

Understanding the Cause and the Cure of Disease: An Ayurvedic Perspective

Have you ever wondered why we become sick or what is the ultimate cause of disease? These topics have been a personal interest for more than fifteen years and have led me to the study of several alternative health care systems including Chiropractic, Homeopathy, Chinese Medicine and Allopathic Medicine, in addition to Ayurvedic Medicine.

Understanding the cause of disease is profound and yet simple. If we can understand the cause of disease then we can begin the process of determining the cure. Each system of conservative and alternative medicine has its own unique perception of the cause of disease. Based upon this perception, each system sets about to develop a cure.

For instance, Allopathic Medicine, also known as traditional Western Medicine, looks to pathogens (bacteria, viruses, fungus, etc.) as the cause of disease and based upon this model develops drugs to kill the pathogens. Chiropractors look at the cause of disease as mis-alignments or abnormal function of the bones of the spine, which creates an interference with nerve function. Thus, the cure is an adjustment or manipulation of the bones of the spine to correct the mis-alignment, opening the pathways for proper nerve function.

Every system of health care has its own model, and I have studied most along my journey. Too often I was left with a remaining question. Why? For instance, why do we become susceptible to the pathogens when we have an immune system which is supposed to keep us healthy? Why do the bones of the spine become dysfunctional? There must be answers. There must be deeper levels of cause. If so, then the pathogen causing an infection or the vertebrae causing nerve interference is only a symptom of some deeper underlying cause! I searched long and hard for that underlying cause and it was in the science of Ayurveda^{i[1]} that I found it.

Ayurveda teaches us that all disease begins when we are living out of harmony with our environment. When we take in inappropriate impressions from our environment through any of our five senses, we weaken the body and create an internal environment which supports the creation of disease. In this environment bacteria, viruses and other pathogens thrive, and muscles tense and alter the function of vertebrae interfering with nerve function. We could say that energy flow is disrupted in the body.

The ramifications of understanding the cause of disease are numerous. Models can be created both to prevent and to treat disease. If disharmony is the cause of disease then the re-creation of harmony is the cure. This is what the science of Ayurveda is all about.

One realization of this model is that both the creation and the healing of disease is under our control. It is a disturbing thought that we participate in the creation of disease -- but an empowering thought that we can also participate in the cure! Ayurveda takes health into the realm of personal responsibility, and once we enter that realm we are no longer random victims of the multitude of diseases that afflict humanity. In addition, we become empowered to participate in our own healing process!

Healing through Ayurveda involves all five senses. Through taste, we utilize proper diet and herbs. Through sight we utilize proper color and beauty. Through smell we utilize aromatherapy. Through sound we utilize music and sound energies. Finally, through the skin we take in specially prepared herbal oils and receive massage. In addition to five sense therapy, Ayurveda advocates the periodic removal of accumulated toxins and food residues through specialized purification procedures called Pancha Karma^{i[2]}.

Ayurveda is not a system of healing in which everyone does the same practices. In fact, rarely are

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two programs exactly alike. Ayurveda sees each person as an individual with a different internal balance of energy called one's constitution^[3]. Understanding a person's constitution allows the Clinical Ayurvedic Specialist (a certified practitioner of the science of Ayurveda), to set up a program of care specific for that individual. This program helps them to re-establish harmony with their environment thus creating an optimal internal environment for healing to take place.

For instance, some people thrive on hot spicy foods, while for others it gives diarrhea and indigestion. Understanding the internal energy of the body, the Clinical Ayurvedic Specialist can predict the reactions a person will have and thus can recommend a food program specific to that individual, not only with foods but also with herbs, colors, aromas, etc.

An important part of a healthy lifestyle from an Ayurvedic perspective is relaxation and peace of mind. To this extent, Ayurveda utilizes meditation and yoga as healing tools. These two powerful tools have been well documented to reduce stress and aid the function of the immune system.

We do not have to be sick. Through unhealthy life practices, our bodies become weak. Through healthy practices they can become strong once again and remain strong. Ayurveda is the science of reaching our full healing potential.

With the tools of Ayurveda, a person can take back control over their health and well being. These tools lead to the formation of an ideal internal environment which supports the healing process. It does not negate the value of using allopathic medicines in acute disease but simply gives a person a deeper understanding of the process of becoming optimally healthy.

Each person takes a journey when they become ill. The path back to health can be a difficult one. Ayurveda acts like a guide shedding light upon that journey; a teacher, sharing the tools and wisdom of the process; a counselor, supporting you as you travel; a healer awakening the healer within you.

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[1] <http://www.ayurvedacollege.com/glossary/term/10>

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