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**“A REVIEW ARTICLE ON ROLE OF AHARA (DIET) IN
VYADHIKSHAMATVA (IMMUNITY) FROM CHARAK SAMHITA.”**

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ABSTRACT:

When diseases started blighting life, creating impediments in penance, abstinence, study, celibacy, religious observance and lifespan of mankind, the holy sages out of their compassion for creature assembled at auspicious place near Himalayas and then they gained knowledge about Ayurveda. Likewise, in recent past, the surge of COVID – 19 disturbed days to day life of humans and no satisfactory answer was found by medical system. So, the world is hopeful about Ayurveda to fight against such newly emerging infections and also to prevent against them by boosting own immunity. So, it is important to study Vyadhikshamatva from Ayurveda perspective. Acharya Chakrapani has stated that one which attenuates the manifested disease and other which prevent its occurrence comes under Vyadhikshamatva. Many factors like equilibrium of dosha, strength of body tissue, wastes in proper proportion, proper diet, lifestyle, behaviour, adequate physical and mental strength of body, Oja, Vayu in normal state, normal digestive fire, normal body channels, purified blood, purification according to season, use of immunomodulator and aphrodisiac drugs, Aptopdesha and pratipatti, daiva, purushakara contribute to build Vyadhikshamatva. Out of these, ahara plays most important role. So, the present article focusses on to study the concept of Vyadhikshamatva from Charak samhita and role of ahara in it.

KEYWORDS: Ahara, diet, Vyadhikshamatva, immunity, Charak Samhita

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Acharya Charaka has highlighted the purpose of this science as to preserve the health of healthy and to cure the disease of unhealthy. [1,2,3] This unique approach of giving prime importance to maintenance of health for prevention of disease is characteristic feature of Charak samhita. This indirectly points towards concept of *Vyadhikshamatva*. Acharya Chakrapani has defined the term *Vyadhikshamatva* in 2 divisions – *vyadhi bala virodhitvam* i.e., capacity to restrain or withstand the strength of disease i.e., strength to resist to progress of disease and *vyadhi utpad pratibandhakatvam* i.e., the resisting power of body components enough to prevent occurrence and recurrence of disease.[4] The *Vyadhikshamatva* does not get established with the use of particular drug only. However, many factors like equilibrium of *dosha*, [5-9] strength of body tissue, [10-16] wastes in proper proportion, [10,11,17] proper lifestyle, [18-27] proper behaviour, [26,27,28-35] adequate physical [36-49] and mental strength of body, [50-53] *oja*, [54-57] *Vayu* in normal state, [58-61] normal digestive fire, [62,63] normal body channels, [64-68] purified blood, [69] purification according to season, [70,71] use of immunomodulator and aphrodisiac drugs, [72-76] *Aptopdesha* and *pratipatti*, [77,78] *daiva* and *purushakara* [79,80] contribute to build *Vyadhikshamatva*. Apart from these factors Acharya Charaka has highlighted importance of proper diet in *Vyadhikshamatva*. As for the lamp to be kept enlightened it is necessary to put oil for its nourishment and to prevent it from external factors like wind likewise to maintain healthy life it is necessary to provide nourishment through *ahara* and to avoid causative factors. [81,82] Proper *ahara* maintains the equilibrium of *dosha*, *dhatu* and *mala*, for maintaining physical and mental strength of body, *oja*, normalcy of digestive fire and thus helps in

establishing *Vyadhikshamatva*. Today, the faulty dietary habits are mostly responsible for deprived immunity and raised tendency of occurrence and recurrence of disease. So, it is important to highlight the role of proper diet in *Vyadhikshamatva* which is tried through this article.

Observation and result

The term *Vyadhikshamatva* is made up of 2 words – *vyadhi* and *kshamatva*. *Vyadhi* is a condition which comes into existence as a consequence of nonequilibrium between *dosha*, *dhatu* and *mala* and the other word *kshamatva* is derived from *kshamasahane* which means to resist. Therefore, *Vyadhikshamatva* means the factors which limits the pathogenesis and opposes the strength of disease. [83] *Vyadhikshamatva*, *vikar vighatkara bhava* and *vyadhi saha* are the terms used by Acharya Charaka for immunity. Acharya Chakrapani has stated that one which attenuate the manifested disease and other which prevent manifestation of disease comes under *Vyadhikshamatva*. [4] Acharya Chakrapani has defined *vikar vighatkara bhava* as one which prevents the occurrence of disease. [84] Generally, the indulgence of causative factors leads to vitiation of *dosha* which further leads to vitiation of *dushya*, and this combination tends to accumulate at a particular place and manifest as disease. This journey of causative factor upto disease manifestation is known as *samprapti*. [85] But sometimes despite of having indulged in causative factors there occurs different combinations of *nidan*, *dosha* and *dushya* which impact the manifestation of disease due to presence of *vyadhi vighatkara bhava*. The 3 probabilities which might occur in combination of *nidan*, *dosha* and *dushya* are as follows –

1. No *anubandha* – no occurrence of disease

2. *Anubandha* after some time – late occurrence of disease
3. *Anubandha* of lesser strength – disease of lesser strength or the symptoms are not fully manifested.^[86]

Acharya Charaka has quoted that all the bodies are not capable of preventing disease. Individuals, who are excessively obese, emaciated, whose muscles, blood, bones are depleted, who are physically very weak, who are habituated to consuming unwholesome food, who take in inadequate quantities of food, and who have very weak mind cannot withstand diseases. Contrary to this, individuals having opposite qualities to the ones mentioned above are capable of resisting diseases.^[4]

• **Importance of Vyadhikshamatva**

1. Even if patient indulges in incompatible food and if the patient is having *Vyadhikshamatva*, then its adverse effects are not observed on the body. ^[18-20]
2. The occurrence and strength of disease according to *nidan*, *dosha*, *dushya* combination depends on the *Vyadhikshamatva*.^[84,86]
3. Attenuation of strength of present disease also depends on the *Vyadhikshamatva*.^[4]
4. As a small sparkle of fire flares up when it comes in contact with wind or wood and gets converted into huge flames of fire. Similarly in a weak body in which previously a disease pathology had occurred, and it has just recovered from the disease, whenever it gets chance, the disease may again relapse the body. Hence, *Vyadhikshamatva* is important to avoid recurrence of disease.^[87]

• **Role of ahara in Vyadhikshamatva**

1. Acharya Chakrapani has stated that diet in proper quantity plays prime

role in maintenance of healthy life.^[88]

2. The food taken in right quantity certainly provide strength, complexion, happiness and longevity to the person without disturbing the normalcy.^[89]
3. The vigour and complexion are promoted in a man who knows and follows seasonal dietary and lifestyle regimen. The dietary includes various types of food articles which are eatable, chewable, drinkable and lickable.^[90]
4. Intelligent person desirous of well-being in the present world (birth) and the world after death should strive his level best to follow the correct regimen of diet, code of conduct and deeds.^[91]
5. One should regularly consume shashtika rice (*Oryza sativum*), shali rice (varieties of *Oryza sativum* rice), mudga (*Vigna radiata* green gram), rock-salt, aamalaka (*Phyllanthus emblica* -Indian-gooseberry), yava (*Hordeum vulgare*-barley), rainwater, milk, ghee, flesh of *jangala* animals (arid habitat) and honey ^[92] and many such things which maintain health as well as prevent onset of disease.^[93]
6. Three supporting pillars of life are *ahara* (food), *nidra* (sleep) and observance of *bramhacharya* (celibacy/control of senses). By the wisdom of well-regulated support of these three pillars one can get body with strength, good complexion and proper growth and this continues throughout life, provided person does not get involved in regimens which are detrimental for health.^[94]
7. The diet taken at proper time is prime in maintaining health.^[95]
8. The wise and the learned believe that food and beverages that possess apt colour, smell, taste and touch, taken in the right quantity, at the right time, season and location, are

- a source of life and vitality for all living beings. This realization came through practical observation. Wholesome food (and a healthy lifestyle) is the fuel that maintains *agni* (digestion and metabolism process), invigorates the mind, promotes proper distribution of body elements, vitality, complexion, and acuity of the sense-organs. Conversely, unhealthy diet and lifestyle cause vitiation or imbalances in *dosha*, *dhatu*, and rasas, thus causing diseases.^[96]
9. Strength, health, longevity and vital breath are dependent on the state of *agni* that burns when fed by the fuel of food and drink or dwindles when deprived of them.^[97]
 10. The man whose *agni* is well tended, who feeds it duly with wholesome diet, who does daily meditation, charity and the pursuit of spiritual salvation, and who takes food and drinks that are wholesome to him, will not fall to approaching diseases except for special reasons.^[98]
 11. The disciplined man who practices wholesome diet lives for a period of 36000 nights i.e., hundred years, is blessed by good people and is free from disease.^[99]
 12. The source of life for all living beings is food and all living beings are food, and all the world seeks food. Complexion, clarity, good voice, long life, understanding, happiness, satisfaction, growth, strength and intelligence are all established in food.^[100]
 13. Different types of wholesome foods ingested in the form of eatables, drinkables, lickables and masticables stimulate the *antaragni* (digestive process) and get properly digested by respective *bhutagni* (specific digestion as per basic constituent or element). Further in due course of time food gets transformed into different *dhatu* in presence of *dhatvagni* (tissue specific digestion and metabolism) and *vata* (*vyana vayu*) by the process of *dhatvagnipaka* or metabolism, nourishes the tissues through the channels of circulation without any interruption, and produces plumpness, strength, complexion, health and longevity.^[101]
 14. Various diseases are caused due to intake of unwholesome food. So, an intelligent individual desirous of preventing such diseases should take wholesome food.^[102]
 15. The individual who follows a dietary regimen or lifestyle that brings his *dosha* and *dhatu* in state of equilibrium is said to be leading a healthy life.^[103]
 16. Observing many troublesome diseases caused by irregular dieting, the wise should diet wholesome, measured and timely food with self-restraint.^[104]
 17. The person should promote his wellbeing himself by properly examining the eight factors of dieting which determine the wholesomeness of the food.^[105]
 18. Strength and lie depends on diet.^[106]
 19. The man who uses wholesome diet and behaviour, who moves cautiously, who is unattached to sensual pleasures, who donates, observes equality, who is truthful, who is forbearing and who is devoted to venerable people becomes free from diseases.^[107]
 20. The food one consumes becomes capable of nourishing the body tissues and of promoting the *ojas* (vital essence), strength, complexion etc., only in the presence of normally functioning *agni*. In the absence of normal digestion (and metabolism), the normal body tissues such

as *rasa* cannot be formed nor nourished.^[108]

21. *Dehagni* (all the entities in the body that are responsible for digestion and metabolism) is the fundamental causative agent for longevity, normal complexion, normal strength, good health, motivation, normal growth, normal luster, normal *ojas*, normal body temperature and various other forms of *agni*.^[109]
22. Irregular intake of dietary articles, or irregular dietary habits lead to vitiation of *dosha*, causing disorders.^[110]

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of Ayurveda science can be matched with the definition of *Vyadhikshamatva*. The contribution of commentator in explaining the *leshokta* can be understood with the definition of *Vyadhikshamatva* by Acharya Chakrapani. *Vyadhikshamatva*, *vyadhisaha*, *vikar vighatkara bhava* are the terms used in Charak samhita. Prevention of occurrence and recurrence of disease and strength of disease depends on *Vyadhikshamatva*. Many factors like equilibrium of *dosha*, strength of body tissue, wastes in proper proportion, proper diet, lifestyle, behaviour, adequate physical and mental strength of body, *Oja*, *Vayu* in normal state, normal digestive fire, normal body channels, purified blood, purification according to season, use of immunomodulator and aphrodisiac drugs, *Aptopdesha* and *pratipatti*, *daiva*, *purushakara* contribute to build *Vyadhikshamatva*. Out of these, *ahara* plays most important role. The food of apt colour, smell, taste, touch, taken in right quantity, at right time, season, location, following correct regimen, properly processed by ignited digestive fire is responsible for prevention of disease, its recurrence and also attenuate the strength of disease by

maintaining equilibrium of *dosha*, *dhatu*, *mala*, promoting formation of *Ojas*, modifying physical and mental strength of body.

CONCLUSION:

The resisting power of body components enough to prevent occurrence and recurrence of disease and capable to restrain or withstand the strength and progress of disease is *Vyadhikshamatva*. It is not achieved merely with the use of single drug but is the cumulative effects of many factors like equilibrium of *dosha*, strength of body tissue, wastes in proper proportion, proper diet, lifestyle, behaviour, adequate physical and mental strength of body, *Oja*, *Vayu* in normal state, normal digestive fire, normal body channels, purified blood, purification according to season, use of immunomodulator and aphrodisiac drugs, *aptopdesha* and *pratipatti*, *daiva*, *purushakara*. The diet of proper quality, quantity, taken at right time, place, following correct regimen, properly processed by ignited digestive fire contributes majorly in *Vyadhikshamatva*. Any change in this leads to occurrence of disease. So, ayurveda physicians should guide about this topic to all the persons who are desirous of healthy life.

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