

## A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW ON PURISA (STOOL) PARIKSHA

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## ABSTRACT

In *Ayurved*; *Astasthan* *pariksha* is one of the important examinations to find the various causes behind diseases. In *Ayurvedic* text, different methods have been described for diagnosis of various aspect of disease, the *Purisa pariksha* (Stool examination) is one of them. *Purisa pariksha* is the main laboratory investigation tool which is necessary to diagnosis the disease described under *samanya pariksha* regarding the abnormalities in terms of color, odor, quality, consistency etc. In all ancient days, the identification of *ama* is used to be done by *purisa pariksha* only. This review article aims to focus on the importance of *Purisa pariksha*. This conceptual study is helpful in the management of various progressive chronic diseases.

**Keywords:** *Astasthan* *pariksha*, *Mala pariksha*, *Purisa pariksha*, Stool.

## INTRODUCTION

*Purisa pariksha* is described under *Astasthan* *pariksha* by *Acharya Yogaratnakar*.<sup>1</sup> *Purisa pariksha* plays very important role in diagnosis of the disease. Examination of *purisa* gives much information regarding the condition of the *doshas*, *dhatu*s, *ahara paka* etc.

both in health and diseased states. Hence, *Ayurved* advocates it as a diagnostic method generally in all diseases and especially in disorders of *Annavaha* and *Purisavaha* srotas.<sup>2</sup>

### Aim & Objectives

1. To study the status of *Agni* in the body.
2. To study the symptoms of abnormal *doshas*.
3. Prognosis of diseases.
4. To study about many physiological and pathological states of the body.

### Characteristic Of *Prakrta* (Normal) *Purisa*

Characteristics of normal *purisa* in terms of physical characteristics during health such as *samhata* (well-formed solid), *peeta* (yellow), *durgandha* (bad smelling), *laghu* (light in weight), *natisnigdha* (not very viscid), *natyalpa-natibahu* (neither very less nor abundant in quantity), *sukha pravrtti* (easy expulsion) with one to two *vegas* per day.<sup>3</sup> *Pramana* (quantity) of *Purisa* has been described by *Acharya Charaka* as *Sapta Anjali Pramana*. These features are influenced by many factors such as *deha prakrti*, *ahara*, *vihara*, *kala*, *satmya*, *vyadhi* etc.<sup>4</sup>

### Precautions and Handling of the *Purisa* (stool) samples

- Stool should be collected in clean, dry container with a tightly fitting lid and transported to the laboratory immediately.
- Stool should not be contaminated with urine, water, soil or menstrual blood.
- Warm stools are best for detecting ova and parasites. Do not refrigerate for ova and parasites.
- Patients should not receive oily laxatives, anti-diarrheal medication, bismuth, antibiotics like tetracycline or antacids for 7 days before stool examination.
- The semi-formed & solid stool should be examined within 60 minutes of collection.
- The liquid stool should be examined within the first 30 minutes.
- In the case of constipated cases, use non-residual purgative on the night before the collection of the stool.
- For occult blood stop iron-containing drugs, meat and fish at least 48 hours before the collection.
- Multiple samples are needed to rule out the parasitic infestation.
- In the case of infants, collect from the diaper.

- Trophozoites are most likely to be found in loose or watery stools or in stools containing blood or mucus, while cysts are likely to be found in formed stool.

### Indications of *Purisa pariksha* (Stool examination)

- To evaluate the function and integrity of the GI tract.
- To rule out the presence of WBCs and RBCs.
- To find ova or parasites.
- To see the presence of fat for malabsorption syndrome.
- For screening of colon cancer.
- For asymptomatic ulceration of GI tract.
- Evaluate diseases in the presence of diarrhea and constipation.
- To evaluate the intestinal bleeding, infestation, inflammatory diseases etc.

### Methods to prepare the stool smears

1. Saline Wet mount – for trophozoites, cysts of protozoa, ova/larvae of helminthes.
2. Iodine Wet mounts – for identification of protozoal cysts.<sup>5</sup>

### TYPES OF EXAMINATION

Examination of the *Purisa* (feces) is carried out in two ways:

1. **Physical Examination:** It is to note the *varna* (color), *swabhava* (consistency), *gandha* (odor), *pramana* (quantity) and *samyoga* (admixture).
2. **Microscopical Examination:** To detect *ama dravyas* (undigested food particles), *krimi bija* (ova of worms) or *krimis* (worms), *rakta anu* (blood cells especially the red cells). Culture of the stools for detecting different kinds of bacteria is also in vogue in the present day when absolutely necessary.<sup>6</sup>

### *Pariksha Krama* (Methods Of Examination)

A great detail regarding the changes in physical characteristics of *purisa* has been described under various diseases in *Brihatrayi*. Examination should be carried out by the physician himself. The following methods are ideal;

1. **Darsana (Inspection)** – carefully look for *varna* (color), *doshanusara* properties, *sangati* (con-

- sistency), presence of froth, *samyoga* (admixture), *samsthans* (shape) etc. [Table 1 - 4]
- Sparsana (Touching)** – even though unpleasant touching the material may be ideal to know its qualities like *sheeta* (cold), *ushna* (warmth), *picchila* (unctuousness) etc. [Table 5]
  - Ghrana (Olfaction)** – normal, increase or decrease of its foul smell, appearance of unusual smells etc. should be found in many diseases. [Table 6]
  - Prasna pariksha (Interrogation)** – for number of *vegas*, feeling before, during and after expulsion, *pramana* (quantity), food and food habits and associated symptoms such as pain etc. will be of great advantage. [Table 7,8]

- Yukti pariksha** – to determine *pakwa-apakwa* by putting a small portion of the material on water and nothing whether it floats or sinks. Floating is normal and is called *pakwa* condition while sinking is *apakwa* or *sama* condition which is abnormal.<sup>7,8</sup>

#### Jala Nimajjana Pariksha (Hydrostatic Test)

This is the only objective method which was used in ancient times to detect the presence of *Ama* in *purisa*. *Amapakwa nirnaya* is done by putting a mass of *purisa* into a vessel containing water. If floats on water, it is indicative of *pakwa* state which is normal; but if it sinks it is considered as *ama* state which is abnormal.<sup>9-11</sup>

**Table 1:** Properties of *Purisa* (Stool) vitiated by *Dosha*

S. No.	Dosha	Properties
1.	Vata	Dry, hard, frothy, blackish, constipated
2.	Pitta	Yellowish, mixed with blood, very frequent evacuations, offensive
3.	Kapha	Pale, white and mucoid with undigested materials, odorless
4.	Sannipata	Black, loose, yellowish, constipated, whitish colored, offensive

**Table 2:** The Color/Appearance of *Purisa* (Stool) in various diseases

S. No.	Types of Color	Diseases
1.	Krishna	Kshaya roga, Vataja Arsha, Vataja Gulma, Kumbha Kamala, Vata prakopa
2.	Aruna	Vataja Atisara, Samgrahani
3.	Shyava Aruna	Vataja Udara roga, Vataja Arsha, Vataja Atisara, Vataja Gulma, Vataja Jwara, Vataja Pandu, Vata prakopa
4.	Shukla	Kaphaja Jwara, Kaphaja Pandu, Kaphaja Udara roga, Kaphaja Arsha, Kaphaja Atisara, Jalodara, Sahaja Arsha
5.	Rakta	Raktapitta, Chidrodara, Pittaja Atisara, Pittaja Atisara
6.	Peeta	Ama dosha, Pittaja Jwara, Pittaja Murccha, Pittaja Swarabheda
7.	Harita	Halimaka
8.	Lohita	Pittaja Atisara
9.	Gunjaphala Varna	Shokaja Atisara
10.	Tilpishthanibham	Shakhashrita Kamala

**Table 3:** The Consistency of *Purisa* (Stool) in various diseases

S. No.	Consistency	Diseases
1.	Sandra	Kaphaja Atisara, Sahaja Arsha
2.	Baddha	Tikshnagni, Alasaka, Ajirna, Paramada, Baddha gudodara, Vatadusta stan-yapana, Purisavritta vata, Pratyasthila, Sahaja Arsha, Vataja Atisara, Vataja Visarpa, Vataja Jwara, Vataja Arsha, Vataja Parinamasula, Purisaja krimi, Sannipata Jwara
3.	Drava	Mandagni, Pittaja Arsha, Vataja Grahani, Asadhya Atisara

4.	Bhinna	Kshayaja Kasa, Kaphavritta apana vayu, Kaphaja Grahani, Pittaja Arsha, Pittaja Murccha, Sandharanajanya Yakshma
5.	Sushka	Udavarta, Vataja Grahani, Sahaja Arsha
6.	Ghana	Samgrahani

**Table 4:** Presence of froth in *Purisa* (Stool) in various diseases

S. No.	Types of Froth	Diseases
1.	Phenila	Vataja Arsha, Vataja Atisara, Vataja Grahani
2.	Varahsneha-mamsambusadrish	Sannipataja Atisara

**Table 5: The Sparsha (touch) of Purisa (Stool) in various diseases**

S. No.	Type of Sparsha	Diseases
1.	Sheeta	Ajirna, Kaphaja Atisara
2.	Ushna	Pittaja Arsha
3.	Snigdha	Kaphaja Arsha, Kaphaja Atisara
4.	Ruksha	Vataja Jwara, Vataja Atisara
5.	Picchila	Samgrahani

**Table 6: The Odor of Purisa (Stool) in various diseases**

S. No.	Types of Odor	Diseases
1.	Daurgandhya	Ama purisa, Purisavaha Srotodushti, Vid vighata, Pittaja Pandu, Kaphaja Atisara, Sannipataja Chardi
2.	Vistragandhi	Pittaja Arsha, Kaphaja Atisara
3.	Atidurgandhita	Pittaja Arsha, Pittaja Atisara
4.	Amagandhi	Amatisara
5.	Kunapagandhi	Chidrodara, Sahaja Arsha
6.	Kunapa-Puya-Ama-Matsyagandhi	Sannipataja Atisara
7.	Mahat Putigandhi	Jalodara
8.	Nirgandha/Sagandha	Agantuja Atisara

**Table 7: The Frequency/Abnormal Quantities of Purisa (Stool) in various diseases**

S. No.	Quantity/Frequency	Diseases
1.	Alpa	Purisavaha Srotodushti, Pandu, Vataja Atisara, Sannipataj Jwara, Devon-matta purusa
2.	Atipravritti/ Bahu	Pittaja Atisara, Amatisara, Asadhya Atisara
3.	Sanga	Vataja Gulma, Apan vayu ruddha, Sushka Yoni, Udara roga, Vatasthila, Mutra jathar, Baddhodara
4.	Alpa Alpa	Pravahika, Chidrodara, Vataja Grahani, Vataja Atisara, Kaphaja Atisara
5.	Muhur-muhu	Vataja Grahani, Vataja Atisara
6.	Bhedayukta	Kshayaja Yakshma, Sandharana janya Yakshma
7.	Kriccha	Vataja Ashmari, Vidvighata, Amashaya krudha vayu, Pakvashaya krudha vayu
8.	Sasabda	Vataja Arsha, Amatisara, Purisvaha srotodushti, Puris kshaya, Vataja Grahani

**Table 8:** Types of *Shula* (Pain) during defecation in various diseases

S. No.	Types of <i>Shula</i> (Pain)	Diseases
1.	<i>Sashula</i>	<i>Amatisara</i>
2.	<i>Sashula Sadaha</i>	<i>Pittaja Atisara</i>
3.	<i>Parikartika</i>	<i>Vataja Atisara</i>
4.	<i>Prahavana</i>	<i>Pravahika</i>
5.	<i>Shula, Gudstrava</i>	<i>Jalodara</i>
6.	<i>Chirat dukham</i>	<i>Vataja Grahani</i>
7.	<i>Sashula Pravahana</i>	<i>Kaphaja Atisara, Kaphaja Atisara, Pravahika</i>
8.	<i>Kunthan</i>	<i>Vishamagni, Samatisara</i>

### **Arista Laksanas (Bad Prognostic Signs)**

*Purisa* passed by a person which is *ati-krsna* (tarry black), *ati-subhra* (very white), *ati-peeta* (highly yellow), *ati-rakta* (highly red), *chakrika yukta* (containing shining plaques), *ati-pramana* (copious) even when no food is taken definitely kill the patient and patient dies quickly if associated with *bhrsosma* (excessive hotness).<sup>12,13</sup>

### **Important Facts about Stool**

- The intestinal protozoan is usually found in the soft and liquid stool.
- Cysts are found in the formed stool and rarely found in liquid stool.
- Helminthes eggs are found in liquid or formed stool.
- Liquid stools are diluted, so difficult to find parasites.
- Examined the surface of the unpreserved stool for macroscopic parasites.
- Pinworms are seen at the surface and tapeworms in the interior of the stool.
- The freshly passed stool is essential for the detection of amoebae or the flagellate.
- All liquid or soft stools should be examined within 30 minutes of the collection.
- Formed stool immediate examination is not critical, can wait for 3 to 4 hours.

### **Reference Ranges of Normal Stool<sup>14</sup>**

- Bulk : 100-200 gms/day
- Color : Brown
- Water : Up to 75%
- pH : 7.0 – 7.5
- RBC : Absent

- WBC : Few
- Epithelial cells: Present
- Crystals : Calcium oxalate, triple phosphate
- Fat droplets : Average 2-5/HPF in random sample
- Urobilinogen: 50-300 mg/24 hours
- Parasites : Nil
- Ova, cysts, trophozoites: Nil

### **DISCUSSION**

*Purisa* (Stool) is an important by-product of the metabolism and reflects the changes occurring in the body in different pathological, physiological and diseased conditions. Abnormal changes in *purisa* (stool) pertaining to its color, odor, consistency, frequency and quantity have been described in various disease conditions. An attempt has been made to collect these scattered references from *Samhitas* & textbooks at one place and one can refer these changes in *purisa* (stool) for diagnosis of various disease conditions.

### **CONCLUSION**

In all ancient days, the identification of *ama* is used to be done by *purisa pariksha* only. *Malas* or *Kitta* or Waste products of the body are of two kinds: *Ahara mala* and *Dhatu mala*. *Ahara mala* are the *purisa* and *mutra* while *dhatu malas* are many. Though these are *malas*, they sub serve for the maintenance of health so long as they are normal in their *pramana* (quantity), *gunas* (qualities) and *karmas* (functions). These *malas* also become abnormal (*vridhhi* and *kshaya*) conditions of the *tridoshas*. *Purisa*, which is one of the main metabolic products of the body, shows changes in its characters in diseased conditions.

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