

## GULMA: AN AYURVEDIC AND MODERN PERSPECTIVE

Asvir Mandlavat<sup>\*1</sup>, Shankar Lal Yadav<sup>2</sup> and Kamlesh Kumar Sharma<sup>3</sup><sup>1</sup>MD Scholar, P.G. Dept. of Ayurveda Samhita and Siddhant, MMM Govt. Ayurveda College (DSRRAU), Udaipur, Rajasthan India.<sup>2</sup>MD Scholar, P.G. Dept. of Ayurveda Samhita and Siddhant, MMM Govt. Ayurveda College (DSRRAU), Udaipur, Rajasthan India.<sup>3</sup>Professor & HOD, P.G. Dept. of Ayurveda Samhita and Siddhant, MMM Govt. Ayurveda College (DSRRAU), Udaipur, Rajasthan India.**\*Corresponding Author: Asvir Mandlavat**

MD Scholar, P.G. Dept. of Ayurveda Samhita and Siddhant, MMM Govt. Ayurveda College (DSRRAU), Udaipur, Rajasthan India.

Article Received on 10/02/2025

Article Revised on 02/03/2025

Article Accepted on 22/03/2025

**ABSTRACT**

Gulma is a term in Ayurveda that denotes a group of abdominal disorders characterized by a palpable mass, pain, and digestive disturbances. It is a complex pathological condition involving vitiation of the doshas—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. In modern medicine, Gulma can be correlated with conditions like abdominal tumors, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), colitis, and certain neoplastic conditions. This article provides an in-depth analysis of Gulma from both Ayurvedic and modern perspectives, exploring its etiology, pathogenesis, classification, clinical features, diagnosis, and management approaches.

**KEYWORDS:** Gulma, Ayurveda, Doshas, Abdominal disorders, Modern medicine, Pathogenesis, Treatment.**INTRODUCTION**

Ayurveda, an ancient system of medicine, describes various diseases that correlate with contemporary medical conditions. Gulma is one such disorder mentioned in classical Ayurvedic texts, including Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya. The term 'Gulma' refers to a hard, localized swelling or mass in the abdominal region, causing discomfort and functional disturbances.<sup>[1]</sup> The description of Gulma encompasses a wide range of digestive and metabolic disorders, which can be correlated with multiple gastrointestinal conditions in modern medicine, such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), gastrointestinal tumors, or inflammatory bowel diseases. This paper aims to analyze Gulma from both traditional and contemporary viewpoints, providing a detailed understanding of its clinical implications and therapeutic strategies.

**Etiology and Pathogenesis  
Ayurvedic Perspective**

According to Ayurveda, Gulma arises due to the vitiation of the three doshas—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha—along with the accumulation of ama (toxins).<sup>[2]</sup> The primary causes of Gulma include improper diet (viruddhahara), emotional stress, excessive consumption of dry, cold, and unwholesome foods, and suppression of natural urges (vegadharana). When these factors disturb the dosha

balance, they impair the digestive fire (agni), leading to the formation of hard masses in the abdominal cavity.

The pathogenesis (samprapti) of Gulma is characterized by aggravated Vata dosha, which leads to the obstruction of channels (srotorodha), impaired circulation, and localized accumulation of pathological elements.<sup>[3]</sup> This results in symptoms such as pain, distension, and irregular bowel movements.

**Modern Medical Perspective**

From a modern viewpoint, Gulma-like conditions can arise due to chronic inflammatory processes, infections, neoplasms, or metabolic dysfunctions. Gastrointestinal malignancies, inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD), diverticulitis, and mesenteric cysts can all mimic the features of Gulma. The role of stress and dietary habits in gastrointestinal disorders is well established, aligning with Ayurvedic principles that emphasize the importance of a balanced diet and mental well-being.<sup>[4, 6]</sup>

**Classification** Ayurveda classifies Gulma into five types based on the predominant dosha:

- 1. Vataja Gulma:** Characterized by severe pain, constipation, bloating, and irregular bowel habits. The mass is mobile and associated with dryness and gas formation.

2. **Pittaja Gulma:** Presents with a burning sensation, acidity, excessive thirst, and frequent diarrhea. The mass is often inflamed and associated with heat.
3. **Kaphaja Gulma:** Manifests as heaviness, nausea, and sluggish digestion. The mass is firm, slow-growing, and covered with a mucous-like layer.
4. **Sannipataja Gulma:** A mixed presentation with symptoms of all three doshas, making it more complicated and chronic.
5. **Raktaja Gulma:** Associated with blood vitiation, often resembling neoplastic growths or conditions like fibroids and tumors.<sup>[5, 7]</sup>

**Clinical Features** Patients with Gulma often present with:

- Abdominal pain and distension
- Constipation or diarrhea
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea and vomiting
- Unexplained weight loss in chronic cases<sup>[1]</sup>

Modern diagnostic approaches such as ultrasound, endoscopy, CT scans, and histopathological studies help determine the nature of the abdominal mass and differentiate between benign and malignant conditions.<sup>[3, 8]</sup>

**Diagnosis** The diagnosis of Gulma in Ayurveda is primarily based on clinical examination and dosha analysis. Palpation techniques described in ancient texts help determine the nature of the mass. Modern diagnostic tools include:

- **Ultrasound and MRI scans** to visualize the structure and composition of the mass.
- **Endoscopy and biopsy** for suspected neoplastic conditions.
- **Blood tests** to assess inflammatory markers and tumor markers.
- **Colonoscopic evaluation** for conditions like colitis and IBS.<sup>[3, 9]</sup>

### Management Approaches

#### Ayurvedic Management

The treatment of Gulma in Ayurveda follows a holistic approach, including dietary modifications, herbal remedies, and Panchakarma therapies:

- **Dietary recommendations:** Light and easily digestible food, avoiding processed, spicy, and cold foods. Ayurvedic texts recommend warm, soupy preparations to aid digestion.
- **Herbal formulations**
  - **Hingvastak Churna** – Helps in digestion and relieves Vata-related symptoms.
  - **Trikatu Churna** – Enhances metabolism and reduces Kapha dominance.
  - **Pippali (Piper longum)** – Aids in reducing mass formation and enhancing digestion.
  - **Kanchanar Guggulu** – Used for treating glandular swellings and tumor-like conditions.

#### Panchakarma therapies

- **Virechana (purgation therapy)** for Pitta-related Gulma.
- **Basti (medicated enema)** for Vata-related disorders, helping in detoxification and balancing Vata.
- **Raktamokshana (bloodletting therapy)** for Raktaja Gulma.<sup>[2, 10]</sup>
- **Lifestyle modifications:** Yoga, meditation, and Pranayama are recommended to manage stress and improve gut function.

#### Modern Medical Treatment

Depending on the diagnosis, the treatment includes:

- **Pharmacological interventions**
  - **Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs)** for acidity-related issues.
  - **Laxatives** for constipation and bowel regulation.
  - **Antibiotics and anti-inflammatory drugs** for infections and colitis.
- **Surgical intervention:** Tumors or neoplastic masses may require surgical removal or biopsy for further analysis.
- **Dietary modifications:** High-fiber diets, probiotics, and a low-fat intake for better gut health.<sup>[3, 11]</sup>

### CONCLUSION

Gulma, as described in Ayurveda, exhibits similarities with various gastrointestinal and neoplastic disorders in modern medicine. Understanding its etiology and classification through both perspectives helps in better diagnosis and treatment. Integrating Ayurvedic principles with contemporary medical approaches can offer comprehensive management strategies for patients suffering from Gulma-related disorders. Future research should focus on exploring the biochemical mechanisms behind Ayurvedic interventions and their potential synergy with modern therapeutic approaches.

### REFERENCES

1. Sharma, A. Ayurvedic Pathology of Gulma and Its Clinical Correlation with Modern Medicine. *Ayurveda Research Journal*, 2014; 28(1): 12-19.
2. Shastri, S. Charaka Samhita: Ayurvedic Concepts in Disease Management. Ayurvedic Publications, 2016.
3. Kumar, R., Verma, P., & Singh, S. Gastrointestinal Disorders and Their Management: A Clinical Perspective. *Journal of Modern Medicine*, 2019; 34(2): 56-72.
4. Tripathi, Y. Understanding Dosha Imbalance in Chronic Disorders. *Indian Journal of Traditional Medicine*, 2018; 15(3): 102-110.
5. Mishra, P. Comparative Study of Abdominal Masses in Ayurveda and Modern Medicine. *Journal of Integrative Medical Sciences*, 2020; 22(4): 45-58.
6. Patel, M., & Joshi, K. Ayurvedic Approach to Digestive Disorders and Its Clinical Application. *Journal of Ayurveda and Holistic Medicine*, 2021; 10(1): 45-57.
7. Sharma, B. Tumor-like Conditions in Ayurveda and Their Correlation with Modern Pathology.

- International Journal of Integrative Medicine, 2020; 18(4): 78-92.
8. Gupta, R., & Singh, A. Diagnostic Imaging in Gastrointestinal Disorders: A Comparative Study. Journal of Radiological Sciences, 2019; 27(2): 34-50.
  9. Mehta, S. Colonoscopy and Its Role in Modern Gastrointestinal Medicine. Medical Gastroenterology Review, 2017; 14(3): 98-112.
  10. Rao, P. Panchakarma Therapies and Their Effectiveness in Chronic Diseases. Ayurvedic Medicine Journal, 2016; 22(1): 22-39.
  11. Kumar, D. Role of Diet in Gastrointestinal Health: A Review. Nutrition and Health Journal, 2018; 30(2): 77-89.