Boost Your Brain Health With Ayurvedic Wisdom Transcript

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Introduction and Ayurvedic Brain Health

Welcome back to this episode of the Reverse Alzheimer's Summit. I'm your host, Dr. Heather Sandison, and I'm joined here today by Dr. Shivani Gupta. She's an ayurvedic practitioner and an expert in Fuzing, Eastern and Western practices that help our bodies achieve equilibrium.

She completed her masters in R U Vedic Sciences and her PhD on turmeric. Inflammation is part of an explanation for root cause for many health issues in our lives, and we have the power to overcome it.

Her passion is teaching at home. Remedies to reduce inflammation naturally. To help you enjoy more energy, less brain fog, feel less pain, and ultimately achieve vibrant health.

Welcome, Dr. Gupta. Thank you. Thanks for having me. Oh, it's a pleasure. So tell me about the the kind of Eastern Ayurvedic approach to brain health and where you would start if you were seeing a patient who had who was suffering with cognitive decline.

Sure. So, you know, Ayurvedic as this ancient system of medicine from India that's over 5000 years old. And it has so much ancient wisdom to it. It teaches us preventive health.

It teaches us about our mind, body connection. Are those shows how to detox, how to live. And so, so much around brain health, Ayurvedic perspective would be prevention.

Like how do we support gut health and build the gut digestive fire way earlier on in life so that we get to maintain that level of function and and sharpness and cognition and and everything that we want to have for our brain as we age.

And then within the toolkit of I that we also have a lot of great tools where we reach into herbs and spices. We build what I call our custom mindful medicine chest, which is our tool kit that we can use to address these things.

So to me, brain health is really how do we build the gut digestive fire?

Inflammation, Turmeric, and Curcumin Absorption

How do we build that mind, body, spirit connection back in? And how do we support the body in being so healthy, reducing that stomach inflammation and improving our systems so that brain health is improved as the byproduct of network.

And so when you, like you mentioned, even in your bio, that inflammation can be one of these root causes that can throw off brain health. Certainly, we know that when they're infections or when there are toxins that are stimulating inflammation, maybe that a step above inflammation as a root cause that that can sometimes get out of control and lead to the production of misfolded proteins like amyloid plaques and how proteins.

And so can you talk a little bit about the your perspective of iron and of stopping that runaway train, that inflammation can become? Yes. So I think we underestimate the impact of chronic low grade persistent inflammation on the body we run through life.

And I studied under a professor at MD Anderson Cancer Center, and he's the one who discovered that it's black pepper when added the tumor that increases the bioavailability by 2,000%.

And so when I was studying under him, I said, you know, what are we supposed to do as a society? We're going to eat, are happy foods. We're going to go through life.

We're going to have stresses. We might not exercise perfectly. We said, look, we underestimate that inflammation is set off. It's almost like light switches are turned on in our toes for inflammation, poor sleep, poor diet, stresses, things like that.

Then you move into your thirties. It's still going on. We never turned off those light switches. Forties, fifties. And suddenly in your fifties and sixties, you're being diagnosed and you're being told, Hey, you've got all these health issues when truly these cascades started much earlier and we just didn't know that it was propagating in the backdrop.

And so my message to everyone is we can do better. We can learn that this is an issue. We can understand that inflammation must be addressed. And then we can put those building blocks in place, those pillars of health.

We can focus on sleep, we can focus on diet, we can focus on self-care and detoxing. And I like to teach that the super spices are the new super foods.

And so when you reach into the Super Spices toolkit from Iyer Vaid that that's when you're reaching into ashwagandha, probably the adaptogen and curcumin from turmeric.

And I love talking about turmeric because when we use these spices, we can really turn off inflammation in the body, and then we get to do the homework of maintaining the result with the lifestyle.

So you mentioned turmeric being important to take that with black pepper because you get this added benefit, this potentiation, if you will. And I've also said that it's better with fat.

Is that true? Yes. So curcumin. There's apples. There's no apples to apples science between curcumin with black pepper and curcumin with a healthy fat.

Curcumin for Cognition and Neuroprotection

And so when I was doing my dissertation, I said, in this lifetime, I'd love to see that done. But we do see a lot of science that says either curcumin with black pepper added or curcumin with a healthy fat added is going to increase that absorption.

And so I tell a lot of people, just take your turmeric with your food because then you know you're going to get that fat added in and that further absorption into the body.

That's amazing. And so specifically, are there some of these? Are you Vedic herbs? I'm so I'm self-conscious of how I am pronouncing it because you pronounce it much more the way it's meant to be.

But I'm curious if there's ways that there are particular herbs from the are you Vedic practices that are helpful for cognition specifically? Sure. I mean, curcumin itself.

What if the entire tumor plant, only 3% of the humanoids, and out of those three core humanoids, the one curcumin is the most effective at reducing inflammation in the body.

And so a lot of people reach out to me and say, I'm juicing my tumor, I'm sprinkling it on my chicken. And I'm like, guys, make sure whatever form you're using it in, you're using quirky, you know, black pepper or a healthy fat.

And if you want a significant reduction in inflammation, you need to get that extract dose to create that significant change. But what's cool is curcumin, which is a key component in diabetic medicine.

It's noted really for its potential to influence tau protein abnormalities, which is a significant factor in Alzheimer's pathology. It's believed to inhibit the tau aggregation and reduce the Tao Fosse Flora is.

How do you see that phosphorylation? I could see the word in my brain and these processes are implicated in that

formation of the Neurofibrillary triangles, which are a hallmark of of Alzheimer's.

And so by modulating these different tau related processes, curcumin may contribute to that preserving of our neural integrity and slowing down the cognitive decline that's associated with the disease.

And Kirkman's also believed to interact with the amyloid plaques. So it's a characteristic feature of which is a characteristic feature of Alzheimer's.

It potentially disrupts the plaque formation in the brain and enhances that clearance of the amyloid proteins from the brain. So this activity can mitigate that toxic effect of the amyloid accumulation.

And so I found that when I was doing my dissertation, I was so surprised by how effective curcumin can be for neurocognitive disease. And I thought to myself, Wow, you know, seeing what I've seen.

My own grandfather had Parkinson's. I've seen the advanced stages of diabetes really run rampant in my family. What if we all just took curcumin way earlier, turn off those inflammatory processes and supported the body?

And then you asked about neurocognitive, even ashwagandha, which is an adaptogen, and people have ashwagandha. It has such powerful benefits, kind of like curcumin.

It's adaptogenic. It's a neuroprotective herb. It helps reduce stress. If you're anxious and stressed, it brings you down a couple notches. If you're depressed and having the blues, it lifts you up.

And so will every herb work. And everybody know I wish it would. Like, I would really wish it would. But I think when we're suffering through these different times of life and trying to figure out what is the toolkit we need it.

It's really great if you open up that toolkit into the natural solutions that are plant medicine from Mother Earth and that plant intelligence that exists that communicates so well with our body could really astound you.

Broader Health Benefits and Clinical Research

And that's where I'm researching. Next is what can I add to curcumin to make it even more effective for Alzheimer's and these different issues? Yeah, I'm curious, you mentioned that it surprised you some of what you learned in your PhD process.

Is there anything else that really stood out? I mean, you've you've dedicated and invested a ton of time until learning about curcumin and turmeric and how to use this for the health benefits.

I am just curious, even outside of Alzheimer's or cognitive decline, was there anything else that really surprised you in your work so much? I am a total nerd.

And so when I was doing the Ph. D., I had a section on diabetes, on obesity. It reduces our like it supports us when we're trying to reduce visceral fat and have weight loss.

Not that it's like the weight loss tool, but if we're inflamed, we're not going to lose weight. So we put ourselves in these cycles. Neurocognitive was a big one because I really want to keep my brain health over the long haul.

Immune support. So curcumin's a powerful antioxidant and it prevents oxidation. So really as a powerful anti-aging tool, a lot of people, Colby, who are in pain, they've got joint pain, their bodies hurt.

It's almost like we're becoming a rusted tin man over time. And so if we can prevent that oxidation and reduce inflammation the knee, osteoarthritis or osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis applications of curcumin, I think are very powerful.

It's antibacterial, antiviral and antifungal. And so because it's an immune modulator, a lot of people use it to kind of

hold their immune system up and support themselves because it's going to reduce that inflammation.

It supports the gut microbiome, which we know supports the brain health because it's gut brain axis. It extends it can help support extend telomeres. It helps with autophagy.

So it helps clear our bodies of all the old cells that our body loses. The ability to get rid of as we age helps us get rid of zombie cells. And so now, as I speak at more medical conferences and I'm embarking on clinical research, I learn even more all the time.

Like it's such an anti-aging tool and it's very powerful pre-op and post-op. And so most of my body of work now is explaining to surgeons what's prepared the patient for what's coming and then it's really heal them faster and get them off of pharmaceuticals sooner so that they can have less side effects.

Yes, it hurts. Worry about the clinical work that you're doing. You're doing research. Yes. So right now we're embarking on a knee osteoarthritis trial because we already know that there is science that shows that curcumin is as effective as NZ for joint pain.

Then we're embarking on there's actually a new study by the British Medical Journal that prove that curcumin is as effective as PPIs. So all of GI doctors can switch using it.

And then I have a group or we're studying. Why is it that our genes and our whole body receives curcumin so well? Like why? It's a weird thing that it's so well received.

And so this group and I work together and we had a whole team called a hackathon and we worked and worked for a whole weekend, three days, and we discovered that curcumin with ginger is more effective for Alzheimer's.

Then just curcumin. We haven't published the science yet. We're still needs flora to phase, but because we found the correlation, now we're going to see what else needs to be added to kind of create a super formula to support this group.

Because if we found that, maybe we could create a huge shift in the results that people see. So that's what gets me excited is like, what else can we discover?

How can I share it? Whether I make a formula around it or someone else does, who cares? Like we just need the solutions out there so people get the help.

How fun. That's great. And you mentioned a couple of things like NSAIDs for joint pain in our population. As we get older, we have these aches and pains and they keep us from exercising.

Integrating Ayurveda with Conventional Care

And that gets really dangerous because of sedentary lifestyle, whether it's because of an injury, an old injury or a new injury, or for whatever reason, when we kind of end up being couch potatoes, it really can have a huge impact on metabolism, on aging, on social isolation and of course, unclogging the function exercise is just jet fuel for the brain.

Yeah. And so yeah, having blood circulating right. Is so important. So to be able to use curcumin instead of an end said that's important because a lot of people will avoid them if they have GI believes or they're worried about their liver.

You don't want to be on those consiste lightly. And then same thing with people is they have their side effects as well and heartburn can be such a debilitating symptom to have.

So if you can help control that with something like curcumin or turmeric instead, that's that's fantastic. As people age, if they're on PPIs, it reduces their immune function because you don't have as much acid in the gut.

It can perpetuate reflux because the lower esophageal sphincter will hang open. It also can reduce mineral absorption. So there's a lot of side effects to long term use.

So these are proton pump inhibitors that are used for heartburn. And so having an alternative like this that's effective and without the side effects is is a huge win for people.

And then, oh, by the way, the side effect is actually less oxidation. Exactly. Brain benefits. Yes, less inflammation, all the things that we want. So why not give ourselves solutions that work and address our root cause issue at the same time?

Like to me, it's a no brainer. Yeah, absolutely. So when you think about holistically incorporating, are you better for whatever ailments? How do you coach patients in, you know, talking to their Western medical doctor or a conventional doctor?

And that's your path. And acupuncturists, if they've got one of those on board, you can integrate all of these perspectives. You know, nowadays I think it's getting easier.

I think more and more practitioners are getting it. I think, you know, the science on curcumin has exploded. It went from like 1000 to 16000 studies or something.

As of last count, there's so much more science being published so fast it's becoming less resistant to understanding that ashwagandha, curcumin, all these things could be used.

But I also think that most people get it. Now that the lifestyle changes matter. We need to balance the gut. We need to optimize sleep, we need to address gut health.

And so fitting in the Ayurvedic lifestyle, I think is actually the perfect meeting point between all the Western solutions, which I think many of them are phenomenal and we need them there into vet interventional that get in there and solve.

So I work with a lot of functional medicine doctors and integrative and holistic practitioners and I teach my clients look, they're going to do their job, which is phenomenal.

But to hold the result, you need this like umbrella of Ayurvedic wisdom and knowledge and Ivy that is going to show you how to live a lifestyle, to hold that result, to live without inflammation, to daily support the gut, to daily support brain health, to daily be grounded and balanced and live according to your Iyer Vedic Dosha or Mind Body Constitution.

So we have a lot of tools and it's just about getting kind of those fires put out and then you have that energy and that space to add in the lifestyle shifts.

I've always been so inspired and intrigued by the doses at which you it just give us a really brief explanation. I know we're not going to do it justice in this amount of time we have set aside.

But even just giving people a sense of what the dohas are and how Ayurvedic practitioner would approach a patient? Sure. So we always give everyone a dosha quiz.

I have one on my website, which is my name, but I love everyone taking a dose of quiz and understanding which one you are. So we are born a combination of the different elements.

So people are either avuta which is more air ether, or there are fitter which is more fire water, or they're more gafa, which is earth water. And as you know, we have different body types, we have different mind styles, we have different emotional spaces within us.

And so what's cool is your dosha really explains who and what you are. And so when you get way off balance, a lot

of times it's just a dosha balancing that needs to be used.

And once you're balanced within your dosa, you can really leverage it because you understand how to constantly stay, calibrate it and energized and grounded.

And so I love teaching those shows because of what the person, if you ground them, they feel phenomenal and productive.

Doshas, Lifestyle Balance, and Closing Remarks

Again, a fifth the person if you cool them down and cool the jets down, they can be a very productive, successful person and a Kapha person needs a lot of self understanding.

They're more Mother Earth energy. And so you need to just support them to understand how to get in motion and stay in motion. And then when they're ready to stop, they're going to stop.

And so that self understanding and self awareness can be very powerful. And also, as we're going through different seasons of life, like women going through perimenopause, menopause, all these different set transitions, balancing your dosha could be the key to feeling like yourself again.

So I love that as well. And these different dosha are approach in terms of the types of exercise and foods and herbs that you want to be leaning into as you run into bump into symptoms or as you hit transitions like menopause or as things come up along the way, stressful situations, whatever life throws at you, you are there.

The first step, it sounds like, is taking the quiz. Yes. And then what do you recommend after that? Once you take the quiz and you understand dosha I make lots of videos on the topic?

People can always reach out to me for a consultation, but I like to just share this knowledge so we all can understand for ourselves what to do. And then I do whole group programs as well because once we understand how to balance our dosha, fix our sleep, fix our gut health and kind of go through that journey, then all of a sudden we shouldn't need so many interventions in our life.

That's my goal, is can we live a lifestyle that holds us disease free, that reduces that inflammation, and also has us keeping our energy level and our brain health and our gut health for our entire lifespan?

Because if we really do just live according to the current programing and the current plan of life, all I see is people who manage disease for the last quarter of their lives.

And that's what I'm trying to prevent. That's what I saw in my family. And so I know that if we just use the super Spice kit, if we use Ayurvedic wisdom, naturopathic wisdom and these different tools, we can have an entirely different life experience.

Like my plan is to feel and look like this all the way until the end. How fun and how inspiring. So tell us again, how can I listeners find out more about you?

Sure. So my website is shivanigupta.com it's my name shivanigupta.com, my Instagram is @Dr. ShivaniGupta and I'm on all the social channels as well. How fun, Well, thank you so much for the work you're doing and for just your time and attention and expertize today.

And sharing that with us. It's been such a pleasure having you. Thank you. Thanks for having me.