



PATHOGENESIS OF THYROID DISORDERS (HYPER AND HYPOTHYROIDISM) WITH RESPECT TO OJA (KSHAYA AND VRIDHI) IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Thyroid gland disorders are growing worldwide health issue. Thyroid hormone regulates metabolic rate of the body. Failure of thyroid hormone to maintain metabolic rate mainly produces hyperthyroidism or hypothyroidism. Thyroid disorders are characterized by physical and mental abnormality. There is no exact correlation of thyroid gland in Ayurveda. But the *Ayurvedic* system of medicine is very futuristic and it doesn't emphasize on naming the disease. It rather insists on understanding the constitutional status of a disease and adopting an appropriate treatment principle. The main action of thyroid hormone is to act as a spark to start-up body metabolism at cellular level. In Ayurveda, it can be correlated with the actions of *agni*. The *agni* located in the *jathara* (digestive fire) is responsible for digestion and absorption of the food. The *bhutagni* is responsible for transformation of heterogeneous substance to homogenous substances. The *dhatwagni* (the *agni* located in the body tissues) along with *bhutagni* are responsible for the metabolism.

KEYWORDS: Jathara- stomach. Agni-the digestive fire.

INTRODUCTION

Disease of the thyroid include: functional disorders (hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism), thyroiditis, Grave's disease, Goitre and tumours. The relative frequency of some of these diseases varies in different geographic regions according to the iodine content of the diet consumed. Although Ayurveda recognises genetic/hereditary factors plays an important role in the development of these diseases, it also describes a very clear disease process and an in-depth understanding of what actually causes the immune dysfunction. The thyroid is an important part of the human endocrine system, which are responsible for regulation of oxygen use, basal metabolic rate, cellular metabolism and growth and development. From the *Ayurvedic* view the initial causes are diet and lifestyle factors that imbalance the digestive fire and metabolism and disrupt the balance of the *doshas* (*Vata/Pitta/Kapha*). Stress and overwork also play an enormous part as this causes imbalanced *Agni*, vitiation of the *doshas* and the direct depletion of *Ojas* (which is considered the final essence of tissue metabolism and the primary support for our immune system).

Pathogenesis of The Thyroid Disease

As is always the case from an *Ayurvedic* perspective, the disease process begins in the gut with imbalanced

digestive fire (*Agni*) and the production of undigested food waste (*Ama*). This *Ama* then moves from the gut into circulation along with imbalanced *doshas* (*Vata, Pitta* or *Kapha*) and begins to compromise the function of the metabolic *agnis* that are necessary for the healthy tissue formation. This progresses from the level of plasma (*rasa*) and continues up the chain, inhibiting the formation of strong and healthy tissues until *Ojas* is affected. Once the quality of *Ojas* is disturbed (in this case it is often caused by the presence of *Pitta* dosha in the form of heat) then the immune system begins to act improperly, attacking the thyroid gland and the full blown autoimmune condition develops. Whether the autoimmune condition manifests as Grave's or Hashimoto's depends upon the specific *doshic* imbalance involved. When this chain of metabolic dysfunction goes on unchecked, *Ojas* gradually becomes more depleted and conditions such as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, fibromyalgia, osteoporosis and heart problems can also develop. *Ojas* is also depleted by: fear, anxiety, anger, grief and trauma, excessive alcohol consumption, eating too much dry and cold food (including processed food or too much raw food), lack of restful sleep, excessive talking and sensory stimulation, too much mass media, overly strenuous exercise, overwork, travel, excessive fasting or sudden weight loss.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To study the concept of thyroid disease(hyperthyroidism, hypothyroidism).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The classical *ayurvedic* text *charaksamhita* along with its commentary is referred as a supportive one for the causes and signs and symptoms and pathogenesis of the thyroid disease.

DISCUSSION

In both these scenarios, the immune system begins to attack the cells of the thyroid gland, which then become inflamed and either produce less thyroid hormone or more (depending on the condition). This then causes various metabolic changes as the thyroid hormones are responsible for regulating and coordinating many of the body's activities.

In the case of **hypothyroidism** symptoms may include:

- Fatigue and sluggishness
- Increased sensitivity to cold
- Constipation
- Pale, dry skin, puffy face
- Hoarse voice
- Elevated blood cholesterol
- Unexplained weight gain, mostly in the form of fluid
- Muscle aches, tenderness and stiffness, especially the shoulders and hips
- Pain and stiffness in the joints and swelling in the knees or in small joints.
- Muscle weakness, especially in the lower extremities
- Excessive or prolonged menstrual bleeding (menorrhagia)
- Depression.

In the case of **hyperthyroidism** symptoms may include:

- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Difficulty sleeping
- Fatigue
- Rapid or irregular heartbeat
- Fine tremor of the hands or fingers
- Increased perspiration or warm, moist skin
- Sensitivity to heat
- Weight loss, despite normal eating habits
- Enlargement of the thyroid gland (goiter)
- Change in menstrual cycles
- Erectile dysfunction or reduced libido
- Frequent bowel movements or diarrhea
- Bulging eyes (Gravesophthalmopathy)
- Thick, red skin usually on the shins or tops of feet (Gravesdermopathy)

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