



Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas in Ayurveda: Classical Perspective and Modern Nutritional Relevance: A Narrative Review

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ABSTRACT

Background: Diet (Ahara) is one of the three fundamental pillars (Trayopastambha) of life described in Ayurveda and plays a vital role in maintaining health and preventing disease.[1–3] Among the various dietary principles, Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas denote wholesome food substances recommended for regular consumption to maintain physiological equilibrium, enhance immunity, and promote longevity.[1,3] Although these dietary articles have been extensively described in classical Ayurvedic literature, their relevance in the context of modern nutrition and preventive medicine warrants comprehensive evaluation.[1–5]

Objective: To critically review the classical concept of Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas and correlate their Ayurvedic attributes with contemporary scientific evidence regarding their nutritional composition and health-promoting properties.

Materials and Methods: A narrative review was undertaken using classical Ayurvedic texts, including the Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya, and major Nighantus.[1–8] Modern evidence was collected from peer-reviewed scientific literature indexed in PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar, together with standard nutritional references including the Indian Food Composition Tables (2017).[9] Classical descriptions were critically analyzed and correlated with current nutritional and biomedical evidence.

Results: Classical texts recommend twenty-one Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas, including cereals, legumes, fruits, leafy vegetables, dairy products, honey, rock salt, and wholesome animal foods.[1–8] These dietary substances possess favorable Rasa, Guna, Virya, and Vipaka, contributing to the maintenance of Agni, nourishment of Dhatus, enhancement of Ojas, and equilibrium of the Doshas.[1–3] Contemporary evidence demonstrates that many of these foods are rich sources of complex carbohydrates, dietary fiber, high-quality proteins, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and phytochemicals possessing anti-inflammatory, immunomodulatory, cardioprotective, and metabolic regulatory activities.[9–18]

Conclusion: The Ayurvedic concept of Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas represents a scientifically relevant dietary model integrating traditional wisdom with evidence-based nutrition and preventive healthcare. Regular consumption of these wholesome dietary substances may contribute to reducing the burden of lifestyle-related disorders while promoting long-term health and well-being. Further clinical and translational research is required to validate their therapeutic potential in evidence-based integrative medicine.

Keywords: Ayurveda; Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas; Ahara; Preventive Medicine; Nutrition; Health Promotion.

INTRODUCTION

Diet (Ahara) occupies a central position in Ayurvedic philosophy and is regarded as one of the three fundamental pillars (Trayopastambha) essential for sustaining life, alongside proper sleep (Nidra) and regulated conduct (Brahmacarya). [1–3] Classical Ayurvedic literature emphasizes that health and disease are largely influenced by the quality, quantity, and mode of food consumption. Appropriate dietary practices promote physical strength, mental well-being, immunity, longevity, and resistance to disease, whereas improper dietary habits disturb the equilibrium of the Dosas, impair digestive fire (Agni), and initiate disease processes.[1–3] Consequently, Ayurveda considers food not merely a source of nourishment but also a primary therapeutic measure for maintaining health and preventing illness.[1,3]

Among the various dietary principles described in Ayurveda, the concept of Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas holds particular importance. These are wholesome food substances recommended for regular daily consumption because of their ability to maintain physiological balance, nourish body tissues (Dhatus), support optimal digestion, and preserve normal body functions.[1–3] Classical texts, including the Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya, describe a group of cereals, pulses, fruits, vegetables, dairy products, honey, rock salt, and wholesome animal foods that are considered suitable for habitual consumption.[1–3] Their regular use is believed to promote vitality (Bala), complexion (Varna), reproductive health (Sukra), longevity (Ayu), and overall well-being while reducing susceptibility to disease.[1–3]

The recommendations regarding Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas are based on the Ayurvedic principles of Rasa (taste), Guna (qualities), Virya (potency), Vipaka (post-digestive effect), and their influence on the Dosas.[1–8] Foods possessing favorable Ayurvedic attributes are considered capable of maintaining Agni, ensuring proper metabolism, facilitating tissue nourishment, and enhancing Ojas, the vital essence responsible for immunity and disease resistance.[1–3] These dietary recommendations illustrate the preventive orientation of Ayurveda, wherein health is preserved through regular consumption of wholesome foods rather than relying solely on therapeutic interventions after disease develops.

Recent advances in nutritional science have provided evidence supporting many of these classical dietary recommendations. Several Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas, including barley (Yava), wheat (Godhuma), rice (Sali), Amalaki (*Emblica officinalis*), green gram (Mudga), honey (Madhu), ghee (Ghrita), and pomegranate (Dadima), are recognized as valuable sources of complex carbohydrates, dietary fiber, proteins, essential fatty acids, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and diverse phytochemicals.[9–18] Contemporary studies have demonstrated their antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, immunomodulatory, antimicrobial, cardioprotective, and metabolic regulatory properties, suggesting that these traditional dietary substances may contribute to the prevention of obesity, diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular diseases, metabolic syndrome, and other lifestyle-related disorders.[12]

20] Such findings reinforce the relevance of Ayurvedic dietary concepts within the framework of modern evidence-based nutrition.

The increasing global prevalence of non-communicable diseases has renewed interest in preventive healthcare strategies centered on healthy dietary patterns. [10,12] In this context, the Ayurvedic concept of Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas represents an integrative model that combines traditional wisdom with nutritional science to promote holistic health. Understanding the classical basis of these dietary recommendations and correlating them with current scientific evidence may facilitate their wider acceptance in contemporary healthcare systems.

Therefore, the present review aims to critically examine the classical descriptions of Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas available in major Ayurvedic texts and correlate them with modern nutritional and biomedical evidence. By integrating Ayurvedic principles with current scientific knowledge, this review seeks to highlight the significance of these wholesome dietary substances in health promotion, disease prevention, and the maintenance of overall well-being.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design

The present study was designed as a narrative review to comprehensively evaluate the concept of Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas described in classical Ayurvedic literature and correlate these concepts with contemporary scientific evidence on nutrition and preventive healthcare. [1–10]

Sources of Classical Literature

Classical Ayurvedic information was collected from authoritative texts, including the Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya, Bhavaprakasha Nighantu, Dhanvantari Nighantu, Kaiyadeva Nighantu, Madanapala Nighantu, and Raja Nighantu. [1–8] Relevant information regarding the synonyms, Rasa (taste), Guna (properties), Virya (potency), Vipaka (post-digestive effect), Karma (pharmacological actions), therapeutic indications, and dietary significance of each Nitya Sevaniya Dravya was systematically extracted and compiled.

Sources of Modern Scientific Literature

To establish modern scientific relevance, published literature was retrieved from electronic databases including PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar. Standard nutritional information was obtained from the Indian Food Composition Tables (2017) and other internationally accepted nutritional references. [9,10] Additional peer-reviewed review articles and original research papers describing the nutritional composition, phytochemical constituents, pharmacological activities, and clinical significance of the selected dietary substances were also included. [11–20]

Literature Selection Criteria

Relevant English-language publications reporting nutritional composition, antioxidant activity, immunomodulatory effects, anti-inflammatory properties, cardiometabolic benefits, and other health-promoting activities of the selected Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas were considered for inclusion. Classical references describing the dietary importance and therapeutic attributes of these substances were also reviewed. [1–20]

Data Collection and Analysis

The available classical and modern scientific evidence was critically analyzed and systematically correlated to identify similarities between Ayurvedic principles and current nutritional knowledge. Particular emphasis was placed on correlating the classical concepts of Rasa, Guna, Virya, Vipaka, Agni, Dhatu-poṣaṇa, and Ojas with contemporary evidence regarding nutritional composition, phytochemicals, physiological functions, disease prevention, and health promotion. [1–20]

Ethical Consideration

As this study is a narrative review based exclusively on published classical literature and previously published scientific articles, ethical committee approval and informed consent were not required.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Classical Concept of Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas

Ayurveda advocates that preservation of health is primarily achieved through appropriate dietary practices. The concept of Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas represents one of the earliest preventive nutritional models described in classical literature. These dietary substances are recommended for regular consumption because they support normal digestive function (Agni), maintain equilibrium of the Tridoṣas, nourish the Dhatus, enhance Ojas, and thereby promote longevity and resistance against disease. [1–8]

Major Ayurvedic texts consistently describe wholesome dietary articles such as Sali, Sastika Sali, Godhuma, Yava, Mudga, Amalaki, Jivanti, Vastuka, Patola, Ksira, Ghrita, Madhu, Saindhava Lavana, and Dadima as suitable for habitual consumption. Although slight variations exist among the classical texts regarding the individual items, the underlying principle remains uniform: foods possessing favorable Rasa, Guna, Virya, and Vipaka contribute to physiological balance and protection from disease. [1–8]

From an Ayurvedic perspective, these dietary substances predominantly exhibit Madhura, Kasaya, and Tikta Rasa with Sita Vīrya and nourishing properties. Such attributes help sustain digestive efficiency, facilitate proper tissue nourishment, improve metabolism, strengthen immunity, and promote Bala, Varna, Sukra, and overall vitality while reducing susceptibility to chronic diseases. [1–8]

Modern nutritional science provides substantial support for these classical observations. Whole grains such as rice, wheat, and barley are rich sources of complex carbohydrates, dietary fiber, B-complex vitamins, and essential minerals that contribute to glycemic control, gastrointestinal health, and cardiovascular protection.[9–16] Green gram provides high-quality plant protein with a low glycemic index, whereas Amalaki is exceptionally rich in vitamin C and polyphenolic antioxidants that help reduce oxidative stress.[13,17] Honey possesses antimicrobial and wound-healing properties, while Ghrita facilitates the absorption of fat-soluble nutrients. Dadima contains polyphenols with antioxidant and cardioprotective activities. [14–18] Collectively, these nutritional attributes closely parallel the health-promoting properties described in Ayurvedic literature.

Furthermore, many Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas demonstrate antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, immunomodulatory, hypolipidemic, antidiabetic, gastroprotective, and cardioprotective activities in experimental and clinical studies. [12–20] These biological effects support the Ayurvedic concept that regular intake of wholesome foods preserves physiological homeostasis and helps prevent the development of lifestyle-related disorders. The remarkable concordance between classical Ayurvedic principles and contemporary nutritional science highlights the enduring relevance of these dietary recommendations in modern preventive healthcare.

Nitya Sevaniya Dravya	Major Ayurvedic Properties	Modern Nutritional / Pharmacological Significance
Sali	Laghu, Sita, Tridosa balancing	Complex carbohydrates, antioxidants, energy source
Godhuma	Balya, Brmhana, Snigdha	Protein, dietary fibre, B-complex vitamins
Yava	Lekhana, Medohara	β -glucan fiber, cholesterol lowering, glycemic control
Sastika Sali	Balya, Tridosa-samaka	Easily digestible carbohydrates and micronutrients
Jangala Mamsa	Laghu, Balya	High-quality protein with comparatively low fat
Sunisannaka	Dipana, Pacana	Vitamins, minerals, antioxidant activity
Jivanti	Rasayana, Cakṣuṣya	Flavonoids and antioxidant constituents
Balamulaka	Dipana, Vatahara	Fibre, vitamin C, digestive benefits
Vastuka	Pathya, Pacana	Iron, calcium and antioxidants
Haritaki	Rasayana, Anulomana	Polyphenols and tannins with antioxidant activity
Amalaki	Tridosa-samaka, Rasayana	Vitamin C, polyphenols and immunomodulatory activity
Draksa	Balya, Pittahara	Resveratrol and cardioprotective antioxidants
Patola	Pittahara, Kaphahara	Bitter phytochemicals with antidiabetic potential
Mudga	Laghu, Tridosa balancing	High-quality plant protein and dietary fibre
Sarkara	Pittahara	Readily available energy source

Ghrta	Medhya, Rasayana, Yogavahi	Essential fatty acids and fat-soluble vitamins
Divyodaka	Tridosha balancing	Hydration and maintenance of fluid balance
Ksira	Jivaniya, Balya	Protein, calcium and vitamin B12
Ksaudra	Yogavahi, Lekhana	Antioxidant, antimicrobial and wound-healing properties
Dadima	Hrdya, Dipana	Polyphenols, vitamin C and cardioprotective effects
Saindhava Lavana	Tridosha balancing, Dipana	Essential minerals and digestive support



Role of Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas in Preventive Healthcare and Lifestyle Disorders

The increasing prevalence of non-communicable diseases, including obesity, type 2 diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, and metabolic syndrome, has highlighted the importance of dietary interventions for disease prevention.[10,12] Ayurveda recognized this preventive approach centuries ago through the concept of Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas, emphasizing that regular consumption of wholesome foods is fundamental for maintaining health rather than merely treating disease after its onset.[1–3]

The majority of Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas are nutrient-dense foods with demonstrated health-promoting properties. Whole grains such as Sali, Sastika Sali, Godhuma, and Yava provide complex carbohydrates, dietary fibre, vitamins, and essential minerals that contribute to sustained energy release, improved gastrointestinal function, and metabolic homeostasis. Their regular consumption has been associated with improved glycemic control, reduced serum cholesterol, and decreased cardiovascular risk.[9,12,16] Similarly, Mudga supplies high-quality plant proteins and bioactive compounds that support tissue repair, satiety, and maintenance of healthy body weight.[16]

Several plant-based Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas possess potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory activities. Amalaki is recognized as one of the richest natural sources of vitamin C and polyphenolic compounds, providing protection against oxidative stress and supporting immune function.[13,17] Patola, Jivanti, Vastuka, and Suniṣaṇṇaka contribute essential micronutrients and phytochemicals that exhibit hepatoprotective, antimicrobial, and immunomodulatory effects.[17–20] Likewise, Madhu demonstrates antimicrobial, antioxidant, and wound-healing properties, whereas Ghr̥ta facilitates the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins and bioactive phytoconstituents while serving as an important carrier in Ayurvedic pharmaceuticals.[14,18]

The collective nutritional and pharmacological properties of these dietary substances closely correspond with their classical Ayurvedic descriptions. Foods described as Balya, Rasayana, Jivaniya, and Tridosasamaka exhibit scientifically documented actions that support immune competence, reduce chronic inflammation, improve metabolic regulation, and protect against oxidative damage. [12–20] This correlation demonstrates that many traditional Ayurvedic dietary recommendations have a sound scientific basis and remain highly relevant in contemporary nutrition.

From a public health perspective, incorporating Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas into daily dietary practices offers a practical, economical, and culturally acceptable strategy for promoting healthy ageing and reducing the burden of chronic diseases. Their emphasis on balanced nutrition, digestive health, and disease prevention aligns closely with modern concepts of functional foods and preventive medicine. Consequently, these dietary principles may complement existing nutritional guidelines and contribute to the development of integrative healthcare models. [10,12]

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

Despite increasing scientific interest in traditional dietary systems, comprehensive clinical evidence regarding the long-term health benefits of Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas remains limited. [10,12,19] Although numerous experimental studies and observational reports support the nutritional and pharmacological potential of these dietary substances, high-quality clinical trials are still insufficient to establish definitive evidence for their routine therapeutic application. [12–20]

Future investigations should focus on well-designed randomized controlled trials, prospective cohort studies, nutritional intervention studies, metabolomic and nutrigenomic analyses, and molecular research to validate the therapeutic efficacy and mechanisms of action of individual Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas.[19,20] Standardization of traditional food varieties, evaluation of bioactive phytoconstituents, dose–response relationships, bioavailability, and long-term safety should also be prioritized to strengthen the scientific evidence supporting their use.

Further research integrating Ayurvedic principles with contemporary nutritional science may facilitate the development of evidence-based dietary guidelines for health promotion and prevention of lifestyle-related disorders. Collaborative research involving Ayurveda, nutrition, public health, food science, and clinical medicine may provide a stronger scientific foundation for incorporating Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas into integrative healthcare systems and national nutrition programmers.[9,10,19,20]

The integration of classical Ayurvedic dietary wisdom with modern biomedical research has the potential to contribute significantly to predictive, preventive, and personalized healthcare, thereby improving quality of life and reducing the global burden of non-communicable diseases. [10,12,19]

CONCLUSION

Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas constitute one of the most significant preventive dietary concepts described in Ayurveda. Classical Ayurvedic literature recommends these wholesome food substances for regular consumption because of their ability to maintain digestive efficiency (Agni), preserve Dosa equilibrium, nourish the Dhatus, enhance Ojas, strengthen immunity, and promote longevity. [1–8]

The present narrative review demonstrates a substantial correlation between the classical Ayurvedic descriptions of Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas and contemporary nutritional science. Modern evidence indicates that these dietary substances are rich sources of essential nutrients, dietary fibre, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and bioactive phytochemicals with antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, immunomodulatory, cardioprotective, antidiabetic, and metabolic regulatory properties.[9–20] These findings support the traditional Ayurvedic concept that regular consumption of wholesome foods plays a pivotal role in maintaining physiological homeostasis and preventing lifestyle-related disorders.

The remarkable concordance between Ayurvedic dietary wisdom and current scientific evidence highlights the continuing relevance of Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas in contemporary preventive healthcare. Incorporation of these wholesome dietary substances into daily nutritional practices may contribute to improved nutritional status, healthy ageing, enhanced quality of life, and reduction in the burden of non-communicable diseases. [9,10,12]

Although the available evidence is encouraging, further well-designed randomized controlled trials, multicentric clinical studies, and translational research are required to establish stronger scientific evidence regarding their long-term efficacy, safety, and mechanisms of action. [19,20] Such investigations will facilitate the integration of Ayurvedic nutritional principles into evidence-based clinical practice and public health strategies.

In conclusion, the concept of Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas represents a scientifically relevant and sustainable dietary model that successfully integrates the holistic principles of Ayurveda with contemporary nutritional science. Their routine consumption has the potential to promote health, prevent disease, and strengthen the foundation of evidence-based integrative medicine. [1–20]

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