

UNDERSTANDING AGNIMANDYA: A COMPREHENSIVE EXPLORATION AND THERAPEUTIC APPROACHES

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INTRODUCTION

According to the foundational principles of Ayurveda, Agni plays a vital role in the body's physiological functions. The strength, health, vital life force (prana), and lifespan are all contingent on the proper functioning of Agni. The balance and aggravation of Doshas also hinge on Agni, underscoring the necessity of its preservation. This subtle Agni efficiently transforms food substances into forms easily assimilated by the body. While ancient Ayurvedic texts like Charak, Susrut, and Vagbhat don't explicitly delineate Agni deficiency as a separate ailment, Acharya Madhav later classified it as such within the context of other diseases.

Definition

Agnimandya manifests when the digestive power, known as Agni, deteriorates markedly. Acharya Charak proposed that Agnimandya be termed as Grahanidosha or Grahanirog.

Concept of Agnimandya

Agni plays a crucial role in converting the consumed food (ahar) into nourishing essence (aha-ras), which is then utilized by the body with the assistance of dhatwagni and bhutagni. Any imbalance, whether hypo or hyper functioning, in Agni is deemed as the primary cause of disease pathogenesis. In the context of Agnimandya, Acharya Madhav stressed not only on weak digestion (Mandaagni) but also highlighted any form of Agni dysfunction, whether overactive or underactive, as encompassed within the term "agnimandya."

Causes of Agnimandya

- Imbalance and aggravation of the three doshas: Vata, Pitta, and Kapha.
- Overeating or excessive intake of improper food.
- Eating too quickly.
- Excessive consumption of caffeine.
- Consumption of fatty or greasy foods.
- Overindulgence in alcohol or tobacco smoking.
- Consumption of spicy foods and inadequate intake of high-fiber foods.
- Psychological factors like anger and anxiety.
- Conditions such as cholecystitis, acute or chronic gastritis, peptic ulcers, and gastric ulcers.
- Use of drugs such as antibiotics, aspirin, and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.

Pathogenesis

Agnimandya serves as a pivotal step in the pathogenesis of numerous diseases. Imbalanced doshas lead to their aggravation, causing vitiation of tissues (*dushya*) and their subsequent accumulation, culminating in various ailments, often initiated by Agnimandya. The diminished Agni intensity results in the production of improperly digested food essence (*apachitahar rasa*), leading to obstruction (*stritirodh*) and toxin formation (*aamnirmiti*). Therefore, in the treatment of any disease, the therapeutic approach should invariably commence with *Amapachan* and *Agnivardhanchikitsa* to achieve swift and comprehensive recovery.

Symptoms

- Loss of appetite
- Sensation of a heavy stomach
- Headache
- Diarrhea and constipation
- Abdominal pain
- Vomiting
- Low-grade fever
- Nausea
- Acidity
- Burning sensation in the chest

Precautions

- Avoiding foods that commonly cause indigestion is a highly effective way to manage it.
- Smokers can alleviate indigestion by quitting smoking or refraining from smoking immediately before meals.
- Exercising with a full stomach can induce indigestion; therefore, scheduling exercise sessions before meals or waiting at least an hour after eating may help prevent discomfort.

Treatments**Dietary adjustments**

- Until Agni stabilizes, patients should consume light and easily digestible foods such as vegetable soups, rice gruel, khichari made from rice and green gram, along with warm water and plenty of fluids.

Prepared Medicines

1. Lavan Bhaskar Churna: Take 1-3 grams with warm water or lemon juice twice daily before meals.
2. Hingvashtak Churna: Consume 1-3 grams with warm water or lemon juice twice daily before meals.
3. Tab. Shankhavati: Take 250mg tablets three times daily with warm water before meals.
4. Tab. Ampachakvati: Consume 250mg tablets three times daily with warm water before meals.
5. Mastushatpalaghrita: Take a mixture of Pippali, pippalimula, chauya, chitraka, and musta combined with ghee and yarakshara twice daily with warm water before meals.

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