

ANCIENT INDIAN MEDICAL EDUCATION SYSTEM: AS SAID BY SUSRUTA

Abstract

Medical Education System regulates the education procedure in medical science. It is important for education and training of the students of medical science. Selection of students, training, education, syllabus for theoretical as well as practical training etc. are the main and important components of the Medical Education System. Now well organized system is developed in state, national and even in international level to look after the medical education system in different levels. India, being the advanced and hub of civilization since long past has systematic and organized systems for maintenance of discipline, integrity and quality in all sectors. Charaka and Susruta are the two founder scholars of Ayurvedic system of medicine. Charaka Samhita and Susruta Samhita are the two basic classics of Ayurveda. These two Samhita have discussed a lot in different fields of medical science which was then called as Ayurveda. It is a matter of pride that starting from the selection of students for medical education upto their training and permission to enter into the practical field as Vaidya (physician) are included in different references by the two scholars in their respective samhitas. Discussion on the ancient medical education system as discussed by the great Ayurvedic scholar, Susruta seems to be beneficial and important even in the present context.

Key words: Medical education system, important components, Charaka and Susruta, Ayurveda, beneficial and important

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Regulation of the medical education system with special reference to selection of student, providing education, preparation of syllabus for theoretical as well as practical training, regulation of the education system is important for creation of a future generation in the field of medical system. A prescribed procedure in selection of students, providing education and training to the admitted students, licensing to the students after completion of the education and training are the important points to be regulated appropriately following an appropriate system. Presently a number of regulations are accepted and taken in force by the state and central Government for appropriate and disciplined maintenance of the Medical Education System in state as well as in the national level.

Ayurveda, the ancient medical system, also was well regulated by some prescribed rules and regulations as laid by the great scholars Charaka and Susruta which are very interesting and informative. Susruta's views on the education system seems to be more elaborate and systematic. Hence a discussion on the concepts of the Medical Education System in India is considered to be appropriate and applicable even in the present context.

I. SELECTION OF STUDENTS FOR ADMISSION INTO MEDICAL INSTITUTION

The candidate for admission into an institution of medical education should have the following characters as said by Susruta [1] –

- A good family background (uttama kula)
- Within a prescribed range of age (baya)
- With good behaviour (sushila)
- Having enthusiasm and strength (saurya)
- Holiness (soucha)
- Good habits (achara)
- Honesty (binaya)
- Inspiration (utsaha)
- Strength (bala)
- Intelligence (medha)
- Patience(dhriti)
- Memory (smriti)
- Concentration (moti)
- Capacity to discuss and make decision (pratipatti)
- Having thin tongue , lips and teeth (tanu jihba, otha, dantagra)
- Straight and long face, eyes and nose (riju baktra , akshi , nasa)
- Happy mind (prasanna chitta)
- Good speech (Prasanna vak)
- Good effort (Prasanna chesta)
- Having the capacity to bear stress (kleshasahatwa)

The students having the above mentioned qualities are advised to select for admission in the course of medical science (Ayurveda).

II. FORMAL ENTRY OF THE STUDENT IN THE COURSE / INSTITUTION (SISHYOPANAYANA)[2]

The process of entry of the newly admitted students is advised as follows:

- The function should be arranged on a good day and time when the planets (graha, nakshatra etc.) remain in a good position
- The place of the function should be on plain where the offering place, idols of Gods, the place for fire (homa) should be prepared.
- Flower , leaves of holi plants, ghee, honey, branches of prescribed plants etc. for offering to the fire should be collected and kept ready for use
- The ritual should be made with offering of the prescribed substances to the Gods and fire with chanting of prescribed verses (Mantra) which should be followed by instructions of the teacher to the disciples.

III. ADVICE OF THE TEACHER TO THE DISCIPLES [3] -

The procedure of giving first advice to the disciples is advised as follows:

- First 3 rounds should be completed around the fire by the teacher
- The student should be advised to keep himself away from the bad habits like , desire for sex (kama), anger (krodha) , lust (lobha) , excessive attraction (moha), ego (mana) , pride (ahankara) , jealousy (irshya) , rude speech (parushya) , cruelty (paishunya) , telling untruth (anruta), lathergy (alasya) , discussion on the weakness and bad habits of the others (ayasha) etc.
- They should be advised to cut the nails and hairs (nichanakha roma) , maintain holiness (shuchita) , wear clean and white cloth (Kashaya bastra dharana) , speak the truth (satyabhashana) , exercise celibacy (brahmacharyya) , show respect to the teacher (abhibadana tatpara)
- They should also be advised to follow the advice of the teacher . Without the permission of the teacher they should be advised not to go anywhere , not to sleep , not to sit , not to eat and always should keep himself busy in study and in the works that are advised and accepted by the teacher . Violation of these advice may cause failure in the process of study .

IV. THE OATH OF THE TEACHER (GURUPRATIGYA) [4] –

After giving the advice to the student the teacher is also instructed to take an oath which is mentioned in short but includes a broad area of the duty of the teacher. The oath is **“if , after following all rules advised to you (by the student) I (the teacher) will not give you proper education and guidance then I shall fall in the crime of committing sin and all my knowledge and education will become worthless”.**

After completion of the formal procedures only a student is advised to consider efficient for the education and the education and training as per syllabus should be started. The education should include extensive theoretical and practical training on all branches of the system.

The disciple, after completion of the theoretical and practical training under the guidance of the teacher, should complete practical training (yogya). After completion of the practical training certificates should be taken from the teacher/ institution (guru) and the king (administration) (raja) and should start practice (bishikhanupravesha) by following the medical ethics regarding appearance , behaviour , thinking etc. (cutting and trimming of nails, hairs, beard , taking bath regularly , wearing clean and white dress , using umbrella when going out , wearing shoe to protect the feet , thinking the good and useful things , speaking the good and beneficial words , considering all as friends , keeping an assistant etc.) [5]

The above discussion reflects the interesting concepts on the procedure of enrolment of the students for medical education that consists a detail of the guidelines provided by the great Indian scholar, Susruta, the father of Surgery. Student life is the period of the life when the mind does not attain maturity. The mind, due to its immaturity, cannot decide appropriately about what to do and what not to do. Generally at this age they run behind the apparently beautiful things. In stead of keeping busy in hard study they like to enjoy the life. The tendency to escape from the beneficial rules and regulations laid down by the teacher/ institution is natural for a growing mind. Hence a disciplined and well guided life should be arranged for a student by the teacher / institution that will make them bounded into study and training.

In relation to the practice of medical knowledge there must be regulation laid down by the administration. Mention of certification by the teacher/ institution and permission of the king indicates the realization of the need of registration from the administration for medical practice which is interesting and reflection of the depth of knowledge of Susruta about the need of administrative regulation of medical practice.

The procedure of enrolling the medical students, providing the initial advice and training, the oath of the teacher, concept of certification by the teacher/institution and administrative permission for medical practice (registration) mentioned by Susruta are very interesting and beneficial.

Implementation of these rules may help in appropriate education and training of the future doctors (Vaidya).

REFERENCES

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