

## Case Study: Hindu Ayurveda Cleansing in Hospital Setting

*Authored by Garrett Potts*

A Hindu male in his early 40's presented to a small, local hospital experiencing some gastrointestinal symptoms requiring further diagnosis. The patient was experiencing abdominal pain, constipation, and flatulence and was admitted for further observation.

When the attending provider returned to his room, the patient was kneeling over a trash can, vomiting, and expressed a desperate need to use the restroom. The doctor showed him to the restroom and waited for him to return. The doctor initially thought that these were additional symptoms that might indicate what was going on with the patient's GI tract.

However, upon returning to the patient's room, the doctor saw what looked to be laxatives and a vial with unidentified organic content of an epicac-like substance intended for purging among the patient's belongings. The patient explained that he had begun taking some initial steps of Ayurveda Cleansing.

The doctor wondered why the patient had sought his own means of treatment and why he had brought these substances with him to the hospital in the first place. The doctor admitted the patient for observation and hydration for forty-eight hours.

### Reflection:

- What do you know about Ayurveda Cleansing? How might you learn more about this patient's practice and the substances he ingested?
- Why do you think the doctor decided to delay treatment for forty-eight hours? What would you do if this were your patient?
- How can this patient's medical team respect his spiritual/religious practices while also providing him the best medical care?
- How can the provider respectfully learn more about the patient's use of herbal supplements/complementary medicine while respecting his spiritual/religious beliefs?

### Additional Resources:

Idler, E. L. (Ed.). (2014). Religion as a social determinant of public health. Oxford University Press, USA.