

CONCEPT OF VYADHIKSHAMATVA IN THE PATHOGENESIS OF AUTOIMMUNE DISORDERS

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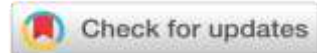
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ABSTRACT

The ultimate objective of *Ayurveda* is to attain *Dhatu-Samya*, which signifies the equilibrium of components that sustain and nurture the body's constituents. If this state of balance is disrupted for any reason, it is referred to as *Vyadhi*. One of the paramount elements in achieving this objective is *Vyadhikshamatva*, which can be understood as the body's capacity to resist diseases or prevent their development. In modern terms, we commonly refer to this as immunity. On the one hand, the immune system plays a vital role in our survival, as it defends against infectious pathogens and on the other hand, it is capable of causing tissue damage and disease in response to environmental stressors (such as allergies) or by mounting attacks on one's tissues and cells (autoimmunity). *Ayurveda* does not have a description of autoimmune illnesses, but we may explain this phenomenon by the disruption of *Agni*, which governs all metabolic and anabolic functions in our bodies. *Ama*, *Amavisha*, or other non-homologous elements that arise from impaired *Agni* can be viewed as the beginning phase in the development of autoimmune diseases.

Keywords: *Vyadhi*, *Vyadhikshamatva*, *Agni*, *Ama*, *Oja*, *Bala*, Autoimmunity

INTRODUCTION

Vyadhi-Kshamatva refers to the body's immune system or its resistance to illness. Acharya Chakrapani divides this concept into two parts¹:

- a) *Vyadhi-Balvirodhittvam* refers to the body's ability to reduce the strength or intensity of the occurring *Vyadhi* (disease) and the likelihood of future complications.
- b) *VyadhiUtpadpratibandhkatvam* is the ability of our body to detect the source of disease and maintain overall health.

Oja permeates our whole body, and the absence or lack of this *Oja* can lead to the depletion of the body. It is the excellent product of *Sapta-Dhatu*, which is also called *Bala*.² *Oja* is the functional unit of *Bala*. This *Bala* helps nourish the body's elements, enabling a person to carry out their daily routine. There are three types of *Balas*: *Sahaja*, *Kalaja*, and *Yuktikrita*.³ *SahajaBala* is present by birth in every individual, called *Prakrita* and can be correlated with innate immunity. Acharya Charaka considered *Shleshma* a *Bala*, a form of *Sahaja Bala*. *Kalajabala* varies according to *Vaya*, *Kala* and *Ritu*. In weak patients, Rasayan, Vajikarana Aushadha and good dietary habits attain *Yuktikrita Bala*. *Kalaja* and *Yuktikrita Bala* can be correlated with acquired immunity. Some *Ayurvedic* texts highlight the concept of infectious diseases, but there is no reference to developing acquired immunity against those.⁴ In *Vyadhibala-Virodhikativam* and *Vyadhiutpad-Pratibandhkatvam*, the key factors are *Bala Oja*, respectively. If these are hampered in the primary stage, our body can become diseased due to the derangement of its constituents. In *Ayurveda*, the derangement of immunity is defined in three stages: *Ojovibhransa*, *Ojovpayada*, and *Ojokshaya*.⁵ *Ojovpayada* and *Ojovibhransa* are the deformities of *Oja*, whereas *Ojokshaya* is directly associated with the depletion of *Oja* or weak immunological function. *Ojovisransa* implies *Oja's* escape from the body or *srotas*, whereas *Ojovyapad* denotes changes in *Oja's* attributes at the *Gunatmaka* level (qualitative), while its amount remains constant. This disorder prevents *Oja* from functioning normally, and even one contributing factor can result in an illness. Because the *guna* of *Oja* is opposed

to the *guna* of *Visha*, as the quality of *Oja'sguna* decreases, the property of *Visha* increases in the body. *Oja's vaikritaguna* could not withstand the effects of the *Vishajaguna*, which led to an imbalance in the *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala*, and its constituent parts. Increased *Visha* causes the creation of different hazardous compounds such as *Ama*, *AmaVisha*, *SamaDhatu*, and so on. In other words, our body's own *Vyadhikshamatva* property is to blame for the development of sickness. This is the initiation of an autoimmune response. The modern whole immune system is based on the response of immune cells against foreign material or antigen or the reaction between antigen –antibodies, resulting in cell damage or cell dysfunction. Tolerance to self-antigens is crucial for immune system function. Autoimmune diseases result from the breakdown of this tolerance. Factors contributing to autoimmunity include:

1. Inheritance of Susceptibility Genes: Genetic components, particularly HLA genes, play a role in autoimmune diseases. Examples include Type 1 diabetes, Rheumatoid arthritis, Multiple sclerosis, SLE, and Ankylosing spondylitis.
2. Role of Infections and Environmental Factors: Infections and tissue injury can expose self-antigens, activating immune cells. Infections may trigger autoimmune reactions by promoting self-reactive lymphocyte activation or mimicking self-antigens.
3. Other Factors -Ultraviolet rays and smoking can induce exposure or modification of self-antigens. The gut and skin microbiome influence autoimmunity development.
4. Gender Bias - Autoimmune diseases are more common in women, possibly influenced by hormones and X chromosome genes.

Autoimmune diseases are usually chronic and progressive, and the nature of the dominant immune response determines the type of tissue injury.⁶

MATERIAL & METHODS

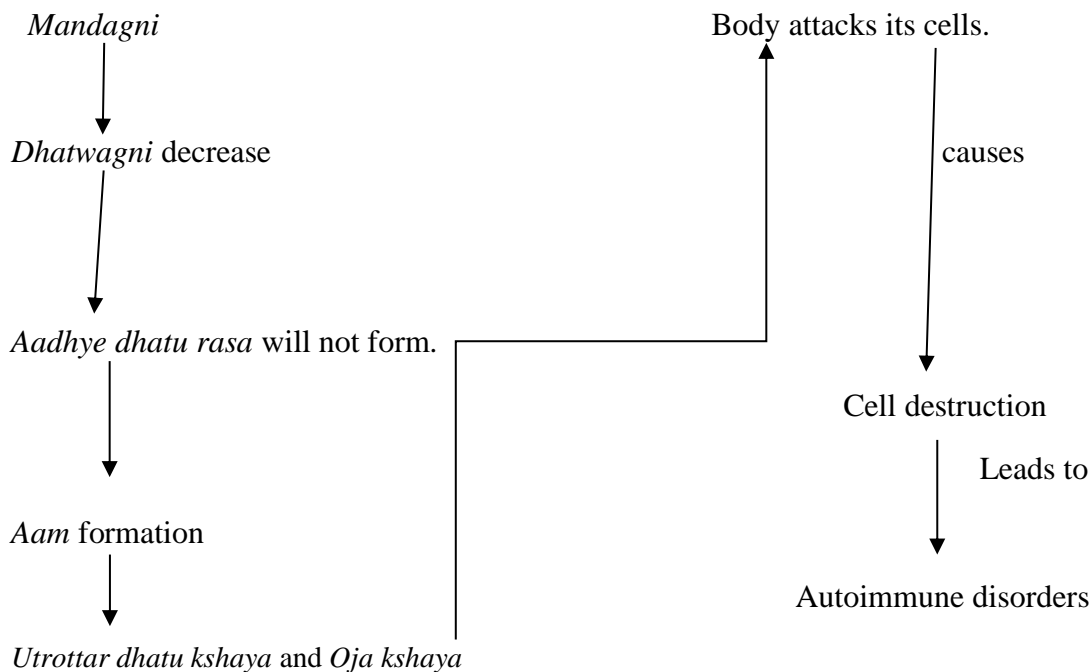
As a source, various classical *Ayurvedic* texts, *Charak Samhita*, *Sushrut Samhita*, etc. and peer-reviewed research journals have been studied.

DISCUSSION

As we know, several factors, such as gene susceptibility, infection, tissue damage, exposure to UV rays, smoking and gender, all play vital roles in the development of an autoimmune reaction. These elements are linked to an unhealthy lifestyle (*Mithya Aahara-Vihara*), the primary idea of disease genesis in *Ayurveda*. As we know, Agni is responsible for Ayu, Varna, bala and Oja in our body, and *Mandagni* is the foremost cause of all diseases in *Ayurveda*.⁷ When our *Jathragni* is weak, apakva aahara rasa is formed from ingested aahara dravya; this apakva aahara rasa is called *Ama*.⁸ *Ama* is generated due to the accumulation of metabolic byproducts and waste that the body does not effectively eliminate or utilise. *Ama* is also a product of the amalgamation of excessive vitiated *Doshas* like *Visha*, formed by *kodrava*.⁹ *Aamvata* is a classic example of this.

One of *Ama*'s symptoms is *balabhramsha*, understood as dislodged immunity or a weak immune system. Let's consider *Ama* in light of modern pathology. We can correlate *Ama Visha* with elevated serum levels of antinuclear antibodies (ANA), anti-DNA, RA factor, CRP, LE cells, and circulating immune complexes.

These conditions develop due to altered immune reactivity with persistent antigenic stimulation, which may be the response to any exogenous or endogenous autoimmune factors.¹⁰ *Acharya Charaka* stated, "*Na hi sarvaniapthyanyadoshani*" not all *Apathya* vitiate *Doshas*.¹¹ The ability of each *Dosha* to cause sickness varies, and not every human body has the same *Vyadhikshamatva* property. The location of the *Dosha*, the *dasha*, the *kala*, the type of illness, and other factors influence the vitiation of *Doshas*.¹² A person who consumes unwholesome food for nutrition cannot endure *Vyadhibala* since their body's *Doshas* are already somewhat vitiated. It indirectly inhibits the *Vyadhikshamatva* capability of our body. *Pragyaparadha* is one of the causes of disease, which directly shows today's unhealthy lifestyle and is one of the significant factors in producing autoimmune disorders. A decrease in *Mandagni* and *dhatwagni* hampers the formation of *Aadhya rasa dhatu* in the body, and in the long term, it leads to *Oja kshaya*. As the *Oja* contributes to the body's defence mechanism and any *kshaya*, it ultimately negatively impacts its *Vyadhikshamatva*. All of these contribute to the pathogenesis of Autoimmune disorders.



Flow chart 1 – Role of *Vyadhikshamatva* in the Pathogenesis of Autoimmune Disorders

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda considers *Vyadhikshamatva* one of the essential factors responsible for good health and disease prevention. When this capability is hampered qualitatively, self-destruction occurs by one's immune system, called autoimmunity. The concept of Ama, Anukta vyadhi, can be correlated with autoimmunity in *Ayurveda*. *Ayurveda* aims to restore balance to the body and mind to promote overall health and well-being. Following proper *Dincharya and Ritucharya and avoiding Mithya Aaharavihara helps* lessen the chances of autoimmune conditions. Treating autoimmune reactions can be challenging when the underlying cause is unclear. *Ayurveda*, however, offers us the opportunity to understand better and address these illnesses.

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