



CONCEPTUAL STUDY ON AMLAPITTA WITH PATHYA-APATHYA

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ABSTRACT

Amlapitta, a common disorder of the gastrointestinal system described in Ayurvedic literature, is characterized by symptoms such as Avipaka (Indigestion), Klama (Tiredness), Utklesha (nausea), Tikta Amlodgara (Bitter and sour belching), Gourava (Heaviness), Hritkantha daha (burning sensation in chest and throat) and Aruchi (Anorexia), which closely resemble Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) in contemporary medicine. According to Ayurvedic principles, impaired digestive fire (Agnimandya) plays a central role in the development of Amlapitta by causing the aggravation of Pitta Dosha, particularly through the excessive manifestation of its Amla (sour) and Drava (liquid) qualities. Unhealthy dietary habits, irregular meal patterns, excessive consumption of spicy, sour, oily and fermented foods, sedentary lifestyle and psychological stress are considered major contributing factors. Due to its increasing prevalence and association with modern lifestyle practices, Amlapitta has emerged as a significant health concern affecting physical, mental and social well-being. Ayurveda emphasizes Nidana Parivarjana (avoidance of causative factors) as the primary approach to disease prevention and management, highlighting the importance of Pathya (wholesome diet and lifestyle) and Apathya (unwholesome diet and lifestyle). Recommended Pathya measures include the consumption of Laghu(light), Sheeta virya(cooling), easily digestible and digestive-enhancing foods along with regular eating habits, adequate rest and stress management. Conversely, Apathya foods are those that aggravate Pitta Dosha and impair digestive function, thereby contributing to the development and progression of Amlapitta. Ayurveda emphasizes individualized Pathya-Apathya guidelines based on constitution, digestive capacity, season and disease condition, which are essential for the prevention and effective management of Amlapitta.

INTRODUCTION

In the present era, the life of persons become so fast due to increase in competition in everyday life. Heavy work responsibilities, mental stress and poor time management often prevent individuals from maintaining regular and healthy eating habits. As a result, many rely on convenience foods and fast foods, which may negatively impact digestion and reduce digestive strength. Amlapitta is a common digestive disorder described in Ayurveda and is characterized by symptoms such as sour belching, nausea, burning sensation in the upper abdomen and indigestion. The condition develops due to the imbalance of Pitta Dosha along with impaired digestive function (Agni), resulting in improper digestion and the formation of metabolic toxins (Ama). According to Ayurveda,

Amlapitta arises from dietary, behavioural, psychological, seasonal and external factors. Excessive intake of spicy, sour, oily, heavy and incompatible foods aggravates Pitta and impairs digestion. Irregular habits such as overeating, eating before complete digestion of the previous meal, daytime sleeping after meals and suppression of natural urges further disturb digestive balance. Mental stress, anxiety, anger, fear and grief along with seasonal changes that aggravate Pitta, also contribute to the development of Amlapitta. In India, GERD affects approximately 7.6–19% of the population, with women reporting more symptoms and men experiencing more severe disease. Ayurveda emphasizes the importance of Pathya (wholesome diet and lifestyle) and avoiding Apathya (unwholesome habits) in

managing Amlapitta. Proper diet, regular routines and emotional well-being play a key role in maintaining digestive health and preventing recurrence.

AIM AND OBJECTIVE

The main aim of the article is importance of Pathya & Apathya in management of Amlapitta.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Information regarding pathya and apathya of Amlapitta is collected from various Samhitas and previously published articles.

The word Amla Pitta consists of two words—"Amla" and "Pitta."^[1]

According to Acharya Charaka, Pitta Dosha naturally exhibits the qualities of Amla (sour) and Katu (pungent) rasa.^[2]

According to Acharya Sushruta, Pitta is predominantly Katu (pungent) in nature, but upon vitiation (Vidagdha), it acquires Amla (sour) properties.^[3]

NIDANA

Several dietary factors are considered capable of aggravating Pitta, including Kulattha (horse gram), Pulāka (fermented rice preparations), heavy and oily meals (Guru and Abhishyandi Āhāra). Sweet substances derived from sugarcane, such as concentrated sugarcane products and related preparations, are also traditionally regarded as contributing factors. Certain



lifestyle practices may further disturb this balance, including intentionally holding back natural bodily urges, sleeping during the daytime soon after meals and bathing immediately following food intake. In addition, emotional states such as envy, sorrow and fear are described as psychological influences that may promote Pitta aggravation.^[4]

SAMPRAPTI

Amlapitta develops due to various causative factors, including dietary (Āhāraja), behavioral (Vihāraja) and psychological (Mānasika) influences. These factors aggravate Pitta Dosha, particularly increasing its Amla (sour) and Drava (liquid) qualities, which in turn weaken Agni (digestive fire).^[5] According to Acharya Kashyapa, continuous exposure to such causative factors (Nidana Sevana) leads to Pitta Prakopa and Mandagni, resulting in improper digestion of food. The undigested food undergoes fermentation (Vidagdha) and acquires a sour, acidic state (Shuktibhava) within the Amashaya (stomach), producing excessive acidity (Amlata). This pathological condition is known as Amlapitta.

Nidanasevana



Doshadhushti especially Pitta



Rasadhatu Dhushti



Mandagni



Ajeerna (If Apathya is taken regularly)



Annavisha (Vidagdha and attains Shukti Bhava)



Increased Amla and Drava Guna of Pitta in Amashaya



Amlapitta

LAKSHANA

As described in Madhava Nidana, the clinical manifestations of Amlapitta commonly include Avipaka (impaired digestion), Klama (a feeling of tiredness or exhaustion), Utklesha (nausea) and Tikta-Amla udgara (eructations with a bitter or sour taste.). Patients may also experience a sense of Gourava (heaviness in the body), HritKantha daha (burning sensations affecting the chest and throat region) and Aruchi (reduced appetite).^[6]

Types

Amlapitta is categorized into two main types based on the direction of its manifestation - Ūrdhvaga (upward moving) and Adhoga (downward-moving).

1. URDHVAGA AMLAPITTA- In this disease, vomiting may be green, yellow, blue, black, excessively red, highly sour, blood-red like water used for washing meat, very sticky, clear, mixed with phlegm or having the taste of various substances. After digestion of food or sometimes even without eating, the patient may experience bitter-tasting or sour vomiting. Similar bitter and sour eructations (belching) also occur. Other symptoms are, Burning sensation in the throat, heart region (chest), abdomen, hands and feet, Headache, Feeling of excessive heat in the body, anorexia, Fever, Disorders caused by the aggravation of Kapha and Pitta doshas, Itching, Skin rashes or eruptions, Various types of pustules or skin lesions.^[7]
2. ADHOGA AMLAPITTA- This type of Amlapitta may sometimes be expelled through the anal route (downward direction). It is characterized by: Frequent and excessive thirst, Burning sensation in the body, Fainting (loss of consciousness), Dizziness or giddiness, Delusion or confusion, Nausea, Appearance of rashes or eruptions on the skin, Diminished digestive fire (poor digestion), Horripilation (goosebumps), Excessive sweating, Yellowish discoloration of the body.^[8]

CHIKITSA

A holistic management approach is essential, encompassing Nidana Parivarjana, Prakriti Vighata Chikitsa and strict adherence to Dincharya, Ritucharya, Ratricharya and Sadvritta. In addition, lifestyle modifications, regular practice of recommended Yoga techniques including Asanas, Shatkriyas and Pranayama, along with the adoption of a suitable Pathya–Apathya (wholesome and unwholesome dietary regimen), play a vital role in maintaining health and preventing disease.

Samanya chikitsa of Amlapitta-

The management of Amlapitta primarily focuses on eliminating the aggravated Doshas through appropriate Panchakarma procedures. Vamana (therapeutic emesis) is considered the initial and most important purification therapy. This is followed by Mridu Virechana (mild purgation). In chronic or recurrent cases of Amlapitta, Basti therapy is recommended, wherein Asthapana Basti utilized to restore Dosha balance and promote long-term relief from symptoms.^{[9][10][11][12]} Vamana is the preferred treatment for Urdhwaga Amlapitta, while Virechana is indicated for Adhoga Amlapitta.^{[13][14]}

Following Shodhana Chikitsa, Shamana Chikitsa is administered, with dietary recommendations according to the predominance of the involved Dosha.

PATHYA-APATHYA

The dietary articles and activities that do not adversely affect the body systems and are liked by the mind are regarded as Pathya (wholesome). Likewise, dietary articles and activities that adversely affect the body system and are disliked by the mind are regarded as Apathya (unwholesome).^[15]



list of Pathya found in the disease Amlapitta is suggested by various Ayurveda Acharyas:

Varga	Ahara Dravya	English Name
Anna Varga	Purana Shali	Old variety of Rice
	Godhuma	Wheat
	Mudga	Green Gram
	Yava	Barley
Ksheera Varga	Gogudha	Cow Milk
Shaka Varga	Patola	Bottleguard
	Kusmanada	Pumpkin
	Karkotaka	Spiny Gourd
	Karavellaka	Bitter Gourd
	Vetagra	Bamboo shoots
	Kadali Pushpa	Flower of Banana tree
	Vastuka	
Mamsa Varga	Jangala Mamsa	Forest Meat
Phala Varga	Dadima	Pomegranate
	Amalaki	Gooseberry
	Kapittha	Wood Apple
Miscellaneous	Go Gharita	Cow's Ghee
	Narikelodaka	Coconut water
	Puranamadhu	Old Honey
	KhandaSarkara	Stone Sugar

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Varga	Ahara Dravya	English Name
Anna Varga	Navanna	New Rice
	Masha	Black Gram
	Kulattha	Horsegram
	Taila	Oil
Jala Varga	DushitaJala	Polluted Water
	Sheeta Jala	Cold Water
Madya Varga	Nutana Madya	New Wine
Kanda Varga	Aluka	Potato
Ksheera Varga	Dadhi	Sour Curd
	Aviksheera	Goat Milk
	Nava Guda	Jaggery
Mamsa Varga	Matsya	Fish
	Anupa Mamsa	Meat of Marshy land animals

DISCUSSION

The classics emphasize that adherence to an appropriate diet is as important as medicinal therapy in the management of disease. In fact, the effectiveness of treatment is greatly enhanced when Pathya is followed, while the continued intake of Apathya may reduce the benefits of medicines. Therefore, dietary regulation plays a crucial role in both the prevention and management of Amlapitta. Individuals suffering from Amlapitta, as well as those with a familial predisposition to similar disorders, may benefit from the regular consumption of wholesome foods such as Yava (barley), Godhuma (wheat), Purana Shali (aged rice), Mudga Yusha (green gram soup) and Laja Saktu (roasted grain flour). These dietary substances possess properties such as Deepana (enhancing digestion), Laghu (light to digest), Pittahara

(pacifying Pitta), and Vatanulomana (promoting the normal movement of Vata), which help counteract the pathological effects of Ama and aggravated Pitta. Since these foods are economical, nutritious and easily available, their routine use can aid in maintaining Doshic balance and reducing the risk of Amlapitta.

Various etiological factors, including improper dietary habits (Aharaja Nidana), unhealthy lifestyle practices (Viharaja Nidana), psychological factors (Manasika Bhavas) and seasonal influences (Kalaja Bhavas), contribute to the development and progression of Amlapitta. Therefore, Nidana Parivarjana or the avoidance of causative factors, remains the most important preventive strategy for controlling Amlapitta and preventing the formation of Ama and the aggravation of Pitta.



CONCLUSION

According to Ayurveda, the management of Amlapitta extends beyond the use of medications or dietary modifications alone. Although Amlapitta is often considered a Yapya Vyadhi, requiring long-term management rather than complete eradication, sustained adherence to appropriate Pathya, therapeutic interventions, and healthy lifestyle practices can effectively control the condition and prevent its recurrence. Such an integrated approach not only helps maintain digestive health and Dosha balance but also promotes longevity (Deerghayu), overall well-being (Sukhayu), and the ability to lead a productive and socially beneficial life (Hitayu).

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