

Classical presentation of *Shaarira Rachana* w.s.r. to *Vedas, Samhitas* and other ancient literatures

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REVIEW ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is considered as traditional Indian medical system which encompasses great knowledge about human anatomy and physiology. Acharya Susruta presented several aspects related to human anatomy along with utility of dissection process. The ancient Acharya of Indian system emphasizes structural organization of human body. Susruta has described anatomical aspects of body in *Sharira sthana*; this section emphasizes that origin of universe can be correlated with physical and metaphysical state of body. The ancient Acharya presented human body as an extension of the embryo. The classical texts presented several concepts related to the human anatomy (*Rachana Shaarira*) and this article elaborated same.

Keywords: Ayurveda, *Rachana Shaarira*, Anatomy, Physiology.

Introduction

Rachana Sharir (Human Anatomy) is one of the important aspects of health sciences since all other branches of medical system mainly depends upon the knowledge of *Rachana Sharir*. *Rachana Sharir* considered as fundamental subject of health science and management of health problems merely depends upon knowledge of anatomy and physiology (*Rachana & Kriya Sharir*). It is believed that knowledge about *Rachana Sharir* and *Kriya Sharir* helps physician to become perfect in his/her profession practice. Therefore *Acharya* paid prime importance about the knowledge of *Rachana Sharir*.

The *Vedas* of Indian system and *Acharya* described that how human body originated from *Panchamahabhutas* and relation between concepts of *Trigunas* and physiology of human body. Similarly development of embryo and health of fetus correlated with quality of *Shukra* (Sperm) and ovum which contributes towards the process of fertilization. Moreover *Acharya* emphasizes factors required for

healthy progeny. The concept of congenital anomalies also presented in ayurveda which mainly occurs due to the anatomical defects or physiological disturbances. Present article described periodical and demographical presentations of ancient physician related to the *Rachana Sharir*. **Figure 1** depicted some specific treaties which encompass knowledge about human anatomy. (1-3)

Various presentations of *Rachana Sharir*

As per ayurveda the life start from embryo and biological aspects related to the pregnant women (*Garbhini*) presented in ayurveda texts of *Rachana Sharir*. The developmental stages of fetus, related abnormalities, month wise nourishment of pregnant women and placental transportation also presented in text of ayurveda as anatomical and physiological perspectives of *Garbhini*.

The vital points of body described as *Marma* in context to *Rachana Sharir* the knowledge about these vital points helps in surgical intervention since any accidental injury to these points can cause fatal impact.

The knowledge about *Marma* can be correlated with concept of surface anatomy and topographic anatomy. The concept of *Marma*

can also be correlated with concept of acupressure as per modern science.

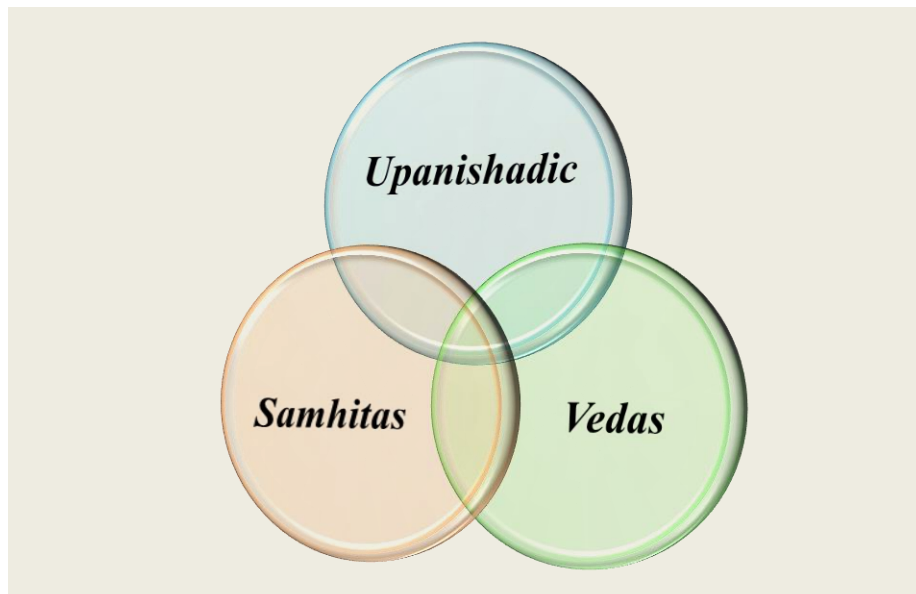


Figure 1. Some ancient treaties which encompass knowledge about human anatomy

Ayurveda *Rachana Sharir* presented some veins and their divisions which are contraindicated to be punctured, the vein liable to puncture for the management of some diseases also described in the context of *Rachana Sharir*. The vein puncture recommended in diseases like *Udara* and *Gridhrasi*, etc.

The classical texts of ayurveda also differentiated amongst the various types of vessels and in this regard veins and arteries presented as *Siras* and *Dhamanis* respectively. Ayurveda *Rachana Sharir* explained origin, division and distribution of *Siras* and *Dhamanis*.

Similarly *Rachana Sharir* emphasizes concept of *Srotas* as minute channels of body which helps in the process of transportation. These *Srotas* supply nutrients to the tissue, eliminates wastes and helps in circulations of *Rasa*. The literatures of *Rachana Sharir* not only presented origin of *Srotas* but also elaborated their distribution and materials to be carried out.

The description of skin and its layers also available in classical ayurveda texts, these skin layers considered responsible for specific functions. *Avabhasini*, *Lohita*, *Shweta*, *Tamra*,

Vedini, *Rohini* and *Mamsadhara* are different layers of skin described by ayurveda science and all ayurveda texts described similar anatomical constitution of skin. (3,4-6)

Presentations of *Rachana Sharir* as per Ancient Period (*Kala*) of Ayurveda

Upanishadic period

The *Upanishadic* period around 800 B.C. witnessed anatomical evaluation of human body and ancient literature explored anatomical aspects related to the development of embryo and tissues. This period encompasses knowledge about human dissection and divided human body into three major portions extremities, neck and trunk.

The *Veda* period presented knowledge about heart, lungs, kidneys and stomach. *Dhamanis* described as arteries and *Siras* as veins. The *Atharva Veda* encompasses great knowledge about human anatomy and many ayurveda physician adopted presentation of *Atharva Veda* related to the human anatomy.

Before Vedic Kala:

The period around 3000 BC considered as period before *Vedic Kala*, in this time archaeological excavations presented paintings

of animals and their parts. These types of painting mainly presented vital parts of body.

Vedic Period:

Period around 1500 BC considered as *Vedic* period in which four *Vedas*; *Rigveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Samveda* and *Atharvaveda* came in practices. The fourth *Veda* presented concept of Ayurveda while anatomical description presented in *Atharvaveda*. The Indian classics of medical system like; *Charaka Samhita* and *Susruta Samhita* adopted anatomical terms presented by *Atharvaveda*.

The major anatomical presentation of this period is as follows:

- ❖ The concepts of vessels; *Dhamni* and *Sira* presented
- ❖ The descriptions about *Snayu* also given
- ❖ *Atharvaveda* mentioned connection of *Hridaya* with *Manas*
- ❖ The shape of *Hridaya* referred like lotus bud
- ❖ Concept of *Nadi* and *Mastishka* also presented
- ❖ Number of *Asthi* presented as 360

In 460-370 BC Hippocrates first described human anatomy without performing dissections; these classics presented various descriptions based on the inspection of skeletal and observations of living animals. These classics presented shape of the bones but lacking correct information about brain and arteries.

In 384-322 BC Aristotle dissected animals similar to humans and presented structure of the aorta but he failed to describe correct information about origin of ureters and nerves.

In 310-250 B.C Erasistratus the physician from Islands presented description of heart, differentiate between cerebrum and cerebellum and presented functions of trachea.

Anatomical description as per various demographical/regional classics:

The major presentation of Egyptian classics described tendons or vessels or nerves under the category of 52 *Metu*. The word neuro first

describe with cerebrospinal fluid. The Greece classics witnessed development period of human anatomy started in Greece. However dissection of human body after death not allowed initially due to the religious reason. Alcmaeon in Italy first describe presence of optic nerve and eustachian tube, the Italian classics also emphasizes role of brain towards consciousness and intelligence. The Chalcedon (Turkish) physician dissects human body and described anatomical nomenclature including description of arachnoid membranes, venous sinuses, origin of nerves and coverings of liver. These classics first presented name of duodenum and described relation of pulse conduction with pumping of heart. *Acharya Sushruta* the Indian physician emphasizes criteria to select body for dissection and methods of preservation. The Roman physician presented dissection of animals especially monkeys and described information about diaphragm, laryngeal nerve and pituitary gland. (6-11)

Conclusion

Ayurveda described several aspects related to the human anatomy and physiology and in this regards *Acharya Susruta* elaborated various perspectives related to the dissection process and preservation of human cadaver. The ancient literatures of ayurveda described structural organization of human body and correlates constitution of universe with compositions of human body. The knowledge of *Rachana Sharir* (Human Anatomy) is very essential to understand and control pathogenesis of diseases. Anatomy and physiology (*Rachana & Kriya Sharir*) helps physician to plan treatment of specific diseases and in this regards ancient *Acharya* of ayurveda mentioned various anatomical aspects adopted from *Vedic* knowledge.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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