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An appraisal of Immunity with reference to Vyadhikshamatwa in Ayurved

Thote V V¹, Gautam H S², Zade LR³.

1. Associate Professor (Reader), Dept of Swasthavritta and Yoga
2. Associate Professor (Reader) Dept of Shalakyta Tantra
3. Associate Professor (Reader) Dept of Dravyagun Vignyan
M. S. Ayurved College and Hospital, Gondia (Maharashtra),India.

Abstract:

A person is called healthy or swastha , if he possesses an equilibrium state of the doshas (body humors). Immunity as is “the ability of body to recognize a threat to its own well being, and to eliminate it through body’s defence system i. e. Immune system. Acharya Chakrapani has defined Vyadhikshamatva under two main headings Vyadhi bala virodhitvama and Vyadhi utpad pratibandhakatwam. If a person with a good body build, good mental power and good Oja level is maintained in one’s body, then such a body have good immunity. Vyadhikshamatva, it is an extremely important aspect that must be understood thoroughly for successfully understanding the aspects of kriya sharir and rog nidan evum vikruti vigyan.

Keywords: Vyadhikshamatva, Bala, oja, Kriya sharir, Immunity

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Vrushali Vasant Thote

M. S. Ayurved College and Hospital, Gondia (Maharashtra)

Maharashtra, India

Mobile no.: 99609 45342

Email: vrushali.thote@gmail.com



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Introduction

Immunity, it is a common word that we hear now-a-days, the general definition of Immunity as is “the ability of body to recognize a threat to its own well being, and to eliminate it through body’s defence system i. e. Immune system.” But Immunity is not a new thing to Indian Medical System. In Ayurved, a detailed explanation of immunity can be found, under the heading of “Vyadhikshamatva”.The origin of this word “Vyadhikshamatva” Is as follows- it is made up of two words- Vyadhi (Disease/Any such condition that gives pain and suffering to the body) and kshamatva(Capacity of body to bear the suffering given by the Disease) this gives a broad view and Vyadhi kshamatva as “The Capacity of body to prevent any type of infection or diseased condition/ to easily recover from any ongoing diseased condition.”

This explanation of Vyadhikshamatva comes in synchronization with the Prayojana(Purpose) of Ayurved. A person is called healthy or swastha , if he possesses an equilibrium state of the doshas (body humors), agni (bio-digestive fire), dhatus (tissues), and malas (waste products of body) associated with a pleasant state of soul, sensory organs and mind.

So, this way it can be concluded that a person with a Good Immunity build i.e. Vyadhikshamatva will not be easily affected by diseases while a person with less Vyadhikshamatva will be more prone to infections and diseases.

The Definition of Vyadhikshamatva and it’s concept.

Acharya Chakrapani has defined Vyadhikshamatva under two main headings- **Vyadhi bala virodhitvama** i.e. The defensive power of body that helps to bear and fight with the ongoing diseased condition.

Vyadhi utpad pratibandhakatwam i. e. The preventive aspect of body's defence that restricts occurrence and re-occurrence of diseases.

The capacity of every human body is different to fight from the infections & diseases, and to prevent occurrence of any such infections and diseases. Based on this, every person has a different and unique-to-one immune power. Many factors can affect this power of defense, but broadly all these factors can be classified into 2 parts- Sharir bala(physical power) and Manas Bala(Mental power). If one has good Sharir and Manas Bala then the person will be having a good Vyadhikshamatva such bodies are called as Vyadhi kshamta Sharirani while the one’s who does not have good Sharir and Manas Bala due to various reasons they do not enjoy a good Immune power and are called as Vyadhi A-kshama Sharirani. Both Sharir and Manas Bala can be good by birth or can also be developed over time, this can be with the help of Exercise, Yoga, Meditation, having balanced diet acc. to Prakriti, Agni, Desh, Kala etc. Acharya Hemadri, says in context of developing immunity that, “One can get Satmaya(Immunized) to Bhutas(Microbes/Allergens), if they slowly sensitize their body with lower doses of Bhuta at Regular Intervals. He also says that, this sensitization can be of two types-

Krutrim i. e. The immunity that is naturally adapted by getting in direct contact of causative agent. (Active Immunity)

Akrutrim i. e. The immunity that is directly provided by the external sources. (Passive Immunity)

Another important factor that affects the Vyadhikshamatva is Oja.

Concept of Oja-

Acharya Sushruta says that, Oja is the sara bhag(essence) of all the dhatus and that it leads to increase in strength of body, increases body complexion and lusture as well. Here, the increase in strength represents the increase in body's defense capability to repel and overcome from a disease. This "Oja" has been said to be the source of life as it is what provides the nutrition to the garbha(feetus) in its initial stages. Acharya Charak has explained the formation of oja in garbha and it's role in fetus development.

Oja has been said to be of two types-

1.Para Oja - The oja that is called as the source of life. It is situated in the heart and has a quantity of 8 bindu.

2.Apara Oja - The oja that is present in our systemic circulation that is responsible for providing the strength to the body for prevention against diseases, the tej(glow) and kanti(radiance) of the body is also because of it. It's Adhithana is sarva sharir(whole body) and the quantity of apara oja is ½ anjali.

Types of Vyadhikshamatva

- 1.Sahaj Vyadhikshamatva
2. Kalaj Vyadhikshamatva
- 3.Yuktikrut Vyadhikshamatva

Each part is further subdivided into two(except for Kalaj Vyadhikshamatva)-

- 1.Krutrim
2. Akrutrim

Sahaj Vyadhikshamatva- Immunity that is inherited in the fetal body from their parents in the form of genetic makeup(prakruti) . This means that if the sperm(shukra) and ovum(aartava) are genetically healthy then the offspring will be healthy and with a good immunity but if the parental sperm and ovum has any kind of genetical defect then the offspring will be having low immunity and will be more prone to diseases.

Sahaj krutrim vyadhikshamatva- Over a long period of time when a species develops resistance against a specific disorder/disease/allergen etc is called as sahaj krutrim vyadhikshamatva. Ex. – Africans being resistant to Falciparum Malaria

Sahaj Akrutrim Vyadhikshamatva- When passively some immune increasing factors are incorporated in the body by a natural process then it is called as Sahaj Akrutrim Vyadhikshamatva. Ex. – Upon Breastfeeding the child, the mother's milk contains many immune boosting factors that are known as immunoglobulins.

Kalaj Vyadhikshamatva-

Immunity that is developed in the body with reference to age, season etc. Time related factors. It is normally said that a person's immunity is strongest in young age and weakest in the old age. Similarly in context of seasons, our vyadhikshamatva is highest in Hemant and Shishir Ritu as there is increase in sharir bala in these seasons.

Yuktikrut Vyadhikshamatva-

Immunity that is developed in a body by putting in regular efforts and regular practice of what is called as healthy habits is called as Yuktikrut Vyadhikshamatva. The Regular practice of healthy habits here includes- Dincharya, Rutucharya, Vyayam, Satmaya Aahar-Vihar, discarding of Asatmaya artha, Yoga etc.

Akrutrim Yuktikrut Vyadhikshamatva-

Upon Natural exposure to a disease causing factor and body's natural response to the causative agent in an attempt to destroy it; the immunity that is developed by body is called as Akrutrim Yuktikrut Vyadhikshamatva.

Krutrim Yuktikrut Vyadhikshamatva- In this method of developing Vyadhikshamatva, the basis of vaccines can be found, as the method used by acharyas might be different, but the principle remains the same. Acharya Gananath sen, explains the practice of inoculation of live attenuated microbes. The same principle is used in today's world of modern medicine for the formation of vaccines.

Discussion:

It is very much evident by now that Immunity is very well and very elaborately explained in Ayurvedic sciences as well. The main importance of this special concept in Clinical concept is such that, if we know what is the severity of the disease then the next thing we need to know is, what is the capacity of the body of the patient to bear the pressure and severity of disease and acc. To the what can be its capability to bear the treatment and according to that the prognosis and the

treatment plan can be prepared effectively. For an example, If a person with a good body build, good mental power and good Oja level is maintained in one's body, then such a body have good immunity, we can make an assumption as that, an in a body like that even a severe disease cannot do much harm because of good immunity and a prognosis can be made that the disease is easily curable and treatment can be planned accordingly. This way one can achieve success on deeply understanding the patient's immunity level.

Conclusion:

Vyadhikshamatva, it is an extremely important aspect that must be understood thoroughly for successfully understanding the aspects of kriya sharir and rognidan evum vikruti vigyan. The knowledge of sharir bala, manas bala and oja sarata gives us a clear idea of one's vyadhibalavidodhak and vyadhiutpada pratibandhakatva power and accordingly the disease can be categorized into easily, moderate difficult or difficult to treat and can be successfully treated in time.

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