CONCEPT OF AGNI AND AMA IN AYURVEDA - A BRIEF REVIEW
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ABSTRACT
In our country since last few decades along with scientific and technological revolution a social revolution has also took place which ultimately has drastically changed dietary habits of society at large. This change in dietary habit has ultimately resulted in manifestation of many problems related to gastrointestinal tract. Ayurveda, an ancient system of Indian medicine documented and practiced since 1500 B.C. deals with inter-individual variability for personalized and predictive medicine. In Ayurveda the concept of Agni is very specific one of its kind among other contemporary sciences. Concept of Agni is vividly discussed in Ayurveda as it is the most significant entity for maintaining health of an individual. In Ayurveda, Agnimandya is said to be the root cause of most of the diseases. Hence it is important to understand the basic nature of Agni so as to take care of it. In the present study we have reviewed the basic concept of Agni its types thoroughly and also discussed efficacy of some well-known approaches to treat Agnimandya on the basis of recent clinical studies.

INTRODUCTION
Primary aim of Ayurveda is to maintain healthy status of an individual and to cure the disease of diseased one. Ayurveda is divided into eight main branches. Kayachikitsa is the first and foremost among Ashta Anga of Ayurveda. Agni is of prime importance in Kayachikitsa, as Kayachikitsa is nothing but the Chikista of Agni.

In Ayurveda, the term Agni is used in the sense of power which converts ingested substances from one form to another. Agni converts food in the form of substances which are acceptable by body. Ayurveda considers that Dehaagni is the fundamental cause of life, complexion, strength, health, nourishment, lusture, Oja, Teja and Prana (The very life energy).1

Aacharya Sushruta explains the qualities of Swasthapurusha (healthy person) determining his physical and mental health. A person is considered to be healthy when:
1) All three Doshas (Vata, Pitta and Kapha) are in well balanced condition.
2) The Agni is working normally.
3) The Dhatus are normally formed and proportionally well balanced performing their respective functions.
4) The Malas are properly formed and timely eliminated out of the body.
5) The soul, mind and all sense organs working properly with pleasure and happiness. Thus overall well-being depends on the equilibrium of Dosha, Agni, Dhatu, Mala, soul and mind.2

While addressing process of Vyadhi Nirmiti (disease formation) as well, Aacharya has mentioned that weakened power of Agni (Agnimandya) is the root cause of most of the disorders.3

Thus the concept of Agni is associated with health of an individual as well as closely related with formation of diseases. The improper diet or faulty life style causes Agni Dushti which causes abnormality of Dhatus and ultimately results in various diseases as discussed by Acharya Charaka, Acharya Sushruta and other scholars of Ayurveda.

Since last few decades along with scientific and technological revolution a social revolution has also took place which ultimately has drastically
changed dietary habits of society at large. This change in dietary habit has ultimately resulted in manifestation of many problems related to gastrointestinal tract. So it becomes our prime concern to understand Agnimandya thoroughly. This research paper is a sincere effort to understand Agni and Agnimandya in terms of contemporary dietary habits, which will be beneficial for prevention of disease as well as for treatment purpose.

Aims and objectives
1. To re-evaluate, discuss, and elaborate the Ayurvedic concept of Agni and Ama.
2. To understand the importance of correcting Ama in the treatment of Neej Vyadhi with respect to current research work.

Material And Methods
This article is based on a review of Ayurvedic texts. Materials related to Agni, Agnimandya and other relevant topics have been collected. The main Ayurvedic texts used in this study are Charaka Samhitha, Astanga Sangraha, Astanga Hridaya and available commentaries on these texts. We have also referred to the various websites and scientific journals to collect information regarding current researches on the relevant topics.

Literature Review
Agni
Food that we eat undergoes gradual transformation by the effect of Jatharagni, Bhutagni and Dhatvagni. The processed metabolic products circulate inside the Srotas continuously by the proper functioning of Vata Dosha. This in turn favours the overall development and growth of tissues, strength, complexion and happiness as well.4

In the text Brahmastrutra, presence of Agni has been said to be the sign of life in the body. Acharya Yasaka has given the etymology of the term Agni. The word “A” denotes root “I,” meaning “to go”; “G” denotes the root “Anja,” meaning “to glitter” or root “Daha” meaning “to burn” and “Ni” means “to carry.”

It means Agni carries everything in it. It moves everywhere and metamorphoses substances, burns, assimilates, glitters and grows.5

Types of Agni
Agni is innumerable because of its presence in each and every Parmanu of the body. According to the functions and site of action, Agni has been divided into 13 types, i.e. one Jatharagni, five Bhutagni and seven Dhatvagni.

1. Jatharagni
Jatharagni is the most important one, which digests four types of food and transforms it into Rasa and Mala. Jatharagni Mandya (i.e., hypofunctioning Agni) causes production of Ama. Saamataa is a condition manifesting due to the amalgamation of Ama with Dosha and Dushya (Dhatus and Mala) resulting into the manifestation of various disorders. Any sort of pathology of Jatharagni will ultimately affect the normal functioning of Bhutagni and Dhatvagni ultimately causing manifestation of various diseases. Therefore by all means one has to protect Jatharagni by means of proper diet according to own Agni. One who consumes unwholesome diet due to greed and does not follow rules of diet as mentioned by Stalwart Acharyas, give way to diseases caused by the vitiation of Grahanii.

2. Bhutagni
Bhutagni is the one that is present in a basic element (Bhutas). There are five Agnis in each of the five basic elements, namely – Parthiva (earth), Apya (water), Tejas (Agni), Vayuva (Vayu) and Nabhasa (Aakas). Each cell (Dhatuparamanu) consists of these five Bhutagnis as each and every cell in our body is composed of five basic elements. All the nutrients in this world that we eat also consist of the same five basic elements with their respective Agni. Acharya Charaka has mentioned that the five Bhutagni digest their own part of the element present in the food materials. After the digestion of food by the Bhutagni, digested materials containing the elements and qualities similar to each Bhutas nourish their own Bhautika elements of the body. However, there is an indirect reference of five Bhutagni underlying in the brief description made to the transformation of food stuff.

3. Dhatvagni
Each of the seven type of Dhatu viz. Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa, Meda, Asthi, Majja and Shukra have their own Agni known as Dhatwagni. Each Dhatwagni present in each Dhatu synthesizes and transforms the essential Dhatu nutrients required for that particular Dhatu from the basic nutrients present in the Anna Rasa.

According to Vagbhata the Dhatwagni is Sukshmaansh of Jatharagni which is situated in Dhatu. It’s Sada (diminished power) and Dipti (increased power) causes Dhatuvrddhi and Dhatukshaya respectively.

Other Types
According to Acharya Susruta, five types of Agnis are illustrated, viz. Pachakagni, Ranjakagni, Alochakagni, Sathakagni and Bhrajakagni.
Pachak is considered. Based on the channels), uses on D. B. A. 

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Mandya diet) are the factors which cause (eating before the digestion of previously consumed having opposite properties) and intake of diet), and Dushti the pathogenesis of most of the diseases. 

Formation wh Ama vitiated, the whole metabolism will be disturbed, happy and individual is in functioning, the individual dies. When of importance of functions, the above in which Vishamagni, Teekshnagni, Jatharagni, Bala, Aagnis, Adhisthana, tolerance of even a little bit of Manda Agni, Teekshna, Dosha becomes less at one time or it may become more at another

Importance of Agni
Types of various Agni have been discussed above in which Jatharagni is the chief because function of Bhutagni and Dhatvagni depends on it. While describing importance of Agni, Acharya Charaka says when Agni stops its normal functioning, the individual dies. When Agni of an individual is in Samyavastha (balanced), then person remains healthy and would lead a long, happy and healthy life. Agni of a person when vitiated, the whole metabolism will be disturbed, resulting in ill health and various diseases. Hence, Agni is said to be the base of life.

Ama
Jatharagni Mandya will cause Ama formation which results in Strotorodha and vitiation of all Doshas. Agni Dushti is an important factor in the pathogenesis of most of the diseases. Agni Dushti occurs at two levels i.e., Jatharagni Mandya and Dhatvagni Mandya. Atimatrasahana (excessive intake of diet), Viruddhashana (intake of food having opposite properties) and Adhyashana (eating before the digestion of previously consumed diet) are the factors which cause Jatharagni Mandya. Strotorodha (obstruction in micro circulatory channels), Bala Bhransha (loss of body strength), Gaurava (heaviness), Anil Mudhata (abnormal movement of Vata Dosha), Aalasya (laziness), Apakti (indigestion), Nisthiva (excessive dribbling of saliva), Mala Sanga (obstruction to Mala eg. Purisha, etc.), Aruchi (anorexia), Klama (lethargy) these are the signs of presence of Ama in body.

Classic principles of treating Ama Dosha
The line of treatment of AmaDosha starts with Pachana (digestion of Ama) then Deepana (increasing digestive power) and lastly Shodhana after Snehan and Swedan. Shodhana without Ama Pachana results in further complication as Ama Dosha is amalgamated within body tissues. Hence Shodhana Karma is not recommended as first line of treatment. The overall treatment approach primarily focuses on Pachana (digestion of Ama), Deepana (increasing digestive power), Anulomana (purge) and Shamana (medicine) to avoid further formation of Ama.

Current studies on effect of various measures to treat Ama
In a recent clinical study entitled, "Clinical study to evaluate the effect of Ushnodak in Mandagni’ the researcher has clinically evaluated the efficacy of lukewarm water on people suffering from Agnimandya. For carrying clinical study, 30 subjects were considered. Based on the treatment recommended and its continuous follow up for 40 days, 97 % effectiveness was observed in which 30% subjects were found to be benefitted with improved results. These were evaluated on the basis of various parameters such as Abhyayaharan Shakti, Jarana Shakti, and Ruchi. In this study researcher concluded that, developing habit of consuming Ushnodak every day in the morning and late night helps in improving function of Agni. For better result in Agnimandya or diseases caused by Agnimandya, Ushnodak is effective as Anupan (drink taken with or after medicine) along with Deepana Pachana medicine.

In another research study entitled, “Adaptation of Ashta Ahar Vidhi Visheha Ayatana in today’s life style” author has concluded that the intake of Ahara in the appropriate quantity is not enough to bestow good effects on the person’s health. To take total benefits of the Ahara, it is also necessary to have the knowledge about “Ashta Ahar Vidhivishesh Ayatana” i.e., dietary guidelines and to follow the same. It is the time to adopt these Ayatanas in our routine life so as to remain healthy. It is wisely said that “It is better to cultivate health instead of treating diseases.”

CONCLUSION
Ayurveda is one of the oldest systems of medicine which has elaborated the effect of diet and lifestyle on health of an individual.
is the fundamental line of treatment in Ayurveda. Hence we hereby conclude that one should understand the concept of Agni and care should be taken for proper functioning Agni as it is the one which responsible for healthy body and healthy life.

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