

THE PHYSIOLOGICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL CONCEPT OF AGNI

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ABSTRACT

Life (ayu), Varna, Bala, Utasaha (Enthusiasm), anabolism, Prabha, Oja, Drushti, everything depends on Agni. Agni is invariable agent in Paka (digestion), ingested food is to be digested, absorbed for maintenance of life (Ayu). Agni is present everywhere in the body for the process of metabolism and gives energy to the body, i.e., Jatharagni, Dhatvagni etc. Jatharagni is one of the most important Agni also known as Kayagni, vitiation of Agni called Mandagni and this is the main reason for Vyadhi. Therefore, for treatment of Vyadhi treatment of Agni is important. If Agni of a person is vitiated, the whole metabolism in his body is disturbed, resulting in ill health and disease. Hence, Agni is said to be the base (moola) of life.

KEYWORDS: Agni, Bhutagni, Dhatvagni, Jatharagni, Pitta.

INTRODUCTION

Agni, Ayurveda has described the main component of the body, which is essential for the digestion and metabolism of the food. Ingested food must be digested for a healthy life and maintenance of life, this is performed by the Agni.

Ayurveda described Agni as Dehagni because Agni converts food into form of energy, which is responsible for all the functions of the body, nourishment, Oja, Teja, health.^[1]

Aacharya Charak mentioned that after stoppage of function of Agni the individual dies, when Agni is absolute Sama state person is healthy, and Charakacharya also mentioned destination of swasthya is Sama state of Agni.^[2] When Agni is vitiated by Hetu Sewana the Sama state of Agni is disturbed and individuals get suffer from disease (Vyadhi).

Aacharya Charak described Agni as kaya, Kaya Chikitsa is a Chikitsa of Agni i.e., Agni is the base (Moola) of life.^[3]

The purpose of this article is to enlighten the function, importance, and physiological as well as pathological aspect of Agni.

Review of Literature

The term Agni which is derived from Agni = A+G+Ni. A denotes root "I" meaning "to go"; "G" denotes the root "Anja", meaning "to glitter" or root

"Daha" meaning "to burn". "NI" meaning "to carry". This etymology is given by Yasaka.^[4]

In Shabdakalpadrum 61 synonyms of Agni are described, these synonyms given by its nature and functions of Agni.^[5] E.g., Tanoopaka, Sarvapaka, Damunasa, Rudra etc.

According to Sushrutacharya Agni is described as Pitta. Pitta is derived from "Tapa" which means combustion or digestion.^[6] When describing about Agni & Pitta different views have been suggested by Acharyas.

Concept of Agni as a Pitta

According to Sushrutacharya there is no any Agni without Pitta, means Agni is one of the guna (quality) of Pitta.^[7] Digestion and metabolism are the main functions of this Pitta or Agni.

According to Aacharya Charak Agni present in the Pitta gives good or bad results when its normal or vitiated state.^[8]

Aacharya Hemadri described as Agni has five divisions located in Pawakshaya and Amashaya. It is composed of panchmahabutas, have dominance of Tejas Mahabhuta.^[9]

Types of Agni

There are 13 types of Agni described by Acharyas;

1. Aacharya Charak^[10]: 13

Jatahagni -1, Bhutagni- 5, Dhavatgni-7

2. Acharya Sushrut^[11]: 5

Pachakagni, Ranjakagni, Alochakagni, Sadhakagni, Bhrajakagni.

1. Jatahagni- this agni is present in Aamashaya (Stomach & Duodenum) digestion of ingested food is the main function of Jatharagni. Kayagni is synonyme for Jatharagni, if Kayagni vitiated person get diseased hence mandagni is main reason for origin of Vyadhi, it is responsible for the duration of life, health, Ojas, give strength to all Dhavtagni, Bhutagni. In opinion of Dhanvantri Pittadharakala which is situated in the entrance of Pakwashaya and acting as pathway of food. When agni undergoes vitiation, Grahani also vitiated and produce Vyadhi.

Jatharagni is classified into four categories

Jatharagni is most important because each and every nutrient which is ingested first comes to jatharagni. Separation, digestion of ingested food is another function of Jatharagni.^[12]

Jatharagni also have three types Samagni, Tikshagni, Mandagni, vishamagni.

Samagni: Is a stable state of Agni. The Samagni digest food properly at the proper time. This Agni increases quality of Dhatus, Samagni is mentioned in the definition of Swastha Purush.^[12]

Tikshanagni: Tiksha means very fast. This Agni digest food very quickly, Acharya Shushrut states that when the power of digestion increased normal to above normal, food digest quickly and produce desire for food.^[13]

Mandagni: Mandagni means slow, the agni which digest food very slowly the power of digestion is Slow.

2. Bhutagni: Bhutagni is one present in basic element (Bhuta). There are 5 Agni of each five elements, Pruthvi(earth), Tejas (Agni), Apya(water), Aakash, Vayavya(Vayu). Each and every cell of body consist of these five basic elements or MAhabut. Also, every cell consist of these five Bhutagni also. All food we eat which is also made of these panch mahabhutas with their respective Agni or bioenergy. Acharya Charak mentioned that Panch Bhutagni digest their own similar elements present the food. After the process of digestion by Bhutagni digested material containing the element and qualities similar to each Bhutas nourishes their own specific elements.^[14] These Bhutagni acts after process of Jatharagni, the digestion by Bhutagni is called as "sukshma Paka".

3. Dhavtagni: there are seven Dhatus present in the body contain their own Agni for metabolism of nutrients. Agni metabolized the materials and supply to specific Dhatus.

Theses Agni namely

- a) Rasagni
- b) Raktagni
- c) Mansagni
- d) Medagni
- e) Asthiagni
- f) Majjagni
- g) Shukragni

The action of these Agni is selective. Acharya Charak mentioned that seven Dhatus contains their own Agni, and their own Agni they digest and transform nutrients and supplied to the specific Dhatus this is also called as "Sukshma Paka".^[15]

Importance of Agni

Bala, Varna (colour), Swasthya(health), Utasah (entusiasiam), Ojas, Upchaya (development of body), Prabha, Tejas(valour), Ayu(life) all depends on Agni and its Sama State.^[16] As long Agni is in Sama state person can have healthy long life, loss of Agni leads to loss of life. To maintain Swasthya, digestion and metabolism is the main function if Agni.

Physiological and Pathological Aspect of Agni

- a) **Samagni:** this is physiological state of Agni, not associated with Dosha so called as Samagni. The Samagni digest food properly in proper time. This increase health of individuals, quality of Dhatus.^[12]
- b) **Vishamagni:** Vishamagni is state in which improper digestion of food takes place. Sometime it performs normal metabolism, sometime abnormal metabolism shows following symptoms- Flatulence, abdominal pain, upward movement of Vata in sode koshta, atisar, intestinal gurgling, straining during defecation. When Agni is affected by Vatadosha created Vatavyadhi.
- c) **Tikshangi:** Pitta Dosha dominance present in Tikshagni. Tiksha means Fast/quick. When power of digestion increased normal to above normal food digest very quickly and produces hunger or desire for hunger this condition known as "Bhasmak Roga" in Ayurveda.^[13] Pitta dominance Prakruti Purush have lakshans of Tikshangi.
- d) **Mandagni:** Mand means slow, the digestive power of Mandagni is very low. Kapha Dosha dominance is present. Dhanvantri says this Agni digests the least amount of food in great amount of time and produce symptoms like- heaviness in abdomen and head, cough, dyspnea, vomiting, excessive salivation. Mandagni gives rise to Kaphaj vikara.

CONCLUSION

After detailed discussion of Agni, it can be concluded that, Agni is moola of life. Nourishment of body cells is the important function of Agni takes place through the digestion (Sthulpaka and Sukshma Paka). Sthulpachan is digestion of food in stomach by Jatharagni and Sukshmapachan is digestion of nutrients through Bhutagni as well as Dhavtagni. Agni is main reason for

healthy ayu. Sama state maintain Swathya. And vitiated state gives rise to Vyadhi, hence in Kayachikitsa treatment of Agni is also important, for that Agni Parikshan is main tool to Diagnose cause of Vyadhi and correct treatment of Vyadhi.

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