

# Critical appraisal of Amlapitta and its preventives - An Ayurvedic review

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## Abstract -

This era of evidence based medicine and IT revolution in 21st Century, witnessed an up gradation of alternative medicines as an ultimate solution to the numerous unanswered puzzles in medical field. Ayurveda stands apart from the rest of medical fraternity with its holistic approach to disease management on the basis of Nidana Panchaka that enables this eternal science to effectively handle many apparently minor ailments which certainly hamper the quality of life of humanity. Amlapitta is a disease which is commonly found in almost all parts of the world. Today, wide changes have occurred in life of all. Unhealthy diet, faulty behaviors as smoking, alcohol consuming, drug abuse, stress and physical inactivity are the presentations of unhealthy life style that they are used as dominant form of lifestyle which is not suitable for our normal physiology of digestion of body. Signs and symptoms of Amlapitta are very similar to gastritis or hyperacidity. According to conventional medical science the most common causes of gastritis are H. pylori infections and prolonged use of Non-Steroidal Anti Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs). Estimates of the prevalence of dyspepsia in western adults generally range from 10% to 20%. These diseases are chronic in nature and affecting to adults mostly. Hence there is a need to understand the concepts and first line treatments. The great Ayurvedic Acharya Charaka and Kashyapa has described very vividly the etiological factors pathogenesis as well as pathya-pathya for the amlapitta various place among Ancient literatures. Diseases. Annavisha produced due to Ajirna when mixes with Pittadi Dosha and lodges in Amashaya then it produces the Amlapittadi diseases. This paper attempt has been made to gather and redefine clinical information of the disease Amlapitta from classics of Ayurveda and explain it in contemporary perspectives for better clinical skills for management of the disease.

**Key Words-** Ayurveda, Amlapitta, Gastritis

## Introduction-

Ayurveda is the only medical science which teaches the understanding of life. What exactly is life, what do we expect from life, and what is the art of living. Ayurveda is a preventive medical science and it has curative property too. Ayurveda is based on two principles i.e. maintaining Swaasthya of the Swastha Vyakti (Healthy individuals) and curing the Vikara of the Aatura (diseased persons). Those who take proper

diet and drinks live a long life and those not doing so die prematurely. Proper maintenance of the power of digestion also depends upon the intake of proper diet (Agnivesha et.al.). In the society, due to improper *Ahara* (diet) and *Vihara* (lifestyle), incidences of diseases are increasing in day-to-day life. If proper dietary pattern is not followed by the patient, nobody can cure these diseases (Agnivesha et.al.). Chronic diet-related diseases are on rise around the world due to new lifestyles and eating habits ( Popkin BM at.al.) Gastrointestinal disturbances are increasing and India is no exception to this. Among them, non-ulcer dyspepsia, a gastrointestinal tract (GIT) disorder, acquires majority of the share (Talley NJ at.al). The first and foremost task in Ayurvedic disease management is a proper understanding of its nidam samprapti of amlapitta. In this respect Acharya Charaka has told that Agni is responsible for Ayu, Varna, Bala, Swasthya, Utsaha, Upachaya, Prabha, Ojo & Teja and it also gives the importance as long life in the functioning state and even death, in un functioning state of Agni (Agnivesha et.al.). Acharya Charaka and Acharya Vagbhata (As. Hr. Ni. 12/1) has clearly defined the role of Agni in the etiopathogenesis of all the human ailments.

Vagbhata has described that all the diseases are caused by the mandagni. As the disease arises from the heterogeneous etiological factors, it is difficult to manage it with single effective treatment. Though this is very common disease fall in with in the present culture, it is the one that which bears the direct impact of the dietetic and lifestyle errors that a person indulges. The scientific solution for any disease lies in cause and course of disease itself. This paper attempt has been made to gather and redefine clinical information of the disease Amlapitta from classics of Ayurveda and explain it in contemporary perspectives. This helps to provide comprehensive understanding of the factors, principles and for better clinical skills for management of the disease.

### **Definition of Amlapitta -**

The word “Amlapitta” is comprised of two words – ‘Amla’ and ‘Pitta’. Amlapitta is a pathological condition in which there is vitiation and exaggeration of Pitta dosha in the body. Here, the original Katu rasa of Pitta is changed into Amla rasa, that implies to a disease in which sourness of pitta gets increased. Acharya Chakrapani in his commentary on Charak Samhita defines - “Amlapittam Cheti amlagunoundriktam pittam” - the augmented or increased amla guna of pitta is known as Amlapitta. Another writer of Madhav nidanas namely Shrikanthadutta in his Madhukosha vyakhya defines - “Vidahadhyamla gunaoundrikta pittam amlapittam” i.e. the pitta becomes augmented or vidagdha because of excessive increase of amla guna of pitta & “Amlam vidagdhama cha tat pittam amlapittam” the pitta which attains amla guna & vidagdhata is called as amlapitta

### **Historical review -**

To have a systematic understanding of the disease one has to trace out its original concepts, various advances made in understanding of this disease from time to time. The Vedic Kala has no connotation of

such disease then Acharya Charaka has not mentioned Amlapitta as a separate entity but Amlapitta is mentioned in the chapter of Grahani, which indicates some similarities in the Nidana, Samprapti, Chikitsa and Pathya in both the diseases. Charaka samhita has many scattered references of Amlapitta which are likewise - Amlapitta has been listed as an indication of eight types of milk, Kulattha has been considered as a chief causative factors of Amlapitta, Excessive use of Lavana rasa has been considered as a causative factor of Amlapitta. Word Amlapitta is also not found in Sushruta samhita. Acharya Sushruta has mentioned symptom known as Amlika, results from excessive use of Lavan rasa (Su.su.42/9), is similar to Amlapitta. Acharya Vagabhata has not described the Amlapitta as diseases entity. But the description of Paittika Hridroga seems very nearer to the Amlapitta (A. H. ni.5/41). After Kashyapa Samhita, Madhava Nidana is the first available text which gives importance to Amlapitta and describes its etiopathogenesis and symptomatology in detail along with two clinical sub type Urdhvaga and Adhoga Amlapitta. Acharya kashyapa believed that the disease is caused by the vitiation of Tri-doshas causing Mandagni leading to Vidagdhajirna ultimately manifesting as Amlapitta.

Amlapitta and its upadravas may consider in gastric syndrome or acid peptic diseases according to the modern science. A survey of people suffering from acid peptic diseases in India revealed that over 25% of the people are suffering from acid peptic diseases. Therefore much work has been expected from the Ayurvedic scholars to overcome the disease Amlapitta.

### **Process of digestion as per Ayurveda-**

Prana Vayu, which having the karma of Aadana, helps the Anna to enter in the Kostha where the Anna gets disintegrated by fluids and softened by unctuous substances. Samana Vayu stimulates the Jatharagni which is situated in Amashaya and as a result, proper digestion process starts. Agni performs normal functions when food is consumed in appropriate time & with appropriate quantity and serves as promotor of longevity (Chakrapani ).

As fire helps to boil the rice mixed with water for proper cooking, in the same way Agni stimulates the digestion process for the food substances which are present in Amashaya for the production of nutritional and waste products. The taken Ahara undergoes two processes for complete digestion that is Avasthapaka is the first stage of digestion which is completed by Pachakagni in Annavaha srotasa. In this Paka, three stages occurs which are as under Madhura Avasthapaka, Amla Avasthapaka, Katu Avasthapaka. Vipaka is the second phase of digestion that completed by Bhutagni and Dhatavagni. Vipaka is start after Avasthapaka. The food is taken (Prakarshati Nayati) into stomach (kostha) by Prana Vayu. The propelled food gets mixed with the Drava present in the Amashaya is broken down (Bhinna Samghatam) and softened. The outcome of action of Bodhaka Kapha on food, which is essentially Madhura in taste is seem to be continued and completed in Urdhva Amashaya. When food enters in the mouth, it meets Bodhaka Kapha, which is responsible for taste perception (A. H.12/16).

Modern physiology indicates that the end products of digestion in the buccal cavity mark the beginning of the Madhura bhava of Madhura avastha paka, which is seen to be continued further and completed in the Urdhvamashaya. Thus, salivary amylase initiate break down of starch. Its function is to break certain chemical bonds between glucose units in the starches. This activity reduces the long chain polysaccharides to disaccharides maltose the disaccharide maltotriose and  $\alpha$ -dextrines. The digestion of the carbohydrates by salivary amylase continues in the fundal part stomach for nearly one hour. So; we can say that the duration of Madhur Avastha paka is nearly one hour. Second most is Amla Avastha Paka:

The food may remain in the fundus for about an hour without mixing in gastric juice. The beginning of Amla Avastha Paka is brought about by the hydrochloric acid secreted by the cells of the mucus membrane of the stomach. It might be due to secretagogue influence of the food which stimulates hydrochloric acid in the stomach, and food attains Amla Bhava (acidification). This aspect of Prapaka does not seem to have anything to do with the digestion of the end products of the Madhura Paka i.e. substances the taste of which is Madhura (sweet carbohydrates). Thus, the HCL secreted by Parietal (oxyntic cells) cause partial digestion (unfolding of proteins) in the food. The Pepsin (which is activated from pepsinogen) in the presence of HCL break certain peptide bonds. Gastric lipase splits short chain triglycerides in the better fat molecule found in milk to fatty acid monoglyceride. This enzyme best operate at a pH 5 to 6 and has a limited role in adult stomach. The come of this phase of digestion is the production of acidified chyme, which has been characterized by both Acharya Charaka and Vagbhata as Pakwapakvam or Kinchit Pakvam Kinchit Apakvam i.e. partly digested. According to him the food in this stage is not yet fit for absorption and utilization in metabolic processes described by Ayurveda as Nistha Paripaka (Chakrapani comm. on Ch. chi. 15/10).

Thereafter, the partly digested food which has attained Amlabhava is moved down, Acchaya Pitta is secreted. This movement is assisted by Vyana Vayu. By Acchaya Pitta is meant Aghana or light. The term Aghana has also been interpreted as Swatcha or clears (comm. of Chakrapani and Gangadhara on Cha Chi 15/10). It is obvious that the concept of Achcha Pitta comprehends the Gallbladder, Bile and Pancreatic juice which, together have been shown for being responsible for the subsequent stage of the digestion of fats, proteins and carbohydrate in the small intestine. The third aspect of Avastha Paka is Katu Bhava, this is related to the way in which the food residue or Anna Kitta is dealt in this part of GIT. Acharya Charaka says 'the material passed down from the Amashaya, having reached the Pakwashaya is dehydrated and converted into lumps by heat and pungent gas being produced in this process.

### **Etiological factors-**

Nidana means the causative factors of the disease. According to Acharya Sushruta, nidana parivarjana is the first line of treatment of the disease. The knowledge of nidana is useful in proper management of the disease as well as in the prevention of the disease. The meticulous search in the classical texts reveals that The

Amlapitta vyadhi is caused due to Viruddhashana and Pittaprakopaka bhojana and pana. Individuals with a Pitta imbalance are susceptible to hyperacidity, peptic ulcers, and some types of inflammatory disorders. The pathogenesis of amlapitta involves three important factors i.e. Agnimandya, Ama & Annavaha Strotodushti. Along with this, the vitiation of pitta leading to quantitative & qualitative increase of pachaka pitta especially in its ama & drava guna gives rise to amlapitta. The gastric glands produce acids, which help break down food during digestion. The etiological factors may be discussed under following groups.

#### **Aharaja Hetu (Dietary factors) :**

The first and the foremost group of etiological factors of Amlapitta may be considered as the dietary factors. The food consumed against the codes of dietetics is dietetics i.e. Ahara Vidhividhana and Aharavidhi Visesayatana is included. Various types of incompatible substances, excess of Pitta aggravating factors like Katu, Amla, Vidahi etc. and untimely consumption of food are the factors against the dietetic code and they are directly responsible for vitiation of pitta and agni. The type of food consumed now a days as samosa, burger, pizza, Chinese food items, excessive use of chilly, clove, mustard, garam masala (spice mixture), excessive intake of salty and sour foods like chips, sauces and soups. Eating of stale, fermented foods, Oily foods, excessive acidic diet and Consumption of Maida products in large quantity. Excessive intake of tea/coffee, Carbonated drinks, bakery food items lesser intake of water. Intake of incompatible food like non-veg., pizza followed by milk shake or carbonated drinks. These are the foods that can be considered as modern-day examples of Abhisyandi (heavy diet), Atisnigdha (Unctuous) and AtiRuksha (Very coarse), dushit and paryushit anna sevana , which has been motioned as Aharaja Hetu i.e Dietary factors in the Ayurveda.

#### **Viharaj hetu**

For disease prevention and sound health judicious code of habits and conducts should be followed. One should avoid the habits which are not conducive to body physiology and follow the good codes meticulously to maintain the equilibrium of the body and sustain good health.

- Excessive use of Analgesics specially NSAIDs
- Lack of rest, fast moving lifestyle
- Suppression of natural urges
- Habit of day sleeping after taking food
- Habit of consuming alcohol, smoking and chewing tobacco
- Habit of taking bath immediately after food
- Improper sleeping schedule
- Eating too late at night regimens
- Sleeping immediately after meals

Excessive intake of the alcohol, caffeine and nicotine products erodes the mucosal lining of stomach and stimulate the increased hydrochloric acid secretion causing gastritis. Having a bath immediately after food may hamper the digestion by increasing circulation towards periphery and reducing it in abdominal region thus decreasing the gastric juice secretion causing Ajeerna in turn leading to Amlapitta. Day sleeping after food will increase the kapha leading to formation of Ama.

### **Manasika Hetu (Psychogenic factor):**

Psychology also plays a great role in maintaining the health and psychological activities. The aberrant psychology like excessive anxiety, worries, jealousy, greed, anger, fear and Job dissatisfaction etc would affect the physiology of digestion. Due to these psychological factors the secretory and motor functions of the gastro intestinal tract are disturbed. This may either result in lesser secretion of the digestive juice or secreted at improper times and sometimes it may be secreted in excessive quantity. All these conditions aggravate Pitta and arrange agni which leads to Amlapitta. Living in anoopadeshai, Bengal and coastal region, Sharadritu (Autumn season) Adhyashana causes aggravation of Doshas, and due to insufficient rest to the stomach, the mucus membrane is hampered which will lead to local damage

## **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS**

### **Symptoms**

In Ayurvedic classics, no specific Purvarupas of Amlapitta are mentioned, Agnimandya and Ajirna are the successive stages evolving towards the manifestation of Amlapitta. Persons with the symptoms of Annavaha and Purishavaha Srotodusti also fall in the category of purvarupa. Kashyapa, MadhavaKara and Harita have described lakshanas of Amlapitta. Later workers of SangrahaKala like Bhavamishra, Vangasen and Yogaratnakara have followed Madhavkar. The classical initial symptoms are Weakening of digestive fire (agnimandya), indigestion (Avipaka), chestburn (Kanthadaha), exhaustion (Klama), Sour or bitter belching (Tikta Amla Udgara), Heaviness in abdomen (Gaurava), loss of appetite (Aruchi), Regurgitation of food or sour substance (Utklesha), burning sensation in the chest (Hritdaha). According to the Gati of Pitta, Madhava has described 2 types of Amlapitta. i.e.

UrdhvagaAmlapitta and AdhogaAmlapitta. According to the involvement of Dosha Kashyapa and Madhava both have divided Amlapitta as below -

<b>Acharya Kashyapa</b>	<b>Acharya Madhav</b>
Vatika Amlapitta	Sanila Amlapitta
Pittika Amlapitta	Sanila Kapha Amlapitta
Slesmika Amlapitta	Sakapha Amlapitta

Table : types of Amlapitta

Types	Direction	Symptoms
Urdhvaga Amlapitta	Upwards	Vomiting, Headache, Burning sensation, Loss of appetit
Adhoga Amlapitta	Downwards	Thirst, Burning sensation, fainting, rashes on skin etc
Vatika Amlapitta		Tremors, Delirium, fainting, darkness before eyes
Pittika Amlapitta		Salivation, sweet sensation in mouth
Slesmika Amlapitta		Weakness, Coldness, Vomiting

### Complication

Complication/ upadravas of Amlapitta have been not described by ancient Acharyas except Kashyapa who has mentioned eight upadravas (Complication) and presence of these render disease incurable. These complications are Jvara, Atisara, Panduta, Shula, Shotha, Aruchi, Bhrama, Grahani Roga

### MANAGEMENT

The main key for treating Amlapitta is to improve digestion. As the saying goes “Prevention is better than cure” it is better to avoid all the causative factors of Amlapitta.

- Avoid excessive salty, oily, sour and spicy foods specially chilies
- Avoid heavy and untimely food specially late night
- Avoid smoking and alcohol intake specially after the eating
- Food should consist mainly of bitters like bitter gourd, matured ash gourd
- Include barley, wheat, old rice and green gram in diet.
- Avoid overcooked, stale and contaminated food.
- The food must be properly cooked
- Follow mental relaxation techniques

We can take some important single Ayurvedic drugs useful in Amlapitta

Shatavari, Yashtimadhu, Amalaki (Indian gooseberry), Sunthi (dry ginger) twice a day with water while we have feeling of acidity. Some important Pharmacopeia Preparations are also can be used like - Kamdudha Rasa, Sutashekhar Rasa, Prawal Pishti, Prawal Panchamrit Rasa, Dhatri Lauha, Shankh Bhasma, Swarna Mashik Bhasma, Amlapittantaka louha, Narikela Lavan, Dashang Kwath Bhoonimbadi kwatha, Patoladi

kwatha, Gulucyadi kashaya, Amalakyadi Churna, Shatavarighrit, Yashtighrit, Sukumaaraghritam, Dadimadighrta, Nalikerekhanda, Avipattikar Churna.

### **Pathyapathya-**

Pathya- Follow the meal times, 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 pomogranate juice, lemon juice, amla juice, sweetlime juice, Medicated water with ushir (wala) or coriander seeds, or laja (puffed rice). Warm 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, Vegetables like white pumpkin, bitter gourd, okra, all leafy vegetables can be eaten except methi which should be definitely avoided. Fruits like black grapes, sweet lime, pomogranate, fig, dry fig, black resins. Take adequate sleep & rest, Practice Yoga, Pranayam, meditation & exercise regularly, Apathya - 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. very often, 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

### **Conclusion-**

Amlapitta is considered to be a gastrointestinal disorder caused due to suppression of Jatharagni by the increased Drava guna and Amla guna of Pachaka Pitta affecting the Annavaaha, Rasavaaha and Purishvaaha srotasa. Another aspect of preventive medicine is mainly based upon the intake of competent foodstuffs. Ayurveda is the pioneer system to give due place to this branch. Ayurvedic cuisine includes a wide variety of dishes easy to digest. Food is considered to affect the mind as well as the body; nutrition is utilized as deeper source of health and produces the healthy life this work aims to disseminate the knowledge about the fundamental Ayurvedic principle that One has to follow code of dietetics for better health. Appropriate quantity and quality of food consumed helps to prevent and control hyperacidity. One should also take food considering one's own capacity of digestion. This paper intends to explore the richness of Ayurvedic dietetics to prevent and control the Acidity, hyperacidity and other ailments by following the dietary do's and don'ts that may helps to produce soothing effect on the inner layer of the stomach, reverses inflammatory changes and controls the digestive secretions by which hyperacidity can be tackled.



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