

Transmission of Ayurvedic Medical Knowledge: Techniques Used by Ayurvedic Medical Practitioners in Two Selected Districts of Sri Lanka

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Knowledge is a key tool for the advancement of the society. From the beginning of the mankind, every civilization has developed its own unique knowledge systems. These knowledge systems have been linked with their culture, languages, health care, education, environmental protection and deal with their whole patterns of lives. Sri Lanka being a homeland to diverse communities takes pride in a rich legacy of traditional knowledge that plays a critical role in health care, cultural performances, religious observances etc. In the ancient times, Sri Lankans used their own knowledge systems for the prevention of diseases. Before the advent of Ayurveda, the earliest system of medicine that existed in Sri Lanka was called, Sinhala vedakama (indigenous medicine) which was handed down from generation to generation. Thereafter, knowledge systems related to indigenous medicine and ayurvedic medicine fused with other systems and has developed as a unique system of medicine, until Europeans introduced the allopathic system of medicine. The continued existence and evolution of the two systems of medicine have been influenced due to the effective information transmission techniques. The objective of this research is to identify the information transmission techniques used in ayurvedic medical field and to explore special communication techniques used by ayurvedic medical practitioners in Sri Lanka. There were two types of surveys undertaken, literature survey and field survey. The two districts of Anuradhapura and Colombo were selected for the field survey. Three practitioners were selected purposively from each ten categories of Kedum Bidum, Gedivana Pilika, Visha Vedakama etc. Accordingly, thirty practitioners from one district and altogether sixty from two districts were interviewed. Two types of techniques were utilized for data collection, i.e. interviews, visits and observations. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed using SPSS. Some of the key findings are special inter and intra personal communication techniques, Dutha lakshana, Veda geta, kem, ritualistic techniques and special techniques related for continuation of family heritage etc. The research found that there are some special information transmission techniques used in Ayurvedic medical field which are different from common communication.

Key words: *Ayurveda Medicine; Communication Techniques; Indigenous Medicine, Knowledge Transmission; Traditional Knowledge.*