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A REVIEW – AMLAPITTA (HYPERACIDITY)

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ABSTRACT

Amlapitta, or hyperacidity, is a prevalent disorder of the gastrointestinal tract, primarily linked to an imbalance in digestive fire (agni). This condition arises when the sour qualities of gastric juice (pachak pitta) increase due to a lack of balance. Amlapitta is recognized as a Tridoshaja disease, influenced by multiple doshas, although Acharya Kashyapa notes the role of all three doshas, while Madhavkara emphasizes the predominance of Pitta. Interestingly, Acharya Charak does not categorize Amlapitta as a distinct ailment but includes it as a symptom of Grahani, which refers to digestive disturbances. In Ayurveda, many disorders stem from impaired agni. Modern lifestyle changes such as the consumption of processed foods, fast foods, and variations in cooking methods along with stress and anxiety, have contributed to the rising incidence of this condition. Individuals who use tobacco, alcohol, or consume excessive salty packaged foods are particularly susceptible. From a modern medical perspective, Amlapitta correlates with hyperacidity, defined as an elevated level of acid in the stomach. The stomach produces hydrochloric acid, essential for digestion, but an excess can lead to complications, categorized in medical terms as Acid Peptic Disorder (APD). Thus, Amlapitta is a common condition worldwide, reflecting a broader concern regarding gastrointestinal health.

KEYWORDS: Amlapitta, Hyperacidity, Annavahasrotas, Agni, Pachak Pitta etc.

INTRODUCTION

The term "Amlapitta," meaning hyperacidity, combines two elements: "Amla," which means sour, and "Pitta,"[1] referring to gastric juice. In Amlapitta, the quantity of Pachaka Pitta (gastric juice) increases, and its usual alkaline flavor transforms into a more acidic, sour taste due to fermentation. This heightened sourness in the gastric juice is what defines Amlapitta.[2]

Amlapitta is one of the commonest vyadhi of annavahasrotas.[3] Amlapitta, or hyperacidity, is a gastrointestinal disorder characterized by abnormal secretion of gastric and pancreatic enzymes. In modern medical terms, it is referred to as Acid Peptic Disorder (APD). Amlapitta is recognized in Ayurveda as a common issue affecting the gastrointestinal tract, arising from an imbalance in digestive fire (agni).

This condition occurs when the sour quality of pachak pitta (gastric juice) increases, leading to disease. Acharya Kashyapa acknowledges the involvement of all three doshas in Amlapitta,[4] while Madhavkara emphasizes the predominance of Pitta.[5] Acharya Charak does not classify Amlapitta as a distinct condition but includes it as a symptom of Grahani,[6] which involves digestive irregularities.

Many disorders in Ayurveda stem from impaired agni, and various modern lifestyle factors such as rapid environmental changes, the introduction of new food types, altered cooking methods, pollution, and exposure to chemical agents have contributed to a rise in these conditions. Stress and anxiety further exacerbate Amlapitta, making it a significant lifestyle issue. Individuals who use tobacco, alcohol, or consume excessive salty packaged foods are particularly at risk.

In Ayurveda, Amlapitta correlates with hyperacidity in contemporary medical understanding. Hydrochloric acid (HCl) plays a crucial role in digestion, converting the inactive enzyme pepsinogen into its active form, pepsin, which breaks down proteins in a process called proteolysis.[7] Hyperacidity simply refers to elevated acid levels in the stomach, impacting digestion.

When there is an excessive amount of hydrochloric acid in the stomach, the condition is known as hyperacidity.[8] Hyperacidity also called as acid dyspepsia. Acid

dyspepsia manifest as burning pain or discomfort in upper abdomen, usually in epigastrium, postprandial abdominal discomfort which characterized by fullness & nausea.[9]

According to Acharya Vagabhat, Pachak Pitta (gastric juice) functions as Agni (digestive fire) in Annapachan Prakriya (digestion).[10] When its liquid form is diminished, this Agni plays a crucial role. Pachak Pitta is analogous to Hydrochloric Acid (HCL). Amlapitta, characterized by excessive Pachak Pitta, corresponds to Hyperacidity. Amlapitta's classification is based on Dosha Dushti (juice defects) and Sthana Dushti (systemic disruptions). Symptoms include Avipak (indigestion), Kalma (general debility), Utklesh (nausea), Tikta Amlodgara (bitter belching), Gaurava (heaviness), Hrdakantha Daha (heartburn), Aruchi (loss of taste).[11]

CAUSES OF AMLAPITTA

1. Aharaja (Dietary factors)

Virudha Ahara (incompatible diet), Antarodakpaan (drinking water between meals), Adhyasana (eating before digestion), Ama Bhojana (consuming food before previous digestion), Ajeernabhojana (persistent indigestion), Guru (heavy meals), Snigdha Bhojana (oily food), Ati Rukshunma (excessive dry food). These factors lead to Agnimandya (diminished digestive fire), contributing to Amlapitta.[12]

2. Viharaja (Lifestyle factors)

Refers to unhealthy habits contrary to normal hygienic behavior, as described by Acharya Madhavakara. Excessive physical exertion, including overexercise, Ratrijagarana, Dhatukshaya, and Upavasa, provokes Vata and Pitta, leading to Jatharagnimandya and Amlapitta. Kashyapa identifies additional causative factors: Vegadharana, Divaswapa after meals, and excessive Snana.

Three key categories contribute to Amlapitta

1. Agantuja Hetu: Excessive consumption of alcohol, smoking, tobacco, beverages, and toxic substances cause local stomach irritation, increased gastric juice secretion, and Amlapitta.

2. Mansik Hetu: Psychological factors significantly impact health maintenance.

3. Others: Other contributing factors include Living in unfavorable environments (Anoopadesh), Sharadritu (autumn season), Addiction to alcohol, tobacco, and smoking, Prolonged NSAID use, Helicobacter pylori infection These factors collectively increase Pitta dosha, manifesting Amlapitta symptoms.

i) According to Kashyapa Samhita, Amlapitta classification based on Dosha Dushti includes

a) Vataja Amlapitta: characterized by Shoola (colic pain), Angavada (body ache), and Jrumbha (dizziness), Snigdhaguna Upashaya.[13]

b) Pittaja Amlapitta: Bhrama, Vidaha, Sitaupasaya, Svadupasaya[14]

c) Kaphaja Amlapitta Gaurava, Chhardi, Rukshaguana, Upasaya, Usmaguna, Upasaya"[15]

ii) Madhava Nidan - here four types are mentioned

a) Vatadhikva Amlapitta - Kampa, Pralapa, Murchha, Chimchimitva, Gaatraavasada, Shoola, Tamodarshana, Vibhrama, Moha, Harsha.[16]

b) Kaphadhikya Amlapitta - Kapha, Nishthivana, Gaurava, Jadata, Aruchi, Shita, Saada, Vami Lepa, Agrimandya, Kandu, Nindra.[17]

c) Vata - Kaphaadhikya Amlapitta - Combined Lakshanas of Vataja Amlapitta and Kaphaja Amlapitta.[18]

d) Shleshma Pittaja Amlapitta- Tiktodgara, Amlodgara, Kata Udgara, Hriddaha, Kukshidaha Kanthadaha, Bhrama, Murchha. Aruchi, Chhardi, Alasya, Shiroruja, Praseka. Mukta Madhurya.

ACCORDING TO STHAN DUSHTI

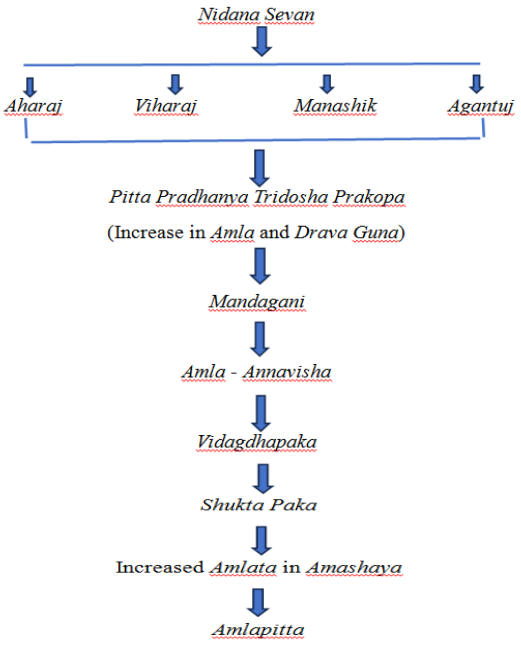
1. Urduwaga Amlapitta

- Vamana (vomiting) with Harita, Pitta, Neela, Krushna, Rakta, Raktabha, Mamsodakabha
- Atiamla, Atipichhila, Achha, Shleshmanujata, Vividha Rasa, Amlodgara, Tikrodgara, Kantha HridKukshi Daha, ShirahShoola, Kapha-Pinaja Jwara, Kandu, Mandala, Pidaka.[19]

2. Adhoga Amlapitta

- Trushna, Daha, Machha, Moha, Hrillasa, Kotha, Agnimandya, Harsha, Sweda, Anga Pitata.[20]

SAMPRAPT



COMPLICATIONS

Complications of Untreated Amlapitta

If left untreated or if unhealthy habits persist, Amlapitta may lead to:

- Gastric ulcers
- Chronic gastritis
- Duodenitis
- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- Malabsorption
- Anemia
- Peptic stenosis

Dietary Recommendations (Pathya) for Amlapitta

Do's

- Consume light, easy-to-digest foods
- Coconut water
- Cooling foods and drinks, such as
- Vegetables: white pumpkin, bitter gourd, matured ash gourd, leafy greens (except methi)
- Grains: wheat, old rice, barley, green gram
- Fruits: gooseberry, dry grapes, black grapes, sweet lime, pomegranate, fig, dry fig.
- Beverages: pomegranate juice, lemon juice, amla juice, sweet lime juice, medicated water with ushir (wala) or coriander seeds, or laja (puffed rice) lukewarm water.

- Traditional preparations
- Dadimpak (pomegranate sweet dish)
- Moramla (amla jam)
- Gulkand (rose petal jam) with milk
- Lukewarm milk (1 cup every 2-3 hours)
- Ghee with warm milk (1 teaspoonful)
- Adequate sleep and rest
- Yoga, pranayama, and meditation

Don'ts

- Avoid excessive spicy, sour, and salty foods
- Limit fried and junk food items
- Don't remain hungry or fast
- Avoid overeating; opt for small, frequent meals
- Avoid untimely and irregular food habits
- Limit foods high in garlic, salt, oil, and chillies
- Avoid rice, curd, and sour fruits
- Don't lie down immediately after eating; use left lateral position
- Avoid smoking, alcohol, tea, coffee, and aspirin-like drugs
- Manage stress

By following these guidelines, individuals can effectively manage Amlapitta and prevent complications.

DISCUSSION

Amlapitta, or hyperacidity, is a widespread disease affecting individuals globally, posing a persistent challenge to researchers due to its escalating prevalence. This common functional disorder of the digestive system, or Annavaha srotas, is exacerbated by modern lifestyles characterized by stress, busy schedules, and poor eating habits. The term "Amlapitta" originates from the Sanskrit words "Amla," meaning sour taste, which stimulates excessive salivary secretion, and "Pitta," a bodily humoral substance regulating digestion, transformation, and transmutation. In Amlapitta, Pitta becomes vitiated, leading to excessive sourness and impaired digestive function. This patho-physiological condition is marked by an increase in Pitta's excessiveness and sourness, often triggered by altered appetite or Agnimandya. Many individuals experience occasional burning sensations in the stomach and chest due to excessive acidic secretions, a hallmark symptom of Amlapitta. As a result, understanding the etiology and pathophysiology of Amlapitta is crucial for developing effective management strategies to mitigate its impact on global health.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Amlapitta shares similarities with hyperacidity in modern medical science, particularly in the digestive process. Hydrochloric acid (HCL) plays a crucial role in activating pepsinogen, converting it into pepsin, which facilitates proteolysis. From an Ayurvedic perspective, Pachak Pitta (gastric juice) functions as Agni (appetite), essential for digestion. When its liquid form is compromised, Agni's role becomes vital. Notably, Pachak Pitta parallels HCL, and Amlapitta represents a condition where Pachak Pitta increases excessively. Thus, Ayurvedic Amlapitta corresponds with hyperacidity.

Untreated or poorly managed Amlapitta can lead to severe complications, including gastric ulcers, chronic gastritis, duodenitis, irritable bowel syndrome, malabsorption, anemia, and stenosis. Modern literature employs various technical terms to describe conditions analogous to Amlapitta, underscoring the importance of understanding this entity in both Ayurvedic and contemporary medical contexts. This term either explain the pathological condition of the disease or explain the characteristics of the disease. It is very difficult to correlate Amlapitta (Hyperacidity) with a single disease of modern science.

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