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Upamana Pramana (Analogy) - Ancient Diagnostic Tool of Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT

Pramanas, the means or source for gaining the valid or true knowledge have their special importance in *Ayurveda* in terms of literary research, clinical practice and therapeutics. *Pramanas* are mainly contributions of *Nyaya darshana* and has given four *pramanas* viz. *Shabda Pramana* (Authoritative statement), *Pratyaksha* (Direct Perception), *Anumana* (Inference) and *Upamana* (Analogy) as a valid source of true knowledge. *Upamana pramana* is one among them. *Upamana pramana* reflects the knowledge of similarity. It is a method of comparing an unknown object with a known object for acquiring the knowledge about the unknown one. The compared known object is very well known even a layman would identify it easily. Through *upama*, any subject's understanding becomes very simple and transparent. As a result, the *Acharya* in *Ayurveda* have used the *upama* to simplify and clarify the subject so that complicated concerns linked to disease diagnosis and treatment can be easily comprehended.

In spite of all these, necessity and utility of *Upamana Pramana* is the most ignored in the field of research by the faculty of *Ayurveda*. While going through the *Samhita Granthas*, it is noticed that various *Upama* are mentioned are in scattered form. So in this study, some well-known examples of diseases related to specific *upama* will be collected from *Ayurvedic samhitas* in order to explain differential diagnosis between two diseases or types of diseases with presence of specific character related to color, size, shape and appearance.

Key Words *Upamana Pramana, Upama, Sadharmya, Analogy, Similarity, simile*

Received 23rd June 22 Accepted 26th July 22 Published 10th July 2022

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a very ancient, sacred and contemporary science of life. In its treatises, various clinical as well as philosophical theories about healthy life have been incorporated. Understanding of these theories is more essential for Ayurvedic scholars for the better implementation of these concepts practically. These concepts can be easily understood with the help of *Pramana*.

Pramanas are mainly contributions of *Nyaya darshana* and has given four *pramanas* viz. *Shabda Pramana* (Authoritative statement), *Pratyaksha* (Direct Perception), *Anumana* (Inference) and *Upamana* (Analogy) as a valid source of true knowledge.¹

Acharya Sushruta has accepted *pramanas* similar to *Nyaya darshana* and mentioned *Upamana Pramana* separately.² *Acharya Charak* accepted *Pratyaksha, Anumana,*

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Aptopadesha and *Yukti* as four independent *pramanas*.³ He did not accepted the *Upamana* as a separate *pramana*, but described it in the context of *Vadamarg*'s in *Vimana Sthana* but it's application are seen widely throughout the text.⁴

According to *Tarka Sangraha*, *Upamana* is the instrument of assimilative knowledge of correlation present between a name and the object denoted.⁵ *Upamana Pramana* is useful in the diagnosis of disease by comparing with familiar object.

Upamana Pramana plays an important role in *Ayurveda* as its application is seen widely in *Samhitas*. In field of teaching, various *Acharyas* has utilized many well-known things in order to identify the unknown things and concepts. By using *Upamana Pramana*, they pointed to assist the scholars to apprehend the confused and ill-defined concepts in better and appropriate way. Thus, all the types of scholars who are having mild, moderate and high intellect can understand the mysteries related to understanding the diseases, its diagnostic methods, differential diagnosis, prognosis of diseases, identification of plants and their fundamentals and concept becomes more clear.

Upamana Pramana is particularly important in medical science and experimental practice. Various disciplines, such as patient inspection, drug identification, disease diagnosis and therapy, and so on, are

characterized based on their similarities to a well-known subject.⁶

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is conceptual type of study. All sorts of references have been collected and compiled from various available classics texts of *Ayurveda* like *Charak Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya* and *Ashtanga Sangraha* with available commentaries. Various research articles are also searched from various websites. Literature available regarding *Upamana Pramana* from various journals and books were collected. All matter is analyzed and attempt has been made to draw some fruitful conclusions.

UTILITY OF UPAMANA PRAMANA IN DIAGNOSIS -

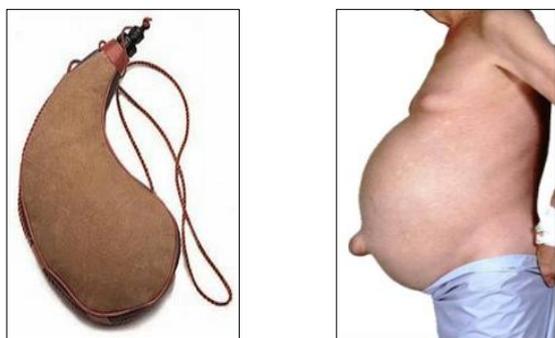
Symptoms or signs of a disease help to diagnose a disease properly. An accurate diagnosis is the key to Success. Our *Acharya* use the *Upamana Pramana* to help the physician correct diagnosis with an ease. *Upamana pramana* has been used extensively in the diagnosis of the disease. There are so many examples mentioned in *Samhitas* in related to *Upamana Pramana* which provide its wide utility in diagnosis of diseases. They are as follows-

1) *Jalodara (Ascites)*⁷-

In patient who is suffering from *Jalodara roga* (Ascites), the abdomen of a patient feels like an *Toyapoornadruti* (a leather bag filled with

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water) and when a physician palpates and percussions it feels like accumulation of sticky fluid inside the muscle tissues. As a result, this unique touch aids in the diagnosis of the condition *Jalodara*. In the above said example, bag filled with water is a familiar object and Ascites roga is unfamiliar thing. Though the similarity of stiffness in both of them, the unknown roga Ascites is made understood. (Figure no. 1)



Bag filled with water Patient having Ascites

Figure 1 Showing comparison between leather bag filled with water and Ascites patient

1) **Charmakushta (Type of skin disease)**⁸- *Charma Kushta* is type of *Shudra Kushta* mentioned in *Charaka Samhita*. It can be diagnosed by thick skin with *Khara guna* of skin to touch like skin of elephant. When the patient comes to doctor with this type of skin, *Upamana pramana* to help the physician correct diagnosis with an ease. (Figure no. 2)



Skin of elephant



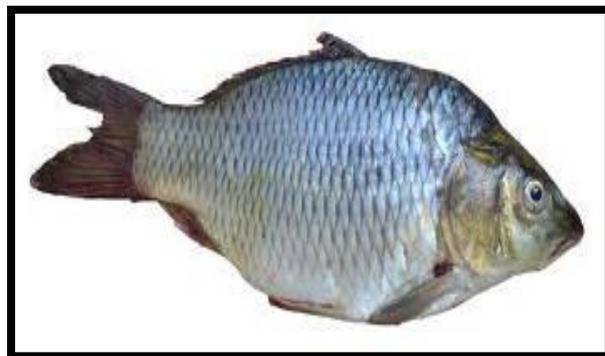
Charma Kushta

Figure 2 Comparison between skin of elephant and Charma Kushta

1) **Eka Kushta (Type of skin disease)**⁹-

In the case of *Eka Kushta*, patient's skin looks like scales of a fish. So By this *upama* we can easily understand the clinical feature of *Eka Kushta*. It can be correlated with "psoriasis" in modern due to formation of "Silver color scales" which see similar to "*Matsyashakal*".

(Figure no. 3)

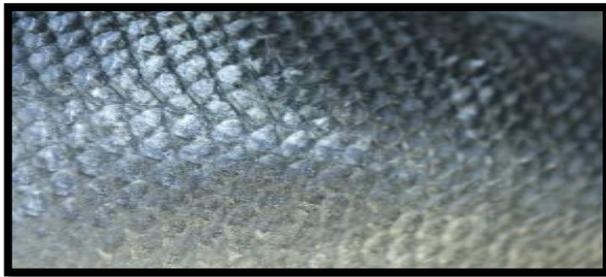


Scales of fish



Eka Kushta

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Scales of fish

Figure 3 Showing comparison between scales of fish and Eka Kushta patient

4) **Kakana Kushta** (Type of skin disease)¹⁰ – *Kakanaka Kustha* is described as *Mahakustha* by *Acharya Charaka* which shows similarity with *Gunjabeeja* (Seeds of *abrus precatorious* Linn) color (Red and black) and size. Thus this disease can be easily diagnosed with the *upama* “*kaaknantikaavarnaani*” due to presence of red and black color in it. (Figure no. 4)



Gunja Beej



Kakana Kushta

Figure 4 Showing comparison between Gunja Beej and Kakana Kushta patient

6) **Udumber kushtha**¹¹-

In the case of *Udumbara Kustha* (type of skin disease), skin color is **dark red** color and looks like *Pakwa Udumbara phala* (Mature *Ficus glomerata*). In *Ayurveda* *Pakwa Udumbar* fruit is considered as *upama* due to its light red color and skin in *Udumber kushtha* is also light red color so that this disease can

be easily diagnosed by this *upma*. (Figure no. 5)



Udumbara Phala Udumbara Kushta Kushta

Figure 5 Showing comparison between Udumbara phala and Udumbara Kushta patient

5) **Kamla Vyadhi**¹² (Jaundice) –

In this disease, color of eyes, skin, nail and mouth color becomes like *Haridra varna* (*Curcuma longa*). So *kamala vyadhi* is easily diagnosed with this *upama*. (Figure no. 6)

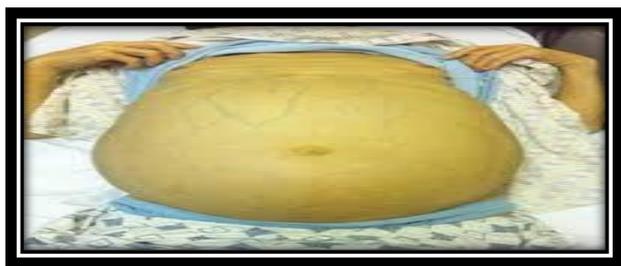


Yellow colored skin



Haridra

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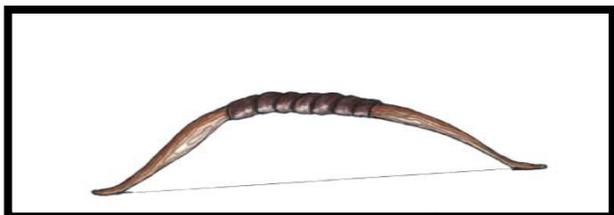


Kamla Vyadhi

Figure 6 Showing comparison between Haridra and Kamla patient

5) *Dhanustambha*¹³-

For example, *Dhanusha* (bow) is better known to people so if somebody explains that the disease *Dhanustambha* (tetanus) which is characterized by the rigidity or stiffness of muscles of the body and whole body is bended like *Dhanusha* (bow). So by these symptoms, even a layman would be able to identify the disease as and when one suffers from it. (Figure no 7)



Dhanusha (Bow)



Patient suffering from Tetanus

Figure 7 Showing comparison between *Dhanusha* and Tetanus patient

5) *Dandaalasaka*¹⁴-

The disease in which patient's entire body attains stiffness similar to *Danda* (stick) is

called *Dandaka roga*. In this Upamana, *Danda* (stick) is better known to people so if somebody explains that the disease *Dandaka* which is characterized by the rigidity of muscles of the body is similar to a stick or log of wood in symptoms. It makes body unable for flexion and extension. So after perceiving this type of Upama, any individual is able to clinically identify and diagnose such condition whenever such cases are encountered. (Figure no. 8)



Danda (stick)



Dandaka Roga

Figure 7 Showing comparison between *Dhanusha* and Tetanus patient

6) *Kalameha*¹⁵-

The disease which makes the body stiff like *Danda* (stick) is called *Dandaalasaka*.

Danda (stick) is better known to people so if somebody explains that the disease *Kalameha* disease which is characterized by black color urine is similar to *Maseevanam*. So by this symptom even a layman would be able to

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identify the disease when one suffers from it.
(Figure no. 9)



Black color



Kalmeha

Figure 9 Showing comparison between black color and Kalmeha

7) Neelmeha¹⁶ -

The disease in which urine of patient becomes blue in color then it is called Neelameha .

In Neelmeha, patient urine is in blue color as similar to Chashapakshi (blue color bird) who is better known to people. So by this symptom even a common man will understand its resemblance with Chashapakshi and will be able to identify the disease. (Figure no. 10)



Chashapakshi



Blue color urine

7) Mukhadushika¹⁷ -

The disease in which eruptions appears similar to Shalmalikantakvat (thorns of Salmalia malabarica) especially on face is called as Mukhadushika. It occurs especially on the face of adolescents therefore it is also called as Yuvanpidika. In Ashtanga Hridaya, Mukhadushika is mentioned under Kshudra Rogas. Due to special appearance even a layman would be able to identify the disease. (Figure no 11)



Shalmali kantak



Mukhadushika

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CONCLUSION

Considering the contribution and clinical utility of *Upamana pramana*, it cannot be ignored as it is equally important like other three *pramanas* and it should be given a separate place and should be accepted as an independent *pramana* like other *pramana*. We can say that *Upamana pramana* act as an aid for *Pratyaksha*, *Anumana* and *Shabda pramana* to obtain true knowledge because at many places knowledge obtained by other *pramanas* is partial without *Upamana pramana*. With the use of *Upamana pramana*, a physician can have sufficient understanding about vitiated *Dosha* and be able to identify the disease. It also aids in the differentiation of diagnoses. In the end it is conclude that *Upamana Pramana* is one of the effective and easy method to diagnose disease.

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