



CONCEPTUAL STUDY ON THE AYURVEDIC ASPECT OF ALLERGY

Rajveer Sason^{1*}, Anshu Malviya¹

¹PG Scholar, PG Department of Agada Tantra, National Institute of Ayurveda, Amer Road, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

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ABSTRACT

Term allergy is a hypersensitive immune response of body to some foreign proteins can be hereditary and can be develop without genetic involvement. Cause of allergy is the reaction of human beings to a number of allergens. Usually it is due to vitiated pita & blood. Low immunity is responsible for almost all types of allergies. In Ayurveda, allergy is correlated with various concepts especially *Ama*, *Asatmya*, *Virudhahara*. Various Acharyas has explained various causes and symptoms having similarity with allergy. The main cause of allergy is *Ama* or toxins produced by low digestive fire. Different symptoms are produced at different levels. Production of *Ama* can vitiate *Rakta* & *Pitta* or it can vitiate *Kapha*, producing different symptoms. Immunity also plays important role in the production of allergy. All types of proteins either in animals or food origins can cause allergy. It was with this idea that an ancient, Indian literature was reviewed to find out the role of the constitution of human body in relation to allergy. According to Ayurveda, if the body balance is maintained no allergic reactions are possible. According to Ayurveda the body balance is basically based on the balance of *Tridoshas*. This paper gives an idea about the concept of allergy in Ayurveda from the views of various Samhita and Acharyas.

*Address for correspondence

Dr Rajveer Sason

P.No. 423

Behind Madho Vilas Brahmपुरi

Road Jaipur Rajasthan. Pin

302002.

Email: sasonrajveer2@gmail.com

Phone no. 9509116664.

INTRODUCTION

It is difficult to compare a disease of Ayurveda to allergy. Allergy has no known etiology. Concept of allergy was not new in Ayurvedic Samhitas only difference is that the word Allergy has not been utilized. Regarding its knowledge, same explanation can be obtained in Samhitas as Modern medicine has contributed to the world of allergy, even some etiological factors are more clearly expressed and some are new. The present paper is an attempt to correlate and to understand the concept of allergy in Ayurveda.

Allergy is an abnormal immunological response which causes diseases like Asthma, eczema, urticaria, conjunctivitis itching, skin rashes etc. This is a hypersensitivity of foreign proteins. It is well known that the cause of allergy may be expression indicating the reaction of human beings to a numbers of bioparticles, such as pollen grains, fungal spores, hairs, insect parts, microbes in dust, air & any other foreign substance. Extensive work has been carried out in the recent years clearly indication the role of bioparticles as allergens. These allergens come in contact with human body either through inhalation, injection or simple contact. The main cause of allergy is *Ama* or toxins produced by low digestive fire. Accordingly different symptoms are produced at different levels. Production of *Ama* can vitiate blood & *Pitta* or it can vitiate *Kapha*, producing different symptoms. Immunity also plays important role. All types of proteins either in animals or food origins can

cause allergy. It was with this idea that an ancient, Indian literature was reviewed to find out the role of the constitution of human body in relation to allergy.^[1]

When a person is exposed to a specific allergen to which he is sensitive, histamine is released in the body. It has been found that histamine concentration increases in the blood of allergic person. The concept of allergy can be studied and understood on the concepts of *Asatmya*, *Ama dosha* and *Virudhdhara* in Ayurveda.^[2]

Material and Method

This article is based on various studies published in national, international, index and non-index journal of Ayurveda, Medical science and biological science. Ayurvedic *samhita* and its relevant commentaries have referred to collect the material for the article. Text of Modern medicine and biology science has also referred to collect material for this article.

Allergy and concept of *Asatmya*

It includes *Asatmya aharaa* and *Vihara* in an individual. First we have to know *Satmya*. The complete description of allergy in Ayurveda can be traced under the title of "*Satmya*". As per definition given in Charak all those *Ahara* and *Vihara* which are having *Viruddha guna* of particular *Desha* or *Roga* are considered as *Satmya* of that *Desha Roga*.^[3] *Satmya* is divided into 4 types

- 1) *Ritu Satmya*
- 2) *Auk Satmya*

3) *Desh Satmya*4) *Roga Satmya*

The *Aushadha*, *Anna* and *Vihar* in all respects, which keep a man healthy and good for his soul, can be termed as *Satmya*. The opposite activities of *Satmya* can be called as *Asatmya*. The *Asatmya* not only includes the *Aushadha*, *Anna*, *Vihar* but also to *Dosha*, *Kala*, *Jati*, *Ritu*, *Roga*, *Vyayam*, *Udaka*, *Diwaswapana* etc. So this concept of *Asatmya* can be considered as allergy to some extent. Charaka has mentioned a well advanced scientific study and says that the union of *Indriyas* with the *Asatmya* of *Shabda*, *Sparsha*, *Rupa*, *Rasa* and *Gandha* of *Indriyarthas* are also responsible to make a man allergic. In other words *Satmya* can also be correlated with "*Upshaya*".^[4]

Concept of *Asatmyaja vyadhi*

According to Ashtang hridya, it is clearly mentioned that a specific "*Dincharya*" is to be followed in that particular period^[5]. In Ayurveda a specific diet regimen (*Ahara* and *Vihara*) is indicated for each and every season under the heading of "*Ritucharya*". Indications and contraindications for each season are also mentioned. It should be followed to remain healthy.^[6]

Our Acharyas have well planned the concept of *Ritucharya* by considering the proportions of *Tridosha*, *Panchamahabhoota*, *Rasapanchaka* etc in various seasons and its adverse effect on a human body. There are some rules regarding the adoption of coming season and abandonment of the *Ritucharya* of previous season which are mentioned under "*Ritu sandhi*". If do's and don'ts of *Ritu sandhi* are not followed properly than it leads to:

- *Asatmyaja roga* (Sha.pur.2/30).
- *Tridosha Prakopa* which is causative factor of almost all the diseases. (Sha.Pur.2/31)
- Vitiation of *Dhatus*, giving rise to *Dhatu Pradoshaja Vikara*.(Sha.Pur.2/32, 33)

In the same context, Sushruta has also mentioned that due to *Vayu vikriti* following diseases are caused-*Kasa*, *Swasa*, *Pratishyaya*, *Shiroroga*, *Netraroga* which have mentioned in allergic diseases in modern texts. So this phenomenon of *Asatmya* shows that there are some factors which are enough for man to be allergic. So this concept of *Asatmyaj vyadhi* is very scientific. All factors are favorable in the period of *Ritu sandhi* for a disease to manifest itself.

Concept of *Viruddhashan*

Ayurveda considers that *Viruddhara* and vitiated types of food articles affect the body as well as the mental condition of the individual, so our ancestors has contraindicated some particular substances-probably due to concept of allergy. *Viruddha* leads to two factors i.e. on combining two, three things, the stronger one shades or overpowers the weaker ingredients. This has been accepted principally in Ayurveda also. It has been stated that in a combination of so many opposite qualities, the majority of the power packed qualities over power the weaker qualities (Ch.Vi.1/4).

The second meaning of *Viruddha* indicates about the combination of two substances which are not having an affinity for each other. So far this interpretation of *Viruddha* is concerned, it has been applied in Ayurveda in the context of dietetics and various combinations having such affinity for each other have been discussed. On this basis it may be concluded that such type of *Ahara* or foodstuff which is composed of substances having no affinity at all may be defined as *Viruddha* or *Viruddhahara* i.e. *Dravyaviruddha*.^[7]

Types of *Viruddha Ahara*

Ayurvedic classical literature reveals that the *Viruddhahara* may be discussed in various aspects and accordingly various types of *Viruddhahara* may be established. Charak has described 19 types of *Viruddha* Sushruta has described 10 types of *Viruddhahara* under "*Ekanta Ahita Ahara*" which are as.^[8]

Acharya Charak ^[9]	Acharya Sushruta ^[10]
<i>Paraspara gun viruddha</i>	<i>Samyoga viruddha</i>
<i>Samyoga viruddha</i>	<i>Karma viruddha</i>
<i>Samskara viruddha</i>	<i>Mana viruddha</i>
<i>Desha viruddha</i>	<i>Rasa viruddha</i>
<i>Kala viruddha</i>	<i>Veerya viruddha</i>
<i>Matra viruddha</i>	<i>Vipaka viruddha</i>
<i>Swabhava viruddha</i>	<i>Desha viruddha</i>
<i>Dosha Prakritiyadi Viruddha</i>	<i>Kala viruddha</i>
<i>Agni viruddha</i>	<i>Matra viruddha</i>
<i>Satmya viruddha</i>	<i>Atishaya guna yojata Viruddha</i>
<i>Veerya viruddha</i>	
<i>Koshtha viruddha</i>	
<i>Awastha viruddha</i>	
<i>Krama viruddha</i>	
<i>Parihara viruddha</i>	
<i>Upachara viruddha</i>	
<i>Paka viruddha</i>	
<i>Hrit viruddha</i>	
<i>Sampat viruddha</i>	

Allergy and concept of Heredity

Acharya Sushruta has clearly defined hereditary diseases in Su.Sh.24/6.

- Causative factor-Vitiation of sperm and ovum
- Chances of allergic disorders increase in bilateral inheritance
- Unilateral inheritance decreases the chances of allergic disorders.
- Acharya Charaka has described it as "*Kulaja Roga*"
- Acharya Bhela has described it as "*Prakritibhava*"
- Acharya Vagbhata has described it as "*Kulaja and Kulodbhava*"
- Acharya Yagyavalkya has described it as "*Sanchari*"

Overall, a healthy sperm and ovum gives rise to a healthy progeny. According to Ayurvedic principle there

is a balance of *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* within the body of each and every individual. Acharya Charaka has described 6 varieties of *Prakriti* in individuals. From which the first two points i.e., "*Jatiprasakta*" & "*Kulaprasakta*" can enlighten our view.

Jatiprasakta – In this condition there is some kind of tendency for hypersensitivity. On the other hand *Kulaprasakta* i.e., family disposition. [11] This can be related with chromosomal abnormalities. There is genetic inheritance, influencing the future generation. The above explanations may be enough to throw light on the role of heredity in the manifestation of allergic diseases.

Allergy and the concept of *Dushivisha*

This is a most important and unique concept of Ayurveda which can be directly co-related with allergy. Acharya Sushruta- Sushruta has described is in *Kalpa sthan* that when a person is afflicted by an artificial or natural toxins, he is treated with an antitoxic treatments in some cases a complete elimination of these toxins from body is not possible. They may remain in a dormant state for quiet long period. [12]

Acharya Charaka- Charak explains that intake of toxic drugs which are less potent (*Hina veerya*) remains in a dormant state within the body for years together, without causing any harm to the body. It remains in the latent stage due to covering *Avrita* of *Kapha dhatu dushti*. [13]

Chakrapani has commented upon this statement of Acharya Charaka, that "*Dushivisha*" vitiates the *Dhatu*s after the lapse of a long time on obtaining favorable conditions. [14]

Explaining further Sushruta has mentioned that "when causative factors like *Desha* (place), *Kala* (time), *Anna* (diet) and *Divaswapna* (day sleep) are favourable for *Dushivisha*, it will become more potent vitiating *Dhatu*s leading to the manifestations of a disease." [15]

Allergic diseases described in Ayurveda are as follows Acharya Charaka – Charaka has mentioned following diseases caused due to *Dushivisha* – *Shonit dushti*, *Kitibha*, *Kooha*. [16]

Acharya Sushruta- Sushruta has mentioned following disorders caused due to *Dushivisha-Avipaka*, *Arochaka*, *Kooha*, *Mandal*, *Shooha*, *Vamana*, *Atisara*, *Trishna* etc. Many of the diseases mentioned above has allergy as one of the causative factor. [17]

Histamine and *Dushivisha*

Histamine is also present in the body in latent form similar to *Dushivisha*. It remains in an inactive form within the covering of cell wall. Cell wall can be called *Kapha Dravya*. Histamine is active only by its chemical reaction with Histaminase.

Concept of *Ama*

Toxins or *Ama* can form and accumulate in the body impairing its ability to neutralize foreign substances. One main cause of *Ama* is when the body is not able to properly digest food. Undigested food stuff is then stored in the tissues as toxic material. Poor elimination also contributes to *Ama* collection in the

body. The formation of *Ama* is an important factor is the etiopathogenesis of allergic manifestation in the body. The impaired *Vatadi doshas* get *Sama*, a condition which exhibits a symptomatology comparable to that of toxins. This *Ama visha* which is intensely toxic releases the histamine more to mix with the *Rasa*, *Rakta* and circulates in the body in exhibiting the symptoms of allergy. [18]

CONCLUSION

Allergy in Ayurveda is due to low immunity and *Ama* (toxins), as the primary cause of most allergies. This *Ama* is produced due to various *Virudh ahar* and indigestion due to low digestive fire results in the aggravation of *Rakta* and *Pitta* or it can aggravate *Kapha* with different symptoms. According to various Acharyas various symptoms produced due to *Dushivisha* can also relates with symptoms of allergy. *Asatmya* is also a concept by which we can relate allergy *Asatmya* is intolerance, describing that to which the body is unaccustomed. So by understanding each of these components will lead to a more comprehensive approach to the treatment of allergies with respect to the natural intelligence of the body.

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