University of Connecticut
DigitalCommons@UConn

SoM Articles School of Medicine

1-1-2005

Importance of Prakurti Analysis in Ayurvedic Diagnosis: an Interview with Dr. Doiphode

Amala Guha
University of Connecticut School of Medicine and Dentistry

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/som_articles

Part of the Alternative and Complementary Medicine Commons

Recommended Citation
Guha, Amala, "Importance of Prakurti Analysis in Ayurvedic Diagnosis: an Interview with Dr. Doiphode" (2005). *SoM Articles.* Paper 21.
http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/som_articles/21

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Medicine at DigitalCommons@UConn. It has been accepted for inclusion in SoM Articles by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UConn. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@uconn.edu.

Importance of Prakurti Analysis in Ayurvedic Diagnosis
An Interview with Dr. Doiphode

Amala Guha
University of Connecticut School of Medicine, Farmington, CT, U.S.A.

Dr Amala Guha: Let me start by asking you -what does the word "Prakurti mean" in Ayurvedic Medicine? Does it relate to consciousness (Svadhaya/Brahman/creation) of Veda?

Dr. Doiphode: According to one of the references in Veda, the word Prakruti is related to consciousness (Svadhaya/Brahman/creation). The literary meaning of the word Prakruti is 'natural condition or state of anything in its natural form'. It is opposite of 'Vikruti' which indicates change or effect. To come to one's senses or to retain one's consciousness is indicated by term "Prakrutimapad". Another meaning of Prakruti is nature (as distinguished from 'Purusha').

According to Sankhya/Samakhya philosophy, it is mother of all nature and is responsible for creation. It is also called as co-efficient or multiplier. There are many other meaning of the word Prakruti in Indian Philosophy. Many references are also available in Veda.

In Ayurvedic Medicine, the term 'Prakruti' indicates natural disposition, temper, temperament, nature or constitution. It is also an indicator of natural character, make, form or figure. In Ayurved 'Prakruti' is indicated as one's constitution dependent on once prominent Dosha at the time of conception. Other meanings, referred as above, are not considered for clinical use.

Dr. Amala Guha: In reference to "The concept and importance of the Prakruti" how important is it to know ones Prakurti in Ayurvedic diagnosis?

Dr. Doiphode: Prakurti Vinishchaya (Prakurti analysis) is an important part of Ayurveda as there is no other contemporary science that emphasizes on Prakurti analysis. By definition, Prakruti of a person is the predominance of a dosha at the time of conception. This predominance of dosha takes its effect on the development of the fetus and gives the impression of the body by which, in due course, the individual is identified. The Prakruti of a person could be defined as individual trait and is thus unique to that individual. There are two aspects of Prakruti, (1) genotype and (2) phenotype. .

The factors like diet and other environmental changes may have direct affect on genotype Prakurti, However, factors mentioned before may have very limited or no affect on ones phenotype.

Prakurti of a person is made use of during the diagnosis of the person for deciding the possible drug, medication or methods of treatment. Such as, even if two individuals are suffering from vitiation of a particular dosha, the selection of drugs will be different for each individual depending on their prakruti. Although Prakurti determination is important for selection of drugs and treatment, the Prakurti vinishchaya (analysis) is of limited value for the diagnosis of a disease. However, when an individual comes to us in a diseased state many of the normal components of the Prakurti are disturbed thus the Prakurti vinishchaya at the time becomes really difficult. Ideally Prakruti of a person is confirmed during optimal health.

Dr. Amala Guha: If according to you, Prakruti has only diagnostic importance, why it is so popular in western world.

Dr. Doiphode: As I mentioned before, Prakruti confirmation does not help for diagnosis of any disease. It merely helps for advice for diet and life style management. Diagnosis of Prakurti helps for selecting diet that suits that Prakruti. This advice is accepted without doubt and is considered as something innovative. However, in last few decades Ayurved is being studied with lot of enthusiasm in the west and there are many experts who teach Ayurved to the tune of their understanding. Such propagators and teachers of Ayurveda, especially in the west, have presented 'Nadi' Pariksha (pulse diagnosis) and Panchakarma in an exaggerated manner. Unfortunately, Prakruti, Nadi (pulse) and Panchakarma are considered as the total representation of Ayurveda in the west. This, of course, is a misrepresentation of Ayurvedic principle.

Dr. Amala Guha: If Prakruti analysis is not useful for diagnosis, what is its utility?

Dr. Doiphode: Ayurved has given lot of importance to Prakruti, because it has power to predict future illnesses. Prakruti indicates proneness of that individual for dosha specific diseases by which his Prakruti is decided. That means an individual who belongs to Vata predominant Prakruti, will get Vata vitiated diseases more frequently and easily than an individual of Pitta or Kapha Prakruti. The severity of diseases will also be more, if the dosha is Prakruti and vitiation is common.

Dr. Amala Guha: How does it help for selection of a drug?

Dr. Doiphode: If the constitutional dosha and vitiated doshas are different, a drug must be such that it will pacify the vitiated dosha, at the same time, would not increase/ vitiate the constitutional dosha. This is particularly true in case of Vata & Kapha because, their qualities (Guna) are opposite to each other and while treating 'Kapha', vata my increase. This point is also true as far as diet and life style are concerned. If the constitutional dosha & vitiated dosha are same, selected drug(s) has to be stronger.

Dr. Amala Guha: As we see that 'Prakruti' consideration is a peculiarity of Ayurveda, does it probe any problem in modern research?

Dr. Doiphode: In creating evidence based ayurvedic clinical trial, a protocol has to be created and understood in this context. Current clinical trials are designed in a way where results of the trials are accepted only if they are statistically significant. For applying proper statistical test and obtaining statistically significant results, it is necessary to have as fewer variables as possible. In the case of Ayurvedic clinical design, when Prakruti is considered and a drug is selected on that basis, the number of drugs for different patient (because of Prakruti variability) cause increased number of variables. Increased number of variables makes selection of statistical test, sample size etc difficult. Since there are very few common factors in individual treatment, sample size is significantly reduced and application of suitable statistical test becomes difficult.

Dr. Amala Guha: What is the role of Prakruti vinishchaya in to-days context.

Dr. Doiphode: The science has made a break through in genetics. Genetic mapping for predicting future diseases and managing them using genetic engineering is possible. World also have realized that classification of humans in major groups is not sufficient, and individual classification is required. Knowledge of Prakruti (genotypes) will be useful in these experiments. Many dreaded diseases can be explored with the knowledge of Prakruti. The principles of Prakruti analysis suggest different medicine for different individuals for the same illness. Understanding of this concept is a step towards customized or designer medicine. Genome can be studied using knowledge of Prakruti for preventing many dreaded diseases.

Dr. Amala Guha: With all the limitations & hidden treasure of knowledge, what in the practical utility of Prakruti today?

Dr. Doiphode: As I have already mentioned, Prakruti knowledge is most essential for selection of a drug. The individual can be given suggestions regarding diet & life style during disease as well as during health for maintaining optimal health. Every case presentation will be incomplete if 'Prakruti vinishchaya' is not made. By using proper diet & if required changes in life style will keep the individual free from diseases for which Prakruti of that individual makes him/her prone. Thus Prakruti plays a vital role in preventive aspect.

Dr. Amala Guha: You have stated before that at the diseased state people's Prakruti analysis is very difficult or not possible as the Prakurti is vitiated, then how would it be possible to obtain proper prakruti vinishchaya? and when should it be obtained?

Dr. Doiphode: In case of illness, there are effects of the pathological process on the body that mask some of the characters for Prakruti diagnosis. It is always better to have record of one's prakruti conformed in his healthy state. Many times patient comes to the doctor for the first time during illness. In such situation, though not appropriate, rough diagnosis of the Prakruti is sufficient for management of that disease. Ideally prakruti should be analyzed when the individual is healthy.

Dr Amala Guha: Thank you dr. Doiphode for your time and valuable information about Prakurti and Prakurti Vinishchaya

Dr. Doiphode is a professor of Surgery
and head of the department
Ayurvedic Medical School,
University of Puna,
Pune, India.
Dr.V.V Doiphode (HOD@ayurved)

"Invention is not the product of logical thought, even though the final product is tied to a logical structure" Einstein