



CHIKITSA SUTRA AND MANAGEMENT OF DISEASES OF ANNAVAH SROTAS

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ABSTRACT

The *Annavah Srotas* is very important in maintaining digestive physiology of body. Food is a primary source of energy that provides nutrients to all body parts and any imbalances in digestive system or *Srotas* associated with food may cause severe pathological manifestations. For the nourishment purpose food must undergo a transformation that enables the body to absorb and utilize *Ahara*. This transformation mainly occurs within the specific channels or system named *Annavah Srotas*, where *Ahara* is consumed into essential components and that after assimilated in body. Ayurveda *Acharya* recognizes role of the *Annavah Srotas* and disorders related to this channel. *Agnimandya*, *Atisar*, *Grahani*, *Arochak*, *Chhardi*, *Parinamshool* and *Amlapitta*, etc. are major ailments described for this system. Ayurveda science also suggested *Chikitsa* for addressing these conditions. In this regards *Hingvastak Churna*, *Triphala Churna*, *Kutajashtat Ghrita*, *Sunthyadi kvatha*, *Dhanyakadi kvatha*, *Panchamula Kashaya*, *Bilvadi Churna*, *Agnimukha Churna*, *Bhallatakadi kshara*, *Ashtapala ghrita*, *Phalatrikadi kwatha* and *Amalaki churna* play important role to treat diseases of *Annavah Srotas*.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda*, *Annavah Srotas*, *Chikitsa*, *Ahara*.

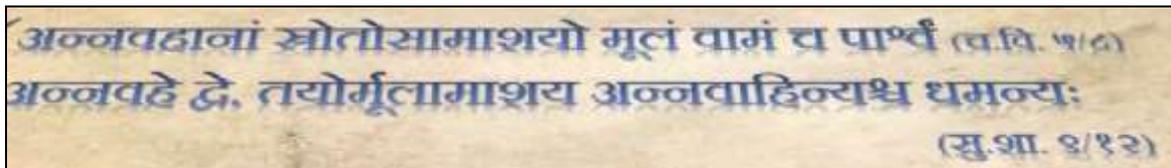
INTRODUCTION

The Ayurveda scholars enumerated various body channels as *Srotas* and *Annavah Srotas* is one such channel that holds a prime importance in different process of digestion. *Ahara* serves as the fundamental source for life, the proper digestion and assimilation of food provides nourishment to body that results complexion, longevity, energy and helps to govern various physiological activities of body. Food should undergo transformation process inside the body for

absorption and assimilation. This transformation occurs when food enters *Annavah Srotas*, here proper functioning of *Annavah Srotas* is prerequisite.^[1-3]

Moolasthan of Annavaaha Srotas

According to *Acharya Sushruta*, *Matrija Bhava* plays a role in the origin of the *Annavaha Srotas*. The subtle essence of *Rakta* and *Kapha* is influenced by *Pitta*, followed by the swift movement of *Vayu*, leading to the formation of *Antra*, *Guda* and *Basti*.



In this context, *Antra* represent the entire digestive system, shaped by the formation of hollow spaces due to *Vayu* from the mouth to the anus. *Dalhan* further explains that *Madhyam* refers to the region extending from the throat to the anus.

Annavah Srotas may suffer by some pathological conditions and this affects overall process of digestion

and assimilation. The disease of *Annavah Srotas* can be treated successfully with the help of different therapies as depicted in **Figure 1**.



Figure 1: Therapies that helps to treat disease of Annavaḥ Srotas.

Annavaḥ Srotas disease mainly involves deranged state of Agni that becomes cause of various diseases of digestive system. The digestive power of Jatharagni becomes sluggish, leading to improper digestion of food. The pathological events of diseases of Annavaḥ Srotas involve various aspects as mentioned below.^[3-5]

PATHOGENESIS

The causative factors lead to aggravation of Pitta and Vatadi Dosha, resulting in Mandagni, subsequently state of Vidagdha, turns into Shukta and manifested in the form of Amlapitta. Similarly incomplete digestion associated with Agnimandya affects Pitta Dosha which remains stagnant in the stomach. This vitiated Pitta Dosha along with disturbed Vata (resultant of etiological factors) leads symptoms of diseases of Annavaḥ Srotas which includes Atisar, Grahani, Arochak, Chhardi and Parinamshool, etc. The disturbance of Annavaḥ Srotas mainly affects quality of digestive juices (Ahara rasa) thus nourishment process also gets deteriorated.^[4-6]

Causes of Annavaḥ Srotas Dushti

अतिमात्रस्य च अकाले च अहितस्य च भोजनात्
अन्नवाहीनि दुष्यन्ति वैगुण्यात् पावकस्य च ॥१२॥

As mentioned in above quote the unwholesome diet, excessive consumption of food and consuming food at inappropriate time may become causes of Annavaḥ

Srotas Dushti. The major pathogenic factors and elements associated with these conditions are depicted in Table 1.

Table 1: Annavaḥ Srotas pathogenic factors and biological elements.

S. No.	Pathogenic Factors	
1	Dosha	Predominantly Pitta dosha
2	Dushya	Rasa
3	Srotas	Annavaḥ and Rasavaḥ
4	Sroto dushti	Sanga and Vimarga gamana
5	Udbhava sthana	Amashayottha
6	Agni	Jatharagni and Dhatvagni
7	Adhithana	Amashaya
8	Svabhava	Ashukari and Chirakari

Possible way of Sroto dushti

- ❖ **Atipravrutti:** This indicates an excessive flow or production within the channel. It's like when a river overflows its banks, leading to issues downstream.
- ❖ **Sanga:** This is when there's an obstruction or blockage in the channel, disrupting the normal flow of its contents. Imagine a blocked pipe causing water to back up.
- ❖ **Siragranthi:** This refers to the formation of nodules or lumps within the channel, which can further impede the flow and cause localized disturbances.
- ❖ **Vimargagamana:** Here, the flow of contents gets diverted to the wrong channel or pathway, leading to problems as substances end up where they shouldn't be.

CHIKITSA

- Vamana followed by Mridu virechana is recommended for eliminating accumulated Mala.
- Anuvasana basti and Asthapana basti should be administered.
- Vamana and Virechana advise for Urdhvagata and Adhagata Dosha elimination respectively.
- Shaman therapy involving drugs and diet should be used after detoxification measure. Shamana Chikitsa and lifestyle modifications recommended to disrupting the disease progression which includes uses of natural medications.^[5-7]

Following drugs can be used for restricting pathogenesis of *Annavah Srotas Dushti*.

Ayurvedic Drug	Properties	Uses
<i>Triphala</i>	Amla, Haritaki, Bibhitaki	Digestive tonic, constipation relief, detoxification
<i>Hingvashtaka Churna</i>	Asafoetida, ginger, etc.	Indigestion, flatulence, bloating
<i>Aloe Vera</i>	Cooling, digestive	Gastric ulcers, constipation, inflammatory bowel disease
<i>Kutajarishtha</i>	Kutaja bark extract	Diarrhea, dysentery, irritable bowel syndrome
<i>Dhanyakadi</i>	Coriander, cumin, etc.	Indigestion, bloating, abdominal pain
<i>Avipattikar Churna</i>	Amla, bibhitaki, etc.	Hyperacidity, acid reflux, gastritis
<i>Guduchi (Tinospora)</i>	Immunomodulatory, cooling	Digestive disorders, liver protection
<i>Pippali</i>	Digestive, carminative	Digestive aid, improves appetite
<i>Shankha Bhasma</i>	Conch shell ash	Hyperacidity, peptic ulcers, gastritis
<i>Trikatu Churna</i>	Ginger, long pepper, black pepper	Digestive stimulant, improves metabolism

Commonly used formulations for *Annavah Srotas diseases*

- ✦ *Hingvastak Churna* comprises *Hing* and *Ajwain*; it aids digestion, relieves abdominal discomfort and reduces gas, etc.
- ✦ *Triphala Churna* facilitates gentle detoxification and supports digestion process.
- ✦ *Kutajashtat Ghrita* is beneficial for treating diarrhea and dysentery, etc.
- ✦ *Sunthyadi kvatha* comprises of *Sunthi*, *Maricha* and *Pippali*, it support digestion, improves appetite and reduces bloating, etc.
- ✦ *Dhanyakadi kvatha* containing *Dhanya* and *Jeeraka* along with other herbs, it helps in managing bloating, abdominal discomfort and indigestion, etc.
- ✦ *Panchamula Kashaya* is beneficial for balancing *Vata* and promoting digestion.
- ✦ *Bilvadi Churna* is effective in managing diarrhea and dysentery, etc.
- ✦ *Agnimukha Churna* containing *Shunthi*, *Maricha* and *Pippali*, it improves digestive fire.
- ✦ *Bhallatakadi kshara* contains *Bhallataka* and used to manage diarrhea, hyperacidity and indigestion, etc.
- ✦ *Phalatrikadi kwatha* comprises *Triphala*, *Patola* and *Katuki*, it is considered beneficial for vomiting and hyperacidity. It pacifies *Kapha* and *Pitta*, thus regulates bowel movements.
- ✦ *Amalaki churna* imparts *Tridosahara* and *Pittashamaka* properties, alleviates burning sensations, improve appetite, cures constipation and hyperacidity.
- ✦ *Yashtimadhu churna* helps in pacifying *Vata* and *Pitta doshas*; it reduces inflammation, relieves peptic ulcers and hyperacidity.^[6-8]

Specific Diseases of *Annavah Srotas* and their Treatment.^[8-12]

✓ *Atisar*

➤ *Nirukti*

According to *Acharya Charak* अति + सृ+णिच्+ अच् = अतिशयेनसास्यति (रेचयति) मरुम्, इति = अतिसारः | (व० च० 19/1-2).

Atisar refers to the excessive flow of watery stool through the anus, characterized by continuous discharge

of watery fecal matter, including different types of diarrheas and dysenteries, etc.

➤ *Chikitsa sutra* and treatment.

Treatment of two types; *Shaman chikitsa* which include *Nidana parivarjana* as basic line of treatment and uses of drugs according to *Dosha* predominance. *Shodhan chikitsa* involves *Vaman*, *Virechan*, *Basti*, *Niruh Basti* and *Anuvasana basti*. The primary cause of *Atisar* is *Mandagni*. Treatment for *Atisar* involves uses of medications with *Deepan*, *Pachan* and *Grahi* properties. Following drugs can be suggested for *Atisar*.

- ❖ *Gudabilva*
- ❖ *Bilvadikshir*
- ❖ *Kutajashtat Ghrita*
- ❖ *Shadanga Ghrita*

✓ *Grahani*

It is defined as an organ that receives and digests food, it positioned between the *Amashaya* and *Pakvashaya*.

➤ *Nirukti*

Graha: This part of the word can be associated with the verb "*Graha*," which means "to seize" or "to hold." In the context of *Grahani*, it can imply the function of the small intestine in holding and processing food. "Ni" prefix often denotes inwardness or within. In the context of *Grahani*, it suggests the internal aspect of digestion and nutrient absorption happening within the small intestine. Therefore, "*Grahani*" can be interpreted as the organ (small intestine) responsible for holding and inwardly processing food, emphasizing its crucial role in digestion and nutrient assimilation.

➤ *Chikitsa sutra* and treatment

The improper functioning of this can leads to *Grahani Dosha*. *Grahani Rog Chikitsa* includes various therapies such as *Pachana*, *Deepana* and specific herbal formulations like *Grahani Kapat Ras*. Ayurvedic texts often mention specific diets for different *Grahani* disorders. For example, in *Ama Grahani* a light diet with digestive spices is recommended, while in *Vishama Grahani*, a regular and balanced diet is advised.

Following formulations can be used for treating *Grahani Dosha*.

- ❖ *Sunthyadi kvatha*
- ❖ *Dhanyakadi kvatha*

- ❖ *Sriphala Salatu kalka*
- ❖ *Marichadi Churna*
- ❖ *Ashtapala ghrita*
- ❖ *Kapitthashtaka Churna*
- ❖ *Dadimashtaka Churna*

✓ **Arochak**

It refers to a condition associated with loss of taste and appetite.

➤ *Nirukti*

The term "*Arochaka*" is derived from the Sanskrit root "*Ruchi*," which means taste or flavor. The prefix "A-" in Sanskrit often denotes negation or absence. So, "*Arochaka*" signifies the absence or loss of taste.

➤ *Chikitsa sutra* and treatment

This condition arises due to disorders affecting *Annavah Srotas*. Enhancing the digestive fire (*Agni*) is crucial in Ayurvedic treatment for *Arochaka*. Digestive herbs, spices, and formulations that stimulate *Agni* and improve digestion may be recommended. Following formulations can be used for treating *Arochak*.

- ❖ *Hingvastak Churna*
- ❖ *Triphala Churna*
- ❖ *Agnimukha Churna*
- ❖ *Bhallatakadi kshara*
- ❖ *Amalaki churna*

✓ **Chhardi**

The expulsion of aggravated *Doshas* is facilitated by the functions of *Udana* and *Vyanavata*, ultimately resulting in *Chhardi* (vomiting).

➤ *Nirukti*

The term "*Chhardi*" is derived from the Sanskrit root "*Chhid*," which means to eject or expel forcefully. In the context of Ayurveda, "*Chhardi*" specifically refers to the act of vomiting or throwing up contents from the stomach.

➤ *Chikitsa sutra* and treatment

Ayurveda views vomiting as a manifestation of an imbalance in the *Doshas*, particularly aggravated *Pitta dosha*. However, vomiting can also occur due to *Vata* or *Kapha* imbalances, depending on the specific underlying cause specific drugs are suggested. The causative factors induce imbalances in *Kapha* and *Pitta doshas*, subsequently affecting *Vata dosha*, leading to an upward movement of the *Doshas* resulting in *Chhardi*. Formulations for treating *Chhardi* may include.

- ❖ *Chandanadi Kalk*
- ❖ *Haritaki Churna*
- ❖ *Parpata kvatha*
- ❖ *Jambvadi kvatha*
- ❖ *Dhatriphaladi Panaka*
- ❖ *Ashvattha ksharajala*
- ❖ *Jambvadi Yogatrayam*

✓ **Parinamshool**

Parinamshool is refers to a type of abdominal pain, indicating *Shool* or colic pain arises during the digestive transformation.

➤ *Nirukti*

"*Parinamshool*" is a Hindi word that can be broken down as "*Parinam*", meaning "result" or "outcome," and "*Shool*" meaning "pain" or "trouble." When combined, "*Parinamshool*" signifies the pain or trouble caused by the results or outcomes of certain actions or situations.

➤ *Chikitsa sutra* and treatment

The pain associated with gastric mucosa irritation by acids can manifest in various ways like burning, gnawing, discomfort, dull ache, or gas. This pain is often attributed to aggravation or obstruction in channels related to *Vata* in Ayurveda. *Anulomana* of *Vata*, which essentially means promoting the normal downward movement of *Vata*, can help reduce this pain. Certain herbs and formulations like *Hingu*, *Datura*, *Bhanga*, *Katuki*, *Ahipena*, *Haritaki*, *Lavan Bhaskar Churna* and *Avipattikara churna*, etc. are known to relieve pain by facilitating the discharge of flatus and promoting laxation. These ingredients likely play a role in alleviating symptoms associated with gastric irritation and ulcers. The formulations for treating *Parinamshool* are as follows.

- ❖ *Triphala Lauha*
- ❖ *Krishnadi Lauha*
- ❖ *Sambhuka Bhasma Tiladi Gudika*
- ❖ *Triphaladi Churna Dvaya*

Probable Mode of Action of Ayurveda Drugs in *Annavaha Srotas Dushti*.

Ayurvedic drugs act on the *Annavaha srotas dushti* through several mechanisms as mentioned below.

1. **Digestive Fire Regulation:** Ayurvedic herbs and formulations often aim to regulate the "*Agni*" or digestive fire. Herbs like ginger, pepper, and long pepper (*Pippali*) are known for their ability to kindle *Agni*, aiding in better digestion and metabolism.
2. **Detoxification:** To address *Srotas dushti*, detoxification therapies are used in Ayurveda. These therapies help in removing accumulated toxins (*Ama*) from the body, which can obstruct the proper functioning of the *Annavaha srotas*.
3. **Balancing *Doshas*:** According to Ayurveda, digestive disturbances can arise from imbalances in *Pitta Dosha* and Ayurveda drugs aim to balance these *Doshas*.
4. **Enhancing Digestive Juices:** Certain herbs and formulations in Ayurveda are known to stimulate the production of digestive juices such as stomach acid, bile, and enzymes. This helps in better breakdown and absorption of nutrients from food.
5. **Anti-inflammatory and Soothing Effects:** In cases where inflammation is contributing to the *Srotas dushti*, Ayurvedic herbs with anti-inflammatory

properties like turmeric, licorice, and aloe vera may be used to calm and heal the digestive tract.

6. **Improving Gut Motility:** Ayurvedic formulations often include herbs that support healthy gut motility, preventing issues like constipation or diarrhea that can stem from *Srotas dushii*.
7. **Nourishing and Rejuvenating Effects:** Some Ayurvedic medicines focus on nourishing and rejuvenating the tissues of the digestive system, promoting healing and restoring normal function to the *Annavaha srotas*.

CONCLUSION

The *Annavah Srotas* helps in digesting of food and support process of nourishment. Any disruptions within the *Annavah Srotas* can lead to severe health issues including *Atisar*, *Grahani*, *Arochak*, *Chhardi*, *Parinamshool* and *Amlapitta*, etc. To address these conditions, Ayurveda offers specific treatments which includes uses of formulations such as; *Patoladi kvatha*, *Yavadi kvatha*, *Vasa Guggulu*, *Chhinnadi kvatha*, *Haritaki Churna*, *Hingvadi Putapaka* and *Shatavari ghruta*, etc. These drugs come under the heading of *Shamana Chikitsa* and this pacifying therapy combined with lifestyle modifications helps effectively in managing diseases of *Annavah Srotas*.

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