

## CONCEPT OF AGNI - A CLINICAL APPROACH

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### ABSTRACT

*Agni* comprehends the various factors which participate in and direct the course of digestion and metabolism in a living organism. Vitiated *Agni* is the root cause for the disease manifestation. *Kayachikitsa*, which is defined as *Kayasya Antar Agni Chikitsa* (*Kaya-sareera* and *Antar Agni-Jataragni / Pachakapitta*) emphasize the importance of *Agni* in disease management. *AGNI/Pitta* is the Vital sustaining force behind all life activities, and it maintains the quality of life and results in *Niraamaya Jeevanam*/disease-free life. So, *Agni* is considered as the main component in determining the line of treatment in *Kayachikitsa*, and maintaining the *Agni* in equilibrium state is its main motto. The present paper deals with the objective assessment of *Dehaagni*, *Dehaagni hetus* and the companions of the *Agni*, levels of *Agni dushti* or the vitiation of *Agni*, its symptoms, *nidana* and management at the level of *Agni dusti*.

**Key words:** *Dehaagni hetus, Pittadhara kala, Kosta, Annavaha srotas, Pureesha vaha srotas*

### INTRODUCTION

*Agni* comprehends the various factors which participate in and direct the course of digestion and metabolism in a living organism. "*Agni reva sareere pittantargate kupitaakupitaani subhaasubhaani karoti*" "ch su 12/11, *AGNI* is the *Pitta* inside the body, which maintains all physiological functions and their integrity, performs all vital activities, converts

*chaturvidha aahara* into its various structural and functional constituents and provide energy to proceed with its innumerable micro cellular metabolic activities both biophysical and biochemical. *Agni/Pitta* has opposite traits of functions like digestion or indigestion, visual perception or impairment of vision, normal or abnormal body temperatures, the normal or

abnormal colour of the body, courage or fear, anger or cheerfulness, lucidity or confusion of mind. This dual nature of the *Pitta* maintains the physiological and psychological balance as well as cause Pathological conditions when deranged.

#### Importance of Agni:

Vitiated *Agni* is the root cause of the disease manifestation.

*"Saante agnoumreeyate yukte chiranjeevayatyanamayah rogasyaatvikrute moolam agnistasmaanniruchyate" ch chi 15/4*

When the *Agni* is extinguished, results in death, and judicial maintenance of the *Agni* results in longer and healthier life without any Diseases. *Ayurveda* which is clinically divided into *Ashtangas*/ 8 specialities, has allocated one complete speciality i.e; *Kaya chikitsa* to emphasize the clinical importance of *Agni*. *Kayachikitsa* is defined as *Kasya Antar Agni chikitsa-Kaya chikitsa*, (*Kaya-sareera* and *Antar Agni-Jataragni/ Pachakapitta*) .*AGNI/Pitta* is the Vital sustaining force behind all life activities, and it maintains the Quality of life and results in a *Niraamaya Jeevanam*/disease-free Life. So, *Agni* is considered the main component in determining the line of treatment in *kayachikitsa*, and maintaining the *Agni* in equilibrium is its main motto.

#### Objective assessment of Dehaagni:

As *Agni* is the functional aspect of all physiological activities and is the root cause of various diseases, it's objective assessment can be done by observing the *Dehaagni hetus*.

*Hetus* for identifying the status of *Dehagni (ch chi 15/03)*.

*"Aayurvarna balaswastya utsahopachaya prabha ojustejoagnah pranaschoktaa Dehaagni Hetavah"*

- *Ayu* -the *chetana* state - conscious/ coherent state
- *Varna* -the lustre normal or abnormal colour of nails (*nakha*), lips (*oshta*), face (*mukha*), *mutra* (*urine*), and *puresha* (*faeces*)
- *Bala*- the strength *aahara sakti* and *vyayama sakti*
- *Swaasthya*- the health status or the equilibrium of physiological and psychological functions
- *Utsaaha* - the state of enthusiasm
- *Upachaya* - State of the nourishment or growth

- *Prabha* -the Aura
- *Ojus* - the immunity
- *Tejo* - the Reproductive health
- *Agni* - The status of the digestive fire
- *Prana* -status of the life components

These *Dehaagni hetus* help in the Objective assessment of the *Agni*, it's physiological state, pathological deviations, the level of derangement and planning the treatment.

Effects of *Doshic* vitiation with *Agni* at structural and functional levels can be analysed by *Ayu, Varna, Bala, and Swastya*.

Effects of *Doshic* vitiation with *Agni* at the psychic level are appreciated by *dehagnihetus utsaaha (vata), upachaya(kapha), prabha(pitta)*.

*Agni* directly or indirectly influences the Disease resistance capacity (*Ojus*) and the progeny development (*Tejus*), which are the indices of healthy life.

1. ***Ayu - state of Chetana:*** Life, a conglomeration of *Sareera, Indriya, Satva* and *Atma*, itself is the *hetu* for assessing the state of *Agni*. *AYU* is the perceptive force behind all the life processes and in turn, as long as *Ayu* or *chetana* is present, the *Agni* will be in equilibrium with *Ayu*, maintaining the life processes. *Agni* when maintained in an equilibrium state results in *sukha ayu* and *hita ayu* and if not, results in *dukha ayu* and *ahita ayu*. Expression of life is *Ayu* and *Agni* is the force behind that expression of life.
2. ***Varna -complexion:*** Bodily complexions are *Gouraaadi varnas*. (*Ch ni 1/12*) *Krishna, Syama, Shyamavadata, and Avadata varnas* indicate the normal physiological state of *Agni*. *Vikruta varna* constitute (*ch ni 1/13*) *Neela, Syama, Tamra, Harita, and Sukla* indicate the Pathological conditions of *Agni*. These *vikruta varnas* can be appreciated by observing the *Nakha, Nayana, Vadana, Mutra, Puresha, Hasta, Pada, and Osta*. in some diseases like *Pandu, Kamala, Prameha, unmada, etc*
3. ***Bala - "yukti Kruta balam punah tat aahara chestaayogajam" ch su 11/37*** *Ahara Sakti* and *vyayama sakti* are another objective parameters for

assessing Agni. *Aahara Sakti* is determined by *Abhyavaharana sakti*, the food intake capacity, and the *Jarana sakti*, the digestive capacity of the individual, *Vyayama sakti* is assessed by the working capacity of the individual, If the *aahara Sakti* and *vyayama sakti* are optimum it implies the optimal state of Agni and vice-versa.

4. **Swasthya** - state of normal physiological and psychological functions *Sama dosha samagnischa sama dhatu mala kriya prasannatmendriya manah swastya ityabhidheeyate*"su.su 15/41 The functional equilibrium of the physiological components *Dosha, Dhatu, Agni, Mala* and *prassannata* / felicity of psychological components *atma, indriyas and manas* is *Swastya* and the person is called *swastha*. Any derangement of the equilibrium of the physiological or the psychological components indicate the vitiated Agni.
5. **Utsaaha - the state of enthusiasm**- *utsaaha* is the *udana vata karma*. *Utsaaha Hani* or lack of enthusiasm though clinically observed in *Medovridhhi* condition and *Prameha*, it indicates the underlying psychological cause for many diseases. *Agni* is also the probable cause behind the disturbed state of *utsaaha*.
6. **Upachaya - growth /anabolism or happiness/nourishment** "*Prakriti bhutaa upachaya bala varna prasaadinee tridoshas*"(Ch su 20/12 ) The three *Doshas* (i.e. *vata, pitta* and *kapha*) in their natural state help in keeping the individual's sensory faculties normal while enhancing the strength, complexion, happiness and life span of an individual As *Dosha samyata* depends on *aahara* and in turn *Agni* ( the factor behind the maintenance of *Doshic* equilibrium). Any deviation from normal growth and nourishment of *Sareera* indicates the state of deviated Agni.
7. **Prabha** -Aura "*Syattaijasee prabhaa*" Aura or lustre due to blood oxygenation or increased vascularization is the reflection of the *Tejas/sapta dhatu Sara*. Normal *prabha* is white, yellow, green, dark, pale, red, and black in colour and is clear in appearance. *Prabha* illicit the psychic ill health of

the individual if deviated from normal color or not clear.

8. **Ojus** – immunity, *Ojus*, the essence of all Dhatus, when vitiated, is clinically assessed by *Durbalata-debility, vyadhitendriyata* - the discomfort of the senses, *Duschaya*- loss of lustre, *rukshata*-dryness, and *Kshaama*-emaciation.
9. **Tejus- lusture /Tejo Rupa sukrah** "*Agni mulam balam pumsaam reto mulam tu jeevitam*"(yogaratnakara) Reproductive ill health of the individual is also the index of pathological state of Agni and is clinically assessed by *durbalata-debility, mukha sosh*- dryness of mouth, *Pandutva*- pallor, *srama*- fatigue, *klaibyam*-impotency.
10. **Agni - digestive fire**- Assessment of Agni clinically depends on *Doshas*, which show the diurnal and seasonal vitiations and age variations. State of Agni is *Vishama* in *Vata* predominance, *Teekshna* in *Pitta* predominance, *Manda* in *Kapha* predominance, and *Sama* in *Doshic* equilibrium.
11. **Prana - Components of Life-** "*agnissomo vayussatvamrajastamah panchendriyaani bhutaatmaiti praanaah*" su sa 04/01 *Prana* or life components are three doshas (*Agni, Soma, Vayu*), *tri gunas* (*Satwa, Rajas, Tamas*), *Panchendriya* and *Bhutatma* are also the indices of status of Agni.

#### Identifying the pre-clinical/clinical state of deranged Agni

Though the *Dehagni hetus* elaborately depict the physiological and pathological states of Agni and help in objective assessment, clinically the state of Agni can be appreciated simply by understanding the State of *Kayaagni* and its companions. Companions of *Kayaagni* are *Samana vata, Kledaka kapha, Apana vata, Pitta dhara kala*.

#### Impact of the Kayagni companions on Agni Kledaka Kapha

Local action of *Kledaka kapha* at the level of *amasaya* is *Praklinno abhisanghaatah sukha Jaro bhavati* aiding in the smooth digestion of the ingested food. Remote action is derangement at the *Sleshma sthanas* (structural) and the deranged physiological functions

of bodily fluids (*Udaka karma* /deranged fluid dynamics)

#### **Samana vata**

"*Sweda dosha ambu vahini srotamsi samadhistitah antaragnescha parswasthah samaano agni balapradah*" *ch.chi 28* Local action of *Samana vata* is strengthening of the *Jataragni*, whereas its remote action is affecting the *Swedavaha*, *Dosha vaha* and *Ambu vaha srotas*. Any deviation of the normal blood and urine biochemical values, emphasises the vitiation of *kledaka kapha* and *samana vata*. Treatments include the correction of *Agni* and also *Kledaka kapha* and *Samana vata*.

#### **Apana Vata**

Local action is *Sukra*, *mutra*, *shakrut*, *artava*, and *garbha pravritti*, whereas its remote action is " *dehe dharyatetih anaamayah*", maintains the normal healthy state of the body. For any vitiation of *Apana vayu*, the correction is the administration of *vatanulomana* drug or therapy. Due to these remote and local effects of *Agni* and its companions clinically the *Kayaagni* assessment is to be done at four levels by observing the symptoms and their chronicity.

#### **Levels for Assessment of kayaagni vitiation:**

##### **Level 1 AMASAYA**

##### **Level 2 PITTADHARAKALA**

##### **Level 3 KOSTA (ABHYANTARA ROGAMARGHA)**

##### **Level 4 DHATU LEVEL**

#### **Level 1 AMASAYA**

Vitiation of *Pachaka Pitta* or *Agni*

Clinical symptoms of *Agni dusti lakshanas* at the level of *Amasaya* are.

- *Vistambha* - Flatulence
- *Sadana* - Tiredness
- *Siro ruk* - headache
- *Chardi* - vomiting
- *Aruchi*- anorexia
- *Avipaka* - indigestion
- *Brama*- giddiness
- *Murcha* - altered consciousness.
- *Prusta kati graha*- stiffness at the lumbar and thoracic region

- *Jrimba*- yawning
- *Angamardha*- Body pain
- *Trishna*- thirst
- *Jwara* - raised body temperature. The symptoms at this level 1 are acute in origin and mostly represent the state or symptom only but not an established disease. Here *chardi*, *Brama*, *murcha* are to be considered as symptoms due to acute vitiation of *Agni* only.

#### **Nidana At the level 1 (Jataragni)**

- *Abhojana* - Fasting
- *Ajeernaat* - intake of food with indigestion
- *Ati bhojanaat* - Excessive intake of food
- *Vishamasanaat* - Irregular intake of food
- *Asaatmyaat* - incompatible food
- *Desa, kaala ritu vaishamyaat* - place, time, and seasonal vitiation
- *vega dharana* - Holding of natural urges.
- *virekavamana, sneha vibhramaat* - inappropriate *vamana, virechana, or sneha karma*
- *vyadhi karshanat* - Post disease Malaise

#### **Treatment at level 1**

- *Langhan*- *Laghvasana*, Fasting and intake of *laghu aahara*.
- *Apatarpana* - undernutrition regimen
- *pachana*- administration of Digestives
- *Bheshajam* - Drug administration for the relevant symptom
- *Virechana* - Purging

#### **Level 2 PITTADHARAKALA**

Vitiation of *agni at level 2 includes Pittadharakala* and its adjuvant *srotas* - *Annavaha srotas* and *Pureesha vaha srotas*. Anatomical position of *Pittadharakala* is *Pakwa Amasaya Madhyasti* and it is considered as *Grahani*. The function of *Pittadharakala* is *Dharana* or maintaining the digesting food for a stipulated time for proper digestion and absorption. *ANNAVAHA SROTAS moolam is Amasaya & Annvahini dhamani whereas PUREESHAVAHA SROTAS moolam is Pakwasayam & Guda*

#### **Clinical symptoms at level 2**

- *Admana* - Flatulence (*Annavaha Srotas*)
- *shoola* -pain (*Annavaha Srotas*)

- *Annadwasha* - aversion for the food (*Annavaaha Srotas*)
- *Chardi* - vomiting (*Annavaaha Srotas*)
- *pipaasa* - Excessive thirst (*Annavaaha Srotas*)
- *andhyam*- Blindness and
- *maranam*- death is the extreme symptoms of vitiated *Annavaaha srotas*.
- *Durgandha*- the foul smell of *Pureesha (Pureesha vaha srotas)*
- *Gradhita antra* - inflammation of the intestinal mucosa (*Pureesha vaha srotas*)

The probable *vyadhis* or diseases that manifest due to vitiation of *Agni* at this level are.

*Grahani, Arsas* (along with *Apanavata prakopa* at *Guda vali*), *Atisara* (associated *vata prakopa* at *mutra sweda pureeshasaya*)

**Nidana for Agnidusti at the level 2- Pittadharakala**  
*Tyaktwaa vidhim (ahara vidhivisheshayatana)* not following the rules of food consumption as said by Acharyas *Loulyaat bhuktam*- Greed for food, above two, are the main causes of most lifestyle disorders.

#### Treatment at level 2

*Grahani chikitsa*, Analysing the cause of *agni dusti* and treating the cause depending on the state of *Agni*.

#### Treatment is based on the strength of Agni.

*Sneha-Churna, Asava*, and *arista* can be advised. *Mandendhana & Upavasa*-light diet and fasting if *Agni* strength is mild, *yavagu*, and *ghrita* if *Agni* is moderate. In *Teekshna agni* conditions *Madhura rasa, guru, ahara*, and *Chatuh Snehas* with *milk* are advised.

#### Treatment basing on status of Mala.

*Apakwa pureesha- Deepaniya ghrita, Malabaddhata (Khatina mala)*- *ghrita with lavana* can be advised.

#### Level 3 KOSTA / ABHYANTARA ROGAMARGHA

At the level of *Koshta or Mahasrotas*, manifested diseases are considered rather than individual symptoms due to vitiated *Agni*, as the involvement of *Mahasrotas* occurs following the *samprapti* of the disease and not just the vitiated *Agni*.

#### Clinical symptoms at level 3

Clinical assessment of *Dehaagni vitiation* can be appreciated by observing the diseases common for *abhyantara rogamarga* like *Jwara, Atisara, chardi, kasa, Swasa, Hikka, Udara, Aanaha, Pleeha,*

*Visuchika, Visarpa, Swayadhu, Gulma, Arsa, Vidradhi.*

#### Treatment at level 3

Treatment at this level is the line of treatment as described to the individual diseases along with emphasis on the maintenance of the physiological state of *Agni*.

#### Level 4 DHATUS

Assessment of *Agni* vitiation at the level of *Dhatus-DHATU VAISHAMYAM* is due to *VISAHMAAGNI*, whereas *DHATU VISOSHANA* is due to *TEEKSHNAAGNI WITH MANDA INDHANA*.

#### Clinical symptoms at level 4

The following are the list of diseases that manifest due to vitiated *Doshas* and *Agni* at *Dhatu* level.,

- *Kayaagni* vitiation along with *Kapha dusti* causes *Yakshma, Peenasa, Meha, and Kaphavyadhis*
- *Agni* vitiation with *Pitta dusti* results in., *Daaha, Trishna, Amlapitta, and Pittajavyadhis*
- Vitiation of *Vata* and *Agni* results in *Vata vyadhis, Mutrarogas, Kukshirogas, and Rasaadi dhatu rogas.*
- **Treatment at level 4**
- Treatment at this level is as per the *chikitsa sutra* or the main line of treatment given for the diseases along with maintenance of thirteen *agnis*.

## CONCLUSION

*Agni* and its various factors which participate directly or indirectly in the metabolic processes play an important role in the assessment of various clinical symptoms and their site of cause. Understanding *Dehagni hetus* clinically and assessment of the vitiation of *Agni* at various levels helps to plan the course of treatment and also aids in understanding the root cause of the disease. Clinically *Agni* gains a major role in the diagnosis, prognosis, and planning the treatment of the disease.

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