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# Editorial

The ancient world conceptualized health with limited support evidences. Most of the concepts were based on experiences, observations and assumptions. Conceptualization about various aspects of health have been changed over centuries. It is not a claim of the modern medicine nor a blame to the ancient medicine; the changes in conceptualization about various aspects of health is rather attributable to the evolutionary process. Since, ancient times body fluids gained interest of people, who practiced medicine. Hippocrates, who is recognized as the father of medicine had given emphasis to four body fluids/secretions (Blood, Phlegm, Yellow Bile and Black Bile) as the attribute to well-being as well as psychological characteristics of individuals. These four body fluids were classically known as 'four humors'. Ancient literature has also given significance to genital secretions and semen. Importance of semen has been clearly emphasized in the ancient texts as an attribute to physical and psychological well-being and strength. As semen is a symbol of survival of the race through procreation, it might have gained the attention of intellectuals of ancient times, who might have glorified its importance and emphasized on its preservation.

Semen loss was mostly perceived in the perspective of illness in the ancient medicine. Even the normal physiological process got an illness label due to propagation of myths related to semen and its health implications.



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Write a mail to

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Though the condition is common in the Indian as well as many South East Asian countries and being treated by traditional healers and general practitioners since centuries, it caught the attention of researchers and systematically studied after Prof. N. N. Wig described it as 'Dhat Syndrome' in 1960s.

Since the term 'Dhat Syndrome' was coined, researchers attempted to study various aspects of this condition. Most of the existing researches are conducted over past two decades. Till date a single systematic review and a single long term follow up study exist on 'Dhat Syndrome'. There is no randomized control trial conducted among patients with 'Dhat Syndrome' to analyse the treatment effectiveness. Similarly, there is no standard diagnostic criteria as well as treatment protocol for patients with 'Dhat Syndrome'. Existing research mostly focus on the phenomenology, co-morbidities, belief systems, pathway of care and help seeking behaviour in patients. There are limited studies to explore the course & outcome, diagnostic stability and efficacy of various management strategies.

As 'Dhat Syndrome' is discussed in the context of South East Asian population and always seen as a culture specific phenomenon with overlapping phenomenology with various neurotic disorders, it is struggling to get a valid position in the current diagnostic system. However, considering it's prevalence in a population that roughly covers one fourth of the global population, it becomes an important diagnostic entity worthy for detailed and extensive research. More systematic researches on 'Dhat Syndrome' will give us better insight to the illness and enable us to formulate its remedy.

Dr. S.K. Kar

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