

An Observational Study on Agni Bala in Patients of Medo Dhatu Vriddhi (Sthoulya) w.s.r. to Obesity

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Introduction: In Ayurveda, Agni is regarded as the foundation of health, being responsible for all metabolic activities in the body. Among the various forms of Agni, Jatharagni is considered primary, as it governs and supports the functions of Bhootagni and Dhatvagni. This study focuses on the role of Agni, specifically Jatharagni, in the context of Medo Dhatu Vriddhi (obesity). Sthoulya (obesity), an increasing global health concern, is linked to the impairment of Agni, resulting in excess accumulation of Medas (fat tissue) and associated complications like hypertension, diabetes, infertility, and mental disorders.

Methodology: A cross-sectional study was conducted at Ashwini Ayurvedic Medical College and Research Centre, Tumkur, involving 100 volunteers (BMI >25), aged 20–60 years. A structured questionnaire was used to evaluate the type of Agni (Vishama, Teekshna, Manda, and Sama) and diagnose Medo Dhatu Vriddhi based on both Ayurvedic and modern parameters. The responses were statistically analyzed to explore correlations between Agni status and obesity.

Results: Results showed that 58% of participants exhibited Vishamagni, 30% Teekshnagni, 10% Mandagni, and only 2% had Samagni. A significant correlation was observed between Vishamagni and higher BMI levels, suggesting a key pathogenic role in Medo Dhatu Vriddhi. Lifestyle factors such as sedentary occupations and junk food consumption were prevalent, contributing to Agni imbalance.

Discussion: This study highlights the central role of Agni - especially Vishamagni - in the manifestation of Sthoulya. Correction of impaired Agni should be the first step in the Ayurvedic management of obesity. These findings reaffirm the classical Ayurvedic concept that the regulation of Agni is essential for maintaining metabolic balance and preventing lifestyle disorders.

Keywords: Agni, Jatharagni, Vishamagni, Medo Dhatu Vriddhi, Sthoulya, Obesity, Ayurveda, Metabolic Health

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Introduction

Ayurveda defines health as state of equilibrium in *Dosha*, *Agni*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala* with their proper functions. Among these *Agni* plays the vital role in maintenance of health. *Agni* occupies entire body as various bio-transformations which is carried out in living body at all places and are named and classified as per their different functions i.e. *Jatharagni*, 5 *Bhootagni*, 7 *Dhatuvagni*.^[1] Among these classifications *Jataragni* has given more importance because the rest of the types are fully dependent on *Jataragni* and also this article has limitations hence the focus is limited to *Jataragni* only. *Agni* maintains the body temperature, health and keeps the person active.^[2] It also develops courage. *Agni* keeps a person alive and is therefore considered as a sign of life. So, *Agni* in normalcy leads to disease free long life and its vitiation leads to serious disorders and finally takes the life. *Jataragni* has been categorized in four different states viz., *Vishamagni*, *Teekshnagni*, *Mandagni* and *Samagni*.^[3] Among the four *Samagni* refers to equilibrium of health and the other three types of *Agni* can lead to imbalance.^[10] *Sthoulya* is a disorder where impaired *Agni* plays a role in causation of *Sthoulya*,^[4] the abnormal and excess accumulation of *Medo Dhatu*.^[5,6] *Sthoulya* is one which disturbs physical, mental, as well as social health of an individual. Obesity is one of the burning problems globally as it will hamper the different systems in the body. An obese person is always prone to land up in complications like hypertension, coronary heart disease, dyslipidemia, diabetes mellitus, osteoarthritis, infertility, impotency as well as psychological disorders like stress, anxiety, depression, etc. *Agni* plays vital role in maintenance of health as well as manifestation of diseases. which highlights its importance and influences over the body. According to the *Ayurvedic* literature when *Medas* undergoing *Vriddhi* produce all the premonitory symptoms of *Prameha*, obesity and its complications and other symptoms of increase of *Kapha*, *Raktha* and *Mamsa*. *Vata* especially inside the alimentary tract, causes increase of digestive activity and because of this there will be increase of hunger and thirst which in turn burn away the body just as fire and wind burn up a tree which has a big cavity inside it.^[7] Evaluating the status of *Agni* and its maintenance is essential in the management of *Medo Dhatu*.^[8]

Materials and Methods

Source of Data

Data collected from patients of both outpatient and inpatient departments of Ashwini Ayurvedic Medical College and Research Centre, Tumkur.

Methods of Collection of Data

Role of *Agni* in *Medodhatuvridhi* (*Sthaulya*)

The data was collected and computed from the responses obtained from the questionnaire

Plan of study

Hundred Volunteers who were having BMI above 25 were asked to respond to the questionnaire which is in three parts. The first part of questionnaire was for diagnosing Obesity and BMI with the modern parameters. The second part of the questionnaire was for diagnosing *Medodathu Vridhi* (*Sthaulya*) as per reference and text in *Ayurvedic* literature. The third part of questionnaire was for assessing the role of *Agni* in those volunteers.

Methodology

Totally 20 Questions were included in which

- 1st - 5th question support for *Vishamagni*,
- 6th - 10th question for *Teekshnagni*,
- 11th - 15th question for *Mandagni*,
- 16th - 20th question for *Samagni*

Each question has 5 options i.e., Strongly agree, Agree, Uncertain, Disagree, strongly disagree. Totally positive responses for their respective *Agni* were calculated by adding option (a) i.e., strongly agree and option (b) i.e., Agree.

Inclusion criteria

- BMI level above 25^[9]
- Age group between 20 to 60
- Sex - Both male and female

Exclusion criteria

- Pregnant and lactating women
- Age group below 20 and above 60
- Any individual with co-morbid condition along with obesity
- Individuals who are taking medications

Assessment Parameters

Subjective parameters

Questionnaire to assess *Agni* and *Medo Dhatu Vriddhi* (Refer Annexure 1)

Objective parameters

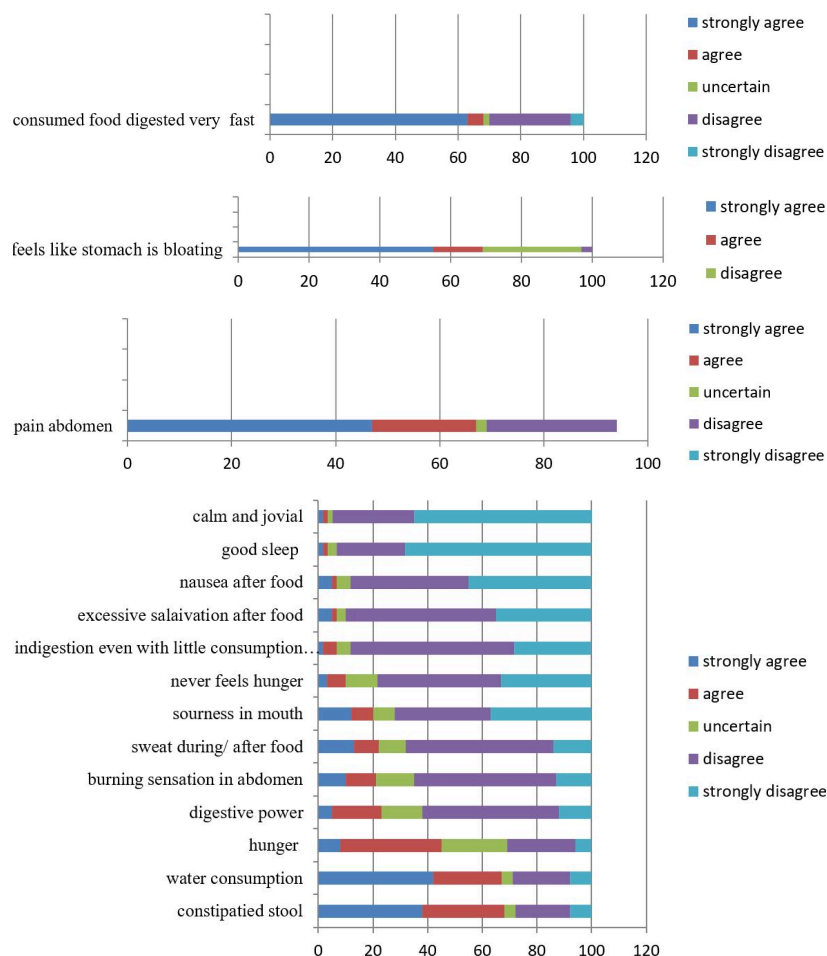
Calculation of BMI (Weight in kg/height in meter square)

Waist Hip ratio

Observations on some important Demographic Data

SN	Data	Sub category	Percentage %
1.	Gender	Male	35
		Female	65
2.	Age group	20-29	16
		30-39	48
		40-49	13
		50-59	14
		60-69	9
3.	occupation	Student	8
		Homemaker	12
		Business	38
		Engineers	16
		Others	26
4.	Junk food consumption	Yes	90
		No	10
5.	Agni Bala	Sama Agni	2
		Manda Agni	10
		Vishama Agni	58
		Teekshnaagni	30

Results



Discussion

Agni is the prime phenomena to be considered while assessing health status, administering medication and rejuvenation. *Agni*, when is influenced by different *Doshas* has four different states viz. *Vishama*, *Teekshna*, *Manda*, and *Sama*. The first three said to be the imbalanced condition influenced by *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* respectively. The last one *Sama* is said to be balanced state which is one of the conditions in healthy individual and also essential for maintenance of health of an individual. *Agni* is having strong relation with *Medodhatu Vridhi*. The present sedentary life style can be a reason for *Medodhatu Vridhi*. Accumulation of *Medas* resulting in *Vata Vridhi* at *Koshta* leads to *Athi Sandukshana* of *Jataragni*. This *Teeksha Agni* makes a person feel hungrier otherwise leading to *Dathu Paka* with the same *Teekshna Agni*, but if food is taken it will nourish the *Medo Dathu*. This results in *Medodhatu Vridhi*.

Discussion on Observation and Results

Gender: In this study maximum number of subjects were of female gender. i.e., 65%. People of this gender have hormonal differences i.e., estrogen promotes fat storage, especially around hips and thighs and hormonal changes during menstruation, pregnancy and menopause affect metabolism and appetite. weight gained during pregnancy may not be fully lost postpartum and multiple pregnancies increase the risk of long-term obesity which was the case in our study where most of the females were multigravida and of fertile age, women are more likely to experience emotional eating related to stress, depression or anxiety.

Age: In this study maximum number of subjects were of middle age i.e., 30-39 yrs. people of this age group have low BMR, due to which fewer calories are burned at rest who has sedentary lifestyle, making weight gain easier if diet is not adjusted. in this age group there will be loss of muscle mass due to age related alteration in BMR.

Occupation: In this study maximum number of people were businessmen, long were sitting in meeting and lack of physical activity, skipping meals, frequent dining out, fast food due to busy schedule and financial pressure resulting in *Vishamagni Dusti*, their BMR gets altered leading to *Medo Dhatu Vaishmya*.

Junk Food: In this study maximum number of subjects were fond off and consuming junk food which contains excess calories, sugar, low fiber and saturated fats which leads to *Agni Vaishyama* i.e., *Vishamagni*, resulting in *Medo Dathu Dushti* causing obesity.

Discussion on Results

Discussion on Agni: Questionnaires on *Agni* were distributed among 100 volunteers who were having *Medodhatu Vridhi* and feedback was tabulated. As per the options given i.e., Strongly agree, Agree, Uncertain, Disagree, strongly disagree, the results were obtained. Among 100 Volunteers most of them responded strongly agree, agree for 1-5 questions and so they were diagnosed with *Vishamagni* i.e., 65%. Among the rest of volunteers, 19% were diagnosed with *Teekshnagni*, 11% with *Mandagni*, and 5% with *Samagni*. The result shows that, there is a strong relation between *Agni* and *Medhodhatu Vridhi* and in treatment of *Sthoulya Agni* should be given prime importance rather than other factors.

Discussion on BMI: Volunteers who were having *Vishamagni*, the BMI level between 25-30 were 8 i.e., 12.32%, the BMI level between 31-35 were 30 i.e., 46.15%, the BMI level between 36-40 were 27 i.e., 41.53%. Volunteers who were having *Teekshnagni*, the BMI level between 25-30 were 15 i.e., 78.94%, the BMI level between 31-35 were 4 i.e.21.05%, **Volunteers** who were having *Mandagni*, the BMI level between 25-30 were 8 i.e., 72.72%, the BMI level between 31-35 were 3 i.e.27.27%. Volunteers who were having *Samagni*, the BMI level between 25-30 were 5 i.e., 100%.

The persons having *Vishamagni* were having higher values of BMI when compared to others. Hence, we can infer that there is a strong relation between *Agni (Vishamagni)* and *Medho Dhatu Vridhi*.

Discussion on data analysis: Data analysis by using correlation coefficient R and spearman correlation the result obtained is statistically significant with the alternate hypothesis i.e., there is a strong correlation between *Agni (Vishamagni)* and *Medho Dhatu Vridhi*.

Conclusion

Healthy body as well as the disease is nothing but the outcome of *Agni*. Out of all the factors for maintenance of positive health,

Agni is *Ayu* since it regulates and maintains normal health and development of human body. So, one cannot sustain life without *Agni*. In case of *Sthoulya* also in *Nidana Samprapti*, *Agni* plays a vital role concluding *Vishama* form of *Agni Dusti* is observed significantly in the current study. In the treatment of *Sthoulya*, before the management of *Medho Dhatu Vridhi*, *Vaikrutha Agni* should be corrected and brought back to *Prakruthaavastha*. *Vishamagni* which is the main factor which cause difficulty in bringing the BMI down, should be put for the further study in controlling obesity.

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