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A critical appraisal on the role of *Agni* in *Amlapitta*

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ABSTRACT

Background: *Ayurveda* is a peculiar domain of medical science which has its remedies for different ailments; either in the form of dietary modifications, lifestyle alterations or treatment modalities. In modern era, due to over inclination towards materialistic life, people often tend to compromise on their lifestyle, which indeed leads to depletion in health causing several ailments. Such compromises in life style and food habits will lead to the manifestation of diseases mainly of *Annavaha Srotas*. Such a commonly encountered disease is *Amlapitta*. Along with *Tridosha*, another entity i.e., *Agni* also plays an important role in the manifestation of the same. Hence, it is worth a discussion to explore the role of *Agni* in the development of *Amlapitta*. **Materials and Methods:** Extensive literary research was conducted inclusive of electronic databases such as Pubmed, Pubmed central, index medicus And index in Services like Elsevier, Scopus, Embase etc along with classical textbooks of *Ayurveda*. **Discussion:** *Amlapitta* is such a frequently encountered pathological manifestation of *Annavaha Srotas* which is explained in *Ayurveda* classics; wherein the *Shuktata* of *Pitta Dosha* gets elevated. *Agni* is an important factor which is responsible for proper occurrence of metabolism, which is utmost important for a disease free life. **Conclusion:** An effort is made in this paper to emphasize the role of *Agni* in *Amlapitta*, which can decide the fate of treatment planned and the rationality behind it.

Key words: *Ayurveda*, *Amlapitta*, *Agni*, *Annavaha Srotas*, *Agnimandya*

INTRODUCTION

Amlapitta is a frequently encountered pathological manifestation of *Annavaha Srotas* which is explained in *Ayurveda* classics; wherein the *Shuktata* of *Pitta Dosha* gets elevated.^[1] *Amlapitta* is a pathology which has a bare minimum explanation in *Bruhatrayee's*. Even though much references are not there in *Bruhatrayee's*, scattered references about *Amlapitta* are seen in *Charaka Samhita*. *Acharya Charaka* has

described *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* which conveys the methods of consumption of food. According to him, man under psychological problem, can't digest the food properly even if it is delicious, adequate and with appropriate food value.^[2] Thus, this undigested food disturbs the physiology of *Annavaha Srotas*. As per *Ayurveda*, when a person with a pre-existing tendency for excessive *Pitta* secretion habitually takes incompatible, sour, heart burn producing *Pitta* vitiating food and drinks, leads to a pathological condition called *Amlapitta*.^[3] In *Amlapitta*, due to *Nidana Sevana*, *Agnimandya* manifests in the body because of which ingested food becomes *Vidagdha* and finally the prodromes like *Amlodgara*, *Urovidaha*, *Aruchi* are manifested clinically.^[4] The Manifestation of *Amlapitta* and its course of development depends on another entity other than the *Nidana's* i.e., *Agni*. *Agni* can be considered as an internal force which helps in the proper metabolism of the body. The changes or a disturbance in the functioning of *Agni* is an important factor in the pathogenesis of *Amlapitta*. *Acharya Vagbhata* emphasizes this when in *Udara Chikitsa* he

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says *Mandagni* is the root cause for the manifestation of almost all the diseases.^[5] *Acharya Charaka* explains the importance of *Agni* in a quite serious way itself when he says *Agni* in the state of its normalcy provides *Ayu, Varna, Bala, Swasthya, Utsaha* etc and when *Agni* function stops death is inevitable.^[6] *Charaka*, in *Gulma Chikitsa* also explains the importance of *Agni* when he says that the *Shamana* and *Prakopa* of *Dosha's* depend on *Agni* and hence *Agni* should be protected always especially through *Nidana Parivarjana*.^[7] Hence, *Agni* is such an important entity in the maintainance of health as well as the manifestation and progression of any of the diseases and here is an attempt made in this article to understand the importance of *Agni* in *Amlapitta* disease.

Amlapitta Nidana - An Overview^[8-10]

Aharaja	Viharaja	Manasika
Abhojana	Vegadharana	Chinta
Atibhojana	Bhukte Bhukte Snana	Shoka
Ajeerna	Bhukte Bhukte Avagaha	Bhaya
Amapurana	Bhukte Bhukte Divaswapna	Krodha
Vishamashana		
Adhyasana		
Gurubhojana		
Gorasa Atisevana		
Phanita-Atisevana		
Pishhta-Atisevana		
Ikshuvikara Atisevana		
Ushna Atisevana		
Katurasa Atisevana		
Amla Rasa Atisevana		
Drava Atisevana		
Kulattha Atisevana		
Madya Atisevana		
Ruksha Atisevana		

Bhrustadhanya Atisevana		
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Samprapti^[11,12]

Kashyapa's View	Madhava's View
Tridoshaja Nidana	Pitta Prakopaka Nidana
↓	↓
Vidagdha Pitta	Drava Guna Vridhi of Pitta
↓	↓
Agnimandhya	Agnimandhya
↓	↓
Vidagdha Ahara	Vidagdha Ahara
↓	↓
Shukthata of Ahara	Shukthata of Ahara
↓	↓
Amlata Udriktata	Amlata Udriktata
↓	↓
Amlapitta	Amlapitta

Purvarupa

Acharya Charaka considered *Amlapitta* as symptoms of diseases during description of *Grahani*. He mentioned *Purvarupa's* like *Trishna, Alasya, Balanasha, Annavidha, Gauravata* etc., these symptoms also can be considered as *Purvarupa* for *Amlapitta*.^[13]

Rupa of Amlapitta^[14]

Lakshana's	KS	MN	BP	YR	GN	RRS	SHS	HS
Adhmana	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Amlodgara	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Amlotklesha	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Angasada	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Antrakoojana	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Aruchi	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	-
Atisara	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
Avipaka	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	-
Vanti	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
Gourava	-	-	+	+	+	-	+	-
Gurukoshtata	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hikka	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
Hritdaha	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Hritshoola	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
Kantavidaha	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+
Klama	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
Romaharsha	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
Shiroruk	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
Tiktodgara	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Udgara	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
Urovidaha	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Utklesha	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-

Upashaya Anupashaya

Specific mentioning about Upasaya and Anupasaya is given only by Kashyapa while describing Doshaja types of Amlapitta.^[15]

1. Vataja Amlapitta - Snigdha Upasaya
2. Pittaja Amlapitta - Swadu and Sita Upasaya
3. Kaphaja Amlapitta - Ruksha and Ushna Upasaya

Agni

Agni is the cause of all diseases means majority of the diseases are outcome of malfunctioning of the Agni^[16] which rightly has been called as centre to health. Agni plays not only a vital role in the absorption of macro as

well as micronutrients, but it is also responsible for the destruction of pathogens in the body system.^[17]

Types of Agni

Ayurveda has classified Agni physiologically into 13 types in the body^[18]

1. Dhatvagni - 7
2. Bhutagni - 5
3. Jatharagni - 1

Clinically, Agni are of four types^[19]

1. Teekshna Agni
2. Vishama Agni
3. Manda Agni
4. Sama Agni

DISCUSSION

Role of different Agni types in Amlapitta Samprapti

Even though Agni is a physiologically important entity, it has its own implications in pathological manifestation of almost all the diseases. Basically, Agni has four important states of clinical significance. They are: Teekshna, Vishama, Manda and Sama Agni. In case of Amlapitta, due to Agnimandya, whichever food taken will not be digested properly and Vidagdhatta will develop in the person. This Vidagdhatta will lead to the development of Shuktibhava which inturn leads to the development of Amlata in Amashaya. During this stage, Samanya Lakshana's of Ajirna like Glani, Gourava, Vishtambha, Jrimbha, Anga marda etc are manifested which is considered as the Purvarupa of Amlapitta.^[20] Since Agnimandya is the root cause for Amlapitta, the food which is taken even in small quantities will not get digested, which leads to Ajeerna and it is the basic stage in the manifestation of Amlapitta. Hence, our Acharya's consider Ajeerna Lakshana's as the Purvarupa of Amlapitta. According to Kashyapa Samhita, the Nidana's if consumed causes vitiation of Tridosha's.^[21] Any of these Dosh'a's decreases the Jatharagni, i.e., causes Jatharagnimandya. During this state, whatsoever food consumed, becomes Vidagdha. Then it becomes Sukta

and it lies in the stomach as it is. During this time, even minute quantity of food taken will turn obviously into *Vidagdha Avastha*. At this stage *Vidagdhajirna* manifests which is the *Purvarupa* of *Amlapitta* as explained earlier. Further vitiated Pitta gets mixed with *Sukta* and causes *Pitta Amavisa Sammurchhana*. The *Amlapitta* with its cardinal symptoms is then manifested in the patient. If not treated properly in this stage, the disease leads to *Bhedavasta* where the typical characteristic types like *Urdhwaga*, *Adhoga* etc. are differentiated. Further complications like *Sheetapitta*, *Udara*, *Annadrava* and *Parinama Shula* etc. may occur in the advanced course of the disease.^[22]

Role of Agni in Nidana, Purvarooopa and Rupa of Amlapitta

Now coming to *Nidana Panchaka's* of *Amlapitta*, if the *Nidana's* are analysed thoroughly, we can understand that the *Nidana's* such as *Abhojana*, *Atibhojana*, *Ajeerna* etc. has direct relationship with different states of *Agni* which results in its manifestation. Similarly, when comes to the *Purvarooopa* of *Amlapitta*, such as *Trishna*, *Alasya* etc. which are also the symptoms of *Ajeerna* signifying again the pivotal role of *Agni* in this process of disease manifestation. The majority symptoms manifested in *Amlapitta* are nothing but the effect of clinical variants of *Agni* shedding its efficacy. In such a way if we critically analyse the *Rupa's* of *Amlapitta*, the inseparable relation of *Agni* with the corresponding symptoms can be observed such as in case of *Avipaka*, *Gourava* etc. which is significant in the pathogenesis of *Amlapitta*.

Role of Agni in peculiar Amlapitta Samprapti's

The pathological picture of *Amlapitta* explained by *Madhava Nidana* varies slightly from other *Acharya's* as he explains the *Drava Guna Vridhi* of *Pitta Dosha* as the precursor of the development of *Agnimandhya* and later on the manifestation of *Amlapitta*.^[23] *Gananath Sen* in *Sidhanta Nidana* has mentioned slightly different angle of *Samprapti* where when food is dominant with *Amlarasa*, then in *Amashaya* also *Amlarasa* is produced and when it is taken in more quantity it irritates the *Amashaya*, which also leads to

Agnimandhya and later to the manifestation of *Amlapitta Roga*.^[24]

Role of Agni in Amlapitta Chikitsa

If we come to the aspect of *Amlapitta Chikitsa*, the *Chikitsa Sutra* includes *Vamana*, *Mridu Virechana*, *Anuvasana Basti* etc.^[25] Here, *Vamana* has been told for removing the vitiated *Kapha dosha* whereas *Virechana* guides in removing excess *Vidagdha Pitta* and *Anuvasana Basti* helps in the correction of *Vata Dosha* as well as improves the status of *Agni*. This explains the rationality behind the importance of correcting the *Agni*. Hence, *Agni* has been given prime importance in almost all the aspects of *Amlapitta* starting from *Nidana* to *Chikitsa*.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the successful treatments of *Amlapitta* depends on the way and extend of correction of *Agni* along with the treatment of presenting symptoms. The correction of *Agni* should be done first by *Nidana Parivarjana* i.e., by avoiding the use of *Agnimandhyakaraka Ahara* and *Vihara's*. The proper correction of *Agni* leads to the breakage of the above mentioned vicious cycle of *Samprapti* and after the initial concentration on bringing back the *Agni* into normalcy, we can easily manage all the other symptoms without any difficulty using various formulations mentioned in our classics. Hence, not only in the management of *Amlapitta* but in almost all the diseases *Agni* plays a pivotal role both in the manifestation as well as the proper correction of the diseases.

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