



## Vyadhikshamatva- An Ayurvedic Aspect Of Immunity

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DOI- 10.5281/zenodo.7499001

### Abstract

Immunology is a branch of biomedical science that covers the study of all aspects of the immune system in all organisms. The study of the molecular and cellular components that comprise the immune system, including their function and interaction, is the central science of immunology. The mere presence of causative agent in the environment or its entry into the body does not always result in the disease. The concept of immunity is also mentioned in the ancient Indian science of living i.e. Ayurveda under the concept of Vyadhikshamatva. Ayurvedic concept of Vyadhikshamatva appears to be similar to the concept of immunity. Ayurveda treats the patient as a whole, the approach for the prevention of disease in Ayurveda is also not disease specific, rather it focuses on the whole body i.e. on making all the systems strong enough to fight with any type of disease by both treating at physical and mental levels through different ways which are explained in present article.

**Key words :-** Vyadhikshamatva , organisms, immunity.

### Introduction

स्वास्थ्यस्य स्वास्थ्य रक्षणम्। आतु रस्य विकार प्रशमनम् च। च.सू.३०/२६

Some people in the world are more prone to disease in spite of following the dietary rules and regulations. Such group of individuals can be included in the ever seek class of people but on the other hand some people remain healthy in spite of breaking dietary rules and regulations. The cause behind this made the science to think about the concept of immunity, which is already mentioned in the ancient Indian science of living i.e. Ayurveda under the concept of Vyadhikshamatva. The mere presence of causative agent in the environment or its entry into the body does not always result in the disease. The most important thing in relation to health and disease is the immunity of the body. The concept of Vyadhikshamatva has been depicted in the classical texts of Ayurveda. The approach of ancient Indian scientist of Ayurveda behind this theory is holistic. They considered the human body as a whole in case of any disorder, where as the approach of modern allopathic medicine is reductionist and

mechanistic, which tries to identify the cause of any disease at the level of some structural part i.e. organ, cell, cellular organelles, molecules etc. and also try to relate the etiology and pathophysiology of any clinical condition to a single cause. Consequently, it believes that an intervention at the specific causative level may result in a pointed attack on the disease and thus, may lead to its cure or management.

### Concept Of Vyadhikshamatva-

व्याधिक्षमत्वं व्याधिबलविरोधित्वं व्याध्युत्पाद प्रतिबन्धकत्वमिति यावत्  
च.सू.२८/७

Disease fighting mechanism of the body is called as Vyadhikshamatva. Vyadhikshamatva is the capacity of the body to limit virulence of the factors producing disease. It is of two types namely Vyadhi-Utpad-Pratibandhakatva (the capacity to restrict the production of disease) and Vyadhi-Bal-Virodhakatva (the capacity acting against the force of disease). According to Carakacharya, when the disease defense mechanism is stronger than the disease causative factors, then the disease does not manifest itself. Ayurveda considers that a

healthy person will not be affected by even the most contagious disease. All the individuals are not strong enough to withstand a disease or fight against disease. As Ayurveda treats the patient as a whole, the approach for the prevention of disease in Ayurveda is also not disease specific, rather it focuses on the whole body i.e. on making all the systems strong enough to fight with any type of disease by both treating at physical and mental levels through use of different types of Rasayanas. Ayurveda's basic principle for the treatment of the patient is to treat the patient, i.e. main focus of the treatment is patient, to make his own defense mechanism strong enough to fight with disease by increasing Rugna Bala(strength of patient). For this purpose after curing the patient, a suitable Rasayana therapy is applied on the patient to increase immunity of the patient.

Persons who are unable to withstand a disease are described in Caraka samhita as-  
शरीराणि चातिस्थूलान्यतिकृशान्यनिविष्टमांसशोणितास्थीनि

दुर्बलान्यसात्त्याहारोपचितान्य- ल्पाहाराण्यल्पसत्त्वानि च भवन्त्यव्याधिसहानि,  
विपरीतानि पुनर्व्याधिसहानि। च.सू. २८/७

Atisthula (obese), Atikrisha (thin) , Anvishtha mansa (weak musculature), Shaithilya in the dhatus- rakta, mansa, meda or visham dhatus, Alpa ahara (taking less quantity of food)-causes undernourishment of dhatus giving rise to alpa rasa, rakta, mansa, meda, asthi, majja, shukra. Many deficiency disorders and degenerative disorders occur due to alpa ahara. , Alpa satva persons- those individuals who have weak mind, who fear to even small symptoms or who are unable to withstand even a small pain, agony.

Caraka says that weak mind increases the disease instead of decreasing the same and the fear of disease itself causes disease. Carakacharya explained that too corpulent and too emaciated individuals suffer from some diseases or the other all time. On the other hand persons with good Vyadhikshamatva have proportionate musculature and compactness of the body and possess very strong sensory and motor organs. They are not overcome by the onslaught of disease. They can stand hunger, thirst, the heat of sun, cold and physical exercises. They can digest and assimilate food properly. such individuals are immune

for the diseases. According to Susruta in the context of a person with good immunity against diseases says, 'He who consumes food which is moderate in both properties viz. unctuousness and dryness, the essence of that food gets formed in him, circulating throughout the body, nourishes all the dhatus(tissues) properly; being in their normal, the dhatus, make for medium sized body; he will be capable of performing all activities, of enduring hunger, thirst, cold, heat, breeze, rain and sunlight and will be strong.

### Relation Of Bala, Agni, Satva And Oja With Vyadhikshamatva-

According to Ayurveda the Vyadhikshamatva depends upon Bala (strength), Agni (digestive fire) and Oja (essence of all Dhatus) of the body. So maintenance of these factors ultimately results in immunization of a person against all diseases.

### Bala And Health Relation-

बलमारोग्यम् आयुः च. प्राणाश्चानौ प्रतिष्ठितायः॥ च. चि. ३

Carakacharya says in above quotation that health of an individual depends upon good strength of the body tissues. One who's body strength is low, it is difficult to treat the disease occurred in them. And hence Carakacharya prefers the Bala examination of an individual before starting the treatment. Here along with Bala of whole body, Dhatu bala is also more important and to understand the dhatu bala, it is necessary to understand the Sara status of the Dhatus. Sarata describes the excellent status of the dhatus and Sarata leads to the physical, mental and social capabilities in an individual. There are 8 types of sara, seven of seven Dhatus and one is Sarata of Satva(mind). Dhatu-Sarat, especially that of the Shonit(blood), Mamsa (Flesh) and Asthi (bones) result in good Vyadhikshamatva. Samhat-Sharira i.e. a well-nit, compact and well-composed body has good Vyadhikshamatva and is said to resist the ill effects of a disease in efficient manner. This conceptualization of Vyadhikshamatva has striking similarity with the modern concept of immunity. Dhatu sarata is one of the factors of examination of a patient and sarva sara purusha is considered strongest among them.

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**Characteristics Of Sarva Sara Purusha-** Kalyanabhiniveshinaha (nature of betterment of mankind), sthira sharira(stable body), snigdha and gambhira swara(melodious voice), sukha, aishwarya, vita upabhoga samman bhajo(readiness to enjoy richness), manda jarasa(less signs of ageing), manda vikara(less amount of diseases), apatya(children) of the same characters and longevity. Sarva sara is the excellent status of all dhatus which denotes the excellent immunity of the body.

**Types Of Bala** – त्रिविधं बलमिति च.सू.११/३६

There are three types of Bala according to Ayurveda-

सहजं यच्छरीरसत्त्वयोः प्राकृतं।

Sahaja- sahaj Bala is naturally acquired from the parents since birth.

कालकृतं-मृतुविभागजं वयःकृतं च।

Kalaja- bala which is acquire by time factor like age, season etc.

युक्तीकृतं पुनस्तद्यदाहारचेष्टायोगजम्।

Yuktikrita- bala which is acquired artificially by ahara(diet), vyayama(exercise), aushadhi(medicines) and Rasayana dravyas(rejuvenating drugs) etc.

**Bala Vriddhikar Bhava** –

बलवृद्धिकर भावः- बलवृद्धिकरास्तु इमे भावा भवन्ति । तत् यथा - बलवत् पुरुषे देशे जन्म, बलवत्पुरुषे काले च, सुखश्च कालयोगः, बीजक्षेत्रगुणसंपत्त, आहारसंपत् च शरीरसंपत् च, सात्म्यसंपत् च, सत्त्वसंपत् च, स्वभावसंसिद्धिः च, यौवनं च कर्म च संहर्षः च इति ॥ च. शा. ६।१३

According to Carakacharya there are 12factors responsible for increasing Bala(strength) of the body:

- 1.Birth in a country where people are naturally strong like sindh pranta,
- 2.Birth at a time when people naturally gain strength i.e. hemant ans sisira ritu(winter)
- 3.Favourable deposition of time( pleasant and moderate climate)
- 4.Excellence in the qualities of seed i.e. sperm and ovum, and asaya i.e. uterus of the parents,
- 5.Excellence of the ingested food,
- 6.Excellence of the physique,
- 7.Excellence of the satmya(wholesomeness of various factors responsible for maintenance of the body),
- 8.Excellence of the mind,
- 9.Favourable deposition of the nature
10. Young age of both the parents i.e. they should not be over aged,

- 11.Habitual performance of exercise,
- 12.Cheerful disposition and immense love for each other.

The individuals possessing most of these factors are naturally immune i.e. Vyadhikshama for diseases.

**Agni And Health Relation-**

रोगाः सर्वेऽपि मंदेनौ ।

अग्नि मूलं बलं पुंसां बल मूलं हि जीवितम् । अ.ह.सू. ८/१- अरुणदत्त टीका

Vagbhatacharya says that decreased power of Agni is the cause of all diseases whereas Acharya Yogaratnakara says that the Bala of man depends upon the Agni of an individual. Carakacharya in the context of functions of agni narrates that, dehaagni or jatharagni (enzymes located in the gastro intestinal tract) is responsible for life, color (luster of the skin), strength, health, enthusiasm, plumpness, complexion, ojas(energy), tejas(gleam of the body), other varieties of agni and prana. Extinction of this jatharagni leads to death, its proper maintenance helps a person to live a long life and its impairment gives rise to diseases. Therefore jatharagni is considered to be the root or the most important sustaining factor(mula) of living beings.

In this way the immunity is influenced by the power of agni, digestive fire and our ability to digest, assimilate and absorb nutrients in our bodies. In a healthy, strong and immune body, invaders get neutralized or destroyed and expelled out of body. If agni is impaired by an imbalance within the tridosha, metabolism is affected and the immune response and natural resistance are lowered. If the body is unhealthy or has ama, stored toxins from undigested food, then the favourable environment is created in the body for invaders to thrive. Ama can be created from both physical and mental indigestion. It serves as fertile ground upon which parasites feed and settle into weak spots in the body.

According to Ayurveda, ama is the root of all physical disease. Indigestion and ama formation prevents nutrients from reaching the tissues and weakens immune function. Ama can result from improper eating habits and unhealthy lifestyle practices. Our relationships, stress and traumas also greatly impact our digestive process and immune function.

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### Methods For Restoration Of Power Of Agni-

Use of Dipan, pachan dravyas like pippali, shunthi etc.

Shodhan therapy like vaman, virechana, basti according to the condition.

Laghu, ruksha, anulomaka ahara for treatment of Ama.

Use of Rasayan dravyas to boost the power of digestion like siddha ghrita, shatavari, amalaki and other dipan, rasayana dravyas.

### Satva (Mind) And Health-

There are three types of satva, Hina, Madhya and Pravara satva i.e. the mind may be weak slightly strong and strongest. Satva power decreases due to oja kshaya i.e. loss of the essence of dhatus, malnourishment of the body tissues and forceful exertion of the dharaniya kayika, vachika and manasik vegas (natural urges of body and mind). Satva is mind and it regulates the body because of its association with soul. Individuals having the excellence of mental faculties are characterized by good memory, devotion, gratefulness, wisdom, purity, excessive enthusiasm, courage, valour in fighting, absence of sorrow, proper gait, depth of wisdom and sincerity in actions and virtuous acts. These type of individuals even if possessed of weak physique, because of the specific manifestations of satva qualities in them, they can tolerate serious exogenous and endogenous diseases without much difficulty. Those having inferior type of mental faculties cannot sustain their mental strength and even if possessed of plump or big physique, they cannot tolerate even mild pain or disease.

### Restoration Of Power Of Satva (Mind)-

By following the rules of right conduct mentioned in the context of achara rasayana by acharyas of Ayurveda, one can restore the power of satva i.e. mind. Vagbhatacharya states that all the activities of all living creatures are aimed at happiness and happiness cannot be obtained without right conduct and hence everyone should follow right conduct (righteousness). Dharma is righteousness or good conduct and sukha is health.

By counseling and boosting the confidence by positive optimistic thought process. Reciting prayers, worshipping the lord and seeking his blessings.

Controlling the mind by yogasanas and pranayama. Administration of medicines for boosting the mind and consuming satvika ahara.

### Oja (Quintessence Of Dhatus) And Health Relation-

The quintessence of the dhatus (from rasa) to the last one shukra is called ojas. This ojas is seated in heart but is spread all over the body and regulates the complete maintenance of the body. The body is certainly lost by its loss and body survives stable by ojas existence. Different functions and entities and all others related to the body are possible only by the existence of ojas. Teja of Dhatu and the living tissues along with normal functioning Shleshma (Kapha), should be comprehended as Oja. This possibly indicates about tissue immunity, as Dhatus of Ayurveda appear nothing but basic tissues of the body. Thus, Ojas is a valuable concept of Ayurveda. It is the essence of all the body parts and functions, it is the sum total of the essence of all healthy parts and their normal functions.

### Ojakshaya (Decrease Of Ojas)-

Ojas get decreased by anger, hunger, too much worry, grief, exertion and others. Due to this decrease, the person affected becomes frightened, weakened, worries very much without reason, his sensory organs become uncomfortable and distressed, complexion becomes affected badly, mind acts badly and body becomes dry and also lean. Ultimately the decrease of ojas from the body causes decreased immunity of an individual due to which he gets prone for diseases.

### Restoration Of Ojas-

To increase Vyadhikshamatva of the body, one have to increase the ojas. According to Vagbhatacharya the Ojas can be increased by use of medicines with enlivening quality, listed under the group of jivaniya gana like jivaka, rishabhaka, meda, mahameda, kakoli, kshirkakoli etc. milk, meat-soup and such others. Increased ojas by these measures produces satiation, good nourishment and strength of the body.

### Rasayana And Vyadhikshamatva-

Modulation of immune response (Immunomodulation) through selective use of immunomodulators is currently being considered the most potent method in the management of health and disease by modern medicine. The concepts of immunity

and immunomodulation are extensively explored and used in Ayurveda, particularly in Rasayana Tantra. Rasayana Tantra is one of eight major specialties of Ayurved. This branch refers to nutrition, natural resistance and geriatrics. Rasayana can be a drug, a food or a life-style (Acara Rasayana). Acara rasayana forms important part of the Rasayan Tantra. According to Ayurveda, a Rasayana helps in strengthening Oja, Bala and Vyadhikshamatva. The Ahara, Vihara, and Manasa Bhava, if properly used, support Ojas but if abused, they have bad effect on it. Ayurved describes a very large number of Rasayanas and Ojovardhaka remedies like Ashvagandha, Silajatu, Tulsai, Amalaki, Punarnava etc. Ayurvedic preparations in general and Rasayanas in particular act more on the nutritional dynamics rather than pharmacodynamics as it improves the state of nourishment which in turn upholds immunity and youth.

#### Conclusion

Ayurvedic concept of Vyadhikshamatva appears to be similar to the concept of immunity. Investigation of the concepts relevant to Ayurvedic Rasayana Tantra in light of the concepts of modern immunology, particularly the immunomodulation will be quite rewarding. Such attempts might bring about much needed integration of traditional Indian Ayurved and modern scientific medicine and help in the development of a holistic approach towards human health. It might be rewarding to investigate the Ayurvedic concepts of Rasayana Tantra in terms of modern concepts of immunology. Attempts may be made to examine the immunomodulatory effects of Rasayanas. New methodologies should be explored that focus on the nutritional dynamics as the basis of immunomodulatory effect of a Rasayana. The knowledge of structure and function of chemical constituents of Ayurvedic

drugs would give better understanding of the pharmaceutical practices of Ayurveda.

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