

Insight into Arishta Lakshanas: With respect to *Panchindriya*

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Abstract. Arishta Lakshana is a term from Ayurveda that refers to the signs and symptoms that indicate impending death. Even in modern medicine, there are indications of immediate death, or Arishta Lakshanas, as they are known in ancient Ayurvedic writings, carrying their clinical significance. These warning indicators have their roots in ancient texts like Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya, and Ashtanga Sangraha. These are closely related to the state of function of Panchindriya, which are Chakshu, Shrotra, Ghrana, Jihva, and Tvak. According to the contemporary context, Panchindriya is co-related to sense organs. Mahabhutas and Doshic preponderance in Indriyas are attributed to their unique physiological effects; likewise, the vitiation of related Doshas might modify Indriya's function. While stating this, certain conditions have been mentioned by Acharyas that are incurable because of the poor prognosis of the illness. The correlation between Arishta Lakshanas and Panchindriya highlights the significance of Ayurvedic indications in modern medicine. By drawing comparisons between these antiquated signals and current diagnostic and prognostic markers, modern medicine is bridging the gap between conventional wisdom and clinical practice today. In Ayurveda, the concept of Indriya needs to be explored to provide literature.

Keywords: Arishta Lakshana, Panchindriya, Mahabhutas, Indriyas, Dosha

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Introduction

Arishta Lakshana refers to the foreboding signs or symptoms of approaching death in a person.[1] These indications are covered in the ancient Indian medical system of Ayurveda, specifically in works such as Charaka Samhita[2] and Sushruta Samhita[3]. Arishta Lakshana is a collection of physical, mental, and behavioral signs that are thought to foreshadow a person's impending death. These indications are supposed to be irreversible and serve as markers that a person's vital energy or life powers (Prana) are depleting. Ayurveda holds that life and death are determined by the balance or imbalance of the three Doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha).[4] When

the body cannot balance these energies and the Srotas (Channels) become obstructed or damaged, the death process begins, as evidenced by the appearance of Arishta Lakshana. When a person is nearing death, some alterations in the function of the Panchindriya can be seen, which are known as Arishta Lakshana.[5] These changes frequently reflect a failure of the body's sensory and cognitive systems. The degeneration of the Panchindriya is an important feature of Arishta Lakshana because it indicates the body's deteriorating ability to interact with its surroundings and sustain normal sensory processes. These symptoms are viewed as evidence that the life force (Prana) is dwindling and the body is no longer capable of supporting itself.

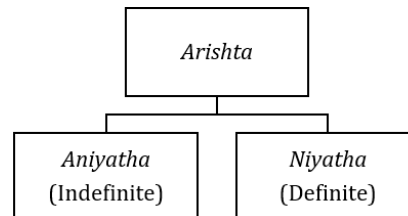


Figure 1: Classification according to Sushruta.

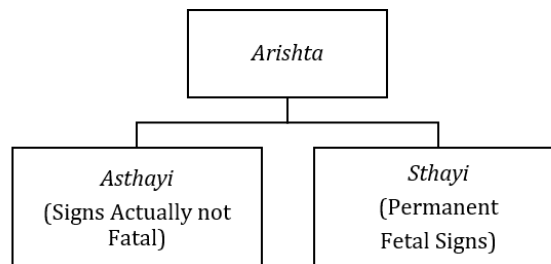


Figure 2: Classification according to Ashtanghahrudaya.

Methods

Arishta Lakshana regarding information has been taken from separate Sthan i.e. Indriya Sthan of ancient Ayurvedic text Charak Samhita and Sutra Sthan of Sushruta Samhita. To find relevant studies, reviewed published articles were used, irrespective of publication year, which closely match with conditions explained by Arishtas.

Swara(Voice) indicating Arishta

Usual sounds arise out of the blue, a blend of voices that sound like sheep, weak voices, indiscernible, choppy, raspy, and terrible, shuttering voices.[6]

Contemporary view of Voice indicating Arishta

The "Death rattle"[7], which is an odd voice that occasionally appears while someone speaks, may be a sign that someone is close to passing away. The accumulation of secretions in the throat and airways as a result of ineffective swallowing is what produces this sound. The voice could sound moist or gurgly. "Agonal breathing"[8] in which the patient may produce gasping or labored noises, is another vocal cue. It can be extremely upsetting to hear the erratic vocalizations that are frequently associated with this kind of breathing. Due to weaker vocal cords and decreased energy, the person may also find it difficult to talk

or only make weak, harsh, or fragmentary sounds. These breathing and speech changes are signs that the body is shutting down and are a normal component of the dying process.

Gandha (Smell) indicating Arishta

A person who constantly smells like a forest full of blossoming trees and creepers is said to be a pus-pita, and this implies that they will pass away within a year. Someone who smells like specific flowers, whether it's a nice or terrible scent, is an Arishta. If a doctor detects offensive smells either separately or collectively. A person is emitting an unpleasant stench if it smells like pee, excrement, or a dead body.[9]

Contemporary view of Smell indicating Arishta

Advanced Gangrene[10] is one illness that can cause mortality and emit a strong stench. When body tissue dies from a severe bacterial infection or a lack of blood flow, it results in gangrene. As the damaged tissue breaks down, it releases an overpowering, unpleasant smell. Gangrene can cause sepsis, a potentially fatal systemic infection if treatment is not received. This goes forward with the death of tissue. Although it usually affects the extremities, inside organs can also become affected by gangrene. Tissue death brought on by a lack of blood supply results in discoloration, swelling, and an odd, pungent stench. *Clostridium perfringens* is a type of bacteria commonly associated with gas gangrene. These bacteria produce toxins and gas within the tissue, contributing to the odor and further tissue destruction. If the infection spreads to the bloodstream, it can cause sepsis. Symptoms of sepsis include fever, rapid heartbeat, rapid breathing, and confusion. Sepsis is a medical emergency that can result in organ failure and death of a person.

Rasa (Taste) indicating Arishta

Before death, the taste of a human person undergoes two types of changes, that are, bitter flavor and extreme sweetness. Flies, lice, wasps, and mosquitoes avoid the body with an unpleasant flavor. However, in the case of sweetness, flies are persistently drawn, even after he has bathed and applied cosmetics.[11]

Contemporary view of taste indicating Arishta

Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA) is a dangerous complication of diabetes that happens when the body

begins to break down lipids too quickly for energy, resulting in a buildup of ketones in the blood, making it acidic. Without adequate treatment, DKA can cause severe dehydration, loss of consciousness, and eventually death.[12]

Sparsha (Touch) indicating Arishta

The absence of a pulse in pulsing zones. Coldness in persons who are usually heated. Soft organs grow rigid. Excessive roughness in delicate organs. Absence of an organ that is normally present at a specific location. Dislocation or looseness of a joint, either downward or to the sides. Excessive loss of muscle and blood. Excessive perspiration or its absence, etc. Obesity without a clear cause implies Arishta.[13]

Contemporary view of Touch indicating Arishta

In the last stages of terminal cancer[14], the body experiences major changes as it begins to shut down, and some of the symptoms connected to touch and skin include coolness and mottling. As the circulatory system slows, blood flow to the extremities declines, causing the skin to become cool and mottled (a blotchy, purplish-blue discoloration), particularly in the hands, feet, and legs. Pallor and clammy skin can result from decreased blood flow and sweating as the body's functions fail. Patients may become less sensitive to touch and other stimuli, indicating a decrease in neurological function. These changes are part of the normal dying process and are typically seen in individuals with advanced terminal conditions such as cancer, heart failure, and severe respiratory disease.

Chakshu (Eye) indicating Arishta

There was no pulsation detected in the carotid area. Accumulation of unclean substances, such as sugar granules or gravels, with an excessive white color. Matting the eyelashes. The eyes become projected and excessively withdrawn. Too much slanting of the eyes. Unevenness in the eyes. Eyes that are loose with abundant secretions. Constantly open or closed eyes. Excessive blinking and opening of eyes. The eyes turn crimson as if they are on fire. Mon-gooses are blind, which means they see everything as black during the day. Arishta occurs when hair falls out of any portion of the body without causing pain when tugged.[15]

Panchindriya	Arishta Lakshanas	Modern correlation
Swara (Voice)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound like sheep, weak voices, indiscernible, choppy, raspy, terrible • Shuttering voices 	Death rattle
Gandha (Smell)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person smells like a forest full of blossoming trees and creepers • One who smells like specific flowers, whether it's a nice or terrible scent 	Advanced gangrene
Rasa (Taste)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bitter flavor and extreme sweetness • Insects avoid body with an unpleasant flavor 	Diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA)
Sparsha (Touch)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of a pulse in pulsing zones • Coldness in persons who are usually heated • Soft organs grow rigid • Excessive roughness in delicate organs • Absence of an organ • Dislocation/looseness of a joint • Excessive loss of muscle and blood • Excessive perspiration or its absence 	Last stages of terminal cancer
Chakshu (Eye)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No pulsation detection • Accumulation of unclean substances • Eyes become projected • Slanting of eyes • Unevenness in eyes • Excessive blinking 	Traumatic brain injury

Table 1: Arishta Lakshanas according to Panchindriya with modern correlation

Contemporary view of Eye examination indicating Arishta

In cases of severe traumatic brain injury (TBI), such as a large stroke or severe head trauma, the indications seen during an eye examination may suggest approaching death or brain death. This condition is manifested by fixed and dilated pupils. Severe brain injury can cause dysfunction in the brainstem, which governs pupil size and responsiveness to light. Loss of neurological function can cause pupils to become fixed and dilated. The corneal reflex, which involves blinking in reaction to contacting the cornea, may be absent in patients with severe brain injury, indicating reduced brainstem function. Depending on the severity of the damage and accompanying disorders, additional indications such as irregular eye movements (e.g., roaming or absent eye movements)

may be observed.[16] section*Discussion In contemporary medicine, prognosis has taken longer to establish itself as an essential component of care than diagnosis and treatment did. Prognosis estimation, or the probability that an individual will experience a particular outcome over a predetermined amount of time, is considered less significant in clinical practice and training than in the diagnosis and treatment of a disease. Making critical decisions regarding the end of life, such as whether or not to try specific therapies, can be aided by the patient or physician knowing the prognosis. It's interesting to note that the evaluation was done with sense organs in the days before modern technological advancements. For example, body odor, or Gandha, was used to evaluate the Arishta Lakshana. It is now understood that volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which are a sign of a

person's metabolic state, are released by the human body. It is possible to use volatile organic compounds (VOCs) as diagnostic biomarkers for several illnesses, such as infectious diseases, metabolic disorders, and genetic disorders. Olfactory cues known as odors can reveal details about a person's physical or mental health. It's fascinating to learn how people's sense of smell can be used to diagnose physical issues. Even though body odors and volatile organic compounds may be therapeutic. Consequently, an attempt has been made to combine Ayurvedic with its modern setting. This small effort could help formal caregivers gain more observational skills in end-of-life care settings. In terms of research, it is feasible to develop and validate novel prognostic indices that take life expectancy rather than mortality risk into account. To ascertain the type and severity of the disease and to determine the most effective course of treatment going forward, a thorough physical examination ought to be a regular component of our routine.

Conclusion

Effective medical practice requires strong clinical skills in diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis. Prognosis is an important ability in general medicine, however, it is underutilized. Prognosis is a forgotten ability that has to be rediscovered and restored to its proper place. It is recommended to transition from a diagnosis-focused medical strategy to a more useful prognosis-focused approach. Predicting Prognosis helps doctors and patients make better decisions.

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