

## UNDERSTANDING OF AAM AND ROLE OF AYURVEDIC ANTIOXIDANTS ON IT

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## ABSTRACT

In our body, there is a continuous process known as metabolism. During such metabolic changes free radicals are produced by the normal activity of body and are harmful for our body especially as in the long term. They are responsible for making us old and initiate the process of aging in which physical and mental functioning of the body is declined. In *Ayurvedic* terminology it can be correlated with *Aam* which is the product of improper digestion and *Ayurveda* has treatment on it right from *Langhan*, herbs having properties like antioxidants to *Panchkarma*. In general these antioxidants are best to avoid aging, impaired metabolism and general debility of the body, *Ayurveda* being an ancient science, also emphasize stress on consuming the antioxidants.

**KEYWORDS:** *Aam*, Antioxidants, *Herbs*, *Agni*.

## INTRODUCTION

*Ayurvedic* science is an ancient science dealing with basic principles related with dosha, dhatu and mala. *Ayurveda* has many peculiarities like *srotas sankalpana*, *murt-amurt bhav*, *shadras*, *guna* etc. One of them is *Aam*, the exact meaning of *Aam* is raw, unripened, uncooked; the concept of *Aam* is an important, peculiar and unique field *Ayurveda* as it one of the reasons behind producing various diseases. It is a toxin in body. *Aaam Utpatti* is at highest level whenever there is low digestive fire (*Agnimandya*). In *Ayurveda*, the concept of *agni* is of core importance in fact the strength of *Agni* in the body is among the most critical factors. Our body needs fuel in the form of food (*Aahar*), but it is not absorbed as it is, first it has to go through whole process of digestion with action of *agni*.<sup>[1,2]</sup> Any kind of food with any *Ras*, has to pass through *Avasthapaak*. *Aam* can be correlated with free radicles as it is produced in body through metabolic processes. As *Aam* is root cause of many disorders, one should attack *Aam* before it attacks on one's body. It can be removed through detoxification and purifying body with *Panchkarma* and *Shaman Chikitsa* also with lifestyle modification.

## AIM

To study the concept of *Aam* and role of *Ayurvedic* antioxidants on it.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To review *Aam* in different *Ayurvedic* classical texts.
2. To understand the role of *Agni* in the production of *Aam*.
3. To percept the *Ayurvedic* antioxidants which helps in reducing *Aam*.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. Role of *Agni* in *Aam Utpatti*

In the process of digestion key role of *Jatharagni* is there but other dependent *Agni* i.e. *Dhatwagni* and *Panchmahabhutagni* act on it and the food is then turned into absorbable material. When there is vitiation of *Jatharagni*, its power decreases and the *Agnimandya* develops. *Agni* and *pitta* has close relation, so whenever there is increase in *Drav Guna of Pitta*, it reduces the *Ushna* and *Tikshna Guna of Pittantargat Agni* and hence *Agnimandya* develops and *Aam Utpatti* takes place. Whenever there is vitiation of *Kapha Dosha* with increased *Manda Guna*, it also reduces the digestive fire and *Agnimandya* develops which may further responsible for production of *Aam*. So whatever may be the reasons, wherever there is *Agnimandya*, it leads to *Aam Utpatti* and various disorders.<sup>[3]</sup> *Aam Utpati* is natural tendency of *Agnimandya*, though the *Samprapti* includes *Doshadushyasammurchana*, *Aam* is responsible for the *Doshasang*. Because without *Doshasang*, *Khavaigunya Vikarnirmiti* does not place. The *Doshas* without *Aam* and vitiation does not cause diseases and perform their karmas without any obstruction.

## B. Factors responsible for vitiation of Agni

- i. **Related to diet habit** – The persons who don't follow the rules of consuming diet, get their *Agni Dushti*. Staying nil by mouth for long period, overeating and taking meals though there is indigestion, consuming the food with improper or with contraindicated combination which is mentioned as *Viruddha Aahar* can lead to vitiation of *Jatharagni*. Consuming the food which is not suitable for one's Prakruti, Desh, Kaal, Agni and which are too heavy to digest and very cool and dry in nature and contaminated food leads to vitiate agni<sup>4</sup>. Again *Atyambupaana* is one of the factors causing *Agni Dushti*.<sup>(5)</sup> And once *Jatharagni* is vitiated its power reduces and the food even of *Laghu Guna* is then become incapable to digest, giving rise to *Aam* and producing materials similar to that of toxins.
- ii. **Related to Manas Bhav** – Along with above mentioned factors there are some mental and psychological factors like excess worry, fear, anger, depression, lack of sound sleep, Jealousy, pain are there which can hamper the digestive power. The *Pathya* and *Matravat Aahar* even can not be digested in presence of these factors.<sup>[6,7]</sup>
- iii. **Related to Vegvidharan** – Due to *Dharan* of natural urges (*Adharniya Vegga*) *Vata Dosha* gets imbalanced and further it vitiates *Jatharagni*.<sup>[4]</sup>
- iv. **Related to Panchkarma** – When one has gone through *Vamanadi Panchkarma* but by improper way, and one who is emaciated due to chronic disease are the reasons for *Agnidushti*.<sup>[4]</sup>

Due to all these factors, digestive power is impaired and ultimately its function i.e. digestion of food is disturbed, whatever food is taken remain as *Apachyaman*, *shukta* and *Vishrup*. Once *Jatharagni* is impaired, the dependent *Dhatwagni* also gets vitiated and *Vikrut Dhatu* production starts. The accumulation of excess *Kleda* in body give rise to *Aam Utpatti*.

**C. Signs and symptoms of Aam on body:** *Ama* is a generic term for food which is absorbed into the system without properly digestion. Such partially digested material cannot be used by the system, and acts to clog it, even affecting an immune reaction.

- i. Coated thick tongue with sticky appearance.
- ii. Excessive sleep.
- iii. Laziness and lethargy to a huge extent.
- iv. Problem in thinking and decision making.
- v. Foul smell, pain, ache.

If not treated give rise to weight gain, obesity, diabetes mellitus, depression.

## D. Ayurvedic antioxidants

Now a day antioxidant is the much talked topic. They are now at more demand today all over the world. People are using them worldwide to regain mental well-being as well as physical fitness. Despite their popularity, there is

a great lack of information on the topic of antioxidants. Antioxidants are molecules which are useful in preventing the early oxidation of our bodily cells. Oxidation of the body cells can lead to the generation of free radicals that are solely responsible for the aging and degenerative processes taking place in the body. These antioxidants inhibit the production of free radicals so that it can make you feel physically and mentally younger.

*Ayurveda* offers ways to clean the *Aam* from body such as *Panchakarma*. However, it's best to prevent it from forming in the first place, by following *Dincharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Aaharvidhividhan*, exercise etc, along with some herbs as a part of daily practice.

- i. **Amalaki (Embllica Officinalis):** It is an herb with huge amount of Vitamin C content. *Amalaki* possesses certain chemicals like garlic acid, ellagic acid, chebulinic acid, quercetin, chebulagic acid and corilagin that provide it with the power to act as an antioxidant. According to the *Ayurvedic* point of view, due to its cold potency and presence of five tastes, it is very helpful in avoiding oxidation of the cells.<sup>[8]</sup>
- ii. **Haritaki (Terminalia Chebula):** It has a hot potency and has five tastes having laxative action. The herb is famous for its astonishing healing power and its wonderful results in treating many diseases.
- iii. **Ashwagandha (Asparagus):** A rich source of vitamins and minerals, asparagus contains glutathione, a powerful antioxidant that is very helpful in reducing free radical production. Glutathione has been involved curing the thirty types of cancers. It is also a powerful agent, which is helpful in treating diseases of cardiovascular system as a palliative in all heart affections attended with excited action of the pulse<sup>[9]</sup> and respiratory system.
- iv. **Triphala:** This is not a single herb but a uniqueness of ayurveda and its power of treatment. *Triphala* is a miraculous herb combination that has gained its popularity as the most successful antioxidant. *Triphala* contains a mixture of three prestigious herbs *Amalaki*, *Haritaki* and *Bhibitaki*. *Triphala* is considered as the a divine medicine that has gained a respect as the drug of choice for treating almost every disease that exist on the face of the earth.
- v. **Palandu (Allium Cepa):** Fresh juice after crushing the bulb of onion, is useful in gut health as it increases the peristalsis movements, and also used in obstruction.
- vi. **Rason (Allium Sativum):** Relieves clogs of channels with its ushna tikshna guna. It has strong antiseptic properties helpful in Beri-beri, have antioxidant properties.
- vii. **Radish (Raphanus Sativus):** It also possess antioxidant properties specially contains micronutrient e.g. selenium very useful in maintaining beauty of skin.

## DISCUSSION

*Aam* is produced from improperly digested toxic particles that clog the channels (*Srotas*) in human body. Some of these channels are physical e.g. intestines, lymphatic system, arteries and veins, capillaries, and genitourinary tract etc and some are non physical channels called nadis through which your energy flows. *Ama* toxicity accumulates wherever there is a weakness in the body (*Khavaigunya*), and finally resulting in various disorders. During the process of metabolism, *Agni* transforms food products into energy, when *Agnimandya* is present, it leads to the production of certain toxic substances. They are known as the *Kleda*. The excess of *Kleda* must be excreted out of the body to maintain a healthy living. When the process of excretion cannot take place properly, accumulation of toxic waste materials takes place giving rise to the production of *Ama*. It can be better prevented through lifestyle modification with *Ayurveda* and *Panchkarma*.

## CONCLUSION

From above verses and referring various classical and modern texts, following conclusion can be drawn.

1. Faulty dietary habits, sedentary lifestyle and vitiated *Agni* (digestive fire) are responsible for the production of *Aam*.
2. Better status *Jatharagni* and of *Dhatwagni*, lifestyle modification and Season wise *Ayurvedic Panchkarma* helps to prevent production *Aam*.
3. A particular food items with which bitter, pungent and astringent characteristics acts like antioxidants and hence prevents as well as treats *Aam*. Also some herbs like ginger, garlic, castor, aloe Vera, *Guduchi*, *Kuchala*, Cumin, *Bhallataka*, black pepper also have very effective properties to get rid from *Aam*.

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