

Ayurvedic management of *amlapitta* with special reference to hyperacidity: A case study

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Abstract

Amlapitta is one of the most common diseases seen in the society. It is seen in all ages, all classes, and all community. *Amlapitta* correlated with Hyperacidity refers to a set of symptoms caused by an imbalance between the acid secreting mechanism of the stomach and proximal intestine and the protective mechanisms that ensure their safety. The stomach normally secretes acid that is essential in the digestive process. When there is excess production of acid in the stomach, it results in the condition known as Acidity. *Amlapitta* is managed through *Pitta Shaman* with *Vamana* and *Virechana* because according to our Acharyas it occurs due to vitiation of *Kapha Pitta Doshas*. *Swamarg Chikitsta* is described for the treatment of *Amlapitta*. In Ayurved, Hyperacidity can be explained under broad umbrella of *UrdwardAmlapitta*, *VidagdhaJeerna*, *Samapitta Laxanas*, *Pittaja Grahani Laxana*. This marks improvement in symptoms such that retrosternal burning, acidity eructation, nausea, indigestion and flatuation. *Laghu Sutshekhar Rasa*, *Avipattikar Churna*, *PravalPanchamruta* along with lifestyle dietary modification provided significant relief in symptoms of *Amlapitta* with specific reference to Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD).

Keywords: Gastroesophageal reflux disease; Acidity; *Agnimandya*; *Amlapitta*

1. Introduction

In Ayurved, *Agnimandya* is the root cause of all the diseases. The major reason behind *Agnimandya* is faulty dietary habits *Adhyashana* (eating after meal), *Vishamashana* (diet on irregular time and quantity), and wrong behavioural patterns such as *Vegadharana* (Suppression of urges) leads to vitiation of *Doshas* (fundamental bodily bio-elements) of *Doshas* (fundamental bodily bio-elements) either independently or synonymously. Due to the present lifestyle and unawareness of ones *Prakriti*, digestive disorders are very common in all groups and also highly ignored issues. In India, prevalence is 7.6 to 30%, being < 10% in studies and the dietary factor associates include use of spices and non-vegetarian food.

Gastroesophageal reflux is a disease occurring due to improper functioning of esophageal sphincter. It is a very common disease, It also occurs in children. Patients with gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) has the signs and symptoms such as heartburn, chest pain, gastric discomfort, abdominal distension, sour belching, food regurgitation, nausea and reduced appetite.

These signs and symptoms can be seen in the disease *Amlapitta* mentioned in Ayurveda. *Amlapitta* has been mentioned in various Ayurvedic texts since *Samhita* period. This disease has been described in detail in classical texts such as *Kashyapa Samhita*, *Yoga Ratnakara*, and *Bhaishajya Ratnavali*. *Amlapitta* is considered as a *Pitta Pradhana*

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Vyadhi (pre-dominant disease) and possess symptoms such as *Amlodgara* (sour and bitter belching), *HritkanthaDaha* (heartburn), *Gaurava* (heaviness), *Avipaka* (indigestion), *Klama* (fatigue), *Aruchi* (tastelessness), *Utkle sha* (nausea), *Antra Kujana* (gurgling sounds in intestines), *Hritshula* (chest pain) and *Vidbheda* (diarrhea). Over indulgence of etiological factors such as faulty life style causes vitiation of *Vata Pitta Dosha*. *Pitta* along with *Vata* or *Kapha* slackens the *Jatharagni* factor responsible for digestion, i.e., *Jatharagnimandya* (demination of digestion). During this state, consumed food becomes *Vidagdha* (undigested). Later on, it turns into *Shukta* (acidified) and it remains in the stomach for long. At this stage, *Vidagdhajirna* (indigestion caused due to acidified chyle) manifests which is the premonitory symptom of the disease *Amlapitta*. Further, vitiated *Pitta* gets mixed with *Shukta* and causes *Pitta Amavisha Sammurchhana* (combination of unmetabolized *Rasa* and undigested food with *Rasa*). This condition is called as *Amlapitta*.

1.1. Urdhwaga Amlapitta ²

Aruchi (Anorexia), *Gurukoshthatva* (Heavinessabdomen), *Gaurav* (Lethargy), *Vibandha* (Constipation), *Shiroruja* (Headache), *Utklesh* (Nausea), *Tiktamlodgar* (acid eructation). *Urdhwaga Amlapitta* is mainly caused by intake of *Aharas* which is not suited to ones *Prakriti*.e faulty diet e.g *Amla* (sour), *Katu* (pungent), *Lavana* (salty), *Guru* (heavy meal), *Snigdha* (oily/excessive liquid), *Abhishandhi* (food that is difficult to digest) *Aharas* . Besides, addictions like smoking, alcohol, tobacco chewing, excessive stress, condiments also lead to *Urdhwaga Amlapitta*. Drugs like *NSAID's*, corticosteroids, also cause dyspepsia. *Ayurveda* physicians are treating dyspepsia since long time with the help of knowledge as given in classical *Ayurveda* text (causative factors, pathogenesis, treatment plan, and preventive tool) but there is a lack of evidence as per modern standards.

Burning sensation, poor digestion, thirst, perspiration, nausea,sour or bitter belching, fevers due to vitiated *pitta* and *kapha* and heaviness. *Chhardi* (vomiting), *PittajaGulma* (hard mass in the abdomen caused due to vitiated *pitta*), *Parinamshoola* (duodenal ulcer), *Pittashmari* (stones formed due to vitiated *Pitta*) and *Annadravashoola* (gastritis/peptic ulcer) are the most commonly seen symptoms in people with acidity.³

2. Case Report

In this study, a 42 yrs /female patient with chief complaints of retrosternal burning, Acidic eruction, Nausea, Indigestion and Flatulence for 2 months, visited for ayurvedic managements. The patient was working in a private company and had history of eating too much spicy and fatty food, stress, tobacco chewing and drinking coffee in last 6 months.

History- No medical and surgical major past history.

2.1. Physical Examination

Temp-98, R/R=20, Pulse=80/min, BP=130/80 mm of mg, Weight =70 Kgs

Per Abdomen was soft,non-tender, no abnormality detected.

2.2. Ashtavidha Pariksha

- *Nadi* [Pulse] - 80/min
- *Mala* [stool] - *Asamyaka*[unsatisfactory bowel habit]
- *Jeevha* [Tongue] - *Saam*[Coated]
- *Mutra* [Urine] - *Samyaka* [Clear]
- *Shabda* [Speech] - *Spashta*[Clear]
- *Sparsh* [Skin] - *Rukshatwak*
- *Druka* [Eyes] - *Prakruta* [no pallor no icterus]
- *Akrut i*[posture] - *Heena* [Thin]

2.3. Systemic Examination

- Respiratory system- On auscultation, normal bronchovascular sounds heard and no abnormality detected.
- Cardiovascular system- S1 S2 heard and no abnormality detected.
- Central Nervous System- Higher mental function found to be normal.
- Diagnosis- Based on patients history, assessment of clinical feature and physical examination the final diagnosis made was *Amlapitta* with special reference to GERD.

2.4. Medical management

Palliative treatment - As the disease is of *Pitta* origin, all measures are under taken to pacify *Pitta*. Weight reduction, stopping cigarette smoking, Meals should be of small volume. Alcohol, fatty food and caffeine should be avoided. No snacks to be taken after evening meal to prevent nocturnal regurgitation. Heavy stooping or bending at the waist should be avoided especially after meals. Head in the bed should be elevated by 15 cm.

2.5. Ayurveda Treatment for Amlapitta⁴

According to *Acharya Charak Chikitsa* of all disease can be divided in 3 part

- *Nidanparivarjan*
- *Samshodhana*
- *Shamana*.

2.5.1. Nidana Parivarjana

The therapy of *Nidana Parivarjana* aims at avoiding the causes of disease. It is recommended as the primary treatment for many diseases. *Nidana Parivarjana* helps stop the progression of a disease and avoids relapse. Withdrawal of the aetiological factors of the disease is called *Nidana Parivarjana* as the first line of treatment of all the diseases. In *Amlapitta* excessive *Nidana Sevana* leads to *Mandagni* and *Pitta Vriddhi*. So *Nidan* of *Amlapitta* should be removed in its first treatment.

Ruksha Annapana (consuming dry foods), *Langhana* (fasting) and *Vatika Annapana* (consuming a diet that aggravates *Vata* in the body) are some of the causes that should be avoided in case of acidity. Faulty dietary habits, excessive sexual indulgence, excess mental and physical work, consuming alcoholic beverages and consuming excessive amounts of rice and beans are some of the *Nidanas* (causes) of *Amlapitta*. *Adhyasana* (eating too soon after a meal) should also be avoided to prevent Acidity.

2.5.2. Shodhana

Ayurveda uses the following shodhana therapies for acidity treatment. *Samshoshana karma* eliminates the vitiated *Doshas* from their root cause and thus cures the disease entirely so that there is least probability of recurrence of disease. *Acharya Kashyap* has mentioned *Amlapitta* is developed from *Amashaya* (stomach) and *kapha* and *Pitta Dosh* are having *Ashrayas*. *Vamana* and *Virechana karma* as the best treatment for *Amlapitta*, for an example as if we cut down the root of any tree, the stem of the tree dies automatically.

2.5.3. Shamana

The following *Shamana* therapies are used for the treatment of acidity

Langhana

Langhana therapy brings lightness in the body as it creates a balance between the *Doshas* and *Dhatus*. *Langhana* is mentioned as the first line of treatment for diseases originating in the stomach and caused by vitiation of the *Rasa Dhatu*. *Nirahara* (abstaining from food) and *Phalahara* (consuming only fruits) are two types of fasting methods practiced in *Langhana* therapy. *Langhana* therapy provides relief from *Chhardi*, *Atisara* (diarrhoea) and *Arochaka* (indigestion); therefore, it is beneficial in treating acidity. It improves the digestive fire and provides nourishment to the body. *Langhana* also reduces constipation and is beneficial in treating skin and urinary disorders, stiffness in the thighs, and abscess.

2.6. Oral Medications

- *Avipattikar Churna* – 1tsp. *Pragbhakta*
- *Laghusutshekhara Rasa*- 2 tab. *Adhakta* and *Adhobhakta*
- *Prawala Panchamrut Rasa*- 2 tab. *Adhakta* and *Adhobhakta*
- *Patoladi Kadha*- 4 tsp. *Pragbhakta* with water.
- *Ushirasava*- 4 tsp. *Pragbhakta* with water.

2.6.1. *Pravala Panchamrita Rasa*¹⁰

The formulation of *Pravala Panchamrita Rasa* consists of five ingredients including *Pravala Bhasma*, *Mauktik Bhasma* (calcined preparation of pearl), *Shauktik Bhasma* (calcined preparation of pearl shell), *Shankha Bhasma* (calcined preparation of conch) and *Kapardika Bhasma*. It is indicated for acidity, ascites and pain caused due to *Pitta*.

2.6.2. *Laghusutashekhara Rasa*¹¹

Sutashekhara Rasa has an antacid and anticholinergic effect in the body and is commonly used for the treatment of acidity in Ayurveda. It primarily acts on *Pitta Dosha* and provides relief from many symptoms including abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, epigastric tenderness, heartburn, fevers, headaches and breathing troubles.

2.6.3. *Avipattikar Churna*¹²

Avipattikar Churna is an Ayurvedic formulation including *Musta* (nutgrass), *Vidanga* (false black pepper), *Ela*, *Lavanga* (clove), *Trikatu* (a combination of the three acrids – *Pippali*, *Shunthi*, and *Maricha*) and other ingredients. It is mainly indicated for acidity treatment in Ayurveda.

3. Dietary and lifestyle changes for acidity patient as per ayurveda

3.1. Do's¹⁹

- Consume foods like barley, *Patola*, green gram, *Amalaki*, bitter gourd, green veggies, *Kapittha* (wood apple), wheat, pomegranate, honey, cane root, meat broth, cold water, banana, raw sugar and white gourd melon.
- Drink cold water.
- Perform therapeutic purgation, therapeutic enema, and therapeutic emesis under the guidance of an Ayurvedic physician.
- Follow a healthy routine including a balanced diet and timely meals.
- Perform *Yogasanas*.

3.2. Don'ts²⁰

- Don't eat chickpea flour, rice, brinjals, black gram, potato, spicy and salty food, ast food, sour vinegar and rock salt.
- Do not drink coffee, alcohol or tea.
- Do not sleep during the day.
- Do not suppress natural urges like urinating or bowel movement.
- Do not eat incompatible food combinations.
- Do not eat sesame seeds, *Kulattha* (horsegram), black beans, wine, goat's milk, curd, and oily foods.

4. Discussion

Amlapitta is a *Pitta* dominant disease in association with *Kapha* and *Vata Dosha*. Excess formation of vitiated *Pitta* is the main pathological mechanism behind manifestation of this disease. The *Pitta* gets vitiated due to improper dietary and lifestyle habits. The drugs that have *Tikta-Madhura Rasa* (bitter-sweet taste), *Madhura Vipaka* (post digestive effect in sweet taste), *SheetaVirya* (cooling energy of substance), *Laghu* (light), *Ruksha Guna* (dry) and pacifies to *Pitta-Kapha* properties are beneficial in the management of *Amlapitta*. Numerous herbal and herbomineral formulations are mentioned in Ayurvedic classics for the management of *Amlapitta*.

The observation revealed that, this specific treatment which *Laghusutshekhara Rasa*, *Amalaki Churna*, *Pravala Panchamrut Rasa*, *Avipattikar Churna* is significant relief in the management of symptoms *Amlapitta* and no adverse effect of medicine. This Ayurvedic combination treatment proved an effective alternative treatment in the management of *Amlapitta*. *Amlapitta* is a psychosomatic disorder, where psychological factors play an equally important factor along with the dietary indiscretion. Principle of *Ashta Ahar Vidhi Visheshayatana* and *Dashvidh AharVidhi Vidhan* mentioned in *Charak Samhita* are most important aspect for preventive and curative aspect of health. They are to be examined before food intake and are to be followed during food intake. The *Samprapti* of *Amlapitta*, the normal function of *Amla Rasa* are basically attributed to *Pitta Dosa*. *AmlaRas* and *AmlaVipaka* plays important role in the pathogenesis of *Amlapitta*. *Dosha*, *Dushya*, *Strotas*, *Adhithan*, *Agni*, *Ama* are basic component of any disease process and also *Amlapitta*.

UrdhvaGatiAmlapitta symptoms related to *AnnavahaSrotodushti* and *AdhoGati* symptoms of *Amlapitta* is related with *Purishvaha Srotodushti*. Due to the incidence and importance of *Amlapitta*, Acharya may have given detailed explanation of *Amlapitta* and its way of approach in management.

5. Conclusion

As we can see now a days people are very busy in their life so they have to take instants, oily and fermented food and do not live a healthy life so they have to suffer hyperacidity. In this way through *Ayurveda* we can manage effectively *Amlapitta* with follow *Dincharya* and *Rutucharya* rules and some *Shodhan Shaman Chikista*.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare that there was no conflict of interest regarding the publication of manuscript.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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