



## CONCEPT OF VYADHIKSHAMATWA (IMMUNITY) AND FACTORS INFLUENCING IMMUNITY IN VIEW OF AYURVEDA - A REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

Today's era dealing with burden of diseases related to immunology. Immunodeficiency, hypersensitivity and autoimmunity are the patho-physiologies tend to various communicable and non-communicable diseases. Immunological aspect plays an important role in prevention as well as cure of disease. Physical status and psychology of an individual reflect immunity to greater extent. Life style in present era including modified dietetic and behavioral regimen also give rise to neuro-endocrinal diseases which are complex to treat and may complicate in fatal conditions. So better to improve immunity and health. In *Ayurveda*, immunity is considered as *Bala* (strength) of an individual which is dependent on so many factors. *Acharyas* quoted that, *Bala* (strength) and health is excellence of *Dosha* (3 bodily elemental humours), *Dhatu* (tissues), *Mala* (waste), *Oja* and *Agni* (fire). It is also said as *Vyadhikshamatwa*. In this review article, an emphasis is given on the establishment of inter-relationship between *Bala*, *Vyadhikshamatwa*, *Kapha*, *Oja* along with their role as immunological factors and influencing elements.

**KEYWORDS:** *Bala*, *Immunity*, *Kapha*, *Oja*, *Vyadhikshamatwa*.

### INTRODUCTION

*Ayurveda* is traditional medicine with long history of use in health for maintenance and in prevention and treatment of disease.<sup>[1]</sup> *Acharyas* focused on 'Preventive aspect' much more for being healthy forever. *Ayurveda* defined health as excellence of *Dosha* (3 bodily elemental humours), *Dhatu* (tissues), *Mala* (waste), *Agni* (fire) and *Indriya* (sensory and motor organs). All these factors comprise of *Panchabhutas* (5 elements).<sup>[2]</sup> As per World Health Organization health is 'state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, not merely absence of disease or infirmity. Today's era with modified life-style, stresses, variable dietetic regimen leading to loss of health. Thus, change in homeostasis causes diseases. There is Global burden of non-communicable diseases is about 60% whereas of communicable is 28%. Amongst non-communicable diseases, prevalence of immunological disorders going on increasing. Immunological pathophysiology being complicated difficult to treat, so better to prevent. For the purpose one has to maintain or improve immune system leading to fight off invader. Cell mediated immunity and antibody mediated immunity responsible to prevent and cure diseases. Stress, poor diet, medication, extreme ages (childhood and elder) can weaken the functioning of immune system. *Ayurveda* mentioned immunity as

*vyadhikshamatwa* which differ in every individual. *Swasthya* (health) is related with *Vyadhikshamatwa* and various bodily elements (*Dosha*, *Dhatu* etc). *Vyadhikshamatwa* (immunity) is major contributing factor of *Swasthya* and is altered with the action of *Bala*, *Oja*, *Dhatu*, *dosha* and *Agni*. Strong inter-relationship of all these factors is studied in this article.

### DISCUSSION

Today's life style choices have more impact on physical health, mental health and longevity. Environmental, social and cultural factors are considered as determinants of health. Better health reflects happiness and wellbeing. *Ayurveda* is discipline of *Upaveda* in *Vedic* tradition providing knowledge of life and longevity. Imbalance among the bodily and mental *Doshas* is major etiologic component of disease.<sup>[3]</sup> One can acquire positive health with proper immunity. Immunity prevents non-communicable as well as communicable diseases as our immune system designed to keep us healthy.

According to *Ayurveda* various factors responsible for immunity i.e. *Vyadhikshamatwa*. *Vyadhikshamatwa* word derived from *Vyadhi* and *Kshamatwa* which means ability or power to destroy abnormality. *Acharya Chakrapani* classified *Vyadhikshamatwa* into 2

categories 'vyadhivirodhini' means ability to destroy disease and 'Vyadhiutpad pratibandhakatwa' which is responsible for prevention.<sup>[4]</sup> Vyadhikshamatwa differ from person to person<sup>[5]</sup> as *Pravar* (high level), *Madhya* (moderate) and *Awar* (low). That's why many people with appropriate routine also develop disease and some with improper things develop hardly any disease. The person too obese, too lean, having non compact muscles, blood and weak bones, indulged in unsuitable food, undernourished and having weak mind are having low level *Vyadhikshamatwa* i.e. are not able to restrict disease.<sup>[6]</sup> Contrary to them are resistant to diseases. Individual with proportionate musculature, compactness of body, healthy sense organs, who can withstand hunger-thirst, tolerate hot and cold considered to be *Vyadhisaha* (able to resist).<sup>[7]</sup>

Modern science describes bodily defense mechanism in 2 forms i.e. Innate and Acquired. Innate defense mechanism is immediate response to antigen. Acquired is known as immunity classified in 'Cell mediated' and 'Antibody mediated'. All these defenses ward off antigen or pathogen. Lymphatic system refers as immunologic system of body. Bone marrow and thymus gland functions as primary lymphatic organs. Spleen and lymph nodes act as secondary. Lymphocytes (T, B), plasma cells, various APC (antigen presenting cells) play an important role in providing immunity.<sup>[8]</sup>

While going through various bodily mechanisms, *Aacharyas* quoted factors comprising immune system. *Tridosha*, *Dhatusarata*, *Agni*, *Bala*, *Oja* are major components of *Vyadhikshamatwa*. *Bala* is predominant determining factor categorized in *Sahaj bala* (constitutional strength), *kalaj bala* (time affected) and *Yuktikrut bala* (acquired strength).<sup>[9]</sup> *Desh* (place), *Kala* (time, duration), *Aaharsampat* (dietetic regimen), *Bijaguna sampat* (genetic factor), *Sharir sampat* (physical status), *Satmyasampat*, *Swabhavasansidhi* (natural) etc. affect *Bala* of an individual and *Vyadhikshamatwa*.

Excellence of *Dosha* (specially *Kapha Dosha*) provide *Vyadhikshamatwa*. Vitiated state of *Kapha* susceptible to pathophysiology.<sup>[10]</sup> All pathogenesis occurs due to low power of *Agni* (fire).<sup>[11]</sup> If *Agni* is impaired with imbalance of *Tridosha*, metabolic processes deteriorate lowering natural resistance and immune responses. Abnormal synthesis of *Aahar-rasa* (nutrients) and *Dhatus* (tissues) occur due to impaired *agni*. Excellence of *dhatu* is *dhatusarata*<sup>[12]</sup> thus affected. *Dhatusarata* and *Agni* thus considered to be determinants of *Vyadhikshamatwa*.

*Ayurveda* thoroughly describes several procedures at different stages of life which are helpful to build up immunity. *Garbha samskara* (before birth), *balasanskara* and *lehana* (after birth and in childhood) enhance immunity. As *Aacharyas* assigns prime importance to prevention rather than curing disease,

adaptation of *Ayurvedic* therapies such as *Dinacharya* (daily regimen), *Rituchrya* (seasonal regimen) *Panchakarma*, *Rasayana* (rejuvenating therapy) boost immunity to great extent. All these therapies are part of life style mentioned by *Ayurveda*.

## CONCLUSION

According to *Ayurveda*, immunity is explained in terms of *Vyadhikshamatwa*. *Bala* (strength) is considered to be prime determinant of immunity and *Yuktikrut bala* can be achieved with maintenance of influencing factors such as *Agni*, *Dhatusarata*. *Aahar-rasa* build up strength which is dependent on *agni* which in turn varies with *prakruti* (personality) of an individual. Proper *Aahar-rasa* give rise to excellence of *Dhatus* i.e. *Dhatusarata* and *Oja*. *Kapha dosha* directly affect *Bala*. *Bala Agni*, *Kapha*, *Oja*, *Dhatusarata* are interdependent immunity enhancing factors. Thus *Vyadhikshamatwa* (immunity) is multi-factorial. Lifestyle according to *Ayurveda* including *Rasayana* therapy act at all these levels (*Dhatu*, *Agni* etc) may be beneficial to acquire *Yuktikrut bala* and *Vyadhikshamatwa* as well.

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