

## REVIEW ARTICLE

# A Conceptual Study and Significance of *Oja* According to *Ayurveda*

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### ABSTRACT

*Ayurveda*, renowned as the science of life, is dedicated to preserving the well-being of living organisms by both preventing and treating illnesses. Central to Ayurvedic treatment (*Chikitsa*) is principles outlined in its literature, including the concepts of *Ojas* and *Vyadhikshamatva*. *Ojas*, situated in the heart (*hridaya*), extend throughout the body, governing its processes. The presence of *Ojas* is fundamental for the sustenance of life, aligning various bodily states, and preventing destruction. This principle is crucial in the body's defense against disease-causing agents, halting pathogenesis. Ayurvedic literature explicates *Ojas* as essence of all Dhatus, representing *Bala* (strength) of each body part. *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 alignment of Ayurvedic principles with contemporary scientific concepts establishes the relevance of *Ojas* and *Vyadhikshamatva* in maintaining health and preventing diseases. Recognizing *Ojas* as the essence of Dhatus underscores its role in physical, mental, and immunological strength. Incorporating these principles into health applications, particularly in addressing immune disorders, can offer holistic approaches in line with Ayurvedic wisdom. Understanding and harnessing *Ojas* and *Vyadhikshamatva* could prove instrumental in developing Ayurvedic remedies for enhancing immunity, promoting overall well-being.

## 1. 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 *Sapta Dhatu* is *Ojas*. Like *Sapta 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*. It cannot be described by *Updhatu* since it circulates throughout the body through *Mahadhamnis*, unlike *Updhatu*. It is explained as the essence of *Sapta Dhatu*, yet it cannot be explained as *Dhatu* because of its *Prana Dharak Karma*.<sup>[1,2]</sup>

It is referred to as the mala of *Shukra Dhatu* in *Ashtanga Sangraha*. Despite being in *hrdaya*, it permeates the entire body and regulates how it functions. Its absence guarantees that the body will live and that various states (conditions, activities, etc.) related to the body are brought about in a proper manner. Its loss or destruction guarantees that the body (life) will be destroyed. The original body was made up of *Malas*, *Dhatus*, and *Dosas*. Just as *moola*, or the root, is the primary element in the emergence, growth, and demise of plants, so too are *dosa*, *dhatu*, and *mala* for the body. Beyond these *Dosa*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala*, there exists an independent entity known as *Ojas*, which maintains the integrity of every bodily tissue in its functions and structure, giving the human body its vigor and vitality. The power of the body, mind, and soul is entirely dependent upon *Ojas*. In a live thing's body, *Ojas* forms first.<sup>[3,4,5]</sup>

*Vyadhikshamatva* power is provided by the *Oja* since its purpose is to resist and defend the body against diseases that currently exist as well as to prevent diseases from manifesting in it. Strength is the *Ojas*. In actuality, *Ojas* is the cause, and *Ojas*'s purpose is strength. However,

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because strength is an essential function of *Ojas* and is responsible for carrying out all other functions, *Ojas* is recognized as strength in and of itself. *Aparaaja*, the term for the *Oja* that is found throughout the body is half of *Anjali*. In contrast to *Dhatu*, *Ojas Vruddhi* does not occur in the body; however, its depletion does result in various stages and symptoms. When *Ojavyasthapakdravya* is used in a healthy state, it helps to maintain the body's usual level of *Oja*. When *Oja* is present in its regular amount, all of the body's functions operate normally, and the likelihood of the body becoming ill is reduced.<sup>[6]</sup>

*Ojovyasthapakdravya* should be taken periodically to maintain good health and avoid infection in the body. This will ensure that all physiological functions of the body are carried out as intended. Pathological disease known as *Ojakshaya* is caused by a decrease in the number of *Ojas*; inadequate *Oja* not only results in *Oja Kshaya Lakshana* and its three stages. However, *Ojakshaya* can also develop in the pathophysiology of other illnesses. It is therefore essential for a doctor to be knowledgeable about *Oja Vyavasthapan* therapy. An attempt was made to comprehend the clinical importance and the role of *Ojas* W.S.R. to *Vyadhikshamatva* in this study. Reviewing all the materials helps us grasp the same thing.<sup>[6]</sup>

### 1.1. Aim

To study the concept of *Ojas* and its significance in detail.

### 1.2. Objective

To study the concept of *Vyadhikshamatva*.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The primary objective of this conceptual study is to explore and elucidate the significance of *Oja* in *Ayurveda*, shedding light on its conceptual framework, physiological manifestations, and its role in maintaining health and preventing diseases. This study adopts a qualitative research design, employing a comprehensive literature review and expert analysis of *Ayurvedic* texts as the primary methods for data collection. Literature review conducts a thorough review of classical *Ayurvedic* texts, including *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridayam*.

### 2.1. Limitations

Acknowledge potential limitations are the subjective interpretation of *Ayurvedic* texts and the influence of individual perspectives in expert opinions. The study's generalizability may be limited to the scope and diversity of the texts and experts included.

## 3. RESULTS OF REVIEW

### 3.1. *Ojas* and *Vyadhikshamatva*

The concept of *Vyadhikshamatva* in *Ayurveda* includes two aspects

- *Vyadhi Bala Virodhivam*
- *Vyadhiutpadpratibandhkatvam*

which translate to mean, respectively, the body's ability to prevent disease manifestation and its ability to combat diseases when they develop. *Ojas* stop diseases from progressing and provide immunity against them, as well as resistance to the body's deterioration and degeneration. As a result, *Ojas* and *Vyadhikshamatva* serve comparable purposes in the body. In addition, *Vyadhikshamatva* differs throughout individuals in terms of their physical, physiological, psychological, dietary, environmental, and personal aspects; it is not in the same order

in all constitutions. In a same vein, each individual has a different *Ojas*, the factor that prevents diseases, based on factors such as *Agni*, *Satva*, and constitution. Even though *Ayurveda* is a science and is founded on *Tridosabaad*, we can still find references to *Jivanubaad* in the *Brihatrayi*, and we can thus accord some weight to *Jivanubaad*.

Those bad spirits, who only consume *Oja* and move at night, do not want to consume the body. Here, *Jivanu* and other terms are referred to as "*Rajnichara*." It is clear from this that before *Rajnichara* can try to destroy the *Oja*, there must be a conflict between the two, and they will either win or lose based on their respective strengths. Contemporary science is also in agreement with this idea. *Oja* gives the body *Vyadhikshamatva*, and *Oja*'s vigor manifests as *Vyadhikshamatva* in action.<sup>[7]</sup> Pathological condition of *Ojas* is given in Table 1.

### 3.2. *Ojas* Present in the Human Body are of Two Types

1. *Apara Ojas*
2. *Para Ojas*

The body contains half as much *Apara Ojas* as *Anjali*. It is *apradhan* that *Apar Ojas* is circulating in the *dhamnis*. The body exhibits several *Ojakshaya* signs as it decreases. There are eight drops of *Para Ojas*. It is *pradhan*, located in the heart, and its depletion results in death. Living things survive because of *Ojas*, which keeps them saturated. Life in living things does not exist without *Ojas*. *Ojas* is both the embryo's original essence and its sustaining material's essence. *Ojas* enter the heart before the circulation. When *Ojas* is destroyed, the body is also annihilated, which *Ojas*, the life-sustaining energy, is found in the heart. *Ojas* is the body's highest concentration of nutrients and the location of critical components. The following are the typical functions of *bala (Ojas)*: Strong, well-developed muscles; unhindered motions; clarity of voice and complexion; and regular operation of internal and exterior (motor) organs.<sup>[8,9,10]</sup>

The body's strength can eradicate *dosas* that have become vitiated. Despite being in the *hrdaya*, it permeates the entire body and regulates how it functions. Its absence guarantees that the body will live and that various states (conditions, activities, etc.) related to the body are brought about in a proper manner. Its loss or destruction guarantees that the body (life) will be destroyed. It permeates every part of the organism and makes all the parts of the living thing wither away in its absence. The purpose of *Oja* is to resist and defend the body against diseases that already exist, which is why it gives the body the ability to ward off *Vyadhikshamatva*.<sup>[11]</sup> In a natural state, *Kapha* is (accountable for) strength; nevertheless, when vitiated or aberrant, it turns into an excretory product. Twelve stated differently, the natural *Kapha* is referred to as *Ojas*, whereas the abnormal *Kapha* is wicked, meaning it causes a variety of disorders. As previously mentioned, there are similarities between the properties of *Kapha* and *Ojas*. It is stated that *Ojas* and *Shleshma* have some similarities and mutual effects. The body's strength can disintegrate *doshas* that have become vitiated.<sup>[12]</sup>

### 3.3. *Bala* (Strength) is of Following Three Types

- *Sahaj* (congenital).
- *Kalaj* (time affected).
- *Yuktikrut* (acquired) their detail description is in Table 2.

## 4. DISCUSSION

By giving the body resistance power, it needs to fend against illness and maintain health, *Vyadhikshamatva* plays a significant role.

*Ojas* is in charge of the body's vitality throughout life. *Acharya Charaka* asserts that *Ojas* is the best *Pranayatana* (place of vitality) out there. *Ojas* is in charge of the fetus's viability during gestation. It becomes unstable in the 8<sup>th</sup> month of pregnancy, which raises the possibility of a labor delay. For a full-term birth, its stability is therefore crucial. *Ojas* is necessary to keep *Dhatus'* exceptional quality. As a result, it has a direct bearing on the better operations of every bodily tissue. *Ojas* provides mental and physical fortitude. Thus, the number and quality of *Ojas* determine one's physical and mental power. *Ojas* is in charge of keeping *Vyadhikshamatva* (the immunity) in good condition. It is crucial for maintaining good health and preventing illness. In the event that the disease materializes, it is also essential for battling disease germs. Without *Ojas*, the body's regulatory functioning factors, or *doshas*, cannot perform their roles. As a holistic discipline, Ayurveda promises to address both the preventive and therapeutic elements of human illnesses. The overall purpose of *Vyadhikshamatva* is similar to the comprehensive approach of *Ayurveda*.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The notion of *Vyadhikshamatva*, which Ayurveda describes to prevent the development of diseases, can be associated with current immunology because both of these ideas play similar roles in disease prevention. Upon scrutinizing the diverse citations cited by diverse academics concerning *Vyadhikshamatva*, it became apparent that an intrinsic force called *Ojas* is accountable for furnishing the ability to withstand the manifestation of ailments. *Ojas* is regarded as the essential component of all tissues; in excess, it promotes health, while insufficient amounts result in illness. To maintain a healthy state, or regular physiological function of the body, *Prakrit ojas* is vital, and *Ojasvikriti* is important in the pathophysiology of disease. In the end, *Vyadhikshamatva* is dependent upon the state of *Ojas*. *Ojas* can be produced at their highest level, which corrects *Ojasvikriti* when *Dhatwagnis* are also at their peak potential due to the correction of the *Agni* in an *Ayurvedic Rasayana* treatment.

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This study is not required ethical clearance as it is review study.

## 10. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

## 11. DATA AVAILABILITY

This is an original manuscript and all data are available for only review purposes from principal investigators.

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**Table 1:** Pathological condition of Ojas

| S. No. | Oja visramsas  | Oja vyapat  | Oja kshaya  |
|--------|--|---|---|
| 1      | <i>Sandhi vishlesha</i> (sensation of synapses or joints being dislocated or loose)      | <i>Stabdha-guru gatrata</i> (sensation of rigidity and stiffness in the body) | <i>Murcha</i> (fainting or unconsciousness)         |
| 2      | <i>Gatra sadanam</i> (fatigue)   | <i>Vata shopha</i> (unstable swelling due to vitiation of Vata Dosha)         | <i>Mamsa Kshaya</i> (muscle atrophy and emaciation) |
| 3      | <i>Dosha chyavanam</i> (Movement of vitiated Dosha to different locations)               | <i>Varna bheda</i> (abnormal alteration to a typical complexion)              | <i>Moha</i> (confusion)                             |
| 4      | <i>Kriya Sannirodha</i> (impairment and obstruction of every bodily and mental function) | <i>Glani</i> (lassitude)  | <i>Pralapa</i> (delirium)                           |
| 5      | -  | <i>Tandra</i> (drowsiness)  | <i>Marana</i> (death)                               |
| 6      | -  | <i>Nidra</i> (excess sleepiness)  | -   |

**Table 2:** Types of BALA<sup>[13,14,15]</sup>

| Sahaj Bala <sup>[14]</sup>  | Kalaj Bala <sup>[15]</sup>   | Yukti Krutaj Bala <sup>[16]</sup>  |
|---|--|--|
| Born with, strength that comes from inside, both mentally and physically, is referred to as congenital strength, or sahaj. Strength that is congenital occurs from birth.   | Varies on the individual's age and seasonal variance. <i>Kalaj bala</i> is the strength of a person that is dependent on <i>kala</i> .   | <i>Yukti Krutaj Bala</i> is the kind of <i>bala</i> that can only be attained through adhering to the right food habits, diet, and other guidelines. Diets with six tastes enhance bodily power, while diets with one taste weaken it.   |
| Congenital strength is of following three types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Pravarabala</i>: <i>Sama sannipata</i> and <i>Kaphaj Prakriti Purusha</i>.</li> <li>• <i>Avarabala</i>: <i>Vata Prakriti purusha</i>.</li> <li>• <i>Madhyam Bala</i>: <i>Pittaj Prakriti purusha</i>.</li> </ul> | Affected Strength <i>Kalaj bala</i> by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Balya Avastha</i>: Stage of childhood and adolescence</li> <li>• <i>Madhyam Avastha</i>: Stage of adult</li> <li>• <i>Vridhavastha</i>: Stage of oldness</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Uttam</i>: Consumer of all six tastes, follower of <i>Ashta Ahara Vidhi Visheshha Ayatana</i>.</li> <li>• <i>Madhyam</i>: Consumer of two or three taste.</li> <li>• <i>Heena</i>: Consumer of single taste, excess food intake. Not at all intake of food, opposite food intake.</li> </ul> |