



THE CONCEPT OF MALE SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IN AYURVEDA

**Dr. Shailza Bhatnagar^{1*}, Dr. Vikash Bhatnagar², Dr. Sandeep Lahange³, Dr. Sumit Nathani⁴,
Dr. Rakesh K. Nagar⁵**

¹Assistant Professor P. G. Department of Maulik Siddhant, N.I.A, Jaipur 302002.

^{2,3}Assistant Professor P. G. Department of Sharir Rachana N.I.A, Jaipur 302002.

⁴Assistant Professor P. G. Department of Dravya Guna N.I.A, Jaipur 302002.

⁵Assistant Professor P. G. Department of Bal Roga N.I.A, Jaipur 302002.

***Corresponding Author: Dr. Shailza Bhatnagar**

Assistant Professor P. G. Department of Maulik Siddhant, N.I.A, Jaipur 302002.

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda has a treasure of ages old and established theories proposed to have complete physical, mental and social health. One of these theories is concept of *vajikarana* which is not only intended to increase sexual potency and quantity of semen but, in fact, it renders complete physical and mental strength thereby enabling a man to produce healthy and virtuous generations. It is a quest of every couple of every socio-economic group to have a good progeny. Sexual health is also a fundamental in relationship of a couple. The ancient *Acharyas* have described *Vajikarana* for production of healthy generations, vigour and replenishing the lost *Shukra dhatu*. The use of *Vajikarana* therapy is must to maintain the balance among all body tissues.

KEYWORDS: Aphrodisiac, diet, regimen, *ayurveda*, *shukra dhatu*.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sexual and reproductive health has been of concern since ancient times. Incidence of sexual disorders like erectile dysfunction, premature ejaculation and retrograde ejaculation is seen commonly. According to WHO definition of sexual health is a state of physical, emotional, mental, and social well being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of the disease, dysfunction or infirmity.^[1] Sexual and reproductive health was given an international consensus definition at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994. At its core is promotion of reproductive health, voluntary and safe sexual and reproductive choices for individuals and couples, including decision on family size and timings of marriage. Sexuality and reproduction are vital aspect of personal identity and are fundamental to human well being fulfilling relationships within diverse cultural contexts.^[2]

Ayurveda is known for its eternity. Its principles are ages old and serving the humanity since the life existed on the earth. Apart from its curative aspect it has strong and rich treasure of preventive and health promoting therapies. Promotive or invigorating type of treatment is known as *Swasthasaya-urjaskara* which is further categorised into aphrodisiac (*vrishya*) and rejuvenating (*rasayana*). *Swasthya-urjaskara* therapies promote the strength of healthy person.^[3] The substances which promote sexual vigour and reproductive functions are known as

vajikarana^[4] and the substances which provide strength and immunity to the healthy person and check natural decay of body are known as *rasayana*.^[5] Both can further be classified as diet, regimen and drugs. The *Rasayana* provides excellent nutrition to all the *dhatu*s but the *vrishya* nourishes *shukra dhatu* specially.

Vajikarana tantra is a branch among eight branches of *ayurveda* which is meant for providing affluence, producing exhilaration and increasing the quantity of *shukra dhatu*.^[6] The drug or therapy which bestows healthy offspring, elation (immediate feeling of joy) and capacity to copulate with women with great vigour just like a horse is known as *Vajikarana* (virilification). The aphrodisiac formulations give pleasure, progeny and potency. *Vajikarana* therapy is not only intended to increase sexual potency and quantity of semen but, in fact, it renders complete physical and mental strength thereby making a man to produce healthy and virtuous generations.

For achieving this aim so many formulations, recipes and regimens have been mentioned in treatises. *Acharya Charaka* quotes that a person who has control over his sense organs should use aphrodisiacs regularly because *dharma*, *artha*, *priya* and *yasha* all are dependent on it, as it makes the person enable to produce offspring, which is resort of these qualities.^[7]

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The classical *ayurveda* treatises *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita* and *Ashtanga Samgraha* have been explored regarding the concept of aphrodisiacs, findings organised systematically and critically analysed for a rational outcome.

3. REVIEW OF CONCEPT OF VAJIKARANA (APHRODISIACS)

The *kama* (gratification of desire) has been kept under *purushartha chatushtaya* (four objects of human life) and health is considered to be root cause of it.^[8] Good progeny and fulfilment of physical or sexual desires has been a point of consideration since ages. A person desirous of children should daily use aphrodisiacs if he wants *kama* (satisfaction of worldly desires and *sukha* (happiness)).^[9] An aphrodisiac is a substance that increases libido when consumed.

a.) Indications of *vajikarana*^[10]

- *Vajikarana* therapy should be followed after *rasayana* therapy by the person desirous of it. *Rasayana* therapy produces long lasting attributes in the body. *Vajikarana* prove beneficial only when it is preceded by *rasayana* therapy because it nourishes all body tissues from *rasa* to *shukra*. *Rasayana* nourishes all the *dhatu*s equally but *vajikarana* nourishes *shukra* specifically. Deficiency of *shukra* after sexual intercourse is replenished by use of *vrishya dravyas*. Therefore, the use of *vajikarana* therapy is must to maintain the balance among all body tissues.
- It is indicated to be administered to males of young and middle age i.e. 17 yrs to 70 yrs only. It is not necessarily useful in woman as she is supposed to be less active during intercourse. It is also useful in impotent persons.
- It should be practiced always because it has less attributes, which are short lasting.
- It should be used by individuals who have self-control. The person who is not self-controlled would indulge in sexual acts more after the use of *vrishya* formulations, which could be harmful on personal as well as social basis. The person, who has not control over sense organs, if excessively indulged in sexual activities suffers from grave consequences like giddiness, feeling of guilt, general debility, depletion of body tissues, inability of sense organs and premature death.
- It is indicated for the people who are old, lascivious and desirous of women, not wasted by indulgence in women, impotent and deficient in semen, endowed with charming look and youthfulness. *Acharya Sushruta* has also indicated to practice sexual act regularly by a man who is healthy and use aphrodisiac.^[11] The *vajikarana* should be used prior to sexual intercourse as it replenishes the lost *dhatu*. So the time indicated for sexual act may be considered appropriate for undergoing *vajikarana* therapy. Therefore, the use of *vajikarana dravyas* in

winters should be maximum, medium in spring and autumn season and low in summer and rainy season.

b.) Classification of *vrishya dravya* (aphrodisiacs)

Vrishya is any substance which is sweet, unctuous, vitaliser, bulk promoting, heavy (not easily digestible) and exhilarating.^[12] Though generally the word *vrishya* and *vajikarana* are used as synonyms, the former relates to secretion of semen while the latter with the sexual potency for which the bull and the horse have been used as symbols respectively.

These are classified into three types^[13]

- *Shukra-vridhikara*- factors which increase the quantity of semen, e.g. black lentil (*Vigna mungo*), meat, ghee (clarified and heated butter).
- *Shukra-srutikaram* – factors which induce the ejaculation of semen such as determination for sexual act.
- *Shukra-sruti vridikaram* – factors which increase the ejaculation of semen and increase the quantity as well. E.g. milk, *ghee*, black lentil, seeds of *kapikachhu* (*Mucuna pruriens*) etc.

c.) Aphrodisiac and Rejuvenating Diet

Food is best among life sustaining factors.^[14] Nutritious food promotes longevity, strength and endows the individual with good complexion and lustre.^[15] Physical appearance, cheerfulness, contentment, corpulence, strength, intellect are dependent on food. Milk is best among vitalizers.^[16]

i. Medicated milk and milk products

Milk should be boiled with different types of *shukrala* (semen promoting), *jivaniya* (vitalizing), *brinhaniya* (bulk promoting) and *stanya* (galactagogue) drugs and before administration wheat flour, ghee, honey and sugar should be added.^[17] The persons using this can never get deficient of *shukra*. Some examples of medicated milk are.

- Milk boiled with seeds of *kapikacchu*, black lentil, *kharujura* (*Phoenix sylvestre*), *shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*), *shringataka* (*Trapa natans*), *mridvika* (*Vitis venifera*) and consumed after adding sugar and *vamshalocana* (exudate of *Bambusa arundinaceae*), *ghee* and honey to it.^[18]
- Milk boiled with *kharjura*, black lentil, *shatavari*, *madhuka* (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), *draksha* and seeds of *kapikacchu*.^[19]
- Milk of cow fed on black lentil leaves or sugarcane or *arjuna* (*Terminalia arjuna*) leaves added with sugar, honey and *ghee*.^[20]
- Milk boiled with *satavari*, *jivanti* (*Leptidinia reticulata*), *vidari* (*Pueraria tuberosa*), *kantakari* (*Sutanum surettence*), *gokshura* (*Tribulus terrestris*), black lentils, wheat, *shali*, *shashtika* (*Oryza sativa*).^[21]
- Milk boiled with fruits, bark, leaf buds of *ashwatha* (*Ficus religiosa*) and mixed with sugar, and honey.^[22]

- *Jivaka, rishbhaka, meda, jivanti, shravani, kharjura, mudhuka, draksha, pippali, ginger, shringataka, vidari, ghee, milk and water*; cooked like *ghrita* preparation is an excellent aphrodisiac, strength, complexion, voice and bulk promoting.^[23]
- *Ghee* prepared with decoction of *shatavari, vidari, masha, kapikacchu, gokshura, milk, sugar and honey* added to it, gives progeny and promotes virility.^[24]
- The supernatant fatty layer of curd added with sugar, honey, *maricha, vanshlochana* and small cardamom should be strained through a clean cloth piece in a new jar and consumed with rice with plenty of *ghee*.^[25]

ii. Dietary preparations

Different dietary preparations made up of meat and eggs of different animals are mentioned by sage *Charaka, Sushruta* and *Vagbhatta*. Only vegetarian preparations are being discussed in this article. These formulations promote progeny, potency, corpulence and strength in men.

- Boiled *shashtika* rice with black lentil soup and plenty of *ghee* followed by milk provides great sexual impulse.^[26]
- *Shashtika* white rice should be taken having plenty of *ghee* and mixed with sugar and honey along with milk.^[27]
- The *payasa* (rice cooked with milk) prepared of black lentil and *shashtika* rice cooked with plenty of *ghee* and milk prepared in the decoction of *gokshura* and *vidari*.^[28]
- Powder of vitalizers, relishing fruits, and seeds of *kapikacchu, black gram, tila, mudga, wheat flour, rice powder and ghee*, all are kneaded with milk and made into different kind of breads.^[29]
- Flour of black lentil, seeds of *kapikacchu, wheat, shali, shashtika* rice along with sugar, *vidari, ikshu* mixed with milk and cooked in *ghee* to make bread.^[30]
- Sugar, honey and wheat flour should be used to make different preparations.^[31]
- The powder of *tila, masha, vidari* and *shali* rice, moistened with juice of sugarcane, kneaded and *saindhava* added to it and cooked as *utkarika*.^[32]
- Powder of *pippali, masa, shali* rice, *barley* and wheat cooked in *ghee* in form of *pupalika* followed by milk added with sugar.^[33]
- Wheat cooked in milk along with fruits of *kapikacchu* mixed with *ghee* followed by drinking milk may be used.^[34]

d.) Aphrodisiac regimen

Apart from the food, the behavioural regimen and routine activities like exercise, massage, taking bath are also promoters of happiness and life. Some important measures to be followed are-

- The person should have strong determination and should be free from disease and fear.^[35]

- He should wear good clothes and always go for massage, unction, bath, perfumes, garlands and ornaments etc.
- He should be possessed with comfortable house and accessories and made to live in a good and pleasing atmosphere.^[36]
- He should have good company of friends, who are free from grief and pain, have similar conduct and who have lovable and pleasant disposition as well as speech.^[37]
- The natural conditions like big ponds having lotus flowers, fragrance of *jati* and *utpal* and underground rooms which are cold (suitable for summer season), rivers with beautiful waves, mountains with blue peaks, onset of black clouds (in rainy season), rise of beautiful moon at night, pleasant breeze, (autumn season) long nights, women smeared with saffron and *aguru* (winter season), pleasing companions, sound of *cuckoo* bird, flowers in the parks and forests, sound of the music (spring season) are excellent erotic factors for men.^[38]
- Paste of *ikshurasa, rishabhi* and fruits of *kapikacchu* should be applied to the feet for being strong in sexual activity.
- Paste of *punaranava, draksha, and kapikacchu* may be used for external application on feet.
- After sexual indulgence one should take bath and drink milk or juice or soup before going to sleep for maintaining the *sukra* and strength of body.^[39]

e.) Woman –The best aphrodisiac

A sexually excited female partner is the aphrodisiac par excellence as all objects of beauty are assembled in a woman which evokes the maximum delight in a man. The woman who is beautiful and young, educated, skilful and amiable is considered to be the best aphrodisiac. She represents beauty, fertility, motherhood and practically worldly wisdom.^[40]

4. CONCLUSION

Libido or sex drive is influenced by nutritional, biological, psychological, and social factors. *Vajikarana* therapy is basically a nutritional therapy. Aphrodisiac measures in the form of diet and behavioural regimen is necessary for improving sexual behaviour performance, spermatogenesis and or reproduction. These measures improve sexual activity, delays the time of ejaculation, increases libido, prevents exhaustion during intercourse. Additionally they increase general health status, vitality of offspring, strengthens body tissues, increase physical and psychological health and immunity and reproductive functions. Therefore, regular use of aphrodisiac dietary preparations and behavioural regimen is recommended for enhancing male sexual and reproductive health.

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