

CONCEPT OF IMPROVING STRENGTH IN AYURVEDA W.S.R IMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the science of human health and disease. It deals with comfort, discomfort, physiological and pathological aspect of life. The word immunity means the strength of protecting from infectious diseases. The immune system evolved as defense system to protect body from invading pathological microorganisms and malignant diseases. Strong immunity is the key for maintaining stability in health with the changing season. Vyadhikshamatva is described in Ayurveda and this concept is considered equivalent to immunity. Normal condition of kapha, Bala and ojas are also similar to immunity. Vyadhikshamatva literally means resistance (ksamatva) against disease (vyadhi). Physical and mental resistance to disease is of enormous significance for all living being, it regulates both prevention against and rapid recovery from diseases. Ojas is final and excellence of the product dhatu and vyadhikshamatva depends on it. Innate immunity may be correlated to sahajabala and kalajabala may be correlated to acquired immunity. Here is a review of Ayurvedic texts regarding immunity and concept of Vyadhikshamatva which depends on normal dosa, equilibrium state of dhatu, normal agnibala and ojas etc.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Immunity, Vyadhikshamatva, ojas, Bala.

INTRODUCTION

Many people are prone to disease due to their faulty dietary habits, change in climate, on the other hand, some people remain healthy in spite of breaking dietary rules or changes in climate and they do not get affected by many diseases. Many microorganisms enter the human body through air, water, soil but fail to produce disease due to immune response present in the living body. The most important thing in relation to health and disease is immunity of the body. Immunity is defined as the capacity of the body to resist pathogenic agents. It is the ability of body to resist the entry of different types of foreign bodies like bacteria, virus, toxic substances etc. Immunity is of two types

1. Innate immunity

2. Acquired immunity

Innate immunity is the inborn capacity of the body to resist pathogens. Acquired immunity is the resistance developed in the body against any specific pathogens after an antigenic stimulus. So this type of immunity is also known as specific immunity.¹ Our immune system is essential for our survival. Without an immune system our bodies would be open to attack from infections. It is our immune system that protection against pathogens. Vyadhikshamatva is described in Ayurveda and this concept is considered equivalent to immunity. In Ayurveda innate immunity may be correlated to Sahaja bala and acquired immunity may be correlated to kalaja and yuktikritabala. Keen observation substantiates that human being has two different varieties of strengths.

1. The strength required for the growth of the body and to perform routine activities is called ENERGY (Shakti)

2. The Strength required to protect the body against several disease is called RESISTENCE (Kshamatva).² In Ayurveda, Ojas has been described as vital defense mechanism of the body. Ojas is final dhatu and vyadhikshamatva depends on it.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

This article is based on a review of Ayurvedic texts. Concept of Vyadhiksamatva described in various ancient samhitas, text book, internet and research papers will be analyzed thoroughly.

CONCEPT OF HITTA AND AHITA FOOD SUBSTANCE

Some food substance are wholesome and suitable for the body as the body can inheritably transform those substances into its own by virtue of jatisatmya, called hita substances (satmya). Substances which are always suitable and accustomed (to man) by birth like water, ghee, milk, porridge (boiled rice) etc are called hita substance while others those which are always unsuitable and causes putrefaction and similarly death (destroying) such as fire, caustic alkali, poison etc. so also some others which by combinations become similar to poison, are called Ahita substance (Asatmya).³

The following three are the reasons seen for the ill-effect being present in ahita substances

1. Natural inheritance feature (nisargadapi)
2. Physical or chemical combinations (nithogunanam)
3. Refinement (samskara)

Some other example of ahitadravyas

1. Incompatible combination and incongruent exposures (viruddhaaharaviharas)
2. Vajra told by Kasyapa means incongruent substance to produce antigens due to improper digestion eg; insect, creatures, grass etc.
3. Certain drugs (medicine).
4. Micro-organisms (grasas).
5. Psychological aversion.
6. The viruddhadravys e.g. equal quantities of honey and ghee. All the causes are responsible for disease production. Hence vagbhata advised that all drugs in the practice of medicine should only be used logically. Not only ahita diets and medicines provoke the hostile reactions but ones viruddha deeds (vihar) also manifest such mishap ex; sudden cold water bath after heat exhaustion is injurious to eye& skin and promotes thirst.⁴

VYADHIKSAMATVA

During certain conditions or due to certain factors, even unwholesome food does not produce diseases immediately. All unwholesome food articles are not equally harmful, all doshas are not equally power full, all persons arise not equally capable of resisting diseases. Vyadhiksamatva is resistance to diseases or immunity against disease and is of two kinds i.e. the one which attenuate the manifested disease and other variety prevents the manifestation of diseases. Unwholesome food substances become more harmful depending upon the nature of the locality, time, combination, potency and excessive quantity for example, vrihi type of corn is unwholesome because it aggravates pitta. The same become more unwholesome if consumed by marshy land (anupadesa) people the same become less harmful if consumed by dhanvadesa people. It is more unwholesome during saradrituand less harmful in hemanritu.If it is consumed with curd, phanita (penidium) become more unwholesome and the same become less harmful if consumed with honey. If consumed hot it is more unwholesome and the same if taken in cold condition become less harmful. If consumed more in quantity become more unwholesome and become less harmful if consumed less in quantity.⁵

CONTRIBUTING FACTOR FOR VYADHIKSAMATVA

Factor which contributes for Vyadhiksamatva are normal dosha, equilibrium state of dhatu, normal agni, patency of srotas etc. or factor which supports the equilibrium state of all physiological parameters. These points are described below. Equilibrium state of dhatu is called svastha.

Upayogihetu are those useful to the body and they indulge in protection of dhatus, which is important for homeostatic condition of body and mind. Aim and object of Ayurveda is the maintenance of equilibrium state of tissue elements.⁶ Regular oil massage leads to strong body physique. Consumption of proper amount of food certainly helps the individual in bringing strength, complexion, happiness and longevity. An intelligent person should be vigilant about his duties towards his own body like an office in charge of a city and a charioteer towards the city and the chariot respectively. So, wise person should protect his body both externally and internally by adopting dincarya in daily routine. The dosas are exceeding painful, acute and difficult to cure during their multiple combinations, if they require mutually contradictory therapies, if they are deep seated i.e. deeper dhatu like majja etc. are involved in the pathogenesis of disease. If disease is chronic i.e. it become very difficult to cure because they are deep seated and gives displeasure and disease becomes incurable. If dosapranayatana are involved in the disease process along with other vital organ like hridayaetc, then disease become difficult to cure. If vital organs afflicted, then disease become difficult to cure. If disease manifest instantaneously indicates disease become very difficult to cure.⁷

Mode of Mechanism

Chakrapani described the vyadhiksamata and used the following word

1. Vyadhiksamatva
2. Vyadhibalavarodhatvam
3. Vyadyutpadakapratibhandhakakatva.
 1. Vyadhiksamatva as described above, it acts as innate immunity.
 2. Vyadhibalavarodha is developing specific immunity against the bala of a disease, that what we achieve by Naimittikarasayana. Improving strength against a specific disease that is to counter the vyadhibala.
 3. Vyadhiutpadakapratibhandhaktva which is elaborately described by chakrapani. Vyadiutpatti is because of apathyaaharavihara etc. If you plan to counter the vyadhiutpadakahetu or cause pratibhandaka to the apathy, the disease process will be stopped, thus there is no progress of the disease. This is nothing but a mode of sampraptivighatana by which the disease is put down on its own.⁸

Vyadhiksamatva means one who is capable of resisting diseases. Depending on the nature of vatadidoshas and person who is not capable of resisting diseases suffers from diseases either mild or severe, acute or chronic. Person who is desirous of health should adopt the healthy practices related to diet, conduct and activities. Equilibrium state of dhatu is healthy and gives rise to pleasure.

BALA

Bala means strength, strength is required to perform vigorous physical work, to resist the power and to overcome the force of disease and decay. Bala is purely functional, depending upon the samadosa, hetu and mala is an inherent factor, based on prakriti. Caraka says while stating the limitations of langhana that 'Langhana should be done without disturbance to bala because 'bala is the base of health. It indicates that the bala is an inherent factor derived from prakriti as well as built and maintained by samadosa, dhatu and mala condition. Bala is also a synonym for kaphadosa. Bala is only the power that controls the doshas or rogas. Vagbhata also states that bala is the strength that pacifies the dosasushruta equated the bala even with ojas. All the positive function for preservation of health and deliver the function of dosa, dhatu and mala depends upon the bala. Basing on its functions bala can be studied in two aspects.

Vyayamsakti-

Strength for performing physical activity, the strength of doing physical work depends upon sthropchitmsata, well formed, compact and stable musculature. Dalhanafuther clarifies bala as sarvadhatusaropachayalakshana with growth and development of all the dhatusara. It is indicating that the bala is the outcome of functions yielding from sarvadhatusara i.e. performance of acting by each dhatu and together is nothing but bala.

Vyadhiksamata-

Vyadhiksamata is a power to resist and overcome the force or factors which bring about disease and decay. The word vyadhiksamatva is under use since samhita and vedic age, which was used to represent the natural power of resistance against a disease. Caraka says that all the bodies are not equally capable to counter or to resist the disease and decay. Sometimes body naturally heals without help of.

In all living bodies there is a natural protective force which is called as prakritiraksani. Ksamatva means for strength, which has capacity to control its own self from a disease. Certain people will have natural resistance against a disease. Carak as quoted above, all bodies doesn't possess equal capability. It varies from person to person.eg. In some person HLA molecule may be implicated in the pathogenesis. In other, the specific HLA molecule may be linked to a gene determining immune responsiveness to a particular antigen. Pratibalam means the strength of the body to counter the disease. If dhatusara is sufficient enough, though exposed to a abhisangajahetu, the disease manifestation will not take place in the body. If at all occurs, the body counters and arrests the progress of the disease. Kaphaprakrti person may have more pratibala in comparison to other prakrti. Pratyantikabalam means a specific immunity against a disease. Having immunity whether it is acquired or innate against a disease, is known as pratyantikabala, which we can say as specific immunity. Vikaravighata bhavas acts as speed breakers and cause obstacles in the progress of disease manifestation. After formation of vikara in the body, the body tries to break down the samprapti. The bhavas that produce the defense mechanism against a vikara are called as vikaravighata bhava. These are produced in the state of dhatusamya and in good state of ojas. All the phagocytes mechanisms come under this category.⁹

STRENGTH IS OF 3 TYPES

1. Sahaja bala
2. Kalajabala
3. Yuktikrta.

1. Sahaja bala(constitutional) - It is an inherent characteristic property of an individual present since birth. It is because of equilibrium state of dosas.¹⁰Bala or powers acquired through genetics i.e. hereditary, through parents, immunization from the mother during pregnancy are called as sahababala. Ayurveda mentions the disorders acquirable through bijadosa. The absence of those bijadosa disorders, are in another way enhancement of sahababala. Chakrapani says that inborn strength of physical activity and immunity comes under sahababala. The race, species, specific immunity is also come under sahababala.¹¹ This type of bala or resistance to disease is stated to be prakrta, i.e. inherent genetics resistance existing in the individual's body since birth. This increases along with the growth of the 'saptadathus'. It comprehends both sharira and satwa i.e. body and mind.¹²

2. Kalajabala(Temporary)- kalajabala is dependent on seasoned age as of strength is observed in aadanakala, gaining of strength is observed, in visarga kala and middle age is considered as full of strength.¹³This type of bala is influenced by the factors like seasonal variations and age of the

individual. Bala is stated to be at its high peak level in the visagra kala, spreading over varsa, sarad and Hemantartus, which are known as sita or cool period.¹⁴

The bala acquired through seasonal climatic variations usually in cold climate, the working capacity of man increases rather than in hot and humid climates. Tiredness or fatgueness or balabrams in summer (Grismartu) is also the effect of kala. Visargakala is the best in giving strength to the humans either to do physical works or enhance immunity. Usually the person suffers less in the visargakala. Apart from the season, age factor also plays vital role in combating the disease. Adolescence or adults will have more strength in comparison with other age groups.¹⁵

3. Yuktikrtabala(Acquired) – Acquired strength is dependent on healthy practices related to diet, activities etc.¹⁶

This type of bala refers to the induction of body's resistance against disease by resort to appropriate nutrition such as meat, ghee etc. physical exercise, rest depletory, restorative and rasayana therapies in keeping with the seasonal requirements. Adoption of 'Swastavitta' principles of Ayurveda along with achararasayana also contributes to the growth of yuktikrtabala.¹⁷

The strength or activity is acquirable through the intake of sarvarasa, satmyaahara, mamsa and sarpietc, protein diet with requirable relaxation and exercise and using the rejuvenators. Sarvarasaahara builds samadosa, samadhata and samamala which maintain the homeostasis of the body there by promoting the body strength and immunity. Regular and systemic use of relaxation and physical activity naturally relieves the stress there by harmonious condition of mind. Presently studies on this topic, increasing and building the immunity by keeping the mind in harmonious condition developed much and became a branch of medicine namely pschoneuro immunity.¹⁸

Ojas and immunity

Ojas is the essence of saptadhatu and it is the seat for strength. Ojas is the essence of saptadhatu and it is the mala of sukra. The term ojas has been stated in Ayurvedic classics to stand, not only for sleshma but also for rasa and rakta. It is seen in addition that a reference has been made to two kinds of ojasvizardhajanliojas and astabinduojas by chakrapani. These are important and significant in the context of vyadhiksamatva interpreted both as vyadhibalaviroditva and vyadhiutpattivibandhakatva. These two types of ojas have a direct bearing on body's defense against decay, degeneration and infection. Caraka has made a mention of slesmikaojas, which according to Chakrapani is different from astabinduojas. It is transported through the ojavahadhamanis. It is ardhanjali in quantity. Further there are two kinds of ojas i.e. 1. Para, 2. Apar. Caraka has also described apara in the chapter Arthadosamahamulya. In this context Chakrapani says while commenting that the quantity of paraojas is 8 drops (astrabindu) and it is located in hrudaya. The seat of aparaojas (ardhanjali) on the other hand is the ten dhamanis connected with hrudaya.¹⁹

The Qualities of Ojas

Caraka has attributed the following qualities to slesmikaOjas. White,slightly reddish or yellow resembling the colour of ghee, sweet in taste like honey and has the smell of laja.²⁰ According to SushrutaSmatka (cooling/watery) snigdha (viscous), shukla (white), sita(cold in potency), sthira(an ability to keep up the body organ in a perfect order), sara (permeating through), viviktam(best nutrition) mrdu(soft) mrtsna(slimy), pranayatana(seat of life) and uttama(best). While commenting on the functions of ojasSusruta has made a significant observation- The entire body with its limbs and organs is permeated with ojas and tat abhsvascashriryantasarirani i.e. in the absenr deficiency of ojas in the body causes wasting, decay, degeneration and destruction.²¹

The statement indicates the preservative nature of the aparaojas in preventing the decay of the body. Ojas is the sara i.e. essence of all dhatu. It is originated like honey gathered by bees from various flowers and fruits. Ojas is derived from all the 'Sapthadhatus' in other word all the dhatu contribute

to the making of it. Ojas is paramteja, which is the essence of all saptadhatu, being located in the hrdaya, combines with rasa and circulates through the dhamanis and perform the tarpana or prinanam of the entire body. Naturally ojas encapsulates in it all the vital function of rasadidhatu, since it is their essence. The bala of all dhatu is present in the organism from the time of fertilization of the shonita by shukra due to its swakarma the natural power. The significance attached to slesmikaojas, its production and distribution viz-a-vizkapha and its role in the preservation, protection of the body against decay, degeneration and disease is described in the conditions by sushrut as;

1. Ojas-visramsas
2. Ojasvyapat and
3. Ojas-ksaya.²²

1. OjasVisramsas- Visramsas means displacement from its normal place. Clinical features due to ojasvisramsas are as follow-

- Looseness of the joints
- Weakness of the body.
- Displacement of the doshas from their respective seats.
- Impairment in activities or sluggish behavior.

2. OjasVyapat- Vyapat means ojas gets vitiated by dustadosha and dusya. General symptomatology due to ojasvyapat are as follows-

- Stiffness and heaviness in body.
- Swelling due to vata
- Discolouration or loss of complexion
- Exhaustion

3. Clinical features of ojasksaya- Decrease in its quantity

- Fainting
- Wasting of muscles
- Unconsciousness
- Delirium
- Death

Ojas Vraddhi Laksana

Increased ojas is responsible for unique growth, nourishment and promotes strength. Rajayaksama (tuberculosis), madhumeha(diabetes mellitus), Pandu roga(anemia) these are few examples of diseases in which the power, production and distribution of ojas is affected. Agantuja/adibhautika factors like trauma, wasting diseases, fatigue, malnutrition due to alpasana, visamasana, emotional stress like anger, grief etc. obviously interfere with the production of the proper quality and in required quantity of slesmikaojas and its distribution to the various dhatus and organs. Thus ojas and immunity are interlinked. If ojas is in physiological state, there is no possibility of development of disease processes including infections like viral/bacterial etc. since the ojas is the sara of saptadatus and naturally impacts profound support and preservation.²³

Concept of improving strength-

The following factors which favors the promotion of strength. Births of a person in a country where people are

- naturally strong for example in 'Sindh' region people are strong by nature. Time factor which is conducive for dhatu and helps
- for promotion of strength. Excellency among qualities of bija (sperm) and

- ksetra (ovum and uterus) of parents Excellence of diet
- Excellence of physique.
- Excellence of suitability.
- All mental faculties are superior
- Natural mechanism
- Young age.
- Exercise and such other physical activity promote
- strength.²⁴

CONCLUSION

The main purpose and objectives of Ayurveda is the preservation of health in healthy individual and eradication of disease, which are curable. Here is a review of Ayurvedic concept of immunity which can be co-related with Ayurvedic concept of Vyadhikshamatva and normal condition of the Kapha, bala and ojas. Ojas is final and excellence of the product dhatu and vyadhikshamatva depends on it. Production of excellence of dhatu depends on the Hita and Ahita Ahara and Agni. Person who is having balanced proportion of muscle, compactness excellent sensory faculties never suffer from diseases. These people can easily withstand hunger, thirst, heat of the sun, cold and physical exercise. Agni performs normal digestion and metabolism activities. Person who is possessing excellence of all dhatu including mental faculties i.e. sarvasara are endowed with great strength, happiness and resistance to diseases. Rasayana therapy help in producing excellence dhatu and lastly it convert into ojas, ultimately increase in ojas and similarly increase in immunity. One who adopts Ayurvedic principles in day to day life will become free from diseases and can lead healthy and prosperous life.

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