



## Review Article

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### CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING OF *SHADCHAKRA*: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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#### ABSTRACT

Contemporary science is a bridge between Ayurveda and modern science that enlightened the old concepts and familiar to the scientific community. It has been broadly accepted in the scientific community that the physiological functions of the body is influenced by *Shatchakra*. The literature review of this article explain that Intercellular gap junction or nexuses regulate physiological mechanism underlying subtle energy systems. Furthermore, electrical conduction associated with gap junctions could generate phenomena which, have the radiant qualities attributed to *Chakra*. This study aims to critically analyze and explore the concept of *Shadchakras* anatomy with its radiological evidence to prove and understand its therapeutic potential in light of contemporary science language. For this review, we had collected information from Ayurveda and modern literature on the subject of *Shadchakras*. Scientific pieces of evidence provide prove about *Shadchakras* existence with anatomical correlation and physiologically as a part of *Sukshma Sharir* which can affect our body and mind as well and maintain quality of life.

**Keywords:** *Chakra, Sukshma Sharir, subtle energy, Shadchakras*

#### INTRODUCTION

Today, 21st century growing with some Ayurvedic fundamental concepts that helped to rediscover the correlation between Ayurveda in modern language. The identification of the genomic links and radiological imaging leads to a search for evidence to prove the *Shadchakra* theory. The contemporary science of Ayurveda appears in a fresh light as a result of many kinds of research.

In this article, we discuss the points which elaborate on the basic concept of *Shadchakra* healing in light of scientific correlates to re-evaluate them in contemporary language.

Acharya Charaka says-

*"Sarvam Dravyam Panchbhautikam"*<sup>1</sup>

That is every substance in the universe is composed of five elements- *Prithivi, Jala, Agni, Vayu, and Akash*. They make not just the physical composition but also the mind and the spirit also. Most of the diseases are conceived around the *Panchmahabhuta* and *Tridosha* theory of Ayurveda. Advancement to this understanding *Shadchakra* healing theory correlates with the whole-body genomic expression.

#### Review of Literature

According to Ayurveda *Shadchakra* is a part of *Sukshma Sharir*. Anatomically the person can't see or touch it, because *Sukshma Sharir* is the energy of our body and *Chakras* are the energy centres. It is a complex energy-conducting network located within the body that receives and processes what has been called subtle energy or bio-energy<sup>2</sup>. This contemporary understanding

emphasizes the conceptual similarity between Ayurveda and modern science. This theory provides a scientific rationale for many details of *Chakra's* theory that had previously been unexplained and offers a new orientation to conceptualizing and studying such subjective phenomena.

#### Energy field

Human energy fields include the physically measurable electromagnetic fields generated by cells, tissues, and organs, and the whole body. There are also bio-fields subtle or putative fields emanating from these pulsing units of life as well as our subtle energy bodies, channels, and aspects of self<sup>3</sup>. A Russian scientist Semyon Kirlian conducted a scientific experiment by using an ultra-sensitive photographic process and showed a colourful, radiant energy field surrounding the physical bodies of humans, animals, and plants. This energy field called *Aura*; interpenetrates the visible physical body, 4 to 5 inches extending from the Skins or body surface<sup>4</sup>.

Life was considered to be a bio-electrical and vibrational energy phenomenon and so health The physical body is the reservoir of energy. These energy bodies are termed the "Bioplasmic body" "Bio" meaning life; and "plasma" the fourth state of matter after solids, liquids, and gases. Life existed because of the life force and energy running through *Shadchakra*<sup>5</sup>. *Chakra* healing is a highly developed system of an energy-based healing technique that utilizes "*Prana*" to balance, harmonize, and transform the body's energy process.

According to Acharya Sushruta twelve *Prana- Agni, Soma, Vayu, Saiva, Raja, Tama, Panchendriya, Bhutatma* that ensure life for all creatures by its presence in the body<sup>6</sup>.

When you speak the *Bija Mantras*, you resonate with the energy of the associated *Chakra*<sup>7</sup>." Similar to a tuning fork, our vocal cords vibrate as we make certain sounds of *Chakras*. This resulting vibration can generate healing energy.

Neurophysiologist and psychologist Dr Valerie V. Hunt have scientifically verified that there are two primary electrical systems in the physical body. The first is the alternating electrical current of the brain and nervous system which governs our muscles, hormonal, and physical sensual activities. The second is continuous, electromagnetic radiation which allows for energy exchange between an individual and their environments<sup>8</sup>. The primary electrical flow is therefore established by the circulatory system. As well, the nervous system interacts with the circulatory system and creates distinct flows, seen as whirling patterns, within the field. According to Oschman "healing energy whether produced by a medical device or projected from the human body is the energy of a particular frequency or set of frequencies (music chanting (*Mantra*)) that stimulates repair of one or more tissues"<sup>9</sup>. This review of the literature highlights that, cells respond as a result of the electromagnetic field that is directly introduced into that cell. This theory supports the concept of Chakra Healing. Subtle and environmental energies act on the *Chakra* as current or waves affecting the system in the body and the functioning of the *Chakra*.

The human body is an electromagnetic battery system powered by *Chetana* (consciousness), with a well-aligned infra-structure consisting of a metabolic cellular system (the physical, gross body) that goes along with a psycho-sensory electromagnetic circuit board (subtle body). This psychic body of illumination has a vibrating infrastructure that consists of a metaphysical field of electro-magnetic power-lines of force, anchored through the "six *Chakra*"<sup>10</sup>.

### **Shadchakra anatomical perspective**

*Shadchakra* interacts with the physical body through two major systems, the endocrine system, and the nervous system. Each of the seven *Chakra* is associated with one of the seven endocrine glands, and also with a group of nerves called a plexus. Thus, each *Chakra* can be associated with particular parts of the body and particular functions within the body controlled by that plexus or that endocrine gland associated with that *Chakra*<sup>11</sup>. Various frequencies acting on the physical body at different anatomical sites produce an energy field around the body.

Shang described *Chakra* as remnants of embryological organizing centres within the CNS, possessing a similarly high concentration of gap junction connections. An increasing amount of evidence shows that chemical synapses are only part of the neural control process and under many circumstances, electrical synapses contribute to important functions. As a healing practitioner becomes more adept, subtler systems using gap junctions could be activated, changing energetic states in groups of cells, including opening connections between different compartments within the glial syncytium. While it is difficult to imagine how subtle gap junction mechanisms could be studied in humans, a Chinese acupuncture study has demonstrated an increase in the expression of a particular gap junction protein at an acupuncture point in rats using acupuncture stimulation. Acupuncture in humans has been demonstrated to modify limbic and subcortical brain activity in an MRI study.<sup>12-13</sup> Glial functions in the brain have been related to many neurological and psychiatric disorders. This implies that healing practices such as *Chakra* concentration and *Mantra* meditation also promoting fundamental changes in neural structures that allow a broader neural/glial syncytium to be established. Healing practices would

provide access to these subtle electrical circuits and functions. Until the gap junction theory of *Chakra* could be said scientifically to justify the existence of Pranic energy (kuñd'alinii) reside at the base of the spine. Identification of gap junctions within the nervous system has difficulties and it is not likely to be easy to find the proposed *Chakra* centres within the CNS in animals or humans. New technologies such as Functional near-infrared spectrometry (NIRS), Functional magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), together with more refined electrophysiology could potentially yield signs of this underlying physiology. If gap junctions are associated with the *Chakra* function, some type of electrical signature should be present that could be identified. This is challenging for anyone to explaining Chakra's existence and to demonstrate how something nonphysical could interact with the physical<sup>14</sup>. So, the route of the *Chakra* system from the physical body through the hormones, to the psychological and emotional body is through the endocrine system, which is closely associated with the *Chakra* system.

### **Therapeutic potential of Chakras as bioenergetic medicine**

Each Sanskrit letter of the alphabet is inscribed on each lotus petal of every *Chakra* has its own uniquely powerful vibration which is used to activate the qualities of each petal. You can practice properly use a *Chakra* system as originally intended invoking and installing the images and energies of Hindi deities into each *Chakra* and intoning Sanskrit sound. These energy centres governing a group of physiological activities that can help to maintain our health or wellbeing. The imbalance of *Chakra* can lead to an imbalance of energies in the body at various organs level, which will lead to many mental and physical disorders. The scientific decoding of concept of *Shadchakras* that forms the framework of health management with the help of quality of life is being reviewed here by us in simplified manner.

"The Bija Mantras do activate (unlock) the energy of *Chakras* to purify & balance the mind & body.

### **Energy healing on a genetic level**

Unhealthy lifestyle, mental stress, oxidative stress cause disturbance in the energy field (*Shadchakras*), and low immunity. These factors disturb the *Prakriti* (Genotype) due to disturbance of (Phenotype) *Vata, Pitta, Kapha Satwa, Raja, Tama* that is DNA mutation. Epigenetic alterations convinced by neuro developmental and metabolic disorders are associated with environmental stress.

In Korea, scientists believe that the primary vascular system is actually the physical component of the meridian system and they also suggest that this system is involved in the routing of energy flow and information, relayed by bio-photons (which are electromagnetic waves of light) and by DNA.

Healing therapy as integrative medicine not only considers the holistic perspective of the physiological components of the individual but also includes psychological and mind-body aspects. *Chakra* Healing not only deals with mental attitude and awareness but do so through epigenetic reorganization and altered gene expression. External parameters such as diet and exercise represent prominent elements in the induction of such epigenetic changes, resulting in health benefits through genomic regulation<sup>15-16</sup>.

### **DISCUSSION**

Possible links between the sluggish production of neurons in the hippocampus and stress is being explored by researchers. The fact

of this theory about anti-depressant drugs assist this theory that can immediately boost and affect the neurotransmitter.

Each *Chakra* is associated with certain alphabets called *Beeja Akshara*, which need to be meditated to bring about balance in the *Chakra*. *Pranic* healing helps to nullify blockage in *Chakras* and creating positive energy in the body. *Shadchakras* healing procedure includes meditation or *Mantra* chanting can bolster well-being and improve quality of life. So when one person chants *Mantra* which is related to *Chakra* frequency, it's not just about chanting words it's deeply related to our brain mechanism. New radiological technologies such as Functional near-infra-red spectrometry (fNIRS), Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), together with more refined electrophysiology could potentially yield signs of this underlying physiology. In a study lead by Dr James Hartzell, the brain's massive grey matter density and cortical thickness were found to increase in those who had learned and routinely recited the *Mantra*<sup>17</sup>.

Experiments in Kirlian photography have also revealed that negative energies of any diseases appear first in the energy body before manifesting as a physical illness. Therefore, there can be three potential stages of *Chakra* that are underactive(block), balanced(clean), or overactive<sup>18</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

Earlier studies have already explained *Shadchakras* but this systematic review reveals some scientific evidence of *Chakra's* existence. By considering this review we may conclude that the concept of *Chakra* explained in ancient literature is very much relevant in contemporary science. The *Chakra* is conceived as a focal point or nexus which is associated with the interaction of a physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual nature or body physiology through two major systems: The endocrine system and the second is Nervous system. Both the system operates by intercellular gap junction communication system of our body. The Autonomic nervous system uses impulse conduction and neurotransmitters release to transmit information & the responses are rapid and localized while the endocrine system and gives a specific physiological effect.

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