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## Original Research

### Assessment of awareness of Ayurvedic Medicine

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#### ABSTRACT:

**Background:** Ayurveda has the distinction of being the oldest medical system known to man and the oldest and most comprehensive spiritual teachings in the world. The present study was conducted to assess awareness on ayurvedic medicine. **Materials & Methods:** 250 adult subjects of both genders were included. A self-administered questionnaire based on Ayurvedic medicine for healthy lifestyle was prepared and distributed among all. Responses were recorded. **Results:** Out of 250, males were 150 and females were 100. Awareness on ayurvedic medicine was seen among 82%, 55% thought it to be expensive, 74% found it effective, 45% found it harmful, 52% thought that it can be taken with modern medication, 78% found that it is important to keep personal hygiene for maintaining healthy lifestyle, 85% found that it is possible to maintain health and treatment in Ayurveda, 83% replied that special diet is needed during taking Ayurvedic medication, 89% replied that exercise is needed during taking Ayurvedic medication, 42% have taken Ayurveda medicine previously and 14% have encountered side effects. The difference was significant ( $P < 0.05$ ). **Conclusion:** Most of the subjects had sufficient awareness regarding usefulness of Ayurveda on general health.

**Key words:** Ayurveda, Health, Medicine

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#### INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda has the distinction of being the "oldest medical system known to man and the oldest and most comprehensive spiritual teachings in the world". Ayurveda is based on the principle of maintaining a balance between the interrelated relationships within the body and mind.<sup>1</sup> It helps the patient to understand the benefits of knowing their body and mind and to live in intimate relationship with nature. Ayurvedic literature has remedies for age-related diseases like memory loss, osteoporosis, diabetic wounds, etc. for which no efficient medicine is available in modern therapy.<sup>2</sup> Ayurvedic formulations should be standardized on the basis of active principle or major compound (s) along with fingerprints. Ayurveda is a holistic system of medical science and is the oldest healing science which is almost 5000 years old.<sup>3</sup> Ayurveda contains two Sanskrit words: Ayu which means life or lifespan and Veda meaning knowledge. Thus, Ayurveda means "the science of life." This system of medicine was shaped in the ancient lands of

India. Hindu Vedas consider Ayurveda as a gift of Gods to mankind which was communicated to the saints and sages of India through deep meditation.<sup>4</sup> Ayurveda is based on the fundamental principle of preventing and treating illness, maintaining a balance in the body, mind, and consciousness through proper drinking, diet, and lifestyle, as well as herbal remedies. Even today Ayurvedic medicine maintains its holistic approach to health and treatment of diseases.<sup>5</sup> Ayurveda identifies that there are three basic types of energy in the body mainly Vata, pitta and Kapha. Vata is the energy of movement. It controls bodily functions associated with motion, including blood circulation, breathing, blinking, muscle and tissue movements, heartbeat and movements of cytoplasm and cell membrane.<sup>6</sup> The present study was conducted to assess awareness on ayurvedic medicine.

**MATERIALS & METHODS**

The present study comprised of 250 adult subjects of both genders. The consent was obtained from all subjects.

Data such as name, age, gender etc. was recorded. A self-administered questionnaire based on Ayurvedic

medicine for healthy lifestyle was prepared and distributed among all. Responses were recorded. Data thus obtained were subjected to statistical analysis. P value < 0.05 was considered significant.

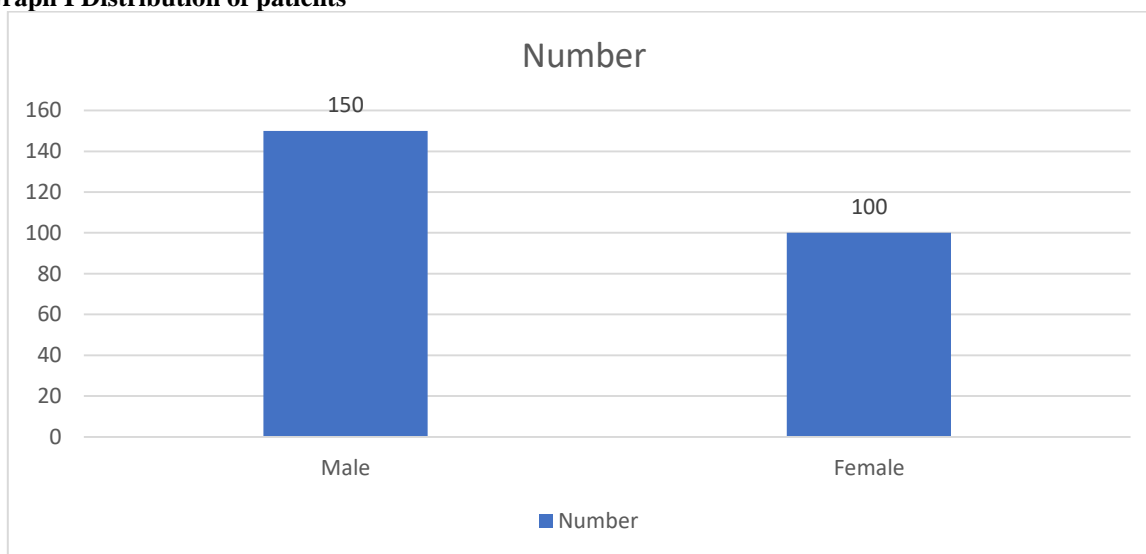
**RESULTS**

**Table I Distribution of patients**

Total- 250		
Gender	Male	Female
Number	150	100

Table I. graph I shows that out of 250, males were 150 and females were 100.

**Graph I Distribution of patients**

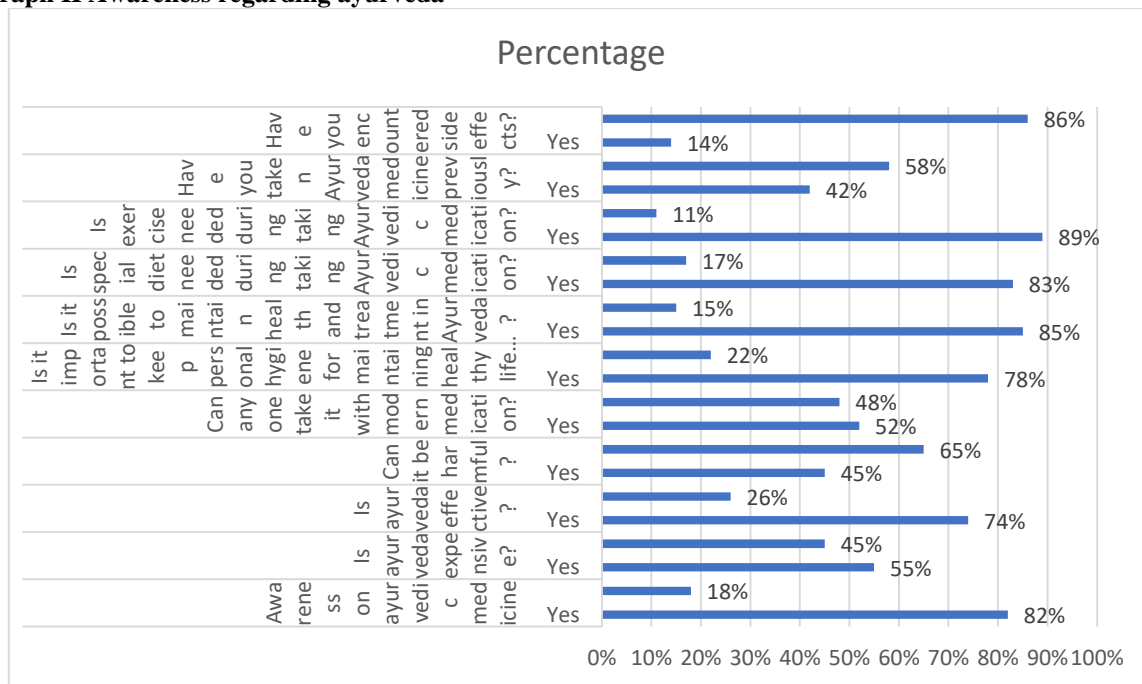


**Table II Awareness regarding ayurveda**

Questionnaire	Response	Percentage	P value
Awareness on ayurvedic medicine	Yes	82%	0.01
	No	18%	
Is ayurveda expensive?	Yes	55%	0.92
	No	45%	
Is ayurveda effective?	Yes	74%	0.02
	No	26%	
Can it be harmful?	Yes	45%	0.82
	No	65%	
Can anyone take it with modern medication?	Yes	52%	0.94
	No	48%	
Is it important to keep personal hygiene for maintaining healthy lifestyle	Yes	78%	0.02
	No	22%	
Is it possible to maintain health and treatment in Ayurveda?	Yes	85%	0.01
	No	15%	
Is special diet needed during taking Ayurvedic medication?	Yes	83%	0.01
	No	17%	
Is exercise needed during taking Ayurvedic medication?	Yes	89%	0.01
	No	11%	
Have you taken Ayurveda medicine previously?	Yes	42%	0.93
	No	58%	
Have you encountered side effects?	Yes	14%	0.01
	No	86%	

Table II, graph II shows that awareness on ayurvedic medicine was seen among 82%, 55% thought it to be expensive, 74% found it effective, 45% found it harmful, 52% thought that it can be taken with modern medication, 78% found that it is important to keep personal hygiene for maintaining healthy lifestyle, 85% found that it is possible to maintain health and treatment in Ayurveda, 83% replied that special diet is needed during taking Ayurvedic medication, 89% replied that exercise is needed during taking Ayurvedic medication, 42% have taken Ayurveda medicine previously and 14% have encountered side effects. The difference was significant ( $P < 0.05$ ).

**Graph II Awareness regarding ayurveda**



**DISCUSSION**

Veda Vyasa, one of the greatest sages of India is considered to have written the Vedas for the first time. Ayurveda, recognized as new age medicine now, represents the science of life and longevity originating in the Vedic tradition of India.<sup>7</sup> Based on the principle of eternal life, this medical system has a vast body of knowledge covering eight branches. Its major premise involves the symbiosis of mind, body and spirit. Any imbalance in this synthesis results in physical ailments.<sup>8</sup>This ancient Indian science of healing seeks to re-establish the harmony between the body and its habitat by creating the optimum health environment. The entire science of ayurveda is based on the ‘Five Great Elements’ (Panchabhuta) theory. These five elements are earth (prithvi), water (jal), fire (agni or tej), air (vayu) and ether or space (akash). Ayurveda comprehends body, mind and spirit likewise and has specific methods for working on each.<sup>9</sup> It divides the constitution of people into three humoral categories- Vata (ether/air), Pitta (fire) and Kapha (water/earth). Vata rules mental mobility. Pitta or fire, governs digestion and assimilation on all levels from food to ideas and Kapha or water, governs form and substance and is responsible for weight, cohesion and stability.<sup>10</sup> The present study was conducted to assess awareness on ayurvedic medicine.

We found that out of 250, males were 150 and females were 100. Nandini et al<sup>11</sup> found that 82% (90 members) of the population were aware of the ayurvedic medicine and the rest 17.4% (19 members) were unaware of it. It was observed that 45% (50 members) of the population were aware that Ayurvedic medicine is expensive and the rest were not aware that Ayurvedic medicine is expensive. It is seen that 85% (91 members) of the participants say that ayurvedic medicines are effective and 14.2% (15 members) of the population say that Ayurvedic medicines are not effective for the South Indian population.

We found that awareness on ayurvedic medicine was seen among 82%, 55% thought it to be expensive, 74% found it effective, 45% found it harmful, 52% thought that it can be taken with modern medication, 78% found that it is important to keep personal hygiene for maintaining healthy lifestyle, 85% found that it is possible to maintain health and treatment in Ayurveda, 83% replied that special diet is needed during taking Ayurvedic medication, 89% replied that exercise is needed during taking Ayurvedic medication, 42% have taken Ayurveda medicine previously and 14% have encountered side effects. Ayurvedic medicine (also called Ayurveda) is one of the world’s oldest medical systems. It originated in India and has evolved there over thousands of years.

In the United States, Ayurvedic medicine is considered complementary and alternative medicine (CAM)—more specifically, a CAM whole medical system.<sup>12</sup> Many therapies used in Ayurvedic medicine are also used on their own as CAM—for example, herbs, massage, and specialized diet. Ayurvedic medicine aims at maintaining and restoring body's own capability to have balance and fight with ailments. Ayurvedic medicines can be safely used with other conventional medicines. They are non-toxic and non-invasive.<sup>13</sup> Ayurvedic medicines are widely used to treat several physical as well as psychological conditions. Arthritis, obesity, hypertension, heart disease, nervous disorder, colds, colitis, constipation, obesity, skin problem, ulcer, acne, allergies, asthma, anxiety, chronic fatigue syndrome, depression, diabetes, flu and immune problems. Ayurvedic practitioners claim that with ayurvedic medicines one can easily get relieve from stress and problem in metabolism.<sup>14</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Authors found that most of the subjects had sufficient awareness regarding usefulness of Ayurveda on general health.

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