



Review Article

A review on functional aspect of Kapha Dosha as per Ayurveda

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Abstract

According to *Ayurveda*, the body humours: *Tridosha Vata, Pitta* and *Kapha*. These *Doshas* control the creation, maintenance, and breakdown of bodily tissue and elimination of wastes and also maintain psychological conditions such as love, anger, understanding and emotions. Due to diet and change in lifestyle one of the *Dosha* increases body imbalance is created. *Kapha* is the combination of water and earth elements. This bio-energy is the structure-forming principle for the organism and is particularly associated with cohesion, stability and energy storage. In *Ayurvedic* teaching the world is clearly regulated. It consists of the five elements space/ether (*Akasha*), air (*Vayu*), fire (*Agni*), water (*Jala*) and earth (*Prithivi*). *Kapha* is a structural manifestation representing mass and is responsible for shape and form. *Kapha* governs the structure of the body. It is the principle that holds the cells together and forms the muscle, fat, and bone. The primary function of *Kapha* is protection.

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1. Introduction

According to *Ayurveda*, human body is composed of *Doshas, Dhatus* and *Mala*. There are three types of *dosha*. *Kapha* is one of them. It is constituting of two elements-Earth and Water, which signify the stability quality of *kapha dosha*.

1.1 *Kapha Constitutio*: *Jala + Prithvi* [1].

Our body consists of around 70% water or fluids. One-third of the body is water extracellular fluid and two-third of the body water is present in intracellular fluid. Here these fluids represent *Jala* manifestation and the structures like bone, muscles and solid mass of other organs represent *Prithvi* manifestation in the body.

Synonyms of *Kapha*: *Shleshma, Balas, Soumya*.

1.2 *Kapha Dosha and Triguna*

All living and nonliving things originate from *Panchamahabhuta*, *Kapha dosha* evolve from *Panchamahabhuta*, so these *dosha* bear *triguna*

property. According to *Sushruta*, *Kapha* evolve from *Jala* and *Prithvi*. *Jala* has *Satva* and *Tama* predominance [2]. *Dosha* is present all over the body [3]. They have specific sites in normal physiological conditions. The general location of *kapha* is the upper parts of the body. It is marked as above heart [4].

1.3 According to their place and the different functions *Kapha Doshas* are classified into 5 types [5]

1. *Tarpaka Kapha*:

Place - Residing in the head, sinus and spinal fluid.
Function- It nourishes and lubricates the brain tissue & nerves.

2. *Bodhaka Kapha*:

Place- Residing in the tongue, throat and palate.
Function- It governs the lubrication of the oral cavity, enhances the sense of taste and aids digestion by making the swallowing of food easier.

3. *Kledaka Kapha*:

Place - Residing in the chest and gastric area.

Function- It governs the moisture content in the stomach and intestinal mucosa.

-It lubricates the ingestion of food by facilitating the passage through the food pipe into the lower digestive tract.

4. Avalambaka Kapha

Place- Residing in the heart, chest and back.

Function-It governs the proper functioning of the vital organs-the lung and heart tissue-thereby influencing respiration and circulation.

5. Shleshaka Kapha:

Place- Residing in all joints.

Function- It provides the necessary lubrication necessary to protect the body from friction/wear & tear.

1.4 Qualities of Kapha dosha [6]

1. Snigdha

- Oily, unctuousness and it brings in lubrication.
- Oily skin is because of Kapha dosha.
- lubrication factor in joints, vertebral discs, Cerebral spinal fluid around the brain and pleural fluid.

2. Sheet -Cold.

- It is the quality of both Vata and Kapha Dosha.
- Sheet is the quality of water hence it is the quality of kapha as well.

3. Guru - Heaviness.

4. Manda - Mild and Viscous.

- Delay in making decisions, understanding and expressing feelings. etc are features of Manda qualities of Kapha Dosha.

5. Shlakshna- Smoothness

- It is healing in nature and smooth to the touch.

6. Mrutsna- Soft.

- Soft to touch.
- Produces features in the body tissue like muscle, fat and heart.

7. Sthir - Stability or immobility.

- It produces stability in body tissue.

1.5 According to Acharya Sharangdhar

1. Shweta

2. Tanmogunaadhik.

This article aims to review the functional aspect of kapha dosha through Ayurved literature.

2. Materials and methods

The material used in this paper is from Ayurved texts

like Charak samhita, Sushrut Samhita, Ashtang hriday, Harit samhita and Ashtang Sangrah etc.

3. Results and discussion

Ayurveda offers a holistic treatise on the physical, psychological and emotional well-being of an individual. According to Ayurveda the world and Human body are made of the following five elements (*Panchamahabhuta*): *Prithvi* (earth), *Tejas* (fire), *Jala* (water), *Vayu* (air), and *Aakash* (space).

A unique combination of these elements gives rise to what is called a *Dosha*, or humour. The three *doshas* are *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha dosha*. Each individual embodies a unique combination of all of these *doshas*, where one *dosha* dominates, or is predominantly larger in quantity. *Kapha* has independent tasks in the body. However, it is dormant without *Vata dosha*.

The principal function of kapha dosha is to maintain normal physiology by supporting growth and anabolism. The special functions of kapha are as below [7-10].

-*Snehana* -provides and maintains unctuousness to the body.

-*Bandhana*-Maintains the anatomical integrity of various cells, tissues, and organs with each other, as well as provides support/ Maintain the integrity of joints

-*Sthirata or dardhyata* - Maintain firmness and steadiness. *sthirata or dardhyata*)

-*Gauravata* - Provides weight to various structures and organs

-*Vrishta* - Maintains reproductive health.

-*Bala* - Provides physical and mental strength.

-*Kshama* - Maintains the quality of forgiveness.

-*Dhriti*- Maintains the quality of patience.

-*Alobha* - Maintains the quality of greedlessness.

-*Upachaya* - Growth of the body.

-*Jnana* - Knowledge.

-*Buddhi* - Intelligence.

Acharya Vagbhata was the first to describe five types of kapha with names [11-13].

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Table 1. The classification of Kapha is based on different functions and locations in the human body [14-18].

S. No	Type of Kapha	Location	Functions
01.	Avalambaka	Chest(Ura)	-Supports Trika (area of conjugation of the head with two arms) -Support and maintain the structural and functional integrity of the heart by the power of nutrients present in food. (<i>annarasasahitenhrityaavalambana</i>). -Supports other kapha sites (<i>sheshanam cha shleshmasthananamavalambanat</i>).
2.	Kledaka	Stomach (amashaya)	-Liquefaction and disintegration of food particles to facilitates easy digestion. (<i>praklinnambhinnasanghata or annasanghatakledanat</i>). - Supports the other kapha sites through its inherent qualities.
3	Bodhaka	Root of tongue(<i>jihvamula</i>) Throat(<i>kantha</i>)	-Facilitate the perception of taste(<i>rasajyane</i>)
4	Tarpaka	Head (<i>shira</i>)	-Due to the presence of natural qualities, it nourishes the sense organs (<i>tarpanata</i>).
5	Shleshaka	Joints (sandhi)	-Maintains the structural and functional integrity of all joints (<i>sarvasandhisanshleshat, sarva sandhi anugraha</i>).

-Maintains the structural integrity of joints (*sandhi samshleshana*)

-Maintains the unctuousness (*snehana*)

-Helps in the healing process(*Ropana*)

-Provides nutrition to the whole body(*purana*)

-Provides strength (*bala*).

Avalambaka, kledaka, bhodhaka, tarpaka, and shleshaka are the five classifications of kaphadosha. The location and function of five types of kaphadosha based on different ayurvedic texts are given in Table 1.

3.1 Factors responsible for abnormal states of kapha

Certain factors cause excess or decline of kapha in the human body. These factors are natural or unavoidable and artificial or avoidable.

3.1.1 Natural factors

These factors are the essential components of biological rhythm occurring in the external as well as internal environment of the body. This natural increase is physiological. These factors are as follows [10-22].

1. Season (*ritu*):

Kapha undergoes accumulation in winter (*hemant and shishira*), gets vitiated during spring (*vasanta*) and subsides to normal during summer (*grishma*).

2. Various stages of digestion of food:

Kapha gets increased during the first stage of digestion or immediately after eating food(*bhuktamatra*).

3. Biological rhythm of day and night:

Kapha is increased in the morning (*purvahe*) and evening (*purvaratre or pradoshe*).

4. Habitat (*desha*):

Marshy area (*anupa*).

5. Age (*vaya*): In childhood, *Kapha* is dominant as compared to other *dosha*.

Acquired factors:

Acquired factors are those which increase and aggravate *kapha dosha* other than natural factors. These are avoidable and used in clinical practice by applying the concept of *samanya vishesha siddhanta*. These factors are as follows [23, 24].

1. Diet (*dravya*) and properties of diet:

Food with sweet (*madhura*), sour (*amla*) and salt (*lavana*) taste, heavy-to-digest food, slimy, unctuous food articles and excessive intake of water cause *kapha* vitiation. The common examples of these foods are pickles, sour fruits, curd, dairy sweets, freeze cold items, milk products, oily and deep fried food items.

2. Lifestyle and other activities

Daytime sleep (*diwaswapna*), lack of exercise

(*avyayama*), drinking water at night (*nisha ambupana*), mixing wholesome and unwholesome together (*samashana*) and over eating before digestion of previous meals (*adhyashana*) [25] etc.

3. Emotional and behavior factors

Pleasure (*harsha*), procrastination, laziness, excess sleep, lack of mental activities.

3.1.2 Kapha Doshas

A) Physical qualities

1. Cold=Their skin is cold to touch. They can also experience recurrent cases of cold, congestion, and cough during cold weather.

2. Wet

3. Heavy = It expresses the density. Kapha is involves in anabolism. Due to this property the kapha body type people are overweight. Mental heaviness is always associated with it.

4. Dull: Their actions are very slow due to this property.

5. Slow: Due to this they are slow to talk, slow to walk and also have slow digestion.

6. Static: They are very stable. And resist change.

7. Smooth /Slimy: they have smooth skin. And also has good internal lubrication.

B) Emotional qualities

lethargy, depression and over attachment.

4. Conclusions

According to *ayurveda*, *Kapha dosha* is the element associated with water and earth The nature of *Kapha* is slow, cool, smooth, moist, oily, heavy and steady. Apart from that, *Kapha* embodies lubrication, stability, and structure in the mind and body. Due to the qualitative nature of the *Doshas*, *Ayurveda* types of bodies can be defined. The *Kapha* body type is earthy with the water element in it. This makes them grounded and more stable. These are powerful individuals and caring by nature. They not only get things done but help and support others too.

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All authors contributed equally

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Conflicts of interest

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