



Review Article

## GENERAL AILMENTS RELATED WITH *AGNIDUSHTI*

Laxmi Sharma<sup>1\*</sup>, Sudipta Kumar Rath<sup>2</sup>

\*1PG Scholar, <sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Dept. of Dravyagun vgyan, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, Rajasthan.

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### ABSTRACT

*Agni* is described as an important factor of digestion and metabolism in Ayurveda treatise. *Agni* is responsible for all the vital functions within body and determines the quantity of food to be consumed. The conversion of ingested food in the form of energy through digestion, absorption and assimilation completely depend upon individual's *Agni* i.e., digestive fire. *Agni* has a significant role in balanced body functioning and keeping the body components in homeostasis. According to Acharya Charak, *Dehagni* is considered as the cause of life, complexion, strength, lustre, health sustenance, *Oja*, *Teja* and it shows the critical importance of *Agni* in overall health of an individual. Individuals die when their *Agni* stops working, but when their *Agni* is *Sama* (balanced), they are completely well and live a long, happy, and healthy life. When a person's *Agni* is vitiated, his entire metabolism is disrupted resulting in bad health and disease. As a result *Agni* is considered the foundation (*Mool*) of life. Although the number of *Agni* in our body is uncountable because it play an important role in metabolism even at cellular or molecular level particularly then also in Ayurvedic texts it mainly considered of 13 types in number. These are one *Jatharagni* or *Koshthagani*, five *Bhootagni* and seven *Dhatvagni*. Firstly, *Jatharagni* perform its action in *Koshtha* (stomach) then *Bhootagni* and *Dhatvagni* perform their action. Any kind of disturbance at any level of digestion and metabolism (*Aaharpachankriya*) leads to certain kind of disruption in normal functioning of *Agni*. It may be hyper or hypo or fickle state of *Agni* (*Tikshnagni*, *Mandagni*, *Vishmagani*). These all conditions called as *Agnidushti*. *Agnidushti* is a common cause for general health ailments like *Ajeerna* (indigestion), *Amlpitta* (acidity), *Atisaar* (diarrhoea), *Arsha*, *Grahani* (IBS or IBD) etc. Consumption of unhealthy food without following the *Aaharvidhi* described in Ayurvedic texts increasing these health issues day by day. The paper is about to deciphering these ailments in respect with pathogenesis i.e., *Samprapti*.

## INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a traditional medical system which helps in maintenance and promotion of health of healthy individual, prevention from diseases through diet and lifestyle regimens and curing the disease of diseased person by using of different therapeutic principles.<sup>[1]</sup> The term Ayurveda make up of two words *Ayu* (life) and *Veda* (knowledge) which are used to describe a variety of aspects relating to health and wellbeing. These include living a happy life, achieving

lasting happiness, and extending one's lifespan. Ayurveda recognises the basic states as- physical, mental, and spiritual. Sushrut outlines the characteristics of a healthy individual. As a result, the *Dhatu* (tissues) and *Mala* (wastes) must function normally, the *Dosha* must be in balance or equilibrium (*Samyavastha*), and the digestive fire must be in a balanced state. The mind, *Atma*, and sensory-motor organs must all be in a happy state. These people are referred to as *Swastha*, or healthy.<sup>[2]</sup> Among all these aspects *Agni* is most important component as it determines all stages of health or sickness. Proper dietary intake, proper digestion and metabolism, as well as proper utilisation and excretion, all contribute to health which are completely depend upon status of individual's *Agni*.

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*Agni* is primary element responsible in transformation which includes digestion and assimilation process, which ultimately contributes to growth and development of an individual. According to Ayurveda, there are 13 different subtypes of *Agni* in the body, each with a unique physiological purpose and location i.e., 1 *Jatharagni*, 5 *Bhutagni* and 7 *Dhatvagni*.

**Jatharagni:** The main *Agni*, or *Jatharagni*, is the mother of all others and it is the cause of normal longevity, appearance, strength, health, enthusiasm, growth, complexion, *Ojas* (energy/vital essence), lustre, various forms of *Agni*, and even the reason for a person's existence. In regarding the significance of *Agni*, Acharya Charak stated that when *Agni*'s function is stopped, a person dies; nevertheless, when *Agni* is *sama*, a person is completely well and lives a long, happy, and healthy life. However, if a person's *Agni* is vitiated, their body's metabolism will be affected, which will result in pathogenesis of some kind of *Agnidushti*, that will further lead to illness and diseased condition.

**Bhootagni:** The work of *Bhutagni* continues after functioning of *Jatharagni* on the ingested food in the GIT. It converts the *Vijaatiye panchbhautic* elements of the *Aahar rasa* into *Sajaatiye panchbhautic* elements, which nourish their own unique *Bhautika* parts of the body.<sup>[3]</sup> As stated by Acharya Charak every substance in this universe is made up of *Panchmahabhoots*.<sup>[4]</sup> This principle indicates about the *Panchabhautikatva* of each and every cell or element of body. There are five fundamental components to each *Panchbhoutik dravya*, as well as five corresponding *Bhoutika agnies*. Thus, the corresponding *Bhootagni* play role in conversion on same kind of *Mahabhautic* component present in the food material after the disintegration by *Jathragni*.

**Dhatvagni:** *Dhatvagnis* are seven in number as alike with corresponding *Dhatu*. Each *Dhatvagni* is skilled in combining and altering the elements appropriate for its individual *Dhatu*. According to Acharya Charaka, each of the seven *Dhatu*s that sustain the body has its own *Agni*, which it uses to digest and alter the materials that are given to them into substances that are similar to them for absorption and nutrition.<sup>[5]</sup> This is a form of discriminatory action. The *Datvagnis* play their actions on raw material provided by *Bhootagnis* i.e., *Nabhas*, *Vayavy*, *Tejas* etc. and convert the *Ahara ras* in *Sara* (nutrient/*Dhatu*) and *Kitta* (waste/*Mala*) parts.

**Concept of Agnidushti:** According to Hareet *Samhita*, *Samagni* depends on whether the *Doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*) are in normal stage. When the *Pitta* is higher than normal, the condition is known as *Tikshnagni*.

When *Kapha* is higher than normal, the condition is known as *Mandagni*.

**Samagni:** The *Samagni* properly digest and assimilate meals at the appropriate time. Consequently, the *Dhatu*'s (supportive tissues of the body) quality is improved<sup>[6]</sup>. The persons having balanced dietary habits according to their *Prakriti* and daily and seasonal regimen, their *Agni* remain in *Sam* state, which leads to healthy and prosperous life. There is no *Doshic* unbalance in *Samagni* state. All *Doshas* remain in *Samyavastha*.

### Types of Agnidushti

**1. Vishamagni:** The fickle state of *Agni* is known as *visamagni*, characterised by incorrect digestion and metabolism, which manifests as *Dhatuvaishmyata*. Symptoms arises like- flatulence, stomach pain, rising of *Koshthashrit vata*, diarrhoea, and heaviness in the abdomen (*Aadhman*), as well as gurgling in the intestines and straining to expel stools. Different sorts of *Vatavyadhi* are produced due to unbalance of *Vata* in this *Vishamagni dushti*.

**2. Tikshnagni:** This type of *Agnidushti* occurs when *Pitta dosha* gets increased. *Tikshna* word refers to fast action. So, this condition permits to quick digestion of any sort of food material. In result, it produces desire of something to eat repeatedly. If food is not ingested in this condition, then it leads to dehydration that manifest with consumption of *Dhatu*s (body components). Charak has named this as '*Bhasmak roga*'.

**3. Mandagni:** *Mandagni* resembles with enhanced *Kapha dosh*. *Mandagni* means - slow digestion fire. It is very common type of *Agnidushti* that results in undigestion of even very small quantity of food. That improper digestion leads to formation of '*Ama*' that manifest different kinds of pathogenesis like *Ajeerna*, heaviness in abdomen, vomiting, *Arochak*, headache etc. Vagbhat states that *Mandagni* is the cause for manifestation of all disease. It triggers to expel out the undigested food from the body either via oral route or via anal route.

*Vishmagni*, *Tikshnagni* and *Mandagni* all are come under *Agnidushti* which manifest different kinds of diseases associated with *Doshic* involvement, only *Samagni* offers the desired health benefits of consumed food.

### Causative factors (Hetu) of Agni Dushti<sup>[7]</sup>

1 Excessive fasting, irregular eating schedules, or consumption of food without digestion of previous meal. 2. Eating an unhealthy diet and *Virudha Ahara* (inappropriate food materials) i.e., deleterious combination of food materials. 3. Eating excessive quickly or indulging in other activities while eating (incompatible activities). 4. A diet that is not in

accordance with a person's *Prakriti* (*Prakriti virudhh* or *Asatmya bhojan*). 5. Consumption of excessive cold, heavy food, contaminated food. 6. Suppression of natural urges like- urination, defecation, vomiting, sneezing, cough etc. Irregular sleeping habits. 7. Emotional variables including rage, greed, fear, sadness, and depression can also cause stomach problems. 8. Eating food under unsanitary conditions, which can cause diseases. 9. Existence of additional illnesses that adversely affect intestinal health. 10. *Madhur rasa atiupayog*: If the sweet taste (*Madhur ras*) is ingested excessively in diet, the stomach fire is reduced. 11. *Katu, Vidahi bhojan, Vistambhi bhojan, Vidgdhhabhojan, Adhyashana*. 12. Hetus of *Annava* *Srotas Dushti*. These *Hetu* leads to *Agni vikruti*. 13. Improper administration of *Panchakarma* therapies (After the *Shodhan* process *Agni* get diminished eg. *Virechan-Snehabasti vyapad, Snehvibhram* etc.)

### Manifestations of Agnidushti

*Agnidushti* or "*Vigunata of Agni*" includes *Vishmagni, Tikshnagni* and *mandagni* conditions. In *Viman sthana* Acharya Charak has mentioned '*Agnivaigunya*' as a causative factor for '*Annava* *hasrotodushti*' which leads to such of pathological manifestations in '*Amashya*' and '*Annava* *hini dhamnis*' (GIT) as sites of '*Annava* *hasrotas*' (digestive system).<sup>[8]</sup>

General ailments which are followed by *Agnidushti* given in Ayurvedic texts. These are like-undesireness to eat something (*Anannabhilasha*), anorexia (*Aruchi*), indigestion (*Avipaka*), vomiting (*Chhardi*), digestive fire insufficiency (*Agnimandhya*), *Ajeerna*, constipation (*Anaha*), flatulence (*Adhman & Atopa*), IBD (*Grahani*), *Bhasmak roga*, pain (*Shool*), dyspepsia (*Pipasa*), *Andhyta*, death etc.

### 1. Arochak (Anorexia)

The condition in which one get develop disregard towards the '*Anna*' or food. When it presents as a symptom or *Upadrava* of other disease called as '*Aruchi*' or whenever it occurs as a main disease called as '*Arochak*'. Patient indicates about the deterioration in perception of the taste of everyday food or other consumable food item. Sushrut has named it as '*Bhaktopghat*'.

**Pathogenesis (Samprapti):** *Arochak* is considered as '*Ras pradoshaj vikar*' when the consumption of the *Ahar* and *Vihar* implying with *Doshprakop*, separately or in combination, *Vatadi dosha* get vitiated and causes *Agnidushti* which leads to formation of '*Apakva Anna rasa*'. In another way when patient suffer from *Mansika hetu* like sadness, fear, anger etc. *Mansik dosh* also get accumulate in the site of consciousness (*Chetna*) i.e., heart. Due to this, the *Apakva annrasa* circulated by means of heart.<sup>[9]</sup> When it reaches to *Jivha* i.e., site for *Bodhak kapha* '*Dosh-dushya sammurchhana*' get occur

result in hampering the functions of *Bodhak kapha*. Patient feels imperception regarding food.

### 2. Ajeerna (Indigestion)

When the ingested food gets not completely digested due to insufficiency of digestive fire is called as '*Ajeerna*'. This undigested food gets the form of '*Ama*' and manifest of different kind of symptoms resembling with different kind of *Doshic* involvement.

**Pathogenesis (Samprapti):** *Ajeerna* is described mainly in three types in Ayurvedic texts. '*Amajirna*' occurs due predominance of *Kapha dosha*. *Vidagdhajirna* associated with *Pitta dosh* involvement. Similarly *Ajirna* associated with *Vata dosha* is known as '*Vishtabdhajirna*'.<sup>[10]</sup> Etiological factors like- drinking water in excessive quantity, eating food at the wrong or in excessive quantity, irregular fasting habits, eating unwholesome food, avoidance of natural urges, disturbed sleeping habits, other mental conditions affects the *Agni* and it becomes severely vitiated hampering the digestion process sequentially which results in formation of undigested food substance or '*Ama*' that are sour and toxic in nature,<sup>[11]</sup> start pathologic process in the GIT and results in variety of diseases. Even when they consume food in the right amount have trouble in digesting it.

### 3. Adhman

Pain and rumbling sound in stomach occur in association with distension of abdomen to *Vata dosha* accumulation in abdomen. This condition is called as '*Adhman*'. This is caused by *Vata vegdharan*.<sup>[12]</sup>

**Pathogenesis (Samprapti):** *Vegdharan, Rukshanna sevan* etc. etiological factors causes the *Vatprakop* and *Pittakshaya* results in improper digestion of food which further leads to obstruction in *Vata dosha*'s pathway. So, the obstructed and increased *Vata* get accumulate in *Udar* (abdomen) and create the rumbling sound and pain in association with distension of abdomen.

### 4. Grahani roga

Acharya sushrut has called the *Sashti pittadhara kala* situated between the '*Amashaya*' and '*Pakvashaya*' as '*Grahani*' and the disease arises by making this '*Grahani*' as *Adhishthan* is called '*Grahani roga*'. *Grahani* is said to be the abode of digestive fire. Acharya Chakrapani has called the *Agnidushti* located in the *Grahani* as the '*Grahani dosha*'. Because after the consumption of *Chaturvidha* food, it's holding, digestion, absorption and relinquishment of waste material etc. are under the control of *Grahani*.<sup>[13]</sup>

When there is a state of *Mandagni* the *Grahani* takes out the '*Apakva anna*' (undigested food) from the body. It is a painful disease which originates with symptoms associated with *Doshic* involvement. Symptoms varies according to *Vata, Pitta, Kapha* and

*Sannipatic* origin. Common features are-irregular bowel habits, evacuation after taking meals, weakness, polydipsia, anorexia, bitter taste of mouth, darkness in front of eyes, oedema over extremities, pain in bones, vomiting, fever, acid eructations.<sup>[14]</sup>

**Pathogenesis (Samprapti):** Due to *Nidansevan*, the *Grahani* gets deformed following to depletion in *Jatharagni* and when the *Grahani* is contaminated, transfers both ripe and unripe food to the '*Pakvashaya*' (in the lower part), then sometimes there is a tendency to liquid stools and sometimes bound stools frequently, which that is called *Grahani* disease. The *Grahani* holds the unripe food down for absorption.

### 5. *Bhasmak roga*

It is a disease caused by *Agni's* acuity (arise) in which the food consumed by patient gets digested quickly due to the acuteness of *Agni* and the patient feels hungry again and eats more. In this, the patient perpetually disturbed by hunger and becomes restless when food is not available and becomes weak day by day even after taking large quantity of food.<sup>[15]</sup> In modern science it can be compared with hyperthyroidism.

**Pathogenesis (Samprapti):** Consumption of the above-mentioned etiological factors leads to the depletion of *Kapha*, and the *Pitta* becomes arise and gives strength to the *agni* by going to the place of *Agni* (*Grahani*) along with *Vata*. As a result, there is an increase in the *Jatharagni*. Increased *Agni* and *Vayu* suppress the qualities of food in the *Ruksha* body and digest it soon. If no more food is available soon, the aggravated *Agni* starts digesting the *Raktadi dhatu*s after digesting the food. It may leads to weakness, many diseases, and death also.

### 6. *Amlapitta*

The burning of *Pitta* and becoming acidic is *Amlapitta*. That is, a disease in which food becomes acidic after reaching in *Amashaya* due to burning of *Pitta*. This acidic *Pitta* has tendency to get discharged from the oral route.

**Pathogenesis (Samprapti):** After the intake of etiological factors (*Aahar & Vihar*) in the rainy season and in '*Aanupdesh*' the *Pitta* gets burned and becomes acidic in nature. Then it originates symptoms like- acid eructations, burning in chest and throat, anorexia and develops *Amlapitta* disease.<sup>[16]</sup>

### DISCUSSION

All these instances show that only *Agni*, which is situated in *Pitta*, is responsible for any useful or adverse effect as mentioned by Charak. In modern science, digestive fire or digestive enzymes and hormones can be correlated with the *Agni* which is responsible for uninterrupted digestion process. At any level of digestion process when *Agni* get disturbed

it shows some features which can be mild to severe according to patients *Prakriti* (body constitution), age and *Kala* (time) etc.

### CONCLUSION

As Vagbhat said "*Rogah sarveapi-jayante mandeagnau sutramudrani tu*" all diseases are associated with *Agnidushti*. So, this indicates us to bring our attention towards individual's dietary habits to evaluate the status of *Agni* to fulfilling the aim of maintenance of health of healthy person. To cure a diseased person, it is always needed to maintain the individual's *Agni* in '*Samagni*' state. So, during prescription for any disease '*Amapachan*' and '*Deepan*' drugs should be included.

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**\*Address for correspondence**

**Dr. Laxmi Sharma**

PG Scholar,

Dept. of Dravyagun vigyan,

National Institute of Ayurveda,

Jaipur, Rajasthan.

Email:

[laxmisharma221196@gmail.com](mailto:laxmisharma221196@gmail.com)

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