Ayurveda is the science of life which provides healthy long life as it deals with prevention and promotion of health as well as the treatment of diseases. All the ancient Ayurvedic classics discussed the Tridosha-theory as a base. The equilibrium of tridosha causes health where as disequilibrium of the same leads to different types of diseases depending upon specific pathogenesis. Effect is observed according to the cause as per the well known theory of Karya-karan-vad of Ayurveda. Illness is because of different causes and its effect is seen in the form of linga (symptoms of the disease) for which aushadhi is essential to treat that’s why ancient seers and sages of Ayurveda propounded the “Trisutra-Ayurveda” namely Hetu, Linga and Aushadha. Hetu is the synonym of nidan in the context of diagnosis of the diseases. It is the first and foremost factor which initiates the pathology and crucial in diagnosis as well as treatment also. Keeping this significance in the mind Acharya Charak has stated that a physician should first diagnose the disease correctly and Chakrapanidatta, the commentator of Charak-Samhita says that successful treatment depends upon the proper knowledge of hetu and linga of the disease. The term ‘nidan’ in the Ayurveda has been used in two sense mainly i.e. vyadhi-janak nidan and vyadhibodh nidan. Knowledge of nidan in both the sense is essential for a good physician to get success. Diagnosis is never complete without the elucidation of all the factors related with the disease. This article is mainly concerned with vyadhijanak-nidan.

**Keywords:** Ayurveda, Nidan-Panchaka, Nidan, Karan, Hetu, Chikitsa.

**ABSTRACT**

All the Ayurvedic classics have discussed about Nidan very vividly. It is because of significance of the concept of nidan. Nidan means aetiological factors of disease. It is of two types according to Cakrapanidatta i.e vyadhi-janaka nidan and vyadhi-bhodhaka nidan. Vyadhi-janaka nidan means causes of disease or diseases (etiological factors). Vyadhi-bhodhaka nidan means which is the mean of diagnosis which includes nidan, purvarupa, rupa, upasaya and samprapti (nidan - panchaka). Again Acharya Cakrapanidatta has again discussed the nidan of two types for all the diseases i.e. Sadharana and Asadharana karan in his commentary of Charak-Samhita. Nidan, dosha and dushya play a significant role in the manifestation of each and every disease. In this context, nidan means external causative factors which includes faulty diet, life style and accidental causes, dosha are Vata, Pitta and Kapha considered as the samavayi karan of endogenous diseases and dushya means Rasa etc. dhatus and malas which are vitiated by doshas. Diagnosis is never complete without the elucidation of all the factors related with the disease. This article is mainly concerned with vyadhi-janak-nidan.

**NIRUKTI AND DEFINITION OF NIDAN**

Nidan word has been defined by Amar Singh in Amarakosha as -

दिन दिनां लाविकारणम् | निदानसमिट्व नितरं धीयते अधारणतया जम्यते |

Means the entity by which something is produced specifically is known as nidan. He says that nidan can be defined as adikarana which means “Mukhya karana” i.e. main cause. It can be used in medical science in the sense of initiating causes of disease or diseases. Acharya Charaka says that “तत्र निदानल कारणमिकलमथे” means nidan word has been used in the sense of causative factors of the disease. Acharya Vijayarakhita has mentioned in Madhukosha Tika that the factor which causes disease are known as nidan. Nidan is the process by which disease is diagnosed. Again Acharya Vijayarakhita has defined that which gives complete knowledge about Vyadhi, is called nidan. The word nidan is used in two different contexts i.e. etiological factors and diagnosis of diseases of the diseased.
one. Further Acharya Vridhha Vaghbha has mentioned in Ashtanga-Samgraha that nidan means one which aggravates vatadi doshas. It is due to intake of unwholesome diet and improper activities. Regarding the definition of nidan, Acharya Gananatha Sen in his book Siddhanta- nidan put forward his views that external etiological factors are called nidan. These factors causes either disturbance in equilibrium of dhatus or directly produce various disorders. In this way nidan is of two types. The first one is the cause of endogenous diseases and second is the cause of exogenous diseases. Further explained that the term ‘Nimitta’ is used to differentiate from Samavayi and Asamavayi Karana of the diseases.

SYNONYMS OF NIDAN
Acharya Charaka has described hetu, nimitta, Ayatana, karta, karana, pratayaya and samuththana as synonyms of nidan in the Nidanstan7. Acharya Vridha Vaghbha has mentioned two more synonyms of the term nidan i.e. mulam and yon. Brief information of the synonyms is being given here-

Hetu- Hetu means the cause

Nimitta- Apart from the cause, Nimitta gives the meaning of Sakuna also. (Vidyotini Hindi commentary of Charak- Samhita)

Ayatana- The Ayatana word stands for karana. It means the site or region also which gives shelter. The Ayatana word is used in sutras thana in the context of the cause of diseases. Again in 29th chapter of Sutrasthan of Charaka Samhita, the term Ayatana is used in the context of ten pranayatan.

Karta- Means one who is doer.

Karana- Means the primary cause.

Pratayaya- Pratayaya is used in the sense of faith, suffix also. In the context of nidan, it is the cause of disease.

Samuththana- Means by which something gets origin, it is used in the sense of ‘Unnati’ also which means progress or development.

Nidan – According to Amarakosha, it is the initial cause of disease gives the meaning as nishechaya. The nidan is the cause and it is first among nidan-panchaka.

CLASSIFICATION OF NIDAN
According to Charaka Samhita, there are three types of causes of diseases in general i.e. excessive utilisation, non-utilisation and wrong utilisation of objects, acts and time. These are Asatmyendriyartha samyoga, Prajnaparadha and Kala. Madhavakara has also discussed the similar causes. The objects of senses are five and further subdivided each into three, so totally 15 varieties of unwholesome conjunction of sense organ is observed and it is the root cause for the manifestation of diseases.

Asatmyendriyartha samyoga means unwholesome contact of Chakshurindriya, Shravanendriya, Ghranendriya, Rasanendriya, and Sparshanendriya with their objects.

Prajnaparadha means wrong utilisation of speech, body and mind. Some says even sinful acts also responsible for intellectual blashemy.

Kala is known as transforming or consequence. Kala is the unit of time comprises of hemanta ritu, grishma ritu and varsha ritu characterised by cold, hot and rain respectively. Unhealthy season is considered one of the causes of the diseases.

Cakrapanidatta has discussed nidan of two types for all the diseases in the living beings- Sadharana and Asadharana karana. Among these Asadharana karana include Ahara etc. which is responsible for vitiation of vatadi doshas in individual and sadharana karana means which are shared commonly by all the persons of a locality viz. Vata, Jala, Desha and Kala described in Janpadoddhavansa-Viman chapter of Charak-Samhita.

As per Madhukos- tika of Madhav-Nidan, nidan is classified in to four types- Samnikrishta hetu, Viprakrishta hetu, Vyabhishti hetu and Pradhanika hetu.

SANNIKRISHTA HETU-
The factors which causes the prakopa of the doshas and do not expect the sanchaya etc. stages. For examples-Diurnal variation of doshas takes place routinely i.e. during night, day and during digestion, for this sanchaya of doshas is not essential, it manifests naturally. It is the proximal/ immediate cause of the disease. For example; intake of ruksa etc. Diet in Jwara roga is samnikrishta karan where as Rudra-kopa can be taken as viprakrishta karan.

VIPRAKIRISTA HETU
It is the distant cause for the production of disease. For examples- Sanchaya of kapha doshas in Hemanta ritu produces disease in Vasanta ritu (spring season). It is also accepted that Javara manifest due to warth of God Rudra is also the viprakrishta karan.

VYABHICHARI HETU-
The cause which is weak and unable to produce the diseases, but act as a carrier. When favourable situation arises for the manifestation of diseases, due to certain factors, even unwholesome food does not produce diseases immediately.

PRADHANIKA HETU-
It is the powerful cause which produce diseases instantaneously like poison, Accumulation of doshas is not necessary, sudden manifestation of the symptoms are seen. Again as per Madhukos- tika of Madhav-Nidan, nidan has been classified in to three types - Dosha hetu, Vyadhi hetu and Ubhaya hetu.

DOSHA HETU
Normal accumulation, aggravation and pacification of doshas take place in respective seasons due to madhura etc. rasas is called dosha hetu. Means factors responsible for the aggravation of doshas comes under the heading ‘dosha-hetu’ in the context of nidan of diseases.

VYADHI HETU
Vyadhi hetu are those which are responsible for the development of specific disease by specific etiology. For example: regular consumption of ‘mrit’ (clay) manifest mritbhakshanajanya pandu roga.

UBHAYA HETU-
Specific factors which aggravate vata and rakta and simultaneously manifest vatarakta- vyadhi. Here causative factors aggravate dosha & simultaneously manifest diseases.

Again as per Madhukos- tika of Madhav-Nidan, nidan has been classified into two types - Utpadaka hetu and Vyanjaka hetu.

UTPADAKA HETU-
Utpadaka-hetu are those which favour accumulation of respective dosha in respective season due to seasonal effect.
For example: in hemant ritu due to madhura rasa, accumulation of kapha is observed.

**VYANJAKA HETU-**

Vyanjaka hetu are those which stimulate the development of diseases. For examples: accumulated kapha in hemant ritu produces disorders of kapha in vasanta ritu due to effect of sun. Here effect of sun is the Vyanjaka hetu.

**Again as per Madhukosh- tika of Madhav-Nidan, nidan has been classified into two types -** Bahya hetu and Abhyantara hetu.

**BAHYA HETU**

Various unwholesome diets, activities, ill effects of season and such other external factors producing disease, are called bahya hetu.

**ABHYANTAR HETU-**

Abhyantara hetu means internal factors of the disease such as the dosha and dushya involved.

**Again as per Madhukosh- tika of Madhav-Nidan, nidan has been classified In to two types -** Prakrita hetu and Vaikrita hetu.

**PRAKRITA HETU -**

Prakrita hetu are those which causes aggravation of dosha/doshas naturally. For example: Kapha prakopa in vasanta ritu, Pitta prakopa in Sarad ritu, Vata prakopa in varsha ritu is due to the seasonal effect.

**VAIKRITA HETU-**

Vaikrita hetu are those which cause dosha prakopa or vyadhi irrespective of seasonal effects. For example: in vasanta ritu – pitta-vayu prakopa, in varsha ritu – kapha-pitta prakopa, in Sarad ritu – kapha-vata prakopa.

**Again as per Madhukosh- tika of Madhav-Nidan, nidan has been classified into two types -** Anubhandhya hetu and Anubandha hetu.

**ANUBANDHYA HETU -** It is the prime cause.

**ANUBANDHA HETU -** It is the secondary cause.

**Acharya Gananatha Sen has classified nidan into two types i.e. Samanya-nidan and Vishista-nidan.**

**SAMANYA- NIDAN -**

Unwholesome Ahar and vihar are general etiological factors.

**VISHISHTA- NIDAN -**

Shastra, agni, krimi and sarpa etc. are called specific etiological factors. Further he has explained that the specific etiological factors are nimitta for Agantuya roga which directly produce the disease. Among specific etiological factors vissha, Shastra, agni, sthula krimi, sarpa and dansa are gross specific etiological factors. Microorganism, sukshma krimi etc. are the minute specific etiological factors.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF NIDAN**

Nidan is defined as the external cause/causes of the disease. Elucidation of nidan is necessary for the proper identification of Dosha, the Roga, Rogavasta, Roga Bala, and Sadhyata- Asadhyata of disease. The knowledge of nidan is useful for diagnosis, prognosis and treatment. Even one can protect his health if he knows about the nidan of various diseases. The first line of treatment is nidan - parivarjana (to avoid causative factors) of diseases. Acharya Charaka says that a physician should first of all diagnose the disease and then he should select proper medicine. Thereafter, he should administer the therapy applying the knowledge of the science of medicine. A physician who initiates treatment without proper diagnosis of the disease can accomplish the desired object only by chance; the fact that he is well acquainted with the knowledge of application of medicine does not necessarily guarantee his success. That’s why Acharya Charak has stated

**DISCUSSION**

Different Acharyas have discussed nidan in their own way which enriches the concept of nidan. Different classifications of nidan are available and each of them is useful in clinical practice. Different types can be justified by the quotation of Acharya Charaka.

Each and every classification gives an important idea about the nature of the etiological factor such as Pradhanik hetu is quite different from vyabhichari hetu, similarly sannikrishta and viprakrishta hetu, utpadak and vyaynak hetu, prakriti and vaikrit hetu are either opposite in nature or play different type of role in the manifestation of disease. For instance if we check the disease process at the level of utpadak hetu, it is easy to cure, but when vyaynak hetu takes place definitely more aggravation is there. Treatment of asatmyendriyarth samyog is not similar to prajnaparadh and vice versa. That’s why different classifications give different messages which are altogether useful in clinical practices. Nidan word has been used in Ayurveda in both the sense i.e. vyadhijanak and vyahbibodhak but this article is mainly focused on vyadhijanak nidan.

**CONCLUSION**

Nidan is defined as the external cause/causes of the disease. Elucidation of nidan is necessary for the proper identification of Dosha, the Roga, Rogavasta, Roga Bala, and Sadhyata- Asadhyata of disease. The knowledge of nidan is useful for diagnosis, prognosis and treatment. Even one can protect his health if he knows about the nidan of various diseases. The first line of treatment is nidan - parivarjana (to avoid causative factors) of diseases. Acharya Charaka says that a physician should first of all diagnose the disease and then he should select proper medicine. Thereafter, he should administer the therapy applying the knowledge of the science of medicine. A physician who initiates treatment without proper diagnosis of the disease can accomplish the desired object only by chance; the fact that he is well acquainted with the knowledge of application of medicine does not necessarily guarantee his success. That’s why Acharya Charak has stated

- रोगमाओ रैक्षेण्ट तत्त्वामि ज्ञानोद्वैतवाय समावेशेत्
- वैदिकास्य कृतडयात् समा विद्यामी प्रसिद्धिः
- साध्यायं असाध्यायं स्यां तत्र तत्त्वामिज्ञानं ज्ञानीमि
- मद्यमस्त धितिनस्माद्देशियति
- तत्त्वामिज्ञानं असाध्यायामि
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