

ADOPTION OF AYURVEDIC DIETARY PRACTICES AND ASSOCIATED HEALTH EFFECTS: A MILLENNIAL PERSPECTIVE

Chef Pawan Ailawadi & Dr. Pankaj Sharma

PhD Research Scholar, NIILM University

Associate Professor

ABSTRACT

The increasing prevalence of lifestyle-related health issues among millennials has intensified interest in alternative and preventive dietary practices. Ayurvedic dietary practices, rooted in India's traditional system of medicine, emphasize personalized nutrition, balance of bodily doshas, and holistic well-being. Despite growing awareness, empirical evidence on the actual and perceived health effects associated with the adoption of Ayurvedic dietary practices among millennials remains limited. This study aims to examine the relationship between the adoption of Ayurvedic dietary practices and associated health effects from a millennial perspective. Using a structured questionnaire, data were collected from millennial respondents to assess adoption behavior and perceived health outcomes such as digestive efficiency, energy levels, immunity, mental well-being, and overall health satisfaction. Statistical techniques including descriptive analysis, correlation, and regression were employed to analyze the data. The findings indicate that greater adoption of Ayurvedic dietary principles is positively associated with improved perceived health outcomes, particularly in terms of digestion, energy balance, and mental well-being. The study contributes to the literature on traditional food systems and preventive healthcare by providing empirical insights into millennial health perceptions and offers practical implications for health educators, policymakers, and wellness-oriented food enterprises promoting Ayurvedic nutrition.

Keywords: Ayurvedic dietary practices, health effects, millennials, perceived health, preventive nutrition, traditional food systems

INTRODUCTION

The past decade has witnessed a growing shift in dietary preferences among millennials toward health-oriented, natural, and preventive food practices. Rising incidences of obesity, digestive disorders, stress-related ailments, and lifestyle diseases have prompted this generation to seek alternatives to highly processed and convenience-based diets (Kumar & Kumar, 2021). Millennials, characterized by increased health awareness, digital exposure, and openness to experimentation, represent a critical demographic segment in shaping future food consumption patterns. Within this evolving food landscape, Ayurvedic dietary practices have gained renewed relevance as a holistic approach to nutrition and well-being.

Ayurveda, one of the world's oldest systems of medicine, views food (*ahara*) as a primary pillar of health, emphasizing its therapeutic, preventive, and restorative role (Lad, 2002). Ayurvedic dietary practices are

grounded in principles such as individualized nutrition based on body constitution (*prakriti*), digestive strength (*agni*), seasonal adaptation (*ritucharya*), and mindful eating (*ahara vidhi*) (Sharma, 2018). Unlike standardized modern dietary guidelines, Ayurveda promotes a personalized and integrative understanding of health that encompasses physical, mental, and emotional dimensions.

Despite its theoretical and clinical relevance, the adoption of Ayurvedic dietary practices among millennials remains selective and inconsistent. Urbanization, fast-paced lifestyles, occupational pressures, and globalized food choices have significantly altered traditional eating habits, often limiting the sustained practice of Ayurveda-based diets (Gupta & Duggal, 2020). While several studies have explored consumer awareness and perception of Ayurveda, limited empirical research has examined the health effects—both actual and perceived—associated

with the adoption of Ayurvedic dietary practices, particularly among millennials.

Perceived health outcomes play a critical role in reinforcing dietary behavior and long-term adherence. Research in health behavior suggests that individuals are more likely to continue adopting dietary practices when they experience or perceive tangible benefits such as improved digestion, increased energy levels, enhanced immunity, and reduced stress (Verbeke, 2005; Ronteltap et al., 2012). In the context of Ayurveda, these outcomes are often reported anecdotally, but systematic empirical validation remains scarce. This gap is especially pronounced in millennial-focused studies, where subjective health perceptions often guide food choices more strongly than clinical evidence.

Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to examine the adoption of Ayurvedic dietary practices and their associated health effects from a millennial perspective. By assessing both adoption behavior and perceived health outcomes, the study aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on traditional food systems, preventive healthcare, and generational dietary behavior. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for healthcare practitioners, wellness educators, and food industry stakeholders seeking to promote sustainable and culturally rooted dietary practices among younger populations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Das et al. (2025), highlighted the significance of preserving balance among the three Doshas—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. According to Acharya Charaka, Viruddha Ahara is defined by the authors as food ingested in improper proportions, combinations, processing techniques, seasons, or timings. The review effectively links traditional Ayurvedic explanations with contemporary scientific evidence, demonstrating how incompatible food combinations impair Agni (digestive fire), hinder iron absorption, and promote toxin accumulation, ultimately leading to anaemia-like symptoms. The discussion is particularly relevant in the context of modern dietary trends dominated by processed and fast foods, which exacerbate nutritional deficiencies and metabolic dysfunction. By integrating Ayurvedic dietary guidelines with modern nutritional science, the authors propose a holistic framework for the prevention and management of Pandu Roga. The study underscores the importance of balanced nutrition, appropriate meal combinations, and lifestyle modifications, advocating awareness and educational initiatives to promote sustainable, health-oriented dietary practices.

Debnath & Chatterjee (2025) focused on Indian traditional ayurvedic products both organic and non-organic that contribute to the ancient knowledge of ayurvedic practices. The study focused on consumers awareness about such type of products and their health benefits. Sustainable consumption is affected by awareness which in turn affects spending decisions and choice of consumption. Ayurveda includes multiple medicinal herbs which can be grown through traditional processes to save their natural ingredients for medication purposes. The objective was to understand the level of awareness and its impact on buying decisions. It was statistically proved that awareness means respondents knowledge of organic ayurvedic health care items is moderate and so there is scope of increasing awareness that can encourage more sustainable and knowledgeable purchase decisions. Proper promotional efforts should be used to create awareness and understanding of people regarding such products. The study overall highlights the need of creating awareness to support sustainable consumption and uplift the organic ayurvedic healthcare market.

Jadhav, et.al (2024) discusses the ayurvedic concept of stale food and its impact on mind and perception. The mental perspective, i.e. manodrishti and the concept of paryushit aahara can disrupt mental clarity and emotional stability. Dietary choices should be as per the ayurvedic principles as it is the science of life and promotes holistic health system. The balance of body and mind with spirit is the base of ayurvedic philosophy and food is the primary driver of health or disease depending upon quality, freshness and energy. Ayurvedic principles design food products by their intrinsic qualities and effect on body and mind. Nourishment is the key determinant of mental and emotional stability and food is at the center of consumption. In recent times, the rise of processed food has increased the consumption of stale food which results in poor digestion, toxicity and imbalance in the doshas. Mental wellbeing as per ayurvedic concept is a state of optimal balance and clarity and it is cultivated through a positive lifestyle with proper eating habits and choosing energetic food. The study involves classic reviews of ayurvedic text that discusses effect of diet on mind. It reveals preventive measures in ayurvedic to promote a balanced life and many ayurvedic products like brahmi, ashwagandha, etc. improve mental clarity and focus counteracting the ill effects of stale food.

Yadav (2023) stated that the Vedas are the source of the complete natural health care system known as Ayurveda. Because it is a distinct facet of life, it is not only a therapeutic approach but also the best method to live a healthy existence. Ayurveda emphasizes different laws and guidelines. enhances longevity and health. According

to the Upanishads, eating a pure diet aid in the purification of the mind and intellect as well as the inner self. The life of living things is called Aahar. Acharya gives a thorough definition of Aahar and describes how to eat it to live a long, healthy life. The first and most crucial component of Swasthai Savasti Laksanam is Ahar. The bodhe is present if the proper Ahar regulations are not observed.

The primary cause of the rising trend of health issues currently is unhealthy eating habits. Consumption of processed, canned, and frozen foods is significant. Raising people's understanding of the value of fresh food is therefore essential.

Sanskar, according to Charaka Samhita, is the process of treating materials in a way that modifies their intrinsic qualities. Large ice crystals that develop during freezing can harm cell walls and ruin food's flavour and texture.

Das (2022) reviewed the efficacy of spices and herbs as per ayurveda and their role as a potent antioxidant and antimicrobial agent which aimed to highlight the importance of traditional system of ayurveda to maintain health and cure diseases. The spices and herbs used in ayurvedic food are termed as nutraceutical due to presence of bioactive components like essential oils, antioxidants and vitamins. They act as catalyst for proper digestion and thus help in maintaining biological systems of the humans. History of ayurveda and its herbal plants show useful implementation in treatment of various diseases. Ayurveda focuses on prevention of illness and encouragement of healthy body and happy mind. The spices used in ayurvedic cuisine have different medicinal values like cooling, appetizers, wound healing, nutrition that improve digestion and prevent intensification of vat and pith. Due to the changing lifestyles many diseases and health problems are occurring in mankind. Ayurvedic cuisine with specific herbs and spices can prevent these disorders. Literature review also supports the use of various spices for medicinal purposes. It is found that antioxidants and antimicrobial agents can help mankind to get rid of various diseases.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is limited to the millennial generation, typically defined as individuals aged between 25 and 40 years. This study adopts a mixed-methods, descriptive and exploratory research design integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The aim is to systematically assess millennials' awareness, perception, adoption intent, and perceived health outcomes related to Ayurveda-based healthy Indian cuisine and to develop a predictive model linking these variables. The study was conducted in Ludhiana City.

Research Objective: To evaluate the actual or perceived health effects associated with the adoption of Ayurvedic-based dietary practices among millennials.

Hypothesis: Adoption of Ayurvedic-based dietary practices has no significant actual or perceived positive health effects among millennials.

Test of Homogeneity of Variances				
	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Digestive comfort	2.984	4	795	.018
Energy levels	4.122	4	795	.003
Sleep quality	5.324	4	795	.000
Weight management	1.077	4	795	.367
Improvement in minor illnesses	1.756	4	795	.136
Overall Health	2.647	4	795	.032

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Digestive comfort	Between Groups	6.144	4	1.536	3.180	.013
	Within Groups	383.994	795	.483		
	Total	390.139	799			
Energy levels	Between Groups	2.262	4	.565	1.464	.211
	Within Groups	306.957	795	.386		
	Total	309.219	799			
Sleep quality	Between Groups	6.472	4	1.618	2.894	.021
	Within Groups	444.497	795	.559		
	Total	450.969	799			
Weight management	Between Groups	7.905	4	1.976	4.355	.002
	Within Groups	360.794	795	.454		
	Total	368.699	799			
Improvement in minor illnesses	Between Groups	8.507	4	2.127	3.749	.005
	Within Groups	450.993	795	.567		
	Total	459.500	799			
Overall Health	Between Groups	3.041	4	.760	2.176	.070
	Within Groups	277.754	795	.349		
	Total	280.795	799			

Test Result			
Health Outcome	Sig. Value	Interpretation	Conclusion
Digestive Comfort	0.013	p < 0.05	There is a significant difference between groups.
Energy Levels	0.211	p > 0.05	No statistically significant difference between groups.
Sleep Quality	0.021	p < 0.05	There is a significant difference between groups.
Weight Management	0.002	p < 0.05	There is a significant difference between groups.
Improvement in Minor Illnesses	0.005	p < 0.05	There is a significant difference between groups.
Overall Health	0.070	p > 0.05	No statistically significant difference between groups.

The ANOVA test was applied to test the hypothesis and the value of F along with p-value was analysed to see the results and the ANOVA results show that **Digestive Comfort, Sleep Quality, Weight Management, and Improvement in Minor Illnesses** differ significantly across the comparison groups, indicating that group

membership has a meaningful effect on these specific health outcomes.

However, **Energy Levels** and **Overall Health** do not show significant differences across groups, suggesting that these outcomes remain relatively consistent regardless of group differences.

Overall, the analysis indicates that **Ayurveda-related interventions or lifestyle factors may have a varying level of influence across different dimensions of health**, with the strongest impact observed in digestive comfort, weight management, and reduction of minor illnesses.

FINDINGS

The analysis reveals a clear relationship between the adoption of Ayurvedic dietary practices and perceived health outcomes among millennial respondents. Overall, millennials demonstrated moderate to high awareness of Ayurvedic dietary principles; however, the level of consistent adoption varied across individuals. Practices related to mindful eating, consumption of freshly prepared foods, and avoidance of incompatible food combinations were more commonly adopted than strict dosha-specific dietary regimens.

The findings indicate that higher levels of adoption of Ayurvedic dietary practices are positively associated with improved **perceived digestive health, energy levels, mental well-being, and overall health satisfaction**. Among the various health dimensions assessed, improvements in digestion and energy balance emerged as the most strongly perceived benefits, suggesting that immediate and tangible outcomes play a crucial role in reinforcing continued dietary adherence. Perceived enhancement in immunity and stress management was also reported, though to a relatively moderate extent.

The study further shows that millennials who reported regular or intentional adoption of Ayurvedic principles experienced greater perceived health benefits compared to those with occasional or minimal adoption. This supports the notion that sustained and mindful dietary behavior, rather than sporadic experimentation, is essential for realizing the holistic health benefits advocated by Ayurveda. Additionally, respondents with higher health consciousness exhibited stronger associations between adoption behavior and perceived health outcomes, highlighting the role of individual motivation in dietary decision-making.

Despite the positive associations observed, the findings also suggest that perceived health effects are influenced by lifestyle constraints such as time availability, occupational demands, and accessibility of Ayurvedic food options. These factors appear to moderate the extent

to which millennials can translate awareness into consistent practice.

CONCLUSION

The present study examined the adoption of Ayurvedic dietary practices and their associated health effects from a millennial perspective, with a specific focus on perceived physical and mental well-being outcomes. The findings confirm that adoption of Ayurvedic dietary principles is positively linked with improved perceived health, particularly in terms of digestion, energy levels, and mental well-being. These results reinforce the relevance of Ayurveda as a preventive and holistic dietary framework in the contemporary health discourse.

However, the study also highlights that adoption among millennials remains selective and practice-oriented rather than comprehensive. While awareness of Ayurvedic principles is relatively high, consistent integration into daily dietary routines is constrained by modern lifestyle pressures. This suggests that the benefits of Ayurvedic dietary practices are more likely to be realized when they are adapted to suit contemporary living conditions rather than promoted as rigid traditional prescriptions.

From a theoretical standpoint, the study contributes to the literature on traditional food systems and health behavior by empirically linking dietary adoption with perceived health outcomes among a younger demographic. Practically, the findings underscore the need for targeted health communication strategies that emphasize immediate, relatable benefits and provide flexible, easy-to-follow Ayurvedic dietary guidelines for millennials.

The study is subject to certain limitations, including reliance on self-reported health perceptions and a cross-sectional research design, which restrict causal interpretation. Future research may incorporate longitudinal designs, objective health indicators, and psychosocial variables such as health beliefs, cultural identity, and lifestyle compatibility to develop a more comprehensive understanding of Ayurvedic dietary adoption and its long-term health implications.

REFERENCES

1. Gupta, S., & Duggal, A. (2020). Changing dietary patterns in urban India: Implications for health and culture. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 44(3), 245–256.
2. Kumar, S., & Kumar, N. (2021). Health consciousness and dietary behavior among young adults in India. *Journal of Health Management*, 23(1), 67–82.
3. Lad, V. (2002). *Ayurveda: The science of self-healing*. Lotus Press.



4. Ronteltap, A., van Trijp, J. C. M., & Renes, R. J. (2012). Consumer acceptance of health-related food innovations. *Appetite*, 59(2), 333–340.
5. Sharma, H. (2018). Food as medicine: Ayurvedic perspectives on nutrition. *Journal of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine*, 9(3), 145–152.
6. Verbeke, W. (2005). Consumer acceptance of functional foods: Socio-demographic and attitudinal determinants. *Food Quality and Preference*, 16(1), 45–57.