A Critical Review Of Ojas: An Ayurveda Immunity Booster

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ABSTRACT:
Boosting immunity is the new requirement of today’s world. So, the factors responsible for immunity are getting the importance. Ojas is one of the key factors responsible for immunity. Ojas connects the mind to the body and consciousness. It nourishes all body tissues and influences the physical, psychological and emotional life of a person directly. So, an attempt is made to study Ojas and Ojovahasrotas in details including its formation, primary seat, types, perception of Ojas according to various acharyas, symptoms of its elevation as well as depletion and how to assess it practically in the patient, ways to increase the Ojas etc. This can help to have a deep insight of the subject and can help in the early detection of the Ojodushtilakshanas. Also, diseases including Ojodushti are given collectively in order to elaborate the practical view of the subject.

The further scope of the study includes the pre-clinical and clinical trials of the Ojovrudhhikar drug (drugs increasing Ojas)

KEYWORDS: Ojas, OjovahaSrotas, Immunity, Par Oja, AparOja, Covid 19

INTRODUCTION:
Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the world is going through a historic yet unpleasant time. The situation is precarious because scientists have given further warnings that everyone needs to be prepared for the second recurrence of the disease also the World Health Organization have declared that only lockdown is not enough to deal with the hazardous effects of the pandemic. In such condition panic is obvious, which further leads to weakened Immunity. As it is seen that people with good immunity remained unaffected during the pandemic or has lesser symptoms of the disease, immunity and related factors are required to be reviewed critically.

According to Ayurveda Ojas is one of the main factors responsible for a person’s immunity. Thus, to study Ojas and Ojovahasrotasis the need of an hour. An attempt is
made to study all the aspects related to Ojas including its formation, primary seat, types, perception of Ojas according to various acharyas, symptoms of its elevation as well as depletion and how to assess it practically in the patient, ways to increase the Ojas in order to boost the immunity etc.

Ojas is a Sanskrit term which means “vigor” or “essence of vitality.” Formation process of Ojas is similar to how ghee is produced from milk. Ojas is an endproduct refined through many natural transformations and thus is a precious one. A person with exceptional Ojas rarely becomes sick.

Ojas is considered as the pure essence of the Kaphadosha. Here an attempt is made to discuss all aspects of Oja, like formation of Ojas, its actual appearance, properties and effects on the body when the Ojas is increased or decreased in quantity.

AIM and OBJECTIVES:
To study the Ojas and Ojovahasrotas in details
To study the practical ways to increase the Ojas in order to boost the immunity

MATERIALS and METHODS:
For the detailed study of Ojas and Ojovahasrotas, thorough literary study has been conducted using Samhitas, reference books, various journals and publications.

Moolasthana (Primary Seat) of Ojovahasrotas:
AcharyaCharak in Sutrasthana stated that ten vessels attached to the heart carry Ojas and pulsate it all over the body. Therefore, the primary seat of Ojas is the heart, from where it circulates to the entire body.

Formation of Ojas:
Every living thing takes food to be alive, Ojas considered as the ultimate refined result of digestion, metabolism, absorption and assimilation of that food. According to Samhitas, Ojas is collected from the body’s seven tissues which are Rasa (plasma), Rakta (blood), Mamsa (muscle) Meda (fat), Asthi (bone), Majja (bone marrow), and Shukra (semen and ovum) by the influence of Agni (digestive fire). The process of formation of Ojas is similar to how a bee collects honey from the essence of many flowers.

According to AcharyaVagbhat, during the process of digestion or paka formation of two things are observed i.e., mala and sara. Mala is the malarupi Ojas and sara is the garbha.

Types of Ojas:
There are two types of Ojas: 1) Par and 2) Apar

Quantity:
The quantity of Par Ojas is eight bindu (drops) and that of Apar Ojas is half anjali.

Perception of Ojas according to various Acharyas:
According to some Acharyas Ojas is formed in the form of Upadhatu (byproduct) while according to others it is formed in the form of Malas (waste material)

Ojas as Upadhatu:
According to Acharya Sushruta Ojas is the essence of Saptadhatu and it is the seat for strength.

Ojas as Mala:
Acharya Vagbhat in Ashtanga Hridayam states that Ojas is the essence of Saptadhatu and formed as the Mala of Shukra.

Ojovahasrotodushtithetu (etiological factors affecting Ojas):
As Ojadushti is one of the main causes of decreased immunity and nidanparivarjan is the foremost treatment of any disease, finding and removing the factors causing ojadushti is important. Ojas undergoes depletion due to Abhighat (injury), Dhatukshaya (tissue depletion), Kop(anger), shokagrief, diyan(worry), shram(exertion), Kshudha(hunger) etc. resulting into the flowing out from the dhatus and getting associated with rejas(heat factor from the body) and instigated by Vata which gives various discomforts to the body.7

Ojovahasrotas dushti Lakshana:
Dushtimeans unwanted changes in the functions of the Ojas. There are 3 types of Ojadushti: 1) Ojovisrams 2) Ojovyapat and 3) Ojokshaya. The signs and symptoms of Ojadushti are very important because detecting them early can help reverting the Ojadushti earlier and can prevent the hazardous effects of Ojakshaya.

Ojovisrams: 
Visramsmeans displacement from its normal place8. The symptoms when Ojas is displaced from its place includes: Sandhivishlesh(sagging of Joints), Gatramansadanam(weakness of the body), Doshachyavanam (displacement of Doshas from their normal seats) and Kriyasannirodha (impairment in the activities)

Ojovyapat: 
Vyapatmeans Ojas gets vitiated by dushtadosha and Dushya8. OjoVyapatcan leads to Stabdhagurutratra (stiffness and heaviness in the body parts especially limbs), VataShopha (swelling due to Vata), Varnabhedha (discoloration or loss of complexion), Glani(exhaustion), Tandra(stupor) and Nidra(excess sleep).

Ojakshaya:
Here Kshaya means decrease in the quantity of Ojas. Ojakshayacan cause Murchha (Fainting), MamsaKshaya(wasting of muscles), Moha(unconscionessness), Pralap(delirium) and Maran(death).8 According to CharakSamhita9 and Ashtanga Sangraha10 symptoms of Ojakshayan includes: Bibheti(fear complex or full of fear), Durbalo (generalized weakness), Diya yati(worries a lot), Vyathitendriya (discomfort in sense organs), Dushchhaya (loss of complexion), Durmanama (mindset becomes unstable), Ruksha (roughness in the body), Ksham (emaciation)

Prognosis of diseases caused by Ojadushti:
OjaVisrams and Vyapat are curable while Ojakshaya is suggested to be left untreated as it is non curable11

Ojovruddhi Lakshana:
Like the depletion Ojas also undergoes to elevation. This causes elevation in the properties and functions of Ojas. Increased Ojas is responsible for unique growth, nourishment and promotes strength.12

Practical observations for Ojadushti and Ojovriddhi:
Practically one can find the physical symptoms like tendency to get sick frequently, heaviness of body and mind, dry and cracked skin, Muscle pain, joint pain, cold and numb hands and feet, weaker sense organs, impaired bodily functions and frequent drowsiness and fatigue. On Mental level practically we can observe the person with Ojakshaya has mental confusion, lack of focus, consistently negative attitude, anxiety and depression. Due to dushtakaphadosha there can be an obstruction in the flow of Ojas due to which symptoms like: feelings of numbness, heaviness in the limbs, joint swelling or lipomas etc. along with the development of diabetes, obesity, Glaucoma, high cholesterol and blood pressure can appear making the person sick. On the contrary when there is rise in the properties of Ojas practically one can experience ample of energy, glowing complexion, sparkling eyes, increased physical strength, sharp sense organs,
body without no aches and pains, rejuvenated health and mind. A person with Ojovriddhi will experience a sense of well-being, happiness and joy.

**Diseases which include Ojodushti:**
The dushtiof Ojovahasrotascan leads to generation of many diseases like –

**UdanavruttaPrana:**
Loss of activities, Oja, bala and complexion is observed in UdanavruttaPrana.13

**Jwara:**
Jwarais the king of all diseases. It causes death to all creatures on the earth and which is seriously afflicting individual.14

**AbhinyasJwaraor HataujasaJwara:**
As there is loss or decrease of Ojas, this condition is said to be difficult to cure.15

**OjoNirodhajJwara:**
OjonirodhajJwara manifest due to depletion of Ojas by aggravated Pitta and Vata. Symptoms of Jwara gets greatly aggravated on 7th, 10thand 12th day or symptoms may subside on 7th, 10th and 12th day respectively.16

**Shosh:**
In case of Shosharogathere will be severe dryness or extreme depletion of tissues leading to loss of Ojas.17

**Rajayakshma:**
Disturbed function of Agni leads to manifestation of kitta(waste substances) in excess as a result of which Ojas diminishes. That is why mala is to be protected to support the body18.

**Prameha:**
In case of AparaOjas is involved and not the ParaOjas because even slight reduction in the ParaOjas leads to death.19

**Pandu:**
Due to excessive exacerbation of three Doshas especially Pitta afflicts Dhatus as a result complexion, strength, unctuousness and Ojas get exceedingly reduced leading to development of Pandu roga.20

**Murcha:**
Unconsciousness, loss of strength is the purvaroopa observed in Murcha.21Acharya Sushruta has explained Bala has three kinds of abnormalities namely Balavyapat, Balavistransand Balakshyaaand the symptoms are similar to that ofOjovyapat, Ojovistransa and Ojakshyarespectively. 22

**Aahar and Viharfor increasing Ojas**
The best foods for building Ojas are pure whole milk and ghee for non-vegetarians Mamsarasa is the best. To increase the potency of ghee and milk, it should be triturated with the drugs of Jivaneeyagana. Slowing down and getting enough rest. Hurry, Worry and Curry are depleting and destroying the Ojas. Avoid sleeping during the day. Use of pleasant fragrances can act as Hridyal(good for heart) and thus helps to increase the Ojas. Reproductive tissue is in line for digestion right before Ojas, meaning it is the last of the seven tissues to be fed so, limiting the sexual activity helps in reducing the depletion of Ojas. Avoiding excessive fasting and eating dry and stale food helps to increase the Ojas. Yogasanas, Pranayam helps to improve the Ojas.

**DISCUSSION:**
In the recent COVID pandemic, immunity was the only hope of all the human beings. Till date there is no vaccine or sure shot treatment available so self-Immunity is the savior. So, one can say that many such pandemics happened in the past and many more will come in future. But only those with good immunity will remain unaffected. Also, Ayurveda concepts of immunity are not only disease based but includes the wholesome approach and thus can help to boost overall generalized immunity and health. So, it is very much important to study them in details. As Ojas is an important factor related to immunity its importance increases many times. Ojas can be considered as the living protoplasmic substance and is the basis of the physical immunity.
of every cell. It is supposed to protect the integrity of the individual. Few of the related articles on this aspect were reported. It is formed from the last (reproductive) tissue of the shukra/arthava and contains all five basic elements. It passes through the heart, circulates around the body and maintains the natural resistance of all tissues. If due to any reason, the flow of Ojas in the body stops, the body becomes considerably weak. As the Ojas has properties similar to KaphaDosha, treatment of Ojodushti includes slowing down the daily routine and taking the food and medicines that are similar to the properties of KaphaDosha. Meditation and Pranayama helps in boosting the properties of Ojas.

CONCLUSION:
1 Ojas is the precious nectar from the body and thus has to be preserved by all means.
2 The practical symptoms of Ojodushti have to be assessed in every patient as everybody is going through some sort of stress and early diagnosis can prevent the hazardous effects.
3 Ojovardhak measures can be implemented on the daily basis in the situation like COVID19 pandemic in order to stay unaffected.

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