Ayurvedic concept of Ahara Rasa and Rasa Dhatu

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ABSTRACT

According to Ayurveda, food is the main pillar of healthy life. Living body is continuously subjected to wear and tear process. Dhatus which are being lost in physiological activities are replenished by food and water. Man needs to eat food to build a new Dhatu and to repair damage Dhatu. After consumption food is digested in gastro intestinal tract. Fluid formed from the digested part of food is called as Ahara-Rasa. For growth, Dhatu needs nourishment, and these Dhatu are nourished by food and water. Aahar Rasa is formed in Annavaha Srotas. Aahar Rasa contains nutrients of seven Dhatus. Aahar Rasa is absorbed from Grahani (small intestine) and brought into heart. Heart is a root of Rasavaha Srotas, hence in heart, Rasa Dhatvagni transforms nutrients of Ahara Rasa into stable Rasa Dhatu. Rasa Dhatu is formed in Rasavaha Srotas. Rasa is the first Dhatu formed from Aahar-Rasa.

Key words: Rasavaha Srotas, Rasa, Dhatu, Ahara Rasa.

INTRODUCTION

Ahara- Rasa denotes 'Sara' portion of food after digestion by Jathragini. Once ingested food is digested, it is absorbed in the form of Ahara-Rasa. Distinction between Ahara-Rasa and Rasa is difficult to demonstrate physically as both are fluids and they circulate together. Ahara -Rasa is final and absorbed product of digested food. Rasa is a Dhatu and is generated after certain biochemical changes on Ahara-Rasa. Physically or structurally it is not possible to put a hard and fast line of distinction between Ahara-Rasa and Rasa. Functionally however they differ with each other. For this reason, one has to learn difference between Ahara-Rasa and Rasa Dhatu. Diseases of both differ and treatment also differs.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

To understand the concept of Ahara- Rasa and Rasa Dhatu from Ayurvedic perspective.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Material related to this conceptual study is collected from various authentic books, Samhitas, web searches etc.

Definition of Aahar Rasa

Fluid formed from the digested part of food is called as Ahara-Rasa. Panchabhautik and Shad-Rasatmak food undergoes the process of digestion and from digested part of food, subtle, pure and Tejobhuta Ahara -Rasa is formed.

Absorption of Ahara-Rasa

Jatharagni digests food in Grahani, Ahara-Rasa containing all nutrients (Sarabhuta) is formed from food in Grahani. Under the control of Saman Vayu, Aahar-Rasa gets absorbed from Grahani and brought to heart. Ahara-Rasa, which is brought to heart is circulated throughout the body to all living cells.

Rasa and Rakta Dhatu along with Ahara-Rasa get pumped from heart and circulated to every organ. Ahara-Rasa mixes with Rasa and Rakta Dhatu, hence

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Ahara-Rasa cannot be differentiated from Rasa-Rakta Dhatu.

Chart showing formation of Ahara-Rasa and Rasa Dhatu:

Ingestion of food
↓
Jatharagni digests food
↓
Formation of Ahara-Rasa (contains nutrients of seven Dhatus)
↓
Ahara-Rasa absorbed from Grahani
↓
Nutrients of Rasa
↓
Action of Rasa-Dhatvagni
↓
Poshya Rasa Rasa Mala Kapha
↓
Circulation Excretion
↓
Preenan of every cell

Properties of Ahara-Rasa and Rasa Dhatu

Ahara-Rasa is a fluid and grow and subtle (Sukshma) constituent.

Rasa Dhatu is liquid, unctuous, dull, cold & sweet, like Kapha Dosha.

Rasa Dhatu Utpatti Kala

From Ahar-Rasa, Rasa Dhatu is formed within 24 hours.

Function of Ahara-Rasa

Ahara-Rasa nourishes Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa, Meda, Asthi, Majja, Shukra and Ojas. Twenty-four Dhamanis (blood vessels) emerging from heart carry Ahar-Rasa to all parts of body and performs functions of Tarpan, Vardhan, Dharan and Yapana.

Tarpan - means gratification or satisfaction. Ahar Rasa keeps every cell of body active by supplying them proper nutrients. Ahar Rasa keeps every human cell active and fresh.

Vardhan - when tissues of child are supplied with proper nutrients, then only Dhatu grows rapidly. Growth of child ultimately depends on nutritious food, its digestion and absorption.

Tarpan and Vardhan are predominant in children.

Dharana - In middle age Ahar-Rasa provides nutrients to every tissue and helps them to sustain in physical and mental stress, this function is called Dharana.

Yapana - Nourishment of tissues in old people is important to keep them alive.

Function of Rasa Dhatu

Gratification and nourishment of Rakta Dhatu are the two functions of Rasa Dhatu.

Preenan means gratification, satisfaction, and freshness.

To supply fluids and nutrients to every cell of body and keep the body as well as mind fresh and active is the Preenan done by Rasa Dhatu.

According to Modern science

Human body needs plenty of energy to perform physiological activities such as walking, running, talking, etc. Man obtains energy from food. Carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins and water are nutrients of food.

Transformation of Nutrients in Liver

Human cells cannot use glucose, amino acids and fatty acids in their absorb form, hence enzymes in liver transforms these nutrients into more usable forms. Cell surface contains receptors which bind with specific constituent so that constituent enters inside the cell.  

Discussion and Conclusion

Both sciences agree that body needs food for its growth and functioning. Ahar Rasa is final absorbed product of a food digested by Agni in Pachak Pitta.
Aahar-Rasa is product of digestion through Annavaha Srotas. Aahar-Rasa is absorbed from Grahani into Rasa-Rakta. Absorbed Ahara- Rasa is carried to heart and then it is circulated in body. Agni of every Dhatu transform nutrient of respective Dhatu into stable Dhatu. Every Dhatu identifies its own nutrient and binds with it, so that Dhatwagni can transform it into stable Dhatu.

Rasa Dhatu is a first generation of Aahar Rasa and is produced by digestion of Ahara-Rasa in Rasavaha Srotas by Rasa-Agni. Hence Rasa Dhatu is product of digestion through two Srotamsi, Annavaha Srotas and Rasavaha Srotas.

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