



Use of Ayurvedic Whole System in Rheumatoid Arthritis

[Source: PIB](#)

Why in News?

Recently, a study highlighted the effectiveness of the [Ayurvedic Whole System \(AWS\)](#) in managing [Rheumatoid Arthritis \(RA\)](#), a chronic autoimmune disorder.

- The research shows that the AWS not only reduces RA symptoms but also helps **restore a normal metabolic balance** in patients.
- It presents a promising **complementary approach** to conventional medical treatments.

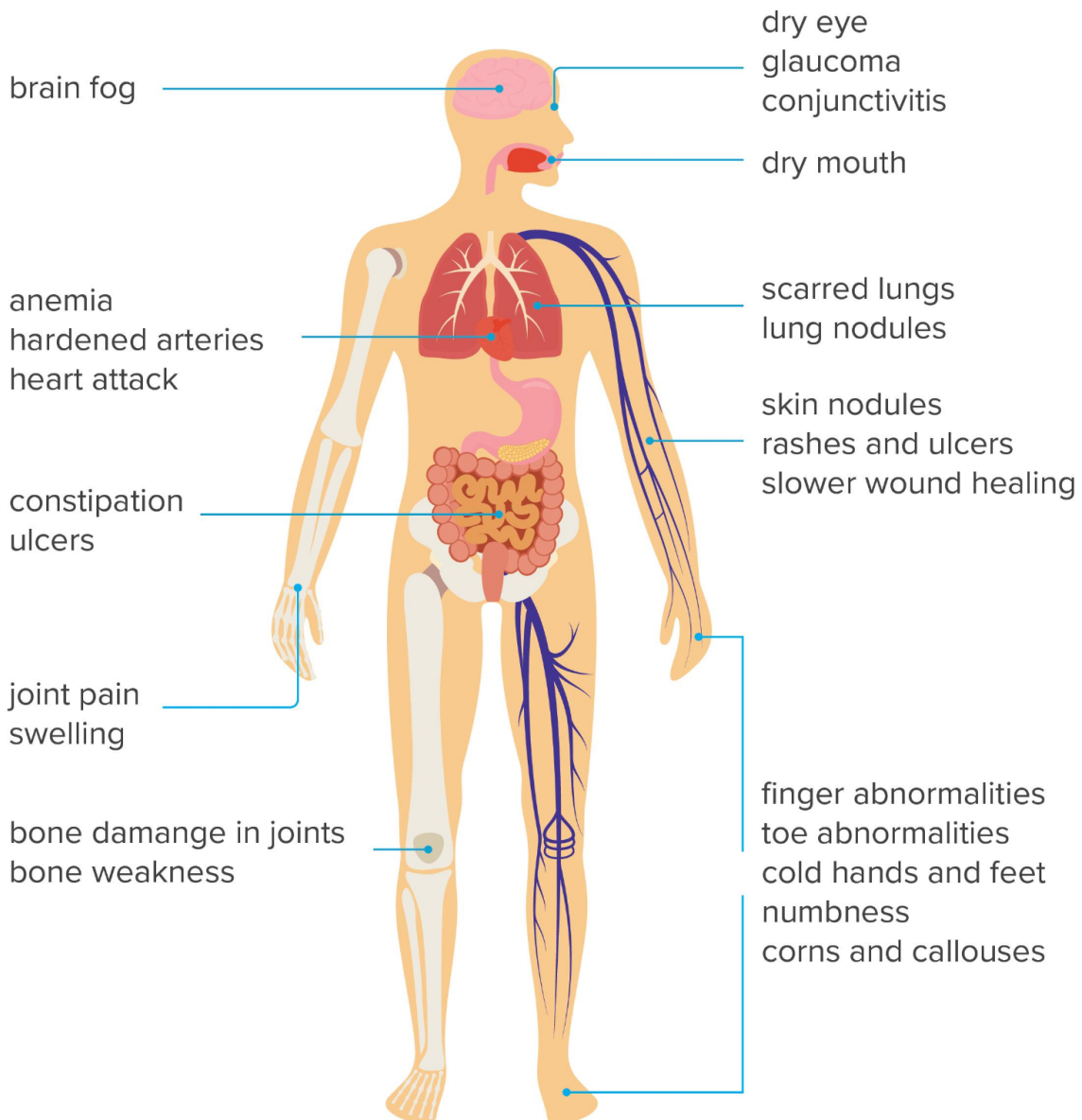
What are Key Facts About Rheumatoid Arthritis?

- **About:** RA is a **chronic inflammatory disorder** that affects the **lining of joints**, causing a painful swelling that can eventually result in **bone erosion and joint deformity**.
 - In some people, the condition can damage a wide variety of body systems, including the **skin, eyes, lungs, heart and blood vessels**.
 - It is an **autoimmune disorder**. It happens when the immune system doesn't work properly and **attacks the lining** of the joints, called the **synovium**.
- **Significance of the Study:** It supports the Ayurvedic concept of '**Samprapti Vighatan,**' where the disease-causing process is **dismantled**, and the body's '**Doshas**' (**bio-energies**) are brought back to **balance**.
 - The research is pivotal as it explores the potential for pathology reversal in RA using an Ayurvedic whole-system approach.
- **Key Clinical Improvements Observed:**
 - **Disease Activity Reduction:** There was a notable reduction in the **Disease Activity Score**, a critical measure for assessing RA severity.
 - **Decrease in Joint Inflammation:** Both the total number of **swollen** and tender joints were reduced among patients receiving AWS treatment.
 - **Reduction in Toxins:** The **Ama Activity Measure (AAM) Score**, which evaluates **toxins** in the body, showed significant reduction post-intervention, indicating decreased systemic inflammation and toxicity.
 - **Metabolic Profile Shifts:** Post-AWS treatment, imbalanced metabolic markers began to shift towards **normal** levels observed in healthy controls, suggesting a return to a more balanced metabolic state.
- **First-of-its-Kind Evidence:** This study is the first to clearly demonstrate the clinical efficacy of AWS in managing RA.
 - It highlights the **dual benefit** of symptom reduction and metabolic normalisation, potentially leading to long-term positive outcomes for patients.

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Effects on the Body

Rheumatoid Arthritis



What is the Ayurvedic Whole System?

- **About:** Ayurveda is the time tested [traditional system of medicine](#) of India.
 - The term '**Ayurveda**' meaning '**the knowledge of life**' comprises two Sanskrit words viz '**Ayu**' meaning '**Life**' and '**Veda**' meaning '**Knowledge**' or '**Science**'.
 - Ayurveda is a **whole-body (holistic) system** of medicine. It takes a natural approach to all aspects of health and well-being.
- **Ayurvedic Strategy:** Ayurveda is based on the idea that each person has certain **life forces (doshas)** and everything in the universe is connected.
 - An **imbalance in one area can affect another**.
 - When the imbalance is not fixed, **disease and illness can occur**.
 - Ayurveda mostly uses **nutrition, lifestyle changes, and natural treatments**.

- These are used to **support balance and a return to health.**
- **Three Principal Energies (Doshas):** Ayurveda identifies **three basic types of energy** or **functional principles** that are present in everyone and everything.
 - **Vata:** It governs functions like **breathing, blinking, muscle movement**, and the circulation of fluids.
 - **Pitta:** It governs **digestion, absorption, nutrition**, and body temperature.
 - **Kapha:** It governs the body's structural components, **lubricates joints**, moisturises the skin, and maintains immunity.



AYUSH Systems of Medicine

AYUSH encompasses Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa, and Homeopathy, with Ayurveda having a documented history of 5000+ years.

Ayurveda

- ↳ **Samhita Period (1000 BC):**
Emerged as mature medical system
 - ↳ **Charaka Samhita:** Oldest and most authoritative text
 - ↳ **Sushruta Samhita:** Gives fundamental principles and therapeutic methods in eight specialties
- ↳ **Main Schools:**
 - ↳ **Punarvasu Atreya** - School of physicians
 - ↳ **Divodasa Dhanvantari** - School of surgeons

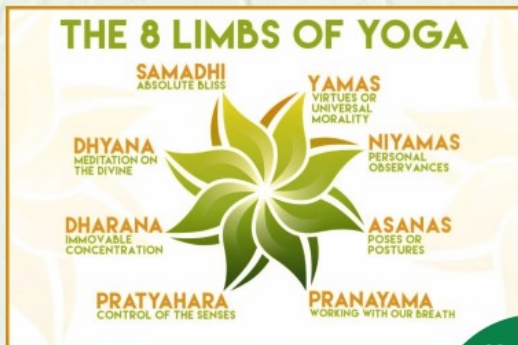
Lord Brahma is believed to be the 1st proponent of Ayurveda

Branches of Ayurveda:

- Kayachikitsa (internal medicine)
- Shalya Tantra (surgery)
- Shalakya Tantra (disease of supra-clavicular origin)
- Kaumarabhritya (paediatrics)
- Agada Tantra (toxicology)
- Bhootavidya (psychiatry)
- Rasayana Tantra (rejuvenation and geriatrics)
- Vajikarana (eugenics & science of aphrodisiac)



Yoga & Naturopathy



- ↳ **Naturopathy:** Healing with help of 5 natural elements - Earth, Water, Air, Fire and Ether
 - ↳ Based on theories of self-healing capacity of body and principles of healthy living
 - ↳ Encourages a **person-centred approach** rather than disease-centred

Yoga first propounded by Maharishi Patanjali in systematic form Yogsutra

Unani

Pioneered in Greece, developed by Arabs as 7 principles (Umoor-e-Tabbiya)

- ↳ Based on the framework of teachings of **Buqrat** (Hippocrates) and **Jalinoos** (Galen)
 - ↳ Hippocratic theory of **four humors** viz. blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile
- ↳ **Recognised by WHO** and granted official status by India as an alternative health system

Siddha

Dates back to 10000 – 4000 BC; Siddhar Agasthiyar - Father of Siddha Medicine

- ↳ Preventive, promotive, curative, rejuvenative, and rehabilitative health care
- ↳ **4 Components:** Latro-chemistry, Medical practice, Yogic practice & Wisdom
- ↳ Diagnosis based on 3 humors (**Mukkuttram**) and 8 vital tests (**Ennvagai Thervu**)

Sowa Rigpa

Origin: Lord Buddha in India before 2500 years

- ↳ Traditional medicine in Himalayan regions of Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, etc.
- ↳ Recognised in India by Indian Medicine Central Council Act, 1970 (As amended in 2010)

Homeopathy

German physician Dr. Christian F. S. Hahnemann codified its fundamental principles

- ↳ Medicines prepared mainly from natural substances (plant products, minerals, animal sources)
- ↳ Brought in India by European missionaries - 1810; official recognition - 1948
- ↳ **3 Key Principles:**
 - ↳ *Similia Similibus Curentur* (let likes be cured by likes)
 - ↳ Single Medicine
 - ↳ Minimum Dose



Drishti IAS

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Which one of the following pairs does not form part of the six systems of Indian Philosophy? (2014)

- (a) Mimamsa and Vedanta
- (b) Nyaya and Vaisheshika
- (c) Lokayata and Kapalika
- (d) Sankhya and Yoga

Ans: (c)

Q. With reference to the history of philosophical thought in India, consider the following statements regarding Sankhya school: (2013)

1. Sankhya does not accept the theory of rebirth or transmigration of soul.
2. Sankhya holds that it is the self-knowledge that leads to liberation and not any exterior influence or agent.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

Q. Consider the following statements: (2010)

1. The Taxus tree is naturally found in the Himalayas.
2. The Taxus tree is listed in the Red Data Book.
3. A drug called "taxol" is obtained from the Taxus tree is effective against Parkinson's disease.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (b)