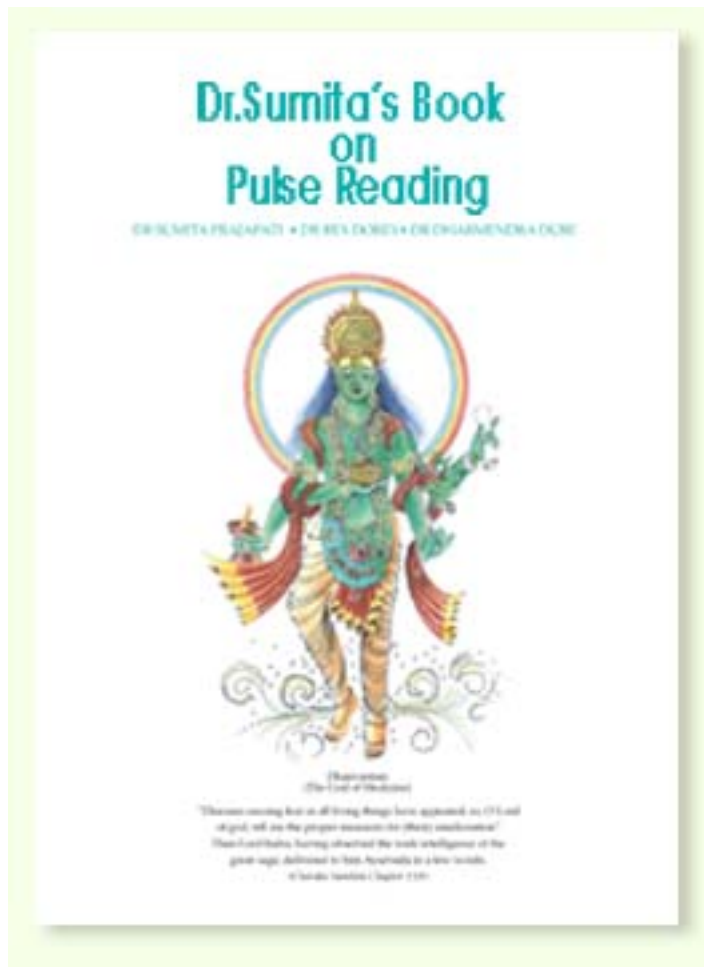


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About Book

Part One: The Principles of Ayurveda

The first part of this book is about the basic principles of Ayurveda. It tells of the great importance we put on the spiritual and physical aspects, the three doshas, their subdoshas, the seven dhatus, the srotas and malas, together with Ayurveda's healing modalities, Purvakarma and Panchakarma.

Part Two: Pulse Reading

The second part of this unique book reveals the ancient secrets of pulse reading. Its uniqueness is in the fact that not many have gone as far as this book to fully demonstrate and explain the inner workings of this wonderful science. In this section we explain the body's imbalance (vikriti), plus the symptoms, treatments. Fully-illustrated diagrams of the pulse make this subject practical and easy to understand. Also included in the Appendices are our prescribed herbs, appropriate diets, Panchakarma treatments and Glossary.

For practitioners, who have already acquired a reasonable knowledge of Ayurveda and comprehend the basics of this subject, should easily understand the vibrations of the pulse, interpret the patient's vikriti and prescribe our medicinal herbs for the patient's wellbeing.

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About Authors



Dr. Sumita's Book



Dr. Sumita's Book

Introduction

“A vaidya (Ayurvedic doctor) who does not know how to diagnose pulse, urine, tongue and facial diagnosis cannot achieve success in the treatment and can kill the patient”.

Amongst some of my vivid childhood memories are those of my grandfather, a vaidya at a village in Patan district of Gurjrat state in western India.

As a young girl then, I was intrigued by the snaking queues of villagers who would patiently wait outside our home to just have their pulse ‘felt’ by my grandfather, reverently called ‘vaidji’ by them.

My grandfather – who walks upright at 95 years now, has all his teeth intact, and doesn’t need the aid of glasses to read – would sit on his gaddi (cotton mattress spread on the floor) and press his three fingers on the pulse of the patient close to the wrist and do ‘nadi pariksha’ or pulse reading diagnosis.

What is Pulse Diagnosis?

Pulse diagnosis is the ancient art and science of detecting the existing status of a person's body, mind, soul and spirit. 'Nadi' or pulse is that vital flow of energy or life that courses through as a subtle channel all over the body and enables the vaidya to feel the way the blood spurts from the heart. This helps an experienced Ayurvedic doctor to diagnose or treat various ailments, or to prevent their occurrence. 'Ayurveda', which literally means the 'Science of Life', has bestowed the miraculous science upon us of diagnosing the imbalances within our body, without the use of any instruments except fingers. I feel problems that remain undiagnosed, even by using sophisticated diagnostic tests, can be accurately judged by examining the pulse.

Pulse reading can be learnt through continuous practice, focus, awareness and under the guidance of an experienced guru. It is like playing the veena, a musical instrument, akin to the violin. On striking, each string produces a different musical note. Similarly, an expert pulse reader by touching, pressing and 'feeling' the different combinations of the pulse, is able to diagnose the imbalances within a person's body. Ayurveda states three barometers of diagnosis: darshana (see and observe), sparshana (touch) and prashna (inquire by asking questions). Successful pulse reading involves touching, feeling, observing and experiencing not only the rate, rhythm and volume of the pulse; but also its movement, amplitude, temperature, force and consistency in the body.

The Vision Unfolds

Medicine flows in my veins. I grew up and completed my MD in both the Modern and Ayurvedic systems of medicine. I began my career by practicing in the Modern medicine, but soon realized that it did not tackle the root cause of the disease. Most of the times my patients felt good, initially, but came back a few months later with the same problem occurring.

I honed the pulse reading skills I had learnt from Dr Sane while doing modern medicine. Six months after starting my MD in Ayurvedic medicine I was seeing close to a 100 patients a day, diagnosing the problem and treating them successfully. It has been ten years since then and today I fully understand why there were those serpentine-like queues of patients at my grandfather's house.

Basic Concepts of Ayurveda Before I share my practical experiences, I would like to state the basic concept of Ayurveda, which reiterates that all living beings are the permutation and combination of the five elements – space, air, fire, earth and water. These five elements constitute the three major biological components – the three doshas.

The doshas are: vata (air + space), pitta (fire + water) and kapha (water + earth). Life and death on earth is caused by nothing else but the balance and imbalance of these doshas. Health follows when the doshas are balanced, and disease when they are imbalanced.

Another important factor for health or disease is agni or digestive fire that governs digestion and metabolism. For example, what happens when we cook rice on a very, very slow fire, it is not cooked properly and what happens if the fire is very high, the food is burnt? So to prepare well-cooked rice, what is required? The answer is obvious, a medium or normal fire. In the same way, if our digestive fire is too low or too then the food we consume remains half digested and

forms a sticky mucus-type toxic substance we call aam in Ayurveda.

The aam, in turn, gets into our blood stream and obstructs channels within the body, which is the beginning of disease. If the problem is diagnosed on time, then it is easy to solve, but if it is not tackled and enough time is allowed to pass, the disease becomes chronic and incurable.

To understand the subtle nuances of pulse reading, it is important to know the abovementioned basic tenets of Ayurveda. Pulse reading helps to diagnose the problem at the first stage, as the dosha and toxins (aam) are just beginning to accumulate, which is long before they spread and vitiate the entire body where they manifest themselves in the form of disease that finally becomes chronic and complicated. So, if the vaidya is able to do a correct pulse reading before the disease progresses, disease can be reversed towards health.

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Case Studies

In my ten years of practice, I have successfully treated many patients suffering from an imbalance of vata, pitta and kapha.

Case Study 1 – Vata Pulse Patient's History The patient was an over weight, 55-year old lady doctor, who came to me for the treatment of obesity.

Diagnosis

On examining her pulse, I found that it was full of swelling and moving like a snake. The vata pulse was jumping more with low circulation and it was difficult to 'feel'. I asked her if she had ever had an abortion and she said: "twice". Then I asked her if she had ever had a caesarean operation and she said: "yes". She went on to tell me how she had progressively started putting on weight after the operation. To lose weight she had tried several diets on her own. She began her day with a black tea followed by salads, had only sandwiches and coffee for lunch and ate vegetables and two slices of bread for dinner, in spite of all that she continued to add on the kilos. Wrong diet, over fasting and sedentary lifestyle was aggravating her vata pulse, resulting in the patient bloating. Salads are strictly not recommended to people having vata.

Recommendations

The patient was put on a diet of whole or split green gram (mung), green gram soup, rice, vegetable soup with ghee (clarified butter) to be taken at four hourly intervals, with basti

(medicated enema) treatment in panchakarma, the age-old science of purifying the body. Within a fortnight, her pulse began to feel light and the vata level began to reduce.

After the complete basti course spreading over a year, she lost 8 kilos. After three years, today her weight stands at 55 kgs and her pulse is healthy and steady.

I also taught her how to 'feel' her own pulse and now, whenever there is a slight rise in vata, she immediately embarks on a vata pacifying diet that includes cooked rice, dates, vegetables and sesame oil massage also drinking 1 tsp of castor oil at bed time with a glass of warm water. The lady doctor actually bounced back to health because of the correct diagnosis of a vata type pulse. More importantly, she became self-educated in diagnosing her own problem. Ayurveda is truly a 'science of life'.

Case Study 2 – Pitta Pulse

Patient's History

A 25-year-old medical representative, with a history of asthma since childhood, came to me to cure his severe migraine problem. He had tried a variety of painkillers to combat the disease, but, all to no avail.

Diagnosis

On examining the patient's pulse, I found that it was hot, fast strong and heavy to the feel this was due to aam (toxins). Aam was created by indigestion which left the pitta pulse jumping excessively. His job involved walking in the hot sun the whole day, without fixed hours for eating meals. Besides he was fond of spicy, fermented, sour, foods, tomatoes, pizzas, yogurt and

alcohol. Not only this, he was taking inhalers, antibiotics, broncho-dialators and steroids at frequent intervals for asthma, sulting in his immunity level being very low. His diet, lifestyle and asthma medicines were pitta increasing. Hence, he was suffering from migraine.

Recommendations

I advised him to take 2 tsp of cow's ghee first thing in the morning on an empty stomach to control pitta and a tea spoon of Triphala at night as a mild virechan to remove pitta. He followed a pitta-pacifying diet and eating on time. After about a month-and-a half, he reported a 50 per cent reduction in the intensity of migraine and even his asthma attacks had reduced. Slowly, his asthma medicines were reduced. After six months, his pulse was free from aam and was very light to the feel. With the heat in the body controlled, the patient's pitta pulse was not jumping so excessively; it was healthy light and steady.

Case Study 3 – Kapha Pulse

Patient's History

A 30 year-old-businessman once came to me for the treatment of diabetes and obesity. Diagnosis After checking his pulse, I immediately told him, "This is not you". He replied that he was very slim until he started his business six years ago.

Next, I asked him, "Are you a diabetic?" His pulse was very humid, with the kapha pulse very prominent. "Yes, I am on insulin and my blood sugar is not under control even after medication." He pleaded that he wanted to get rid of the insulin injections.

His pulse was very heavy to 'feel', because he had aam. The sedentary lifestyle, stress, and his fondness for fried foods and sweets, with no exercise, had caused slow digestion with a formation of mucus and kapha, which blocked the channels to his pancreas, lungs and intestines. This resulted in an increase in the blood sugar level, in cough, congestion in the chest, respiratory problems and severe constipation.

Recommendations

I advised him to walk for an hour daily. To begin with, he was put on a diet of mung soup and mung with spices like dry ginger, oregano, asafoetida, black pepper, rock salt, onion, garlic and coriander. Then, after a couple of weeks, vegetables and rice was included and added to his menu. He was asked to take a teaspoon of a mixture of turmeric and amla (gooseberry) powder on an empty stomach in the morning. At night he was asked to take a teaspoon of castor oil with warm water. He successfully took panchakarma treatments, virechan and enema. Side by side,

his insulin dosage was reduced every week.

After a year of adopting this life style, his insulin was stopped and he regained his slim look once more. Today, his pulse is without aam (very light to 'feel') and the kapha pulse is feeble but prominent.

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