



EDITORIAL

IMPROVING THE STANDARDS OF PANCHAKARMA EDUCATION AND PRACTICE IN INDIA

VAIDYA VASANT PATIL

Editor-in-Chief, JAHM

Associate Professor, Dept. of PG Studies in Panchakarma, SVMAMC, ILKAL

Background: Revival of interest in Ayurveda has provided impetus to medical tourism in the country. There has been a phenomenal increase in the demand for specialized therapies of Ayurveda, particularly Panchakarma, not only for treatment of diseases but also for preventive & promotive health care. As a result, many health centers and tourist resorts have come up in the country with or without adequate facilities.

It has been observed that many health centers being run in the name of Panchakarma centers are actually not providing authentic Panchakarma but in a form that has deviated from original concepts and practices. Many of these centers are manned by unqualified persons without basic knowledge of Ayurveda, thereby perverting the real purpose of these therapies. Many aspects of administration like climatic & constitutional considerations, selection of oils etc. are often neglected. Body relaxation procedures such as massaging, fomentation, steam bath etc. based mainly on western approach are practiced in deviation from the classical form. Even the therapeutic and preventive procedures are wrongly done without observing basic requisites for such procedures.

A need has been felt to prevent such deviations or misuse of therapies offered by Ayurveda/Panhcakarma Centers. It is important to

ensure that Panchakarma therapy is administered as per standard operating procedures and there should be some minimum pre-requisites of infrastructure that must be complied by every Panchakarma therapy center.

An area of misuse of Ayurveda in India is the establishment of Massage Parlors and Panchakarma Centers without adhering to the specific Rules or Regulations in force. The legal system is not that rigid in the matter of enforcement of the law regulating Ayurveda. Government apathy is the root cause of this malady. This would endanger the acceptance of Ayurveda as a scientific system of medicine. As regards the establishment of Massage Parlors, there should be some definite legal framework. The Kerala Ayurveda Health Centers (Issue of License and Control) Act, 2007 is only a feeble and half-hearted attempt and it is only eyewash. In fact, the Singapore legislation (Massage Establishments Act) would perhaps serve as a useful tool in dealing with the matter^[1].

Practice: Ethically for the practice of Panchakarma one must have passed the two year diploma or three year MD Panchakarma degree just like in allopathic practice. But in India, Panchakarma is practiced by undergraduates, non Panchakarma postgraduates and even some non certified

persons. Some state governments recruiting non-Panchakarma post graduates for district Panchakarma hospitals. This is absolute blunder and the Govt. of India (AYUSH) has not framed any law to control the unethical practice of Panchakarma. Practitioners also don't have ethics to practice what they got the degree. This has led to poor quality of Panchakarma practice resulting in loss of trust among the patients community.

Education: In most of the Govt. colleges for teaching Panchakarma subject, there is scarcity of staff having Panchakarma degree. In new syllabus importance should be given on practical aspects of preventive and promotive Panchakarma. A chapter on good clinical practice (GCP) guidelines of Panchakarma at clinic, hospital and health resort. Students should be trained to practice Panchakarma told as part of Dinacharya and Ritucharya. Super-specialty subjects on Preventive Panchakarma, Promotive Panchakarma, Bala-Panchakarma and Stree Panchakarma should be developed.

Recommendations to CCIM and AYUSH:

1. Constitute a commission for revising and amending the current Laws related to the Panchakarma practice and education
2. Minimum standards should be framed for practice of Panchakarma at metro, urban, sub-urban and rural places separately.
3. Strict control of unethical practice of Panchakarma in clinics, hospitals and resorts to provide quality service to the patient
4. In all the health resorts the appointment of Panchakarma Post graduate should be made mandatory
5. First preference for Panchakarma Post graduates in all Govt. recruitment for medical officer
6. Priority should be given while giving promotion and salary increment
7. Remove Kayachikitsa as allied subject for Panchakarma
8. For research on Panchakarma subject, the investigator should be Panchakarma Post graduate with 3 years of experience
9. Uniform syllabus for Panchakarma therapist course should be designed
10. There should be control over the Panchakarma treatment charges and it should be fixed based on the quality of services given by Panchakarma centre or hospitals

I am appealing all the Panchakarma Post graduates to raise their voice against CCIM & AYUSH. For this we have to make an association of Panchakarma physicians at national level to improve the standards of Panchakarma in practice and education. Hope CCIM and AYUSH will take initiatives in improving the standards of Panchakarma education and practice.

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1. Vaidya vasant patil. Principles and Practice of Panchakarma. (4th ed.). NEW DELHI: Choukhmabha Publications; 2014. p.42-3

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