



Review Article

A REVIEW ON RELEVANCE OF PRAMANA PARIKSHA (PHYSICAL ANTHROPOMETRY)

Seetharama Mithanthaya^{1*}, Swati Bedekar²

¹Professor, Dept. of Rachana Sharira, J S Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya, Nadiad, Gujarat.

²Professor, Dept. of Rachana Sharira, Sawkar Ayurvedic Medical College, Satara, Maharashtra, India.

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ABSTRACT

The estimation of *Bala* on the basis of *Pramana* (Physical anthropometry) is one of the glorious concepts of Ayurveda. The *Pareeksha* of *Atura Deha* before performing his *Chikitsa* plays a significant role in the proper assessment of *Rogi* with respect to his *Bala* and *Ayu*. *Pramana* (physical anthropometry) is mainly assessed by *Swa-Angula*, which is taken as the unit of measurement of the body parts and structures with respect to length, breadth, height, and circumference. Anthropometry explains about average height, and breadth of a person and his body parts with the help of different measuring units like cm, inch, etc, but applying average will not serve the purpose in every situation as anthropometric measurements are supposed to get influenced by different circumstances like gender, race, place and time, etc. The “*Swa-Angula Pramana* (physical anthropometry)” is an ideal parameter irrespective of gender, race, and place. The growth of the body varies at different ages and gets ceased after a particular stage. *Anguli Pramana* (physical anthropometry) is a unit of measure followed in the olden days to denote the dimensions of any object which includes *Ayama* (length), *Vistara* (width), *Parinaha* (circumference), *Utsedha* (height), etc. An individual with *Anga-pratyangas* having proper measurements is endured with longevity, wealth, prosperity, happiness, *Ojas*, strength, etc.

INTRODUCTION

The estimation of *Bala* on the basis of *Pramana* (physical anthropometry) is one among the glorious concepts of Ayurveda. A detailed description of *Pramana Shareera* (physical anthropometry) is available in all three main texts of Ayurveda including *Caraka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Sangraha*^[1,2,3]. The *Pareeksha* of *Atura Deha* before performing his *Chikitsa* plays a major role in the proper assessment of *Rogi* with respect to his *Bala*⁴ and *Ayu*^[5]. *Caraka Samhita* has consisted of this concept under the heading *Dashavidha Pareeksha Vidhi*^[6,7].

Pramana (Physical anthropometry) is mainly assessed by *Swa-Angula*^[8], “*Swa-Angula Pramana* (physical anthropometry)” is taken as the unit of measurement of the body parts and structures with

respect to length, breadth, height, and circumference. Even in the textbooks of contemporary Anatomy, some references were available related to handbreadth, later they used the cm, inch and so on. One example of this is “Duodenum, its word meaning is the organ which has a length equal to the breadth of twelve fingers”^[9].

It is evident that the Ayurvedic authorities were fully convinced by the values of measurements in medical science, and due importance was given to the measurement of different parts of the body. They listed in detail the anthropometric (Somato-metric) values of each part of the body along with its clinical implications.^[10,11,12].

Anthropometry explains about average height, and breadth of a person and his body parts with the help of different measuring units like cm, inch etc^[13,14], but applying average will not serve the purpose in every situation as anthropometric measurements are supposed to get influenced by different circumstances like gender, race, place and time, etc. Our Seers explained the concept of *Swa-Angula Pramana* (physical anthropometry)^[15,16,17]. The “*Swa-Angula Pramana* (physical anthropometry)” is an ideal parameter irrespective of gender, race, and place. The growth of the body varies at different ages and gets

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ceased after a particular stage [18], though the average measurement of the body is fixed by random study, the variation in the measurement may occur with growing age.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Concepts related to *Pramana Sharira* (physical anthropometry) were compiled from Ayurveda and modern textual material and are available from other sources like journals, library and the internet. The collected data were properly rearranged and documented.

DISCUSSION

The word *Prama* refers to true knowledge and *Pramana* (physical anthropometry) is the means of gaining knowledge.[19] The *Angula Pramana* (physical anthropometry) is a tool that is used to express the quantitative expression of dimensions of the human body parts.[20,21] The *Pramana* (physical anthropometry) is one among the *Dashavidha pareekshya bhavas*[22] and every patient should be examined by measuring *Anga-pratyanga* by using *Swa-Angula Pramana* (physical anthropometry) as a unit measurement.[23,24] The *Pramana* (physical anthropometry) *Pariksha* is one of the main tools which is to be followed to determine the *Bala* and *Ayu* of the patient.[25] The individual having appropriate *Pramana* (physical anthropometry) of different *Anga-pratyanga* is indicative of *Deerghayu*. [26]

The classics of Ayurveda indicate two types of *Pramana* (physical anthropometry), *Anjali Pramana* (physical anthropometry), and the *Anguli Pramana* (physical anthropometry). The *Anjali Pramana* (physical anthropometry) is a unit used to measure the volume of any object in the human body including body fluids[27] on the other hand, *Anguli Pramana* (Physical anthropometry) is the tool for measuring the dimensions (*Ayama* - length, *Vistara* - width, *Parinaha* - circumference and *Utseda* - height, etc.) of the different *Anga-pratyangas* of the body. [28,29]

Ayu Pareeksha is one of the essential steps in the evaluation of a patient before starting with the treatment.[30] *Pramana taha pareeksha* is one of the prime principles of Ayurveda to evaluate the *ayu* of the patient.[31] The individuals having *Anga-pratyanga* with appropriate *Pramana* (body measurements) will attain *Deerghayu* and the individuals with moderate and poor *Pramana* (body measurements) attain *Madya* and *Alpa Ayu* respectively.[32] In *Ashtanga Hrudaya*, it has been mentioned that a person having a height equal to 3½ of his *Hasta* will have a happy life. [33]

There are some differences of opinion between *Sushruta Samhita* and *Charaka Samhita* with respect to the height of an individual. As per *Sushruta Samhita* the stature of any individual will be 120 *Angula*. [34] And should be measured by making the person to stand on his toes with arms raised above the head. [35] Whereas

Charaka Samhita and *Ashtanga Hridaya* specify the height of an individual as 84 *Angulas* [36,37] and it has to be measured from *Padatala* to *Shirahparyanta*. [38]

Caraka Samhita gave a splendid concept of '*Sama Shareera*' later it was supported by *Acharya Vriddha Vagbhata*. [39,40] This concept gives the idea that an individual having equal height and arm span is considered to have *Sama Shareera* and it is indicative of *Deerghayu*, *Bala*, *Sukha*, *Aishvarya*, *Ojas*, etc. [41]

Description Regarding Angula Pramana (Physical anthropometry)

Prama is valid and appropriate knowledge and *Pramana* (physical anthropometry) is a tool through which *Prama* is attained. [42] *Mana* is the process of measuring different items, there are various kinds of measurements which includes *Tula* (measurement of weight), *Anguli* (measurement of dimension), *Anjali* (measurement of volume), etc. [43] *Anguli Pramana* (Physical anthropometry) is a unit of measure followed in the olden days to denote the dimensions of any objects which includes *Ayama* (length), *Vistara* (width), *Parinaha* (circumference), *Utsedha* (height), etc. the *Angula* measurement can be taken as-

- Width of the *Madhyama Parva* (proximal interphalangeal joint) [44] or *Madyama Rekha/Prakarsha* (middle crease) [45,46] of the *Madhyama Angula* (middle finger).
- It can be taken as the *Nakha Tala Bhaga* of *Angushtha*. [47]

Importance of Pramana Shareera (Physical anthropometry) Based on Swa-Angula Pramana

An individual with *Anga-pratyangas* having proper measurements is endured with longevity, wealth, prosperity, happiness, *Ojas*, strength, etc. [48]

The measurements mentioned in the classics for each part of the body are appropriate and desirable whereas the less or more of these are abnormal and undesirable. [49]

- Useful in measuring different measurements of different parts of the body.
- It is one among the *Dashavidha Parikshya Bhava* and is also useful in assessing the *Ayu* of the patient. [50]
- It helps to understand the prognosis of the disease.
- The health of an individual can be assessed by examining the individual's *Anguli Pramana* (physical anthropometry). [51]
- Helps to identify the *Nindita Purusha* explained in Ayurvedic classics. It helps in determining *Atideergha* and *Atihrasva Purushas*.
- It is one of the essential assessments to ascertain the *Bala* of an individual. [52]
- Helps in assessing the age of an individual.

CONCLUSION

The *Pramana Pareeksha* (physical anthropometry) is one of the main tools for the examination of patients, specifically to assess the *Ayu* and *Bala*. The patient with less *Bala* is prone to have a bad prognosis of the disease. The assessment of *Ayu* and *Bala* will play a major role in various aspects of patient care including evaluating the prognosis of disease, fixing the treatment protocol, identifying the dosage form, and fixing the dose of the medicine. Thus, it is much needed for every physician to follow the *Pramana Pareeksha* to evaluate the *Bala* and *Ayu* before starting the *Chikitsa*.

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***Address for correspondence**

Dr. Seetharama Mithanthaya

Professor,

Dept. of Rachana Sharira,

J S Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya,

Nadiad, Gujarat

Email: drsitharam1@gmail.com

Ph: 9901732256

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