

JYOTI MAYADEV

Rotation in Ayurveda at Gujurat Ayurvedic University in Jamnagar, Gujurat, India

Rotation month: Feb. 2004

General :

My rotation in Ayurveda at Gujurat Ayurvedic University was fantastic. I learned a lot about the ancient Indian medical system, and its application in the realm of allopathic medicine. I was taught about theory, drug constitution and prescribing, and the integration of yoga and medicine for the prevention of disease.

Rotation Set-Up :

I was on a special rotation for one month and was the only American medical student from an allopathic medical school. The university was very accepting of my wanting to learn about Ayurveda. The university has a program for international scholars where students from all over the world, including countries such as Japan, South Africa, England, and the US, study for 5 years to get their M.D. (ayu). I spent half of the day in lectures learning the basic principles of Ayurveda. My lectures were one on one with very knowledgeable professors, who trained in both, allopathic and Ayurveda. I had the opportunity to ask questions during the lectures. I was assigned readings from Ayurvedic textbooks and went over clinical applications of therapeutic techniques during the lecture time. Then, in the afternoon, I would go to the pharmacy laboratory and learned about the various drugs and herbal mixtures used to treat disease and symptoms. I was very involved in making several components. I was amazed at the amount of time and manpower the drug combinations required. For example, we make a herbal remedy from coconut, lemon, and rock salt. The coconut had to be cooked in a fire for 6 hours at a certain temperature before we could add the other components. After the drug lectures and practicals, I would attend the patient clinics. I was involved with the diagnosis, history, and physical exam of the patients. My preceptor and I would talk about treatment options, and future follow up. The clinic was very busy, and there were often so many patients, that the clinic was standing room only.

Housing:

Gujurat Ayurvedic University has international students completing their MD (Ayu), so I stayed in the international guest house. It was quite nice, and I had a roommate. The housing is very affordable. I was charged about \$40 for the entire month. Meals could be purchased at the on campus cafeteria, or at nearby restaurants for about \$10 a day.

Subject Material in brief:

I spent the majority of my lectures learning about **Ayurvedic** principles such as how health is regarding as a holistic entity taking in consideration the mind (**manas**), body

(*deha*), soul (*atma*), environment, and the way work (karmaindriyas), and knowledge (jnanaindriya) are obtained. In addition, I concentrated on the application of **Panchkarma**.

It would be very beneficial to read about Ayurveda and be familiar with Indian (Vedic) philosophy before being a part of the rotation. Ayurveda views health as a byproduct of a purified state, and this state of health is needed for one to reach his ultimate goal in Vedic philosophy, self-realization. Many of the lectures started off with the understanding that I had the basic concepts of Ayurveda already formed in my mind. Often many of the lecturer's would write in Hindi script because the Ayurvedic textbooks use ancient scriptures to form the basis of the entire medical system. Several lectures felt that translating the scripts into English would cause the meaning to become diluted. My Hindi is not very proficient, so I think students who do not know Hindi or Sanskrit would not be at a disadvantage. However, I highly recommend Dr. Vasant Lad's book, *Principals of Ayurveda*, before leaving for the rotation. Also, Dr. Robert Savboda, has a couple of books that integrate Ayurveda and allopathy that would be useful.

According to ayurvedic philosophy an individual bundle of 'spirit', desirous of expressing itself, uses subjective consciousness or *Satwa* to manifest sense organs and a mind. Spirit and mind then project themselves into a physical body, created from the five (*Pancha*) great (*maha*) eternal elements (*bhutas*) – together called the *Panchamahabhutas* – which arise from *Tamas*. The sense organs then using *Rajas* to project from the body into the external world to experience their objects. The body becoming the mind's vehicle, its physical instrument for sense gratification.

The *Bhutas* combine into "*tridoshas*" or bioenergetic forces that govern and determine our health or physical condition. While the three *gunas* (*Rajas* or activity, *Tamas* or inertia and *Satwa*, which balances the first two) or psychic forces determine our mental and spiritual health. *Ayurveda* is thus a holistic system of health care that teaches us to balance these energies in order to achieve optimum health and well being.

In *Ayurveda*, physicians try to assess the symptoms of these diseases as much as the nature of ailment and its root causes (*nidana*). This is of utmost importance in ensuring correct choice of remedial & preventive measures for treatment of the disease. For otherwise, even after therapy, one might not get the desired response and there would remain a chance of recurrence.

The early signs and symptoms (*purvaroopas*) provide useful warnings and the opportunity for taking necessary action before a disease can assume dangerous magnitudes. The main signs and symptoms (*roopas*) reflect the true nature and intensity of the disease. Another oft used method of diagnosis is exploratory therapy (*upasaya*) which uses diet, medicines and routines to detect diseases otherwise difficult to diagnose. Acting either against the cause of disease or the disease itself or producing relief. For example a swelling that is alleviated by an oily & hot massage, is obviously caused by an imbalance of vata.

In Ayurveda treatment consists of four basic forms, namely - medicine or drug therapy, **pancha** (five) **karma** (actions/ systems), dietary regime and regulation of lifestyle. And works in two fundamental ways - cure and prevention.

The preventive aspect of treatment is further subdivided into **swastha varta** (personal hygiene) - consisting of **dinacharya** (daily routine), **ritucharya** (seasonal corrections) and **sadachara** (appropriate behaviour) - **rasayana & vajikarana** (rejuvenation & virilification) and **yoga**. The curative aspect consists of three parts antati **parimaijana** (internal medicine) - consisting of **samsodhana** (internal purification through **panchkarma**) and **samsamana** (curative action) - external medicine as massage, use of pastes & powders and finally surgical treatment.

The deep cleansing process, unique to Ayurveda, that enables the body to release excess doshas and toxins from its cells and expel them is called Panchakarma, which basically denotes detoxification or elimination of toxins from the body. Although the human body is considered as a great, intelligent, natural healing system capable of rejuvenating itself, the formation of toxins reduces that natural capacity. It is then that Panchakarma plays a crucial role in that correction.

Contact Information:

Dr. M.S. Bhagel, M.D. (ayu), Ph.D.

Director, International Studies, Guhurat Ayurvedic University, Jamnagar, Gujarat, India

Email: ayurveduniversity@ayurveduniversity.com

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the rotation:

Jyoti Mayadev, class of 2004

PGY-1: Providence Portland Medical Center, Preliminary year in Medicine

PGY2-5: University of Washington, Seattle, Department of Radiation Oncology

Email: jsm14@po.cwru.edu