

CLINICAL IMPORTANCE OF VYADHIKSHAMATWA W.S.R. TO OJA

Dr. Charan Singh Bairwa*¹, Sharma Ravikant², Tewari Aditaya Nath³, Gujjarwar Vidula⁴

^{1,2}M. D. Scholar, PG Department of Roga Nidan Evum Vikruti Vigyan, Ch. Brahm Prakash Ayurved Charak Sansthan, Khera Dabar, Najafgarh, New Delhi-73.

³Associate Professor, PG Department of Roga Nidan Evum Vikruti Vigyan, Ch. Brahm Prakash Ayurved Charak Sansthan, Khera Dabar, Najafgarh, New Delhi-73.

⁴HOD and Professor, PG Department of Roga Nidan Evum Vikruti Vigyan, Ch. Brahm Prakash Ayurved Charak Sansthan, Khera Dabar, Najafgarh, New Delhi-73.

Article Received on
30 October 2018,

Revised on 20 Nov. 2018,
Accepted on 11 Dec. 2018

DOI: 10.20959/wjpr20191-13890

*Corresponding Author

Dr. Charan Singh Bairwa

M. D. Scholar, PG

Department of Roga Nidan

Evum Vikruti Vigyan, Ch.

Brahm Prakash Ayurved

Charak Sansthan, Khera

Dabar, Najafgarh, New

Delhi-73.

ABSTRACT

According to Ayurveda human body is constituted of seven dhatu (tissues). Which are rasa, rakta, mamsa, meda, asthi, majja and shukra. These dhatu are formed after digestion of ingested food (Ahara). When all the dhatus are formed, the last essences of these dhatus which form is called as Ojus or oja. It is the essence of dhatu, which gives strength (bala) to the body, vigour, vitality, improves immunity power and takes care of well-being of the body. It is present all over the body like ghee exists in the milk or honey exists in the flower. Oja in Ayurveda is considered as the resistance to decay and degeneration of the body and immunity against diseases. It is considered as quintessence of all the dhatus and represents the bala (strength) of all dhatus. The concept of immunology as described in ancient Ayurvedic literature is stated as vyadhikshamatwa or ojabala of an individual. The sahaja bala may be

clinically correlated as natural immunity whereas kalaja and yuktikrita bala as acquired immunity. Its Ayurvedic concept of Karya-Karna Sidhanta, the Aahara is Karya & Karana is Oja. Increase of Oja bestows Tusti (satisfaction), Pusti (good nourishment) and Baladaya (improvement of strength, physical, mental and capacity to resists disease). Ojas Kshaya on the other hand, weaken the body given to many diseases to develop, shortens life span and even kills the person.

KEYWORD: Oja, Vyadhikshamatwa, Bala, Immunity.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda the age-old science of life has contributed as a major system in maintain and fulfilling the health related needs of human society. This science has witnessed drastic changes in environments, lifestyle and so on. This had been possible because of strong, universal, unchanged principles of Ayurveda. The epitome of Ayurveda science and utility is firmly standing on fundamental principles of ayurveda Oja literally means “vigour”. The oja is one of the tools for the achievement of this aim. Acharaya Sushruta describes oja as the paramateja of the saptadhatus and as the bala or biological strength of an individual.^[1] Oja act as resistance to roga prevents from abnormalities in body and acts as protection against various antigens & foreign bodies. It is the quite essential for our life, energy and exists on a subtle level in the body. Disease strikes at the location where there is derangement of oja. The diseases such as AIDS, Diabetes, Pandu, Rajaykshma, Ghrahani etc, can manifest features of decreasing immunity or rather Ojakshaya. Vyaadhikshamatva, literally means "resistance (ksamatva) against disease (Vyadhi). Ayurvedic text describes the factor of immunity in terms of vyadhikshamtva^[2], which is considered as the natural or acquired biological defense of an individual against disease. Ayurveda also mentioned a number of methods to encourage Oja & Vyadhikshamtva. Factors which contribute for vyadhikshamatva are normal dosa, equilibrium state of dhatu, normal agni, and patency of srotas etc. Protection of health and maintenance of arogyata is the main aim of Ayurveda. The Physical and mental resistance to disease is of enormous significance to all living beings; it regulates both, prevention against and rapid recovery from diseases. Oja is located in haridya (heart) & infiltrates all over the body.^[3] The presence of ojas in body is relevant as like ghee present in milk itself. Being cumulated at every dhatu level and highly nutritive in nature it is said to be extreme purest, finest sara part of sneha. Moreover being it represents bala, veerya, prana, prakriti and kapha of body. Ojas and bala in body explains the cause effect relationship where ojas is cause and bala or strength being the ultimate effect of the same.^[4] Our physical, mental and spiritual strength totally depends on ojas which is manifested by its own features. In modern text it is compared with immunity. Ayurveda concentrate on the concept of oja and any vkriti related to oja like its increase or decrease or pathological condition (if any) and how it affects the body. In circumstance like, immunodeficiency disorders and malnutrition, where loss of oja or bala is an invariant feature, individuals are known to be convincible to various other diseases or perennial infections.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1. To study the concept of Vyadhikshamatwa.
2. To study the fundamental points of oja as physiological and pathological view.

Conceptual Study: Concept of Oja -According to Hippocrates-the natural force of the nature is the greatest healer of disease. The ayurveda treats the patients as a whole. Its etiology and pathogenesis of any disease condition is based on the theory of tridosha^[5] i.e. imbalance of the three body humors (Doshas, as Vata, Pitta and Kapha). The imbalance in doshas and the consequent impact on the body components (Dooshyas, as Dhatus and Malas) are supposed to be responsible for disease. This in turn is supposed to influence the path physiology of the body. The properties of all the natural and synthetic substances are rasa (taste), Guna (inherent property), Veerya (potency), Vipaka (manifest property) and Prabhava (influence on the body). Management of the disease may require many interventions (Poorva karmas, Shaman and Shodhan etc.) but it may not always be possible to point out the exact component of a specific causative factor by many interventions. The ayurvedic concept of tridoshas as the basis of disease seems to be similar to the concept of disease as dissonance. The related ayurvedic concepts of atiyoga, ayoga and mithyayoga appear to be similar to the concepts of excessive interaction, absent interaction and erroneous interaction between receptor molecules and recognition molecules. Similarly it is recognized that the central concept of Rasayana^[6], one of the eight major branches in ayurveda that deals with the concepts and methodologies of drugs designing is vyadhikshamatwa, which is similar to the concept of immunity. The basic principal of Rasayana-designing seems quite similar to current scientific concept of immunomodulation.^[7] It may be helpful in bridging the gap between the concepts and practices of ayurveda and modern medicine. When etiological factors come into contact with the body and they try to produce disease. At the same time the body tries to resist the disease. This power of the body, which prevents the development of diseases or resists a developed disease, is called immunity (vyadhikshamatwa) in ayurveda. It is observed that certain persons do not develop a disease even after coming into contact with the relevant etiological factors, while others become victims of the disease. The reason is that when the resistive power of the body is sufficiently strong it destroys the cause. This strength is attainable from three sources constitutional, temporal, and acquired. Constitutional strength is that gained from the time of the formation of the fetus onwards. Hence it is depend on the healthy sperm and ovum and also on the excellence of time and place. The temporal strength is the one, which is gained from the favorable condition of time, such as youth, and favorable

season. The acquired strength is one, which is achieved by the proper diet, exercise, and other regimens. Oja is responsible for strength, vitality and immunity against the disease. It means vigor or the essential energy of the immune system.

Different meanings of word oja in English

Body strength, Vigor, Energy, Ability, Power, Virility, Splendor.

Formation: The best way to describe formation of oja is to understand how honey is made. Nearly ten to twenty thousand bees collect the nectar or essence of thousands of fruits and flowers and stored them into their hives for the formation of honey. Similarly according to Charaka, (during embryogenesis) the synthesis of oja is at the time of fertilization, when shukra (sperm) fuses with shonita (ovum) paka of shukradhatu (both shukra and shonita) takes place (fertilization) and two things formed i.e. sara (nutrient materials) and mala (excretory products).^[8] This oja will perform its function of avastambha and support the life of garbha (fetus). After that rasaadi dhatus sara formed oja as the last product of dhatusarta.^[8]

Seat: Primary location of oja is the heart, from where it circulates to and circulated in the entire body. There are two places where ojas prevails.

1. Para oja - Hridya Sthana (in the heart).
2. Aparaj oja - Sarva Sharirsa Vyapi (in all over body).^[9]

Properties: Acharaya Charaka has explained ten properties of oja which are similar to milk and ghee while totally opposite to madya (Alcohol) and visha (Poison).^[10] They are as follow.

- Guru (heavy)
- Sheeta (cold)
- Mridu (soft in nature)
- Shalakashna (smooth in nature)
- Bahalam (which spreads into the minute channels)
- Madhura (sweet in nature)
- Sthira (stable)
- Prasanna (pleasant)
- Pichhilam (sticky)
- Snigdha (unctuous).^[11]

Function: Oja plays a vital role in all three stages of life i.e. Utpatti, Sthiti and Pralaya.^[12]

1. In Utpatti

- (a) In Fertilization
- (b) In growth and development of Garbha.
- (c) In viability or Non viability of Foetus.

2. In Sthiti Avastha

Dosha, Dhatu and Mala are the fundamental units of the body, among these, Doshas are said to sustain the body in their normal state. But these doshas even in their physiological state of equilibrium cannot sustain body which is devoid of oja.^[13] It's all the activities of the living body may it be Kayika, Vachika, Mansika take place smoothly if it is contained with Oja.^[14] This it can be inferred that Oja influence the function of physical, mental and other higher functions of the body and maintain the homeostatic condition of body.

Pathological point of oja

When physiological doshas are not working normally than doshas gets vitiated so, Vata and Kapha abnormalities are raised and Pitta totally destroys their own work from all these oja easily gets vitiated, and it leads to destruction of normal activities of human being. Acharya Susruta explains oja vikriti that is oja visransa, oja vyapada and oja kshaya are three stages of oja vikriti which may occur in various conditions and diseases ranging from physical and mental fatigue to acute and chronic mild and severe types of diseases. According to acharayas view these conditions may arise as a result of metabolic abnormalities leading to diminished production of oja. There symptoms are

Symptoms of Visransa oja (1st Stage)

- Sandhi vishlesh (Looseness of joints)
- Gatra sada (Weakness of the body)
- Dosha chyavanam (Tri doshas move away from their normal seats)
- Kriya sannirodha (Inability to perform normal functions)
- Shrama (Lethargy in organs)
- Aprachuryam kriyanam (It also results in the impairment of Kayik, Vachika, Mansik function of the body).^[15]

Symptoms of Vyapada oja (2nd Stage)

- Stabha gurugatrata (Stiffness and feeling heaviness in the body)
- Vata shopa (Swelling caused by Vata dosha impairment)
- Varna bheda (Change in complexion or discoloration)
- Glani (Exhaustion)
- Tandra (Drowsiness)
- Nidra (Sleep)^[16]

Symptoms of oja Kshaya (3rd Stage)**A. According to acharaya Sushruta**

- Murchha (Unconsciousness)
- Mansakshaya (Decrease of muscles)
- Moha (Mental disturbance specially in judgment)
- Agyan (Loss of sense)
- Pralap (Delirium)
- Mrityu (Death)^[17]

B. According to acharaya Charak

- Bibheti (Person suffer from fear complex)
- Durbalo abhikshanam (Physical and mental debility)
- Vyathita indriya (Feel discomfort in the sense organ)
- Duschhaya (Developed impaired)
- Durmana (Bad mentations)
- Ruksha (Dryness)
- Shama (Skin become black)
- Kashya (Emaciation of the body)^[18]

Oja Vriddhi

It is not cause any disease, it provides satisfaction, strength, nutrition to whole body.^[19] It is the pure and subtle substance that's extracted from food that has been completely digested and provides psychological stability and endurance without which we experience fear and anxiety.

Pharmaco-therapeutic properties

Twenty sharira gunas are described in classics divided in ten pairs. One out of each pair shows anabolic and / or anticatabolic effect on body. Ojas possesses these ten gunas on the basis of which it performs various pharmacotherapeutic actions in the body.^[20]

Factor responsible for reduction of Oja

Acharayas are mentioned about the causes of decrease of Oja i.e.

- Ativyayama – excessive physical exercise.
- Anashana – fasting for long period.
- Chinta – constant worry.
- Pramitashana – consuming very less quantity of food.
- Vata-atapa seven – excessive exposure to heavy blows of wind and sun heat.
- Bhaya – grief and sorrow.
- Rukshapan – drinking strong wines.
- Prajagar – keeping awake at nights.
- Excessive elimination of Kapha, Shonita, Shukra and mala.
- Kala- due to old age.
- Abhigata – mental or physical trauma or injury to Marma or vital parts of the body.
- Ativyavaya- excessive sex.^[21]

Vyadhikshamatwa: The most significant concepts developed in ayurvedic literature. Acharya Charaka has introduced the term vyadhikshamatwa in ayurveda. It means all doshas are neither of equal strength nor all the bodies capable of resisting disease equally.^[22] The definition of vyadhikshamatwa given by Chakrapani that vyadhikshamatwa denotes the resisting power of the body, which reacts to arrest the progress occurrence or reoccurrence of diseases. In this definition two significant terms vyadhi-bala-virodhitva and vyadhiutpada-Pratibandhakatva have been used in a particular order.^[23]

- Vyadhi-bala-virodhitva – reducing the strength of diseases those already manifested.
- Vyadhiutpada-Pratibandhakatva – prevention of those diseases to be yet manifested.

Bala: The vyadhikshamatwa mostly depends on bala that opposes the disorder state of doshas. Charaka describes that the maintenance of health depends entirely upon the bala. This strength is attainable from three source.^[24]

Sahaja Bala (Constitutional strength): It comes from the parents and is inherited. Today in our modern society, many children have allergies to various foods and other substances, and appear to be less strong than their parents. These inherited qualities come from their ancestors. According to Ayurveda's theory on genetics, genetic factors are defined at the cellular level. The whole cell is considered as Beeja; Beeja bhaga is the nucleus, and avayava are the chromosomes. If two parents' genetic makeup is healthy, the same health is seen in the children, whereas if their genetic makeup includes susceptibility to certain diseases, those diseases will be carried over into the next generation. The effect will be at the cellular, nuclear or chromosomal level. As this immunity is inherited, there is not much one can do except to avert the defects through various modalities of Ayurveda.

Kalaja Bala (Temporal strength): According to kalaja bala, the time of day, season, and one's age are important factors for enhancing immunity. Strength is greater in the early morning, spring, and young age than in evening, summer and old age. Kalaja bala is inclusive of one's time, day of the week and place of birth and their impact, marked or subtle, on immunity. Certain places have stronger and healthier climatic and environmental conditions. E.g Places with an abundance of water, cool and pleasant climatic conditions are Kapha dominating areas and accord to stronger immunity.

Yuktikrita Bala (Acquired strength): It represents acquired immunity, in which disease can be defended against through Ayurveda. Ayurveda concentrate on three plans for acquiring or enhancing immunity (Oja).

- Rasayana is health promoting and rejuvenates the whole physiology, producing resistance against disease both physically and mentally.
- Vyayama (exercise) – by doing daily exercise person can enhance its digestion, and metabolism which in turn promote person immunity.
- Satmya (suitability) - Adapting to wholesome diet, lifestyle and giving up unwholesome diet and lifestyle, to which the physiology has been addicted since birth, also enhances immunity.

CONCLUSION

In ayurveda system of medicine, it is considered that a living system is made of Panchmahabhuta, in the form of Vata, Pitta, Kapha at the physical level and Satwa, Raja, and Tama at the mental level. The imbalance in these body humors in the basic cause of any type of

disease manifestation till date, several objective parameters have been proposed to monitor the level of these basic humor but none of them is complete. In this exercise, now it is proposed to consider free radical theory of disease as one of the objective parameters. Since the beginning of 20th century, the serious limitations of reductionist-mechanistic approach began to be realized in various fields. Attempts began at synthesizing and integrating ideas and observations of different fields into a composite whole. Gradually, a shift from reductionist to holistic approach started influencing every field of knowledge. In the field of medicine, it was realized that human health and its management is a very general problem. It can only be addressed by evolving a holistic paradigm of medicine and health-care. This realization resulted in reinvestigation of traditional systems of medicine, particularly ayurveda. It is being increasingly realized now that ayurveda fundamentally has a holistic approach to human health. As a result, serious attempts to develop interface between Ayurveda and modern scientific medicine are being made. Further some recent concepts of molecular medicine, immunology as similarities with certain concepts of ayurveda. Therefore, it is being realized that it might be possible to develop a dialogue between modern scientific medicine and ayurveda. It might be possible to specify the Ayurvedic concepts of dhatu and mala in mutually acceptable and yet chemically well definable forms. It might also be possible to better comprehend Ayurvedic concepts like Doshas or Dooshyas along with Rasaa, Gunas, Veeryas, Vipakas and Prabhavas of Dravyas in physico-chemical terms. Here a comprehensive review of the Ayurvedic classical texts was presented to understand the concept of the Vyadhikshamatva w.s.r. to immunity. Bala, Oja, Prakrit Kapha etc. are compared with immunity.

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