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PATHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF JATARAGNI, DHATHVAGNI AND PANCHABHUTAGNI

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: *Agni is a fundamental concept in Ayurveda, responsible for the digestion, transformation, assimilation and nourishment of the body. Jatharagni, Bhutagni and Dhatvagni play interconnected roles in maintaining physiological equilibrium. Jatharagni governs the primary digestion of food, Bhutagni facilitates the transformation of the five Mahabhuta components of ingested food, and Dhatvagni is responsible for the metabolism and nourishment of the seven Dhatus. Impairment in the functioning of these Agnis is considered an important factor in the pathogenesis of various diseases.* ***Objective:*** *To explore the interrelationship between Jatharagni, Bhutagni and Dhatvagni, and to understand their pathological significance in the manifestation of diseases, with particular reference to Jwara and Sthoulya.* ***Materials and Methods:*** *This article is a conceptual review based on classical Ayurvedic literature, primarily the Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita. Relevant references pertaining to the functions of Agni, Nidanas of Agni Dushti, disease pathogenesis, and clinical assessment of Agnibala are reviewed and interpreted in the context of contemporary lifestyle and dietary practices.* ***Discussion:*** *Jatharagni serves as the principal digestive force, influencing the functioning of Bhutagni and Dhatvagni. Impairment of Jatharagni may lead to improper digestion and the formation of Ama, whereas dysfunction of Bhutagni and Dhatvagni may result in defective metabolic transformation, improper tissue nourishment, and disturbances in Dhatu homeostasis. Factors such as irregular dietary habits, incompatible foods, excessive or inadequate food intake, altered sleep patterns, seasonal variations, and psychological stress may contribute to Agni Dushti. The pathogenesis of Jwara illustrates the role of impaired Jatharagni, Ama formation and Dosha disturbance, while Sthoulya demonstrates the significance of Medodhatvagni dysfunction in excessive and abnormal Meda accumulation. Assessment of Agni through Jaranashakti and Aharashakti, along with the identification of Samagni, Vishamagni, Tikshnagni and Mandagni, is essential for understanding an individual's digestive and metabolic status.* ***Conclusion:*** *The coordinated functioning of Jatharagni, Bhutagni and Dhatvagni is essential for maintaining digestion, metabolism, tissue nourishment and physiological homeostasis according to Ayurveda. Understanding their interrelationship provides a systematic framework for interpreting the Samprapti of various diseases and highlights the importance of Agni assessment in clinical practice. This conceptual review emphasizes the relevance of classical Ayurvedic principles in understanding disease mechanisms and promoting individualized approaches to health maintenance.*

KEYWORDS: *Agni, Jatharagni, Bhutagni, Dhatvagni, Agni Dushti, Ama, Jwara, Sthoulya, Agnibala, Aharashakti.*

INTRODUCTION

Agni is a fundamental concept in Ayurveda responsible for digestion, metabolism, transformation and nourishment of the body. The three important types are Jatharagni, Bhutagni and Dhatvagni. Jatharagni is responsible for the primary digestion of food, Bhutagni transforms the five Mahabhuta components of food, and Dhatvagni facilitates the metabolism and nourishment of the seven Dhatus.

These Agnis function interdependently, and their normal functioning is essential for maintaining health and physiological balance. Impairment of Agni (Agni Dushti) may lead to improper digestion, Ama formation, disturbed tissue metabolism and disease manifestation. Dietary irregularities, unhealthy lifestyle habits, disturbed sleep and psychological stress are among the factors contributing to Agni Dushti.

The role of Agni in disease pathogenesis can be understood through conditions such as Jwara and Sthoulya. Assessment of Agni through Jaranashakti, Aharashakti and the features of Samagni, Vishamagni, Tikshnagni and Mandagni is important in Ayurvedic clinical practice. Thus, understanding the interrelationship of Jatharagni, Bhutagni and Dhatvagni helps explain the Ayurvedic perspective of digestion, tissue nourishment and disease development.

AIM

To understand the interrelationship and pathological significance of Jatharagni, Bhutagni and Dhatvagni in the maintenance of physiological homeostasis and the pathogenesis of diseases, based on classical Ayurvedic literature.

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OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the Ayurvedic perspective of agni
2. To understand the involvement of jataragni, bhutagni and dhathvagni in the pathogenesis of diseases.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

UNDERSTANDING THE RELATION BETWEEN JATARAGNI, BHUTHAGNI AND DHATHVAGNI.

JATARAGNI

पक्तृणाम् अधिप = जाठराग्नेः

Jatharagni, which digests food, is regarded as the chief among all the digestive/metabolic Agnis. The other Agnis depend upon it; their increase and decrease correspond to the increase and decrease of Jataragni. Therefore, one should carefully maintain Jataragni by supplying it with wholesome food and drinks in the proper manner, just as suitable fuel sustains a fire. When Jataragni remains in a normal and stable state, longevity and strength are maintained."[1]

Jataragni is the foundation of digestion, metabolism and nourishment; therefore, preservation of normal Jataragni is essential for maintaining health, strength and longevity."

Agni is responsible not only for digestion of food but also for its proper transformation and utilization by the body. When Agni functions normally: supports longevity (ayuḥ), maintains healthy complexion(Varṇa), produces and maintains strength(Bala), maintains a state of health(Svasthya), supports enthusiasm and activity (Utsaha), promotes proper nourishment and development of tissues(Upacaya), maintains bodily lustre/radiance (Prabha), supports vitality and resistance(Ojas), maintains metabolic vitality and radiance(Tejas), maintains proper Agni(7 dhathvagni, 5 bhutagni), supports the vital functions of life(Praṇa). Thus, Agni is regarded as the fundamental basis of nourishment and vitality [2].

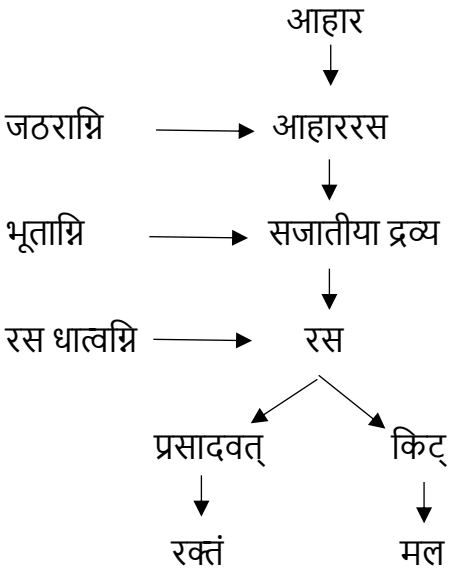
BHUTHAGNI

Food contains five Mahabhutas ,corresponding Uṣmas act on them and digestion/transformation of that particular mahabhuta component of food occurs. The different substances and their qualities nourish their respective counterparts in the body. The Parthiva (earth-dominant) substances nourish the Parthiva components of the body, while the remaining substances nourish their corresponding components in their entirety, giving nourishment of the body.[3]

DHATHVAGNI

The seven bodily Dhatus undergo transformation by their respective Agnis. During this process, each Dhatu is divided into two parts—Prasada and Kiṭṭa. Prasada Bhāga: the useful, refined portion that contributes to nourishment and formation of the corresponding Dhatu. Kiṭṭa Bhaga: the waste portion, which contributes to the formation of appropriate Mala (waste products).[4]

INVOLVEMENT OF AGNI IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF AAHARA:[5]



UNDERSTANDING THE ETIOLOGY OF AGNI DUSHTI IN THE PRESENT ERA

According to Charaka:[6]

Abhojana (weight loss diet), ajeernath (eating before the digestion of previous meal like snacks in between meals) , athibhojanath (heavy meals/dinner), vishama-anashana(having brunch),ashathmya (incompatible foods), guru-sheetha-atiruksha (heavy cold dry foods), sandhushta bhojanath(contaminated/putrified) , refrigerated foods like food with Preservatives, colouring agents. improper treatments like vamana, virechana, Snehapana and vyadhi Karshana(emaciated due to chronic diseases). desha vaishamyath (travelling, jet lag, Consuming non local foods),kaala vaishamyath (night shifts), rithu vaishamyath (climate changes, air conditioned environment), vega dharana (suppressing urges because of meetings, classes,travelling, gaming, suppressing sleep by energy drinks or coffee).

According to Sushrutha:[7]

Aharaja and viharaja nidanas like- athyambu paana (drinking excess water), vishamashana, sandharana, swapnaviparyaya (rathri jagarana or diva swapna-not sleeping at proper time) - In such situations the food , though sathmya (habituated), kale api(taken at proper time) and laghu(easily digestible) does not undergo proper digestion.

Manasika nidanas like- irshya(Jealousy), bhaya(Fear), krodha(Anger),lubdha(Greedy), shoka(Grief), dhainya(Depression/distress), dhvesha yuktha(Hatred).

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INVOLVMENT OF JATARAGNI, BHUTHAGNI AND DHATHVAGNI IN THE PATHOGENESIS OF DIFFERENT DISEASES.

SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM OF THE PATHOGENESIS OF DISEASE

आहार + जठराग्नि (मन्द) ⟶ Formation of आम

↓ ↓

जठराग्नि Equilibrium state Causes diseases in महा स्त्रोतस

↓

Formation of आहाररस + **भूताग्नि &धात्वग्नि** (मन्द) ⟶ Formation of आम

↓ ↓

धात्वग्नि is in equilibrium state Causes diseases all over the body

↓

अस्तयी धातु ⟶ Pachakamsha is manda ⟶ Vriddhi of the specific dhatu

⟶ Pachakamsha is theekshna ⟶ Kshaya of the specific dhatu

Pachakamsha (equilibrium) ⟶ Formation of healthy स्तयी धातु

EXAMPLE –INVOLVEMENT OF AGNI IN JWARA SAMPRAPTHI:[8]

निदान सेवन – मिथ्याहारविहारा

↓

त्रिदोष प्रकोप

↓

जठराग्नि मांध्या

↓

आम

↓

दोष संचय in आमाशय

↓

बहिर् गमन of कोष्ठाग्निं

↓

प्रकुपित दोष along with रस धा तु travels all over the शरीर

↓

Because of साम दोष- स्वेद

↓

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वहा स्रोतस् अवरोध occurs

↓

उष्णत in सर्व शरीर

↓

ज्वर

EXAMPLE – INVOLVEMENT OF AGNI IN STHOULYA SAMPRAPTHI:[9]

निदान सेवन

↓

Formation of अन्न रस which is मधुर तर

↓

आम

↓

मेदो धात्वग्नि मांध्या

↓

मेदो धातु अति वृद्धि

↓

स्रोतो अवरोध by मेद धातु and कफ दोष

↓

प्राकोप of वात ----- प्रकुपित वात enters कोष्ठा

↓

Does जठराग्नि संधूक्षण

↓

क्षुदतिमात्रं and शीघ्र आहार पाचन

↓

Again आम रस is formed

↓

मेदो धात्वग्नि मांध्या

↓

मेदो धातु अति वृद्धि – अपक्का मेद

↓

स्थौल्या

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SYMPTOMATOLOGY OF AGNI DUSHTI:[10]

the four types of Jataragni according to Ayurveda: **Samagni, Viṣhamagni, Tikṣhṇagni, and Mandagni**. It explains how each type digests food and what symptoms occur when digestion is abnormal.

1. Samagni - means balanced digestive fire. A person who properly digests food taken at the appropriate time, without difficulty or abnormal symptoms, has Samāgni.
2. Vishamagni- The Agni which sometimes digests food properly and at other times digests it improperly, producing symptoms such as abdominal distension, pain, Udāvarta, diarrhoea, heaviness of the abdomen, intestinal rumbling and abnormal bowel movement, is called Viṣhamagni.
3. Thikshangi - The Agni that quickly digests even a large quantity of food is called Thikshangi. It repeatedly digests even large meals very rapidly and, after digestion, produces dryness and burning/heat of the throat, palate and lips.
4. Mandagni - The Agni which takes a long time to digest even a small quantity of food, producing heaviness of the abdomen and head, cough, difficulty in breathing, excessive salivation, vomiting and weakness of the body, is called Mandagni.

ASSESSMENT OF AGNI DUSHTI

PAREEKSHA

- Ayurvedic concept of pareeksha Gives Evidence based knowledge, Application of Theoretical to practical knowledge. [11]

IMPORTANCE OF AGNIBALA PAREEKSHA

TO ASSESS

- ✓ **Ayubala pramana**
- ✓ **Baladosha pramana**

Concept of agni pareeksha is given much importance in ayurveda and is mentioned by charaka and sushrutha under Dwadashavidha pareeksha , and charaka mentioned under Dashavidha pareeksha.

CLINICAL ASSESMENT –

HISTORY TAKING

Jaraṇashakti means the capacity to digest food.

So, rather than judging Agni simply by how much a person eats, Ayurveda recommends assessing how well the person digests the food consumed.

For example:

- If food is digested properly and within an appropriate time → good/normal Agni
- If digestion is slow → Mandagni
- If digestion is excessively rapid → Tikṣhṇagni
- If digestion is irregular → Viṣhamagni

Agni assessment = assessment of Jaraṇashakti (digestive capacity).[12]

Aharashakti (capacity for food) should also be assessed. aharashakthi should be examined by the capacity to consume food (Abhyavaharaṇashakti) and the capacity to digest it (Jaraṇashakthi), because strength and longevity depend upon food."[13]

Two components of aharashakthi

Aharashakthi = Abhyavaharaṇashakthi + Jaraṇashakthi

Abhyavaharaṇashakthi - Capacity to eat/consume food, How much food a person can comfortably take.

Jaraṇashakthi - Capacity to digest food, How well and appropriately the food is digested

Therefore, a person may be able to eat a large amount, but if they cannot digest it properly, their actual Aharashakthi is not necessarily good.

DISCUSSION

Agni plays a crucial role in digestion, metabolism and tissue nourishment according to Ayurveda. Jatharagni is the principal digestive force, supporting the functions of Bhutagni and Dhatvagni. Impairment of Jatharagni may lead to improper digestion and Ama formation, while dysfunction of Bhutagni and Dhatvagni may result in defective nutrient transformation and disturbed Dhatu metabolism. These pathological changes contribute to disease development, as illustrated in Jwara and Sthoulya Samprapti. Dietary irregularities, disturbed sleep, unhealthy lifestyle practices and psychological stress are important factors contributing to Agni Dushti. Therefore, assessment of Agnibala, Jaranashakti and Aharashakti is essential for understanding digestive and metabolic disturbances from an Ayurvedic perspective.

CONCLUSION

Jatharagni, Bhutagni and Dhatvagni function in an interconnected manner to maintain digestion, metabolism and tissue homeostasis. Their impairment can contribute to Ama formation, Dhatu imbalance and disease pathogenesis. Understanding their physiological and pathological roles, along with proper assessment of Agni, provides an important foundation for Ayurvedic clinical evaluation and individualized management. Maintaining Agni through appropriate dietary habits and a balanced lifestyle is emphasized for preserving health and preventing disease according to Ayurvedic principles.

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