

## A REVIEW OF AMLAPITTA (HYPERACIDITY)

Preeti D. Bairagi<sup>1</sup>, Vivek S. Chandurkar<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>MD Scholar, <sup>2</sup>Professor and HOD,

Dept. of Kayachikitsa, SGR Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Solapur, Maharashtra, India

Email: [bairagipreeti74@gmail.com](mailto:bairagipreeti74@gmail.com)

Published online: November, 2017

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### ABSTRACT

*Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity) is one of the commonest *vyadhi* (disease) of *annavahasrotas* (Gastrointestinal track disorder), caused by vitiated *agni* (appetite). *Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity) is a condition where *amlaguna* (Sour taste) of *pachak pitta* (gastric juice) increases due to *samata*. *Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity) has been considered as *Pitta Kaphapradhana Tridoshaja Vyadhi* (compound disease caused by multiple factors). *Aacharya Kashyap* has accepted the involvement of three *Doshas* in *Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity) while *Madhvakara* has accepted the dominance of *Pitta* in this disease. *Aacharya Charak* has not mentioned *Amlapitta* as separate disease but described in *Grahani* (intermittent loose motions followed by constipation) as one of its *Lakshana* (symptom). According to *Ayurveda* many disorders are due to vitiated *Agni* (appetite). Various factors and progressive changes in lifestyle such as, adaptation of newer & newer food materials, junk foods, fast foods, changes in method of cooking, occupational hazards etc. have precipitated the increasing trend of the disease. Along with those stimulating factors tremendous stress, anxiety had significantly aggravated the disease including *Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity). This is a life style problem & those who are addicted with tobacco, alcohol as well as excess of packaged food rich in salt content can easily caught by this disease. *Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity) can be co-related with hyperacidity as far as modern science is concerned. It simply means an increased level of acid in the stomach. The stomach secretes hydrochloric acid, a digestive juice that breaks down food particles into their smallest form to aid digestion. When there is an excessive amount of hydrochloric acid in the stomach, the condition is known as hyperacidity. It is a disease of gastrointestinal track, due to abnormal secretion of gastric and pancreatic enzymes. In medical science it is described as Acid Peptic Disorder (APD). In *Ayurveda* it is described as *Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity). It is quite common disease prevailing all over the world.

**Keywords:** *Agni, Amlapitta, Annavahasrotas, Hyperacidity, Pachak Pitta, Samata etc.*

### INTRODUCTION

The word “*Amlapitta*” (Hyperacidity) comprised of two words- ‘*Amla*’ (Sour) and ‘*Pitta*’<sup>1</sup> (Gastric juice). In *Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity) the quantity of *Pachaka Pitta* (Gastric juice) is increased, its quality

of normal bitter taste (alkaline) is changed to more sour taste (acidic) as a result of fermentation. Because of this increased sour quality of *Pitta* (Gastric juice) it is called *Amlapitta*<sup>2</sup> (Hyperacidity). It is a

disease of gastrointestinal track, due to abnormal secretion of gastric and pancreatic enzymes. In medical science it is described as Acid Peptic Disorder (APD). In Ayurveda it is described as Amlapitta (Hyperacidity). It is quite common disease prevailing all over the world.

*Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity) is one of the commonest *vyadhi* (disease) of *annavahasrotas* (Gastrointestinal track disorder),<sup>3</sup> caused by vitiated *agni* (Appetite). *Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity) is a condition where *amlaguna* (Sour) of *pachak pitta* (Gastric juice) increases due to *samata* causing *vyadhi* (Disease) condition. *Aacharya Kashyap* has accepted the involvement of three *Doshas* in *Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity)<sup>4</sup> while *Madhavkara* has accepted the dominance of *Pitta* in this disease.<sup>5</sup> *Aacharya Charak* has not mentioned *Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity) as separate disease but described in *Grahani* (intermittent loose motions followed by constipation) as one of its *Lakshana*<sup>6</sup> (symptom). According to *Ayurveda* many disorders are due to vitiated *Agni* (Appetite). Due to various factors in the progressive civilization of the present day like speedy environmental changes, adaptation of newer & newer food materials, change in method of cooking, atmospheric pollution, encroachment of various chemical agents in newer life style, occupational hazards etc. have precipitated the increasing trend of the diseases. Along with those stimulating factors tremendous stress and anxiety have significantly aggravated the disease including *Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity). This is a life style problem & those who are addicted with tobacco, alcohol as well as excess of packaged food rich in salt content can easily caught by this disease.

*Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity) is gastrointestinal disorder described in *Ayurveda*. It can be correlate with hyperacidity in modern medical science. In the process of digestion, HCL plays important role. HCL converts inactive enzyme pepsinogen into active enzyme pepsin which then helps digestion by breaking the bonds linking amino acids, a process called proteolysis.<sup>7</sup>

Hyperacidity simply means an increased level of acid in the stomach. The stomach secretes hydro-

chloric acid, a digestive juice that breaks down food particles into their smallest form to aid digestion. When there is an excessive amount of hydrochloric acid in the stomach, the condition is known as hyperacidity.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup>

According to *Aacharya Vagabhat*, *Pachak Pitta* (Gastric juice) acts as *Agni* (Appetite). When its liquid form is lost, this *Agni* is important in *Annapachan Prakriya* (Digestion).<sup>10</sup> So this *Pachak pitta* (Gastric juice) is correlated to HCL & *Amalapitta* is condition where *pachak Pitta* (Gastric juice) is increased in quantity. Hence *Ayurvedic Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity) disease entity can be correlated with Hyperacidity. *Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity) is classified according to the *Dosha Dushti* (defect in juices) and *Sthana Dushti* (place) of the *Strotasa* (system). *Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity) having symptoms like *Avipak* (Indigestion), *Kalma* (general debility), *Utklesh* (Nausea), *Tikta Amlaudagar* (Burping), *Gaurava* (Heaviness), *HrdakanthaDaha* (Heartburn), *Aruchi* (loss of taste).<sup>11</sup>

### Causes of Amlapitta

#### 1) Aharaj (Dietary cause):

This includes various kinds of faulty dietary habits which are against the normal habits as mentioned in *Ayurveda*. According to *Kashyap Virudha Ahara* (Incompatible diet), *Adhyasana* (food after meal), *Ama Bhojana* (to consume food although previous food is not digested), *AjeernaBhojana* (constant indigestion), *Guru* (heavy meal), *Snigdha Bhojana* (oily food), *Ati Rukshanna* (excessive dry food), etc. causes *Agnimandya* (loss of appetite) that leads *Amlapitta*(hyperacidity)<sup>12</sup>. *Acharya Madhavakara* says that increased *Pitta* (gastric juice) is aggravating factor responsible for *Amlapitta* (hyperacidity) disease<sup>13</sup>.

#### 2) Viharaja :

This includes the factors which are against the rules of normal hygienic behavior. It is of two types –

a) Excessive physical work.

b) No or less physical work.

Excessive physical work includes more exercise than the normal, *Ratri-jagarana*, *Dhatukshaya*, *Upavasa* etc, which causes *Vata Pitta Prakopa*. *Kashyapa* mentions that the causative factor may be *Vegadharana*, *Divaswapa* after intake of *Bhojana*, more *Snana*. So, the above factor causes *Jatharagnimandya* that leads to the disease *Amlapitta*.

### 3) **Agantuja Hetu:**

In this group factors like constant and excessive consumption of alcohol, smoking, tobacco, beverages and other irritant and toxic substances are included. These substances cause local irritation in the stomach which eventually secretes more gastric juice and cause *Amlapitta*.

### 4) **Manasika Hetu:**

Psychological factor also plays an important role in the maintaining of health.

**Other causes-** Living in *anoopadeshai*, *Sharadritu* (autumn season), addiction of alcohol, smoking, tobacco chewing, prolonged intake of NSAIDS (pain killers), *helicobacter pylori* infection. All the above factors result in excessive increase of 'Pitta dosha' in body and exhibits symptoms of *amlapitta*.

### According to **Dosha Dushti:**

**i) Kashyapa Samhita-** here three types are mentioned:-

a) *Vataja Amlapitta- Shoola, Angasada, Jrumbha,*

*Snigdthaguna Upasaya*<sup>13</sup>.

b) *Pittaja Amlapitta- Bhrama, Vidaha, Sitaupasaya, Svadupasaya*<sup>14</sup>.

c) *Kaphaja Amlapitta- Gaurava, Chhardi, Rukshaguna, Upasaya, Usmaguna, Upasaya*<sup>15</sup>.

**ii) Madhava Nidan-** here four types are mentioned:-

a) *Vatadhikya Amlapitta-Kampa, Pralapa, Murchha, Chimchimitva, Gaatraavasada, Shoola, Tamodarshana, Vibhrama, Moha, Harsha*<sup>16</sup>.

b) *Kaphadhikya Amlapitta- Kapha, Nishthivana, Gaurava, Jadata, Aruchi, Shita, Saada, Vami Lepa, Agnimandya, Kandu, Nindra*<sup>17</sup>.

c) *Vata-Kaphadhikya Amlapitta- Combined Lakshanas of Vataja Amlapitta and Kaphaja Amlapitta*<sup>18</sup>.

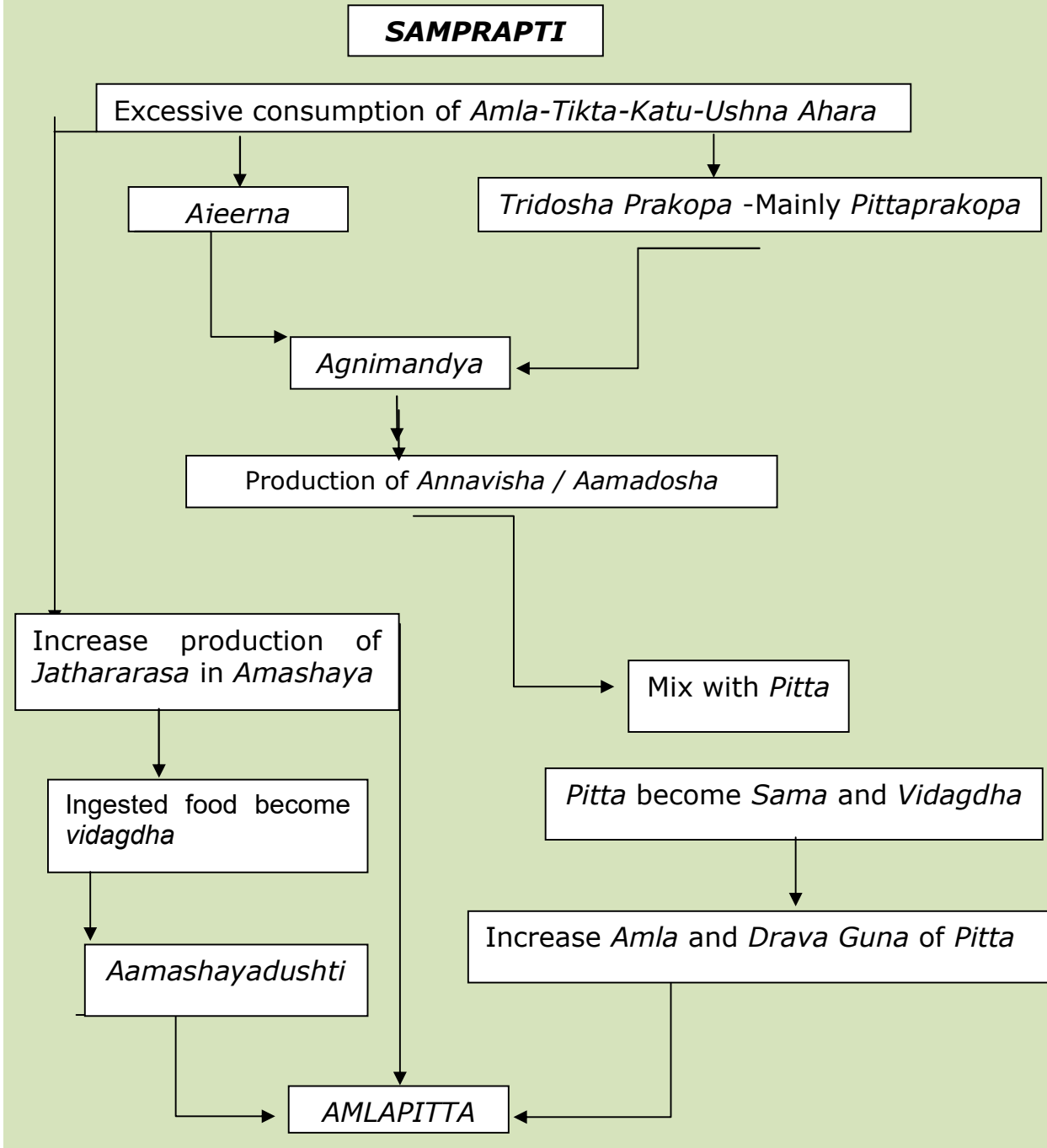
d) *Shleshma- Pittaja Amlapitta- Tiktodgara, Amlodgara, Katu Udgara, Hrididaha, Kukshidaha, Kanthadaha, Bhrama, Murchha, Aruchi, Chhardi, Alasya, Shiroruja, Praseka, Mukha Madhurya.*

### According to **Sthana Dushti:**

**1)Urdhwaga Amlapitta-***Vamana Harita, Pitta, Neela, Krushna, Rakta, Raktabha, Mansodakabha Varna, Atiamla, Atipichhila, Achha, Shleshmanujata, Vividha Rasa, Amlodgara, Tiktodgara, Kantha-Hrid-Kukshi Daha, ShirahShoola, Kapha-Pittaja Jwara Kandu, Mandala, Pidaka*<sup>19</sup>

**2) Adhoga Amlapitta -***Trushna, Daha, Murchha, Moha, Hrilasa, Kotha, Agnimandya, Harsha, Sveda, Anga Pittata*<sup>20</sup>.

**Samprapti of amlapitta: (chart 1: Flow chart Samprapti of Amlapiitta)**



**COMPLICATIONS:**

If not treated timely or if unwholesome diet, regimen and habits continued, it may lead to gastric ulcer, chronic gastritis, duodenitis, irritable bowel syndrome, mal-absorption, anaemia, peptic stenosis.

**Do's (Pathya) and don't in Amlapitta-**

- Light food, coconut water, articles having cooling properties.

- Vegetables like white pumpkin, bitter gourd, matured ash gourd, leafy vegetables except methi.
- Wheat, old rice, barley, green gram, sugar candy, cucumber
- Fruits like gooseberry, dry grapes, black grapes, sweet lime, pomegranate, fig, dry fig,
- Take adequate amount of fluids like pomegranate juice, lemon juice, amla juice, sweetlime juice, medicated water with ushir (wala) or coriander seeds, or laja (puffed rice) lukewarm water
- Dadimpak (sweet preparation made of pomegranate) *Moramla* (jam made from amla), *gulkand* (jam made from rose petals) with milk
- A cup of lukewarm milk after every two or three hours
- One teaspoonful of ghee with warm milk
- Take adequate sleep & rest
- Practice Yoga, pranayam, meditation

#### Don'ts in *Amlapitta*

- Avoid excessive spicy, sour and salty substances
- Avoid fried and junk food items
- Do not remain hungry. Avoid fast.
- Do not overeat, take small frequent meals
- Avoid untimely and irregular food habit
- Avoid foods containing excess amount of garlic, salt, oil, chillies, etc.
- Avoid rice, curd and sour fruits.
- Avoid lying down immediately after food and in supine position. The best recommended position is left lateral
- Avoid smoking, alcohol, tea, coffee and aspirin type drugs.
- Avoid stress

#### DISCUSSION

*Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity) is a disease that prevalent all over the world. The increasing prevalence rate is a constant challenge to the research workers. The disease *Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity) is a common functional disease of *Annavaha srotas*. Materialistic life

style provokes people to run behind a busy, stressful life with least concern towards proper food habit.

*Amla*+ *Pitta* = *Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity) the term *Amla* (Sour) refers to a particular type of taste equated with the sour taste which causes excessive salivary secretion. *Pitta* is a bodily chemical substance which is mainly responsible for the maintenance of the process of digestion, transformation and transmutation. The above classical description of *Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity) emphasizes that *Amlapitta* is a patho-physiological condition in which the *Pitta* gets vitiated in terms of *Vruddhi* (excessiveness) and sourness of *Pitta* is increased.

Change in function of *Agni* (Appetite) leads to various diseases. It is common for many of us to face a burning sensation in stomach and chest at times. This is in most cases due to excessive secretion of acidic material in the stomach. In *Ayurvedic* terminology, this is referred as *Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity).

#### CONCLUSION

*Amlapitta* can be correspond with Hyperacidity of modern medical science. In process of digestion HCL i.e. hydrochloric acid plays important role and it converts inactive enzyme pepsinogen into active enzyme pepsin which then helps digestion by breaking the bonds linking amino acids, a process called as proteolysis.

According to *Ayurveda Pachak pitta* (Gastric juice) acts as *Agni* (Appetite). When its liquid form is lost, this *Agni* (Appetite) is important in digestion. So this *Pachak pitta* (Gastric juice) is similar to HCL & *Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity) is condition where *Pachak Pitta* (Gastric juice) is increased in quantity. Hence, *Ayurvedic Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity) entity can be corresponded with Hyperacidity. If not treated timely and if incompatible diet, regimen and habits continued, it may lead to gastric ulcer, chronic gastritis, duodenitis, irritable bowel syndrome, malabsorption, anaemia, and stenosis.

In modern literature, some technical terms have been used to indicate an abnormal condition resembling to *Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity). These terms 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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**Source of Support: Nil**

**Conflict Of Interest: None Declared**

How to cite this URL: Preeti D. Bairagi & Vivek S. Chandurkar: A Review Of Amlapitta (Hyperacidity). *International Ayurvedic Medical Journal* {online} 2017 {cited November, 2017} Available from: [http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/849\\_854.pdf](http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/849_854.pdf)