

SOFT SKILL TRENDS IN AYURVEDA

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INTRODUCTION

The detailing of soft skill in medical field is the need of hour. This area needs much attention in today's scenario^{1, 2}. Increasing incidence of lost patient-doctor trust bond is needed to re-establish. Unlike the other professions, medical profession was considered as a noble occupation earlier but now the picture has changed. Number of lawsuits are filed in jurisdiction for the conflicts between doctors and patients and their relatives³. There are many studies, which shows that lack of basic soft skills were the causative factor for these incidences⁴. That's why we can see that now a day the soft skill training is demanded to be included in medical curriculum⁵.

Ayurveda being the complete medical science has its own guidelines for the soft skill which are associated with their physician. Every Acharya had described the characteristics of a good physician^{6,7}. Even, Acharyas has detailed about the qualities of all four chief aspect of a medical team which includes *Bhishak* (physician), *Drava* (medicine), *Upasthata* (attendant) and *Rogi* (patient)⁸. In between all four the physician is said to be principal^{9,10}. In this study the Brihat-trayi and their commentary has researched to find their guidelines related to soft skill for a medical professional.

Usually in medical profession only hard skills are emphasized to be learnt and included in the curriculum. Hence neither students nor teachers give attention towards developing soft skills. While we taught hard skills to the medical graduates, one important aspect we usually miss that cure of disease not only depends on the treatment part but on psychological well being of patient also. And again, in medical profession we need much more presence

of soft skills because the physician has to meet people who are already in stressful situation- the patient, their relatives. Their attendant were already facing difficult situation. These difficult situation stress out both, the patient and their relatives. So the medical personnels need much more training in soft skills so that they can deal with the situations. Again, not only the medicine or procedure shows its effect but patient's acceptance towards the doctor's approach also decides the outcome of the treatment. So, showing empathy, communicating with patients properly, being able to perform in a team and adopting behaviour in changing scenarios are very cardinal for a medical personnel. Being the physician the chief one, here we are discussing the soft skill code provided in Ayurveda by the Brihatrayi. This article strives the significant soft skills underlined in Ayurvedic reference books - Charak Samhita, Sushrut Samhita, Ashtang Sangrah.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Literature relevant to soft skill of an Ayurvedic physician mentioned in the Brihat-trayi along with their commentaries are studied and presented here. With the help of all these reference we have tried to make a guideline for soft skill of an Ayurvedic physician.

Result- While discussing about the soft skill and hard skill and their impact on the outcome of the treatment, first a look after the meaning of these terms.

Hard skills- also called technical skills, are any skills relating to a specific task or situation. It involves both understanding and proficiency in such specific activity that involves methods, processes, procedures, or techniques¹². for an Ayurvedic

Physician diagnosing disease, choosing line of treatment, performing shalyakriya, performing panchkarma are the hard skills. So the context provided in this shlok are the hard skills required by Ayurved Physician. Domain specific hard skills for a physician mentioned in Brihatrayai are-

विद्यावितर्कोविज्ञानंस्मृतिस्तत्परताक्रिया।

यस्यैषड्गुणास्तस्यनसाध्यमतिवर्तते।।

This reference is given by Acharya Charak in Sutrasthan 9/21. Chakrapani comments on this

विद्यावैद्यकशास्त्रजनम।वितर्कः शास्त्रमूलऊहापोहः।विज्ञानंशास्त्रान्तरज्ञानं;
किंवासहजंविशुद्धंज्ञानं।तत्परतेहव्याधिचिकित्सायांप्रयत्नमतिशयत्वम।क्रियापुनः
पुनश्चचिकित्साकरणम्।

The physician should have proper knowledge of his subject. This criteria is easily fulfilled by the institutional education. Whatever he/she has learned can be analysed by his/herself. Proper knowledge of own subject as well as other associated subjects also. The physician should also have good memory and recalling power as diverse situations need different approaches everytime. Fast action and decision making power is also required. All this can be achieved if the physician had enough exposure and rigorous training in their education period.

After acquiring the degree, the practical knowledge of all those studied lesson is also important. So the application of every said condition is thought here and analysed so that could be applied appropriately.

So, hard skills are specific abilities or capabilities that an individual can master and demonstration in a measured way for example doing a operating procedure or a panchkarma procedure or treating a patient with particular medicines.

Soft Skill in Brihatrayi-

Soft skill means personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people in medical profession. It means empathy towards the patient, time management, adaptability to the changing circumstances, to work in a team and communication abilities.

Soft skills are a combination of interpersonal skills, social skills, communication skills, character traits, attitudes, career attributes and emotional intelligence quotient (EQ) among others¹³. In Charak Samhita Su.10/26 Acharya Charak says¹⁴-

मैत्रीकारुण्यमार्तेषुशक्येप्रीतिरुपेक्षणम्।

प्रकृतिस्थेषुभूतेषुवैद्यवृत्तिश्चतुर्विधेति।।

This is a very important guideline given for the behavioral code of the physician by Acharya Charak.

Chakrapani comments on this

15 मैत्री सर्वभूतेष्वात्मनीवाप्रतीकूला प्रवृत्तिः।

Here the friendly behavior is recommended for the physician as it is very cardinal for doctor- patient relationship. While explaining *maître* Chakrapani said that *maître* means measuring everyone like self. While Gangadhar Rai says in Jalpakalpataru that treating the patient friendly . The comfort, respect, appreciation would be included in this quality.

Comfort- The patient should feel comfortable with the physician irrespective of type of his/her disease. If the patient has not bonded well with the physician he/she won't trust also. Again in the history taking the patient should be able to shed his/her all inhibitions to make the correct diagnosis.

Respect- The patient should feel respected by the physician irrespective of their educational, financial, mental status, as a basic human behavior. This makes the patient more confident about their doctors. Again this respect should be given to the other components of the medical team as their 100% effort is required for the success of treatment.

Appreciation- The doctor should be very encouraging and appreciating in general. The efforts taken by the patients and his/her team towards successful treatment should always be encouraged and appreciated. It will help them to put more energy and effort for the betterment of the patient.

16 आर्तेषु आर्तियुक्तेषु। कारुण्यमंपरदुःखप्रहाणेच्छा।

Karunya -Means the urge to reduce or eliminate the pain of the patient. To understand the pain or Arti of the patient and desire to remove it. This quality is important to have the human touch towards the patient care. Unless the physician is able to empathise with the patient, the understanding of patients *Prakriti* and *saar* will not be clear. Which is very important when we are going to decide line of treatment according to ayurveda.

The empathy towards the patient is said to be important quality by *Acharya Charak*. Empathy is often included as a component of emotional intelligence. But rather than just the recognition of other's emotions, empathy includes the ability to understand and share those emotions. In the medical setting, there are different categories of empathy, ranging from cognitive (or detached empathy) to affective. A physician's ability to use both can have a significant effect on patient care and outcomes.

17 शक्येसाधयितुं शक्ये, साध्यव्याधिगृहीतइतियावत्।

The ability to decide that the particular medical case is curable or not, is very important for medical professionals. Again the confidence and determination towards good prognosis is a cardinal credential for the physician. To give inputs, using new and innovative approach for that particular clinical condition is known as *Priti* in curable diseases. The curable one could be *sukhsadhya* and sometimes *kricchrasadhya*. So physician's consistent efforts to cure the disease in different and new approach is associated with this trait.

18 प्रकृतिरिहमरणं, प्रकृतिरुच्यतेस्वभावः; तथा-“इदमस्मान्मूर्तोत्....स्वभावमापत्यते,
मरणमित्यर्थः; मरणसमीपगतत्वादुच्यते प्रकृतिस्थेइति।

Here *Acharya* indicated towards very important code of conduct for incurable patients. Here, *Prakriti* does mean with death. Those who are not curable and prone to death should not be attended by the physician. And even if attended the physician should maintain *Upeksha bhav* that means with detachment empathy.

Not always a physician would be able to treat or cure the patient. Sometimes a bad prognosis occurs. Sometimes the disease is not curable, sometimes patient does not respond. Being a responsible and sensitive professional usually doctors become affected. For this situation Acharya Charak has already mentioned the quality of detachment empathy.

In Ch. V. 8/8 Acharya Charaka has mentioned the qualities of medical student who would become physicians in future. Here Acharya mentioned that the student should possess *Udarsatva, Nibhrit, Anuddhat* qualities¹⁹. *Udarsatva* means one who can forgive, *Nirbhrit* means polite and *Anuddhat* means one who is not egoistic. *Sarvabhutahitaishanam* meant the one who wants good for everyone.

In Su. Su. 2/3 Acharya has mentioned the qualities of a medical student, which includes *Namrata, Utsah, Sheel, Prasanna Chitta, Vakchesta, Kleshsah*²⁰. *Namrata* means polite behaviour, *Utsah* means positive attitude and *Sheel* means soft and cool attitude towards tough circumstances. One who has positive attitude, good communication skills and ability to work under the pressure. *Prasanna chitta* indicates towards happy conscious. *Vakchest* indicates good communication skills. *Kleshsaha* means remaining stable in painful situation.

DISCUSSION

With all above references, here is indicated that how strong behavioural code has been described in Ayurvedic text. So with all these prescribed traits of a Physician we can format the soft skill code in following headings-

1. *Maître*- The physician should make their patients feel very comfortable and relaxed so that they can develop their doctor patient bond.
2. *Karuna*- Strong desire to eliminate the pain of the patient. It can be achieved by effective line of treatment, providing moral support, installing hope in the patient and their relatives.
3. *Priti*- The physician's consistent approach towards the treatment of curable diseases. Trying new and innovative ways in case of non-progressive prognosis is an essential element in medical field as it is a live science and pathophysiology of the disease keep changing.
4. *Upeksha*- A cardinal attribute for medical professionals as failure is usually associated with loss of a life or organ in this field. So, physician should possess this trait to keep themselves safe from the negativity caused by incurable disease load. The physician should have detaching empathy towards incurable medical conditions. Similar results are found in different studies carried out by different researchers²¹.
5. *Namrata*- Polite behaviour towards the patient, his/her team and morbid situations. The soft and easy taking attitude of the *vaidya* will help the patient having positive attitude for the prognosis. This attribute develops the patient's trust in the *Vaidya*. This credential is appropriate in even today's clinical settings²².
6. *Prasanna chitta*- As the medical fraternity is always exposed towards negativity developed in the body and psyche of the patient so they must own very happy and positive approach to their profession. The patients found to have better trust factor in their doctor possessing this quality²³.
7. *Vakcheshta*- good communication skill is the heart of doctor- patient relationship. This always helps to make a clarity towards the mutual understanding of line of treatment from both side. This trait is most researched and studied in clinical setting by current medical researcher as mechanical conversation does not allow the

patient to be able to bond with the physician. Studies indicate positive effect of good communication ability in patient care²⁴. This attribute is again very much important as now we are making medical facility as a hospitality.

8. Sheela- the patience should be inculcated in the vaidya as enduring listening increase patient's trust and helps the vaidya to deal with difficult circumstances. Enduring listening capacity is the core of patient centric approach which is the need of the hour. So this trait is also said to have improved patients satisfaction²⁵.

Conclusion- Doctors often work under severe stress, are overworked, and frequently deal with patients who are experiencing all-too-human emotions, so soft skills like patience, positive approach, good communication skill, mental toughness are the critical personality traits. Physicians are expected to practice as a team – and ultimately often lead that team – so soft skills like collaboration and communication top the list. Confidence, commitment, and flexibility make the list of soft skills, too, but there are more, which are mentioned by *Acharya Charak* and *Acharya Sushruta*. If these code of behavior are followed by today's physicians, the chances of conflicts could be reduced. The better clinical outcome would also be achieved.

This detailed soft skill guideline would hopefully help the Ayurvedic physician to re-establish the lost doctor- patient connection. Hopefully it would also be helpful to increase the confidence level of the Ayurvedic physicians.

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