



Review Article

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IMPORTANCE OF OJAS IN THE PREVENTION OF DISEASES: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

In the present world there is a prevalence of various diseases as the people are not so aware about their health and dietary habits. The diseases more often affect the health of population due to the resistance to various organisms and viruses, causing the disease. In spite of a balanced diet, daily exercises and yoga practices, the people are more prone to develop the diseases. The main reason behind this may be the lack of ojas (immunity) due to various factors i.e. mental and physical stress in this modern world. Acharyas, in past also explained these factors for the loss of ojas. The ojas is the essence of all the seven dhatus (essential tissues), which provides the health when present in normal state. The ojas eventually present or circulate in whole body to fight against the foreign particles (virus and bacteria) to make the body free from disease. Not only the ojas protect against various physical diseases but also make keep check and wellness of mental health as a para ojas (specific immunity), which resides in the heart. Ojas implies a resistance against the loss of integrity, proportion and inter-relationship amongst the individual's doshas (physiological components of body) and dhatus. So clinically there is a great importance of ojas in the well-being of mental and physical health. In the short words the vyadikshamatva (acquired immunity) is maintained by the ojas in normal state and measurement in body to imply the resistance against the diseases (vyadhi) and provides the rapid recovery.

Key Words: Ojas, Immunity, Dhatus, Bala, Vyadhikshamatva

INTRODUCTION

The diseases are occurred due to some dietary changes, infections, and change in environment as explained in the Ayurveda. While following of the healthy diet, and habitat according to the six ritus (seasons) explained in Ayurveda can make people healthy. The ojas constitutes the essence of all seven dhatus taken together. The quintessence of all the fundamental principles of the body, starting with lymph Chylea and ending with semen is called the Ojas¹. The protection of body among various infections by an element ojas can also be mentioned as under vyadhikshamatva. The homeostasis between the mental and physical elements would be maintained by ojas to be a healthy person. As the definition of Health, according Ayurveda and WHO also states that a person with uniformly health digestion, and whose bodily humours are in a state of equilibrium, and in whom a fundamental vital fluids course in their normal state and quality, accompanied by normal processes of secretion, organic function and intellection, is said to a healthy person². As it all depends upon the bala (physical strength) of a person to fight against various diseases and its ability to do physical work by its indriyas³ (sensory organs). In modern science the immunity depends upon the lymphocytes as in immunity the invasion of antigen is required to activate the mechanism of immunity e.g. smallpox. But in some cancer like disease no such invasion of antigen is required to as the NK (natural killer) cells easily start killing the cancerous stage of disease. As it is also called the specific defence mechanism is also commonly known as lymphocyte mediated immunity.⁴ so while correlating the ojas

with immunity it is observed that lymphocyte-monocyte mediated mechanism is as same as the mechanism of ojas in body. But the precise correlation of ojas in modern medical science has yet to be defined.

Concept of Ojas and Bala

The controversy arises between the concept of bala and ojas in Ayurveda. Different Acharyas explain the bala as ojas on the basis of different symptoms i.e. teja (fire) and ghrita(ghee) is an example given to resolve this issue because by consuming ghrita it concludes to increase teja, and the qualities present in ghrita are as same as of teja. According to these theories the bala is considered as ojas. Therefore, the qualities of bala and ojas are similar. This concept is considered as to implement the treatment theories for both bala and ojas. The treatment for both is same as they are undifferentiated.⁵ The ojas or strength giving principle serves to impart a firm integrity to the flesh (muscles), exercise unbounded control over all acts of vitality, improves the voice and complexion and helps both the internal and external sense organs, in duly performing their natural functions. And the main reason behind performing these functions is ojas.⁶ The treatment of bala and ojas with common concepts is fully based on the qualities of ojas i.e. somatmaka (lubricated), cool, oleaginous and firm, softy, shinny etc. ⁷ The whole body with its limbs and members is permeated with ojas, and loss or diminution in its natural quality leads to gradual emaciation of organism.⁷

Composition of Ojas

The form in which ojas is produced in the body of human for the first time is of color of ghee, in taste it like that of honey, in smell it is like a fried paddy.⁸ The ojas consists of two types: a) The superior type and b) The ordinary type. The heart is a dwelling place for the superior type of ojas. The vessels attached to the heart and whole body are the sites of ordinary type of ojas.

Quantity of Ojas

It is very difficult to comprehend the exact nature of ojas. It is said to be predominantly white, reddish and yellowish in color. The ojas of the superior quality is of eight bindu (drops) in quantity. The other type of ojas is half an anjali (bowl full of hands) in quantity.⁸

The 18 types of diminutions are defined by Acharya Charaka. Any diminution in the volume of superior ojas would cause instantaneous death. So diminution in the volume of ordinary type of ojas is discussed, which happens mostly in the cases of different wasting diseases, mental distresses, injuries grief, anxieties, fatigue and hunger etc.^{8 & 9}

The diminution of volume of ojas can lead the stages of:

1. Dislodgement from its proper seat (visramsa),
2. By change or modification of its native virtues in contact with de-arranged organs (vyapada)
3. By wasting away (kshya)¹⁰

These diminution or vitiated ojas can lead to loss of immunity which arises different diseased conditions.

So the immunity is a condition or mechanism which protects the person to get infected from various bacteria's and viruses. The deranged or vitiation of ojas can cause the loss of immunity or bala in human body leads to the infections. The three types of bala are categorized as:

1. Sahaja bala
2. Kalaja bala
3. Yuktikrita bala

Sahaj bala (innate immunity) is the bala known as constitutional strength which exists in the mind and body from the very birth.¹¹ Sahaja bala is as same as the immunity which also presents in human body from the very birth, which fights against various diseases. The ojas or immunity makes the beginning of the formation of embryo as it is nourishing fluid from the embryo. It enters the heart right at the stage of embryo formation. Acharya Chakrapani also defined the presence of ojas in the three stages in embryo i.e. at the time of conception, it is essence of sperm and ovum, second stage the essence of slime material which provides the nourishment to embryo, third stage during the formation of different organs it manifest its own actions. So, ojas develops as immunity which a person acquired from the birth time.¹²

DISCUSSION

The ojas is the essence of all seven dhatus (essential tissues) taken together. It is compared with the bala (strength) present in the human body. It is discussed; the bala which is considered as ojas is the sehaja bala (acquired immunity) which is attained by a person from the very first from the birth. The sehaja bala (innate immunity) is also considered as the immunity to fight against the diseases. The immunity acquired is the best essence of all the seven dhatu (essential tissues) is as compared with ojas. The vyadhiikshmatava (immunity) is acquired with essence of essential elements present in body which fights against various diseases. So, to attain the normal amount of ojas in body it is

essential to consume the rasayana (rejuvenation) and vajikarna (aphrodisiacs) medicines, as it is understood that these medicines are consumed by a healthy person free from diseases. This is processing to achieve the better quality and quantity of ojas, which protects the person from different diseases. Along with such procedures, in the childhood it is also indicated to consume the svarnaprashana (intake of gold salts) in aweleha (linctus/confection) form with vacha and ghrita to develop the immunity against many diseases. Immunization programs organized today, in this modern world is as similar as swarnaprashana of vedic period to control the prevalence of epidemic diseases and their further ill effects.

CONCLUSION

The ojas is correlated with immunity which is the essence of all seven dhatus (essential elements) present in heart and whole body to protect against various diseases. The bala is also correlated with ojas, the specific bala known as the sehaja bala (acquired immunity) which present in the neonatal from the very birth. The sehaja bala also helps to develop the yuktikrita bala (strength acquired with exercises and practices) to fight against various diseases. The ojas is thus obtained from the rasayana (rejuvenation) and vajikarna (aphrodisiacs) drugs after samshodhana (purification of body) which nourishes the seven dhatus. Thus, the essence of nourished dhatus is the ojas which results in rejuvenating the body parts and also protect from infections by different organisms. The swarnaprashana (intake of gold preparations) methods followed in vedic periods also enhanced the immunity of neonates and infants to protect from diseases and develop resistance against them, which in modern world is performed by vaccinations.

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