



A CRITICAL REVIEW ON AYURVEDIC CONCEPT OF AGNIMANDYA (LOSS OF APPETITE)

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ABSTRACT

Human beings, in order to adjust themselves in the modern era, have been compelled to become fast and mechanical. This is the reason why they can't give proper attention to daily and seasonal regimes, exercise and diet. This change in lifestyle is responsible for replacement of *Shad-rasatmak* Ahara by preserved and fast foods, bakery products, shift duties (i.e. *Ratree jagran*), stress. All these factors making them more and more susceptible for diseases generated by *Agnimandya*. According to them *Mandagni* is root cause of every disease. Due to this *Mandagni* Ahara-Pachan Kriya gets affected leading to production of *Sama* Ahara-Rasa which ultimately causes the Rasa *Dhatwagni Mandya* and *Uttarottar* Dhatu remains malnourished. Agni plays the key role in the process of bio-transformation. This is the reason why Ayurvedic Samhitas has given a lot of importance to Agni. The Ayu, *Varna, Bala, Swasthya, Utsah, Buddhi, Kanti, Oja, Teja* and *Prana* of human beings mainly depend on the status of Agni, because of this Agni should be kept in its *Prakut* state.

KEY WORDS: Agnimandya, Appetite, Mandagni, Dhatwagni, Oja, Bhootagni, Kayagni

INTRODUCTION

According to fundamental principles of Ayurveda *Agni* has an important role in the physiological functioning of body. Broadly Agni can be divided into three major categories¹⁻³:

- 1) *Jatharagni*
- 2) *7 Dhatwagni*
- 3) *5 Bhutagni*

Jatharagni has been considered prime among all Agnis. The functioning of other Agnis i.e. *Dhatwagni* and *Bhutagni*, are dependent upon the strength of *Jatharagni*. Hence it is praised as God itself because of its miraculous nature and action.¹

This *Agni* is *Parama-sukshma* and transforms the food substances into various forms which can be easily assimilated by our body. If *Jatharagni* becomes weak, it will result into improper formation of *Rasadhatu* and consequently *uttarottar* Dhatu formation hampers.

In Ayurvedic Samhita, decrease in the intensity of Agni has been termed as "*Agnimandya*"^{4,5}. The references of this disease have been found since Mahabharata Adiparva. Acharya Charak, Sushrut, Vagbhat has not described this disease separately but in the course of other diseases. Acharya Madhav has described *Agnimandya* as a separate disease.

Aims and Objectives

- To re-evaluate, discuss and elaborate the various Ayurvedic concepts and principals related to *Agnimandya*.
- To understand the relation between Agni and Dosha, concept of *Agnimandya* and evolution of various diseases.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This article is based on a review of Ayurvedic texts. Materials related to Agni, Ama, *Agnimandya* and other relevant topics have been collected. The main Ayurvedic texts used in this study are Charak samhita, Sushruta samhita, Astang sangraha, Astang hridaya, Madav nidana and available commentaries on

these. We have also referred to the modern texts and searched various websites to collect information on the relevant topics.

CONCEPT OF AGNIMANDYA

Agni converts the Ahara *dravya* into Ahara-rasa and then with the help of *Dhatwagni* and *Bhutagni* the *poshak ansha* is made available to body. Hence, any *vikriti* i.e. hypo or hyperfunctioning of the "Agni" is the prime cause of pathogenesis of any disease. *Agnimandya*, *Amanirmiti*, *Strotorodha* can occur in any sequence and are the basic events responsible for the outbreak of any disease.^{6,7} Also this vicious cycle if not treated timely, will increase the intensity of the disease.

While describing "*Agnimandya*" Acharya Madhav has not only emphasized on "*Mandagni*" alone but any kind of hyper or hypo-functioning of Agni has been considered in the term "*Agnimandya*"⁸.

Agnimandya as a disease⁸

Agnimandya is a clinical condition characterized by loss of appetite i.e. *kshudhamandya*, *Aruchi* i.e. loss of taste, *Avipak* i.e. decrease in digestion, *Prasek* i.e. excessive salivation, *Amashaya Pradeshhi Gaurav* and *Shirogaurav* i.e. heaviness of stomach and head, *Antrakujan* i.e. excessive peristalsis, *Pravahan* i.e. strenuous defecation etc¹⁰.

Agnimandya as a main event in Samprapti⁹

Agnimandya is a main step occurring in pathogenesis of many diseases. Hetu sevan causes *Dosha-prakop*. These *prakupit* dosha vitiate dushya and their *Sammurchana* which leads to many diseases, mostly it starts with *Agnimandya*³.

Due to decrease in intensity of Agni, the *apachit* ahara-rasa is produced leads to *Strotorodha* and Ama nirmiti. Hence, while treating any disease the *Samprapti bhanga* always to be start with *Amapachan* and *Agnivardhan chikitsa* to get fast and complete cure.

Agnimandya as a symptom⁸

Acharya has described *Agnimandya* as a main symptom in diseases like *Jwara*, *Pandu*, *Atisara*, *Grahani*, *Ajeerna*, *Gulma*, *Kamala*, *Shotha*, *Shwasa*, *Pratishyaya*, *Arsha* etc.¹

Sharir of Vyadhighatak involved¹⁰

Our body is constituted by Dosha, dhatu and mala. Vata, Pitta and Kapha are Tridosha. These are responsible to maintain prakriti and when get vitiated leads to disease formation. Rasa-Rakta-Mamsa-Medo-Asthi-Majja and Shukra are sapta dhatu and Mutra, Shakrut and Sweda are three Malas.^{4,5} Hence, to understand the pathogenesis of the disease Agnimandya, the following Dravya sangrah must be considered.

A. DOSHA⁷

1. Vata

Pran, Vyan, Udan, Saman, Apan are the five types of Vata. Amongst them Prana, Apana, Samana are related with Anna pachan kriya. So, any Vikriti in these types of Vayu leads to Agnivikriti.

a. Pran

While describing the karma of Pran Vayu, Acharya states that Pran is important for the intake of food in mukha and then in the Annavaaha Strotas. This Annagrahan is the first step of Anna pachan and thus it is one of the responsible Dosha in the disease Agnimandya

b. Saman

The ingested bhukta and peet i.e. solid and liquid substance get samparinat by the help of Saman Vayu. The Saman Vayu stays near Agni and its sancharsthan is Koshtha. This Saman Vayu keeps the Agni patent and its function is Grahan, Pachan, Munchan and Vivechana of Annadravya. If this type of Vayu get vitiated it will affect the Agni more vigorously.

c. Apan

Apan Vayu stays in Pakwashaya where the process of Sara-Kitta vibhajan takes place under the influence of Apan Vayu. It is responsible for Mutra and Purisha nishkraman kriya. The samyak Mala pravritti is one of the Ahar jirnasya lakshnam. Hence, the Apan Vayu must be considered in the pathogenesis of the disease "Agnimandya".

2. Pitta^{2,7}

Pachak, Ranjak, Sadhak, Alochak and Bhrajak are five type of Pittas, out of these 5 types Pachak Pitta have an important role in outbreak of Agnimandya.

The Pachak Pitta is situated in between Amashaya and Pakwashaya i.e. Grahani. It is responsible for Pachan and Vivechan of Chaturvidh Annapan and hence called as Pachakagni.

3. Kapha^{3,7}

Bodhak, Avlambak, Kledak, Tarpak, Shleshak are the five types of Kapha. Kledak Kapha plays a main role in Agnimandya Samprapti.

Kledak Kapha

At this place this Ahara is mixed with Kledak Kapha which softens it, liquefies it and responsible for its Pachan. It will cause "Bhinna Sanghata" of Anna due to which Agni can reach upto very small particles of Ahara and can digest it properly. Hence any disability of Kledak kapha can cause Agnimandya.

B. DUSHYA^{1,7}

Dushya gets vitiated by Doshas but they don't have capacity to vitiate others. This term includes Rasa Raktadi saptadhatu, Twak, Snayu adi Upadhatu, Swedadi Mala as mentioned earlier.

In the disease "Agnimandya" the vikrit Ahara-rasa is formed. The very first Dhatu Rasa get direct nourishment from Ahara-

rasa. So this Agnivikriti leads to Apachit Ahara Rasa which at first affects Rasadhatu and then the other Dhatus respectively.

C. STROTAS^{1,7}

Strotas are those which act as vehicle of Bhav Vishesa for their passage from one part to another part of the body. Any Vikriti in Annavaaha Strotasa right from Mukha to Guda leads to the pathogenesis of Agnimandya.

Acharya Charak has mentioned the mula sthana of Annavaaha Strotas and the symptoms caused by its Dushti as Anannabhilasha, Aruchi, Avipak are mainly concerned with Agnimandya.

D. AGNI

The main element to be affected in the disease Agnimandya is Agni. The hypo or hyper functioning of Agni are included in the disease by Acharya Madhav. We have already discussed the concept of Agni and its importance.

SHARIR RACHANA AND KRIYA⁷

To understand the disease 'Agnimandya', the description about general considerations and concepts of Agnimandya has been mentioned earlier. While studying the disease, we must know the Sharir Rachana and Kriya of the organs involved. Charakacharya has described Panchadasha Koshthangas, out of the described Koshthangas Amashaya, Pakwashaya, Antra and Guda are the organs involved directly or indirectly in Anna Pachan Kriya⁶.

In the disease 'Agnimandya', the main element to get hampered is 'Agni'. There are 13 types of Agni, out of which Jatharagni is the main who has control over other Agnis and is mainly involved in the pathogenesis of the disease. Charakacharya has mentioned that Agni and Pitta are different, the Agni works in the body through the Murtwan Pitta especially Pachak Pitta. Thus, Pachak Pitta has Agenya Gunadhikya and get the name of Agni by losing its Dravya Guna. This Pachak Pitta is situated in between Pakwashaya and Amashaya. The location of Agni is in between Amashaya and Pakwashaya i.e. Grahani.

Rachana Sharir

1. Amashaya²

Synonyms : Kaphashaya, Shleshmashaya

The word Amashaya is Ama + Ashaya

Ama = Undigested food.

Ashaya = Cavity (Akash Mahabhut Pradhan)

Sushrutacharya has described Amashaya as one of seven Ashayas. Charakacharya has mentioned Amashaya as one of the fifteen koshthangas. In 'Agnimandya' the affected Strotas is 'Annavaaha Strotas'. Amashaya is the mool sthana of Annavaaha Strotas.

Utpatti: It is mentioned in Kashyapa Samhita, that Amashaya is formed in the third month of intrauterine development. Acharya Vagbhat has stated that the Kleda in the cavities of Dhatu get Vipakwa by their respective Ushmas and there will be formation of Sapta Kala covered by Kapha, Snayu and Aparas. Acharyas included Amashaya in Matruja Avayava.

Sthana: Amashaya lies in between Stana and Nabhi.

Snayu : It is composed of Sushir Snayu and Peshi, are circular and longitudinal in Urdhwa and Adho Amashaya.

Marma²

Amashaya is close to Nabhi Marma. This marma is one of the Sira Marma and is Sadyo Pranahara in nature.

Sira: Amashaya has Chaturvidha Sira.

Dosha: Dosha related to Amashaya are

1) Vayu : Samana 2) Pitta: Pachak, Ranjak

3) Kapha: Kledak

Dhatu: Amashaya is made up of Rakta, Mamsa and Medodhatu.

Function: The ingested food is brought in Amashaya by Prana Vayu. The food particles are made Snigdha, soft and liquified by the action of Kledak Kapha. Then this food is digested by Pachakagni, small amount gets transformed into Rasadhatu and the remaining small part is passes towards Grahani for the further processing.

2. Grahani²

Synonyms: *Pacchyanashaya, Laghwantra, Kshudrantra.*

Sthana: Grahani is the part that lies between *Amashaya* and *Pakwashaya*. Vagbhattacharya said that it is situated at the opening of *Pakwashaya* like '*Gala Pradesh*' i.e. neck like part. It is the part of *Bhuktamarga* that means *Annavaha Strotas*.

Utpatti: It is *Matruja Avayava*, formed from the *Sarabhaga* of Rakta and Mamsa Dhatu as it is a part of Antra.

Function: Grahani is a part of *Annavaha Strotas*. It is hollow tubular organ having cavity i.e. *Akashiya* part in it. So that *Vyuhana* and *Gaman* of *Bhavpadartha* takes place at this site. Acharya Vagbhat has stated Grahani as *Adhithana* of Anna. Here the *Pachan, Vivechan* and *Munchan* occurs.

Kriya Sharir⁷

After keeping a view over the Sharir - *Rachanatmak* description of the involved organ, it is an important task to study the kriya sharir related to the disease - Agnimandya. The function of Agni is mainly getting hampered in this disease. '*Jatharagni*' is the main Agni amongst 13 types of Agni & has control over the types of Agni.

Charkacharya has stated that '*Agni*' works through '*pitta*', this relation is especially found between *Jatharagni* & *Pachak Pitta*. Due to *Agnidushti* the *Pachankriya* is directly get affected. This *Pachankriya* occurs at *Annavaha strotas*.

Annavaha Strotas starts from *Mukha* & ends into *Adharguda*. The *Annapachan kriya* starts with the ingestion of food in *Mukha*, with the help of *Bodhak Kapha*. Then through *Anna nalika* i.e. oesophagus up to *Amashaya, Grahani* & *Pakwashaya*. Where the *Sara - Kitta Vibhajan* occurs. The *Ahara Rasa* get absorbed & the *Mala* excreted out of the body. Before the description of *Pachan Kriya* Let us take a review over the factors responsible for the *Pachan kriya* in sequence.

1. Ahara¹

Acharya Charak has mentioned the importance of *Annapana* by saying that it will restore the '*Prana*' of all living being. Acharya Sushrut has mentioned that, our body is *Panchbhutik*, hence it gets nutrition from *panchbhautik* *Ahara*. Thus through *Samhitas*, referances has been found regarding types, quantity, quality & its importance. For this purpose Charakcharya has mentioned 8 types of '*Vidhi*' processing to make the *Ahar dravya* more suitable for digestion & absorption.

2. Pranvayu

The ingestion of food & it's *Vahan* i.e. conduction upto *Amashaya* is the *kriya* of *Annagrahan*, occurs under the influences of *Pranvayu*.

3. Bodhak Kapha

The type of *Kapha* that stays at *Jivha* & *kantha* is called as *Bodhak kapha*. It is *saumya* & *Jalapradhan*. It is responsible for sensation of taste. It gets mixed with the food taken, softens it & makes one homogenous bolus of the *Aharadravya*, make it easy for *vahan* & *pachan* also through *Annavaha strotas*.

4. Agni^{1,4,5,7}

The main *Pachankriya* occurs under the influence of *Agni*. Broadly, *Agni* are of 13 type –

a. The one *Jatharagni* stays at *koshtha* and is of prime importance. This *Jatharagni* convert the *Bahya Ahara dravya* into *Ahararasa*, which can get absorbed easily. *Prana, Apana* and *Saman* are 3 types of *Vayu* which helps *Jatharagni* in the process of *Annapachan*.

The five *Bhutagnis* are to nourish the *Panchbhautik Deha*, the *Agni* of that particular *Dhatu* is responsible for *Pachan* of that particular *Mahabhuta Pradhan Aharadravya*. They are 5 in number as *Bhauma, Apya, Agneya, Vayviya* and *Nabhasa*.

c. After the action of *Bhutagni* this *Ahararasa* is ready for further absorption. It will now has capacity to nourish *Rasadi Sapta Dhatus*. *Rasagni, Raktagni, Mamsagni, Medogni, Asthyagni, Majjagni* and *Shukragni* are the seven *Dhatwagnis*. They helps the particular *Dhatu* in conversion of the end products of *Ahara prasada bhaga*. Thus the nutrients will be made available up to the *Dhatu* level.

5. Kledak Kapha

Kledak Kapha is situated in *Amashaya*. It is *Saumya* and *Snigdha* and hence soften the food particles. Also liquefies it. Due to this the *Agni* can reach up to the very small particle of food bolus and can digest it properly.

6. Saman Vayu

The *Saman Vayu* stays near *Agni* and its *Sancharasthan* is in *Koshtha*. It's function is *Grahan, Pachan, Vivechan* and *Munchan* of ingested food. It increases the intensity of *Agni*.

7. Pachak Pitta

It is the fundamental unit of body metabolism. *Agni* works through *Murtawan Pachak Pitta*. *Kshudha, Trishna, Aruchi, Prabha, Medha* are the main functions of *Pitta*. Among 5 types of *Pitta*, *Pachak Pitta* is of prime importance for *Pachan Kriya*. It stays at *Grahani*, digest the food and responsible for *Sara-Kitta Vibhajan*.

8. Pittadhara Kala

Internal delicate layer of *Ashaya* is called as *Kala*. *Pittadhara-kala* is situated from distal part of *Amashaya* to *Pakwashaya*. It is important for functioning of *Agni*. The *Pachak Strava*, secreted there. *Pittadhara-kala* is also facilitates absorption. Acharya Sushrut has given the name *Pittadhara-kala* and it is situated at '*Grahani*'.

9. Apan Vayu

Apan Vayu stays in *Pakwashaya*. Here the process of *Sara-Kitta Vibhajana* takes place under the influence of *Apan Vayu*. It excrets *Mala Bhaga* out of the body and thus ends the '*Pachan Kriya*' in a complete manner.

Pachan Kriya^{1,2,7}

The whole process of '*Pachan*' is explained by Acharyas through *Ayurvedic Samhitas*.

1. Firstly the *Annadravya* enters in *Mukha*. Then it ingested under the influence of *Prana Vayu*. Here it comes in contact with *Bodhak Kapha* and thus the actual process of *Pachan* starts. Here, the food particles get separated, grind by teeth so

the Bodhak Kapha got mixed with that food particles with the help of Jivha. So it becomes soft and Snigdha, get swallowed easily in this form upto *Urdhwa Amashaya*.

2. In the second step it comes in contact with Saman Vayu in Madhya Amashaya. This Saman Vayu stimulates Agni and keep food in Amashaya up to its Pachan. It helps in *Grahan, Pachan, Vivechan* and *Munchan* of Anna dravya. Here the *Kledak* Kapha works and it separates the food particles and softens it so that it becomes easy for digestion.

The actual process of Annapachan in Amashaya is explained with a very good example of preparing rice. The stimulated Agni is get '*Prabal*' under the influence of Saman Vayu and digest the food like the rice get boiled. This process of digestion separates Rasa and Mala.

1. While explaining the process of Pachan, Charakcharya has also mentioned *Ahara Parinamakara Bhava*.

Avasthapaka⁷

Charakcharya has mentioned 3 stages of *Avasthapaka* through which he has explained the digestion.

A. Pratham Avasthapaka:

The 'Ahara' ingested having any types of Rasa amongst *Madhuradi Shadrasa*. In this stage, the food is converted into Madhura Rasa irrespective of its previous one. The first two *Mahabhuta* to get separated are *Prithvi* and *Jala*. Thus at this stage the *Avikrut Kapha* production takes place.

B. Dwitiya Avasthapaka:

This is also called as Amla-paka, it occurs while the Ahara moves from Amashaya towards Grahani. In this stage, the food in *Prathama Avasthapaka* is acted upon by Pachak Pitta and Agni. Thus get converted into Amlarasa. At this stage, the food remains in *Vidagdhavastha* i.e. Pakwa or Apakwa form. The food is now *Amla-rasatmak* in nature. Mostly *Teja Mahabhut Pradhan Dravya* get separated here and also production of '*Accha Pitta*' takes place.

C. Tritiya Avasthapaka:

This third *Avasthapaka* is *Katu Paka*. It occurs at *Pakwashaya*. Here the food in second *Avasthapaka*, get converted into *Katu Rasa*. Pachan of *Akashiya* and *Vayaviya*

part of food takes place hence the Dravya becomes *Katu* in nature. Here the Ahara is now converted into *Pakwavastha*. The Anna get *Pindaswaroop* here and Mala get separated. This Mala separation is done by *Purishadhara Kala* according to Acharya Sushrut.

The Ahara Rasa thus get '*Sampurna Pachit*' Swaroop i.e. digested well and ready for absorption and metabolism upto cellular level and the Mala get excreted out. Now this Ahara Rasa comes under the influence of Vyan Vayu and thus the '*Rasa Rakta Samvahan*' process occurs through which it get absorbed anywhere in the body.

By getting nutrition of Ahara-rasa firstly the Rasadhātu is formed and then the other Dhatus get their nourishment respectively.

Thus, the whole cycle of formation, absorption and metabolism of Ahara Rasa occurs which is called as '*Annapachankriya*'.

CONCLUSION

Thus we can conclude that there is a detail description available in various Ayurvedic texts regarding concepts and principals related to *Agnimandya*. Acharyas has established very scientific relation between *Agni* and *Dosha*, concept of *Agnimandya* and evolution of various diseases.

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