

Navanna: an Ayurveda Review

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Introduction and Research Problem

Carakasamhita has claimed the perpetuality of Ayurveda, the sacred science of healthy and contented long-life, by arguing on its beginninglessness and its discourse on innate tendencies of nature and eternal disposition of matter. Being the best outcome of Veda, Ayurveda proposes Hetusutra (etiology), Lingasutra (symptomatology) and Aushadhasutra (therapeutics) generally applicable to both healthy as well as ailing.

Under Hetusutra, Navanna (foods prepared from freshly harvested grains) has been mentioned as an important causative factor of several diseases. Yet, freshly harvested grains have been preferred in the society, and are overwhelmingly promoted by commercial and scientific communities endorsing their health benefits. This dichotomy of views resulted in undertaking this study to further investigate the Ayurveda opinions regarding Navanna and their impact on health.

Methodology

Vridhdhatraya, Laghutraya and several Nighantu were extensively used for data collections. Collected data have been analyzed and categorized in order to reach a conclusion.

Discussions, Results and Conclusions

Navanna Guna

According to Rajavallaba-Nighantu, Navanna increases Kapha due to its heavy, unctuous, sweet and nourishing properties.

1. Navanna as a causative factor of ill-health

In Carakasamhita, a well-known textbook out of Vridhdhatraya, Navanna has been mentioned as a causative factor for diseases of Prameha, Kushtha and Shvayathu. Ashtangahridayasamhita of Vagbhata has distinguished consumption of Nava-

Dhanya (freshly harvested grains) may cause Prameharoga. Yet, Sushrutasamhita, another text of Vriddhatraya, did not recognize Navanna as a causative factor.

Compared to Vriddhatraya texts, Madhavanidana, a renowned text out of Laghutraya, has clearly pointed out that Navanna is responsible for producing diseases of Prameha and Kushtha, as it quotes heavily from Vriddhatraya.

2. Navanna as a restorative factor of health

Several Nighantu, such as Raja-Nighantu and Dravyagunasangraha, have recognized Navanna among the six factors that promote Prana (promoting life).

3. Navanna as an unwholesome factor

In Sushrutasamhita, it has been mentioned that Navanna should especially be avoided during rainy season, instead Anava (aged) barley, rice and wheat should be consumed.

Based on the above facts, Navanna increases Kapha Dosha owing to its properties. Sometimes, this increased Kapha might behave unhealthily giving rise to several diseases mentioned above. This unhealthy aspect of Navanna may greatly be enhanced during the rainy season and this may be considered as the reason for prohibiting Navanna during that season.

In conclusion, Navanna means freshly harvested grains and this is denoted by Vagbhata clearly mentioning of Navadhanya. Compared to Navanna, Anavadhanya (aged grains) seems to be far healthier, as excessive Navanna consumption tends to produce several diseases. Based on this Ayurveda fact, it would be wiser to refrain from excessive consumption of fresh harvested grains.

Keywords : Navanna, Navadhanya, Prameha, Kushtha

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