



**A REVIEW ON AJEERNA (INDIGESTION) AND IT'S MANAGEMENT- A RISING
CAUSE OF DISEASES**

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ABSTRACT

Our health depends on having a balanced diet at regular times along with good vihara which leads to maintaining good digestion. Indigestion is defined as an anomaly in food digestion or a lack of adequate digestion (dyspepsia). Numerous digestive problems, such as gas (belching or flatulence) and an upset stomach, are referred to as indigestion. The most frequent concern is digestive irregularities, which can cause major health problems and even prove fatal if not treated appropriately. Ajeerna has been covered in great depth in almost all of the key Ayurvedic literature. The care of Ajeerna should include changes to lifestyle, a healthy diet, and drug use. The article throws light on etiopathogenesis of Ajeerna, its types, symptomatology, complications and principles of management.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Ajeerna, Indigestion, Agni, Aparipakvata, Ama.

INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of food is to provide the body with nourishment and energy. This is achieved when the right kind and right amount of food is ingested at the right time. Similarly, drinking water and other fluids judiciously (considering the above factors as that for food) maintains fluid-electrolyte balance in the body. It also helps in maintaining adequate hydration which is necessary for smooth functioning of the body. Excess of any of the aharas and viharas will lead to disturbed agni which will further cause digestive irregularities. The gastro-intestinal system undergoes a number of changes with age, and older persons frequently experience digestive issues. In accordance with Ayurveda, persons who do not adhere to dietary recommendations and overindulge in food become victims of Ajeerna. Several aspects starting from intake of food and its digestion, assimilation and excretion when disturbances in this normal process may lead to Ajeerna. After explaining Agni and the normal digestion process, Ajeerna is explained in Charak Samhita under the Grahani Dosha Chikitsa Adhyaya. The term Grahani Dosha, rather than Grahani Roga, is used here because Dosha has the ability to cause an infinite number of diseases, and explaining Ajeerna in this context is critical because it serves as the foundation for many health issues. The word Ghor is used to describe Ajeerna in Charak Samhita and Ashtanga Hridaya. This indicates the seriousness of the disease, the difficulties in managing it, and the possibility of further damage.

AIM AND OBJECTIVE

Aim: To review the ayurvedic aspect of Indigestion and It's management.

Objective: To understand the significance of indigestion (Ajeerna) as a rising cause of major diseases and the requirement of prompt treatment to curb it at it's earliest.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Aetiology or nidana

1. Aharaja

- **Vishamashana:** Overeating or binge eating; Undereating or excess fasting; Untimely food.
- **Unsuitable food habits**
 - Eating not in accordance with the seasons,
 - Excessively dry food (Ruksha),
 - Foods heavy for digestion (Guru),
 - Excess trans fats (Vishtambhi),
 - Exotic Fruits and Vegetables, raw sprouts and raw salads, using cruciferous veggies (Cauliflower, Broccoli, Cabbage, etc) (aam);
 - Acidic food: Alcohol, vinegar, sauces, ketchup;
 - Inflammatory foods: White flour (Maida), White sugar (Table sugar/refined sugar), White salt (table salt).
 - Nightshade fruits and vegetables: Potatoes, Tomatoes, Bell peppers, Brinjal, Blueberries; these contain a plant alkaloid, "SOLANINE" which causes gastric irritation.
 - Excess dairy products: Raaw milk, curds, paneer, and cheese;
 - Contaminated food and stale food (asuchi),

- Frozen foods (Hima).
- Wrong food combinations: Mixing sour fruits with milk, namkeen with dairy products, heating curds, mixing eggs or green leafy vegetables with milk, fish and milk, milkshakes, hot and cold combinations, etc.
- Drinking water in excess quantity (atya-ambupana)

2. Manasik

- Eating under the influence of intense emotions: Emotions like anger, fear, guilt, jealousy adversely affect the enteric system and thus cause indigestion.

3. Viharaj

- Frequent night outs (Swapna Viparyaya): Keeps your nerves at the edge and in a state of constant irritability. Hence, the food that is eaten is not digested properly.
- Suppression of urges (Sandharana): Forcefully controlling natural urges like hunger, thirst, burps, gas, urine, and stools also have a negative effect on the gut leading to indigestion.

Pathogenesis or samprapti

The term Ajeerna refers to improperly digested or undigested food. Pachaka Pitta, Samana Vayu, and Kledaka Kapha play the most important roles in normal digestion. Pitta functions such as Pakti (Digesting food and forming Saar and Kitta) and Ushma (Heat required for transformation and assimilation) are useful in digestion. When these factors are disrupted, it leads to improper digestion, which leads to Aparipakva (Undigested) food, as well as Saar and Kitta portions of ingested food.

There are mainly three types of indigestion, ama, vidhagda and vishtabdha due to vata pitta and kapha respectively. Some consider a fourth type called rasashesa that is due to delayed absorption. A fifth type is recognised by some as dinapaki indigestion that is due to a sluggish digestion and is not due to the involvement of any dosha. The sixth variety of indigestion is called prakruta, which is a natural and daily regimen.

In the ama type of indigestion there is a feeling of heaviness of the body, nausea and swelling in the cheeks and around the eyes. As the food is not digested, eructation's occur of the same nature as the material ingested. Ajeerna is caused by agnimandya. Agnimandya causes ama. Samana vata increases formation of ama. Mainly kapha dosha involving first stage of ajeerna occurs as amarjeerna.

Samana vayu is increased because of pre-existing ama, it increases agni or pachaka pitta or Hcl (acidity). It combines with ama and produces contaminated chyle or ama (sour) and produces burning sensation, belching and is called vidhagda arjeerna.

In the Vidagdha type of indigestion there is vertigo, thirst, fainting and various other disorders due to vitiated pitta, smoky and acidic eructations, perspiration and a burning sensation are also produced. (pitta type).

Contaminated chyle goes to antra or intestines, and this vitiates apana vata in their sites, this causes vistabdha arjeerna. In the vistabdha type of indigestion there are symptoms of colic flatulence and various types of vatika disorders, faeces and flatus are not passed (constipation) and stiffness, confusion and body ache also occur. All three doshas involved in vistabdha but main dosha is vata.

In the case of delayed absorption, rasasesa type indigestion, there is an aversion to food, pre cordial discomfort and heaviness all over the body. Because of amajeerna the disorder visuchika ajeerna can arise, with vistabdha ajeerna the disorder alasaka can arise and with vidagdha arjeerna the disorder vilambika can arise.

General clinical features of ajeerna (Samanya lakshanas)

The diagnosis of Ajeerna is based on its clinical features: Vibandha (Partial or complete cessation of bowel habit), Atipravritti (Enhancement in bowel habit), Glani (Lack of zeal), Marut Mudhta (Complete pause in GI motility), Alashya (Lack of enthusiasm), Apakati (Unable to digest the ingested food and formation of Saar and Kitta), Nishthiv (excessive spitting).

Table no. 1: Types of Ajeerna and Its specific symptomatology: (Ma. Ni. 6).

Types of Ajeerna	Specific symptomatology
Ama Ajeerna : Dosha – Kapha	Food stains sweetness, Guruta (Heaviness of body), Utkleda (Vomiting sensation), Ganda Akshikuta shopha (Oedema over orbital and cheek region), Udgarascha yatha bhuktam (Eructation of the ingested food), Avidagdha (Indigestion which does not cause heartburn).
Vidagdha Ajeerna : Dosha – Pitta	Food becomes sour and slightly digested, Bhrama (Giddiness), Trit (Thirst), Murchha (Fainting), Sadhumaamla udgara (Sour eructation and feeling of smoke coming out from mouth), Shukta tikta amla udgara (sour-bitter eructations), Sweda (Sweating), Daha (Burning sensation), Vividha Pittaja Ruja (Various other pain of Pittaj origin).
Vishtabdha Ajeerna : Dosha – Vata	Bhrisha Toda (severe pain abdomen), Shula (Sharp/colic pain), Vishtabdhamaandha (hardness of bowel), Viruddha Vata (opposite movement of Vata dosha), Adhmana (Abdominal distension), Vividha Vata vedana

	(Various pain of vata origin), Mala vata apravriiti (obstruction in the evacuation of faeces and vata), Moha (Delusion), Stambha Anga Pidana (Stiffness and pain all over the body parts), Jrimbha (Yawning), Shiroruja (Headache).
Rasashesha Ajeerna	Udgara shuddavapi bhaktaakansha na jayate (Clear eructation but no desire for food intake), Hridguruta (heaviness in heart region), Anna vidvesha (dislike towards food), Hridayaashudda (discomfort in chest region), Arochaka (anorexia).
Dinapaki Ajeerna	Food gets digested on the next day in contrary to the normal digestion process which should complete on the same day of consumption of food.
Prakrita Ajeerna	Normal indigestion which persists till the food consumed at a given time is digested. It wanes off after the food gets digested.

Upadravas or complications if ajeerna is neglected

It leads to the accumulation of semi-digested food particles in the body, which over a period of time, turn toxic. The body tissues do not get properly nourished, and hence are deprived of the essential micro and macronutrients. The digestive fire is further damaged. The digestive fire is crucial for one's existence and if that is disturbed then it affects immunity which leads to various diseases.

Murchha (Fainting), Pralapa (Delirium), Vamathu (Vomiting), Praseka (Excessive salivation), Sadana (Malaise), Bhrama (Giddiness), Marana (Death) are the upadravas described in the samhitas.

Investigations

Following Investigations may be helpful to know whether indigestion is physiological as a process of ageing or secondary to any disease condition.

Liver function test (LFT), Ultrasonography (USG-Abdomen), Upper G.I. Endoscopy, Barium meal follow through.

Principles of management

Avoidance of the aetiological factors is of key importance in avoiding and overcoming indigestion. A wholesome, timely and balanced dietary regimen along with sufficient exercises and considerable lifestyle change with a good amount of sleep helps in maintaining the gut health which prevents Ajeerna. In Ama ajeerna, since it is kapha dominant, langhana has been advised by sushrutachrya and vamana by yog ratnakara. Saindhava

Lavana Jala has been used for vamana. Dhanyaka+shunthi processed water can also be used as it has properties like ama ajeerna prashamana, bastishodhaka (clears bladder) and shulaghna (relieves colicky pain). Vidagdha ajeerna is pitta dominant. Sushrutachrya has advised vamana with warm salt water whereas yogratnakara has advised langhana. Vishtabdhaajeerna being vata dominant, sudation therapy (swedana) helps in relieving it. Rasashesha Ajeerna which is not of very serious nature can be easily managed by just sleeping or taking good rest and avoiding eating unless the condition is resolved. Dinapaki Ajeerna and Prakrit Ajeerna does not require any treatment as this is naturally occurring during the process of digestion. Dipana (Acceleration in digestive fire) with the use of the powder prepared from Trikatu (sonth papal, maricha in equal quantity) in the dose of 1-3 gm. Before or with food. helps in acceleration of digestive fire and appetite. Pachana (digestion) after food supports in proper digestion of ingested food material. Shodhana chikitsa (bio-cleansing therapies) followed by Shamana chikits (Palliative therapy) also advisable. Virechana (therapeutic purgation) with Draksha/Munakka (*Vitis vinifera*) or Aragvadhya phala majja (Cassia fistula fruit pulp) or Haritaki/Harad (*Terminalia chebula* Linn. *seedless fruit powder*) Or Kutaki (*Picrorhiza kurroa powder*) or Eranda taila (Medicated castor oil) (oil of *Ricinus communis* seeds) seperately on different days or mixed together (Depending on the strength of koshtha) can be taken at bed time.

Some of the formulations commonly used in Ajeerna are as follows:

Table no. 2: Drug formulations for ajeerna.

Drug	Dosage (per dose)	Anupana	Karmukatva and rogagnata
Hingwashtaka churna	1.5-3 g (Pratham kaval bhojya)	Ghrita/ Lukewarm water	Agni Deepana, Vatashamana, Kaphashamana.
Lavanabhaskara churna	1-2.5 g	Butter Milk	Vata-kapha shamak, agnideepak, pachana.
Gandharvahastadi kashaya	15 ml	Water	Vata-anulomak, Aruchighna, Mala shodhak, Agni deepaka.
Ajamodarka	12 - 24 ml	Water	Vata-Kapha Shamana, Mutrala, Agni deepaka, Shulaghna, Krumighna, thermogenic, anti-emetic.
Shankha vati	250 - 500 mg	Honey/ warmwater/ Butter milk	Vata-Pitta shamaka, Agni deepaka, Pachaka, Koshtha shulahar, Amlpittashamak.

Chitrakadi vati	1.5 g	Warm water/Butter milk	Pachaka, agni deepana, rochana, anulomana, grahi, chakshushya, shulaha, arshohar, kusthohar, shothahar.
Hingvadi vati	250mg-1g	Warm water	Pachaka, Anulomaka, Vednahar, Vata-Kapha shamak, agni Deepak.
Lashunadi vati	250mg- 1g	Warm water	Amadoshahar, Anulomana, Deepana, Kaphahar, Pachana, Ruchikarak, Vatahar, Vatanulomak, Shulaha.
Agnitundi vati	125 - 250 mg	Warm Water	Amadoshahar, Anulomak, Pachana, Deepana, Kaphahar, Vatahar, Ruchikarak, Swedana, Vishaghna, Vatanulomana.
Sanjivani vati	125 mg	Ardraka Svarasa/ Warm water	Amadoshahar, Anulomak, Pachana, Deepana, Pittahar, Vatahar, Swedana, Vishaghna, grahi, Jwaraghna.
Indukanta ghrita	10 g	Warm water/Milk	Jeerna jwarahar, Deepana, Snehan, Pachana, Balya, Shulaha, Kaasaghna, Vatahar.
Pippalyadi ghrita	10 g	Warm water/Milk	Deepana, Pachana, Kaasaghna, Balya, Kshayahar, Rochana.
Pippalyasava	12 - 24 ml	Water	Deepana, Pachana, Kaasaghna, Kshayahar, Rochana, karshyahar.
Kumaryasava	12 - 24 ml	Water	Pachana, Bala-Varna-Agni Deepana, Rochana, Balya, Jwarahar, Bruhana, Paktishoola nivarana, krumighna.
Draksharishta	12 - 24 ml	Water	Kshayahghna, Kaasahar, Shwasahar, Balakrut, Galamayan, Malashodhak, Deepan, Pachana, Krumighna, Kushthahar, Jwarahar.
Jirarakadyarisha	12 - 24 ml	Water	Sutikamaya, Atisaraghna, Agnideepak, Vatashamak.

DISCUSSION

Ajeerna is one of the problems caused by our unhealthy lifestyle and poor dietary habits. Unless it is severely disrupting the individual's normal routine, it is frequently neglected or improperly managed. In such cases, lifestyle modification becomes critical. According to WHO, 60% of factors affecting individual health and quality of life are related to lifestyle.

Not only physical factors, but also psychological factors such as sorrow, grief, anger, and so on, are responsible for improper food digestion, even if the food is nutritious. As a result, it is advised to avoid eating in such mental situations or, at the very least, to maintain control over these factors. In general, Ajeerna is an Amashaya udbhava (originating in the stomach) disease, and Langhana is important for its management; however, if the Kapha is utklishta (excessively aggravated), Vamana can be performed.

This could be why Acharya Sushruta and Yoga Ratnakara advised Langhana and Vamana, respectively. Similarly, when aggravated Pitta reaches the level of Kapaha, Vamana is an effective remedy. Vidagdha Ajeerna, Pitta dominant condition, Vamana may be indicated depending on the situation. Swedana is useful in controlling Vata in Vishtabdha Ajeerna, which is a Vata dominant situation in which digestion is delayed. When Ajeerna is not properly managed and the individual is constantly exposed to etiological factors, it can lead to severe complications such as fainting,

giddiness, and even death. This may be the reason Acharyas have told this as Ghor Vyadhi. Many effective formulations have been stated as above. Due to their Deepana, Pachana properties pre-dominantly they help to rectify the condition of Ajeerna.

CONCLUSION

Digestion problems affect a large number of people, and it is one of the most commonly reported complaints in the medical field. When ignored, it can have an impact on an individual's work capacity and productivity. Ajeerna is also the beginning of many serious problems. Specific Ajeerna management based on Doshik predominance and involved etiological factors can be extremely beneficial in controlling this problem from its root.

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