

SIX STAGES OF DISEASE

A person of age 60 visits a doctor explaining about difficulty in coordination of his muscles and weakness in the body. Doctor examines him and he undergoes many tests which shows no particular anomalies. Doctor sends him back with some vitamin supplements and some exercise regimens. But in two years the patient develops Parkinson's disease.

Unfortunately, this is a common experience in conventional medicine — that the disease cannot be diagnosed until the patient complains of specific symptoms or lab tests demonstrate specific findings. And by the time the findings are manifest, it's too late to prevent the disease.

"The great advantage of the Ayurvedic approach is to identify imbalances before they actually manifest as a disease". This can allow the ayurvedic practitioner to take action and reverse the imbalance at an earlier stage before the disease is manifested.

Ayurveda explains about the six stages of development of disease. In the first two of the six stages, there are no symptoms. In the third stage there may be vague, non-specific symptoms, such as fatigue and general malaise, which become more pronounced in the fourth stage. Only in the fifth stage do symptoms manifest that are specific to a particular disease.



Example to illustrate Kapha Dosha imbalance leading to Cancer.

Stage 1 (Accumulation):

Weak digestive power and excess of dosha is responsible for such a condition. Here toxins (ama) produced by improper digestion collects in the gastro-intestinal (GI) tract. Toxins resulting from a kapha imbalance accumulates in the stomach, those associated with a pitta imbalance collects in the small intestine, and that related to vata malfunction amasses in the colon. Due to the presence of one of these toxins, mild and ill-defined symptoms may show.

Stage 2 (Aggravation):

The accumulated, stagnant doshas are now 'excited' by factors as food, lifestyle and seasons. The toxins (ama) in such degree get provoked in the site of production in the GI tract. Thus they get aggravated.

Stage 3 (Spreading):

In this stage, the toxins accumulated in the GI tract start overflowing. Generally, up to this stage the damage is entirely reversible and restoration of Vata, Pitta, Kapha balance can be achieved with proper measures. Or there may be spontaneous balance influenced by seasonal changes. Thus there is accumulation of pitta in rainy season, aggravation in fall and spreading in early winter. Based on degree of excitation, it might even passed the stages of aggravation or spreading.

Stage 4 (Lodging/Agumentation):

Overflowing toxins migrate, entering and taking refuge in localized, weak or defective parts of the body thereby leading to malfunction and structural damage. It is from here that specific degenerating disease and susceptibilities to serious infections begin. Weak points of the body is selected by the spreading vitiated doshas.

Stage 5 (Manifestation):

Here the disease manifests with evident symptoms. Manifested symptoms being used by modern medicine for classification & diagnosis of disease. Only here we can see the specific symptoms to define the disease.

Stage 6 (Complications):

The disease having taken years or even decades to reach this final stage, becomes chronic. It offers detailed understanding of the group of symptoms thereby making clear nature of disease. Might act as predisposing factors for the spread of other diseases. The complication stage is the final stage of disease and becomes difficult to have a complete cure from this stage.

Conclusion

Till the 4th stage, the disease is not yet defined. It is still in the stage of doshas. So reversing a disease from this condition is possible. But in the stages 5&6 reversing the problems is difficult and elaborate treatments are required. Ayurveda helps to understand the doshic symptoms and analyse prognosis of the disease and reverse it in an earlier stage.