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Review Article

A REVIEW ON CLINICAL EXAMINATION OF AGNIBALA (DIGESTIVE POWER)

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the science of life mainly deals with the preventive aspect of diseases along with curative aspect and this is the aim of *Ayurveda*. For that prevention purpose life style modification is very much essential now a day. Some factors are responsible for the formation of a disease among of them *Agni* is one of the most important factor. *Agni* plays an important role to sustain the life process. All the diseases are caused due to impaired function of *Agni*. According to modern science, Gastric juice and enzymes functioning at gastro intestinal level, all are responsible for digestion, absorption and metabolism. Altered function of the enzymes secreted from gastro intestinal tract is responsible for production of gastro intestinal diseases. Function of *Agni* is likely to be compared with gastric juice and different enzymes at gastro intestinal level. In the present era, the diseases related to *Annavaha srota* and *Purishvaha srota* (Gastro intestinal system) are commonly found in clinical practice. In the pathogenesis of disease, *Dosha*, *Dusya*, *Srota*, *Agni* and *Ama* (Prime causative factors of diseases) are required to be analyzed for fruitful treatment. In present study center of attention has given on clinically evaluation of *Agnibala* (Digestive power) based on Ancient classical theory.

KEY WORD: *Agnibala*, Clinical evaluation, Preventive, Healthy life.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the science of life. It is used in both preventive and curative aspects. We know that "Prevention is better than cure". So for prevention purpose life style modification is very much essential now a day. Some factors are responsible for the formation of a disease among of them *Agni* is one of the important factors. If we care about this then we may carry healthy life. *Agni* is the factor if it is in normal state then every function of body will occurs naturally like-*Ayu*, *Varna*, *Bala*, *Swastha*, *Utsaha* etc^[1]. When derangement of *Agni* occurs then produced diseases. Now in the present era, the diseases related to *Annavaha srota* and *Purishvaha srota* are commonly found in clinical practice.

Agnibala term is formed by two wards *Agni* and *Bala*. It indicates the ability of digestion, metabolism and absorption. In *Ayurveda* about

13 types of *Agni* has described among them *Jatharagni* is the main *Agni*^[2]. Here specifically *Agnibala* indicates to the power of *Jatharagni*. *Agnibala pariksha* is essential in every individual prior to examine the diseases. It is necessary to examine the existence of a possible co relation among *Agnibala* as understood from *Jaranshakti* (digestive capacity). *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned that *Agni* is examine by *Jaranshakti*^[3]. Again it is described that the quantity of food to be taken again depends upon the power of digestion including metabolism and absorption that means depends on *Agnibala*. In this context Chakrapani clearly mentioned that *Agnibala* is depends on some factors like-*Ritu*, *Vayah* eg- *Agnibala* is maximum in *Hemanta ritu* and *Youvan kala* and minimum in *Varsha* and *Vardhakya*. On the basis of this *Aharamatra* is

depended on *Agnibala*^[4]. *Agnibala* examination is not only concerned with the determination of the functional state of *Agni* but also its capacity to metabolize the digested food and produced energy.

METHODS

Methods of *Agnibala pariksha* mentioned in our classical text^[5]. It can be done by

1. *Jaran Shakti*- i.e., *Jeerna ahara lakshana*
2. *Mala pariksha*.

1. *Jaran Shakti*: It indicates the proper *Ahara paka* (digestion). In context to *Jaran shakti* capacity for food can be examined from two angles like the power of ingestion as well as the power of proper utilization of it. Digestion or metabolism depends on *Agnibala*. Digestion of food when taken in large quantity is indicative of ones capacity for ingestion (Chakrapani 8/120). Our great *Acharya* has described about *jeerna ahara lakshana*^[6-8]

A. *Udgara suddhi*- Normal eructation (physical).

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|------------------------|---|
| <i>Utshaha</i> | - Cheerfulness (mental) |
| <i>Vega Utsarga</i> | - Passing motion without force (physical) |
| <i>Yathachitosarga</i> | - Passing motion depending upon the nature of the diet (physical) |
| <i>Laghuta</i> | - Lightness of the body (physical) |
| <i>Kshuda</i> | - Desire for food (physical) |
| <i>Pipasa</i> | - Sensation of thirst (Mental) |

B. *Kamkhya* - Desire for food (Mental).

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|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>Vuvukshya</i> | - Hunger (physical). |
| <i>Vaisadya</i> | - A sense of cleanliness (mental) |
| <i>Laghuta</i> | - Lightness of the body (physical) |
| <i>Sthirata</i> | - Sturdiness (physical) |
| <i>Sukham</i> | - Pleasure (mental). |
| <i>Svasthavrittianuvritti</i> | - Continuity of health (physical) |

C. *Kshuda*- Desire for food (physical).

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Vega</i> | - Proper urges (Physical). |
| <i>Mukshya</i> | - Aptitude for work (physical). |
| <i>Laghuta</i> | - Lightness of the body (physical). |

2. *Mala in relation to Agnibala*^[9]: An important criteria of normal digestion is as related to the nature of fecal matter or mala voided by an individual. The nature of fecal matter even under normal conditions depends to a large extent

upon the nature of the diet consumed (*Vijoyrakshita*). During the examination 3 days under observation, no active treatment and *Satma* (Proper) diet should be administered. Following parameter should be observed:

A. Time, number and quantity of motions: For normal individual frequency of void stools twice a day. For *Paittik prakriti* person frequency of passing stool to be several in no. (Ca.Vi 8/97). In case of *Vata prakriti* to be less. Quantity and no. of motions increased in *Atisara* and *Pravahika*-indicating impairment of *Agni*.

B. *Akriti* or appearance of stool: Normally ripe banana fruit or cylindrical in shape. The appearance of stool is indicative of the condition of *Jatharagni* (Digestive fuel).

C. *Samhatatva* or consistency: The consistency of normal stool resembles that butter in summer time i.e. semi liquid. It should be variable according to person on the basis of food and consume. In *Vata dusthi* consistency of stool has been described as *Suska*, *Tanu*, *Vijjala*. In *Pitta Dusthi* it becomes *Drava* and in *Kapha dusthi* it becomes *Tantummat* (thread like). Thus from the consistency of the stool the functional states of *Jatharagni* as well as *Dhatwagni* can be studied and described.

D. Colour of *Purisha* (stool): Colour of normal stool varies from light to dark brown. In *Vata* vitiates stool to produced *Krishna*, *Syava*, *Aruna* colours, *Pitta* produces *Neela*, *Pita*, *Rakta*, *Krishna* and *Kapha* produces *Sweta varna* (Whitish colour). Thus the colour of the stool is the is the index of local as well as general condition of body.

E. *Gandha* or smell: Smell furnishes information relating the function of *Pakwasaya*. *Gandha* of *Purisha* may vary according to diet taken. When there is more indigestive parts then correlated to *Jatharagni mandya*. Thus the smell of *Purisha* (Stool) has reference to some of the function of *Jatharagni*.

F. *Jala pariksha*^[10]: It is mentioned in *Samhita granthas* by giving of small quantity of the specimen to a cup of clean tap water and following points are noted.

Whether it floats or sinks: If floats it is to be inferred that *Ahara pachana* (food Digestion) and *Drava Soshana* (water absorption) have satisfactorily taken place in the *Adho amashaya* (lower part of stomach) and *Pakwashaya* (intestine) respectively. Functional state of these two parts also inferred by this examination. An exception to this rule is whether the motion is watery or seyalous, very cold or mixed with

mucus, then it related to *Ama dosha*, that will be obvious even without *Agnibala pariksha*.

Whether it is *Avasadi* (ca.ci 19:5) sinks or dissolves, *Vipluta* (floats and spread) interpretation in this two are for *Vatatisara*.

Other factors: *Ama*, *Krimis*, undigested food particles are also to be noted, they furnish information as regards the functional states of *Agni*.

DISCUSSION

Agni is seated at the sight of *Grahani* which is located above the umbilical region and the organ restrain the down ward movement of the undigested food till it is fully digested^[11]. If *Agnibala* is maximum then this process occurs continuously. According to modern science, it is also seen that digested system is composed of the gastrointestinal tract, three pairs of salivary glands, the liver and pancreas. The digestive system receives the food composed of protein, lipids, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals and water of them the proteins, lipids, and carbohydrates require digestion but all need to be absorbed from the gut. The food we take is placed first in the mouth and then chewed to make it suitable for swallowing by mixing with saliva, the secretion of salivary glands, the food is then formed into bolus which is swallowed with the help of tongue, pharynx, palate etc and is passed through the esophagus to the stomach. In stomach the bolus is mixed with the gastric juice and is pulverized by the movements of stomach. The food is converted into chime, a semi fluid substance and then sent into the duodenum. In the small intestine the chime mixes with the secretion from liver and pancreas. Along with these two there is also the secretion from the small intestine which also mixes with the chime by the agitation produced by the movements of the small intestine and the process of digestion continuous. After digestion, extensive absorption occurs in the small intestine and whatever remains at the end is delivered to large intestine. In colon there is absorption of water and electrolytes along with other materials and the chime is converted into a semisolid mass. This is stored in pelvic colon. During defecation this semisolid material is passed out as stool through rectum and anal canal^[12]. The function of *Agni* can be compared with the gastric juice, different enzymes, hormones at G.I level^[13]. Altered function of the enzymes secreted from G.I tract is responsible for production of gastro intestinal diseases. The digestion, absorption, metabolism all are depends on the different secretion,

enzymes, or hormones of G.I system as well as on *Agni*.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, from the above discussion we can say that *Agnibala* is very much essential for proper digestion metabolism and for absorption. Capacity to intake of food is depend on the proper digestion. Proper digestion can be seen by the proper stool formation. In this path way all the responsible factors if works properly then it reaches to the ultimate goal.

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