# Dimensions of Health: *Ayurveda's Swa Anguli Pramana* and *Siddha Manikkadai Nool* in Comparative Analysis

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.52403/ijhsr.20240559

#### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Anthropometry serves as a vital scientific tool for measuring human body dimensions, influenced by various factors including nutrition, psychology, environment, and infections. Ayurvedic and *Siddha* medical traditions provide unique insights into anthropometry, emphasizing the importance of precise measurements for assessing health and diagnosing diseases. **Materials and Methods:** This study reviews Ayurvedic texts, *Siddha* texts, *Rachana Sharir* books, and modern anthropometry literature to explore concepts related to anthropometry. Specific focus is given to the *Swa Anguli Pramana* in *Ayurveda* and the *Manikkadai Nool* in *Siddha* medicine. Measurements and diagnostic procedures outlined in ancient texts are compared with modern anthropometric practices.

**Results and Discussion:** *Ayurvedic Swa Anguli Pramana* and *Siddha Manikkadai Nool* offer distinct approaches to anthropometry, providing valuable insights into human health assessment and disease diagnosis. The study highlights the correlation between wrist circumference measurements and disease prognosis in *Siddha* medicine. Integrating ancient anthropometric techniques with modern healthcare systems could enhance patient assessment, treatment planning, and interdisciplinary research in medical anthropology.

Keywords: Anthropometry, Ayurveda, Siddha, Swa Anguli Pramana, Manikkadai Nool.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

*Ayurveda* is the oldest, most well-recognized, most extensively used, and most prosperous indigenous medical system in India. The country has a long history of using six different traditional medical systems. In India, homeopathy, yoga, naturopathy, Unani, and *Siddha* are the other allied medical systems.<sup>1</sup> Among the major Indian medical systems, *Ayurveda* is the most widely used and has been practiced for millennia all over the world. This study focuses exclusively on *Ayurveda* and only provides a thorough review of the other Indian systems of medicine (ISM). We have not discussed all elements of ISM in detail. The *Siddha*, Homeopathy, and Unani systems of medicine are the most extensively practiced after *Ayurveda*.<sup>2-3</sup>

Anthropometry is a scientific method of measuring human body dimensions. These measurements are influenced by factors such as an individual's nutrition, psychology, infections.4 environment, seasons, and Ayurvedic medical knowledge provides information on how the body works and how to maintain health. The science of Ayurveda also teaches us how to live longer and healthier lives. The right behaviors create a good quality of life (Sukha), while the wrong ones cause suffering and sadness (Dukha). According to Charak Acharya, there are four ways to investigate things: Aptopadesha (Authoritative statement), Pratyaksha (Direct Perception), Anumana (Inference), and Yukti (Rationalelogical reasoning).<sup>5</sup> Ayurveda also uses the Swa Anguli Pramana as the unit of measurement for assessing patients before treatment. Siddha Medicine is a traditional medical system originating in Tamil Nadu, India, and Sri Lanka. It considers the human body as a collection of three humors and seven basic elements. The Siddha diagnostic method involves observing the five sense organs: Nose, Tongue, Eyes, Ear, and Skin. The examination of the stools and urine has significant importance in diagnosis. А particular Siddha diagnostic method is Manikkadai Nool, which involves measuring the wrist circumference with the number of fingerbreadths to diagnose a person's disease. When the Manikkadai Nool measures from 4 to 6, it indicates a bad prognosis of the disease, and the severity of the illness will be high, leading to death.<sup>6</sup>

## **Aim And Objectives:**

To explore the concepts related to anthropometry in Ayurvedic Samhitas, and the fundamentals of *Swa Anguli Pramana* for clinical practice, as well as concepts related to anthropometry in *Siddha* (*Manikkadai Nool*).

#### **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

This study reviews Ayurvedic texts, *Siddha* texts, *Rachana Sharir* books, and modern anthropometry literature to explore concepts related to anthropometry. Specific focus is given to the *Swa Anguli Pramana* in *Ayurveda* and the *Manikkadai Nool* in *Siddha* medicine. Measurements and diagnostic procedures outlined in ancient texts are compared with modern anthropometric practices.

#### Swa Anguli Pramana:

According to the ancient Indian surgeon, Sushruta Acharya, as mentioned in Sutra Sthana 35/12, a skilled doctor can predict a patient's lifespan by measuring their various bodily tissues and psychological state. This assessment helps them determine whether the patient has a longer or shorter lifespan. If the patient's measurements are above average, they are considered to have better health and a longer lifespan (Deerghavu). In contrast, those with average or below-average measurements have a medium (Madhyama) or short (Alpaayu) lifespan. Understanding these measurements can enable doctors to provide better care for their patients.

The measurement specification for "*Anguli Pramana*" is considered as the length of the proximal interphalangeal joint of the right hand, which is referred to as "*Swa-Anguli*". Therefore, the length of the right hand's proximal interphalangeal joint is considered "*Swa-Anguli Pramana*". For the measurement of "*Swa-Anguli Pramana*", the right hand is considered for right-handed persons, and the left hand is considered for left-handed persons.<sup>7-8</sup>

# Manikkadainool: Wrist Circummetric Sign Agathiyasoodamanikayarusoothiram

"Kamalakkaimanikkaiyil kayaru sooththiram Vimalane nokkiye vedamaamuni Thimilaam piniyathu sera seppiye Amalanaamunikku munnaruli seithathe"

Pathinen Siddhar naadinool
"Manikadai naalviral thalli vanmaiyaay
Thanikkidaikkayaru pottalanthu paarkkaiyil
Kaniththidum viralthanai kandu sollave
Piniththidum noikalai piriththuraikkume"
Pathinen Siddhar naadinool

The *Pathinen Siddhar Naadinool* suggests that *Manikkadai Nool* can be used for diagnostic purposes. To use this method, one needs to measure the circumference of the wrist of the patient using a thread. After the measurement, divide the circumference by the patient's fingers to diagnose the disease. This method can help in accurately diagnosing the disease.<sup>9</sup> When the *Manikkadainool* is 11 fbs, the person will be stout and will live a healthy life for many years. When the *Manikkadainool* measures between 4 to 6, it indicates a poor prognosis of the disease, and the severity of the illness will be high and lead to death.<sup>10</sup>

## Method for Manikkadai Reading (MK):

To measure the length of four fingers, participants were asked to sit with their fingers straight and intact, and their wrist placed on the examination table. A 30cm inelastic thread was used to take the measurement. The length was measured back towards the arm's antebrachial part, and the Antebrachial circumference (ABC) was measured using the same tool. The length obtained, i.e., ABC, was recorded in fingerbreadths (FB). The process was repeated twice for maximum accuracy. <sup>11</sup>

For measuring FB, one full breadth of the finger is considered, which is then divided into 4 units - quarter measurement (1/4th), half (1/2), three quarters (3/4th), and full breadth. These units have specific readings that must be interpreted along with the clinical presentations.<sup>12-14</sup>

### Anthropometry

Anthropometry is а subdiscipline of anthropology that studies the variations in size and shape of humans within different populations. It has been used for centuries to measure human health and productivity. Today, it is used to identify the impact of disease epidemics and times of famine on body size. Anthropometry has been applied to a wide applications, including range of paleoanthropology, evolution, human biological anthropology, craniometry, craniofacial attributes, phylogeography, phrenology, criminology, forensics, physiognomy, personality, and mental typology. Although some of these applications have been used to gather scientific and epidemiological data, they have also been used to support eugenic and racist social agendas.<sup>15</sup>

Table 1: Probability of symptoms by Fingered Breadth (Different terminology used in different medical sciences)<sup>16</sup>

Fingered Breadth	Symptoms			
	Ayurveda term	Siddha term	Modern Science	
11	No Symptoms			
10	Switra	Venpini	Leucoderma	
	Koorparshva Shoola	Kai Vali	Upper Limb Pain	
	Janu Shoola	Kal Vali	Lower Limb pain	
	Vata Roga	Udal Vali	Body Pain	
	Amlapitta	Gunman	Gastric Ulcer	
9.75	Asthisa-Arbudha	Enbu Purai	Bone Abscess	
	Bhagandara	Kuzhipun	Perforating Ulcer	
	Granthi Shotha	Araiyaappu	Inflammation of Lymphatic Gland	
	Kasa	Irumal	Cough	
	Vata Vyadhi	Varatchi	Vatham	
	Pleeha	Piligai	Spleen	
9.50	Shveta	Udal Veluththal	Pale	
	Shareera Ushna	Udal Sudu	Body Heat	
	Netra Daha	Vizhi Kantthal	Burning Sensation of Eye	

	Jvara	Utsuram	Long Continued Internal Fever
	Aruchi	Pasiinmai	Loss of Appetite
9.25	Oja	Vali	Vigour
,	Mutra Kricchra		Dribbling of Urine
	Anidra	Thukkamminmai	Sleeplessness
	Daurbalya	Sorvu	Fatigue
	Pinasa	Pinisam	Sinusitis
7.75	Arsha	Moolam	Piles
	Kapala Kampa	Thalai Asaivu	Involuntary Trembling of Head
	Gandamala	Kandamaalai	Scrofula
	Nakseera	Mookkil Raththam	Epistaxis
7.50	Asthi-Majja-Gata Roga	Enburukki	Necrosis or Caris of Bone
	Udara Shotha	Vairil Vayu Veekam	Belly Swelling
	Mukha Daha	Mugam Erivu	Burning Sensation of Face
	Jvara	Suram	Fever
	Janu Shoola	Kaal Vali	Leg pain
	Urusthambha	Thodai Vippuruthi	Abscess or Carbuncle of the thigh
7.25	Netra Shool	Kan Vali	Eye Pain
	Kati Shoola	Iduppu Vali	Hip Pain
	Shiroroga	Thalail Pithanoi	Biliousness in Head
	Kukkuta Shoola	Kudaithul	Boring pain
	Pandu	Paandu	Anaemia
	Kooru Mamsa Kshaya	Kai Asathi	Weakness of Upper Limb
	Janu Mamsa Kshaya	Kaal Asathi	Weakness of Lower limb
	Anidra	Thukkamminmai	Sleeplessness
7.00	Pittaja Vikara	Sirasil Pitham	Biliousness
7.00	Rakta Pitta	Vaivil Raththam	Hematemisis
	Shosha (Kshava)	Savam	Pulmonary Tuberculosis
	Swasa	sayam	Asthma
		V · A	
	Shareera Vrana	Kai Aarapun	Chronic Ulcer in Upper Limb
	Janu Vrana	Kaal Aarapun	Chronic Ulcer in Lower Limb
	Ushna	Uttinam Athikaripu	Heat
( 75	Malavastambha	Malam Ularthal	Dried Excreta
6.75	Shukra Dosha	Pejam Vayua	Testicular Disease
	Rakta Netra	Kan Sivappu	Reddness of Eye
	Murcha	Mayakkam	Stupor or Giddiness
	Mutraghata	Neradappu	Anuresis
	Koorparshva Shoola	Kai Vali	Upper Limb Pain
	Janu Shoola	Kaal Vali	Leg Pain
	Mukha Shoola	Mugam Vali	Pain in The Face
6.50	Deha Kshaya	Udal Vaadal	Fading if Body
	Jvara	Suram	Fever
	Kukkuta Shoola	Kuththal Vali	Boring Pain
	Kati Roga	Iduppu Noi	Disease of Waist
	Udara Shoola	Adivairu Noi	Abdominal Pain
	Vriddhi	Thodai Kavuttu Noi	Disease in Groin
6.25	Arsha	Moolam	Piles
	Atisara	Kazhichal	Chronic Diarrhea
	Anidra	Thukkamminmai	Sleeplessness
6.00	Kapha-Kshata	Nenjinil Kabam	Phlegm in Chest
	Murcha	Mayakkam	Stupor or Giddiness
	Marana	Maranam	Death

Modern research has provided validation and deeper insights into these traditional practices. Studies such as those by Vinayak et al. (2022),<sup>6</sup> Sathiyabama et al. (2017), <sup>11</sup>and Prabha Mohana (2019)<sup>16</sup> have validated the diagnostic significance of *Siddha* anthropometric methods, enhancing their credibility in contemporary medical contexts. Similarly,

research by *Dhannajay* et al.  $(2015)^8$  and others have highlighted the significance of *Anguli Pramana* in *Ayurveda*, providing a critical review and emphasizing its importance in health assessment.

The traditional medicinal systems of Ayurveda and *Siddha* recognize the significance of anthropometry in assessing human health and

diagnosing diseases. Ayurveda specifically emphasizes *Swa Anguli Pramana*, which involves precise measurements of an individual's body parts, while *Siddha* medicine employs *Manikkadai Nool* to achieve the same goal. Both approaches stress the importance of taking into account the individual's unique constitution in treatment planning.

## Similarities:

Fundamental Principles: Both systems share the belief that precise anthropometric measurements can be used to assess human health and disease. They hold the view that analyzing an individual's body in terms of its proportions and dimensions can offer valuable insights into their overall health status.

Use of Individual Measurements: Two traditional Indian medical systems, Ayurveda and Siddha medicine, use personalized measurements to evaluate health and predict diseases. In Avurveda, this approach is called "Swa Anguli Pramana," which involves finger measuring wrist width and circumference. In Siddha medicine, it is known as "Manikkadai Nool," which uses individual measurements to assess health. Both systems believe in the uniqueness of each person's constitution, or "Swastha," and how it affects their health and susceptibility to diseases.

Holistic Approach: Both systems take a holistic approach to the body, understanding that the different parts are interconnected and can provide insight into overall health. They use anthropometric measurements to assess various aspects of health and disease, based on the idea that the body is a whole system.

## Gaps:

Methodological Differences: Both Ayurveda and *Siddha* medicine use anthropometric measurements, but their specific methods and focus areas differ. In Ayurveda, the *Swa Anguli Pramana* primarily focuses on measuring the proximal interphalangeal joint of the middle finger, which is considered the unit of measurement for assessing the patient's lifespan and health status. On the other hand, in *Siddha* medicine, the *Manikkadai Nool* involves measuring the wrist circumference and dividing it by the number of fingerbreadths to diagnose diseases.

Integration with Modern Medicine: Both traditional and alternative medicine provide significant knowledge about human health and illness, which can complement modern medical practices. Nonetheless, integrating these ancient techniques into present healthcare systems is a challenge due to the absence of standardized methodologies and the requirement for thorough scientific validation. In both Ayurveda's Swa Anguli Pramana and Manikkadai Siddha medicine's Nool. anthropometric measurements are used to assess health and predict disease. However, these two ancient systems differ in their methods, interpretations, and the specific aspects of health they focus on. The gaps between these traditional systems and modern medicine emphasize the need for further research and standardization to ensure the effectiveness and reliability of these diagnostic contemporary healthcare techniques in practices.

## **DISCUSSION**

The study highlights the critical role of anthropometry in Ayurveda and Siddha medicine. Anthropometry is a scientific method that involves measuring human body dimensions to assess health and predict diseases. It takes into account various factors such as nutrition, psychology, environment, seasons, and infections. This approach is essential to understanding an individual's unique constitution, which is a fundamental principle in Ayurveda and Siddha medicine. Additionally, the discussion draws parallels between ancient anthropometric practices and modern applications in medical anthropology, such as epidemiology, forensics, and paleoanthropology. Recognizing the historical

and cultural significance of anthropometric practices helps us appreciate the diversity of medical traditions and their contributions to human health.

### **Ayurvedic Perspectives on Anthropometry**

The study delves into the concept of Swa Anguli Pramana in Ayurveda, which is the measurement of the middle finger's proximal interphalangeal joint. This method is used to assess health and predict lifespan accurately. It emphasizes the importance of precise measurements bodily tissues of and psychological determine states to an individual's health status and longevity. Above-average measurements are associated with better health outcomes and longer lifespans while below-average measurements may suggest a medium or short lifespan. This approach aligns with Ayurvedic principles of personalized medicine and holistic health maintenance, offering nuanced а understanding of health and disease for tailored treatment plans.

### Siddha Medicine and Manikkadai Nool

This study is centered around a diagnostic method in Siddha medicine called Manikkadai Nool, which is used in Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. This method diagnoses diseases by measuring wrist circumference and dividing it by fingerbreadths. The study highlights that different wrist circumference ranges correspond with various disease outcomes. including poor prognosis and high disease severity, which could potentially lead to death. Manikkadai Nool is based on the observation that different wrist circumferences can indicate different health conditions and their severity. The study provides clear instructions on how to accurately measure and interpret these readings, providing a practical application of Siddha diagnostic methods.

## **Implications for Clinical Practice**

The results of this study have important implications for modern clinical practice and research. Incorporating traditional anthropometric techniques from Ayurveda and Siddha medicine into modern healthcare systems could provide valuable insights for patient evaluation, disease prognosis, and treatment planning. Additionally, investigating the relationship between ancient and modern anthropometric measurements may open up opportunities for interdisciplinary new research and collaboration in the field of medical anthropology.

The review article explores the intricate connection between anthropometry in Ayurveda and Siddha medicine, with a specific focus on Swa Anguli Pramana in Ayurveda and Manikkadai Nool in Siddha medicine. These ancient medical systems, which are deeply rooted in India's rich cultural and historical context, offer unique insights into the dimensions of the human body and their impact on health and disease. The study aims to delve into the basics of these systems and provide a comprehensive understanding of their diagnostic and therapeutic approaches.

### CONCLUSION

The exploration of anthropometry in Ayurvedic and *Siddha* traditions, along with its integration into modern medical practices, provides valuable insights into human health assessment and diagnosis. These ancient systems use measurements of the human body as diagnostic and prognostic tools, based on the fundamental principles of Ayurveda and *Siddha* medicine.

Ayurveda's *Swa Anguli Pramana* emphasizes the importance of precise measurements and personalized care, providing a nuanced understanding of an individual's health and potential lifespan. *Siddha* Medicine's *Manikkadai Nool* offers a unique diagnostic approach by correlating wrist circumference

with fingerbreadths to assess disease severity and prognosis.

This discussion highlights the similarities between ancient anthropometric practices and modern medical anthropology. It emphasizes the interdisciplinary nature of healthcare research and the importance of combining traditional techniques with contemporary medical approaches. By doing so, we can enhance our understanding of human health and improve patient-centered care strategies.

The implications for clinical practice are significant. The insights gained from Ayurvedic and *Siddha* anthropometry can help inform personalized treatment plans and improve patient outcomes. The study emphasizes the importance of preserving and incorporating traditional medical knowledge into modern healthcare systems, promoting a more holistic approach to patient care.

This article emphasizes the continuing relevance of anthropometry in comprehending human health. It also highlights the value of combining ancient wisdom with modern science to advance healthcare practices and improve patient well-being. Through interdisciplinary collaboration and a deep appreciation of diverse medical traditions, we can pave the way for a more inclusive and holistic approach to healthcare delivery.

# Newer Research Approaches:

- 1. Validation Studies: It is important to continue validating traditional anthropometric methods, such as *Swa Anguli Pramana* and *Manikkadai Nool*, using contemporary research methodologies. This can help improve their reliability and applicability in clinical settings.
- 2. Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Encouraging collaboration between practitioners of Ayurveda, *Siddha*, and modern medicine can lead to a deeper understanding of anthropometric practices

and their integration into diverse healthcare systems.

- 3. Longitudinal Studies: Conducting longitudinal studies that explore the relationship between anthropometric measurements and health outcomes over time can provide valuable insights into disease progression, treatment efficacy, and overall well-being.
- 4. Cultural Sensitivity and Accessibility: Research aimed at adapting traditional anthropometric techniques to suit diverse cultural contexts and improving their accessibility to healthcare practitioners globally can promote inclusivity and equity in healthcare delivery.

# Additional Information:

## Authors' Contributions:

All authors have equal contribution in above review article. All authors have reviewed the final version to be published and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

Acknowledgements: We are sincerely thankful to Dr. Rakesh Kuamr Sharma, (Associate Professor, P.G. Department of Rachana Sharir, PGIA, Jodhpur, Rajasthan (India), Dr. Shyoram Shrma (Associate Professor, P.G. Department of Rachana Sharir, PGIA, Jodhpur, Rajasthan (India), Dr. Navneet Dadhich (Asst. Professor, P.G. Department of Rachana Sharir, PGIA, Jodhpur, Rajasthan (India), Dr. Amit Gehlot (Asst. Professor, P.G. Department of Rachana Sharir, PGIA, Jodhpur, Rajasthan (India) for their valuable guidance and all PG Scholars of Batch- 2021, 2022 & 2023 for their valuable supports.

**Conflicts of Interests:** The author declares no conflict of interest.

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How to cite this article: Hemendra Kumar Verma, Mahendra Kumar Sharma. Dimensions of health: *Ayurveda's Swa Anguli Pramana* and *Siddha Manikkadai Nool* in comparative analysis. *Int J Health Sci Res.* 2024; 14(5):453-460. DOI: *https://doi.org/10.52403/ijhsr.20240559* 

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