ABSTRACT

Autoimmunity is a state in which the body’s immune system fails to distinguish between ‘self’ and ‘non-self’ and reacts by the formation of autoantibodies against one’s own tissue antigens. Sjögren syndrome is a chronic autoimmune exocrinopathy distinguished by lymphatic infiltration of lacrimal and salivary glands. Primary Sjögren’s syndrome is characterized by Keratoconjunctivitis sicca, Xerostomia and Secondary Sjögren’s syndrome is characterized by RA, SLE, Scleroderma, Vasculitis (extraglandular manifestations). In Ayurveda we can understand primary Sjögren’s syndrome as Shuska Akshi Paka and secondary Sjögren’s syndrome as those disorders which can be included under the diseases like Amavata, Vatarakta, Kushta. In this article, attempt is made to understand the Sjögren syndrome and its treatment in Ayurveda by considering the concepts of Virudha ahara and Vyadhikshamatva.

Keywords: Autoimmune disorders, Sjögren syndrome, Virudha ahara, Vyadhikshamatva

INTRODUCTION: Sjögren’s syndrome is a chronic, slowly progressive autoimmune disease characterized by lymphocytic infiltration of the exocrine glands resulting in xerostomia and dry eyes. It is a systemic disease named after the Swedish ophthalmologist, Henrik Sjögren, who introduced the term ‘Keratoconjunctivitis sicca’ for dryness of eyes. It has two age peaks with first in the twenties and the second in the fifties. Middle-aged women (female-to-male ratio, 9:1) are primarily affected, although Sjögren’s syndrome may occur at any age, including childhood.

In Ayurveda, the features of dryness can be understood by the increase in Ruksha Guna of Vata. This can be managed by Sneha and its importance is quoted by Sushruta Acharya as ‘Snehasaro Ayam Purushaha’ and he explains Prana as Sneha Buyishta. The primary Sjögren’s syndrome can be understood by the reduction of Snehamsa and Vataprakopa whereas extraglandular involvement is seen in secondary Sjögren’s syndrome which can be understood with respect to the Dosha, Dhatu involved and treatment should be planned accordingly.

PATHOGENESIS
AYURVEDA ASPECT OF UNDERSTANDING SJÖGREN’S SYNDROME

As Sjögren’s syndrome is an autoimmune disease, understanding of concept of autoimmune disease in Ayurveda is essential. While explaining the cause for the manifestation of disease, it has been explained that consumption of unwholesome food will not suffer from diseases, even consumption of wholesome food (Hita Ahara) can also suffer from disease. Apart from unwholesome diet (Apathya Ahara), there are other factors for the causation of disease like Kalaviparyaya, Pragnaparada, Asatmya Grahana of Shabdha, Sparsha, Rupa, Rasa, Gandha. These factors may produce diseases even in individuals accustomed to wholesome food (Pathya Ahara). An unwholesome food (Apathya Ahara) articles are more harmful depending upon the nature on Desha, Kala, Samyoga, Veerya, Pramana. Hence depending upon Apathya Ahara, Dosha involved, Sharira Vishesha, the diseases manifests either in the form of acute or chronic – it depends on involvement of Dosha and site of their vitiation. Considering all these factors, Sjögren’s syndrome can be understood in Ayurveda to be caused due to:

- **Apathya Vihara** – includes Toxic Chemical Exposure, Bacterial and Viral Infections and Illnesses
- **Sharira Vishesha** – can be understood in terms of Vikara Vighata Abhava, Bija Dosha/ Khavaigunya. Genetically pre-disposing (Family History of Autoimmune Disease) factors like HLA gene (Especially HLA-DR3, HLA-B8, HLA-DQA1) is the most important region affected in Sjögren’s syndrome.
- **Dosha - Vata Pradhana Tridosha.**

CONCEPT OF VIRUDDHA AHARA

Food substances after ingestion which causes Dosha Utklishta but does not expel out Utklishta Dosha from the body are to be considered as Viruddha Ahara. Concept of Virudha Ahara is considered here as it plays an important role in hampering the functional aspect of Vyadhikshamatva (immunity).

Various theories have been postulated for the pathogenesis of autoimmune disease, like processed foods which are loaded with chemicals in the form of preservatives, hormones, steroids, trans-fats and sugars, which promote the creation of free radicals in the body, which in turn damage the cells it can be correlated as Viruddha Ahara as follows,

Desha Viruddha - Environmental toxins responsible for autoimmune disease.
Agni Viruddha - Free radical production is due to Agni Viruddha inturn produces Ama in our body.
Matra Viruddha – Atimatra Sanskarita Ahara (processed food) may be taken as Matra Viruddha and it leads to formation of Ama
Satmya Viruddha - Intake of food items not suitable to a person’s body constitution for a longer period may be called as Satmya Viruddha.
Paaka Viruddha - In recent era processed food also one of the causative factors of Autoimmune disease.
Samskara Viruddha - Use of preservatives in various food products packed in tinned bottles for longer time can result in formation of toxins leading to manifestation of autoimmune disorders.
Veerya Viruddha - Can be lead to autoimmune diseases, as Acharya Charaka has also stated phrase- “Viruddha Veerya Ashanan Nindita Vyadhi Karanam ”.
Samyoga Viruddha - It is stated by Charaka that taking of milk and fish together can lead to Kushtha Roga.
Sampada Viruddha - Intake of such food items which are not having edible qualities like overripe, unripe, putrefied fruits, food items etc. It is seen practically that fruits and vegetables available in market are mostly synthetically made ripe which soon loses its qualities leading to formation of Ama.
Vidhi Viruddha - Unwashed fruits or vegetables contaminated with pesticides can also cause autoimmune diseases.
Virudha Ahara can be considered under Dushi Visha, which vitiates the Dhatu in the body.
Hence, the role of Virudha ahara in Agni Dushana (Mandagni) and in the formation of Ama, which inturn Mandagni is responsible for the causation of many diseases can be understood.

**VYADHIKSHAMATVA**

Vyadhikshamatva is a broad concept comprising the whole modern understanding of immunology and other gross and subtle factors paying attention to the prevention and progression of disease in human body.

**Vyadhikshamatva is defined as** “vyadhikshamatvam Vyadhibalavirodhitvam Vyadhyyupadapratibandhatvamiti Yaavat”6. Vyadhikshamatva (resistance to the diseases or immunity) includes both attenuation of the manifested diseases as well as prevention of the unmanifested one.

- **Vyadhibalavirodhitvam** – is concerned with the action or process after the disease has manifested in the body. (antagonistic to the strength and virulence of disease).
- **Vyadhyyupadapratibandhatvamiti** – controls the disease during the Samprapti stage (capacity to inhibit and prevention of the manifestation of disease).

**Vyadhikshamatva** is not equal in all individuals, this is due to different nutritional status of the individuals because Ojas, Bala and Vyadhikshamatva are dependent on nutritious food.

**Vidhi Viruddha** - Unwashed fruits or vegetables contaminated with pesticides can also cause autoimmune diseases.

**Vyadhikshamatva** plays an important role in manifestation of autoimmune disease (Sjögren’s syndrome).
PRIMARY SJÖGREN’S SYNDROME IN AYURVEDA: Primary Sjögren’s syndrome characterized by Keratoconjunctivitis sicca, Xerostomia, often with extraglandular manifestations but without additional autoimmune diseases.

In Ayurveda, there is no direct reference regarding signs and symptoms of Sjögren’s syndrome, we can understand primary Sjögren’s syndrome as Shuska Akshi Paka where dryness of eyes is seen as a main symptom and it can be considered under Anukta Vata Vyadi. Decreased immunity (impairment in the functional aspect of Bala, Ojas, and Vyadhi kshamatva)

CHIKITSA
VIRECHANA
Shenapana with Kalyanaka Gritha/Mahatiktaka Grita followed by Virechana with Trivrut Avalehya.

NASYA – with Ksheerabala Taila, Mahamasha Taila, Kalyanaka Gritha, Anu Taila will be beneficial.

SHIRODHARA – with Ashwagandha Balalakshadi Taila, Tungadrumadi Taila, Ksheerabala Taila will be beneficial.

IN SHUSHKA AKSHI
Tarpana with Jeevanthyadi Gritha, Mahatriphala Gritha
Internally Jeevanthyadi Gritha, Mahatriphala Gritha with milk will be useful.

IN SHUSHKA KANTA
Kavala and Gandusha with Triphala Kashaya, Irimedadi Taila, Yastimadhu Phanta
Pratisarana with Sitopaladi Churna along with Navaneeta.

SECONDARY SJÖGREN’S SYNDROME IN AYURVEDA
In secondary Sjögren’s syndrome, mainly RA, SLE, Scleroderma, Vasculitis are associated along with symptoms of primary Sjögren’s syndrome. These disorders can be included under the diseases manifested due to Virudha Ahara like Amavata, Vatarakta, Kushta. These disorders can also be considered under Dushi Visha as Acharya Sushrutha says ‘Sthitam Rasadishvathava Yathokthaan Karoti Dhatuprabhavan Vikaran’ i.e. wherever Dushi Visha involvement is there and takes its Ashraya in different Dhatu and produces different diseases respective to the Dosha and Dhatu involvement. Chikitsa should be planned based on the involvement of Dosha Dhatu Ashraya and following the treatment principles of Virudha Ahara.

CHIKITSA
- These diseases don’t affect the individual who has strong digestive power, who does the oleation regularly and who has strong physique due to regular physical exercise.
- Virechana, Vamana, Shamana, prophylaxis should be administered in the diseases caused by intake of Virudha Ahara.

- Deepana, Pachana to be given importance in these diseases to correct Mandagni and to treat Ama (for Amapachnartha). Formulations like Panchakola Churna, Trikatu Churna, Ajmodadi Churna, Vaishvanara Churna, Hingvadi Churna, Chitrakadi Vati, Agnitude Vati.
- Rasayana which have immunomodulatory activity should be administered after Shodhana, like Pippali Vardhamana Rasayana, Branna Rasayana, Shiva Gtika, Suvarna Malini Vasantha rasa.

DISCUSSION
- Sjögren syndrome is a chronic autoimmune exocrinopathy distinguished by lymphatic infiltration of lacrimal and salivary glands. Primary Sjögren’s syndrome is characterized by Keratoconjunctivitis sicca, Xerostomia which can be included under Shuska Akshi Paka. Secondary Sjögren’s syndrome is characterized by RA, SLE, Scleroderma, Vasculitis (extraglandular manifestations) which can be included under the diseases like Amavata, Vatarakta, Kushta.
- In these auto-immune diseases, the partially digested dietary substance accumulated at the level of intestine, part of Ama penetrates intestinal mucosa, circulates all over the body and perform the role of Antigen, consequently vitiating the Dosha to cause different disorders.
- Ama can also be compared to unstable reactive free radicals, which are the main cause of many diseases and degenerative changes in the body and it may be produced due to Viruddha Ahara.
- Hence we can assume that Viruddha Ahara is one the prime factors responsible causation of autoimmune diseases.
CONCLUSION

- It has been described that majority of diseases are due to uncontrolled or wrong dietary habits, lack of exercise and environmental factors, which in turn causes Ama and Agni Dusti which play an important role in disease manifestation.
- In Ayurveda, there is no direct reference regarding signs and symptoms of Sjögren’s syndrome and it can be understood under the concept of Vyadhikshamatva and Viruddha Ahara.
- Symptoms of primary Sjögren’s syndrome can be included under Sushka Akshi Paka and Udakavaha Sroto Dusti and symptoms of secondary Sjögren’s syndrome can be considered under the diseases manifested due to Virudha Ahara like Amavata, Vatarakta, Kushta.

REFERENCES


Corresponding Author:
Dr A S Nagalakshmi, PG scholar, Department of kayachikitsa, SKAMCH&RC, Bengaluru.
Email: nagalakshmias23492@gmail.com

Source of support: Nil Conflict of interest: None Declared