

AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE OF AGNI IN RELATION WITH LIFE STYLE DISORDER W.S.R. TO OBESITY

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ABSTRACT

In *Ayurveda* the term *agni* is used in a technical sense. Concept of *agni* is too vast, very much expansive and miraculous in nature. Acharya sushruta has define *swastha purusha* as, when the *tridosha* are in the state of equilibrium, digestive fire (*agni*) is in a balanced state and the *dhaatu*(tissue) and *mala* (waste products) are work in a normal state. The senses (*indriye*) mind, *atma* (soul) also in a pleasant state. Such type of person is called as *Swastha purusha* or a healthy person. This *swastha purusha* definition gives lots of importance to *agni*. All the digestive processes come under the action of *agni*. When this *agni* impaired (hypofunctioning) digestion and metabolism of *aahara*

remains incomplete leading to formation of *ama* and are injurious for health and this *ama* disturbed the homeostasis of the body. In ayurveda it is stated that impaired *agni* is route cause of etiology of all types of diseases. Factors responsible for hypofunctioning of *agni* are faulty life style, faulty eating habits that include poor diet, inadequate and irregular diet, over eating, lack of exercise, insufficient and irregular sleep. These faulty life style increases risk of diseases and disorders in the future. Due to this faulty life style *agni* (*jathragni*) is impaired (*mandagni*), *dhatwagni* also impaired (*medogni*) and there is disorder in formation of *medo dhatu*. *Medo dhatu* accumulates continuously and form Obesity. So to manage life style disorders ayurveda provide various ayurvedic regimens. *Dinacharya*, *rutucharya*, *ashtaaahara vidhi vesheshayatana* and *niyama* for maintenance of *agni* and it should be maintained at any cost for living disease free and normal healthy life.

KEYWORDS: *Agni*, *Mandagni*, Diet, Life style, Obesity.

INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda the term *agni* is used in a technical sense. Concept of *agni* is too vast, very much expansive and miraculous in nature. In living body fire is represented by *agni*, which digest the food, helps in absorption of digested material, transforms digested food into body entities. In *swastha purusha* definition aacharya sushruta gives lots of importance to *agni (samagni)*. *Samagni* is the only state which is beneficial to maintain health. All the digestive processes come under the action of *agni*. When this *agni* becomes normal, complete digestion of *aahara* takes place. When this *agni* becomes impaired (hypofunctioning) digestion and metabolism of *aahara* remains incomplete leading to formation of *ama* and are injurious for health and disturbed the homeostasis of the body.

Factors responsible for hypofunctioning of *agni* are faulty eating habits that include poor diet, inadequate and irregular diet, over eating, lack of exercise, insufficient and irregular sleep. These faulty life style increases risk of diseases and disorders in the future. Due to this faulty life style *agni (jathragni)* is impaired (*mandagni*), *dhatwagni* also impaired (*medogni*) and there is disorder in formation of *medo dhatu*. *Medo dhatu* accumulates continuously and form Obesity. In ayurveda it is stated that impaired *agni* is route cause of etiology of all types of diseases. So said “*Rogaha sarvepi mandegnau*”. ayurveda provide various regimens to maintain *agni* and disease free life.

AIM

To study relation of *agni* with life style disorder w.s.r. to Obesity.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the concept of *agn*
2. To study factors influencing *agni*
3. To study the effect of life style
4. Inter relation between *agni* and Obesity
5. Discuss about management of life style disease

MATERIALS AND METHODS

All types of references in related to *agni*, obesity were studied.

Textual materials have been used for this study, from which various references have been collected.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1) Concept of *agni*

Agni is used in a technical sense in ayurveda. In common language *agni* is fire, which is seen with naked eye in day to day life. Concept of *agni* is too vast, expensive and miraculous in nature and have prime importance. Because of its miraculous nature, action can never be understood by any one. So it compared to god.^[1] Acharya sushruta has define *swastha purusha* as, when the *tridoshas* are in a balanced state, *agni* also in a balanced state i.e *samagni* and the *dhatu* (tissue) and a *mala* (waste products) are work in a normal state. The man will physically and mentally happy. Such type of person is called as *swastha purusha* or a healthy person. In above definition lots of importance given to *agni*.^[2]

All the digestive processes come under the action of *agni*. (*vijatiya* to *sajatiya*) The term *agni* is used for various factors which participate and direct the course of digestion and metabolism. According to charaka strength, health, longevity of life and all the living processes are mainly dependent on *agni*.^[3] There are 13 types of *agni* in our body. 1) *Jatharagni* 2) *bhootagni* 3) *Dhatwagni*.

1) ***Jatharagni***: The main *agni* inside the body. *kayagi*, *pachakagni*, *koshtagni* is the synonyms of *jatharagni*. There are 4 different states of *jatharagni*. 1) *vishama* (irregular) 2) *manda* (weak or less powered) 3) *sam* (well maintained) 4) *teeksha* (intense) This *agni* is responsible for digestion of *aahara* and separate it into essential and useful part (*sara*) and waste products. (*kitta*) From these useful part chime or *aahara rasa* is formed and from waste part urine and feces is formed.^[4] The tissues of the body are not exactly similar to the food substances, later it must be converted in such a manner that they are absorbed and reach every cell of the body. This conversion of food substances at different levels till they ultimately become tissues of the body is brought about by the *agni* It means without *agni* there is no formation of *dhatu*. If *jatharagni* is impaired, *aahara* will not be digested properly and *aahar rasa* or chyme also be abnormal and *ama* is formed which is injurious to health. *Jatharagni* is very important because it controls other *agnis*. to maintain the *agni* normal, it requires constant supply of food. If it does not get food then it digest *dhatu*. (Tissues.)^[5] Therefore to keep the physiological function of *agni* normal, we should eat proper food at proper interval. *Samagni* is the only state which is beneficial to maintain health.

2) ***Bhutagni***: There are 5 *bhutagnis*. All the *dhatu*s are the combination of *panchamahabhutas*. All nutrients are also *panchabhautika* in composition.^[6] Soon after the

jatharagni paka is completed, *bhutagni* paka phase will continue. The food which we ingest consists of 5 *bhuta- pruthvi, jala, teja, vayu, akasha*. For each *bhuta* there is specific *agni*. Each *agni* is responsible for transformation of individual *bhuta* present in the diet into *sthayi dhatu*. (tissues).^[7] Body is made up of *panchamahabhutas*. Hence this body has to be nourished by the food which again is of *panchabhautika* constitution. The *aahar* after being digested by different *agnis* will in turn enrich the *panchabhutas* of the body. only state which is beneficial to maintain health.

3) Dhatwagni: (tissue fire) There are 7 kinds of *dhatwagi* corresponding to 7 *dhatu* *rasa, rakta, mamsa, meda, asthi, majja, shukra*. All these *dhatwagnis* will be under the influence of *Jatharagni*, because the *anshas* of *jatharagni* are present in the *dhatu* in the form of *dhatwagnis*. *Agni* located in each *dhatu* and its channel is called *dhatwagni*. *Dhatwagni* is mainly concerned with the formation of substances required to synthesis *rasadi dhatu* from the basic materials present in *anna rasa* (essence of food). When the *jatharagni* is impaired, *dhatwagni* will also be impaired and there is increase in the concerned *dhatu*. If *jatharagni* is hyper active, the *dhatwagnis* also become over active, and there is wasting or reduction of the concerned *dhatu*.^[8] If *jatharagni* is normal, then *dhatwagni* also will be normal and maintain the normalcy of the tissues.

2) Interrelation between *jatharagni* and *dhatwagni*

The relationship of *jatharagni* to *dhatwagni* is associated with decrease or increase of the *dhatu*. Increase or decrease of *dhatu* is mainly dependent on hyperactivity or hypoactivity of *jatharagni* because all the *dhatwagnis* are dependent on *jatharagni*. The normal state of *dhatwagni* is essential for proper nourishment and formation of *dhatu*. If the *jatharagni* is hyperfunctioning, it is responsible for the hyperfunctioning of all the *dhatu*. If the hypoactivity or hyperactivity of *agni*, *dhatu* results in excess or depletion of tissues respectively.^[9] It is clear that *jatharagni, dhatwagni* and *srotasa* are the important factors on which proper formation of *dhatu* depends. The food that is not properly digested is referred as *ama* and it is nothing but a toxin responsible for array of disease.

3) Factors influencing *agni*

Faulty life style influences *agni (mandagni)*. They are mentioned as follows: Faulty eating includes irregular and insufficient diet, over eating, fast food and fast life style, irregular and insufficient sleep, high stress and emotional factors can enhance the *agni (mandagni)* and digestion. Ultimately there is hypofunctioning of *agni* i.e *mandagni* leads to metabolic

disorders like overweight or Obesity. It not only increases risk of diseases but health problems too. Ideal codes of conduct influences *agni* i.e. *samagni*. They includes daily routines (*Dincharya*), seasonal routine (*Rutucharya*), diet and regimens (*ashta aahar vidhi visheshayatana*^[10], *Aahar parinam kara bhava*^[11], *Niyama*^[12] etc) They all maintain the *agni* at normal state i.e *samagni* . Due to Arising, Bathing, exercise, eating, sleep *agni* increases and *medo dhatu* decreases.^[13] Fire situated in *dhatu* fluctuate in accordance with *jatharagni*.

According to ayurveda *agni* gets influenced by morbid *dosha*, season, quality and quantity of food consumed and is dependent on *asthavidh aahar vidhi visheshayatana* (eight basic factors in regards to diet).^[14] And also *Abhojanat*, *ajirnat*, *ati bhojanat*, *vishamashanat*. *agni* becomes impaired. *dhatwagni* also impaired. Charaka stated that indigestion, over eating, irregular diet and habits, the consumption of cold substances, ill effects of *virechana*, *snehana*, climate, season, suppression of natural urges make an individual unable to digest even the most easily digestible light food.^[15] In addition to this *vagbhata* has described that it is not always necessary that the ingestion of an excess of food or over eating should result in *ama dosha*. Other causes such as foods which are raw (uncooked) heavy (indigestible), dry, too cold, unclean (contaminated) and capable of causing *vidaha* (inflammation), dehydrated food and food soaked in too much of water can also cause *ama dosha*. The mental stresses such as rage, grief and hunger etc may also give rise to *ama dosha*. charaka stated that *aahar matra* depend on *agni bala* of the individual. In each person *aahar matra* is different as per *prakriti*, *rutu*, *vay* and day night.

4) To study the effect of life style on *agni*

Life style has a big impact on *agni* and your life in future. Life style means daily habits. Faulty life style affects the *agni* and form life style disorders like obesity. An inadequate diet can cause impaired *agni*, low energy, low immunity and increase the risk of disorders in the future. Insufficient and irregular sleep cause impaired *agni*, indigestion, fatigue, lower mental and physical performance and is linked to the development of disorder obesity. Sedentary life style contributes to poor physical performance, impaired *agni*, indigestion and is a risk factor for obesity.^[16] Sufficient sleep, daily exercise and food is in a proper quality, quantity and proper time increases *agni* and improves digestion and maintain *samagni* which is ideal state for normal health.

5) Interrelation between *agni* and obesity

In ayurveda Obesity is regarded as *medoroga*, a disorder of *medo dhatu*, which includes fat tissue and fat metabolism. According to ayurveda obesity begins with imbalance of *doshas* (*vata*, *pitta*, *kapha*) and an imbalance of *agni* i.e. *mandagni*. The normal state of *dhatu agni* is essential for proper nourishment and formation of *dhatu*. Faulty diet is the most common pathogenic factor for *medovridhi*. *Ama rasa* (*madhur rasatmaka*) is produced due to impaired *agni* i.e. *jatharagni* (*mandagni*) by *kapha wardhaka aahara*, *adhyasana*, *avyayama*, *divasawpna*. This *ama rasa* while circulating in the *sharira* because of its *atisnigdha ansha* there is *medodhatwagni mandhya* and formation of improper *meda* and this *meda* accumulates in *sharira* ultimately *sthaulya*.^[17] According to vagbhata *agni mandhya* at *jatharagni* and *dhatwagni* level is considered as root cause of all disease. *Rasa* is the main nutritive pool which carries nutrients of all *dhatu*. Similarly the nutrients of *sthayi* and *asthaya meda dhatu* are transported through *rasa dhatu*. So according to sushruta *rasa* are responsible for *sthaulya*. So due to faulty life style *jatharagni* is impaired, *dhatwagni* also impaired and there is *dhatu vrrudhi*.

6) Obesity (*sthaulya*)

Obesity is described as *medoroga* or *sthaulya roga* in ayurveda in *ashtaunindit adhaya*.^[18] Obesity is a condition in which an individual is significantly over weight and an excessive amount of body fat has accumulated under the chin and on the breasts, belly, buttocks and thighs. Though it is not a serious case in itself, it may shorten the span of life, as well as create diminished efficiency and happiness. Obesity is a disorder of *medo dhatu*, which includes fat tissue and fat metabolism. According to ayurveda obesity begins with imbalance of *doshas*, an imbalance of *agni*, an imbalance of *mala* or an imbalance of *srotas*.^[19] This collection of imbalances then interferes with the formation of tissues or *dhatu*s and leads to a tissue imbalance that we experiences excess weight. From the ayurvedic perspective, the key cause is found is life style and diet choices that disrupt balance.

Causes of obesity

Includes over eating, excessive intake of heavy and cold foods and drinks, over sleeping, lack of exercise, frequent snacking, eating processed food. According to ayurveda *guru* and *snigdha ahara* (heavy fatty food), *adhyashanan* (over eating), sugar loaded food items (*madhur rasatmaka*) *avyayama* (lack of exercise) *divaswapna* (day sleep) and psychological distress are the main life style related factors strongly associated with the *sthaulya*.^[20] Due to

this faulty life style *agni vitiated*, and this vitiated *agni* does not digest even light food. This undigested food becomes sour in taste and it works like poison and it gives rise to several diseases.

In *sthaulya* there is excessive production of *meda*. This *meda* obstructs normal pathway of *vata*. So *vata* get vitiated and stimulates digestive fire causing excessive hunger. Consumption of food again causes burden over *mandagni* leads to formation of ingested material called as *ama*. This *ama* causes abnormal production of *meda*, this vicious cycle going on leads to *sthaulya*.^[21] *Rasa* is the main nutritive pool which carries nutrients of all *dhatu*. Similarly the nutrients of *sthayi* and *asthayi meda dhatu* are transported through *rasa dhatu*. so according to *sushruta rasa* are responsible for *sthaulya*.

Medo dhatu

It is the 4th *dhatu* in sequence of seven *dhatu* in ayurveda, and is formed from *mamsa dhatu* or muscle tissue. All forms of lipids in body are present mainly in *meda dhatu* which has role in developing many metabolic disorders like *medoroga* (obesity) *Medo dhatwagni* controls fat metabolism. If the *meda agni* or the tissue fire of fat gets weak or stronger than usual, it leads to pathological manifestations with increase or decrease in tissue fat. When the *meda dhatu agni* is abnormally decreased or weakened, there is *vridhhi* in *meda dhatu*.

7) Management of life style disorders

Ayurveda is the only one that truly control of life style disorder. Main aim of ayurveda is to maintain health rather than treating the disease. According to ayurveda, everyone can enjoy healthy life by following certain rules laid by the science. These various rules are divided into *Dincharya*, *ritucharya*, *sadvritta*(code of good conduct) These rules are very important in the prevention of disease and promotion of ideal health. According to ayurveda to maintain a healthy and disease free life everyone should follow these rules. Following the code of right conducts described in ayurveda is highly effective in reducing the life style disorders and helps to live healthy life. Ayurveda has enlisted rules for eating which need to be followed to produce complete benefits of food. *Prakriti, karan, samyog, rashi, dsh, kala, upoyoga samstha, upyokta*. These 8 rules are described by charaka in a very systematic and scientific manner which is known as *astha ahara vidhi visheshayatana*.^[22]

DISCUSSION

We have studied about the life style disorder which occurs by impaired *agni*. *Agni* is one of the important and basic phenomenon of the life. It should be maintained at any cost to live disease free life, especially for disease associated with life style. Hence for maintenance of life style ayurveda advice to follow daily regimens and adopt fixed rules of conduct for life. But in today's irregular and fast life style, irregularities in diet, sleep, high stress levels at the workplace and emotional factors can enhance indigestion factor which leads to metabolic disorders like obesity. Because of all this *agni* is impaired i.e. *mandagni* leads to life style disease obesity. Due to faulty eating habits, lack of exercise and lack of sleep, *agni* becomes impaired and that impaired *agni* does not digest the food properly and leads to formation of *ama*. Over eating produces more *upadana rasa* which causes over growth of *medo dhatu* leads to *sthaulya*.

CONCLUSION

Obesity is a common problem mainly due to improper life style, wrong food choices and lack of exercise. Above all, people do not have a sense of self awareness. Ayurvedic approach provides all the necessary tools to bring back health, harmony and peace in life. By adopting simple life style and healthy eating habits anyone can enjoy the life optimally without much stress.

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