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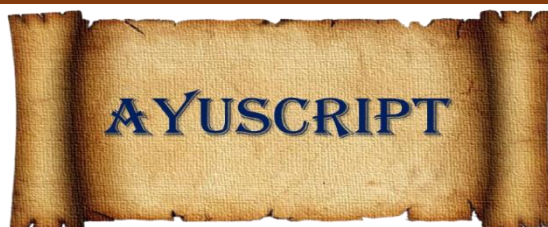
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यन्कल्पे द्वारकोसमकल्पयन् ॥१॥ विश्वकर्मो एमाहूयपुरीहाटकानि  
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 राः ॥१३॥ अथानि विविद्युलाकेषु सुंदरं नचदुष्पते ॥ सवाजिनप्रसूनास्त्रिपु  
 त्तुयस्यविद्युता ॥१४॥ अभापितीरमासायनमनस्कतयावसः ॥ सनाजि  
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 ताकरयनिज्ञोराशनमसिस्तनमसिस्तनोसुलः ॥१७॥ विश्वव्यापिन्नमसिस्त  
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 ताहिद्वेचासुदष्टीमादिवाकर ॥ अथैकयमानोसोद्वेदोदिवाकर ॥२०॥  
 अथानेभीरनपर्ययकालिनभयावदो ॥ अथैकयमानोसोद्वेदोदिवाकर ॥२१॥





## International Journal for Empirical Research in Ayurveda

### Ayurvedic Perspectives in Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases: A Scientific Review with Emphasis on Swasthavritta

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#### ABSTRACT:

**Background:** Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are the leading cause of mortality worldwide, accounting for nearly 70% of deaths. These diseases are strongly associated with modifiable lifestyle factors. Ayurveda, an ancient holistic system of medicine, emphasizes prevention and lifestyle regulation through Swasthavritta.

**Objective:** To critically analyze the role of Ayurveda in the prevention and management of NCDs with a focus on Swasthavritta principles.

**Methods:** A narrative review of literature was conducted using peer-reviewed journals, WHO reports, and Ayurvedic texts published between 2015–2025.

**Results :** Ayurveda provides a multidimensional approach including Ahara (diet), Vihara (lifestyle), Panchakarma (detoxification), and Rasayana (rejuvenation). Preventive concepts such as Dinacharya and Ritucharya align with modern preventive medicine. Evidence suggests improvements in quality of life and risk factor reduction. **Conclusion:** Ayurveda offers a sustainable and preventive model for NCD control. However, further high-quality clinical research is required for wider integration into global healthcare systems.

#### Key words:

Non-communicable diseases, Ayurveda, Swasthavritta, Prevention, Lifestyle disorders

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**Introduction:**

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including cardiovascular diseases, diabetes mellitus, cancer, and chronic respiratory disorders, represent a major and growing global health burden. These diseases are characterized by long duration, slow progression, and significant impact on morbidity, mortality, and quality of life. According to global health estimates, NCDs account for approximately 70% of all deaths worldwide, with a disproportionately higher burden in low- and middle-income countries. The rising prevalence of NCDs is strongly associated with modifiable behavioral and lifestyle-related risk factors such as unhealthy dietary patterns (high intake of processed foods, sugars, and saturated fats), physical inactivity, tobacco consumption, harmful use of alcohol, and chronic psychological stress. These factors contribute to metabolic disturbances, systemic inflammation, and progressive organ dysfunction, ultimately leading to chronic disease states. Globally, NCDs account for nearly 70–71% of total deaths, making them the leading cause of mortality, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Key modifiable risk factors include unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, tobacco use, and alcohol consumption.

From an Ayurvedic perspective, these conditions can be understood as disorders arising from sustained imbalance in fundamental physiological principles. Ayurveda conceptualizes health (Swasthya) as a state of equilibrium of Dosha (Vata, Pitta, Kapha), Dhatu (body tissues), and Agni (metabolic fire), along with proper functioning of Malas and a balanced state of mind and senses. Any deviation from this equilibrium, often triggered by improper dietary habits (Ahara) and faulty lifestyle practices (Vihara), leads to the vitiation of Doshas and impairment of Agni (Agnimandya). This results in the formation of Ama (toxic metabolic by-products), which plays a

central role in the pathogenesis of many chronic and metabolic disorders, closely resembling the modern understanding of inflammation and metabolic syndrome.

Furthermore, Ayurveda identifies Pragyaparadha (intellectual error or failure of judgment) as a key etiological factor, wherein individuals knowingly or unknowingly adopt unhealthy behaviors that disturb physiological balance. In this context, the increasing burden of NCDs can be viewed as a consequence of sustained Pragyaparadha in the form of poor lifestyle choices.

The **concept of Swasthavritta (code of healthy living) serves** as a cornerstone for disease prevention in Ayurveda. It encompasses comprehensive guidelines for maintaining physical, mental, and social well-being through structured daily regimen (Dinacharya), seasonal regimen (Ritucharya), proper dietary practices (Ahara Vidhi), and ethical conduct (Sadvritta). These principles aim not only at preventing disease onset but also at promoting longevity, enhancing immunity, and ensuring optimal functioning of bodily systems. Thus, Ayurveda offers a holistic and preventive framework that aligns closely with modern public health strategies for controlling NCDs by targeting their root causes rather than merely managing symptoms.

Ayurveda, the traditional system of medicine, emphasizes a holistic and preventive approach, focusing on maintaining balance between body, mind, and environment. It provides both preventive and therapeutic strategies for lifestyle disorders, which closely resemble NCDs.

**Methodology:**

This article is based on a narrative review of published literature, including:

- WHO reports and global health data
- Peer-reviewed journals (PubMed, Scopus indexed)
- Ayurvedic classical concepts and contemporary reviews
- Studies related to NCDs and Ayurveda

- Reviews, clinical studies, and policy documents

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including cardiovascular diseases, diabetes mellitus, cancer, and chronic respiratory disorders, have emerged as the most significant global health challenge of the 21st century. Unlike communicable diseases, which are caused by infectious agents and can spread from person to person, NCDs are typically of long duration, slow progression, and multifactorial origin. They exert a profound impact not only on individual health but also on healthcare systems, economies, and societal productivity. According to global health estimates, NCDs are responsible for nearly 70% of all deaths worldwide, with a disproportionately higher burden observed in low- and middle-income countries. The epidemiological transition, characterized by a shift from infectious diseases to chronic lifestyle-related disorders, has further intensified this burden, especially in rapidly urbanizing regions.

The increasing prevalence of NCDs is strongly associated with modifiable behavioral and lifestyle-related risk factors. Among these, unhealthy dietary habits play a central role, including excessive consumption of calorie-dense, nutrient-poor processed foods rich in sugars, trans fats, and refined carbohydrates. Such dietary patterns contribute to obesity, dyslipidemia, and insulin resistance, which are key precursors of metabolic disorders. Physical inactivity is another major determinant, often resulting from sedentary occupations, increased screen time, and reduced engagement in physical exercise. Additionally, tobacco use and harmful consumption of alcohol significantly elevate the risk of cardiovascular diseases, cancers, and respiratory conditions. Chronic psychological stress, which is increasingly prevalent in modern lifestyles, further exacerbates these risk factors by disrupting hormonal balance and promoting systemic inflammation.

Together, these behavioral determinants initiate a cascade of metabolic disturbances, oxidative stress, and inflammatory processes, ultimately leading to the development and progression of chronic diseases.

From a biomedical standpoint, the pathophysiology of NCDs involves complex interactions between genetic predisposition and environmental influences. Chronic inflammation, endothelial dysfunction, impaired glucose metabolism, and altered lipid profiles are common underlying mechanisms observed across various NCDs. These processes often remain subclinical for years before manifesting as overt disease, highlighting the importance of early intervention and preventive strategies. However, conventional medical approaches are largely focused on symptomatic management and disease control rather than addressing the root causes. This limitation underscores the need for holistic and preventive healthcare models that can effectively target the underlying determinants of disease.

In this context, Ayurveda, the ancient system of medicine originating in India, offers a comprehensive and integrative perspective on health and disease. Ayurveda conceptualizes health (Swasthya) not merely as the absence of disease but as a state of dynamic equilibrium involving the harmonious functioning of body, mind, and spirit. This equilibrium is maintained through the balance of fundamental physiological entities known as Doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha), structural components called Dhatus (body tissues), and metabolic processes governed by Agni (digestive and metabolic fire). Additionally, proper elimination of waste products (Malas) and a balanced state of consciousness are considered essential for maintaining health.

According to Ayurvedic principles, disease arises when this equilibrium is disturbed, primarily due to improper dietary habits (Ahara) and faulty lifestyle

practices (Vihara). The concept of Agni holds particular significance, as it governs digestion, absorption, assimilation, and metabolism at both macro and cellular levels. When Agni becomes impaired (Agnimandya), it leads to incomplete digestion and the formation of Ama, a toxic metabolic by-product that accumulates within the body. Ama is considered a key pathogenic factor in Ayurveda and is analogous to the concept of metabolic toxins and inflammatory mediators in modern medicine. The accumulation of Ama obstructs bodily channels (Srotas), disrupts tissue function, and contributes to the development of chronic diseases.

Furthermore, Ayurveda identifies Pragyaparadha, or intellectual error, as a fundamental cause of disease. Pragyaparadha refers to the failure of an individual to make appropriate decisions regarding diet, behavior, and lifestyle, despite having the knowledge of what is beneficial or harmful. This concept is particularly relevant in the context of NCDs, where individuals often engage in unhealthy behaviors such as overeating, smoking, and physical inactivity, even when aware of their adverse consequences. Thus, the modern epidemic of NCDs can be viewed through an Ayurvedic lens as a manifestation of sustained Pragyaparadha, leading to progressive imbalance and disease.

In addition to Pragyaparadha, other etiological factors described in Ayurveda, such as Asatmya Ahara (incompatible diet), Viruddha Ahara (incompatible food combinations), and Avyavahita Ahara (irregular eating habits), further contribute to metabolic disturbances. These factors disrupt the normal functioning of Agni and Doshas, resulting in systemic imbalance. For instance, excessive intake of heavy, oily, and sweet foods can aggravate Kapha Dosha, leading to obesity and metabolic syndrome, while irregular eating patterns may disturb Vata Dosha, contributing to stress-related disorders.

The Ayurvedic framework provides a detailed understanding of disease

progression through the concept of Shatkriyakala, which outlines six stages of pathogenesis—from initial accumulation of Doshas to full manifestation of disease. This staged approach emphasizes the importance of early detection and intervention, allowing for preventive measures to be implemented before the disease becomes clinically evident. Such a proactive approach aligns closely with modern preventive medicine, which advocates for risk factor modification and early diagnosis.

Central to Ayurvedic preventive healthcare is the concept of Swasthavritta, which can be translated as the “code of healthy living.” Swasthavritta encompasses a set of guidelines designed to maintain physical, mental, and social well-being through disciplined lifestyle practices. It includes Dinacharya (daily regimen), Ritucharya (seasonal regimen), Sadvritta (ethical conduct), and Achara Rasayana (behavioral rejuvenation). These principles collectively aim to promote harmony between the individual and the environment, thereby preventing disease and enhancing longevity.

Dinacharya provides a structured daily routine that aligns with the body's natural circadian rhythms. It includes practices such as waking up early (Brahma Muhurta), maintaining personal hygiene, performing physical exercise (Vyayama), practicing meditation, and consuming balanced meals at appropriate times. These practices help regulate biological functions, improve metabolism, and reduce stress, thereby lowering the risk of NCDs. Ritucharya, on the other hand, emphasizes the need to adapt dietary and lifestyle practices according to seasonal variations. By aligning with environmental changes, Ritucharya helps maintain Dosha balance and prevents seasonal aggravation of diseases.

Sadvritta focuses on ethical and moral conduct, including truthfulness, non-violence, emotional control, and social harmony. These behavioral guidelines contribute to mental well-being and reduce

psychological stress, which is a major risk factor for NCDs. Achara Rasayana further elaborates on the importance of positive behavior, such as compassion, patience, and self-discipline, in promoting longevity and preventing disease. Together, these components of Swasthavritta provide a holistic approach to health that addresses both physical and psychological aspects.

In addition to preventive measures, Ayurveda offers therapeutic interventions for managing NCDs. These include dietary modifications (Ahara Chikitsa), lifestyle corrections (Vihara Chikitsa), detoxification procedures (Panchakarma), and rejuvenation therapies (Rasayana). Panchakarma, a set of bio-purification techniques, aims to eliminate accumulated toxins (Ama) and restore Dosha balance. Rasayana therapies enhance immunity, improve tissue strength, and delay aging, thereby playing a crucial role in both prevention and management of chronic diseases. Herbal medicines used in Ayurveda possess antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and immunomodulatory properties, which are beneficial in managing NCDs.

Recent scientific studies have begun to explore the efficacy of Ayurvedic interventions in the management of NCDs. Evidence suggests that lifestyle modifications based on Ayurvedic principles can significantly improve metabolic parameters, reduce risk factors, and enhance quality of life. Integrative approaches combining Ayurveda with modern medicine have also shown promising results in managing conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and stress-related disorders. However, despite these encouraging findings, there remains a need for more rigorous scientific research, including randomized controlled trials and long-term studies, to validate and standardize Ayurvedic interventions.

### Conclusion:

Non-communicable diseases represent a complex and multifactorial health challenge driven largely by modifiable lifestyle factors. Ayurveda

offers a comprehensive and holistic framework for addressing these diseases by focusing on their root causes rather than merely treating symptoms. The principles of Swasthavritta provide practical and effective strategies for disease prevention, emphasizing the importance of balanced diet, disciplined lifestyle, and mental well-being. By integrating Ayurvedic wisdom with modern scientific approaches, it is possible to develop sustainable and effective solutions for reducing the global burden of NCDs and promoting overall health and well-being.

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