

## **An Appeal to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India**

### **Requesting full and effective use of Indian Medical Systems for the Prevention and Treatment of Covid-19**

For the last year and more, during which the world has been faced with the COVID pandemic, Indian medical systems, especially Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani, have been used extensively for the prevention and treatment of this disease in India. The data collated by the AYUSH Ministry and the institutions under it presents a thorough and detailed picture of the extensiveness and the efficacy of these indigenous interventions.

Of the various initiatives undertaken by the Ayush Ministry, two are particularly noteworthy (Nesari TM, J Ayurveda Case Rep 2021, 4:1-2): [[1](#)]

“1. AIIA (All India Institute of Ayurveda) conducted a large cohort public health study for 80,000 Delhi police personnel entitled “AYUSH-RAKSHA”. Ayush-Raksha Kit having Ayurvedic medicines were distributed in three phases and data were analyzed to evaluate the efficacy of Ayurvedic medicines in the prevention of disease. Result showed that age-specific mortality rate of Delhi Police versus Delhi Population was significantly reduced. There was a decreasing trend in the incidence of COVID cases in Delhi Police personnel from 15th June onward (after intervention) whereas Delhi population had increasing trend during the same time which witnessed its peak number of cases during the intervention period. When compared to other States, total number of cases in Delhi Police was low. Similarly, mortality rate among Delhi Police personnel was also much less as compared to other states police personnel.

“2. Around 600 patients were admitted in CHC ward of AIIA (All India Institute of Ayurveda) in the past 11 months, with completely cured and recovery rate of 99.5% (excluding referral data).”

The Union Ministry of Ayush and several State Governments have also actively promoted indigenous preventive formulations and practices for the general population. The data generated from the “Ayush Sanjivani App” indicates that such indigenous prophylactic measures have been widely adopted across all cross-sections of the society. A large number of Indians are known to have regularly taken preventive *desi* or *nattu vaidyam* formulations that are known within their families or regions. All this is believed to have helped in moderating the spread and severity of the disease in India, at least during the first phase.

Besides the efforts at the level of the Government of India and some of the State Governments, physicians of indigenous systems across the country have treated large numbers of Covid patients in their routine practice. A particularly successful intervention was made by a Vaidya of Chennai who treated more than 600 Covid-positive patients, many of them with serious comorbidities, with only two cases succumbing to the disease. Detailed data for the first 167 of her patients, compiled according to the basic scientific and statistical procedures, has been

published in a recent issue of the *Journal of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine*. [2] The patients discussed in the article exclude 21 who dropped out mainly because they preferred or were forced to seek in-patient treatment. All of the 167 who continued with the treatment recovered. Detailed case reports on the seriously comorbid cases treated in this intervention are also published in another issue of the same journal. [3]

There are several reports of similarly large and successful interventions by the ISM community. In Tamil Nadu, 29 Siddha Covid Care Centers with a total of 4,200 beds have been set up and are functioning effectively. A well-known and respected Siddha practitioner of Tamil Nadu has treated 870 patients, of whom none succumbed and only 5 dropped out. An Ayurveda practitioner of Bengaluru has documented records of 400 patients, including some with severe comorbidities, treated by her. A modern hospital in Meerut has been offering integrated Ayurvedic and modern treatment, even for patients under intensive care, in collaboration with a team of senior Ayurvedic physicians. The hospital claims to have documented significantly better outcomes for the patients receiving Ayurvedic treatment.

Information on these and several similar efforts made by the physicians of indigenous systems in different parts of India is available with the Ministry of Ayush and some of the State Governments.

We acknowledge that the interventions described above do not constitute definitive proof for the efficacy of Indian systems in the treatment of Covid because these are “one-armed” trials and do not offer a proper comparison between the group of patients receiving indigenous treatment and those not receiving such treatment. But these case studies do demonstrate the safety and potential effectiveness of the indigenous systems in the prevention and treatment of Covid. These interventions establish that:

1. *Safety*: The treatments and protocols of the Indian systems are safe to use in Covid patients. Among the thousands of patients involved in the experiments mentioned above, there are no reports of a patient deteriorating on account of such treatment. In any case, the indigenous preparations and procedures used in Covid treatment are derived from the extensively recorded pharmacopoeia of Indian systems and have been in wide-spread public use over a very long time and their safety has been well established.
2. *Potential Efficacy*: For people taking indigenous preventive treatment, the rates of infection and mortality are considerably lower than the normal. Similarly, for Covid patients through the indigenous systems, not counting the dropouts, the duration of disease and mortality are also lower. The interventions described above, may not offer definitive proof of these claims, but they do indicate a strong possibility of the indigenous systems being highly efficacious.

When no specific treatment is available for a newly emerged disease, safety and potential efficacy are the only two requirements that a proposed new treatment is expected to satisfy before being given at least emergency approval. Many of the innovative modern treatments used widely during the epidemic had not shown even this much of promise.

Given the amount of data that has been officially collected by the Ministry of Ayush, and the experience of several senior Ayurvedic and other indigenous physicians, regarding the safety and efficacy of their treatment, it is necessary to approve the deployment of indigenous systems for preventive and therapeutic use in Covid disease and to make such treatment widely

available in the public health facilities. Not doing so amounts to denying patients a treatment which is available, has been proven to be safe, and has shown great promise of efficacy.

Therefore, we request the Hon'ble Prime Minister for the following –

1. The preventive and immunity-promoting indigenous medicines may be made freely and easily available in all public hospitals, health centers and dispensaries, etc., and may even be widely distributed through various channels.
2. All government facilities engaged in care and treatment of Covid patients, and at least all district level government hospitals, should in addition to the standard modern treatment, provide the patients the option of receiving supplementary indigenous therapy under the care of trained physicians of the Indian systems according to a protocol established by the Ayush Ministry. An appropriate number of such physicians may be associated with all government facilities as per the approved protocols.
3. About 10-20 percent of randomly chosen and willing patients may be offered standalone indigenous management. Such patients must be assured that the standard modern treatment would be made available to them in case it becomes necessary on the basis of pre-defined parameters.
4. To ensure proper supervision and data collection, the Ayush and the Health Ministries may jointly develop appropriate software through which the treating physicians in every ward can directly upload the necessary data on a centralized system. This would also lead to upgradation of the digital infrastructure in the health delivery system, which would turn out to be highly useful even in normal times.

The above arrangements can be implemented as a part of the ongoing National Ayush Mission (NAM). This would ensure that the Covid patients across the country have the benefit of supplementary indigenous treatment and at least some of them are able to exercise the choice of obtaining full-fledged indigenous treatment. In the process, we shall be able to deploy the large number of trained physicians of the indigenous systems available in the country in the war against Covid. We would thus be utilizing the skills and knowledge of our indigenous physicians and our great heritage of indigenous healthcare in the intense national effort required to deal with this pandemic.

This would also ensure that within a few months we shall have an extensive database to scientifically establish the efficacy or otherwise of the indigenous systems both in providing supplementary treatment and stand-alone therapeutics in the management of Covid. If the data establishes the efficacy of the Indian systems, as it is most likely to do, it shall raise the profile of indigenous healthcare traditions and of India in the world to an entirely new level.

These arrangements would also bring modern medicine and the indigenous systems together in a synergetic manner and open up the possibility of using such synergies for considerably upgrading our health systems in the future.

Times of great distress are also the times when nations undertake great tasks. The current pandemic offers us a great opportunity to utilize our indigenous medical heritage and resources at a large scale and prove their efficacy in a scientifically and statistically significant manner. We must fully utilize this rare opportunity of bringing the indigenous medicine in the mainstream of our health care system and establishing its glory in the world.

[Sign the Appeal](#)

- 1 Nesari TM. Integration of Ayurveda in COVID-19 management: Need of an hour. J Ayurveda Case Rep [serial online] 2021 [cited 2021 Jul 5]; 4:1-2. Available from: <http://www.ayucare.org/text.asp?2021/4/1/1/318661>
- 2 P.L.T. Girija, Nithya Sivan, Yamini Agalya Murugavel, Pallavi Naik, T.M. Mukundan, Monica Duraikannan, “Standalone Ayurvedic Intervention with Home Quarantine in COVID-19 - Outcomes of Clinical Practice”, Journal of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine, 2021;04-15. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaim.2021.04.015>
- 3 P.L.T. Girija, Nithya Sivan, Pallavi Naik, Yamini Agalya Murugavel, M. Ravindranath Thygar, C.V. Krishnaswami, “Standalone Ayurvedic treatment of high-risk COVID-19 patients with multiple comorbidities: A case series”, Journal of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine, 2021;06-06. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaim.2021.06.006>

I am forwarding an appeal requesting the Prime Minister of India for full and effective use of Indian systems of medicine in the prevention and treatment of Covid. The appeal has been initiated by colleagues in the PPST Group. It is likely to be signed by a large number of practitioners of the indigenous systems of medicine; some senior practitioners of the modern system of medicine; several senior scientists and technologists; and, leaders of public opinion in different fields.

If you agree with the above appeal, please [click here](#) or send a reply to me as below mentioning your e-mail id or contact number:

I have read the Appeal to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India dated July 14, 2021 requesting full and effective use of Indian systems of medicine for the prevention and treatment of Covid and agree to associate myself with this effort of great national relevance and urgency.

Name:

Designation (Current or former):

e-mail id:

Contact No:

Remarks (especially mentioning any personal experience or knowledge of the efficacy of the indigenous medicine)