

## ROLE OF AHARASHAKTI PARIKSHA TO PLAN PATHYAPATHYA AHARA IN ROGI AND SWASTHA

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### ABSTRACT

*Aharashakti* represents both *abhyavaharanashakti* (capacity of intake) and *jaranashakti* (power of digestion). *Aharashakti* gives an impression of food habits and status of the *agni*. One may be able to ingest enormous amounts of *pathyapathya ahara* but unable to digest the same. Thus, criteria of assessing both together are necessary. Determination of status of *jatharagni* is especially important in the further step of *pathyapathya* planning in *rogi* and *swastha*. *Aharashakti* can be assessed by quality and quantity of food intake along with time required for its digestion and assimilation. *Abhyavaharanashakti* can be assessed by *aharavidhividhana* and *aharavidhivisheshayatana*. *Jaranashakti* is assessed by the time required to appear *jirnahara lakshana* from *aharasevana*. Along with *jeernahara lakshanas*, *mala pariksha* can also be considered as criteria for determination of the status of *jaranashakti*.

**KEYWORDS:** *Aharashakti, Abhyavaharanashakti, Jaranashakti, Pathya ahara.*

### INTRODUCTION

*Aharashakti pariksha* is the assessment tool to determine one's capacity to ingest(*abhyavaharanashakti*), digest, and assimilate *ahara(jaranashakti)*.<sup>[1]</sup> Nowadays there is an increased prevalence of lifestyle disorders, in which faulty dietary habits play a key role. *Ahara* ingestion according to *aharashakti* gives rise to a healthy body, counter to that originates diseases.<sup>[2]</sup> So, determining the *abhyavaharanashakti* and *jaranashakti* by the one's *prakriti* is important as *aharashakti* differs from person to person.

*Pathya ahara* maintains the equilibrium of all *doshas* and *dhatus* and so, maintains the good health of *swastha*.<sup>[3]</sup> According to *Yogaratanakara* only *pathya ahara* intake can cure diseases. So, intake of disease specific *pathya*(wholesome) *ahara* and avoid *apathya*(unwholesome) *ahara* is the most important part of the treatment along with medicine. *Pathya kalpana* like *manda*, *peya*, *vilepi*, *yavagu* etc. and *pathya ahara* are used in different diseases. *Pathya kalpanas* are also used as carminative in *postpanchakarma* therapy. Quantity of intake of *pathya ahara* and *kalpana* is dependent on *aharashakti* of *rogi* and *swastha*. *Aharashakti* changes with characteristics of *ahara*, season, age etc. hence *pathya ahara* also changes accordingly. After treatment if one is not taking *pathya ahara* according to *aharashakti* that will lead to same or other disease e.g., *grahani* after *atisara* has been relieved. So, there is need to know *aharashakti* of *swastha* as well as *rogi* to plan *pathyapathya ahara* during the treatment and post treatment.

Assessing the intake or digestion separately does not give an accurate picture of *aharashakti*. *Abhyavaharanashakti* and *jaranashakti* depend on one another e.g., one may be able to ingest enormous amounts of *ahara* but unable to digest the same. Thus, criteria of assessing both together are necessary. *Abhyavaharanashakti* can be assessed by *aharavidhividhana* and *aharavidhivisheshayatana*. *Abhyavaharanashakti* can be done by *prashna pariksha* to know quantity and characteristics of *ahara*, number of meals in a day etc.

*Jaranashakti* is depends on the strength of *agni*. *Jaranashakti* is assessed by quality and quantity of *aharasevana* along with time required for its *jarana*(digestion and assimilation) that is time required to appear *jirnahara lakshana* from *aharasevana* and *mala pariksha*.

*Jaranashakti* can be done by *prashna pariksha* to know how many *jeernahara lakshanas* appeared and time required to appear them, number of frequency of *mala* etc. and *darshana pariksha* to know appearance of *mala* etc.

## AIM

To study the role of *aharashakti pariksha* to plan *pathyapathya ahara* in *rogi* and *swastha*.

## OBJECTIVE

To study the importance of *aharashakti pariksha* to plan *pathyapathya ahara* in *rogi* and *swastha*.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

Literary material for study of *abhyavaharanashakti*, *jaranashakti*, *agni*, factors affecting the status of *jaranashakti*, *jeernahara lakshana*, *mala pariksha* have been collected from the various *samhita*, published articles and internet.

### AHARASHAKTI

*Aharashakti* is determined by two factors i.e *Abhyavaharanashakti* and *Jaranashakti*. It is one among the *dashavidha pariksha* which is *rogi pariksha*.

### ABHYAVAHARANASHAKTI

*Abhyavaharanashakti* is any quantity of food consumed for a specific meal and undergoing *samyak jarana* in proper time.<sup>[4]</sup> It varies from person to person and is influenced by certain factors like *prakruti* and type of *ahara* consumed.

One should take *matravat ahara* (proper quantity of food). The quantity of food which is not supposed to alter the equilibrium of *doshas*, does not disturb the *agni* and undergoing proper digestion at proper time is considered as *matravat ahara*.<sup>[5]</sup> There is detailed discipline and process to take the *matravat ahara* for an individual as *aharavidhividhan*<sup>[6]</sup> and *aharavidhivisheshayathanan*.<sup>[7]</sup>

*Guru ahara* is supposed to be consumed only in less quantity compared to *laghu ahara* as they have a tendency to diminish the digestive power.<sup>[8]</sup> Quantity of food, whether it is *guru* or *laghu* have a major role in undergoing proper digestion. It should be determined according to the *Agnibala* of a person. *Aharamatra* is more in *utkrushta agnibala*, medium in *madhyama agnibala* and less in *alpa agnibala*.<sup>[9]</sup>

*Prakruti* is the innate characteristic of an individual. *Pitta prakruti* person can digest more food compared to a *vata* or *kapha prakruti* person due to the *teekshna* and *ushna gunas* of *pitta dosha*.

### JARANASHAKTI

*Jaranashakti* depends on the *agni* of a person. According to *anumana pramana agnibala* of a person can be assessed by the power of digestion i.e *jaranashakti*.<sup>[10]</sup> When a person is eating repeatedly and digesting properly at the proper time, then *aharashakti* is said to be *prabala*.

**AGNI**

*Agni* is a principal factor of digestion and metabolism in our body. Ingested food is to be digested, absorbed and assimilated, which is unavoidable for the maintenance of life, and is performed by *agni*. *Jaranshakti* is *pravara* in *utkrushta agnibala*, is *madhyama* in *madhyama agnibala* and is *avara* in *alpa agnibala*.

**State of agni**

| State of Agni                       | <i>Samanagni</i>  | <i>Mandagni</i>  | <i>Teekshnagni</i>   | <i>Vishmagni</i>  |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| <i>Doshadhikya</i>                  | <i>Samavastha</i>   | <i>Kapha</i>   | <i>Pitta</i>   | <i>Vata</i>   |
| Digestive mechanism <sup>[11]</sup> | digests and assimilates food properly at the proper time, gets affected by improper regimen but otherwise remains normal. | unable to digest the smallest amount of food, digests the least amount of food in the greatest amount of time. | quick digestion of food, regardless of the type of food          | changes between digesting food quickly and slowly           |
| <i>Rogotpadakata</i>                | Healthy (Increases the quality of the <i>Dhatus</i> )   | cause of all diseases <sup>[12]</sup><br>Eg. <i>Amavata</i> , <i>udar</i>                                      | <i>dhatukshayjanya rog</i> <sup>[13]</sup><br>Eg. <i>Bhasmak</i> | <i>Dhatuvaishamya</i> <sup>[13]</sup><br>Eg. <i>Grahani</i> |

**Factors affecting the status of agni (*Jaranashakti*)****1) *Prakruti* and *agni* (*Jaranashakti*)<sup>[11]</sup>**

| <i>Prakruti</i> | <i>Vata</i>   | <i>Pitta</i>  | <i>Kapha</i>  |
|-----------------|---|---|---|
| <i>Agni</i>     | Mostly <i>Vishamagni</i> (Due to the influence of <i>vata dosha</i> )   | Mostly <i>Teekshnagni</i> (Due to the influence of <i>pitta dosha</i> ) | Mostly <i>Mandagni</i> (Due to the influence of <i>kaph dosha</i> ) |
|                 | according to the <i>taratamabhava</i> of the <i>guna</i> of <i>dosha</i> which is residing in <i>koshtha</i> , the status of <i>Agni</i> may vary |   |   |

**2) *Agni* and *Rutu*<sup>[14]</sup>**

| <i>Kala</i>  | <i>Rutu</i>  | <i>Agni</i>                 |
|--|--|-----------------------------|
| <i>Adana kala</i><br>(Predominance of <i>agneya gunas</i> due to the influence of sun)   | <i>Shishira</i><br><i>Vasanta</i><br><i>Greeshma</i> | increase in <i>Agnibala</i> |
| <i>Visarga kala</i><br>(Predominance of <i>saumya guna</i> due to the influence of moon) | <i>Varsha</i><br><i>Sharada</i><br><i>Hemanta</i>    | decrease in <i>Agnibala</i> |

**3) *Agni* and *Vaya***

In *Bala* and *Vridhavastha agnibala* is *manda*, whereas in *yauvana*, *agnibala* will be *pravara*.

#### 4) Type of Ahara and Agnibala

Ahara is fuel of *agni*, due to which *agni* is ignited and absence of it extinguishes *agni*.<sup>[15]</sup> It is the main controlling factor regarding the status of *Agni*. *Guru ahara* is supposed to be consumed only in less quantity compared to *laghu ahara* as it diminishes the *agni*.

#### **JEERNAHARA LAKSHANAS**<sup>[16,17]</sup>

One should eat when the previous meal is digested otherwise it vitiates all the *doshas* quickly. When one eats after the previous meal is digested well, *agni* is stimulated, the eaten food promotes only the lifespan without afflicting any *dhatu*.

*Jeernahara lakshanas* are *udgara shuddhi* (pure belching), *utsaha* (cheerfulness), *yathochita vegotsarga* (timely elimination of flatus, urine and mala), *laghuta* (lightness of work), *kshudha* (appetite is arisen), *pipasa* (thirst is arisen), *hridaya vishuddhata* (absence of *Daha* in chest and stomach), *vatanulomana* (flatus passes down), *vishudha* (sense of cleanliness), *vishada* (clearness of mind), *sukha* (pleasure), eructation of three stages of *Avasthapaka*, *Swasta vrithanuvriti* (continuation of being healthy).

#### **MALA PARIKSHA**

*Mala pariksha* is one among the *ashtavidh pariksha*.<sup>[18]</sup> *Agni* digests the ingested food to convert it into the *ahararasa* and *mala*. So, *mala parikshana* is important criteria to assess *jaranashakti*. The parameters to be observed during *malapariksha* are time, number of frequency and quantity of motions, appearance of stool, consistency, colour and *gandha* of *Pureesha*.

#### **JALA PARIKSHANA OF PUREESHA**<sup>[19,20]</sup>

When the sample of *pureesha* is taken in a bowl of clean water, -

- 1) If feces combined with these *doshas* sink down in water, has excessively foul smell and is passed out frequently in small quantity (*vicchinnani*) is known as *sama mala* (*apakva* or immature) which is an indicator of *Jataragnimandya*. Some read '*pichilani*' (slippery) in place of *vicchinnani*. The undigested fecal matter sinks in water owing to its heaviness.
- 2) If the same features but opposite are found along with lightness, the feces should be known as *pakva* (mature). The digested fecal matter floats in water except in conditions where the feces are very watery or of hardened lumps very cold and mixed with excessive mucus.

- 3) The functional ability or status of both *pakvashaya* and *adho amashaya* are inferred from the examination of *mala*. By this method physician could investigate and find out whether the patient suffering from chyme-disorder passes undigested matter or digested matter in his feces and then could treat him properly with digestive or other kind of medications.

## IMPORTANCE OF AHARASHAKTI PARIKSHA

### 1) To know health status

Strength and life span depend on the food. A person taking well balanced diet in proper quantity which is well digested and assimilated indicates health and longevity.

### 2) To build up immunity

Diet should be well balanced according to *aharashakti*. Poor status of *jaranashakti* indicates poor nutrition and poor immunity and persons with weak *jaranashakti* are prone towards metabolic disorders. Under nutrition may lead to diseases of *dhatukshaya* and *krishta*. Malnutrition is the cause of diseases such as obesity, diabetes and cardiac diseases.

### 3) To plan the *pathyapathya*

Quantity of *pathya ahara* depends on status of *abhyavaharana* and *jaranashakti*. So proper knowledge of *aharashakti* is especially important in planning the *pathyakalpana* and *ahara*.

### 4) Useful for research

For assessing the accurate quantities of diet and its digestion, the diet assessment methods can be included and on this basis concept of *aharashakti* may be validated in *swastha* and *rogi*. Results of a clinical trial may also be analyzed according to status of *aharashakti* of the patient.

## DISCUSSION

*Aharashakti* is mentioned to assess status of *agni* in case of examination of a *rogi* and *swastha*. Considering the quality and quantity of *abhyavaharana* and *jarana*, which are the two factors which determine how properly digestion is taking place in the intestine, the efficiency of digestive power in an individual can be assessed. *Jaranashakti* is one's capacity to digest ingested food and transforms it into *sara* and *kitta*. Intake of *pathyapathya ahara* according to *aharashakti* is responsible for nourishment of all dhatus. Hampered *jaranashakti* will cause the vitiation of *doshas* and malnourishment of *dhatu*s even *pathya ahara* has taken in small quantity. *Aharashakti* can be assessed by *prashana* and *darshana pariksha*.

*Jaranashakti* can be assessed only from outside looking into various signs and symptoms of *jeernahara* and *mala parikshana*. *Aharashakti* plays a significant role in determining the *sama* and *niramavastha* of *roga* and further steps in the process of planning need and quantity of carminative *dravya*. As *Mala* is the only end product of digestion which we can be examined with *pratyaksha pramana*, it can also be considered as a criterion which aids in determining the status of *jaranashakti*.

## CONCLUSION

*Aharashakti* is one among the *dashavidha pariksha*. It is a way to assess *agnibala*. *Aharashakti* of a person varies according to numerous factors like *prakruti*, *ritu*, *vaya*, type and *matra* of *ahara*, *vihara* etc. So, *pathya ahara* changes accordingly. To be aware of the *aharashakti* is essential for maintaining *swasthya* and to cure disease. One should take a meal after the previous food gets digested. Time required for appearance of *jeernahara lakshanas* from *aharasevana*, proper formation and expulsion of *mala* can also be considered as criteria in assessing the status of *jaranashakti*. Only after assessing the *aharashakti*, *pathyapathya ahara* which is the most important part of treatment can be planned.

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