

## ACHARA VAJIKARANA - A CONCEPT DERIVED

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### ABSTRACT

The present sophisticated generation is engaged in various sorts of unhealthy activities such as excessive usage of mobile, computer, internet, different causes of high radiation load along with various types of stress. To relax the mind from daily competitions, people often take the shelter of smoking, drug abuse etc. Along with this, the modern man has lost much of the control over his senses. Thus, these lead to deteriorated sexual functions and are major cause of infertility. Hence, a change in lifestyle is needed more than any type of medicine. The regimens to attain a good fertility status have been advocated in *Ayurvedic* texts under the *Vajikarana* heading.

**Keywords:** Infertility, sterility, *Vajikarna*, lifestyle.

### INTRODUCTION

Psychological stress is harmful to sperm and semen quality, affecting its concentration, appearance, and ability to fertilize an egg, according to a study<sup>1</sup>. It is not fully understood how stress affects semen quality. It may trigger the release of steroid hormones called glucocorticoids, which in turn could blunt levels of testosterone and sperm production. Another possibility is oxidative stress, which has been shown to affect semen quality and fertility.

Psychological stress is harmful to sperm and semen quality, affecting its concentration, appearance, and ability to fertilize an egg, according to a study led by researchers Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health and Rutgers School of Public Health. Results are published online in the journal *Fertility and Sterility*.

According to the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, infertility affects men and women equally, and semen quality is a key indicator of male fertility.

"Men who feel stressed are more likely to have lower concentrations of sperm in their ejaculate, and the sperm they have are more likely to be misshapen or have impaired motility," says senior author Pam Factor-Litvak, PhD, associate professor of Epidemiology at the Mailman School of Public Health. "These deficits could be associated with fertility problems."

The researchers studied 193 men, ages 38 to 49, enrolled in the Study of the Environment and Reproduction at the Kaiser Foundation Health Plan in Oakland, California, between 2005 and 2008. The men completed tests to measure work and life stress on subjective scale (how they felt overall) and objective scale (life events behind the stress). They also provided semen samples. Technicians at the University of Cali-

fornia, Davis, used standard methods employed in fertility testing to assess the samples for semen concentration, and sperm appearance and motility<sup>2</sup>.

Measured subjectively or objectively, life stress degraded semen quality, even after accounting for men's concerns about their fertility, their history of reproductive health problems, or their other health issues. Workplace stress was not a factor; however, the researchers say it may still affect reproductive health since men with job strain had diminished levels of testosterone. Being without a job did not improve matters. Unemployed men had sperm of lower quality than employed men, regardless of how stressed they were.

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"Stress has long been identified as having an influence on health. Our research suggests that men's reproductive health may also be affected by their social environment," says Teresa Janevic, PhD, the study's first author and an assistant professor at the Rutgers School of Public Health.

While several previous studies have examined the link between stress and semen quality, the current paper is the first to look at subjective and objective measures of stress and find associations with semen concentration, and sperm appearance and motility<sup>1</sup>.

#### **MATERIALS & METHODS:**

*Ayurveda* has much to say here as we have *Dravyabhuta* as well as *Adravyabhuta* approach. Even though a direct reference like *Acharya Rasayan* is not there for *Vajikarana* but the concept has been explained well in the texts. There are quotations that explain the need of proper regimens and rules other than the medicines for the sexual debilities. Modern views also support the fact that Psychological factors play a very important rule in such conditions<sup>2</sup>

*Acharya Charaka* says that one should keep friends with those having good nature, those having similar mental status, positive attitude, those who always stay

happy with no tensions in mind - those who are intelligent and of similar age, the people that speak good - Such social circle imparts aphrodisiac qualities in a human being<sup>3</sup>.

Also, further say that *Abhyanga* (good body massage), *Udwartana* (scrubbing the body with herbal pastes), bath, suitable perfuming, wearing fragrant garlands, jewellery, having good place to reside, comfortable bedding, nice clothing, natural places full of chirping birds, *Samvahana* and compatible partner are all vitalizing acts<sup>4</sup>.

Spending time in fragrant water pools filled with beautiful lotus and lillies. High waterfalls, beautiful hilly places, cloudy days, fresh breeze are all factors increasing vigour in a person. Staying under moonlight on fullmoons, at scenic relaxing places, walking at beautiful lawns having numerous flowers, good & hygienic diet, listening to the favourite music, keeping oneself broadminded. Even the intake of proper quantity of alcohol to keep the mind in stress free tranquilized state. Those who have satisfied their mental desires are able to attain the aphrodisiac qualities<sup>5</sup>.

*Astanga Hrudaya* has accepted *Acharya Charaka* view<sup>6</sup>. *Astanga Sangraha* has accepted few facts in *sutrasthana* also<sup>7</sup>.

The present era believes in minimum use of medicines of any kind so the Ayurvedic seasonal and daily regimens along with Yoga have become favourite lifestyle for many across the globe. Thus, knowledge of the above described regimens can also be spread as aphrodisiac regimens.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Psychological stress can be defined as any uncomfortable 'emotional experience' accompanied by predictable biochemical, physiological and behavioural changes or responses. Many clinical studies looking at the effects of psychological stress on male fertility have shown that stress is associated with reduced paternity and abnormal semen parameters. Enough scientific evidence exists to suggest that psychological stress could severely affect spermatogenesis, mainly as a result of varying testosterone secretion. The hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis has a direct inhibitory action on the hypothalamic-pituitary-gonadal (HPG)

axis and Leydig cells in the testes. The newly discovered hormone, gonadotropin-inhibitory hormone (GnIH), also has an inhibitory effect on the HPG axis. Inhibition of the HPG axis results in a fall in testosterone levels, which causes changes in Sertoli cells and the blood–testis barrier, leading to the arrest of spermatogenesis. Germ cells also become vulnerable to gonadotoxins and oxidation. However, the extent and severity of the effects of psychological stress on human testes is difficult to study and data mostly come from animal models. Despite this limitation, stress as a causative factor in male infertility cannot be ignored and patients should be made aware of its effects on testicular function and fertility and helped to manage them.

*Vajikarana* has always stayed a valuable branch of *Astangayurveda*. The drug aspect has been broadly covered but very less limelight is given to the regimens i.e. the mental and physical factors in the management. While if we come across the infertility issue, most of the time it is stress related. Thus, relieving stress by providing various ideal conditions may probably restore the normal health either by acting on levels of glucocorticoids or oxidative stress. The modern-day researches are very supportive to the same. The regimens are bit similar to now days adventurous lifestyles followed as beach parties, camp fires, rafting, swimming, hygiene, jumping etc. by some people.

## CONCLUSION

The International level researches have proved the role of stress in male infertility. There is need of easy ways to cope up the stress. *Ayurveda*, here can represent some easy regimens which can restore the vitality in the body. This further nourishes the *dhatu*s to their most essence forms and help in progression of fertility as well. Keeping the points in mind, this can be termed as “*Achar Vajikarana*” and should be encouraged globally rather than mere medicinal treatments.

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