

**AGNI HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN THE
PHYSIOLOGICAL FUNCTIONING AND MAINTAINING HEALTH**

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ABSTRACT

According to the fundamental principle of Ayurveda, Agni has an important role in the physiological functioning of body. Agni is correlated with the digestive fire and has very significant role in maintaining the whole internal environment of the body. Agni word is also used in the sense of digestion of food and metabolic products. The concept of fire or Agni is critically chief to our overall health. Actually Agni is the force of intelligence within each cell, each tissue, and every system within the body. Jatharagni the main Agni is considered as Dehagni/Kayagni which affects the functions of other Agni - Bhutagni and Dhatwagni leading to formation of Ama in the different stages of Pachanprakriya. Pitta and Agni are the same but different theories regarding Agni and Pitta are there in Ayurveda. In fact Agni has a very vast range of functions directly responsible for maintaining health and when it is impaired then it become the root cause for all imbalances and diseases. Ingested food is to be digested, absorbed and assimilated

for the maintenance of life. Ingested food is converted in energy by Agni which is responsible for all the vital functions of our body. Therefore, Ayurveda considers that Dehagni is the cause of life, complexion, strength, health, nourishment, lusture, oja, teja (energy) and prana (life energy). Lastly we can say that Agni plays very important role in growth, development & maintenance of the body.

KEYWORDS: Agni, energy, dhatvagni, jatharagni, dhatvagni, Pitta Dosha, bhutagni.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda has considered agni a very important entity for the maintenance of good health. Agni itself is a very broad term used widely, having different types according to location and body constitution and have various synonyms also. In Ayurveda, Agni is correlated with the digestive fire and has very significant role in maintaining the whole internal environment of the body and it is used in the sense of digestion of food and metabolic products and also included as a part of SwasthVyakhya. Ayurveda says that if Agni is not in its normal state than it will result in the formation of a disease. The term of Agni, in day today language is said to be fire. But in the context of Ayurveda it the main entity of a living organism, which maintains its integrity along with performing normal activities of vitals by converting Vijatiy Aahar Ghatak to Sajatiy Ghatak through PakadiKarmas. The food taken has to be digested, absorbed and assimilated for the maintenance of life and energy and these actions are performed by Agni. So in Ayurveda the theory states that Dehagni is the cause of life, complexion, strength, health, tissue nutrition, lusture, glow, ojas, tejas (energy) and prana (life energy), vitality.

The foods with different consistencies and tastes is consumed and converted in to absorbable material with the help of Agni. In these sequences, Agni involves other factors too which participate in and perform the act of digestion and metabolism in living organism. Agni may be correlated with digestive and metabolic fire in the body which is directly responsible for ingested food changes in the body. It has been divided into 13 types depending upon the function and location.

1. Jatharagni – This Agni is present in the stomach and duodenum. According to Ashtanga Hridaya, Jatharagni, the the area is grahani, so it digests the Panchmahbhutatmak food materials and transforms it for the utilization by the respective Dhatus which is also responsible for Sara – the essence portion and kitta – waste products Vibhajan of the food material in our body. All the Agnis are totally dependent on the status of Jatharagni it is further classified into four categories according to digestion power and presence of predominance of either of Tridoshas.
 - a. Vishmaggni: When Vata Dosha is higher than normal then there is Vishmaggni which digests foodsometimes quickly and sometimes slowly
 - b. Tikshanagni: When the Pitta is higher than normal then there is Tikshnagni which digests food veryquickly irrespective of its Laghu or Guru Guna
 - c. Mandagni: When Vata and Kapha are higher than normal then there is Mandgni. Mand

means slow here the digestive power is low, even Laghu Aahar is digested slowly.

- d. Samagni: Here all the Doshas are in balanced form. The Samagni digests and assimilates food properly at the proper time and is said the best type of Agni.

2. Bhutagni Are five Agni from five basic elements, namely Parthiva (earth), Apya (water), Tejas (Agni), Vayavya (vayu) and Nabhasa (akash)

Bhutagnis act after the Jatharagni in the Pachanprakriya. Each and every cell in our body is composed of basic five elements. Acharya Charak 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 similar qualities to each bhutas nourish their own specific Bhautika entity of body i.e. Parthivagni nourishes Ghranendriya.

3. Dhatwagni are seven one in each of the seven Dhatus.

- a) Rasa Dhatwagni present in the Rasa Dhatu.
- b) Rakta Dhatwagni present in the Rakta Dhatu.
- c) Mamsa Dhatwagni present in the Mamsa Dhatu.
- d) Meda Dhatwagni present in the Meda Dhatu.
- e) Asthya Dhatwagni present in the Asthi Dhatu.
- f) Majja Dhatwagni present in the Majja Dhatu.
- g) Shukra Dhatwagni present in the Shukra Dhatu.

Each Dhatvagni present in each Dhatu synthesizes and transforms the essential Rasa Dhatu required for that particular Dhatu or cell from the basic nutrients present in the Anna rasa that we consume. Acharya Charaka has mentioned the fact that the seven Dhatus which are support of the body contain their own Agni, and by their own Agni they digest and transform the materials supplied to them to make the entities as similar to them for assimilation and nourishment. If hypo-functioning of Agni is there at any level of Avasthapaak i.e. Madhur, Amla and Katuavasthapaaka or also at Vipak, Ama is produced which root cause of many diseases. Hypo or hyper functioning of Jatharagni is likely to affect the function of other too and so Agni plays very important role in growth, development and homeostasis of the body. According to modern medicine, metabolic processes, division and multiplication are going on in all cells means Dhatuparamanu of our body from birth till death and Agni provides biological energy to these cells of our body by converting food into its absorbable form.

AIM

To interpret an Ayurvedic aspect of Agni and its role in maintaining the health.

OBJECTIVE

1. To understand the Agni with Ayurvedic perspective.
2. To evaluate the importance of Agni in relation with health.
3. To percept the role of Agni in relation with diseases.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Textual references are taken from Ayurvedic classics also related modern texts, journals and websites are referred.

DISCUSSION

The question, Are Agni and Pitta same or differ from each other? is always discussed. The origin of Pitta is from Tapa word meaning digestion, digestion of ingested food for the purpose of nourishment of body. Another one meaning of 'Tapa' is to maintain heat by maintaining the colour, complexion, lusture, glow of skin. According to different Acharyas Pitta to be Agni are same while other said both are different. According to Acharya Sushruta there is no existence of Agni in the body without Pitta, he has also described five types of Agnis - Pachakagni, Ranjakagni, Alochakagni, Sadhakagni and Bhrajakagni as the variety Pitta. Acharya Charak has mentioned the importance of Agni in one verse 'Shanteagnoumriyate' that means after stoppage of the function of Agni death of individual occurs. When the Agni is at balanced level i.e. Sama then it gives emmence health with long, happy, healthy life when the Agni gets vitiated due to Apathyakar Aahar vihar then homeostasis of body gets disturbed resulting in loss of health. That's why Agni is said to be the root (Mool) of life.⁸ Its assessment before giving treatment to patient or even advising about lifestyle is necessary. Depending upon the Agni type i.e. Mandagni, Tikshnagni, Vishamagni and Samagni of person; the diet should be is advised and treatment should be given and overall health is maintained.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion following conclusions can be drawn

1. Differ from each other due to their physical appearance or constitution but though there are many theories regarding the similarity and dissimilarity between Pitta and Agni, finally we can conclude both are same as per their functions

2. All diseases occur are due to vitiation of Agni and it is assessed according ones digestive power.
3. It is much more important to assess Agni type (Digestive power) of patient before prescribing Aushadhi, planning Panchkarma procedures or suggesting Aahar. Hence Agni has foremost importance in maintaining ones health.

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