

AYURVEDA VIEW ON AGNI, ITS PHYSIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATION AND
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Article Received on 17/10/2022

Article Revised on 06/11/2022

Article Accepted on 27/11/2022

ABSTRACT

The Ayurveda concept of Agni is described for the invariable agent associated with the process of Paka which refers to the digestion and transformation. The digestion, absorption and assimilation of ingested food merely depend upon the physiological state of digestive fire (Agni). Agni as digestive element governs metabolic activities thus helps to maintain normal physiology of human body. It is believed that amongst the three Doshas the Pitta is related with Agni, therefore balance state of Pitta is prerequisite condition for restoring the function of Agni. Agni is innumerable depending upon the functions and site of action. Ayurveda text described various types of Agni including Jatharagni, Bhutagni and Dhatvagni. Jatharagni helps to digest food and forms Rasa and Mala. Bhutagnis act on the Bhutika of food and nourishes Bhutas in the body while Dhatvagni act on Dhatus. Agni converts food into the energy, which utilizes for vital functioning of the body. Dehagni is contributed towards the complexion, strength, nourishment, Oja and Teja, etc.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Agni, Jatharagni, Bhutagni, Dhatvagni.**INTRODUCTION**

Ayurveda considered *Agni* as important factor responsible for digestive and metabolic activities of body. The digestion, absorption and assimilation of food depend upon the functioning of *Agni*. *Agni* regulates digestive and metabolic activities therefore helps in the nourishment process. *Agni* converts ingested food into two parts *Rasad* and *Kitta* after the process of digestion. *Rasad* means essence and *Kitta* means excrete; the *Rasad* used for the nourishment purpose while *Kitta* is excreted out from the body.^[1-4]

The *Sama* state of *Agni* contributed towards the optimum health status of individual while the vitiation of *Agni* leads abnormal physiological conditions. The normal state of *Agni* is helpful for long, happy and healthy life. *Agni* provides biological energy and governs potential as well as kinetic activities of body.

As per *Acharya Sushruta* *Agni* is greatly associated with *Pitta*, the *Ushma guna* of *Pitta* contributed towards the digestion and combustion of food inside the body. *Pitta* provides heat of *Agni*, *Acharya Bhoj* described *Pitta* as *Agni* and this digestive fire is responsible for different activities including *Pachana* & *Deepan*, etc.^[4-7]

TYPES OF AGNIS

The ancient text of Ayurveda described three types of *Agni* as depicted in **Figure 1**. *Jatharagni*, *Bhutagni* and *Dhatvagni* are three types of *Agni*, amongst them *Jatharagni* is one in number while *Bhutagni* are five and *Dhatvagni* are seven types. *Jatharagni* present in the stomach and duodenum and considered as prime element responsible for digestive and metabolic activities. *Bhutagni* are associated with five basic elements and *Dhatvagni* present in each of the seven *dhatus*.

Jatharagni

Jatharagni is considered as main digestive fire found in the stomach and intestine; it contributed towards the digestion of food; the different variation of *Jatharagni* includes *Vishamagni*, *Tikshagni*, *Mandagni* and *Samagni*.

➤ *Vishamagni* is produced from the vitiated *Vata* and causes indigestion, gases, irregular appetite and constipation.

- *Tikshagni* is intense digestive fire which arises due to the excess of *Pitta* and leads problems of heartburn and skin alterations.
- *Mandagni* is related with slow digestive fire which leads obesity and metabolic disorders due to the excess aggravation of *Kapha*.
- *Samagni* is balance state of digestive fire that indicates normal conditions of all three *Doshas*. *Samagni* contributed towards the optimum digestion and absorption of ingested food, it provides essential nutrients to the body and facilitates elimination of waste products.

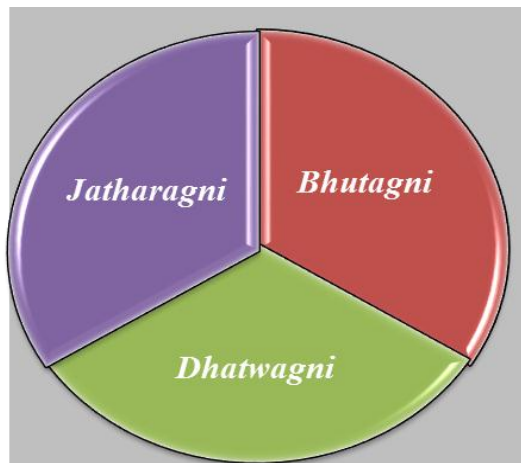


Figure 1: Major category of Agni.

Bhutagni

Bhutagni is located in the liver and related with five elements; *Parthiva*, *Apya*, *Tejas*, *Vayavya* and *Nabhasa*. *Bhutagni* stimulates molecular metabolism and facilitate absorption of nutrients from the food and support functions of the body.

Dhatu Agni

Dhatu Agni is digestive fire of *Dhatus* i.e.; plasma, blood, lymph, fat, bone, muscle, bone marrow and reproductive tissue. *Rasa Agni*, *Rakta Agni*, *Mamsa Agni*, *Meda Agni*, *Asthi Agni*, *Majja Agni* and *Shukra Agni* are various types of *Dhatu Agni*.

Acharya *Sushruta* explained five types of *Agnis* including *Pachakagni*, *Ranjakagni*, *Alochakagni*, *Sadhakagni* and *Bhrajakagni*. Similarly *Vagbhata* categorizes *Agni* as *Bhutagnis*, *Dhatvagnis*, *Dhoshagni* and *Malagni*.

Functions of Agni

- ✓ Digests food and nourishes *Dhatus*
- ✓ Helps to balances *Doshas*; *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*
- ✓ Provides nutrients for normal physiological activities
- ✓ Creates *Tejas*, *Prana* and *Ojas*
- ✓ Maintains life force and govern metabolic activities
- ✓ Provides energy and gives maintain thermostat of body.

Agni and Pathological Attributes

Vishama agni is responsible for irregular appetite, abnormal digestion, indigestion, gas trouble, constipation, diarrhea and abdominal pain. *Vishama agni* also responsible for receding gums, dry mouth, sciatica, hemorrhoids, muscle spasms and dry skin, etc. *Vishama agni* is also related with feeling of heaviness and anxiety.^[6-9]

Tikshna agni is responsible for excessive digestive intensity, *Tikshna agni* contributed towards the excessive desire of food and increases appetite abnormally. Hyperacidity, indigestion, heartburn, hot flashes and gastritis, etc. may observe in case of *Tikshna agni*. Hypoglycemia, diarrhea, dysentery, liver pain and ulcerative colitis, etc. also associated with chronic cases of *Tikshna agni*. *Tikshna agni* imparts emotional manifestations like anger, irritability, aggressiveness and anxiety, etc.

Manda agni is responsible for the low appetite which leads slows the metabolism and inadequate digestive power. This condition may experiences heaviness in stomach, frequent colds, congestion, over salivation, hypothyroid and lack of appetite, etc. Generalized weakness, lethargy, lack of enthusiasm and fatigue, etc. also observed in case of *Manda agni*.

Ayurveda Approaches for Balancing Agni

The treatment of digestive ailments involves utilization of *Ama pachana* or *Agni deepana* therapy, *Shodhana / Panchakarma*, *Shamana Chikitsa*, *Brumhana* therapy and *Rasayana Chikitsa*.^[9-11]

- Spices like cardamom, cayenne, black pepper, cumin and cinnamon, etc. can be used for curing *Manda agni*
- Ginger and lemon juice before meals can support function of *Agni*.
- Fennel seeds acts as carminative and *Hing* helps to reduces flatulence.
- *Sattvic Ahara* recommended especially for elderly population.
- One should avoid overeating and eat mindfully with peace and satisfaction.
- Ayurveda also recommended various detoxification measures like *Virechna* and *Vamana*, etc. for reliving toxins and waste from the body which helps to prevent digestive ailments and suppress effects of *Ama* or toxins.

Drugs for Manda Agni

- *Trikatu* or *Chitrak* powder
- Cinnamon powder
- Ginger liquid extract
- *Agnivardhak vati*

Drugs for Tikshna Agni

- *Avipattikar*
- *Shatavari*
- *Guduchi*

Drugs for Vishama Agni

- *Dashamoolakatutrayadi*
- *Shwasakutara rasa*
- *Talisadi churna*
- *Vasakaarishtha*
- *Drakshaasava*

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda described *Agni* as vital entity of biological system which contributes towards the nutritional strength, complexion, long, happy and healthy life. *Jatharagni*, *Bhutagni* and *Dhatvagni* are various types of *Agni*. *Agni* helps to digest food and nourishes *Dhatus*, balances *Doshas*, provides energy for physiological activities, helps to form *Tejas*, *Prana* and *Ojas* and control metabolic activities, etc. The abnormalities in *Agni* may lead to pathological manifestations, Ayurveda described *Agni deepana*, *Shodhana*, *Brumhana* and *Rasayana Chikitsa*, etc. for restoring balances of *Agni*.

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