

Role of “Ayush Kit” in Preventing COVID-19 among Senior Citizens

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a dramatic loss of human life worldwide and presents an unprecedented challenge to public health, environment and livelihood. COVID-19 has had an impact on almost all aspects of life. The virus had spread over more than 100 countries, leading to Unprecedented lockdowns, strict travelling bans and social distancing measures. The COVID-19 crisis has led to high levels of psychological and social distress among mankind, especially in vulnerable groups such as senior citizens and patients of chronic comorbid diseases. It equally affected the senior citizens of all tiers in society. Senior citizens could soon realise the importance of their health and immunity. People globally witnessed the potentials of Ayurveda in increasing the immune response towards covid-19. Government took immediate measures in order to combat the viral load found among senior citizens. Free immune boosting AYUSH Kit distribution was one among such scheme by Govt of Karnataka. **Materials and Methods:** A case controlled clinical trail was conducted on 60 samples who were aged above 60 years of age, randomly selected from 15,000+ beneficiaries of a scheme by Govt of Karnataka. Beneficiary details were collected from database of GAMC Mysore's OPD. A structured questionnaire containing 20 mandatory questions was the tool for assessment. Questions were asked about the impact of AYUSH kit on their dietary pattern, sleeping pattern, and other health benefits, along with the effect of medicines in preventing covid-19. **Results:** Result revealed the significant impact of AYUSH Kit on all dimensions of health among senior citizens. A remarkable impact was found in controlling their chronic diseases, and brought down the stress and fear of Covid-19. **Conclusion:** Ayurveda is a holistic science. More than a medical system it is a way of life. Ayurvedic preventive methods are effective in preventing COVID-19.

Key words: Ayurveda, Swasthavritta, Immune Boosters, COVID -19, Public Health.

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INTRODUCTION

Corona viruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV).¹ A novel corona virus (nCoV) is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans. Efforts to contain transmission have triggered the worst global economic crisis, devastating the livelihoods of millions. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a dramatic loss of human life worldwide and presents an unprecedented challenge to public health, environment and livelihood. COVID-19 has had an impact on almost all aspects of life. The virus had spread over more than 100 countries,² leading to Unprecedented lockdowns, strict travel bans and social distancing measures. The COVID-19 crisis has led to high levels of psychological and social distress among mankind, especially in vulnerable groups such as senior citizens and patients of chronic comorbid diseases. It equally affected the senior citizens of all tiers in society. Senior citizens could soon realise the importance of their health and immunity.

The immune system being body's multi-level defence network plays a critical role in to respond against infectious disease. People globally witnessed the potentials of Ayurveda in increasing the immune response towards COVID-19. Government took immediate measures in order to combat the viral load found among senior citizens. Free immune boosting AYUSH Kit distribution was one among such scheme by government of Karnataka, the Ayush kit contained Samshamani vati is an Ayurvedic tablet that contains guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*) as the main ingredient, which acts against viral fever and is a good immune booster,³ Drakshavaleha is nutritious medicine which acts on gastrointestinal system and also a good immune booster,⁴ Ark-e-ajib is a strong volatile oil based unani medicine, which is a very good nasal decongestant.⁵

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A case controlled clinical trail was conducted on 60 samples aged above 60 years of age, randomly selected from 15,000+ beneficiaries of a scheme by

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Govt of Karnataka. Beneficiary details were collected from database of GAMC Mysore's OPD. 60 randomly selected subjects were given with medicines for 30 days on follow up of 10th, 20th and 30th day a kit containing 10 day dose of same medicine was given on each follow up. A structured questionnaire containing 20 mandatory questions was the tool for assessment. Questions were asked about the impact of AYUSH kit on their dietary pattern, sleeping pattern, and other health benefits, along with the effect of medicines in preventing covid-19.

"AYUSH kit" contained set of 3 medicines selected by an expert committee in Department of AYUSH Karnataka. Kits were freely distributed, it was open for all senior citizens of Mysuru. Information was circulated through local news papers and all india radio regarding the free distribution of kit. Sampling errors arising due to limited and unequal coverage among senior citizens from different age groups, occupation or state of residence were marginally removed by considering only those variables for analysis which had a considerably large sample size. Descriptive statistical tools like measures of central tendencies, frequencies and proportions, percentage have been used to evaluate the responses. Data wrangling, cleaning and visualization was done using Microsoft Excel 2016 and SPSS Version 20.

RESULTS

The study consisted of 60 senior citizens where in 65% of them were aged between 61-70 years, and 32% samples were aged between 71-80 years, and only 3% were aged between 80-85 years, none of the samples were aged above 85. Gender wise it was 43% female and 57% male.

The frequency of eating food didn't change for 76% of samples, 20% of samples who were not feeling to eat more (eating less than 2 times a day) could improve their appetite and eat well (eating more than 4 times a day) after taking these medicines and on the other hand 3% of the people who are eating excessively (more than 7 times) could control and limit their food to normal (3-4 times a day). For 35% of samples the appetite was improved in terms of frequency of Hunger it remained same for 60% of the samples but 5% of the samples who had a normal frequency of

Hunger turned to excessive hungry. It was seen that 46% of samples who were not getting clear belches after having food could get clear belchings, it remained good for 29%, for 20% of samples belchings remind bad, but 5% of the people got worsened and after using this medicines Figure 1.

A significant improvement with *p* value of less than 0.001 was seen on contentment after having food, clear belchings after food. Ease of passing bowels increased from 34% to 54% with the *P* value of 0.000. Lightness of the body throughout the day was seen to be increased from 27% to 42% with the significance of 0.000. The sharpness of their sense organ increased from 34% to 48%. However there was no significant impact on duration of sleep Figure 2.

Overall mood of happiness increased from 34% to 69%. People with no pain throughout week increased from 15% to 55%. 57% of the senior citizens participated were also suffering with one or the other chronic diseases wherein 96% of them could improve to betterment in their diseases Figure 3. None of the samples participated were infected with COVID-19 before the study and also after a follow up of 30 days none of them were infected with covid 19 Figure 4.

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda took the challenge of covid pandemic into an opportunity to serve the mankind, it emerged out as an integral part of health care system, the efforts by government with its scheme to mainstream Ayurveda are fruitful, the statistical data of this study sounds significant. The AYUSH Kits were distributed in the month of November 2020 and the total number of cases infected in Mysore during that month was 3047,⁶ whereas soon in the next month i.e in December 2020, total infected cases were 1740,⁷ there was a greater reduction of almost 40% within a month, their lies a team effort by Mysore district administration and also the greater awareness among senior citizens towards increasing their immunity, helped alot to achieve it.

It evidently helped in bringing a psychological balance among senior citizens, around 77% senior citizens who were feared about infection very confident and brave enough after taking Ayush medicines. That

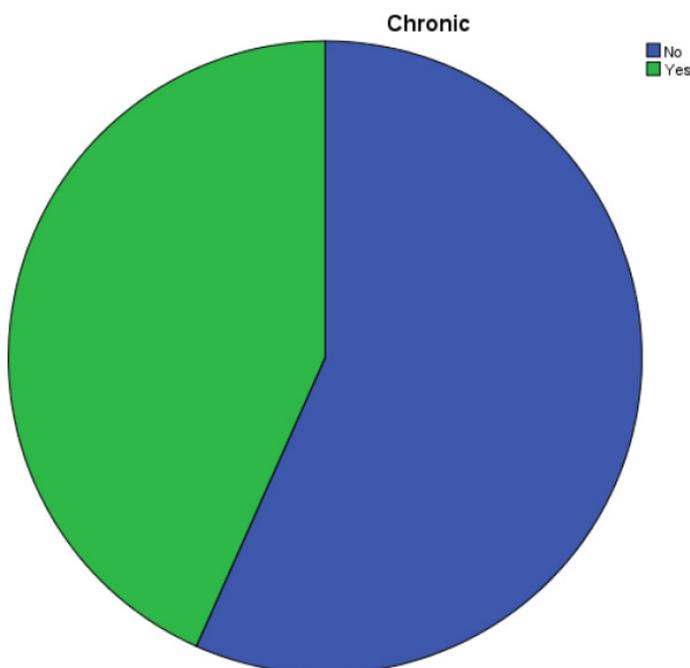


Figure 1: Participants with chronic illness

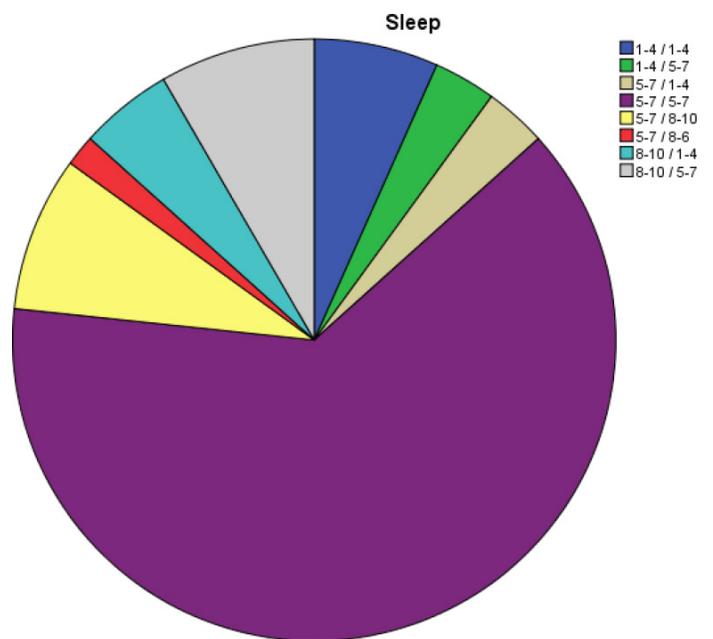


Figure 2: Impact on the number of hours slept (Before/After)

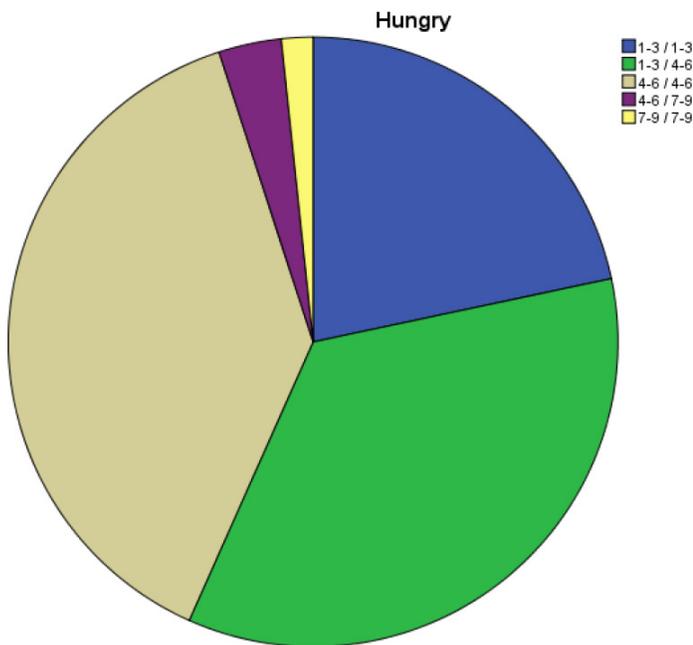


Figure 1: Impact on the number of times felt hungry (Before/After)

in turn evidently increased their working efficiency, indicating their relieved stress and there was a positive improvement in their overall mood throughout the day. There was a remarkable improvement in Digestion and Sleeping pattern which are considered as the sub-pillars of life in Ayurveda.⁸

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda is a holistic science. More than a medical system it is a way of life. The uncontrolled urbanization and modernization has gifted a lot new lifestyle disorders to mankind any new diseases can emerge in future but this time tested treasure of knowledge holds good till eternity.⁹ It is high time to realise and restore ourselves towards our indigenous cultural heritage. There is a key solution in unique concepts of Ayurveda like, *Dinacharya* (daily regimen) *Rutucharya* (seasonal regimen) *Sadvrutta* (code of conduct) and *Achara rasayana* which are to be practiced by everyone who wish to remain healthy.

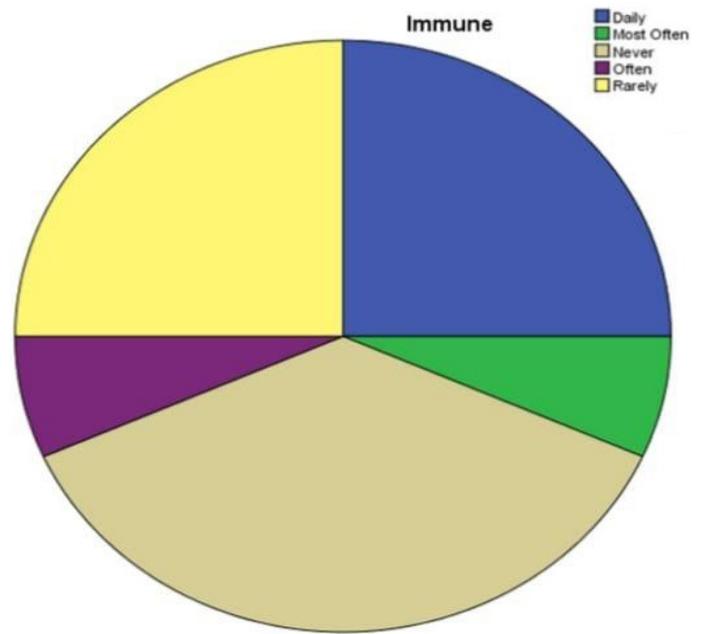


Figure 4: Frequency of practicing any sort of Immune boosting techniques (like Yoga, Physical exercise etc)

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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