



Analytical Study of Agni Vitiation as a Pathological Factor

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ABSTRACT

A person is considered to be healthy when *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala*, and *Agni* of his body are in *Sama Awastha* (Balanced state) and *Indriya*, *Atma* and *Mann* all are functioning properly. Among these factors *Agni* is the important one. *Agni* in *Ayurveda* can be correlated with the digestive fire of the body.

According to *Ayurveda* *Agni* is described as an important factor for *Paka* i.e., digestive and metabolic processes of the body. Once the food is ingested in body it goes through different processes like digestion, absorption and assimilation which is necessary for maintenance of life. In *Ayurveda*, *Agni* is classified into 13 types based on its site of action and various functions it performs i.e. 1 *Jatharagni*, 5 *Bhutagni* and 7 *Dhatvagni*.

The four types of food after ingestion goes through the further digestive processes and gets transformed into *Sarabhaga* and *Kittabhaga* and this process of digestion is carried out by *Jatharagni*. *Saman Vayu* helps in increasing the digestive power of *Jatharagni*. This function of *Saman Vayu* is termed as *Agnipradeepan* in *Ayurveda*.

Ayurveda states that, vitiation of *Agni* produces all diseases. That's why *Agni* should be focused primarily in the treatment of each and every disease. This article focuses on detailed analysis of *Agni* vitiation in pathogenesis of various diseases in *Ayurveda*.

Key Words *Agni*, *Jatharagni*, *Dhatvagni*, *Agnimandya*, *Samprapti*, *Agnisandhukshana*

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INTRODUCTION

Life span, complexion, strength, health, enthusiasm, corpulence, lustre immunity, energy, heat processes and vital breath depends on *Dehagni* (body fire). For carrying out of all vital functions of body needs energy which is sourced from food. The *Agni* has its action on food and then convert into energy. Therefore, *Ayurveda* considers that

Dehagni is responsible for *Ayu*, *Varna*, *Bala*, *Swasthya*, *Utsaha*, *Prabha*, *Oja*, *Teja* and *Prana*¹. While stating the importance of *Agni*, *Charakacharya* has mentioned that stoppage of the function of *Agni* would lead to the death of an individual and *Sama Avastha* (balanced state) of the *Agni* in an individual would lead him to be absolutely healthy and a have a long, happy and



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healthy life. But vitiation of the *Agni* in a person would disturb the whole metabolism of his body ultimately resulting in ill health and diseases. That's why *Agni* is considered to be the base (*moola*) of life¹.

To understand any disease in *Ayurveda* Acharyas have explained the term *Nidan Panchak* which includes *Hetu*, *Purva rupa*, *Rupa*, *Upashaya*, *Anupashaya* and *Samprapti*. According to *Vagbhatacharya*, the pathogenesis of the disease which explains the Vitiation of *Dosha*, Successive Formation and Progression of the disease, is called *Samprapti*. It denotes the step by step progress of disease from *Hetu* *Sevan* to *Vyakti*. The knowledge of *Samprapti* helps not only in understanding the steps in the progression of disease but also plays a key role in treatment of disease by *Samprapti bhang*. Hence proper understanding of *samprapti* of every disease in *Ayurveda* is necessary for treatment of disease.

Importance of *Agni*:

According to *Ayurveda* derangement of *Agni* is responsible for development of each and every disease. Therefore one should give importance to *Agni* for maintaining the good health and wellbeing. Appropriate functioning of the digestive fire is must for normal tone of digestive system, circulatory system, strong immunity, proper tissue growth and body complexion. Poor or inappropriate digestive fire functioning leads to poor digestion, poor immunity against diseases, poor complexion, depleted energy levels etc. One dies if body fire is blown out, lives long and disease free life if it is functioning properly, gets ill if it get

deranged. Therefore *Agni* (digestive fire) is the basic cause for all. Therefore promoting the appropriate functioning of *Agni* is ultimately treating the basic cause of disease.

Types of *Agni*:

- *Charakacharya* has described 13 types of *Agni* in human body namely- 7 *Dhatvagni*, 5 *Bhutagni* and 1 *Jathragni*. Out of these 13 types *Jathragni* is the important one and nourishes the other *Agni*².
- *Sushrutacharya* has described five types of *Agnis* which are *Pachakagni*, *Ranjakagni*, *Alochakagni*, *Sadhakagni* and *Bhrajakagni*³.
- *Vagbhatacharya* has described different types of *Agni* as 5-*Bhutagnis*, 7-*Dhatvagnis*, 3-*Dhoshagni* and 3-*Malagni*.
- *Jatharagni*: *Jathara* means gut and *Agni* means fire. Thus *Jatharagni* means 'fire in the gut' which represents the physiological components of digestive and metabolic processes which takes place in the stomach (i.e. *Jathara*) and intestines (i.e. *Aantra*). All other types of *Agni* depend on the quality and quantity of this *Jatharagni*.
- *Bhutagni*: *Bhutagni* is related to *Panchmahabhutas* or five basic elements of creation and which are responsible for our physical being. Each *bhuta* is said to have fire of its own. Each *bhutagni* helps in digestion and assimilation of their own components from nutrient food into the tissues.
- *Dhatvagni*: *Dhatu* meaning tissue and *Agni* meaning fire. Thus the fire which is located inside the *Dhatu*s (tissues) is *Dhatvagni*. The



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Dhatvagni acts on the nutritive part they receive and convert them into finer components. These finer components formed after the action of *Dhatvagni* on the food help in the formation of the same tissues (i.e. *Dhatu*), nourishes the next tissue in sequence, produces energy and tissue toxins or waste components which are meant to be expelled out.

Agnipradeepan:

Agnipradeepan is the function of *Saman Vayu*. *Saman vayu* which is among the five types of *Vata dosha* and which is located near the digestive fire. It also supports for digestion and absorption of food in association with *Pachak Pitta* or *Jatharagni*.

Saman Vayu increase the *Pachan Shakti* (digestive power) of the *Jatharagni*. The *Prakrut Samana Vayu* increases the power of the *Jatharagni* as in nature, the fine blow of air increases the power of fire. This function of the *Samana Vayu* is called as *Agnipradeepan*.

Samprapti Ghatak of Some Diseases

Agni plays a major role in pathogenesis of diseases given below.

Table 1 Amlapitta

Dosha	Pitta Pradhan tridoshaj
Dushya	Rasa dhatu
Agni	Jatharagni
Agni vitiation	Mandagni
Srotas	Rasavaha, Annavaha
Adhithana	Amashaya
Rogamarga	Abhyantar

Table 2 Udararoga

Dosha	Tridosha, Prana, Agni, Apana
Dushya	Rasa, Udaka, Sweda
Agni	Jatharagni

Agni vitiation	Mandagni
Srotas	Rasavaha, Svedovaha Ambuvaha
Adhithana	Udara
Rogamarga	Abhyantar bahya

Table 3 Grahani

Dosha	Pitta Pradhan tridoshaj
Dushya	Rasa (Ahar rasa)
Agni	Jatharagni
Agni vitiation	Mandagni
Srotas	Annavaha, Purishvaha
Adhithana	Grahani
Rogamarga	Abhyantar

Table 4 Medoroga

Dosha	Kapha Pradhan vata pittanubandhi
Dushya	Rasa, Medo dhatu
Agni	Jatharagni, Medodhatwagni
Agni vitiation	Jatharagni sandhukshana, Medodhatwagnimandya
Srotas	Medovaha
Udbhavasthana	Amashaya
Vyaktasthana	Sarvanga specially Sphik, udara, stana
Rogamarga	Bahya-abhyantar

Types of Agni vitiation:

In *Ayurveda*, following states of the *Agni* vitiation have been elaborated:

Vishmagni: It results due to the predominance of *Vata Dosha*. It represents an uncertain state of *Agni*. Because of the variability in *Vata*, sometimes it quickly digests the food and sometimes digests very slowly. There are episodes of alternating cycles of strong appetite with loss of appetite and forgetfulness to consume food.

Tikshnagni: *Tikshna* means very quick/sharp/fast and *Agni* means digestive fire *Tikshnagni* results because of predominance of *pitta dosha*. In these cases, *Agni* is usually intensified. This type of *Agni* can easily digest even a heavy meal in a



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very short period of time. Sometimes in the absence of fuel it starts consuming body's own tissues (*Dhatu*).

Bhasmaka is the only disease which is described under *Tikshnagni* according to *Ayurveda*. In this *Roga* due to *Tikshnagni*, a person digests any kind of food and in the absence of food *Tikshnagni* starts to digest tissues of own body (*Saptadhatus*), resulting in *Daurbalyata*, *Karshatva* and end as *Mrityu*.

Mandagni: It results due to dominance of *Kapha dosha*. It is opposite to that of *Tikshnagni*. *Mandagni* makes person unable to digest and metabolize even a small quantity of food. There are episodes of poor appetite, slow metabolism and tendency to weight gain despite optimal food consumption. According to *Ayurveda* almost all diseases are caused due to *Mandagni*⁴.

Agnimandya is the main *Samprapti ghataka* of the diseases like *Amlapitta*, *udar roga* and *Grahani*. Along with these, *Agnimandya* is the main symptom in many diseases like *Jwara*, *Pandu*, *Atisara*, *Grahani*, *Ajeerna*, *Gulma*, *Kamala*, *Shotha*, *Shwasa*, *Pratishyaya*, *Arsha* etc. as described by the *Acharya Charaka*.

Samagni (Balanced *Agni*): It is a physiological state of *Agni* when all the three *Doshas* are in the state of equilibrium and they all contribute equally towards normalcy and balance of digestive fire. *Samagni* digests and assimilates food properly at the proper time. This thus increases the quality of the *Dhatus*. According to *Sushrutacharya*, persons having *Samagni* (Balanced *Agni*) along with *Sama* (balanced) *Doshas*, *Sama Dhatu* (properly formed

tissues), proper elimination of *Malas* (waste products), well-functioning bodily processes, and whose mind, soul and senses are in pleasant state are the *Lakshanas* (Characteristics) of *Swastha Purusha* (healthy person).

Agnisandhukshan:

Besides from the types of *Agni* vitiation explained above, this is the type which is different from others and is found in *Medoroga*. In *Medoroga* there is accumulation of *Kapha* & *Meda* which leads to *Srotorodha* which causes trapping of *Saman Vayu* in *Koshta* leading to *Avaraṇa* to *Samanaa Vayu*. Thus *Avrutta SamanVayu* leads to *Jatharagni Sandhukṣaṇa* & increased *Jatharagni* leads to rapid digestion of ingested food & resulting in increased craving for food. This vicious cycle continues and results in *Upachaya* of *Meda* resulting in *Medoroga*.

DISCUSSION

Agni is the main factor which plays an important role in pathogenesis of many diseases as described in *Ayurveda*. Among the types of Vitiation of *Agni*, *Agnimandya* is a main and important type responsible for pathogenesis of many diseases. As described in *Ayurveda*, almost all diseases are due to *Mandagni*⁴, especially *Udara roga*, *Arsha*, *Atisaara*, *Grahani roga*, etc. *Mandagni* leads to *Amanirmiti*. This *Ama* causes *Srotorodha*. This whole pathological event inhibits further process of digestion and absorption, thereby causing various gastrointestinal disorders like *Hrillasa*, *Chardi*, *Amlapitta*, *Atisaara*, *Visuchika*, *Alsaka*



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etc. Further, the *Ama Aahararasa* crosses the intestinal villi and enters the circulation which can be called as *Sukshma Ama-rasa*. This *sukshma Ama-rasa* causes impairment of *Bhutagni*. Due to *Bhutagni* impairment, the *Vijatiya ahararasa* will not be able to become *Sajatiya* and act as antigen in circulation, thus causing anaphylactic reaction and allergic disorders like urticaria, hay fever, allergic rhinitis, etc⁵. Again, the by-products like lactic acid, ketones etc. which does not attain finality in the metabolic processes due to hypo functioning of *Bhutagni* and *Dhatvagni* lead to disorders like *Madhumeha*, *Medoroga*, *Vatarakta*, *Amavata*⁵. All hormonal and enzymatic deficiencies like hypothyroidism may also be considered to occur due to hypo functioning of *Dhatvagni*. So, most of the diseases like gastrointestinal disorders, allergic and autoimmune diseases, and various metabolic disorders have hypo functioning of *Agni* and *Ama* formation as primary factor in their manifestation. This shows that *Agni* vitiation is the main factor in occurrence of diseases.

In *Medoroga* there is *Jatharagni sandhukshan* because of trapping of *Saman Vayu* in *Koshtha* and due to accumulation of *Kapha* and *Meda* it leads to *Avaraṇa* to *Samanaa Vayu*. Thus *Avrutta Saman Vayu* results into *Jatharagni Sandhukṣaṇa* & increased *Jatharagni* leads to quick digestion of ingested food leaving the person craving for food. This continuous vicious cycle results in *Upachaya* of *Meda* resulting in *Medoroga*.

CONCLUSION

Dosha, *Dushya*, *Agnimandya*, *Aam* and *Srotovaigunya* are said to be the key factors to develop a pathogenesis of any disease.

Jatharagnimandya or *Dhatvagnimandya* is considered as the root cause for many diseases in *Ayurveda*. *Hetusevan* causes *Doshaprakopa*. *Prakupit Dosha* vitiates *Dushya* leading to *Dosha-Dushya Sammurchhana* which results in *Mandagni*. *Mandagni* leads to *Amanirmiti* and further steps in progression of disease. Some of the disorders like *Ajirna*, *Alasaka*, and *Visuchika* are caused due to derangement of *Jatharagni* whereas disorders like *Medoroga* results from derangement of *Dhatvagni*. On this basis we can say that individual *Agni* has its own pathological importance. In *Medoroga*, *Jatharagni sandhukshan* and *Dhatvagnimandya* is the prominent feature due to vitiation of *Vata* by obstruction of *Medodhatu*.

Due to *Agnimandya*, the *Apachit Ahar-rasa* is produced which leads to formation of *Ama* and thus *Strotorodha*. Hence while treating any disease the *Sampraptibhang* always starts with *Amapachan* and *Agnivardhan*.

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