

Turmeric – through an ayurveda physician’s view, efficacy and different preparations

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Most of the ayurveda medicines consist of herbal drugs and turmeric is an important one among them. It has been used both as a food ingredient and as a medicine. So it is clear that it was considered as a drug with great medicinal value. Sanskrit name of turmeric is *haridra* and Ayurveda mentions this particular drug in almost all treatises since vedic period. The different varieties, synonyms, properties, action and various medicinal preparations are detailed in ayurveda texts including *bruhatth thrayis. Bhavaprakasa* (16th century AD) says about four varieties of *haridra*: *haridra*, *amara haridra*, *vana haridra*, *daru haridra*. Among them *haridra* is considered as the common turmeric, *Curcuma longa* Linn. According to the references in Ayurveda literature, it had been used internally as well as externally with proper adjuvants according to the condition. Milk, honey and ghee are the common vehicles of *haridra* mentioned in ayurveda. It is a drug with *thiktha*(bitter) *katu*(pungent) *rasa*(taste), *rooksha*(dryness) *laghu*(lightness) *guna*(quality), *ushna* (hot)*veerya*(potency) *katu* (pungent)*vipaka*(post digestive taste) and it balances all three *doshas* : *kapha*,*pitha* and *vata*. It is indicated in various ailments like diabetes, skin diseases, swelling ,respiratory disorders, bruises, poisoning ,loss of appetite and tumours. Along with all the positive effects as an internal medicine , it is very much useful in minor surgical procedures in ayurveda like *jalookavacharana* leech therapy and *ksharasutra*. Also it is being in use as a nasal decongestant through the method of inhalation. Now uncountable researches are going on to study the effect of turmeric on cancer. But *Susruthacharya* had already mentioned *haridra* in his chapter dealing with *arbuda chikithsa*(cancer treatment). This particular review is an attempt to explore the traditional knowledge of the potency and versatility of turmeric.