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Herbal Approach towards Management of *Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity): A Review

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays the complexities of human life, indulging in fast means of living, changing lifestyle, eating habits and increasing mental pressure in the race to become so-called cultured and civilized are the root causes of many diseases. A result of this changing lifestyle is a disease called "*Amalpitta*" and the number of such patients is increasing day by day. Eating food without hunger and eating against the season reduces the digestive fire and this leads to improper digestion of food. Improperly digested food, when mixed with bile, produces burning sensation, thirst, diseases of the mouth and 'acidity'. Acharya *Sushruta* has considered the taste of *Prakrit pitta* (bile) to be bitter and the taste of distorted or *vidagdha piita* (bile) as acid. When there is an increase in *Vidgdha Pitta*, it is called *Amlapitta*. '*Amal-vidagdham cha tat pittam amlapittam*'. In modern science it is known as hyperacidity and it is becoming a rapidly growing dreadful disease of stomach. Generally, two out of every five people are suffering from this disease. In present paper important aspect of *Amlapitta* (hyperacidity) and efficacy of medicinal herbs in its management are discussed.

Key Words *Amalpitta, Pitta, Hyperacidity, Burning Sensation, Medicinal Herbs*

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INTRODUCTION

Hyperacidity is a common problem related to the digestive system. Hyperacidity refers to the increased level of acid in the stomach. The stomach contains hydrochloric acid, a digestive juice that breaks down food particles into their smaller forms to aid digestion. When there is an excessive amount of hydrochloric acid in the stomach, the condition is known as acidosis. Hyperacidity is called *Amalpitta* in Ayurveda and in common parlance it is also known as *Pitta*. In Ayurveda, disease arises due to imbalance of *doshas*. Increase or decrease of any dosha creates

imbalance in doshas and this imbalance cause disease. *Pitta dosha* mainly increases acidity in the *Amlapitta*, use of excessive spicy, hot and oily food aggravates *Pitta doshas* and aggravated *Pitta* reduces the digestive fire, which leads to improper digestion of food and production of *Ama* (toxin), due to which the person gets burning sensation in the chest and sour belching. Many drugs are available in modern medicine to treat hyperacidity such as antacids, H₂ blockers, proton pump inhibitors, prostaglandins, etc. But these drugs have side effects like headache, diarrhoea, dizziness,



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allergic reactions etc. and still there is no permanent cure available and the patient has to bear the brunt. Therefore it is necessary to find a permanent cure without any side effects. Several herbal medicines have been described in the Ayurvedic literature for the management of *Amlapitta* and may be a better option as herbal medicines are considered safe and have fewer side effects.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Material for this article are gathered from various Ayurvedic literature such as *HaritSamhita, Madhav Nidana*, *Chakradatta, Bhavaprakash, Gada Nigraha, Vrinda Madhav Vaidya manorama, Bangasen Rasatantrasara va Siddha Prayoga Sangraha, Yoga Ratnakar, Ayurvedasar- sangra* and by Published research paper.

Aetiology of *Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity)-

There are many reasons for having acidity in which the main ones are-

- Eating excessively spicy and oily food.
- Eating food again without digestion of food eaten earlier.
- Consuming more acidic substances.
- Not getting enough sleep.
- Being hungry for a long time.
- By taking medicines like painkillers for a long time.
- By consuming excessive salt.
- Excessive consumption of alcohol and caffeinated substances.

- Overeating and falling asleep soon after eating.
- Due to excessive smoking.
- Sometimes due to excessive stress, food is not digested properly and acidity problem occurs.

Symptoms of *Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity) ¹-

- *Avipaka* (Indigestion)
- *Klama* (Tiredness without exertion)
- *Tikta Amlaodgara* (Bitter and sour burp),
- *Hrit-Kantha Daha* (Burning sensation in throat and chest),
- *Aruchi* (Anorexia)
- *Uthklesha* (Nausea)

Types of *Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity)-

A) According to Anubandha Dosha *Amlapitta* are of three types²

i) *Vataja-Kampa* (Tremors), *Pralapa* (Delirium), *Murchha* (Fainting), *Chimchimitva* (Tingling sensation), *Gaatraavasada* (Tiredness in body), *Shoola* (Pain in abdomen), *Tamo-darshana* (Darkness in front of eye), *Vibhrama* (Altered senses), *Moha* and *Harsha* (Delusion and Horripilation)³.

ii) *Kaphaja.Kapha –Nishthivana* (expulsion of mucus), *Gaurava* (Heaviness), *Jadata* (Stiffness), *Aruchi* (Anorexia), *Shita-avasaada* (Feeling of cold), *Vami* (Vomiting), *Agnimandya* (loss of appetite), *Kandu* (Itching), *Nindra* (Sleepiness)⁴.

iii) *Vatakaphaja*- Combined Symptoms of *Vataja* and *Kaphaja Amlapitta*⁵.

B) According to clinical presentation *Amlapitta* is of two type



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i) **Urdhwaga**- It is characterised with upper GIT symptoms- *Harita-Pitta-Neela-Krushna-Rakta* and *Amlayukta vaman* (Greenish, yellowish, bluish, blackish and Acidic vomitus containing blood) *Mansodakabha varna*- Atiamla,- *Atipichhila-Vividharasa yukta vaman* (Excessive sticky vomitus similar to water in which meat is washed and of various taste Vomitus), *Amlodgara* and *Tiktodgara* (Acidic eructations), *Kantha- Hrid-Kukshi Daha* (Burning Sensation in throat, heart and abdomen), *Shirah Shoola* (headache), *Hata-pad daha* (Feeling of warmth in palms and feet), *Kandu* (itching) etc⁶.

ii) **Adhoga**- It is characterised with lower GIT symptoms- *Trushna* (Thirst), *Daha* (Burning sensation), *Murchha* (Fainting), *Bhrama-Moha* (Delusion), *Hrillasa* (Nausea), *Kotha* (Urticaria), *Agnimandya* (Loss of appetite), *Harsha* (Horripilation) *Sveda* (Seating), *Anga-Pittata* (Yellowish discolouration of body)⁸.

Principle of Ayurvedic Management

• **Nidana Parivarjana**

• **Shodhana Chikitsa – Vamana** (With Madanaphala, Vacha, Patola, Nimba Kalka, Yashtimadhu Phanta, Saindhava Lavana Jala).

Virechana (Trivritta Lehya, Panchasakara Churna, Eranda Bhrishta Haritaki etc)

• **Shamana Chikitsa** – Use of Langhana, Pachana, Deepana draya

Ayurvedic Preparation used in *Amlapitta*

Churna- Avipattikara Churna⁹, Hingwashtaka Churna¹⁰, Pathyadi Churna^{11,21}.

Gutika, Vati, Modaka- Drakshadi Gutika¹⁰, Vasaguggulu¹², Gudadi Modak¹³

Pak- Narikelkhand¹⁴

Rasa, Loha, Mandur – Kamadudha Rasa¹⁵, Sutashekhara Rasa¹⁶, Leela Vilas Ras¹⁷, Amlappitantaka louha¹⁸, Dhatri Loha¹⁹, Sita Mandur²⁰

Bhasma and Pishti - Muktashukti Bhasma²¹, Prawal Pishti²².

Lavana- Narikela Lavana¹⁰.

Kwatha- Patoladi Kwatha¹³, Phalatrikati kwatha¹¹.

Kshara- Kalyanaka Kshara¹⁰.

Ghrita- Jirkadya Ghrita²³, Pippali Ghrita²³, Drakshadya Ghrita²³, Shatavari Ghrita²⁴.

DISCUSSION

Although acidity is a common problem, but most people are unable to use the right methods to deal with it. They usually take anti-acid medicines before or after meals to get quick relief from pain and indigestion. But this offers only symptomatic relief without touching the root cause of the problem. Instead of opting for a temporary solution to deal with the problem of acidity, it is better to use Ayurvedic medicinal herbs described in different Ayurvedic literature some of them are listed in table number 1. These herbs help in removing excess *kapha* and *pitta* dosha from the body and reduces inflammation of the gastrointestinal tract, relieves burning sensation and pain. It also reduces in *utkalesh* (nausea) and *adhyamana* (flatulence) and improves appetite and taste of mouth.



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Table 1 List of Ayurvedic Medicinal Herbs Used in *Amlapitta*

S.No	Sanskrit Name	Botanical Name	Internal uses	References
1.	Amalaki	<i>Embelica officinalis</i> Gaertn.	Amalaka fruits decoction	Harita Samhita 3.24.4
2.	Bhringaraj	<i>Eclipta alba</i> Hassk.	Powder of haritaki and bhringaraj along with jaggery	Charkadatta.52/12
3.	Dhanyak	<i>Coriandrum sativum</i> Linn.	Decoction of Patol, sunthi and Dhanyaka	Charkadatta.52/07
4.	Guduchi	<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i> Willd Miers ex Hook.f. & Thoms.	Decoction of guduchi, nimba and patol leaves with honey	<i>Bhavaprakash chikitsa</i> 10/16
5.	Guggulu	<i>Balsamodendron mukul</i> (Hook. ex Stocks)	Guggulu along with vasadi decoction control kaphaj amlapitta	Gada Nigraha.2.38.2
6.	Haritaki	<i>Terminalia chebula</i> Retz.	Haritaki along with draksha or honey and jaggery	Vrinda Madhav 53/14
7.	Jambira	<i>Citrus limon</i> (Linn.) Burm.f.	Juice of Jambira alleviates hyperacidity if taken in afternoon	Charkadatta.52/21
8.	Jiraka	<i>Cuminum cyminum</i> Linn.	Paste of Jiraka and danyaka cooked with grita	Charkadatta.52/51
9.	Katuka	<i>Picrorhiza kurroa</i> Royle ex Benth.	Avaleha prepared with kutki and sugara	Vrinda Madhav 53/14
10.	Narikela	<i>Cocos nucifera</i> Linn.	Narikelkhanda Narikela-ambu	Charkadatta.26/13-16 Vaidya manorama 4/17
11.	Nimba	<i>Azadirachta indica</i> A.Juss.	Nimbapanchanga churna along with vridhadaru, parched grain and sugar	Vrinda Madhav 53/18-19
12.	Paribhadra	<i>Erythrina variegata</i> Linn.	Paribhadra leaves decoction with amalaki	Harita Samhita 3.24.4
13.	Patola	<i>Trichosanthes dioica</i> Roxb.	Decoction of patol, triphala, nimba and honey	Vrinda Madhav 26/41
14.	Pippali	<i>Piper longum</i> Linn.	Pippali with honey	Vrinda Madhav 53/17
15.	Putik	<i>Holoptalia integrifolia</i> Planch.	Leaf bud of Putika along with grita are used for emesis in Amlapitta	Bangasen amlapitta. 17
16.	Shunthi	<i>Zingiber officinale</i> Rose.	Decoction of shunthi and patol	Vrinda Madhav 53/06
17.	Shatavari	<i>Asparagus racemosus</i> Willd.	Shatavari mool kalka along with ghrita	Charkadatta.52/57
18.	Vacha	<i>Acorus calamus</i> Linn.	Vacha along with honey and jaggery	Gada Nigraha.2.38.25
19.	Yava	<i>Hordeum vulgare</i> Linn.	Decoction of Yava, pippali and patol.	Charkadatta.52/09

CONCLUSION

Amlapitta or hyperacidity is a common digestive problems, if untreated may produce serious health issues. It can be manage easily by proper diet habit, healthy life style and by use of medicinal herbs or preparation. Above study reveals that many Ayurvedic medicinal herbs have potency to cure *Amlapitta* or hyperacidity and it can be cure easily by their proper use.



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