



A REVIEW ON VYADHIKSHAMATVA (~IMMUNITY) W.S.R. TO RASAYANA AND LEHANA

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ABSTRACT

The immune system advanced as defense system to protect humans from invading microorganisms. The ancient system of medicine i.e. Ayurveda not only deals with treating the diseases but also aims towards prevention of the diseases. *Vyadhikshamatva* is described in *Ayurveda* and this concept is opined as equivalent to immunity. The rasayan therapy enhance the qualities of Rasa, enriches it with nutrients so one can attain longevity, memory intelligence, youthfulness. Intake of Rasayana is helpful in increasing the immunity of the person and to keep him away from the disease. Lehana means the act of licking or lapping up with the tongue. It is opined to be a preventive traditional measure against numerous infections. Hence, for attaining good *Vyadhikshamatva*, we should use various regimens such as Rasayana and Lehana for prevention of diseases by boosting immunity through it.

KEYWORDS: *Vyadhikshamatva* is described in *Ayurveda* and this concept is opined as equivalent to immunity.

INTRODUCTION

Vyadhikshamatva - The word *Vyadhikshamatva* is made up of two words; *Vyadhi* (disease) and *Kshamatva* (suppress or overcome). According to *Ayurveda*, *Vyadhi* is conditions which come into existence as consequence of non-equilibrium between *Doshas* (i.e. vata, pitta & kapha), *Dhatu*s (tissues systems) and *Malas* (excretory products of body). *Vyadhikshamatva* means the factor which limits the pathogenesis and opposes the strength of disease.^[1] *Vyadhikshamatva* may include or correlated with innate and adaptive components. The innate immunity is the first line of defence without antigenic specificity and can be compared with the *Sahaja Bala* of a person which is gained by birth. The factors enhancing the *Sahaja Bala* can be also brought under the same umbrella. The second type of immunity is the adaptive immunity, which is characterised by antigenic specificity. The adaptive immunity can be compared with the *Kalaja Bala* and *Yuktikrita Bala*. Chakrapani Datta, while commenting on *Charaka Samhita*, gave his view on the term *Vyadhikshamatva* and explained the term in two divisions,^[2]

- **Vyadhi-balavirodhitvam:** It is the capacity to withstand the strength of the diseases.
- **Vyadhi-utpadakapratibandhakatva:** The resisting power of the body competent enough to prevent the

occurrence and re-occurrence of the disease.

Present day scholars of *Ayurveda* opine that *Vyadhikshamatva* can be correlated with immunity. In Contemporary science the word 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 (*Shembulingam*). It includes both specific and nonspecific components. The nonspecific components eliminate a wide range of pathogens irrespective of their antigenic make-up whereas other components of the immune system adapt themselves to each new disease encountered and generate pathogen-specific immunity.^[3]

An immune system may contain innate and adaptive components. The innate system comprises of primitive bone marrow cells that are programmed to recognize foreign substances and to react whereas the adaptive system is composed of more advanced lymphatic cells that are programmed to recognize self-substances and not to react. These two components of the immune system create a dynamic biological environment where "health" can be seen as a physical state where the self is immunologically spared, and foreign substance is inflammatorily and immunologically eliminated. "Disease" arises when the foreign substance is not

eliminated and self is not spared.^[4]

Rasayana and Lehana as a Measures of enhancing Vyadhikshamatva (~immunity) Rasayana (Rejuvenation therapy)

According to World Health Organization more than 75% of the population relies on herbs used as traditional remedies for primary health-care.^[5] Medicinal herbs are a potential source of therapeutic aids and have gained significant importance in the health-care system in diseased conditions and to maintain proper health.^[6] Indian herbal industry have explored Ayurvedic herbs, which are now designed into numerous herbal formulations and have entered the international pharmacopeia through the study of ethnopharmacology and traditional medicine.^[7]

Ayurvedic system of medicine not only deals with treating the diseases but also aims at prevention.^[8] Rasayana therapy is one of eight major specialties of Ayurveda. Rasayana means the way for attaining excellence in all body tissue through some special measures and medicines.^[9] The word Rasayana is comprises of two word i.e. Rasa and Ayana which means Transportation of Ras (Nutrition) in the whole body. Rasayana refers to nutrition, natural resistance and geriatrics. Apparently, Rasayana means an improved state of nourishment, which in turn upholds increased immunity and youthfulness. Rasayana can be a drug, diet or even a life style and conduct i.e., Acar. The Rasayanas are supposed to strengthen Oja and Bala i.e., vitality and biostrength with natural resistance against aging and disease. The concepts of immunity and

immunomodulation are widely explored and used in Ayurveda, particularly in the form of Rasayana therapy.^[10]

On other hand Vyadhi-ksamatwa (natural resistance) is not of the same order constitutions i.e., it varies with individuals. It also depends upon nutritional, environmental and individual factors – both physical and mental. The Vyadhikshamatwa or Bala is stated to be of three types: (1) Sahaja Bala – It is genetic and inborn resistance to disease, which exists since birth. It is said to increase with the growth of tissues and does not depend upon any other cause (Chakrapani Ca.Su. 11/36). (2) Kalaja Bala - This type of immunity is said to be influenced by seasonal traits and the age of the person. (3) Yuktikrit Bala – This type of Sarira Bala refers to modulation of body's resistance against diseases by resort to appropriate Ojovardhak diet, physical exercise, rest, restorative and Rasayana, therapies in keeping with seasonal needs.^[11]

1. Contemporary understanding of Rasayana - Intake of Rasayana is helpful to increase the immunity of the person so as to keep him away from the diseases. The possible mechanisms by which action of Rasayana can be interpreted with modern aspects are;

- Nutritive function
- Immunomodulatory action
- Antioxidant action
- Anti-aging effect etc.

In recent years numerous researches have been done to explore Ayurvedic treasure for benefit of common people to improve health by using different Ayurvedic drugs. Some examples are.

Rasayan Dravya	Pharmacological action	Reference ^[12,13,14,15]
Tinospora cordifolia Willd.	Macrophage activation property	Nair PK et al 2006
Withania somnifera Dunal, Tinospora cordifolia Willd. and Asparagus racemosus Willd.	Immunoprotection during cancer chemotherapy	Diwanay S et al. 2004
Tinospora cordifolia Willd.	Immunopotentiating property	Keppel et. al. 1997
Triphala (combination of Terminalia chebula Retz, Terminalia bellerica Roxb. and Emblica officinalis Gaertn)	Antioxidant activity	Naik GH et al. 2003

Lehana

The term Lehana means the act of licking or lapping up with the tongue. lehana generally advised for paediatric use as they are more susceptible to infections. There are so many traditional measures available to combat it and protect from the hostile environment in which drug is mixed with honey or Ghrita are given. The process is called Lehana. This is the most accepted mode of the drug administration to child. Lehana is helpful for the strength, intelligence and ultimately improve the immunity.^[16]

Importance of Lehana

- To enhances growth & development by providing sufficient nutrition.

- Promote health, complexion and strength.
- Protect from various infections along with improving intellect and speech (delayed milestone).

Lehana formulations according to different Acharyas :- Acharya Kashyapa^[17]

- Svaran Prasana
- Samvardhan ghrit
- Brahmi ghrita

Acharya Charaka

- Panchagavya ghrita^[18]
- Brahmi ghrita^[19]

- Kalyanaka ghrita^[20]

Acharya Sushruta^[21]

Sushruta has mentioned 4 recipes (containing gold) which provide general immunity, body resistance, helpful in growth and development and enhancing the intelligence.

These are:

- Svarna bhasm with Kustha (*Saussurea lappa* C.B. Clarke), Vacha (*Acorus calamus* Linn), Madhu (honey) & ghee.
- Svarna bhasm with paste of Brahmi (*Bacopa monnieri* Linn), Sankhapuspi (*Convolvulus pluricaulis* Chois.), with honey & ghee.
- Svarna bhasm, Arkpushpi (*Holostemma annularium* Roxb.), Vacha (*Acorus calamus* Linn), honey & ghee.
- Svarna bhasm, Khaidarya (*Murraya koenigii* Linn), Sweta Durva (*Cynodon dactylon* Linn.) ghee.

Acharya Vagbhata^[22]

- Ashtanga ghrita
- Sarshvata ghrita
- Vachadi ghrita

DISCUSSION

Vyadhikshamatva is defined as the resistance to diseases or immunity against diseases. The concept of Vyadhikshamatva is related with Kapha, Bala, Agni and Oja. Rasayana is a specialized type of treatment influencing the fundamental aspect of the body i.e. Dhatu, Agni, Strotasa. Rasayana is made up of rasa and ayana, rasa primarily means the essential seven vital tissues- rasa, rakta, mamsa, meda, asthi, majja and shukra. Aayana means the channel for the same. So, the intake of rasayana helps in bringing proper growth and improvement of dhatus, which ultimately increases oja. Thus there is regeneration of cells and body tissues leading to increased immunity. Rasayana can act as immunomodulator, by strengthening the immunity.

Rasayana also acts as antioxidants which can prevent many diseases. Lehana is also helpful for the strength, intelligence and ultimately improve the immunity.

CONCLUSION

Rasayana therapy helps in producing an amazing final product of Dhatu and lastly it converts into Oja, ultimately raises the level of Oja and similarly increase in immunity. Many researches proved immunomodulatory effect of drugs which are used in Rasayana therapy. Rasayana are the health promoting agents which produce resistance against disease both physically and mentally. Medhya Rasayana (Nootropics drugs) is life-promoting, disease alleviating, strength promoting and intellect-promoting. Lehana is also helpful in improving the immunity. Hence, for attaining

good Vyadhikshamatva, we should use various regimens such as Rasayana and Lehana for prevention of diseases by boosting immunity through it. Such attempts might bring about much needed integration of traditional Indian Ayurveda and modern scientific medicine and help in the development of a holistic approach towards human health.

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