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Role of Vihara in Vyadhi-kṣamatva: An Ayurvedic Perspective

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Abstract :

Aim: To explore the role of Vihāra mentioned in Ayurveda in maintaining Vyādhi-kṣamatva, with special reference to Bala and factors influencing disease resistance.

Materials and Methods: Relevant references from classical Ayurvedic texts were reviewed to identify Vihāra and Bala-vṛddhikara Bhāva associated with enhancement or reduction of Vyādhi-kṣamatva. Their possible contribution to maintenance of Bala, Ojas and physiological equilibrium was analysed.

Discussion: Ayurveda describes individuals who are excessively obese or emaciated, having inadequately developed Māṃsa, Śoṇita and Asthi, weak, habituated to unsuitable food, consuming inadequate food and possessing low Sattva as Avyādhi-saha, i.e., less capable of resisting disease. Conversely, appropriate lifestyle practices promote strength and resilience. Bala-vṛddhikara Bhāva, including suitable Vihāra, supports the maintenance of physical and mental strength. Abhyaṅga is described as promoting Bala, while appropriately performed Vyāyāma enhances strength and stability. Adequate Nidrā, adherence to Dinacaryā and Ṛtucaryā, regulated sensory activities and maintenance of mental equilibrium further support Bala and Ojas.

Conclusion: Appropriate Vihāra is an important modifiable factor contributing to Vyādhi-kṣamatva. Incorporation of classical Vihāra principles into daily life may support Bala, Ojas and physiological homeostasis, thereby promoting resistance to disease and preservation of health.

Keywords: Vihāra, Vyādhi-kṣamatva, Bala, Ojas, Abhyaṅga, Vyāyāma, Nidrā
IndexTerms - Component,formatting,style,styling,insert.

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of Vyadhikshamatva is explained in Charaka Samhita in the Sutrasthana 28 chapter[1] while explaining the causation of diseases. Ayurveda focuses on maintaining and enhancing health by improving the body's inherent resistance to everyday physiological stressors and disease-causing factors. The primary aim of Ayurveda is Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam (preservation and promotion of the health of healthy individuals) and Aturasya Vikara Prashamanam [2](alleviation of diseases in the diseased). All the fundamental principles and concepts of Ayurveda are directed towards achieving these two objectives. In this context, Vyadhikshamatva plays a significant role in both the prevention of diseases and the management of existing health conditions. Various Acharyas and their commentators have described several factors in Ayurvedic classical texts that contribute to the development and enhancement of Vyadhikshamatva, including Shleshma, Bala, Ojas, Hitakara and Ahitakara Ahara, Agni, Rasayana, and others.

Ayurveda emphasizes the preservation and promotion of health through the appropriate adoption of Ahara (diet) and Vihara[3] (lifestyle practices). Vihara refers to daily activities, behavioural practices and lifestyle

habits that influence the physical and mental well-being of an individual. Proper Vihara helps maintain the equilibrium of Dosha, Dhatu and Mala, thereby supporting normal physiological functioning. Achara Rasayana, Dinacharya, Ritucharya, Nidra, Brahmacharya and appropriate physical activities are important aspects of healthy living described in Ayurveda. Appropriate Vihara promotes the maintenance of Agni, Bala and Ojas, which are important factors contributing to Vyadhikshamatva. Practices such as Abhyanga, Vyayama, proper sleep and seasonal regimens help improve the body's strength and resistance against diseases. Unwholesome lifestyle practices (Asatmya Vihara), irregular sleep, excessive physical exertion and improper daily routines may adversely affect Bala and Ojas, thereby compromising Vyadhikshamatva. Vihara is not merely concerned with disease prevention but also plays an important role in maintaining physical strength, mental stability and overall health.

Thus, the appropriate adoption of Ayurvedic Vihara principles serves as an important approach to enhancing Vyadhikshamatva and achieving the primary objectives of Ayurveda.

Aim

To explore the role of Vihara in enhancing Vyadhikshamatva from an Ayurvedic perspective.

Objectives

1. To understand the Ayurvedic concepts of Vihara and Vyadhikshamatva.
2. To analyse the role of various Vihara practices in promoting Vyadhikshamatva and maintaining health.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design

Descriptive literary research, involving conceptual analysis.

Source of Data

A literary survey was carried out through various texts of Ayurveda and the relevant information regarding Vyadhikshamatva, Vihara, Abyanga, Snana, etc

Methodology

1. A detailed literary review was conducted on Bala Vriddhikara Bhava, Vyadhikshamatva and various Vihara practices, including Abhyanga, Snana, Udvartana, Nidra, Vyayama and other relevant lifestyle practices, based on classical Ayurvedic texts and available literature.
2. The collected information was critically analysed to understand the contribution of various Vihara practices towards the enhancement of Bala and their role in promoting Vyadhikshamatva.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Trividha Bala in Ayurveda[4]

In Ayurveda, Bala refers to the strength or capacity of an individual to withstand physical exertion, resist disease and maintain physiological functions. It is an important determinant of health and contributes significantly to Vyadhikshamatva.

Acharya Charaka has described three types of Bala based on the strength and resistance of an individual. These are collectively known as Trividha Bala.

1. Sahaja Bala (Innate strength): Sahaja Bala is the natural strength present in an individual from birth. It is determined by the inherent constitution of the individual and the natural characteristics of Dosha and Dhatu.

2. Kalaja Bala (Time-dependent strength): It refers to strength that varies according to time and seasonal influences. It is influenced by factors such as age, season (Ritu) and the time of life

3. Yuktikrita Bala (Acquired strength): It refers to strength acquired through appropriate dietary and lifestyle practices. It can be enhanced through proper Ahara, Vihara and therapeutic measures. Balanced nutrition,

regular exercise, adequate sleep, Rasayana, and appropriate daily and seasonal regimens support its development.

Example: Regular Vyayama, Abhyanga, wholesome Ahara, proper Nidra and Rasayana practices help improve physical strength and disease resistance.

Relevance of Trividha Bala to Vyadhikshamatva

All three forms of Bala contribute to the disease-resisting capacity of an individual.

- Sahaja Bala determines the inherent capacity to resist diseases.
- Kalaja Bala explains variations in disease resistance according to age and seasonal conditions.
- Yuktikrita Bala highlights the scope for improving disease resistance through appropriate Ahara, Vihara and Rasayana.

Yuktikrita Bala provides an important conceptual basis for explaining the role of Vihara in enhancing Vyadhikshamatva. Appropriate lifestyle practices such as Dinacharya, Ritucharya, Vyayama, Abhyanga, proper Nidra and Sadvritta help promote Bala and support the body's natural disease resistance.

Balavṛiddhikara Bhava[5] – Factors Promoting Strength

Acharya Charaka has described thirteen factors that contribute to the enhancement of Bala (strength). These factors include environmental, constitutional, nutritional, psychological and lifestyle-related aspects that influence the overall strength and disease resistance of an individual.

1. Balavat Purusha Desha Janma
2. Balavat Purusha Kale Janma
3. Sukhashcha Kala Yoga
4. Beeja Kshetra Guna Sampat
5. Ahara Sampat
6. Sharira Sampat
7. Satmya Sampat
8. Sattva Sampat
9. Svabhava Samsiddhi
10. Yauvanam
11. Karma
12. Samharsha

The factors described by Acharya Charaka indicate that Bala is influenced by multiple dimensions of an individual's life, including genetic constitution, environmental conditions, nutrition, physical development, adaptability and mental well-being. Adequate Bala is an important contributor to Vyadhikshamatva, as it enables the body to resist disease-causing factors and withstand the manifestation of diseases. Among these factors, Ahara Sampat, Satmya Sampat, Sattva Sampat, Karma and Samharsha have particular relevance to the role of Vihara.

- Karma: Appropriate physical activities and regular exercise help improve strength.
- Sattva Sampat: Mental stability and emotional resilience contribute to psychological strength.
- Samharsha: Happiness and positive mental states support overall well-being.
- Satmya Sampat: Adoption of suitable lifestyle practices promotes physiological adaptability.
- Ahara Sampat: Proper dietary habits support tissue nourishment and maintenance of Bala.

Factors Responsible for Decreased Bala and Vyadhikshamatva.

Acharya Charaka explains that the physical constitution, nutritional status, strength and mental stability of an individual have an important influence on their capacity to resist diseases.[6]

A. Atisthula and Atikrisha: Excessive accumulation of body fat and excessive emaciation and inadequate nourishment. Both extremes adversely affect disease resistance.
B. Anivishta Mamsa, Shonita and Asthi: Poor development or nourishment of muscle, blood and bone tissues, resulting in reduced strength and resistance.
C. Durbala: Individuals with diminished physical strength and reduced capacity to resist diseases.

D. Asatmya Aharopachita: Individuals nourished by unwholesome dietary practices, leading to impaired physiological functions and disease resistance.
E. Alpahara: Inadequate food intake resulting in poor tissue nourishment and reduced strength.
F. Alpasattva: Individuals with weak mental strength may have reduced psychological endurance and a diminished capacity to cope with stressful situations and disease-related challenges

Viparitani Punaḥ Vyadhisahani

Acharya Charaka further explains that individuals possessing characteristics opposite to those mentioned above are more capable of resisting diseases.

These include:

- Balanced body constitution without excessive obesity or emaciation.
- Proper nourishment and development of body tissues.
- Adequate physical strength (Bala).
- Consumption of wholesome and suitable food (Satmya Ahara).
- Adequate nutritional intake according to individual requirements.
- Good mental strength (Pravara Sattva).

Such individuals are considered to possess greater Vyadhisahishnuta, meaning the ability to withstand and resist diseases. This reference highlights that Vyadhikshamatva is not determined by a single factor but depends on the combined influence of physical constitution, tissue nourishment, dietary habits, physical strength and mental strength. An important observation in this verse is the inclusion of Alpasattva, indicating that mental strength is also considered an important determinant of disease resistance. This provides an Ayurvedic basis for understanding the importance of both physical and psychological well-being in maintaining Vyadhikshamatva.

The description by Acharya Charaka highlights the importance of maintaining an appropriate body constitution, adequate tissue nourishment, physical strength and mental stability for developing Vyadhikshamatva. These factors can be supported through the appropriate adoption of Ahara and Vihara. Ayurvedic lifestyle practices such as Dinacharya, Ritucharya, Vyayama, proper Nidra and Sadvritta contribute to maintaining physiological balance, promoting Bala and supporting mental well-being. Thus, the verse establishes a conceptual foundation for understanding the role of appropriate Vihara in enhancing disease resistance.

Role of abhyanga in vyadhikshamatva

Pushti and Dṛḍhatva are especially relevant because proper tissue nourishment and physical strength contribute to Bala, which is an important component of disease resistance. Abhyanga, Snehana and Balavardhana Abhyanga[7] are important daily regimens (Dinacharya) described in Ayurveda. Its regular practice promotes Pushti, supports longevity, alleviates Vata Dosha and improves the firmness of the body. As Snehana is considered Balavardhaka, Abhyanga contributes to the maintenance of Bala and proper nourishment of Dhatus. These effects provide an important basis for understanding its role in promoting Vyadhikshamatva.

Role of vyayama in vyadhikshamatva

Karma Samarthyam, Dipta Agni and Vibhakta Ghana Gatratvam are particularly relevant to the development of Bala and maintenance of physical fitness[8]. Vyayama is an important lifestyle practice described in Ayurveda for maintaining physical health and strength. Regular exercise promotes Laghava, improves Karma Samarthya, stimulates Agni, reduces excessive Meda and contributes to muscular firmness. These effects support the maintenance of Bala and overall physiological fitness, thereby highlighting the importance of Vyayama in promoting Vyadhikshamatva

Role of Udvartana in Vyadhikshamatva

Sthirikaranam Anganam and Kaphaharam[9] are particularly relevant to maintaining physical fitness and supporting the equilibrium of Doshas. Udvartana is an important Ayurvedic external therapeutic practice that contributes to maintaining physical health by reducing Kapha Dosha and excessive Meda accumulation. It

promotes firmness and stability of the body and improves skin health. These effects support the maintenance of a healthy body composition and physical fitness, highlighting its supportive role in maintaining Bala and Vyadhikshamatva.

Role of snana in vyadikshamatva

Bala Pradam and Urja Pradam[10] are particularly important because physical strength and energy contribute to the maintenance of Bala, an important factor in disease resistance. Snana is an important daily regimen described in Ayurveda that contributes to physical cleanliness, freshness and overall well-being. Its Balaprada and Urjaprada properties support the maintenance of physical strength and vitality, while its Deepana and Ayushya effects contribute to the preservation of health. Thus, regular bathing, as part of an appropriate daily routine, may indirectly support Vyadhikshamatva through the maintenance of Bala and overall physiological well-being.

Role of nidra in vyadhikshamatva

Nidra is one of the important components of a healthy lifestyle described in Ayurveda. Acharya Charaka highlights its influence on Pushti, Bala, Sukha[11] and overall longevity. Proper sleep supports tissue nourishment, maintains physical strength and promotes mental well-being. Since Bala is an important determinant of Vyadhikshamatva, the adoption of appropriate sleep habits forms an essential aspect of Vihara for maintaining health and disease resistance

Other Vihara Measures Supporting Bala and Vyadhikshamatva

Apart from the commonly practised Dinacharya measures, several other Vihara practices described in Ayurveda contribute to the maintenance of health and well-being. Practices such as Padabhyanga, Shubhra Vastra Dharana, Gandha-Malya Dharana, Padatra Dharana and Chatra Dharana promote physical comfort, personal hygiene and protection against environmental factors. Achara Rasayana, through the cultivation of ethical conduct, mental discipline and positive behavioural patterns, supports psychological well-being and Sattva. Collectively, these practices contribute to maintaining physical and mental health, thereby providing supportive measures for the preservation of Bala and Vyadhikshamatva.

IV. CONCLUSION

Ahara, Vihara, Achara and Vichara play complementary and essential roles in the maintenance of health and the promotion of Vyadhikshamatva. Among these, Vihara has a unique contribution through the regulation of daily activities, physical practices and lifestyle habits, thereby supporting Bala and overall well-being. Even when an individual consumes proper and nutritious Ahara, improper or disturbed Vihara may adversely affect digestion, metabolism, physiological functions and the proper utilization of nutrients. Hence, the benefits of Ahara may not be fully achieved without following appropriate Vihara. Therefore, the balanced adoption of Ahara, Vihara, Achara and Vichara is essential for maintaining physical and mental health, strengthening Bala and promoting Vyadhikshamatva.

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