Significance of Sara Pariksha in Ayurveda: A Critical Review

Pragya Sharma¹*, Mahesh Vyasa¹, Meera K. Bhojani¹, Raman Kaushik²

¹Department of Samhita and Siddhant, All India Institute of Ayurveda, New Delhi, India
²Research Officer (Ayurveda), Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences, New Delhi, India

Abstract

In Ayurveda, Sara Pariksha is one among the ten types of methods to examine a patient, stated as Dashvidha Aattara Pariksha. Sara Pariksha primarily determines the strength of a person. Acharya Chakrapani illustrated Sara as ‘Vishudhataro Dhatu’, which means the essence of all Dhatu. Eight types are explained by Acharya Charaka, each one characterized by both physical as well as psychological parameters. These contribute to the physician in deciding the Bala of a person. This review study mainly focuses on material available on Dhatu Sara in Ayurvedic literature, Brihat Samhita, text related to astrology. Various research papers and studies have been reviewed and referred in the present study that establishes its significance in Ayurveda. Studies so far conducted on Asthi Sara, Majja Sara, Rakta Sara and overall Dhatu Sara have been reported in this article. It can be concluded that Sara is one of the parameters for the assessment of strength of an individual. Further, more studies can be carried out to find out its relation with recent laboratory parameters. Development of some standardized tools or parameters for the assessment of Dhatu Sara may be an important contribution to clinical research. This can be of great help to physicians in maintaining the uniformity in assessing the qualities of each Dhatu Sara. The Sara Pariksha is significant in analyzing the Bala Pramana of a patient. On the basis of Bala, the physician decides the type of medicine and its dose to be given in Samshodhana or Samshumana Chikitsa.

Keywords: Sara Pariksha, Bala, Dhatu Sara, Majja Sara, Rakta Sara

*Author for Correspondence E-mail: dr.pragya03@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda, Sara Pariksha is one among the ten types of methods to examine a person or a patient, which is described as Dashvidha Aattara Pariksha. Sara Pariksha primarily determines the strength of a person. On the basis of excellence of Saptaadhatu and Sattva, eight types of Sara have been explained by Acharya Charaka [1]. Acharya Chakrapani has described Sara as ‘Vishudhataro Dhatu’, which means the essence of all Dhatu [2]. Every particular Sara is characterized by both physical as well as psychological parameters. These parameters and characters are helpful in deciding the strength of a person. Physician should not be captivated to decide if any person is strong or weak from his large or small body structure or appearance. Small, lean and thin persons seem to be strong enough. It is just like “Pippilika Bhara Haranvat Siddhi” which denotes that small looking ants can carry much more weight than its own weight [3]. Ayurveda emphasizes on maintaining the health of healthy and treating the diseased one. The Sara Pariksha can be carried out in both diseased as well healthy persons to know the Bala Pramana. The Bala has importance in context of Samshodhana also, as quoted in Kalpasthan of Charak Samhita that Madhyam (average) and Heena (inferior) Bala personas should be given Madhyam (average) and Mridu (mild) Samshodhana [4]. Aushadha Kala also depends on the Bala of the patient. Balvana Rogi is given medicine without food early in the morning and Durbala Rogi is instructed to take medicine mixed with light and wholesome food [5]. There is a strong relationship in Chikitsa and Rogi Bala [6]. The Dwividha Upakrama told in Charaka Sutrasthana also depends on the Bala of the person. Even it has been told in Samhita that a wise physician should treat the patient after examining these ten entities carefully and not just with formulations alone, these are Dosha, Aushadha, Desha, Kala, Satmya, Agni, Satva, Oak, Vaya and Bala [7]. In
the management of a disease, physician must select the Panchkarma procedures or oral medicine and its dose according to the Bala of the patient [8].

All the available Ayurvedic literatures, related peer-reviewed articles and research papers published in distinguished journals on Sara pariksha are reviewed, critically analyzed and reported in this article.

**REVIEW RESULTS**

Acharya Sushruta classified Sara in eight types and described the characters of each one [9]. Among these eight, Satvra Sara denotes longer life and better prosperity than the Twaka Sara. Sushruta Samhita also emphasized that a physician can treat a patient more effectively, if he assesses the life expectancy of patient on the basis of the criteria of measurement of each body part and Sara Pariksha [10]. Acharya Kashyapa has mentioned nine types of Sara with Oja Sara as an additional kind of Sara [11]. Acharya Vaghbhat has only given the types of Sara without describing their characteristics [12, 13].

The author of Brihat Samhita, Acharya Varahmihir has described Sara Pariksha or nature and characters of persons according to Sara [14]. There is similarity in characters and result of Sara described in Brihat Samhita and Charak Samhita. For example, the symptoms of Rakta Sara in Brihat Samhita are ‘reddish palate, lips, teeth, gums, tongue, anus, hands, feet and eyes.’ Similarly in Charak Samhita, Raktasara persons have ‘the ears, eyes, mouth, tongue, lips, nose, hands and sole of the feet, nails, forehead and genitals unctuous, reddish and full of lusture’. On the basis of physical characters, the knowledge of mental characters and physical and mental strength can be understood [14].

The qualities of eight types of Sara according to Acharya Charak and Sushruta are listed in the Table 1.

Sara has also been classified into Pravara, Madhyama and Avara types [23]. Persons having Sarva Sara have great power, blissful, can tolerate pressure/good endurance, good self-confidence in initiating any work, always inclined to welfare activities, firm and well built body, correct gait, unctuous and deep voice, enjoying wellbeing, power, wealth and deserve respect, delayed ageing process, less affected by diseases and have large number of children with similar traits and long life [23]. The persons having qualities opposite to the above are Asara persons, whereas Madhyam Sara persons have some (3–4) qualities of Pravarasara [24].

**DISCUSSION**

Sara Pariksha is being useful for understanding the physical as well as psychological strength of a person. It also helps in rightly assessing the dose and type of medicine to be prescribed on the basis of strength of the patient. The assessment of different Dhatura Sara and their association with distinct parameters have been taken up by various researchers. These parameters are mostly subjective that may contribute in analysis of Sara of the person.

**Asthisarata and Bone Mineral Density**

A study analyzed that individuals showing more percentage of Asthisarata have better bone density. It turned up to be a perfect positive correlation between bone density and Asthisarata. Although Mamsasarata also found a correlation but it was significantly smaller [25]. This can be a groundwork for the assessment of Asthisarata by a physician through modern parameters. Anthropometric measurements of ankle, knee and other joints and bones for the assessment of Asthisarata can be more explored for close relationship. As mentioned in Ayurvedic classics, individuals having the excellence of Asthi are characterized by robust heels, ankles, knees, fore-arms, collar-bones, chin, head, joints, bones, nails and teeth.

**Dhatu Sarata in Demented Children**

Another study looked for the variance of Dhatu Sarata in mentally retarded and healthy children and derived statistically highly significant result in healthy except in Mansa and Asthisarata. Satvasarata was almost on lower side in mentally retarded children [26]. The development of Mansa, Meda and Asthi dhatu manifested during adulthood, so this
Table 1: Qualities of Eight Types of Sara.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Sara</th>
<th>Acharya Charak</th>
<th>Acharya Sushruta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Twak Sara</td>
<td>Skin: Unctuous, smooth, soft, clear, lustrous</td>
<td>Skin and hair glistening and soft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hair: Fine, sparse, deep rooted, delicate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mental features: Happiness, good fortune, power, enjoyment, intelligence, learning, health, cheerfulness, longevity [15]</td>
<td>Unctuous and coppery nails, eyes, palate, tongue, lips, palm and soles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rakta Sara</td>
<td>Ear, eye, face, tongue, nose, lips: palm of hands, sole of feet, nails, forehead and genitals are unctuous, red and brilliant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mental features: Happiness, sharp intellect, magnanimity, tenderness, moderate strength, lack of endurance and tolerance to heat [16]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mamsa Sara</td>
<td>Temples, forehead, nape, eyes, cheek, jaws, neck, shoulders, abdomen, axillae, chest, hands, feet and joints: Equipped with firm heavy and good looking muscles</td>
<td>Body without any depression, the bony joints are concealed and muscles are well developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mental features: Forbearance, restraint, lack of greed, wealth, learning, happiness, simplicity, health, strength and longevity [17]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Meda Sara</td>
<td>Complexion, voice, eyes, hair, skin hairs, nails, teeth, lips, urine and faeces: Unctuous</td>
<td>Unctuous urine and sweat, melodious voice, fleshy body and intolerance to exertion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mental features: Wealth, power, happiness, enjoyment, charity, simplicity and delicacy in dealings [18]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Asthi Sara</td>
<td>Heels, ankles, knees, elbows, collar bones, chin, head and joints: Prominent</td>
<td>Big head and shoulders and firm teeth, jaw, bone and nails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bones, nails and teeth: Large</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mental features: Enthusiastic, active, enduring, having strong and firm body as well as longevity [19]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Majja Sara</td>
<td>Soft organs, strong, unctuous complexion and sweet voice, prominent, long and rounded joints</td>
<td>Person is not lean, has superior strength, melodious and resonant voice, auspicious features and big eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mental features: Long-lived, strong and endowed with learning, wealth, understanding, progeny and respect [20]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sukra Sara</td>
<td>Look: Charming person, looking with charm, eyes as if filled with milk, immensely exhilarated</td>
<td>Unctuous, compact and white bone, teeth and nails; with numerous progeny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teeth: Unctuous, rounded, firm, even and compact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Having pleasant and unctuous complexion and voice brilliant, having prominent buttocks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mental features: Liked by women, are strong and endowed with happiness, supremacy, health, wealth, honor and progeny [21]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sattva Sara</td>
<td>Endowed with memory, devotion and are grateful, learned, pure, courageous, skillful, resolute, fighting in battles with prowess, free from anxiety, having well directed and serious intellect and activities, engaged in virtuous acts [22]</td>
<td>Possesses memory, devotion, wisdom, purity and valour, with tendency in welfare activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Majjasara

A study conducted on Majjasara in a population of 100 was to grade and objectivise the characters of Majjasara mentioned in Ayurvedic literature [27]. Among 100, nobody was Uttamsara (i.e. Majjasara above 70%), 12 individuals were Madhyamsara (40–70%) and
While efficiency is determined largely by factors such as age, sex, and disease states, the study by Uttamsarata showed positive correlation with MHC, MCH, CI and MCV. MCH showed positive correlation with highest correlation value [28]. These laboratory parameters can be a foundation for Raktasarata. Survey performed for Raktu Sara Pariksha on 372 healthy individuals revealed to have normal laboratory parameters in Pravara Rakta Sara. The study also shows that out of 63 Pravara Rakta Sara cases, 62 were found to be Sarva Rasa Saatmya [29]. While considering gender wise Dhatusarata, the value of haematological parameters in each Dhatusara are higher in males as compared to females according to a study. Higher Sara scores in males are suggestive of more strength as compared to females [30].

**Dhatu Sarata and Bala**

Research study revealed that persons with Uttamsarata are excellent with good physical efficiency index, while Madhyamsara persons have low average physical efficiency index and Heensarata is associated with poor physical efficiency index [31]. Aforesaid study is a clear guide that Dhatusarata state about the Bala of a person.

**Dhatu Sarata Computation**

While expressing the various clinical parameters according to Ayurveda, difficulties arise in uniformity of calculation. In a study, weighted mean seems to hold great potential while depicting Dhatu Sarata [32]. This method does not overlook the portion/share of the individual Dhatus to overall Sarata in that individual; and also bestow the researcher to target on the status of individual Dhatus. Various research studies have been conducted on particular Dhatusara comprehensively. But some areas still remain passive. Measurement of firmness of muscles over neck-temporal-shoulders region may be considered to explore further purview of Mamsasara Pariksha. After all, Mamsasara persons are characterized by stability, heaviness and firmness of muscles.

From the above studies it can be interpreted that there are lots of factors that are associated and dependent on Sarata of an individual. Sara is somehow related with Agni, as Dhatus are formed after the Jatharagni acted upon the food that is ingested. After Jatharagnipaka, it is subjected to Bhootagnipaka. Then Dhatwagnipaka occurs that works for the nourishment and replenishment of Dhatus. Dhatus have two states in the body, Poshakadhatu and Poshyaadhatu. Sara is the direct measurement of Sihayil/poshya Dhatus, which is being nourished [33]. Strength of Dhatus depends on Ahara-Vihara and Agni of the person. For a healthy person, equilibrium of Dosa, Dhatus and Mala is essential as these are fundamental constituents of the body. Out of seven Dhatus (Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa, Meda, Asthi, Majja and Shukra), the former one gives nourishment to the next Dhatus. The high quality of each Dhatus will show characters as mentioned in classics.

**CONCLUSION**

Sara being one of the parameters for the assessment of strength of an individual has potentiality for advanced research in this domain. Raktasarata can be positively correlated with blood indices MCHC, MCH, CI and MCV. Bone mineral density can be one of the criteria for Asthisara estimation. Further, more studies can be carried out to find out its relation with recent laboratory parameters. Researchers can develop some standardized tools or parameters for the assessment Dhatu Sara of an individual. This can be of great help to physicians in maintaining the uniformity in assessing the qualities of each Dhatusara. The Panchavidiha Kashaya Kalpana (Swarasa, Kalka, Kwatha, Sheeta and Phanta) is to be selected with due regard to the strength of the patient and disease. All these are not equally useful in all cases; they have to be determined person to person. Dhatusarata gives an outlook about the Bala of the Aatura. Additional scope of study can be response of Rasayana therapy in particular and overall Dhatusarata. Further area of exploration could be about the basis of features mentioned in Brihat Samhita regarding Dhatusarata, as it is an astrology based treatise.
Clinical Significance
The Sara Pariksha is significant in analyzing the Bala Praman a of a patient. On the basis of Bala, the physician decides the type of medicine and its dose to be given in Samshodhana or Samshamanachikitsa. Even the Aushadha Kala is also dependent on the Bala of the patient. Dhatu Sara assessment can also be advantageous in Samprapti Vighatana Chikitsa. It gives an insight regarding the status of individual Dhatu.

REFERENCES
2. Ibid. 102nd verse (commentary). 278p.
3. Ibid. 115th verse. 278p.
5. Ibid. Chikitsasthan, 30th Adhyaaya, 297th verse. 646p.
16. Ibid, verse104th.
17. Ibid, verse 105th.
18. Ibid, verse 106th.
22. Ibid, verse 110th.
23. Ibid, verse 111th.
24. Ibid, verse 112th.
30. Gunawat CP, Gehlot S. Variation of Hematological Parameters in Different...


**Cite this Article**