabilizing the ACE-2-S interactions shown in silico methods. In addition, there are remedies and regimens that previous studies have shown to induce both T cell-mediated and B cell-mediated immune response in other infections [23]. A case study reported that a COVID-19 patient was cured within a short duration of time depending entirely on Ayurvedic intervention and diet regulation [24]. However, such studies are one of its kind; the absence of mechanistic insights of these herbs, robust clinical trials, and Ayurveda-induced toxicity (hepatotoxicity) makes the use of Ayurvedic intervention alone debatable. To regulate the use of Ayurveda during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Ayush, Government of India has issued guidelines and protocols for Ayurveda practitioners in the fight against COVID-19 and self-care guidelines the general public [25].

**Hot Water in Fever and Covid-19:** Hot water was advised to the patient suffering from fever which is one of the major symptoms of COVID - 19. पाचनार्थं पानीयमुष्णं

प्रयच्छन्ति भिषज ॥40॥ [20]. Hot water helps the immaturely formed Dosas that are responsible for the disease to get matured. पानीयमुष्णं, तस्मादेतज्ज्वरितेभ्यः प्रयच्छन्ति भिषजो भूयिष्ठम्। तद्धि तेषां पीतं वातमनुलोमयति, अग्निं चोदर्यमुदीरयति, क्षिप्रं जरां गच्छति, श्लेष्माणं परिशोषयति ॥40॥ [19]. The पानीयमुष्णं (hot water) causes the वातमनुलोमयति (downward movement of Vata -flanges), अग्निं चोदर्यमुदीरयति (stimulation of Agni-digestive enzymes), easy digestion and श्लेष्माणं परिशोषयति (drying up the Kapha.)

## DISCUSSION

An epidemic disease like COVID 19 can easily be prevented and managed from an Ayurvedic perspective. Isolation, repetitive hand wash, avoiding physical contact with infected material or individuals, and helping others can prevent COVID – 19. Drinking regular hot water will prevent the disease produce complex symptoms by moving body Vata (air) down to the abdomen and thus drying the Kapha (mucous). Respiratory illness is the main cause of death in COVID-19, and dried Kapha will not gather in the lungs preventing chest congestion [23]. It is well-proven fact that any virus or bacteria needs food to survive. *Langhana* (fasting) is one of the practices which is to follow, Intermittent fasting (fasting of 16 h) in a day will eventually weaken the virus, and it will die over time [20].

*Langhanapachana* is another method practiced. Intermittent fasting with consumption of ginger boiled in water consumed hot bits of help in digestion of ama (undigested food), ama is a portion of good food for any virus or bacteria [19]. *Dosavasecana* (elimination of dosas), Consumption of *Triphala* powder with hot water will throw the dosas or viruses out of the body [26]. As narrated above, currently available literature in Ayurveda has a lucid theoretical framework that could be used as the foundation for the experimental studies to examine their effects for COVID-19 infection in the domains of reducing respiratory distress and improving mental health [31]. Recommendations and probable usefulness of Ayurveda in COVID-19 in the existent literature have been extrapolated from its effects on other similar conditions such as acute upper respiratory infections, obstructive lung disorders, and so on. Though some case studies and small pilot experimental studies have been published, experimental studies with robust methodology and validated intervention protocols on humans are lacking and warranted in the future. Scientific rigor should follow to ascertain the efficacy of such interventions [27, 28]. The excretion of toxic heavy metals by saliva may activate salivary enzymes, thus detoxifying the entire body, mouth rinsing with warm liquids and medicated oil may be helpful [29].

Nasal instillation of medicated oils, vegetable oils such as sesame oil may act as a protective layer for trapping virus particles and prevent direct binding of virus onto the surface of the nasal mucosa [30, 32]. The available literature points towards the potential role of Ayurveda in the prevention of COVID-19 infection, reduction in the intensity of the symptoms and infection in those afflicted, as well as improving pulmonary function, quality of life, and mental wellbeing in the rehabilitative phase post-COVID.

## CONCLUSION

It is still unclear whether symptoms of COVID-19 result from direct neural injury or due to some other reason, despite many neurologic complications associated with SARS-CoV-2 infection. Currently, it appears that most of the neurological symptoms of COVID-19 are secondary to systemic illness and nonspecific. However, to identify the possible post-COVID-19 neurologic syndromes post-infection surveillance will be necessary. Incidentally, understanding SARS-CoV-2 pathogenesis and execute effective therapeutic strategies to combat COVID-19 SARS and MERS outbreaks have provided important insights. However, drugs and vaccines are required to authenticate the efficacy and safety of proposed treatment options, rigorous research, and human clinical trials of repurposed. The development and distribution of an effective vaccine is a crucial preventive strategy to limit the COVID-19 pandemic. In the meantime, preventive measures imposed by governments and public corporations are proving too successful in containing the spread of SARS-CoV-2.

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