

Ayurvedakarmayoga – Germany- Part 2

Our experience of treating patients in foreign countries

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In the last article of October we have discussed the role of Naturopathic or Heilpraktiker physicians in Germany. There are many Institutions imparting the education of this complimentary medicine. Some part of Ayurveda is included in the syllabus of Naturopathy. All over Germany there are Associations of Heilpraktikers and they organize National and International seminars. We both participated in National Conference organized by –International Federation of Heilpraktikers at Nanweiler, Germany in Sept. 1982.

We also discussed about chronic constipation leading to Ulcerative colitis and cancer of large intestine. All over Europe and USA there is Association for helping these patients known as Colostomy Association. As per statistics, most of these patients end up with Colostomy surgery. In this surgery affected part of the intestine is removed and then stoma is prepared.

A **colostomy** is a surgical procedure in which an opening (stoma) is formed by drawing the healthy end of the large intestine or colon through an incision in the anterior abdominal wall and suturing it into place. The fecal matter comes out from this opening and all patients have to carry plastic bag attached to it. In Germany rehabilitation clinics for these patients are available. (www.ilco.de)

For these patients of ulcerative colitis, we gave advice of having vegetarian diet containing lots of fiber, and for reducing the inflammation of intestine anti-Pitta diet with demulcent herbs like asparagus (shatavari) and licorice. Indian asparagus or shatavari is *Asparagus racemosus* and we use roots of this herb. It has demulcent,

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anti-Pitta property and used for reducing inflammation of the stomach and intestines. While majority of countries all over the World, has the Asparagus which is mainly *Asparagus officinalis*. The stem of this herb is used for making soup and vegetables. They use this herb for ornamental purpose (for decoration of buildings etc.) This herb has more diuretic properties.

We also gave them simple (but very effective) advice of drinking water kept in copper vessel for more than 8 hours, early in the morning. If you develop this habit, in the long run it is useful not only for treating constipation, but is helpful for lowering high blood pressure, thyroid problems, reducing excess weight and has strong germicidal action. This water also has the property of destroying *e coli bacilli*. Southampton University in UK has done research on effects of water kept in copper vessel. They have found that *Coli 157* bacteria can live happily in stainless steel vessels for months together, while copper vessel at room temperature can kill them in just four hours. (www.southampton.ac.uk)

Leinsamen schale or flaxseed husk (*Linum usitatissimum*) also helps patients of constipation to have regular bowel movements. The dose is 1 to 3 gm. per day preferably at night. Important property of flaxseed husk is that it has Omega 3 and anti-cancer lignans. However it has hot potency and therefore it should be given with caution for patients having Pitta constitution. For Vata-Kapha it works best as it reduces cholesterol also. In many countries it is common ingredient of different types of food, mainly multigrain bread. But Pitta constitution people do not tolerate these products and some may even produce allergy symptoms like rashes and itching.

While psyllium (*Plantago psyllium*) is bulk forming laxative it promotes regular bowel movement without increasing flatulence. It works better in Vata constitution patients. Use of this husk is good for constipation and for patients of chronic Ulcerative colitis also. Majority of these patients are also benefited with couscous or semolina.

Many patients having symptoms of Crohn's disease, Sprue Syndrome came to us for consultation. They had symptoms of chronic diarrhea, weight loss, pain in abdomen, fever and gas in abdomen. In temperate climate countries we do find more number of these patients. These symptoms resembles symptom complex of

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Grahani disorder. In European patients also the basic cause was low digestive fire (*Agnimandya*). In India we use Parpati preparations. However in those days even single herbal tablets were not allowed in Germany, similarly none of herbo-mineral preparations and metallic oxides were allowed. This means that parpati preparations were also not allowed. Even today this problem is there and hence giving Ayurvedic treatment in Germany you have very limited resources at hand. Therefore we used different herbs for treating these patients like Slippery elm, Licorice (*yashtimadhu*), Wheat grass (*Triticum aestivum*), Potentilla tormentilla root and Bromelain - stems of pineapple.

Tree of *Boswelia serata*



Shallaki Guggulu gum



In Germany Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences University of Tübingen has done specific research on *Boswelia* (*Weihrauch*) or (*Shallaki guggulu*) and it has shown good results in the treatment of Crohn's disease. When given in dose of 900 mg. per day, it improves the function of digestion. Therefore we used *Boswelia* in patients of *Grahani* and found good results. (www.boswelliaserrata.net)

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Many patients of *Grahani* also complained of gas in abdomen. Although asafetida in small doses is good to relieve gases in abdomen, it is not easily available in European Countries. We therefore preferred to give those (*Lorbeerblater*) bay leaves, cumin, dill, (*fenchel*) fennel and rock salt for Vata and Pitta Constitution patients and ginger and garlic for Kapha constitution patients.

We advised light diet made up of rice and green gram, boiled fish, apples, almond and soya milk. Regular practice of Pavanamuktasana was also advised to them. According to Ayurveda Butter milk is the best food that is suitable for this disease. However in many European and USA people do not know how to prepare buttermilk by churning homemade curds or yogurt (Yogurt is food produced by bacterial fermentation of milk). People therefore use readymade buttermilk which is thick and does not invigorate Agni.

Homemade yogurt is the best Probiotic food, that gives us good bacteria that line our intestine and are responsible for absorption of food and it also supports our immune system. According Ayurveda it is *abhishyandi* (promotes secretion of fluids that increases Kapha). Excess quantity of curd consumption can cause Kapha diseases like Asthma (*shwasa*), Edema (*shotha*) and Skin disease (*visarpa*). It should not be taken at night, but if it is taken mixed with honey, sugar or amalaki or other food substances as per season, then it is healthy food substance.

In India and many other temperate climate countries we prepare yogurt from starting culture of small amount of buttermilk. This is live culture and contains *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* and *Streptococcus thermophilus*.

Readymade buttermilk is available in the market at some places however it is very thick and heavy for digestion. In homemade yogurt the live culture used is called as mesophilic culture and it works at room temperature. While the yogurt made in dairy factories they use thermophilic starter culture which works best when milk is heated or it is warm. Homemade yogurt is better than dairy made yogurt.

According to Ayurveda Boswelia or Shallaki has also good action on bones and joints (*Asthivaha srotas*), therefore we used this as single herb preparation or in combination with different anti-arthritic herbs for patients of arthritis. Combination of Shallaki, with (*haridra*) curcumin, glucosamine and chondritin sulphate are available in health food markets. Both are natural bi-products of shells of shellfish

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and cartilage of shark. These products are now available in India also and it is our experience that if used along with Shallaki, they give good support to *Asthi dhatu* and improve its function.

Because of cold climate, diet including meat and sausages (It is a food usually made from ground meat, often pork, beef or veal, along with salt, spices and breadcrumbs, with a skin around it), habit of drinking lot of beer as well as lack of exercise are the main reasons for high incidence of arthritis in Germany and other European Countries. This is the reason that first delegation from Sterimed GmbH came to Pune at our Tilak Ayurveda College in search of Narayan Oil in 1981. They were told in Germany that this is very beneficial oil for treating all arthritic problems. Mr. Subhash Joshi from Buehl Neusatz came with this group of German delegation to discuss how this oil can be imported from Ayurveda Rasashala to Germany.

Later on Prof. Holger Braun from Bremerhaven did lot of efforts for establishing collaboration between Pune University and Bremen University. In 1983 this collaboration was signed by Prof. Ram Takawale, Vice Chancellor Pune University and Rektor (VC) of University of Bremen.

In September 1984 we were invited to University of Bremen by the Department of social medicine with Prof. P.H. Kulkarni who was Dean of Ayurveda Faculty of Pune University. In the same year the book '**Fundamental Principles of Ayurveda**' written by Prof. Subhash Ranade and Dr. Bhaskar Sathaye was published in Germany. This is the first book in English language on Ayurveda which was published in West Germany.

In 1993, we were introduced to Prof. Norbert Lotz, psychologist from Germany. He is the Director of FIRST Institute (Frankfurter Institute for Rational Emotive and Cognitive Therapy Supervision and Training) on Sandweg 53, Frankfurt. (www.first-institut.de). This centre is affiliated to IAA. He practices RET therapy for those patients who are disturbed psychologically. Rational emotive behaviour therapy (REBT), previously called rational therapy and rational emotive therapy, is a comprehensive, active-directive, philosophically and empirically based psychotherapy which focuses on resolving emotional and behavioural problems and disturbances and enabling people to lead happier life. Albert Ellis, the father of

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cognitive-behavioural therapy and founder of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT), discovered that people's beliefs strongly affected their emotional functioning. In particular certain irrational beliefs made people feel depressed, anxious or angry and led to self-defeating behaviours. He regularly teaches this specific therapy in various seminars and has also written few books on this topic. He has visited India several times and has delivered lectures at Pune University and other Ayurveda Colleges for teaching this subject. We have strong friendship since last 25 years. We both have attended various International Seminars f. e. at Malaysia and Roermond with him and his wife Dr. Cristina Oxfort. He is music lover, good piano player and also excellent composer.

