

## A CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF AGNI AND ITS CLINICAL SIGNIFICANCE

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### ABSTRACT

There are various forms of consumable food like eatable, beverages, masticable and linctus food, when it is consumed in suitable quantity with free from contamination, undergo metabolic transformation by the effect of *jatharagni*, *bhutagni* and *dhatvagni*. Initially *jatharagni* stimulates *bhutagni* as all consumed foods are *panchbhoutika*. It has to undergo transformation by the respective *bhutagnis*, it becomes easy for tissue metabolism by *dhatvagni*. Then processed metabolic product circulates inside the *srotas* (channels) continuously by the help of *vatadosha*. *Jatharagni* is the chief among all types of *agnis* because *bhutagni* and *dhatvagni* depend on it. Aggravation of *jatharagni* becomes cause of aggravation of *bhutagni* and *dhatvagni*. So one has to protect *jatharagni* by consuming suitable wholesome dietetic and behavior. Its contradictory one, who consumes unwholesome diet due to greed, succumbs to disease caused by the vitiation of *grahni* (small intestine). *Agni dushti* is one of the causative factors for the many diseases. Therefore understanding of *agni* is major concept for understanding of disease process to prescribed principle management.

**Key words:** *Agni, jatharagni, metabolic transformation.*

**INTRODUCTION:** Power of *agni* determines the quantity of food to be consumed<sup>1</sup>. *Agni* is based on power of digestion such as *uttam* (superior), *madhyama* (moderate) and *avara* (inferior) and accordingly it digest the food. Normalcy of *agni* is responsible for strength, health, longevity and vital breath. It should be protected by proper intake of foods and drinks because these act as a fuel<sup>2</sup>. If person deprived of food and drinks, *agni* become disturbed and become the cause of various diseases.

Food substances are composed by five *mahabhutad* and specific *Agni*'s *panchmahabhuta* helps in the digestion of their respective food ingredients after getting stimulation from *jatharagni*. Food enters the *koshtha* where the food is get disintegrated by fluids and softened by

unctuous substances by the help of *Pranavayu*<sup>3</sup>. *Samanavata* stimulates the *jatharagni* which is situated in *amashaya*, and then proper digestion process is start. When food consumed in appropriate quantity along with appropriate time and is in normal condition, it is as promoter of longevity.

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

1. To understand the concept of *agni*
2. To understand clinical significance of *agni*.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Different *ayurvedic* texts are referred to fulfill this part. The main *ayurvedic* texts used in this study are Charaka Samhita, Susruta Samhita, Astangasangraha, Parameswarappa's AyurvediyaVikritiVigyan and

RogaVigyan, commentaries of Samhita's etc.

**Process of metabolic transformation to form respective dhatus:** The seven varieties of *dhatu* (tissues) supports and sustains the life of the body and these undergo metabolic transformation in two different ways i.e. *kitta* (waste product) and *prasada* (nutrient portion)<sup>4</sup>. The nutrient portion of *rasa* (essence of food) provides nourishment to *rakta* (blood), from *rakta* to *mamsa* (muscles tissue), *mamsa* to *medas* (adipose tissue), *meda* to *asthi* (connective tissue), *asthi* to *majja* (bone tissue) and *majja* to *sukra* (semen) and from *sukra*, foetus is the outcome<sup>5</sup>. Metabolic transformation from *rasa* to *sukra* has been explained by Acharya Charaka as follows. The *rasa*, essence of food convert into *raktadhatu* by the effect of heat generated by *pitta*.

The *raktadhatu* transform into *mamsa* by *vata*, *jala* & *tejas* and brings compactness. The *mamsa* is cooked by its own heat and gets transformed into *medas*. This helps in the excitement of liquidity and unctuousness by *jalamahabhuta*.

*Meda* brings compactness by the action of the heat present in *meda* by *prithvi*, *jala*, *vayavyamahabhuta*. This converts in *asthidhatu*. All combined together and gives rise to hardness and roughness in *asthidhatu*. Porosity develops inside the bone with the help of *vayu* and porous space gets filled up with *medas*. This unctuous substance is called *majja*. Then *sukradhatu* is formed by essence of *majjadhatu*.

The whole body is pervaded by *srotas* (channels) and *sukra* moves from its own path. When person excited due to sexual urge, determination and amorous mental attitude, *sukra* comes out and reaches the testicle through semen carrying channels.

During sexual intercourse *sukra* displace cause of heat generated through act of copulation and also liquefies the *sukra* just like heat liquefies *ghee*. *Sukra* comes out from testicle just like water flows from higher altitude to lower altitude<sup>6</sup>.

**Role of agni in the development of disease:** Almost all diseases arise due to sluggish function of *agni* specially *udararoga*<sup>7</sup>. *Jatharagni* is the chief among of three types of *agni*. It is responsible for disease and health. Normal condition of *agni* is responsible for longevity, complexion, strength, health, enthusiasm, well built, luster, and immunity. *Bhutagnis*, *dhatvagnis* and all vital functions are dependent on *jatharagni*. Healthy state of body and diseased condition is entirely dependent on *agni*.

The three diseases piles, diarrhea, and *grahani* are inter-dependent in as much as one of them can cause the other. They get aggravated if there is reduction in the power of digestion and the power of digestion is increased they get cured. Therefore *agni* should be specifically protected for these tree ailments<sup>8</sup>.

*Rasadhatu* circulates all over the body with the help of *vyanvata*. If any abnormality occurred in the *rasavahasritas* (channels carrying *rasa*) as a result diseases manifest. Bodily humours *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* moves inside the *srotas* to perform their normal functions at different places. Healthy *srotas* perform their normal function, as a result body is free from diseases and unhealthy *srotas* become root cause for the development of pathogenesis<sup>9</sup>. If *srotas* becomes abnormal, it brings abnormality in normal *dhatu*. *Srotas* vitiates other *srotas*, *dhatus* vitiate other *dhatu* because of disturbed *doshas*. *Doshas* gets aggravated by the disturbed functions of *agni*<sup>10</sup>. Hence, life

span, health, strength and nourishment etc. are depends on *agni*.

**Agni Pariksha (clinical examination of agni):** *Pachakagni* is responsible for digestion and metabolism. It is of four kinds based on the involvement of *dosha*.

1. *Samagni*- It is not associated with *dosha*. It is physiological state of *agni*.

2. *Vishamagni* state is due to *vata*. It is the state in which, improper digestion and metabolism takes place i.e. sometimes performs normal functions followed by abnormal one and manifest flatulence, abnormal pain, upward movement of *vata* inside the *koshta*, diarrhoea, heaviness in abdomen, intestinal gurgling and straining exercise for evacuation of stools.

3. *Tikshanagni* state is due to *pitta*, in which hyper functioning of digestion and metabolic activities are observed. In this *agni* digestion happens quicker. More quantity of consumed food also digests very quickly.

If *tikshanagni* increases greatly is called *atyagni*<sup>11</sup>. In this, person becomes capable of digesting large amount of food very quickly if consumed often. At the end of digestion, it produces dryness of the throat, palate and lips, burning sensation and enhances warmness in body.

4. *Mandagni* state is due to *kapha*, in which digestion process become weak and takes a long time to digest the less quantity of food and manifest heaviness in abdomen and head, dyspnea, excessive salivation, vomiting and weakness of the body.

*Vishamagni*, *tikshanagni* and *mandagni* are the pathological conditions developed due to abnormality in *dosha*.

Irregular digestion and metabolism causes imbalance in *dhatus*. The intense digestion & metabolism and less consumption of food lead to depletion of *dhatus*<sup>12</sup>. *Prakriti*-wise state of *agni* is shown in table 1.

**Table-1 State of Agni prakriti-wise<sup>13</sup>**

<b>Prakriti</b>	<b>State of Agni</b>
<i>Vata</i>	<i>Vishamagni</i> - (irregular condition of gastric fire)
<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Tikshanagni</i> - (acute condition of gastric fire)
<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Samagni</i> – (normal condition of gastric fire)
<i>Sama</i>	<i>Mandagni</i> – (the weak gastric fire )

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION:** *Agni* literally means fire and in human beings it denotes the power of digestion, metabolism and assimilation. Abnormality in *agni* produces disease and its destruction causes death. *Agnivaishamya* leads to production of *ama*. *Ama* is said to be the root cause of all diseases. Our lifestyle changes with developing science and technology i.e. polluted air to breath, morbid food to eat and toxic water to drink. This lifestyle increases obesity, cardiac disease, diabetes and many more. So we require living a healthy life. Now,

modern medicine advocates dietary and life style management for the restoration of health. *Ayurveda* gives the new direction for planning and management of such diseases. In *Ayurveda*, whole treatment is based on *agni*. Every transformation in the body takes place with *agni*. *Agni* is present in every cell of the body. When *agni* is in balance state, maintains healthy condition in the body. Due to hypo functioning of *agni*, proper digestion of food does not take place, leading to formation of *ama*, which is responsible of the manifestation of almost all disease. Therefore

understanding the concept of *agni* and its clinically significance is very essential for *Ayurveda* physician. One can evaluate

state of *agni* in the body on the basis of specific signs and symptoms (Table-II and Table III).

**Table-II State of Agni Age-wise**

Age	State of Agni
<i>Vriddha</i> (old age)	<i>Manda</i>
<i>Yuva</i> (youthful)	<i>Tikshna</i>
<i>Bala</i> (child)	<i>Manda</i>

**Table-III Pathological state of Agni**

Pathological condition	State of Agni
Hypo-secretion of digestive enzymes	<i>Manda</i>
Hyper-secretion of digestive enzymes	<i>Tikshan</i>
Irregular secretion of digestive enzymes	<i>Visham</i>

**CONCLUSION:** *Ayurveda* describe *agni* as vital component which help in digestion of food and responsible for metabolic activities. *Agni* converts food in the form of energy which responsible for physiological functioning of body. *Agni* contributes to the strength, luster, *oja*, *teja* and *prana*. *Samagni* , in which *doshas* are in equilibrium state and perform normal digestion and metabolic functions while remaining three types produce diseases. *Ajirna*, *amadosha*, *alsaka*, *vishuchika* *urustambha* and *grahniroga* are manifest due to *mandagni* .Proper diet helps to manage disease of *agni*.

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