



A CRITICAL REVIEW OF OJAS IN THE CONTEXT OF AYURVEDA & MODERN SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the science of life and its chief aim is to preserve healthy status of healthy living being, i.e., prevention of disease and treatment of disease. To accomplish these purposes, Ayurveda has mentioned various fundamental principle in reference of Sharir Rachna, Sharir kriya and Chikitsa. The resistance power and immunity together are manifested by the Ojas component which is present throughout the body i.e., Sarbasharirvyapi. Oja is the essence of all the Dhatus and is responsible to protect the body. In different classical Ayurvedic texts Oja has been described elaborately with its type, site, quantity, function, and derangement etiology. Various researchers based on their ideas have given its modern parlance with immunity and stem cells etc. 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 Saptadhatu from Rasa to Sukra is known as Ojas, on which the strength of the body depends. Which is identical with "Vital power." Ojas is likened to Bala, providing physical, mental, and immunological resistance against ailments. Vyadhikshamatva, the body's capacity to ward off illness, parallels the contemporary concept of immunity in science. Ojas, as a vital force, ensures the body's survival and alignment of various states when present. It serves as the cornerstone for the body's resilience against diseases. Vyadhikshamatva, akin to modern immunity, safeguards against harmful infections. The qualitative Ojas initiate the contentment, nourishment of the body and increase strength in terms of physical, mental, immunological of the body. Various authors have mentioned the concept of Ojas in their way but it is a bit difficult to define Ojas as per modern. Therefore, this review article attempts to create a novel concept of Ojas & their relation with amino acids, which is understandable in a scientific way and its overall effects on the human body which will be helpful for scholars in the treatment of diseases and advising precautions.

KEY WORDS: Ojas, Immunity, Sara of Sapt Dhatu, Vyadhikshamatva

INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of Ayurveda, the science of life, is to preserve a state of health for living things through disease prevention and treatment. Ayurveda has stated a number of key principles in relation to Sharir Rachna, Sharir Kriya, Chikitsa, etc. to achieve these goals. The ultimate and superior form of Sapt Dhatu is Ojas. Like Sapt Dhatu, Ahara Rasa provides it with food. It is explained as Updhatu by certain experts. However, since Ojas does not provide nourishment to the body, it cannot be described by Dhatu. Ojas is the final and excellent essence of sapt dhatu. Similar to sapt dhatu it gets nourishment by ahara rasa. Some scholars explain it as updhatu. But as we know, ojas does not nourish the body, so cannot be explained under dhatu. Dissimilar to upadhatu, it circulates all over the body through mahadhamnis so cannot be explained under upadhatu.

Although it is explained as essence of sapt dhatu, but due to its prana dharak Karma, cannot be explained as dhatu.^[1] 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, Sarva 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.

Types of Ojas

TYPES According to Acharya Chakrapani the Ojas is of two.^[3]

Para Ojas Para ojas Dwelling 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.

Apar Ojas Apar ojas Apar 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.^[4] Apar ojas confer the body with two kind of strength i.e. Physical strength and strength to resist disease.

Two dwelling places of ojas

Table 1: Quality of Ojas.

Guna	Substance	Abundance
Snigdha (unctuousness)	Immunoglobulin, Plasma protein, Mast cells, B lymphocyte, Lymphocyte, Lysozyme	T Plasma whole body, tears, saliva, intestinal secretion. Semen etc. Skin, lungs, digestive tract, mouth, conjunctiva, and nose. Reticulo-endothelial cells, lymph nodes, and glands, GIT, respiratory, genitourinary system, tears, brain.
Madhur (sweet)	Glucose, glycogen & lipid	Whole-body
Sthira	Integral protein, fat, and carbohydrate in a cell.	Whole-body
Mridu (soft); Mritsna (slimy)	Plasma protein and lipid	Plasma
Guru	Plasma protein	Plasma
Sheeta (cold)	Liquid of plasma	Plasma
Shukla (Clear white)	Plasma, WBCs, and cytoplasmic granules	Whole-body
Sara (Capacity of flowing and permeating through)	All liquid parts of the body, neutrophils, lymphocyte, monocyte, and macrophages, aneroid movement	Whole-body, in tissues
Viviktam (foremost in action, nutrition in best quality)	Nutrients of plasma	Whole-body

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

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. Apar Ojas- Sarva Sharir Vyapi (all over the body).^[5] 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.^[6] Hemadri commentary on Ashtang Haridya Sutra Sthan Doshbhedhiya Adhaya classified four types of ojas: 1. Rasatmakaa ojas: It circulates all over body along with Rasa Dhatu. 2. Dhatutejorupi 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.^[7] 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).^[8]

the same, but the quantity of both the shuker and ojas is ½ anjali therefore ojas cannot be a mala of shukra.

Functions of ojas

Balen Sthir Upchit Mansta - enhance 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.

Causes of Oaj kshaya Abhighata (injury), Kshyata (disease), Kopad (persistent wasting (anger), Shokad (grief), Dhyana (constant thinking), Ksharma (fatigue), Kshudha (hunger), Vyayam (Excessive exercise), Anashan (fasting), Chinta (anxiety), Ruksha alapapmrmitaashan (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 Atiparvarnam (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 ojokshaya 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). Commentator Dalhan on Sushruta Sutra 15/24 has explained Abhighat (injury) and Kshaya (persistent)

Management of ojas kshya

Ojas play a significant role in the maintenance of healthy life. Particularly if Apar 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. 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 Jeevania mahakashaya, hridya dravya with milk as vehicle should be prescribed and also advice to adopt happily life style. Uses of Snehapan, Abhyanga, Pradeh, Parishek, Snigdha and Laghu anna helps in the management of ojas kshaya.

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. 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. This mala provides bala to the patients of Rajyakshma 'Balam hi Tasya vidbala'. When vayu brings ojas from its place to mutrasaya it develops a condition known as Madhumeha. A kind of Ojas works at the level of rasa dhatu called Rasatmakaa

ojas, another kind of ojas work at dhatu level is called Dhatejorupi 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 eight month of pregnancy without ojas, baby will be prone to develop the infectious disease or even death of baby may occur. 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.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda has given the important importance to Ojas due to its presence needed entirely for survival and performing important functions inside the body. Even though this Ojas is the spirit of all the dhatus inside the body, its creation, continuance, storage, utilization and proper circulation inside the body must be consistent and proportionate. Around 300 amino acids are available in nature. Instead, some of them appeared early, while others were added to the genetic code later. It is necessary to take them in the diet because their deficiency results in decreased formation of protein and ultimately leads to other health hazards. So, prime essential factors of the body appropriately can be correlated with protein (amino acids) in terms of Ojas whereas non-essential amino acids in terms of para Ojas and essential amino acids in terms of Aparauja. Therefore, the function of Ojas is identically implied to the function of essential and non-essential amino acids.

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