



THE CONCEPT OF VATAJA PRATISHYAYA/ALLERGIC RHINITIS: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Vyadhikshamatva (Immunity) could be easily understood as the strength of the body to prevent an invasion and the capacity of the body to combat any invasion. Various factors affect the immune system but the factors like satmya, asatmya, satmya virudhdha have significant role in the manifestation of vataja pratishyaya. Satmya (wholesome) refers to those factors when continuously used supports the healthy status of the individual. On the contrary certain factors act as unwholesome in some individuals and tend to cause diseases. The aetiological factors like dhooma (smoke), raja (dust), rutu vaishmya (seasonal variations) may not cause symptoms in all individuals but few who are atopic or sensitized will develop symptoms of vataja pratishyaya as there will be interaction between the environmental factors and individual susceptibility. This article helps in better understanding of vataja pratishyaya, vyadhikshamatva and the link between these two entities in the manifestation of the condition and thereby helping in designing an effective management.

KEYWORDS: Vyadhikshamatva, Sahaja Bala, Vataja Pratishyaya.

INTRODUCTION

The immune system of human body is capable to resist almost all types of toxins or organisms that tend to damage the tissues or organ.^[1] This unique mechanism is described as vyadhi kshamatva. Vyadhi bala virodhitwa and vyadhi utpadaka pratibandhakatwa are the distinctive aspects of vyadhikshamatva. The ability of the body to fight against the disease is Vyadhi bala virodhitwa whereas vyadhi utpadaka pratibandhakatwa refers to the ability to prevent the occurrence of the disease.^[2] Maintaining bala supports vyadhikshamatva and bala when improved decreases the vyadhibala, the virulence of a disease. Furthermore, bala is categorised as sahaja, kalaja and yuktikrita. Sahaja bala results due to proper formation of dhatu, kalaja bala is related to season and age and Yuktikrita bala is attained by the intake of wholesome food like ghee, meat and following other regimen like proper rest, exercise and by the use of rejuvenators.^[3] Satmya sampat/the wholesomeness and beeja kshetra guna sampat/the excellence of sperm and ovum of parents are the factors contributing to bala or promotion of immunity.

Sahaja bala is present in every individual since birth. Sahaja bala is genetically decided, natural and depends upon the favourable qualities of the sperm and ovum of the parents that involved in the conception.^[4] Foods,

activities and intake of rejuvenators modulate the immune system and thus contribute to yuktikrita bala. Several factors such as matruja (maternal), Pitruja (paternal), atmaja, satwaja, satmyaja, rasaja are responsible for the formation of foetus.^[5] The first four factors are responsible for the initial formation of embryo and rasaja and satmyaja factors influence the growth of the foetus during its development. The health, clarity of senses, excellence of voice etc are derived from satmyaja factor. Wholesomeness increases the strength.

The food and activity that are congenial to health is termed as satmya. The habitual use of certain food and adaptation obtained for the same is termed as oka satmya which differs from person to person such as addiction to alcoholism.^[6] Certain foods like rice and wheat is considered to be satmya to human beings in general and is specifically known as sarva satmya. Satmyaja food which is specific to an individual is referred as atma satmya like tolerance exhibited by an individual to *Semicarpus anacardium*. The food or regimen that is not healthy or wholesome to the body is regarded as asatmya (unwholesome).^[7] Asatmya acts as unfavourable or harmful when it affects the health when a person comes in contact with it. The items which are unfavourable in general is sarva asatmya. If certain items are unfavourable only for specific people it is referred as

atma asatmya. To quote an example a person developing allergy on consumption of pea nut which is supportive to the health otherwise.

The disorders of satmya may be 3-fold; one is consumption of asatmya substances which is referred as satmya viruddha and can cause variety of diseases like kushta and gulma categorized as illness caused by satmya viruddha. Sudden withdrawal of habituated food /oka satmya may result in development of illness like withdrawal manifestations of alcoholism. Such diseases are referred as asatmyaja vikara. Abnormal change in the satmya may predispose to illness which is referred as satmya viparyayaja vikara. To cite an example the person who has the habit of taking the milk when develops intolerance to the same it is known as satmya viparyaya for milk, thus aberration in satmya can cause diseases like jwara and pratishyaya. This works through the principle of satmya viruddha.

The role of satmya and asatmya is not only limited to the food or regimen but also linked to the environmental factors. The disease like pratishyaya manifest when the nose comes in contact with the environmental factors such as dust, smoke etc.

Additionally, a change or reversibility in certain factors can influence the manifestation of disease which is termed as viparyaya. Intake of cold substance by persons accustomed to pungent and hot substance can cause diseases like pratishyaya due to satmya viparyaya. Dust and smoke are not favourable to health. Not all people develop symptoms on exposure to these environmental factors. But a healthy person indulging in viruddha ahara can develop symptoms on exposure to dust or due to satmya viparyaya. When there is increase in the particulate matter like dust or smoke in the environment person with satmya viparyaya is likely to develop untoward symptoms. This may involve only a part of pranavaha srotas like nose and cause diseases like pratishyaya or can cause tamaka shwasa by involving the entire pranavaha srotas. Gradually, the person may develop satmya viparyaya for multiple environmental factors and the disease may become more severe, frequent and persistent.

Among 5 types of pratishyaya explained in classics vataja pratishyaya is characterized by nasal obstruction, stuffy nose, sneezing and watery discharge.^[8] The sadyojanaka nidana (immediate) causes vitiation of vata leading to vataja pratishyaya. The features of vataja pratishyaya simulate the features of allergic rhinitis, a major airway disease.

Allergic rhinitis is a consequence of an immediate hypersensitivity reaction occurring on the nasal mucosa.^[9] Exposure to allergens stimulate the immune system and results in production of antigen specific IgE in genetically predisposed individuals. Sensitization of the individual occurs when IgE is fixed to basophils and

mast cells. With subsequent exposure of the individual to allergens a reaction between antigen and IgE antibody occurs resulting in activation of mast cells and release of several chemical mediators such as histamine, prostaglandins, leukotrienes etc. that are responsible for the symptomatology of allergic rhinitis. The symptoms of allergic rhinitis include episodic sneezing, rhinorrhoea, nasal obstruction and itching in the eyes, nose and/or palate. The symptoms are caused spontaneously when the individual is exposed to allergens or triggering factors.

The disease is more common in developed countries and the increased prevalence is due to urbanization. Allergic rhinitis alters patients' social life, affects learning performance at school and work productivity and increased cost of the treatment. Genetic susceptibility is the strongest risk factor for the development of symptoms.^[10] The factors such as lifestyle changes, increased exposure to allergen, pollution and irritants, dietary modifications responsible for diminution of protective nutrients, decreases in infections leading to a reduction in immune response and stress are responsible for the increase in the prevalence of allergic rhinitis. Thus the form of hypersensitivity reaction to the allergen causing allergic rhinitis is understood as atma asatmya which a sequel of satmya viparyaya. This is the fundamental factor in the manifestation of vataja pratishyaya.

DISCUSSION

The three types of bala play a major role in the prevention of diseases. The immune system is variable amongst individuals. Satmya influence the immune system in a great way. Due to the intake of unwholesome factors the vitiated tridosha circulating all over the body with rasa tend to vitiate the sperm or ovum and can affect the proper formation of dhatu. This may affect the sahaja bala in foetal life and the individual might become susceptible to diseases. The body is incapable to resist diseases if the body is nourished with unwholesome food. At times because of certain factors the unwholesome food does not cause the disease immediately but in long run the intake of unwholesome food generally causes diseases. Furthermore, the nose is in direct contact with the environment and various environmental factors can cause diseases depending upon the resistance of the body.

Generally, the food, regimen, medicine or environmental exposure may not show any reaction in many, but in certain individuals, on consumption of some food or medicine or exposure to environmental factors may show unwholesome reaction. To be more precise, the factors usually harmless to many individuals tend to cause diseases in certain individuals and it is termed as atma asatmyata. Such individuals are called as atopic individuals in contemporary science. Drug, regimen etc which are wholesome to others may become unwholesome to the individuals with atma asatmyata.

The etiological factors such as exposure to dust, smoke, seasonal changes, mist, intake of cold water, keeping awake at night etc may not cause symptoms in all individuals but few who are atopic or sensitized will develop symptoms of vataja pratishyaya as there will be interaction between the environmental factors and individual susceptibility. Hence diseases like vataja pratishyaya are influenced by genetic predisposition and environmental factors. Though all the individuals do not respond to such environmental factors in 20% of the population these non-infectious, harmless antigens induce an abnormal immunological response thus acting as triggering factors and play an important role in development of the disease.

Susruta has given more emphasis to the etiological factors causing vataja pratishyaya. The etiological factors are two-fold according to Sushruta; the sadyojanaka (immediate) and kalantarajanaka (delayed) i.e. the etiological factors either directly cause the symptoms after exposure or it will cause vitiation of dosha and dushya over a period of time or then causes the disease. The causative factors such as exposure to dust and smoke are the aetiological factors of sadyojanaka variety in which the symptoms occur immediately after exposure to these without expecting the chayadi stages to occur. Thus, these factors act as triggering factors in the manifestation of symptoms whereas in kalantarajanaka variety the common vata aggravating factors cause vitiation of vata which undergo the chaya etc stages of kriyakala to cause the disease. The manifestation of symptoms is delayed in this form of aetiology. Hence sadyojanaka nidana is strong or powerful enough to cause the disease immediately on contact without depending on the various stages of kriyakala. There is clear evidence to support this fact that the specific features of the etiological factors, dosha dhatu determine the health or disease; i.e. when these three factors do not support each other or when they are weak, then the manifestation of diseases is delayed and if the factors are favourable to each other the disease manifest immediately. This also evidences that the prevention or manifestation of a disease depends on the power of resistance to such diseases in the body. Hence in an individual with atma asatmyata there is sudden or delayed clinical expression of allergic rhinitis.

Moreover, intake of drugs or food having contradictory properties cause vitiation of dosha. The drugs and diets opposite in nature with place, time, habit, state of health, rules of eating etc are considered as not conducive to health. Intake of cold and dry substance in winter or intake of sweet and cold substance by a person habituated to take pungent and hot things are few examples for such contradiction. As this vitiated dosha do not eliminate from the body gradually cause diseases like pratishyaya. All individuals do not develop nasal allergy when exposed to dust, pollen. But people who have atma astmyata and satmya viruddhata to dust or pollen develop symptoms. This shows that

vyadhikshamatwa and bala of a person varies because of satmya asatmyata and satmya viruddha. Vataja pratishyaya is a condition with complex etiological factors involving both atma asatmyata and satmya viruddhata. The genetic predisposition with the environmental factors plays a major role in the manifestation of the disease.

CONCLUSION

Vyadhi kshamatwa is fundamental to maintain the healthy status of an individual. Atma asatmyata and satmya viruddha are responsible for variation in vyadhikshamatwa and hence are the key factors for the manifestation of vataja pratishyaya/allergic rhinitis.

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