

Diagnosis through Pulse Examination (Nadi - Pareeksha)

Preface

'Pulse, like a lamp, throws light on all the physiological and pathological states encountered in man'. - Ravana

From time immemorial, examining the pulse has been one of the most important diagnostic tools, relied on by all systems of medicine. We have heard anecdotes of an accurate diagnosis made by eminent Ayurvedic physicians by examining the pulse alone. Are these statements exaggerated? What is the scope and what are the limitations of knowledge gained by examining the pulse?

Injury to joints, tuberculosis, viral infections, syphilis, scurvy and other diseases also give rise to swelling of joints. In children and young adults, rheumatism fever and rheumatoid arthritis are the common causes of joint involvement. Both these are included in *ama Vata* in Ayurveda. In old age, osteoarthritis, i.e., degeneration disease of joints and cartilage is the commonest cause of rheumatism

The art and science of examining the pulse was well-developed in ancient India. Fortunately, some Ayurvedic literature is still available to us. A humble attempt has been made here to present most of the literature on pulse in a systematic manner. The literal meaning of the Texts as far as possible has been adhered to and the basic concepts are presented in the original form. The relevant Sanskrit Verses together with references are also given. Ayurvedic literature on pulse includes describing the condition of the vessel wall, flow of blood and the impulse which depend on the characteristics of the blood and other factors. For example, when the pulse is described as hard, tremulous, fast and hot, it implies that the vessel wall is hard, the impulse is tremulous, the rate is fast and the blood flowing through it is warm.

The importance of pulse examination has diminished tremendously in the past few decades because of development of new diagnostic tools such as -sphygmomanometer - blood pressure instrument, ECG, 2D Echo, Cardiac catheterisation, CT scan, MRI, PET Scan, etc.

On the other hand Nadi Pareeksha centers - centers which give you mainly your Ayurvedic constitution and advise diet, etc to improve your constitution - are opening in different cities.

It is important to realise that to diagnose several diseases just by examination of the pulse is a Herculean task. It can be done only by a few experienced Ayurvedic physicians who have dedicated their life to study the correlation between the pulse and various disease states.

This Text gives us an idea about the magnitude of information which could be gained by an experienced physician trained for years by an experienced teacher. I am certain that this monograph will be useful to all physicians, cardiologists, as well as those interested in medical history. - Dr Vasant Balaji Athavale

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