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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Understanding of Naturopathy

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ABSTRACT:

Naturopathy is a unique and varied system of health care that accentuates the use of preemptive and natural therapeutics. Naturopathic are proficient to work as primary care specialists who are experts in the prevention, identification, managing, and curing of both critical as well as prolonged illnesses. The goal of naturopathy is not the treatment of the disease alone, but rather to restore wellness of the body. Treatment plans are designed for the individual patient, and they are not based on the common symptoms. Naturopathic medicine essentially probes the correlation that exists between the physical, emotional and psychological well being of the individual thereby attempting to restore complete wellness and health. They give natural medicine with which the disease is cured instantly without taking much time for the symptom to be cured. This type of medicine was discovered by Hippocrates, a Greek physician, approximately 2400 years ago and is predominantly based on the concept of nature's healing power. Naturopathy favors a holistic approach with non-invasive treatment and generally avoids the use of surgery and allopathic drugs. Naturopathy completes rejection of biomedicine and modern science in common. Naturopathic Medicine, or Naturopathy, is a system that uses natural substances to treat the patient and recognition that the patient's mental, emotional, and physical states must all be treated for a lasting effect. It also considers the environmental factors involved which on the whole disturb the normal functioning of the body and lead it to a morbid, weak and toxic state. The foundation of Naturopathic medicine is the vitalistic philosophy of the healing power of nature. Naturopathy insists that the healing of diseases with natural resources present in the environment like soil, water, sunlight & message etc.

KEY WORDS: Vital Force, Holistic Approach, Non-invasive, Naturopathic medicine, Naturopaths, Natural treatment.

INTRODUCTION:

Naturopathy is a distinct system of primary health care-an art, science, philosophy, and practice of diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of illness. Naturopathy is distinguished by the principles upon which its practice is based. These principles are continually re-examined in the light of scientific advances. The techniques of naturopathy are a blend of modern and traditional, scientific, and empirical methods.

Naturopathy is a holistic system of healing that incorporates a range of treatments and natural therapies, with the underlying belief that your body is able to fight infection and disease itself, given the right support. While conventional medicine is preoccupied with treating the symptoms of a disease or illness, naturopathy takes a more holistic approach to health care with a patients overall health a priority. Naturopathy believes that if one restores or maintains the equilibrium of the body, our immune system is better placed to defend itself against infection and disease. There is therefore no use of or reliance on medication, which would only serve to suppress the symptoms of an illness. Naturopathy is more likely to recommend a programme of exercise, a change in diet or a natural treatment.¹ Natural treatments and therapies are used

to ensure that the body and mind are able to remain resilient, and recover promptly. When we do succumb to an illness and contract a fever this is viewed as the body dealing with the source of the problem. The fever is therefore not viewed as a negative event, rather as part of the body's natural defence mechanism. The naturopathy is able to make use of different natural treatments together to allow the patient to have optimal health. Some of these are detoxification, hydrotherapy, physical medicine and lifestyle, and psychological counseling.² Detoxification is the process of eliminating toxins and other harmful chemicals from the body through fasting, drinking high volume of water and using enemas. Hydrotherapy or water therapy where the patient is recommended to take certain baths, water exercise, alternate hot and cold applications and drink natural spring water. Physical medicine is healing with the involvement of touch therapy and cold compresses as well as electric currents and sound waves in manipulating spine, bones and muscles. Lifestyle and psychological counseling includes guided imagery, hypnosis and many counseling methods in the treatment program. Naturopathy has addressed many conditions so that there is no limitation to what illnesses it can treat. This is because of the many therapies under this alternative medicine; acute to chronic conditions can be helped by the naturopath. Naturopathic medicine aims to heal the whole body and not just one area of it. It is best to allow nature to do the treatment and to enhance the capability of the body to heal itself. Doing this will not only get relief from a certain disease but boost the immune system of the body.³

PRINCIPLES OF NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE:

Some of the basic principles of naturopathic medicine are discussed below:-

1. **The Healing Power of Nature:** Human organism has a unique capacity to heal itself and that such healing is only aided, not accomplished, by a physician. The incredible bimolecular complexity of the numerous cyclic, cybernetic processes of the organism is believed to account for this capacity.⁴

2. **First Do No Harm:** Hippocratic concept would be that sometimes harmful therapies are needed but they should be reserved for the last resort and, if at all possible, avoided. This principle does not mean harmful therapies should never be used.⁴

3. **Health workers as Teacher:** One of naturopathy's primary roles is to educate the patient. This means that, to the extent possible and appropriate, information sharing with the patient should take place so that they are able to make informed decisions about their health care. Since the creation of a healthy lifestyle often rests on the choices and decisions the patient makes, this principle also implies that the patient has a responsibility to assist in the restoration of their own health. Another way to think about this that the "healing power of nature" can be constrained if significant obstacles are not addressed or if the patient is ignorant of their own self-healing processes. One of the naturopathic

physician's key tasks as a teacher is to empower the patient to appreciate and accept this responsibility.

4. **Prevention and Wellness:** Whenever possible, naturopathic physicians work to prevent illness rather than waiting until invasive treatment is required. Naturopathic physicians also strive to maintain wellness in all aspects rather than simply helping to prevent and treat illness. This principle implies that naturopathic medicine acknowledges the social and cultural antecedents of disease, since economic, cultural, and political factors can play as much of a role in determining one's health as the better established mental, emotional and physical causes of illness.⁴

5. **Treat the Cause:** Naturopathy typically strive to determine the underlying causes of illness and to address these to the extent that it is feasible. Naturopathy physicians also work to relieve suffering and palliate disease. Sometimes this may be all that is possible if the causes of illness cannot be identified in an individual patient, though the cause can often be treated while suffering is simultaneously alleviated. The naturopathic healthcare model holds, however, that it is imperative to avoid suppressing symptoms in most cases without addressing the cause of the dysfunction. It is believed that if this clinical guideline is not observed, the potential for even greater pathology may ultimately be created.²

6. **Treat the Whole Person:** Naturopathy focus on taking into account the totality of the human individual. Even a relatively minor physical ailment affecting one organ system may actually be a clue to larger pathology. The mind, body, and environment form a ecological whole that requires them to be considered together in the process of assessing health and disease.⁴

Naturopathic Approaches

Naturopathic treatment can take the form of a variety of therapies and approaches, including:

Dietary advice – a balanced diet is an essential component for a healthy body

Herbal remedies – traditional remedies utilized for hundreds of years for healing

Hydrotherapy – the healing power of water

Iridology – analysis of the iris for diagnosis of health issues

Massage – the manipulation of the tissues of the body for healing and relaxation

Nutritional supplements – especially useful when immunity is compromised by illness

Osteopathy – manipulation therapy concerned with the musculo-skeletal system⁵

Types of Naturopathy Treatment

Naturopathy is the gross distinction of the alternative treatment outside of the course of allopathic tradition of treatment. Naturopathic treatment is known to possess a holistic approach of combining various procedures of treatments and no singular form of treatment is given the priority and over emphasis over others and types of

naturopathic treatments are administered in accordance with the nature and gravity of the disease. Among various types of naturopathic treatments some are purely medicinal and some are practice or habit oriented.⁶

1. Ayurveda Treatment

Ayurveda is considered to be the soul of naturopathic treatment and this particular type of treatment is known to have potential for almost all kinds of diseases, especially life style diseases are more likely to find better cure through Ayurveda than other traditions of treatment. In Ayurveda our body is said to be organized in accordance with three major characteristics, namely, Vata, Pitta and Kapha. All the diseases are characterized with their relation with any of these characteristics or 'doshas'. According to the determination of the association of the disease with any of these 'doshas' medicine is prescribed along with a prescription for necessary nutrition and life style changes. Ayurvedic medicines are prepared from natural herbs and other natural produces and have no side effect on the body.⁷

2. Homeopathy Treatment

Homeopathy as a type of naturopathic treatment is characterized with the philosophy of treating the gross disharmony of the body rather than finding treatment for any particular disease. The philosophy is explained in the famous saying of the founder of homeopathy, Hahnemann that, 'treat the patient, not the disease' and this famous quotation well explains the way homeopathy works towards the treatment of any disease. Most importantly, homeopathic medicines are absolutely side effect less and application of the homeopathic medicine is more dependent on the diagnosis of the treatment and in homeopathic treatment one medicine can be prescribed for great many types of diseases and symptoms.⁸

3. Nutritional Treatment

In the recent time nutritional treatment as a major type of naturopathic treatment has reached unprecedented popularity because of its crucial and key role in the successful treatment of many life style oriented diseases like obesity, diabetes, hypertension, high blood pressure, digestive and liver disorder, kidney problems, etc.⁷

4. Yoga and Meditation

Yoga and meditation is the recommended treatment for natural eradication of many diseases and health disorders. Normally yoga and meditation is useful for the gross wellness of health and as a physical treatment comprising exercise and concentration as well as mental freshness building measure, this treatment is having long reaching implication for many chronic diseases and can cure these diseases completely.⁹

5. Unani Treatment

According to Unani medicine, management of any disease depends upon the diagnosis of disease. In the diagnosis, clinical features, i.e., signs, symptoms, laboratory features and mizaj (temperament) are important. Any cause and or

factor is countered by Quwwat-e-Mudabbira-e-Badan (the power of body responsible to maintain health), the failing of which may lead to quantitatively or qualitatively derangement of the normal equilibrium of akhlat (humors) of body which constitute the tissues and organs. This abnormal humor leads to pathological changes in the tissues anatomically and physiologically at the affected site and exhibits the clinical manifestations. After diagnosing the disease, Usoole Ilaj (principle of management) of disease is determined on the basis of etiology in the following pattern:

- Izalae Sabab (elimination of cause)
- Tadeele Akhlat (normalization of humors)
- Tadeele Aza (normalization of tissues/organs)

For fulfillment of requirements of principle of management, treatment is decided as per the Unani medicine which may be one or more of the following:

- Regimenal Therapy
- Cupping Therapy
- Aromatherapy
- Pharmacotherapy or surgery.¹⁰

6. Color Treatment

Color Therapy is a drugless method of treating the diseases by using different colors from sunlight. The rays of the sun contain all the essential elements needed to reestablish and maintain the health of the human body. Sun rays are made-up of seven colors – (1) Red (2) Yellow (3) Orange (4) Green (5) Blue (6) Indigo (7) Violet.

Red, Orange, Yellow Charged Water Nature:

Stimulating, expanding and heating property. Orange color mainly affects the stomach, liver, spleen, kidney and the intestine. It improves the blood circulation and tones up the muscles. It is helpful in cold, anemia, low blood pressure, rheumatism, sexual weakness, sprains, polio, paralysis, constipation, brain disorders, indigestion, diabetes and eye defects. This water removes weight and removes weakness. It also increases milk in nursing mother's breasts. It enhances mental power, willpower, intelligence and courage.

Green Charged Water:

Neutral, harmonizing and eliminating. It builds up muscles and gives energy. It strengthens the nerve center and purifies the blood. And it helps to expel foreign matter from the body and helps to perk up body and mind. It is a mixture of yellow and blue color. It is the king of colors. It keeps the body chemistry well balanced. Being highly medicinal and effective, it is of great help in the treatment of inflammatory conditions, fevers like typhoid and malaria, liver trouble, eye trouble, indigestion, small pox, boils, pimples, skin trouble, eczema, nightly seminal ejaculations, diabetes, boils, ulcers, headache, nervous trouble, dry cough, cold etc.¹⁷

Blue, Indigo, Violet Charged Water:

Contracting, cooling and soothing. It is a good antiseptic. It removes swelling caused by wind and help in curing burning sensation of any kind. It affects mostly the mouth, throat and the above part reaching the brain. It increases and stimulates the hormones and the antibodies. This water increases the resistance of our body from bacterial diseases. This color is related to human mentality. It is useful in skin diseases, high blood pressure, old ulcers, abdominal colic, dysentery, arthritis, over fatigue deafness, migraine etc. It is as helpful medicine in easing childbirth. It is very effective in high fever and headaches, and removes burning sensation from the body. It cures excessive bleeding during menstruation, and is an effective medicine in tonsillitis, swelling of gums, toothache, pyorrhea and other ailments of the throat. If one gets burnt on any part of the body, pouring blue waters or oil and giving blue rays on the affected part, will give him a quick recovery and will also help in removing the burning sensation.

White Solar Charged Water:

It can be prepared by keeping the water for 8-10 hours in direct sunlight. A liter of this water should be taken every morning. Those who are sick and sensitive can first start with one glass of water and gradually increase the amount. This water should be taken empty stomach in the morning. Without brushing your teeth. Nothing should be taken (tea, coffee, or breakfast) within one hour after taking this water. Other color charged waters could be taken after 45 minutes if needed.

Method to Prepare Colored Water:

Colored water (water treated with different color rays of the sun) can be prepared, by exposing water in transparent glass bottles of desired color in sunlight for 6-8 hours. To prepare blue water, use blue color bottle. If colored bottle is not available use white bottle with transparent colored sheets. After treating the water keep it for 1-2 hours to cool and then use it. Color combination described in ancient Hindu books Red, yellow and blue are the original natural colors. By mixing these colors other colors are formed. Red color when mixed with yellow color in equal proportion produces orange color and yellow color. If mixed with blue produces green color.⁴

7. Sun Bath

The exposure of body to sun rays at a particular time is termed as sun bath. It has many medicinal values. Sunlight is of prime importance for maintaining good health. Sun bath should be taken early in the morning. Sun showers three types of rays upon us. These are:-

Rays of visible (white) light:

Sunlight has seven different colors, which can be seen during rainbow. They are violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red. Each color has an effect on the body.

Infra red rays: These rays generate heat, and are beneficial in the winter. They have a good effect on the body. It relaxes the muscles, reduces swelling and removes pain.

Ultra violet rays: When these rays are exposed on the skin, vitamin D. is produced. Sunlight is the best available source of vitamin D. Ultraviolet rays keep the skin healthy, cures disease of the bone known as 'Rickets'.⁴

8. Acupuncture

Acupuncture is the stimulation of specific acupoints along the skin of the body involving various methods such as the application of heat, pressure, or laser or penetration of thin needles. It is a key component of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), which aims to treat a range of conditions. It is a form of complementary and alternative medicine. According to traditional Chinese medicine, stimulating specific acupuncture points corrects imbalances in the body through channels known as meridians. Scientific investigation has not found any histological or physiological correlates for traditional Chinese concepts such as *qi*, meridians, and acupuncture points.¹¹

9. Manipulative Therapy

The three most notable forms of manual therapy are manipulation, mobilization and massage. Manipulation is the artful introduction of a rapid rotational, sheer or distraction force into an articulation. Manipulation is often associated with an audible popping sound caused by the instantaneous breakdown of gas bubbles that form during joint cavitation. Mobilization is a slower, more controlled process of articular and soft-tissue (myofascial) stretching intended to improve bio-mechanical elasticity. Massage is typically the repetitive rubbing, stripping or kneading of myofascial tissues to principally improve interstitial fluid dynamics.¹²

10. Psychological Counseling

Counseling specially facilitates personal and interpersonal functioning across the life span with a focus on emotional, social, vocational, educational, health-related, developmental, and organizational concerns. Through the integration of theory, research, and practice, and with sensitivity to multicultural issues, this specialty encompasses a broad range of practices that help people improve their well-being, alleviate distress and maladjustment, resolve crises, and increase their ability to live more highly functioning lives. Counseling psychology is unique in its attention both to normal developmental issues and to problems associated with physical, emotional, and mental disorders.¹³

11. Reflexology

Reflexology is a naturopathic treatment involving the physical act of applying pressure to the feet, hands, or ears with specific thumb, finger, and hand techniques without the use of oil or lotion. It is based on what reflexologists claim to be a system of zones and reflex areas that they say reflect an image of the body on the feet and hands, with the

premise that such work affects a physical change to the body.¹⁴ There is no consensus among reflexologists on how reflexology is supposed to work; a unifying theme is the idea that areas on the foot correspond to areas of the body, and that by manipulating these one can improve health. Reflexologists divide the body into ten equal vertical zones, five on the right and five on the left.¹⁵

Naturopathy Benefits:

The benefits of naturopathy are many and varied, and are used to treat a variety of conditions including:¹⁶

- Allergies
- Arthritis
- Depression
- Digestive problems
- Infertility
- Menstrual issues
- Reduced immunity
- Skin conditions; and
- Weight Loss & many others

CONCLUSION:

Natural healing has been practiced since the dawn of human history in one form or another. Every culture and race has its own unique history of healing people using the natural resources provided by the planet upon which we live. In naturopathy today we use many of the skills and a lot of the knowledge that has been passed on from before recorded history by shamans, herb women and other healers and have married these with skills and knowledge that has been developed over the last century or so. Unlike allopathic medicine which treats symptoms only, naturopathy view symptoms as a body's attempt to heal itself and work towards curing the underlying illness and supporting the person as they heal themselves with the use of diet, exercise, herbal remedies and other natural treatments. Naturopathic approaches include Dietary advice, Herbal remedies, Hydrotherapy, counseling, Massage & Nutritional supplements. Naturopaths are therapists who use natural therapies and who work with their patients to empower them to make informed decisions about their health and life and support them throughout the treatment program. They believe that the patient heals him or herself and see their patients in a holistic framework, working with every facet of the person and their life.

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