

AN AYURVEDIC REVIEW ON ETIOPATHOGENESIS AND MANAGEMENT OF AJIRNA (INDIGESTION)

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the one the most ancient science which act by balance or alleviate the parental dosha with the help of Panchakarma and to regulate certain doshas in the offspring with certain medications and to change the diet and lifestyle. Most of the diseases arise due to hypo functioning of digestive fire and it is the root cause for the development of many diseases. Ama is a toxic substance formed by Ajirna and is considered the main cause of most diseases. Agnimandya is main reason for Ajirna which is caused by Faulty dietary habits, faulty life style, suppression of natural urges, psychological factors. Because root of Ajirna is agnimandhya so treatment plan are based on application of Deepan, Pachana, vatanuloman medicines along with panchkarma and Pathya aphyia (diet & life style related restrictions/modifications).

KEYWORDS: Agnimandhya, Aam, Pachkarma, deepana, pachana, Pathya-apathya.

INTRODUCTION

The term “*Ajirna*” meaning is indigestion or no digestion name indicate the food is being digest with difficulty. It is an important digestive disorder caused by malfunctioning of “*Agni system*”. This disorder produces number of disease all disease are mentioned in *Mandagni*.^[1]

The definition of Health in Ayurveda goes like this,

समदोषः समग्निश्च समधातुमलक्रियः ।

प्रसन्नात्मेन्द्रियमनाः स्वस्थ इत्यभिधीयते ।^[2]

It means, He, in whom, the *Doshas*, *Agni*(Digestive power), *Dhatus* (Tissue), *Malas* (Waste products) & their activities are normal; his soul, sense organ and mind are calm/clear, is called “*svastha*”. Human body is made up of three *Doshas*, Seven *Dhatus*, & three *Malas*.

दोषधातुमलमूलं हि शरीरं^[3]-----

In *Samyavastha* these *Doshas*, *Dhatus* and *Malas* maintain the Health of body and their imbalance creates various types of disease condition.^[4] These factor are also important for proper digestion, without proper digestion we cannot receive our nourishment for overall well-being.

प्रायेणाहारवैषम्यादजीर्णं जायते नृणाम् । तन्मूलो रोगसंघातस्तद्विनाशाद्विनश्यति ।।^[5]

Ajirna Occurs mainly due to irregularities of food, Ajirna is the cause for many other diseases, when it is cured other diseases also get destroyed automatically.

Diminished *Jathragni* produces by some *Aharajhetu* (*Atyambupan*, *Atimatrabhojan*, *Smashna*, *Vishmashna* etc.), *Viharaj hetu* (*Vegadharna*, *Swapnaviprayaya* etc.), *Mansika hetu* (*Irshya*, *bhaya*, *shoka* etc.) and *Agantuj hetu* (*Virechan*, *Snehbasti Vyapad*, *Sneh Vibhram* etc.) leads to state in which patient does not digest the food even though consumed at the proper time, wholesome diet & easily digestible food substances. This undigested food become sour in taste and toxic in nature.^[6] *Ajirna* is an *Annavahasrotas* disease, Harmful (*Ahit*), excessive(*Atimatra*) improper timing of diet responsible for *Annavahasrotodushti*, which leads to *Avipak/Ajirna*.

अतिमात्रे चाकाले चाहितस्य च भोजनात् ।

अन्नवाहिनी दुष्यन्ति वैगुण्यात् पावकस्य च ।।(च.वि.5/12)

Nidana*(Etiological factor) of *Ajirna

अभोजनादजीर्णातिभोजनाद्विषमाशनात् । असात्म्यगुरुशीतातिरूक्षसन्दुष्ट भोजनात् ।।

विरेकवमनस्नेहविभ्रमादव्याधिकर्षणात् । देशकालर्तुवैषम्याद्वेगानां च विधारणात् ।।^[7]

Acharya Charaka explain the Hetu of *Ajirna* as abstinence from food, indigestion over eating, irregular eating, talking unwholesome heavy, cold, excessively dry and putrid articles of diet, by wrongful effect of *Virechana*, *Vamana* and *Snehana*, by emaciation consequent upon disease or the incompatibility of country, clime or season or by the suppression of natural urges.

Acharya susurtha mentioned atiyambupana (Drinking more quantity of water), Vishamshna (Food taken in improper quantity and time), suppression of natural urges, improper sleep, grief, fear, anger, sadness, excessive sleepiness, and excessive vigilance; as a causative factor for Ajirna.^[8]

Samprapti Of Ajirna: (Pathogenesis of Indigestion)

कालेऽपि सात्म्यं लघु चापि भुक्तमन्नं न पाकं भजते नरस्य॥^[9]

स दुष्टोऽन्नं: न तत् पचति लघ्वपि। अपच्यमानं शुक्तत्वं यात्यन्नं विषरूपताम्॥^[10]

Due to consumption of etiological factors agni become greatly vitiated and manifest Ajirna. Patients of ajirna does not digest the food even though consumed at the proper time, wholesome diet and easily digestible food meal. This indigested becomes sour in taste and toxic in nature.

Samprapti Ghatak

Dosha- Kaphadi Tridosha

Dushya-Anna, Rasa

Srotas-Annavaaha, Rasavaaha, Purishvaaha

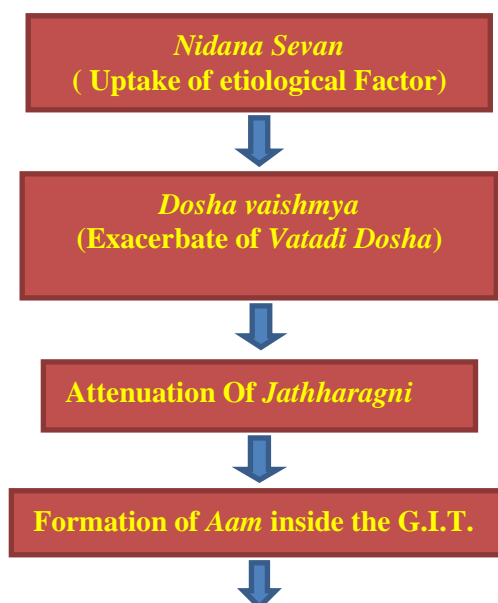
Srotodushti-sanga

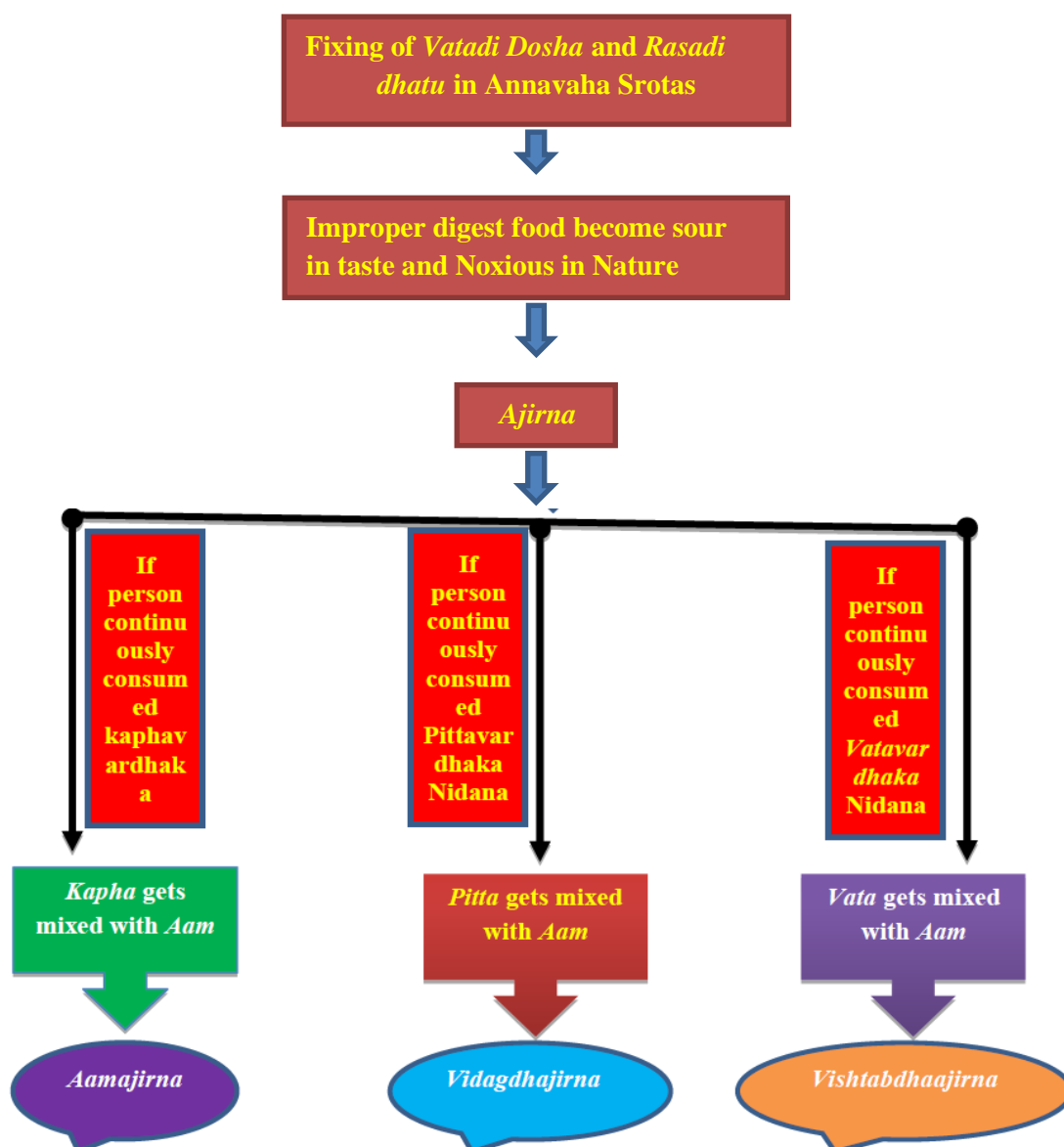
Udbhawsthana-Amashyottha

Adhisthana-Aamashaya, pakwashaya

Agni- Jatharagnimandhya

Samprapti Chakara





Types Of *Ajirna* (Indigestion)^[11]

1. *Aamajirna*: Due to vitiation of *Kapha dosha*.
2. *Vidagdhajirna*: Due to vitiation of *Pitta dosha*.
3. *Vishtabdhajirna*: Due to vitiation of *Vata dosha*.
4. *Rasasheshajirna*- Related to *Ahara Rasa* indigestion on nutrient of food.
5. *Dinapaki-Ajirna*
6. *Prakrita Ajirna*

Lakshana (Symptoms) of *Ajirna*

Samnya lakshana of *Ajirna*

According to Acharya Vagbhata^[12] –

- Improper or excess of elimination of faeces,

- Inactivity of Vata,
- Distension of the abdomen,
- Feeling of heaviness
- Giddiness

According to Charaka^[13]

- Abdominal distension /intestinal stasis
- General malaise,
- Headache,
- Fainting,
- Giddiness,
- Stiffness in back & waist,
- Yawning,
- Bodyache,
- Thirst,
- Fever,
- Vomiting,
- Tenesmus,
- Anorexia
- Indigestion.

Vishishta lakshna of Ajirna (According to types of Ajirna)^[14]

1. *Aamajirna*

Food which has attained sweetness is known as Amajirna. It is characterized by heaviness in abdomen, nausea, swelling of cheeks and eyes, and belchings similar to those occurring just after meals.

2. *Vishtabdhajirna*

Vishtabdhajirna is characterized by pricking pain, long stasis, tympanitis,

Abnormal movement of vata, obstruction to stool and flatus, delusion, general malaise and other symptoms of Vata vrddhi.

3. *Vidagdhajirna*

Food which has attained sourness & slightly digested is known as Vidagdhajirna and it is characterized by giddiness, thirst, fainting, sour and hot belching, excessive perspiration, burning sensation inside and other symptoms of aggravated pitta.

4. *Rasheshajirna*

Rasheshajirna is characterised by disliking for meals, pure belchings, heaviness and turbidity in the heart, excessive salivation and heaviness.

5. *Dinpaki ajirna*

According to Vijayrakshita, In dinpaki ajirna digestion completes within one day and one night. This due to overages of quantity and timings of food and waiting alone is required for such condition and its not harmful.

6. *Prakrita Ajirna*

According to Vijayrakshita, Prakrita ajirna prevails till the consumed food is completely digested. After the completion of digestion it manifest symptoms like hunger, thirst, defecation, etc. Clinical features of Ama like tympanitis are not seen.

***Updrava (Complications) Of Ajirna*^[15]**

- Fainting
- Delirium
- Vomiting
- Excess salivation
- Debility
- Giddiness
- Death

***Consequences of Ajirna*^[16]**

1. When Ajirna combined with Pitta it causes;

- Burning sensation
- Thirst
- Disease of Oral cavity
- Amalapitta
- Other pittaja vikara.

2. When Ajirna combined with Kapha it causes

- *Rajayakshma*
- *Pinasa*
- *Prameha*
- Other kaphaja vikara

3. When Ajirna combined with Vata it causes

- Various Vataja vikara

4. When Ajirna combined with Mutra it causes

- Urinary disorders.

5. When Ajirna combined with Purisha it causes

- G.I.T. Diseases.

6. When Ajirna combined with Rasadi dhatu it causes

- *Dhatugata Roga*.

PATHYA-APATHYA***Pathya;***

- Mudga (green gram),
- purna shali (old rice),
- Rasana (garlic)
- Seasonal fruits,
- Diet of high fiber content,
- Draksha (grapes),
- Amalaka (*phyllanthus emblica* gartn),
- Pippali (long pepper),
- Shunthi(dry ginger),
- Green leafy vegetables
- Luke warm water
- Takra
- *Vajrasana, Suryanmskar, Marjaryasana, Ardha matsyendra asana, Trikonasana, Arddhapavanmuktasana, Setubandha srvangasana* etc.
- Langhana

Apathya

- Heavy, oily, cold, dry food material.
- Unwholesome meal,
- Oily
- Spicy food items.
- Fast food
- Suppression of natural urges
- Tension, anger fear hatredness.

Treatment

1. Nidana parivarjana (Avoid the causative factor which are responsible for Ajirna)

2. **Sanshodhana (Panchkarma)& Shamana Chikitsa**

- In Grahnidosh Chikitsa Siddhanta Acharya charak mentioned that if the aam moves downwards and remains adherent to colon then patient should be given virechana karma with deepana dravyas and if sama rasa pervades other parts of the body then patient should undergone langhana karma and should be given pachana dravyas.

लीनं पक्वाशयस्थं वाऽप्यामं स्त्राव्यं सदीपनैः । शरीरानुगते सामे रसे लघनपाचनम् ॥ (च.चि.15/75)

- According to *Susruth*,

तत्रामे लघनं कार्यं, विदग्धे वमनं हितं ॥ विष्टब्धे स्वेदनं पथ्यं, रसशेषे शयीत च ॥ (सु.सू.46/505)

✓ In *Amajirna – Langhna*

✓ In *Vidagdhajirna-Vamana Karma*

✓ In *Vishtabdhajirna- Swedana*

✓ In *Rasheshajirna- Shayana*

❖ **Aushdha dravya pryoga-**

➤ **Ekala Aushadha Prayoga-**

- *Shunti*
- *Maricha*
- *Ajmoda*
- *Pippalimula,*
- *Nagarmotha,*
- *Chitakamula*
- *Heenga*
- *Aamala*

- *Haritaki*
- *Aamalak*
- *Mishreya etc.*

❖ ***Aushadha yoga Prayoga***

1. Churna Formulations

- *Hingwashtaka Churna*
- *Lavana Bhaskara Churna*
- *Triphla Churna*
- *Trikatu Churna*
- *Panchakola Churna*
- *Diruttarahingwadi Churna*
- *Shivakshar Churna*
- *Avipattikara Churna*
- *Rambana Rasa*
- *Ajirnakantaka Rasa*

2. Vati Formulations

- *Chitrkadi vati*
- *Sanjeevani Vati*
- *Gandhaka vati*
- *Rasona vati*
- *Hingwadi vati*
- *Agnitundi vati*

3. Kwath Preprations

- *Phalatriakadi kwath*
- *Nagarmothadi kashaya*

4. Aasav-Arishta Preprations:

- *Drakshasava*
- *Draksharishta*
- *Abhyarishta*
- *Jirkadhyarishta*
- *Pippalyasava*

MODERN CORRELATION OF AJIRNA

Indigestion or dyspepsia

Dyspepsia is a common problem and affects up to 30% of the population. General symptoms include Abdominal distension, discomfort, pleasure, nausea and gases.

In most cases, it happens after eating and drinking. Changes in lifestyle can often help. Other causes include conditional conditions, such as gastroesophageal reflux (GERD) and the use of specific medications.

Causes

Indigestion can result from lifestyle or dietary habits, a medical condition, or the use of some drugs.

Common causes of indigestion include

- Dietary factors
- Smoking
- Obesity
- Stress

If there is no identifiable structural or metabolic cause, a doctor will diagnose functional dyspepsia.

Dyspepsia can also be a symptom of a wide range of health conditions, including:

- Gastroesophageal reflux disease
- Peptic ulcer disease
- Stomach cancer
- Gallstones
- Liver disease
- Gastritis
- obesity
- Pancreatitis
- Hiatal hernia
- Infection, especially with h. Pylori
- Celiac disease
- Irritable bowel disease

- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Medications, such as antibiotics and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (nsaids)
- In pregnancy, Dyspepsia is common during pregnancy, especially in the last trimester. This is due to hormonal changes and the way the fetus presses against the stomach.

Symptoms of Dyspepsia

A doctor will diagnose indigestion if a person has one or more of the following symptoms:

- Pain related to the digestive system
- Burning sensation in the digestive tract
- Bloating
- Nausea
- Feeling full after eating
- Feeling too fast when eating
- A person will have symptoms even if they don't eat much.

Diagnosis

The doctor will ask this person

- Their symptoms
- Their personal and family medical history
- Any other health conditions and medications they are taking
- Their eating habits
- They may also examine the chest and stomach. This may involve pressing on different parts of the abdomen to find areas of, tenderness, or causing pain on applying pressure.

In some cases, doctors may use the following tests to rule out underlying health conditions:

- Blood test like L.F.T., CBC-can assess anemia, liver problems, and other conditions.
- Helicobacter pylori infection test: In addition to blood tests, these tests may also include urea breath test and stool antigen test.
- Upper G.I.T Endoscopy-The doctor will use a long thin tube and a camera to take pictures of the gastrointestinal tract. They can also take tissue samples for biopsy. This can help them diagnose ulcers or tumors.
- USG Of abdomen

Treatments

Indigestion is usually mild, and people can solve this problem by changing their diet and lifestyle. If none of these work, the doctor may prescribe medication. In some cases, there may be more serious root causes. Anyone with concerns about new, severe, or persistent indigestion should seek medical advice.

Treatment of dyspepsia depends on the cause and severity. Usually treating an underlying illness or changing a person's medication will reduce indigestion.

There are various medications and treatments available, depending on the cause of dyspepsia.

MEDICATION OPTIONS INCLUDE

Antacids

These can counteract the effects of stomach acid. Examples include AlkaSeltzer, Maalox, Rolaids, Riopan, and Mylanta. These are over-the-counter (OTC) medications that do not require a prescription. Doctors usually recommend antacids as one of the preferred treatments for indigestion.

H₂ receptor antagonists

These can reduce gastric acid levels and are more effective than antacids. Examples include Tagamet and Pepcid. Some are available without a prescription, while others require a prescription. There are risks that may bring adverse effects. A doctor can help a person choose the right option.

Proton Pump Inhibitor (PPI)

PPI reduces gastric acid and is stronger than H₂ receptor antagonists. Some examples are Aciphex, Nexium, Prevacid, Prilosec, Protonix, and Zegerid.

Prokinetics

These can help stimulate the movement of food through the stomach. Examples include metoclopramide (Reglan). Side effects may include fatigue, depression, anxiety, and muscle cramps.

Antibiotics

If *Helicobacter pylori* infection causes peptic ulcers and indigestion, your doctor may prescribe antibiotics. Side effects can include an upset stomach, diarrhea, and fungal infections.

Antidepressants

Sometimes problems with the central nervous system can cause digestive problems. Low-dose antidepressants can help solve it.

Lifestyle related therapy

For mild and rare symptoms, lifestyle changes can help. These include:

- Avoid or limit the intake of trigger foods such as fried foods, chocolate, onions and garlic
- Drink water instead of soda
- Limit caffeine and alcohol intake
- Maintain a moderate weight
- Avoid stress
- Avoid wearing tights
- Wait 3 hours or more before going to bed
- Raise the head of the bed
- If you are a smoker, please avoid or quit smoking
- Use fibre rich diet.
- Follow a healthy and balanced diet
- Limit spicy and high-fat foods
- Avoid acidic foods, such as tomatoes and oranges
- Eating four or five small meals a day may also help, instead of three large meals.
- Eat smaller meals
- Eat slowly

CONSULTATION

Chronic indigestion can affect a person's quality of life and overall well-being. Consultation can help some people solve these problems.

Options may include

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

- Biofeedback
- Hypnotherapy
- Relaxation Therapy
- Drug Interactions

If a person's medication seems to be the cause of indigestion, the doctor may recommend adjusting the dose or type of medication.

Complications

In rare cases, severe and persistent indigestion can cause complications. These include:

Esophageal stricture

Continuous exposure to stomach acid can cause scarring of the upper gastrointestinal tract. The tube can become narrow and constricted, causing difficulty swallowing and chest pain. Surgery may be needed to enlarge the esophagus.

Pyloric stenosis

In some cases, stomach acid can cause long-term irritation of the pylorus (the passage between the stomach and the small intestine). If the pylorus heals, it may narrow. If this happens, a person may not be able to digest food properly and surgery may be required.

Peritonitis

Over time, gastric acid causes the lining of the digestive system to break down, leading to an infection called peritonitis. May require medication or surgery.

DISCUSSION

The current rapid emergence of lifestyle-related diseases in India has placed a heavy burden on society. In general, they are due to incorrect diet and lifestyle changes. Ayurveda offers comprehensive, feasible, and cost-effective prevention alternatives that should be recognized and promoted. Nidana Parivarjana is recommended as a first-line treatment for almost all diseases because prevention leaves you with certainty that something bad will not happen.^[18]

In this study, most of the causes were found to be related to diet and lifestyle. If a person does not follow the aahar vidhi vidhana (correct eating habits) properly, it will hamper Jathragagni which leads to Ajirna. Aama which is product of mandagni; leads to manifestation of other disease by combines with Dosha, Dhatu and malas. Aamajirna, vidagdhajirna, vishtabdhajirna occurs are due to mixing of aama with kapha, pitta, vata

dosha respectively. In early stage of disease symptoms easily subside by application of deepana, pachana, vatanulomana drug because they break the pathogenesis of *Ajirna* by act on doshas. When dosha comes back into their normal stage, symptoms of *Ajirna* also disappear. In chronic stage or severe condition application of pachkarma will be better option along with application of drugs, because pachkarma procedure act fast on disease by removal of undigested food from outside of body. Patients can also use Modern medication as secondary option of treatment but modern medicine have some side effects and they are not too much powerful to cure disease easily by its root in compare to Ayurveda therapy (Agnideepana, aampachana, srotoshadhna etc.). Following of pathya apathya gives good result along with medications.

CONCLUSION

Ajirna is a recurrent disease that affects health-related quality of life. Due to the economic and social burden of *Ajirna*, it is important for patients to obtain diet and lifestyle changes. Studies have shown that unhealthy diets, fast and stressful lifestyles, and sedentary habits play an important role in the manifestation of this disease. People can easily deal with *Ajirna* Condition along with Ayurveda medications. Guru Ahara Dravyas have to be taken in half to satisfaction whereas the Laghu Dravya have to be taken not till the satisfaction.^[19] Half of the stomach is to be filled with solid food, one quarter with liquids, another quarter should be kept vacant for the free movement of Vata.^[20] we can say that follow up Aahar vidhi vidhana (Rule of diet) is very necessary for proper digestion of meal. At present, there are few studies in this area.

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