

SHORT COMMUNICATION

INTEGRATIVE DENTISTRY –WHAT, WHEN AND HOW

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ABSTRACT: The Indian medical system and ministry of AYUSH recognizes Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani Siddha and Homeopathy (AYUSH) as CAM (Complementary and alternative medicine) and also promote organizations/institutions that practice AYUSH health services and research. Various oral pathologies have been explained in Ayurveda with treatment. Yoga is a mind-body medicine, considered to be originated from India. Similarly other forms of CAM like siddha, Unani, homeopathy, naturopathy, acupressure/acupuncture, Reiki, pranic healing etc., have preventive and curative effect for oral diseases and can be used as an adjunct in general dentistry. This is a short summary of complementary and alternative medicines which can be integrated with dentistry.

Keywords: Dentistry, AYUSH, Integration, Complimentary medicine, Alternative medicine

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Introduction

Integrative dentistry is a dental treatment approach that combines the conventional dental treatment with the CAM (complementary and alternative medicine). CAM is defined as the form of medicine which can either complement or can be given as alternative medicine to conventional allopathic medicine¹. CAM is commonly the traditional or native medicine. WHO(2002) defines traditional medicine as including diverse health practices, approaches, knowledge and beliefs, incorporating plant, animal and /or mineral based medicines ,spiritual therapies, manual techniques and exercises applied singularly or in combination to maintain wellbeing, as well as to treat ,diagnose and prevent illness².

The National center for complementary and alternative medicine (NCCAM), considers CAM into 5 major categories³:

- ❖ Whole medical system
- ❖ Mind – body technique
- ❖ Biologically based practices
- ❖ Manipulative and body – based therapies
- ❖ Energy therapies

Since, time immemorial before the invention of modern medicine, ancient people practiced traditional medicine customized to their geographical territory and life style.

The Indian medical system and ministry of AYUSH recognizes Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani Siddha and Homeopathy (AYUSH) as CAM and also promote organizations/institutions that practice AYUSH health services and research⁴. CAM has preventive as well as curative effect in oral diseases.

Ayurveda the vedic medical system, explains the vital entities located above the Jatru(clavicle) that included mouth, throat, ears, eyes and nose. Dentistry is known as Danta Shastra in Ayurveda. Diseases of teeth (Danta) and teeth supporting structure (Dantamoolaagata) roga are explained in Mukhagata Rogas.

Various oral pathologies have been explained in ayurvedha with treatment. Dental caries (krimidanta), teeth sensitivity (dantaharsha), dental fracture (danta bheda), periodontitis (dantamoolagata), plaque (danta sharkara), calculus (kapalika), oral cancer. numerous preventive and curative daily practices like dinacharya which includes dantadhavana, gandusha, kavalagraha, nasya, dhoomapana, tambula sevana etc. the ayurvedhic concept of treatment is based on the dhosa type (vada, pitta, kapha) of the body⁵.

Yoga is a mind-body medicine, considered to be originated from India. Yoga is a Sanskrit word which means yoke or join together with liberation as the ultimate destination. Pathanjali is the father of Indian yogic science. This 5000 year old CAM has eight disciplines. Yama (social behavior), Niyama (inner discipline), Asana (yoga postures), Pranayama (control of breath), Prathyahara (control over human sense), Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation) and finally Samadhi (bliss)⁶.

Though various forms of yogic practice prevail, the commonly practiced forms of yoga are asanas (physical exercise), pranayama (breathing exercise) and dhyana (meditation). Yoga cures various diseases by controlling hypo-thalamo pituitary adrenal axis, regulating symptho- parasympathetic axis and vagus nerve stimulation⁷.

It is a promising non-drug medicine which is a cost effective aid in the physical, psychological and social well-being of an individual. Yoga has a curative effect on both the modifiable and non-modifiable risk factors of periodontal disease⁸. Along with weight reduction yoga has also been a weapon in declining inflammation with the scientific evidence of decreased levels of IL-6, IL-8, C - reactive protein (CRP). Various pranayama are recommended exclusively for oral health like sheetali pranayama, sheetkari pranayama etc., sudharshan kriya pranayama is a form of yoga which has improved the periodontal health by positively influencing the salivary expression and levels of anti-inflammatory and pro-inflammatory markers like HBD-2, PPAR-gamma, NF Kappa – B. yoga also enhances the qualitative and quantitative values of saliva that results in a better oral hygiene and periodontal health status⁹ (Figure 1).

Yogic practice is considered superior to traditional exercise, as results obtained after high-intensity workouts are quantitative at the muscular level when compared with the qualitative output of yoga practice that leads to the energization of the chakras (body energy centers).

Similarly other forms of CAM like siddha, Unani, homeopathy, naturopathy, acupressure/acupuncture Reiki, pranic healing etc., have preventive and curative effect for oral diseases and can be used as an adjunct in general dentistry. But to implement this integrated treatment modality in a general practice by a dentist, certain ethics and norms should be followed by statutory regulatory councils and ministry of health. Ethics in integration, medico-legal aspects of integration, statutory aspects of integration, research in integration are the various aspects that have to be taken into

consideration. The integrated dental team should include qualified experts from traditional medicine with an insight in dentistry.

Nevertheless, this upcoming field of dentistry that integrates AYUSH needs long time evidence based interventional research in large sample size to arrive to a customized tailor-made dental treatment approach.

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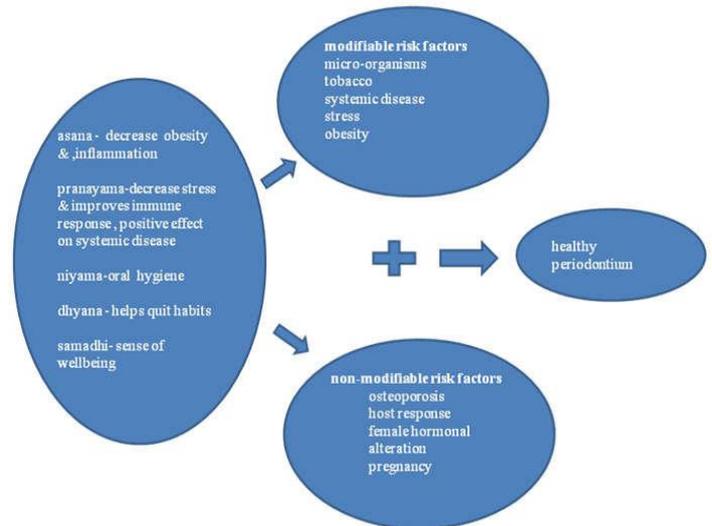


Figure 1:- Shows inter-relationship of yoga and Complimentary and Alternative Medicine with general dentistry