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Ayurveda

CONCEPT OF BALA (VYADHIKSHAMATVA) - A REVIEW

KEY WORDS: Vyadhi-ksamatva, Sahajabala, Kalajabala, Yuktikritabala.

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ABSTRACT

In conditions like *Prameha*, *Rajyaksma*, immune-deficiency disorders and malnutrition, where loss of *ojas* or *bala* is a constant feature, people are known to be susceptible to various other diseases or recurrent infections. According to the concept of *Ojas* or *Vyadhi-kshamatva* or *Bala* (immunity), the body's resistance is of tremendous importance in the daily welfare of living beings not only for disease prevention but also for rapid recovery after disease affliction. *Ayurveda* is the science that is an equally important aspect of disease management as cure and thus, rejuvenating the immune system, is a natural way to help the body fight against the disease causing pathogens. Aapt Purush or Sants stated the use of *Rasayana* (Rejuvenation) to enhance *oja* sand *vyadhi-kshamatva* (immunity). *Ojas* is responsible for good health, better immunity, longevity, intelligence and thought process. For this purpose, use of different types of *ojas* promoting herbs have been described in *Ayurveda* which can be immensely helpful in the management of immune-deficiency disorders. Factors which contribute for *vyadhi-kshamatva* are normal *dosa*, equilibrium state of *dhatu*, normal *agni*, patency of *srotas* etc. or factors which supports the equilibrium state of all physiological parameters. Innate immunity may be correlated to *sahajabala* described in *Ayurveda*. *Kalaja* and *yuktikritabala* may be correlated to acquired immunity. Present article through light on the concept of immunity or *Vyadhiksamatva* from *Charak Samhita* and other *Samhita Granthas*.

INTRODUCTION

During certain conditions, or due to certain factors, even unwholesome food does not produce diseases immediately. All unwholesome food particles are not equally harmful, all *dosas* are not equally powerful, and all persons are not capable of resisting diseases. Resistance to diseases or immunity against diseases 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 marshyland (*anupadesha*) people, the same become less harmful if consumed by *dhanvadesha* people. It is more unwholesome during *sharadritu* (autumnseason) and less harmful in *hemantaritu* (winter season). 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 becomes less harmful. If consumed more in quantity become more unwholesome and become less harmful if consumed less in quantity. The *dosas* are exceedingly 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 it become very difficult to cure because they are deep seated and gives displeasure and disease becomes incurable. If *dasha-pranayatana* are involved in the disease process along with other vital organs like *hridaya* etc, then disease become difficult to cure. If vital organs affected then disease becomes difficult to cure. If disease manifest instantaneously indicates disease become very difficult to cure.

The following persons are unable to resist diseases:-

Atisthula vyakti, *Atikrusha vyakti*; whose muscles and blood are wasted and diminished markedly; debilitated person; one who consumes unwholesome food; one who consumes less amount of food; those who are mentally weak; on the other hand, individuals having opposite type of physical state are capable of resisting diseases.

Contributing factors for Vyadhikkshamatva :-

Many Factors responsible for *vyadhi-kshamatva* are normal

dosa, equilibrium state of *dhatu*, normal *agni*, *normalacy* of *srotas* etc. or factors maintains the equilibrium state of all physiological processes.

CONCEPT OF VYADHIKSHAMATVA:-

The concept of *Vyadhi-ksamatva* (immunity) is of tremendous importance in the daily wellness of human beings; for prevention and recovery from diseases. When etiological factors come in contact with the body 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. *Vyadhi-kshamatva* in *Ayurveda* is not merely immunity against a specific infectious agent or disease such as typhoid, measles or rubella for which modern medicine provides "immunizations". Rather, *Vyadhi-kshamatva* implies resistance against the loss of the integrity, proportion, and interrelationship amongst the individual's *doshas* (bioenergies) and *dhatu*(tissues). Resistance to disease or immunity against disease is of two kinds i.e. the one which attenuate the manifested diseases and other variety prevents the manifestation of diseases (*Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 28/7, Chakrapani commentary, p.570*).

Thus, it is clear that concept of immunity was familiar at that time and has been analyzed in detail in form of *Vyadhi-ksamatva* in various *Ayurvedic* texts. Various factors which contribute towards *vyadhi-kshamatva* are normal *doshas*, equilibrium state of *dhatu*s (bodily tissues), normal *agni* (digestive fire), patency of *srotas* (microchannels) etc. During certain conditions or due to certain factors even unwholesome (*ahitakara*) dietary practices do not produce disease immediately. All unwholesome (*ahitekar*) food articles are not equally harmful, all *doshas* are not equally powerful; all persons are not equally capable of resisting diseases (*Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 28/7, p.570*).

Equilibrium state of *dhatu*s (bodily tissues) is health and gives rise to *aarogyam* that is a healthy state of well being (*Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 9/4*).

Acharya Charaka describes various *hitkara* (useful) and *ahitkera* (harmful) *dravyas* in *Sutrasthana* as *Matrashitiya*, *Tasyashitiya*, *Yajyapurshiya*, *Annapaniya* chapters etc.

According to Acharya Charaka, the following persons are free from disease— those who consume favourable (suitable) diet, are separated to sensual pleasure, who donate regularly, are fair in judgement, speak the truth always, gifted with forgiving nature and the one who is faithful to learned people (Charaka Samhita Sharirsthana 2/46, p.850).

Here an attempt has been made to compile about the concept of Vyadhishamatva (immunity).

Synonyms: Synonyms for Vyadhikshamatva which appears in Ayurvedic scriptures are: Sleshma, Bala and Ojas.

1. Sleshma: Sleshma in normal state is called Bala and Oja. Sleshma in abnormal state called, Mala (waste) and Papma (diseases) (Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 17/117, p.366). Function of normal kapha (kapha is one of the tridosha (three humors—vata, pitta and kapha—which are said to be responsible for maintenance of homeostasis or equilibrium in the body), which performs the functions like strength, support, protection, growth and resistance) like that of ojas. Kapha in normal state provides compactness, stability, heaviness, virility, immunity, resistance, courage and greedlessness (Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 18/51, p.385).

2. Yuktikrita bala (acquired):- Ayurveda focuses on following plans for acquiring bala or enhancing immunity Proper and suitable ahara (nutritious diet), Performing exercise (chesta) with proper method & Using different beneficial yoga (e.g. rasayana chikitsa) (Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 11/36, p.228).

Balavardhakabhava (factors which increase strength/immunity) as described by Acharya Charaka— birth in a place where people are naturally healthy or strong, birth in a family of strong person (means without any family history of immunodeficient disorders), birth at a time when people naturally gain strength (Visargakala), favorable time, excellence among qualities of bija (sperm and ovum) and kshetra (uterus), excellence of diet (ahara-sampat), excellence of physique (sharirsampat), excellence of suitability (satmayasampat), all mental faculties are proper (satvasampat), natural mechanism (swabhavsanssidha), young age, exercise and other physical activities (Charaka Samhita Sharirsthana 6/13, p.900).

Bala or Oja abnormalities are of 3 kinds namely: 1. Bala Visransa, 2. Bala Vyapat and 3. Bala Ksaya (Sushruta Samhita Sutrasthana 15/29-32, p.61-62).

Symptoms due to kshaya (loss) areas: fainting, depletion of muscle, unconsciousness, delirium, improper sensory perception, death.

3. Ojas: According to Charaka, (during embryogenesis) the oja appeared for most in the human body (Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 17/75, p.351). The essence of sapta dhatu means the seven bodily tissues as from rasa to shukra dhatue. .rasa (plasma and lymph), rakta (blood cells), mansa (connective and muscular tissue), meda (body fats e.g. adipose tissue), asthi (bones), majja (bone marrow) and shukra (reproductive systems). Is called Oja and it is the seat for strength, hence called bala (Sushruta Samhita Sutrasthana 15/24, p.60).

Ojas has been considered vital in the defence mechanism of the body. It resides in the heart (hridaya), but also circulates (vyapata) all over body and maintains healthy status of the person. If this is lost, life also is lost and if this intact, life also continues (Astanga Hyridayam Sutrasthana 11/37-38, p.167).

In Ayurvedic texts, various acharays described countless useful dravya, formulations (yogas), mode of conducts for adults to enhance immunity (bala or vyadhi-kshmatva), similarly for healthy ksheerapa (infantile period), ksheerannada (1-2 years age period) and annada-awastha

(age period from 2-16 years).

Acharya Sushruta, Vagbhata, Kashyapa describe a special formulation by the name of "Lehana", for this purpose which enhances immunity and thus minimises infection episodes.

CONCLUSION

In brief, through Ayurvedic concept of Vyadhi-kshamatva not only we can keep at bay the physical bodily ailments but also definitely prevent various psychosocial discrepancies. For as concluded from above, an oja depleted body is breeding ground of various physical and mental diseases. Hence, for attaining good Vyadhi-kshamatva, we should use various regimens and follow conducts as described in Ayurvedic texts for the same.

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