

Oja ayurvedic concept- A review

Dr Yogita Thite *

Assistant professor, In Department of Rognidan and vikruti Vigyan, Swami raghvendracharya Tridandi Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Karjara, Bihar.

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a integral system of natural health care. The objective of Ayurveda is to maintain the health in a healthy individual and to cure the illness. Along with the Siddhant of Tridosha, Panchmahabhuta a unique concept of Ojas has been explained by former system of medicine. Ojas is the element in the body which gives power, vigor, vitality, improves immunity power and take care of wellbeing of body. It is present throughout the body like ghee exists in the milk or honey exists in the flower. The supreme essence of all Sapta dhatus from Rasa to Sukra is known as Ojas, on which the strength of the body depends. Which is identical with "Vital power." [1] The most important thing in relation to health and disease is immunity of the body Vyadhikshamatva (Immunity) is described in Ayurveda and this concept is considered equivalent to immunity. The word immunity means the state of protection from infectious disease.

KEYWORDS: Ojas, Immunity, Dhatu, shukr, ojakshy

I. INTRODUCTION

The extract of Sapta Dhatus (seven bodily tissues as from Rasa to Shukra Dhatu), i.e. Rasa (plasma and lymph), Rakta (blood cells), Mamsa (connective and muscular tissue), Meda (body fats e.g. adipose tissue), Asthi (bones), Majja (bone marrow) & Shukra (semen) is called Oja and it is the seat for strength, hence called Bala. Ojas is Sara (essence) of all dhatus located in the heart, it pervades all over body and control the working of the body. It is viscous, Snigdha (unctuous), Somatmaka (preponderant in watery principal), clear (transparent) and Raktamishat Spitkam (slight reddish yellow in color). By its loss (destruction, absence) death will occur and by its presence the body (and life) sure to survive. Oja is the reason for different condition and activities related with the body. This Ojas or strength-giving principle serves to impart a firm integrity to the flesh (and the muscles), Sarv Cheshta Aprtighata exercises unbounded control over all acts of vitality, Savar Varn Prsado improves the voice and complexion, and (helps both the external (operative) and the internal (intellectual) sense organs, in duly performing their natural functions. [2] Sleshma in

normal state considered as Bala and Oja while in abnormal state it is Mala (waste) and Papma (diseases). Function of normal Kapha is like that of Ojas. Kapha in normal state provides compactness, stability, heaviness, virility, immunity, resistance, courage and gracelessness.

1. **Sahaja Bala (innate immunity)**- Constitutional strength which exists in the mind and body from birth.
2. **Kalaja Bala (acquired immunity)** -Time-based strength is the one which is based on division of seasons and age of the person. In Adana kala (late winter, spring and summers) Bala of individual gradually decreases and in Visarga kala (rainy seasons, autumn and winter) it gradually increases. Bala will be Alpa (minimum) in child and old age, Uttama (maximum) in young age.
3. **Yuktikrutaja Bala (Artificial immunity)** - Acquired strength which is achieved by the combination of diet and physical activities.

FORMATION OF OJAS-

Ojas is the essence of Shukra and Artava which is called as Garbha rasa. Garbha rasa nourishes the embryo. When cardiogenesis occurs in the foetus, the ojas which is nourishing the Garbha enters the heart and then the cardiac activity begins. [3] As bees collect essence of fruits and flowers for formation of honey, that way the essence of all Dhatus comprises Ojas. [4]

NOURISHMENT OF OJAS –

After digestion of food, Prasada (essence) and the Kitta (waste) portion is formed. The Prasada Bhaag provides nutrition to Ojas along with all the Dhatus. [5]

TYPES

According to Acharya Chakrapani the Ojas is of two [6] types- Para Ojas and Aparajas.

- **Para ojas**- Place of Para ojas is Heart. It is the principle ojas. Its volume is eight drops. Para ojas helps to maintain life, thus when, there is loss or partial loss of Para ojas it would lead to death of person.
- **Apara ojas**- Apara ojas circulates all over the body and its volume is half Anjali. This Ojas if

decreased or vitiated manifest abnormalities. Ten great blood vessels connected to heart carry the ojas and pulsate all over the body. [7] Aparaj ojas confer the body with two kind of strength i.e. Physical strength and strength to resist disease.

Sthan of oja-TWO DWELLING PLACES OF OJAS
Primary location of Ojas is the heart, from where it circulates in the entire body. There are two main places where the Ojas prevails,

1. Para Ojas - Hridaya Sthana (heart) 2. Aparaj Ojas-Sarva Sharir Vyapi (all over the body). [8] Acharya Bhel has described the twelve sites of Ojas in the body i.e. Rasa, Majja, Asthi, Meda, Mamsa, Shonit, Purish, Mutra, Shleshma, Pitta, Swed, Shukla. [9] Hemadri commentary on Ashtang Haridya Sutra Sthan Doshbhediya Adhaya classified four types of ojas:

1. **Rasatmakaa ojas:** It circulates all over body along with Rasa Dhatu.
2. **Dhatu-tejorupi Ojas:** It is present in all dhatu (like tissue-macrophages, mast cells, and the WBC'S).
3. **Sukra Mala Rupi Ojas:** It provides protection to the foetus during intrauterine life (like immunoglobulin which cross the placental barrier).
4. **Jivasonita Rupi Ojas:** which specific for blood cells. If it gets malformed then it will results into hypersensitive reaction. [10]

Cardinal Sign of Ojas as per their location

1. Hridyasth Ojas: Ojas which resides in the heart is predominantly Raktamishatspitkam (yellowish reddish in colour).
2. Garbhsthaj ojas: sarpi varnam (Appearance of ojas is like ghee), Madhu rasam (taste is like honey), Lajja gandhi (smell is like laja). [11]

OPINIONS ABOUT OJAS BY DIFFERENT ACHARYAS

Astang Sangrah- Sara of Sukra dhatu , Astang Hridaya- Mala of Sukra, Sarangdhar samhita, Bhel samhita, Bhav Prakash- Updhatu of Sukra. Dalhan- Sneha of Sukra

Some controversies related to ojas Ojas - updhatu or mala of shuker?

Ojas is not an updhatu since its function is better than all dhatus, if ojas is somehow consider an updhatu of shuker, then its function would not have been better than that of shukr, but it's not so. According to acharyas the quantity of a dhatu and its mala cannot be the same, but the quantity of both the shuker and ojas is ½ anjali therefore ojas cannot be a mala of shukra.

TEN QUALITIES OF OJAS

Guru (Heavy), Sheet (cold), Mridu (soft), Shlakshan (smoothness), Bahalam, Madhur (sweet), Sthiram (stable), Prsanam (fresh), Pichilam (slimy) and Sanigdh (unctuousness) are the qualities of ojas. [12] Ojas is of Somatakam (watery nature), Sanigdh (unctuous), Shukla (pure white), Sheet (cold), Sthir (stable), Saram (fluidity) Viviktam (optimum), Mridu (soft), Mritsanam (delicate), and Pranaayatanam uttamam (the excellent seat of life forces). [13]

FUNCTIONS OF OJAS

Balen Sthir Upchit Mansta - Enhances the stability and growth of muscle.

Sarvcheshta svaprtighata – Ability to perform all activities without any hindrance.

Savar Varn Prsado –Clarity of voice and brightness of colour.

Bhayanam Abhyantranam Karnaam Karya Prtipati)- Normal functioning of the external (motor) and internal (sensory) organs.[14]

Causes of Oaj kshaya:-

Abhighata (injury), Kshyata (persistent wasting disease), Kopad (anger), Shokad (grief), Dhyan (constant thinking), Kshurma (fatigue), Kshudha (hunger),[15] Vyayam (Excessive exercise), Anashan (fasting), Chinta (anxiety), Ruksha alapaprmittaashan (dry, small quantity and measured diet), Vata, aatpa (direct exposure to wind and the sun), Bhyam (fear), Shok (grief), Rukshpannam (ununctuous drinks), Prjagar (waking up in the night), Kapha Shonit Sukra Salanam Atiparvartnam (excessive discharge of kapha, blood, semen and other waste materials), kaal (time-factor related to old age or aadaan kaal) and Bhutupghata (injury by organisms) [16] -these are causes of diminution of ojas.

SYMPTOMS OF OJOKSHAYA

When ojekshaya occurs it produces symptoms like Bibheti (fear), Durbalo Abhikshan (constant weakness), Dhyayeti (worry), Vyathitendriya (affliction of sense organ with pain), Dush chhaya (loss of complexion), Durmana (poor mental ability), Ruksha (dryness), Ksham (emaciation). [17] Commentator Dalhan on Sushruta Sutra 15/24 has explained Abhighat (injury) and Kshaya (persistent wasting disease) are the causes for ojevishramsas and symptoms are Sndhi Vishlesh (dislocation of joints), Gatranam Sadanam (Inertness of extremities), and Dosh Chayvan (displacement of doshas from their respective locations) kriya Sannirodh (impairments in function of body). When vitiated doshas mix with dushya, it causes vyapat of ojas and symptoms of

ojovyapat are Stabdha guru Gatrata (stiffness and heaviness of extremities), Vaatshofa (Odema due to vata), Varn bhedo (Discolouration of skin or change in complexion), Glani (Fatigue of sense), Tandra (Drowsiness), Nidra (Excess sleep). Shoka (sorrow) Dhyana (constant thinking) and kshaya are the cause for ojakshaya (below its normal volume) symptoms of Ojakshaya are Murcha (loss of consciousness), Mans kshaya (wasting of muscle), Moha (stupor), Parlapo (delirium), Marnam (death). [18]

PROGNOSIS RELATED TO OJAS

Even partial destruction of Para ojas is lethal. [19] Abnormalities of Apara ojas causes several kind of diseases as explained under Ojovisramsas, Ojovyapata and Ojahkshaya. Ojas vridhi lakshan Tushti pushti bal udaya: Increase Ojas is responsible for Tushti (gratification), pushti (nourishment) and bal udaya (promotes strength). [20]

Factors Influencing Immunity

There are several factors which effects immunity like: Desh jnam (Birth place), kala (time of birth), Sukha Kalayoga (favourable weather), Beej – Kshetra Gunna sampan (excellence of genetic qualities), Ahara Sampat (excellence of properties of food being consumed), Sharir sampat (excellence of physique), satmaya sampat (good ability to tolerate various factors), satva sampat (excellence of mental status), swabhaava sansidhi (favourable factors related to nature), youvanam (youthfulness), karm (exercise) and samharsha (cheerful attitude). [21]

Management of ojas kshaya

Ojas play a significant role in the maintenance of healthy life. Particularly if Apara ojas is vitiated it may causes diseases like Pandu (Anemia), Madhumeha (Diabetes) and Rajyakshma (Tuberculosis). So proper volume of ojas should be maintained by using Aahar similar to the qualities of Ojas like milk and Ghee etc. on the principle of Sarvada sarva Bhaavaanaam saamanyam vridhhi karanam. [22] Drugs explained under Rasayan chikitsa (rejuvenating treatment) and vaajikarn chikitsa (aphrodisiac treatment) should be prescribed to patients suffering from symptoms of oja kshaya. In addition to this drugs explained under Jeevani mahakashaya, hridya dravya [23] with milk as vehicle should be prescribed and also advice to adopt happily life style. Uses of Snehapana, Abhyanga, Pradeha, Parishek, Snigdha and Laghu anna helps in the management of ojas kshaya.

II. DISCUSSION

Ojas is the Bala of body and responsible for Vyadhikshamatva. Ojas is the cause and bala is its effect. Ojas is an important element when it is vitiated, it develops many pathological conditions like: The Samprapti of Pandu is dominated by pitta, the other aggravated Doshas vitiates the dhatus, which in turn lose their integrity and cause the loss of Varna, bala, Sneha and Ojas. [24] Rajyakshma occur due to blockade of Channels and weak digestive power. A person suffering with Rajyakshma is having weak digestive power. Consumed food is mostly converted into mala and little is utilised for ojas synthesis. [25] This mala provides bala to the patients of Rajyakshma 'Balam hi Tasya vidbalam'. When vata brings ojas from its place to mutrasaya it develops a condition known as Madhumeha. [26] A kind of Ojas works at the level of rasa dhatu called Rasatmakaa ojas, another kind of ojas work at dhatu level is called Dhatutejorupi ojas, other kind of ojas which provides protection to the foetus during intrauterine life is called Sukra mala rupi ojas, another kind of ojas which is specific for blood cells. If it gets malformed then it will results into hypersensitive reaction called Jivasonita rupi ojas. Another Important fact about unstable ojas, during eighth month of pregnancy, exchange of this unstable ojas occurs between mother to foetus and vice versa. If delivery occurs during eighth month of pregnancy without ojas, baby will be prone to develop the infectious disease or even death of baby may occur.[27] In many disease conditions like HIV infection, diabetes mellitus, and malnutrition, where vyadhikshamatva decreases due to the loss of ojas. In such conditions people are found to be more susceptible to various other degenerative diseases or recurrent infections. As a general rule, those who pander in an irregular routine, are deprived of sleep and exercise, and eat unwholesome food incline to suffer ill health. On the other hand, those who maintain a regular, healthy routine and take wholesome food generally maintain their health. Still, it can be perceived that some persons can overcome disease even after unwholesome food and irregular routine. It can also be noted that though some persons follow a systematic routine and eat wholesome food, they are still vulnerable to disease. These interpretations are due to added factors which end in the maintenance or obliteration of ojas, respectively. So for the hindrance of disease ones should maintain Ojas.

III. CONCLUSION

In Ayurvedic literature the word like bala, prakrit kapha are used as synonyms of Ojas. The Ojas

is the essence of all dhatus, which is responsible for the biological strength, vitality and immunity in the body. Our physical, mental and spiritual strength is dependent on ojas. Ojas remains present throughout the whole body. Diminution in its natural quantity leads to the gradual emaciation of organism and more susceptible to infectious agent. So to remain healthy ones should follow ojavardhaka aahara and vihar as it protect us from many diseases and also maintain our health. Vyadhikshamatva depends upon prakrit dosha, sam dhatu, sam agni (standard digested power), or the equilibrium state of all other physiological parameters. Ojas is final and excellence product of the Dhatu and Vyadhikshamatva depends on it. Production of excellence of Dhatu depends on the Hita and Ahita Ahara and Agni. Rasayana remedy helps to yield excellence Dhatu and nourishes Ojas. Increase in Oja increases immunity (Bala). Many researches proved immunomodulatory effect of drugs which are used in Rasayana therapy. Lehana will be also co-operative in the improve immunity. Hence, for achieving good ojas (Vyadhikshamatva-bala,immunity), we should use several regimens and follow conducts as discussed.

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