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Ayurvedic Insights into Hypertension: Harmonizing Ancient Wisdom with Modern Understanding

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Abstract

Ayurveda, with its holistic approach, integrates the body, mind, and spirit, aligning with modern science. Hypertension, a major cardiovascular risk factor, often develops without symptoms and is diagnosed by elevated blood pressure. In Ayurveda, hypertension, or "*Raktagata Vata*" (vitiated vata in rakta), involves a disturbance of the *Vata dosha* (doṣa responsible for movement and cognition) in the blood, leading to symptoms like *Bramah* (dizziness), *Sirasah atiruk* (headache), and *dravah* (palpitations). In Ayurveda, systemic hypertension is viewed as the involvement of imbalanced Doshas, primarily *Vata* and *Pitta* (doṣa responsible for regulating body temperature and metabolic activities), disrupting their normal flow within the body's channels (*Srotas*). The concept of *Avarana* (occlusion of normal functioning), which refers to the obstruction of Dosha functioning in its normal state, provides a clearer understanding of hypertension. According to the WHO, 1.28 billion adults globally have hypertension, with many unaware of their condition. Ayurveda views hypertension not as a disease but as a pathophysiological condition involving blood vessels and *Rakta* (blood). Blood pressure regulation in Ayurveda involves the *Tridoshas* theory (three regulatory functional factors of the body), with *Samana Vata* (subtypes of vāta (vāyu) that is seated in proximity to agni), *Vyana Vata* (a subtype of vāta, that is seated in hṛdaya), and *Avalambaka Kapha* (subtypes of kapha situated in the chest region) playing crucial roles. Neural, renal, hormonal, and local vascular mechanisms contribute to blood pressure control. Ayurveda identifies risk factors such as diet, stress, inactivity, and genetics, emphasizing lifestyle modifications, herbal remedies, and personalized treatments to manage blood pressure and maintain overall health.

Keywords: cardiovascular risk factor, lifestyle modifications, Blood pressure.

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conditions featuring these symptoms include *Amashayagata Vata*²¹ *Rakta Dushti*, *Pradoshaja Vikar*²², and *Pittaja Hridroga*²³. When *Vyana Vata* (a subtype of vāta, that is seated in hṛdaya), which is responsible for sweat and blood ejection, becomes vitiated, it can cause diseases affecting the entire body, which may be related to hypertension since excessive perspiration is a known symptom. Acharya Sushruta²⁴ also noted that the liver and spleen are the organs responsible for blood formation and transportation. Any disorder in these organs can disrupt the normal function of the circulatory system.

Conclusion

After thorough study of both Ayurveda and modern medicine, it is concluded that treating diseases according to their *Samprapti* (pathogenesis) in Ayurveda, known as *Samprapti Vighatana* (breaking the pathogenesis), should be adopted. Hypertension considered an abnormality of *Rakta Dhatu* (blood tissue) (*Shonita Dushti*)²⁵, involves treating the primary obstruction (*Avarana*) first, followed by the affected Dosha. Effective treatment should target the root cause of hypertension, ensuring reliable results. Advice to reduce body weight, stop smoking, and increase physical exercise are the only lifestyle recommendations should be routinely followed.

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