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Research Article

ROLE OF AYUSH THERAPIES IN MODERN MEDICINE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY TO EXPLORE THE AWARENESS AND ATTITUDES OF DOCTORS TOWARD THE UTILIZATION OF ALTERNATE SYSTEM OF MEDICINE FOR DIABETES MELLITUS

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Abstract:

***Aim of Study:** To acknowledge the attitude of doctors towards AYUSH Therapy and awareness of this therapy for Diabetes Mellitus treatment*

***Method:** It is a qualitative study. It is done in Mumbai, India. In this study 77 physicians are surveyed for their attitudes towards AYUSH Therapy.*

***Results:** About 68% of the doctors were aware of Ayurveda Therapy and 53% were aware of Homeopathic treatment. 35% of them know Unani and 31 were aware of Siddha method. Approximately 98% doctors believed in the magical effect of Allopathic medicines. About 60% of the physicians consider that the Ayurveda can be effective for diabetes. 70% of them do not recommend Ayurveda treatment along with allopathic therapy. More than half of the doctors believed in the effectiveness of Ayurveda treatment and less than half did not believe in its effectiveness for DM. The lack of evidence and trails are the barriers towards the utilization of AYUSH therapy for DM.*

Conclusion

Most of the physicians are aware of Ayurveda and Homeopathic systems. Most of them believe in the ineffectiveness of AYUSH therapy. To sum up, the lack of evidence is the basic reason of AYUSH Therapy prevention for DM. The good research should be conducted on the safety and efficacy of therapy so that the physicians feel free to use this approach for treatment of DM.

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BACKGROUND:

Diabetes is a chronic disease characterized by imbalance of glucose level. It is a big problem in India now. In this disease either the body is deprived of insulin or it becomes insensitive to insulin. Its prevalence rate has been increased to thrice times in 2006 as compared to the rate in 2005 in urban areas. However, it increases to five times in rural areas.¹ It is appraised that approximately 30 Million people are living with undiagnosed diabetes, which can lead to complications. In India, this disease has led to great problems to the people of India like hospitalization, treatment costs, insulin therapy and other settings, etc.

AYUSH therapy is recognized by India as a form of treatment.² The powders, decoctions and juices which are obtained either from plants or animal source. These can be inorganic in nature.³ AYUSH therapies at present in India for previous 2000 years. Siddha is mostly used in Southern areas of India. It has an impact on physical health, stress, environment, and climatic conditions to ensure best health to the people.

Ayurveda therapy is a broad treatment which includes all the aspects of therapy for example, physical, psychological, social or spiritual. In this therapy diabetes is known as “Madhumeha” which means “honey urine.” In India Homeopathy is considered as the second number therapy, according to usage.⁴

METHODS:**Public and Patient Involvement**

In this research, not any specific patients are considered. This was an overall study done for understanding and analyzing the behavior of Doctors.

Participants

To calculate, 77 doctors were examined. In these 77 doctors, 32 doctors were just “bachelors in medicine, surgery (MBBS)” and others were specialists in diabetes and general specialists like “Doctor of Medicine (MD).”

Procedure

We chose the “snowball sampling method.” Each participant was dealt in his own office personally. No biasness was present in the whole study. The purpose of the survey was made clear to each and every doctor. The identities of the physicians were hidden and their consent was taken from this survey.

For the issues of misunderstanding in the questionnaire, the pilot questionnaire was provided to

them. It was a face to face survey and it did not include any audio or video recording. The questionnaire was definite for every person. At the end of the questionnaire the signatures of each physician were taken.

We used “Linkert scale” for the documentation of following elements:

- Recognition of various systems of “AYUSH therapy”
- Insight of effectiveness of numerous AYUSH therapy systems
- To guess the frame of mind of physicians to use AYUSH therapy with allopathic medicine as an adjunct
- To find out the existing evidence of this therapy
- To understand the hurdles on the implementation of AYUSH therapy
- Likert scale was given a value range from 0 to 5 in the process of comparison and evaluation.

RESULTS:**Apprehension of Numerous Systems of AYUSH Therapy**

- Analysis Shows that Numerous Systems of AYUSH Therapy

Totally 54 physicians had some know-how of Ayurveda, in 24 of them 33% had know-how of Siddha and other 67% had no knowledge of it at all. Of the 27 doctors who knew somehow about Unani system, were 32% in proportion and others did not know. In the segment of homeopathic awareness, 53% were aware of that therapy while 47% had no knowledge of this therapy. The comparison of all these systems of therapy along with the degree of awareness among physicians is given below:

Awareness	Ayurveda	Siddha	Unani	Homeopathy
No awareness	25	51	53	36
Slight	13	8	5	12
Somewhat	14	7	9	10
Moderately	21	12	9	13
Extremely	4	1	1	6
Total	77	77	77	77

- Insight of Various AYUSH Therapy Systems’ Effectiveness

From 47 physicians 61% believed in the effectiveness of Ayurveda Therapy, and others did not believe in it. From 21 physicians 28% believed in the effectiveness of Siddha therapy and others had no belief in it. From the remaining 23 physicians 29% believed in the

effectiveness of Unani system while the 71% were negligent on its effectiveness. Of 38 doctors, half of

them believed in the effectiveness of Homeopathic system and half had a negative response towards it.

The table shows the comparison of the responses among different doctors:

Effectiveness	Ayurveda	Siddha	Unani	Homeopathy	Allopathic
Not at all	32	56	55	38	3
Slightly	12	7	4	15	0
Somewhat	14	8	8	13	5
Moderately	17	5	9	9	15
Extremely	2	3	1	2	54
Total	77	77	77	77	77

- Comparison of Attitudes of Doctors in Using AYUSH Therapy with Allopathic Therapy

52 physicians never used the AYUSH therapy as an adjunct therapy. Some of them had solid scientific reasons, while others had no specific reason for that. The table shows the reactions of doctors on adjunct usage.

Decisions based on specific evidence

	Yes	No	Total
Never	26	26	52
Almost never	2	1	3
Occasionally	16	3	19
Always	2	1	3

- Attitudes of Physicians on Present AYUSH Therapy

Almost half of the doctors believed in the therapeutic effectiveness of this therapy. From the other half some rejected its effectiveness and 31% were not sure about the therapy. Approximately 45% of the physicians said that this therapy cannot be used for DM. 23% of them said that this therapy can be effective for type 2 DM. When the question was asked about the positive effect of DM, half of them rejected. The other half gave the answers as “no” and “maybe” in almost equal proportions.

At last, the question about the barrier to AYUSH Therapy was asked from all the doctors and specialists. Maximum doctors gave the “lack of evidence” as their supporting answer. The other main reasons included patient acceptability, lack of awareness and lack of clinical trials.

DISCUSSION:

In India there are more than four thousand cities. But this survey was done on just one city. In another survey, about 64% of the doctors believed in the effectiveness of AYUSH Therapy and 46% believed in the effectiveness of Homeopathic treatments.⁵ In one more survey, the pharmacy students were analyzed. Most of them had a favorable behavior and belief towards its use.⁶ A study by Ojha showed 45% therapeutic advantage of the patients of DM.⁷ A chemical known as *Aegle marmelos* showed reduced

glucose levels in the patients with diabetes by about 61%.⁸

Another chemical known as *Coccinia indica* has proved the effectiveness of this natural substance for the treatment of diabetes, high glucose level in 10 patients out of 16 patients.⁹ The analysis of this drug on animals showed its similar behavior with that of insulin.¹⁰ A plant known as *Tinospora cordifolia*, has an effect of high insulin secretion in the body of patients with diabetes mellitus. This plant led to the decreased glucose level in the patients with diabetes. Its extracts in alcohol or water gave the evidence of glucose tolerance in the rats.¹¹ A natural substance obtained from a plant known as *Circuma longa*, gave the evidence of reduced levels of glucose in the patients with diabetes as well as animals like rats.¹²

AYUSH therapy includes the treatment in every aspect like physical, mental health and psychological health. It should be most recommended for treatment of every disease. The reason behind its use is that the health should be considered as “a state of complete physical, mental and psychological health” not just the “absence of diseases.”¹³ The compliance rate of diabetic patients is very low in India.^{14,15}

CONCLUSION:

The use of AYUSH therapy is recommended in the majority of the areas of India, especially the rural

areas. The need of research is present for the complete spread and utilization of AYUSH therapy. To sum up the whole report, it can be concluded that the lack of awareness along with its evidence are the major factors which comes in the path of AYUSH therapy. A huge effort is required for the implementation of this therapy all over the India. The strong evidences will directly lead to its implication all over the India. A correct information and “holistic care” requires research on the safety and effectiveness of AYUSH therapy.

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