

Understanding Concept of Ama from Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a bygone science of life. It has its own basic concepts like *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala*, *Agni*, *Ama*, etc. *Ama* plays a major role as a causing factor of so many diseases. The knowledge about causative factors of disease helps to decide a better line of treatment. Due to *Agnimandya* digestion of food doesn't takes place properly and this further leads to the production of *Ama*. Therefore, *Agnimandya* leads to the production of *Ama* & vice versa. Basically, *Ama* is considered as *Apakva Ahara Rasa* which is produced due to *Mandagni*. Further, it circulates all over the body through *Srotas* causing *Srotovaigunya*, & plays a major role in the manifestation of various diseases. The *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala* depraved by *Ama* are known as *Sama Dosha*, *Sama Dushya*, and *Saama Mala*. If the line of treatment for the disease is planned by understanding the concept of *Sama* and *Nirama*, it would give a better result. In this review article, the concept of *Ama* is described from different *Ayurveda Samhita*'s and texts. *Ayurveda* attributes the cause of any disease to an imbalance in one or all of the *Dosha* and for successful treatment of a particular disease *Vaidya* has to determine, whether the imbalanced *Dosha* is *Saama* or *Nirama*. In this review, the article covers all points related to *Ama* from *Samhita* & available latest literature from the internet. Keywords: *Ama*, *Saama*, *Nirama*, *Agni*, *Agnimandya*, *Apakva Ahara Rasa*.

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INTRODUCTION

According to *Ayurveda*, the *Agni*, has a great significant role in good health, our body gets affected in different ways by the strength of the *Agni*. *Ama* is a Sanskrit word that literally means for things like "unripe," "uncooked," "raw," "immature," or "undigested."^[1] 'Ama' is one of the preminent basic concepts described in *Ayurveda*. It is helpful to understand the disease's pathology and determine its line of treatment. As per *Ayurveda*, *Mandagni* is one of the major causing factors for various diseases.^[2] Due to *Mandagni* proper digestion of food doesn't takes place and this further leads to the formation of *Ama*, which is responsible for the manifestation of almost all diseases.^[3] In all diseases, there are the stages of *Dosha* and *Dushya Vaishmya* (vitiation). For better treatment, it is important to understand that the

vitiated *Dosha* or *Dushya* is either *Saama* or *Nirama*. So, in this article, the concept of *Ama*, its production at different levels, and its detailed overview from *Samhita*'s have been described. *Ama* is undigested, properly unprocessed consisting of heavy, unctuous liquid, sticky, fibrous material which has foul smelling & become the cause of weakness, debility to the body, and many diseases.^[4] *Apakva ahara rasa* cannot get absorbed in the body as compared to *Prakruitaahar-rasa*, it remains to stagnate in the gastrointestinal tract. It has fermented *Swarupa* which is harmful to the body. In a nutshell, *Ama* function like a poison for the body.^[5] Disturbed dietary habits, improper sleeping patterns, unethical conduct, excessive sexual indulgence, daytime sleep, and lack of disciplinary living regimen, etc. are certain factors

that can expedite *Agnimandya* followed by the production of *Ama*. *Tridoshas*, *Dhatus*, and *Malas* are mainly get affected by *Ama* as it combines with them and causes various diseases.^[6]

In the context of Ayurvedic medicine, *Ama* refers to the events or factors which arises as a consequence of the impaired functioning of *Kayagni*. If there is a poor strength of *Jatharagni*, a residue of *Ahara Rasa* is still left behind undigested towards the end of the digestion, then it is called as *Ama* and it is the root cause of all the diseases.^[3] *Acharyas* had also stated that due to *Alpa Bala* of *Agni*, *Adhya Dhatu* i.e., *Rasa Dhatu* is not formed properly which is retained in the *Amashaya* and thus the formation of *Ama* takes place. It then further leads to the blockage of *Srotasas* which vitiate *Dhatus* and *Doshas* and causes various diseases.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the concept of *Ama*.
2. To understand *Ama* importance in deciding the line of treatment.
3. To understand the role of *Ama* in disease manifestation.

MATERIALS & METHODS –

For this conceptual study, literature had been collected from *Ayurvedic* texts like:

1. *Sushruta Samhita*
2. *Ashtang Hridaya*
3. *Ayurvediya vikriti vijnana* and *roga vijnana*
4. Modern texts, related websites, and related articles have also been searched.

Ayurvedic Samhitas and textual materials have been used for this study various references have been collected.

Materials and methods: *Ayurveda Samhita's* and textual materials have been used for this study various references have been collected. Modern texts, related websites, and related articles have also been searched.

CONCEPTUAL STUDY:

In *Ayurveda*, in various texts, there are different aspects mentioned for *Ama*. These are the following –

- *Sevan* of *Nidan* leads to vitiation of *Agni* which leads to unable to digest even less amount of food and this undigested food after getting fermented forms a poisonous substance known as *Ama*.^[7]
- Due to *Agnimandya* proper digestion of food doesn't takes place leading to the formation of *Ama*, which is responsible for the manifestation of almost all diseases.^[8]
- When *Kayagni* fails to perform normal functions then it leads to the accumulation of undigested food material inside *Amashaya*, which is the

initial *Rasa dhatu* called *Ama*. Improperly digested food has a foul smell, excess unctuousness, and develops lethargy in all body organs is called *Ama*.^[9]

- Due to the *Agnimandya*, the *Rasa* (first *Dhatu*) doesn't form properly. Due to this *Annarasa* (taken food) undergoes *Dustatva* (fermentation or putrefaction) and gets accumulated in the *Amashaya* (small intestine). This state of *Rasa* is known as *Ama*.^[10]
- Some others consider accumulated *Mala* (excretory products) as *Ama*.^[11]

On the basis of the above definitions it can be said that *Ama* is a stage of premature *Paka* before attaining its final *Paka* and this *Ama* can be formed at any level of *Agni* i.e. *Jatharagni*, *Bhutagni*, and *Dhatvagni*.

AMA NIDANA (ETIOLOGICAL FACTORS OF AMA):

One of the most common causing factors for the generation of *Ama* is *Mandagni*. The *Nidanas* which cause *Agnimandya* may produce *Ama*. In *Ayurveda*, there are various factors that are responsible for *Ama* formation which is described in various places and can be classified as follows.

Pathological Factors of *Ama* are:

- *Hetu: Agnidushti, Agnimandhkarak*
- *Dosha: Tridosha*
- *Dushya: Anna, Rasa*
- *Srotasa: Annavaha, Purishvaha*
- *Adhithan: Mahasrotasa, Grahani*

1. Aharaja Nidana: Habits that disturb *Agni* can often be implicated in the formation of *Ama*. These may be the following – *Agni* is deranged by

- *Abhojana* (fasting)
- *Ajirna Bhojana* (eating during indigestion)
- *Ati bhojana* (overeating)
- *Vishambhojana* (irregular eating)
- *Asatmya Bhojana* (intake of unsuitable)
- *Guru* (heavy), *Sheet* (cold), *Atiruksha* (too rough), *Sandushta Bhojana* (contaminated food).
- *Virrudha ahara* (Improper food combinations)
- Imbalance state of *Ahara Parinamkar Bhava* causes *Agni Vikriti* (vitiation of *Agni*) which is the main cause of *Amotpatti* (production of *Ama*).

2. Viharaja Nidana (Behavioural factors): *Mithya Vihara* means lifestyle, which is unfavourable, unwanted, and inconvenient to the body resulting in an imbalance of *Doshas*.

- *Atyambupan* (more intake of water)
- *Vishamashana* (irregular dietary habits)
- *Vegadharana* (suppression of natural urges)

- *Swapnaviparyaya* (day sleep after lunch and late night sleep or night awakening)
- *Divaswapna*
- *Ratrijagran*
- *Ativyayama*
- *Adhyashayana*
- *Bhojanottara Vyayama*
- *Virrudh Chestha*
- *Atibhojan*

3. Manasika Nidanans (Psychological factors):

Mental health condition also plays a crucial role in the production of *Ama*. Such factors have been mentioned by *Acharya Charaka* in *Vimanasthana*. Even wholesome food also taken in proper quantity, does not get digested due to

- *Chinta* (anxiety)
- *Shoka* (grief) ➤ *Bhaya* (fear)
- *Krodha* (anger)
- *Dukhashayyaprajagarana* (uncomfortable bed).

4. Others: Improper administration of *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Snehana* etc.

PATHOGENESIS OF AMA: [11]

The undigested food in *Amashaya* evinces four stages as follows.

1. **Apakva Ahara Rasa** – The undigested food lead to develop *Ajeernadi* diseases.
2. **Ama/Ama rasa** –In *Amashaya*, *Apakva Ahara Rasa* undergoes *Shukratva* (fermentation), and after some time that is known as *Ama Rasa* or *Ama*.
3. **Ama Dosha** – Later on the *Ama* develops different Pathogenic conditions during interlinkage with *Doshas*.
4. **Ama Visha** - Further, this *Ama Dosha* gradually becomes more toxic and accomplishes the qualities of *Visha* (poison) and known as *Amavisha*.

Acharya Vagbhatta had mentioned *Ama* as a condition in which the *Tridoshas*, *Malas*, and *Sapta dhatus* get combined with *Ama* and escalate in the

whole body. These mixed *Doshas* and *Dushyas* are known to be *Saama*. As its outcome, the disorders which arise in the body are known as *Saama* types of diseases. It is being able to vitiate *Doshas*, *Dushyas*, and *Malas*, responsible for the disease production. *Saama doshas* spread to all *raga marg*. It can also go to *Shakha* from *Koshta* and vice versa thereby producing all types of disease. *Ama* circulates along with *Rasa Dhatu* and accumulates in the place where it gets obstructed and becomes the site of origin of the disease. *Saama doshas* or *Dushyas* are passed from one *Srotas* to another *Srotas* and it gives rise to a disease at the place where it gets obstructed. *Ama* also become ‘*Nidanarthakara* factor’ to produce ‘*Khavaigunya*’ in any of the *Srotas* and make the seat for ‘*Sthana Samashrya*’ of provoked *Dushya* and they get conjugated at this place i.e., *Doshadushya samruchana* takes place. [12]

Role of Agni in Ama Dosha

As, the ingested food undergoes conversion at different levels, till they ultimately utilized by the cells or tissues of the body, which is brought by the *Agni*. If *Agni* is diminished or not properly work then there will be no tissue nourishment and ultimately there will be no possibility of life. *Acharya Charak* had also described about the importance of *Agni* that all the body entities such as *Bala*, *Varna*, *Swasthya*, *Utsaha*, *Upachaya*, *Prabha*, *Ojas*, *Shareera Ushma* (*Teja*), *Deha Pushti*, *Vridhhi*, are all the functions of *Agni*.

LAKSHANA OF AMA: [13]

1. *Srotorodha* (obstruction in the channels)
2. *Balabhramsa* (feeling of weakness)
3. *Gaurava* (feeling of heaviness)
4. *Alasya* (laziness)
5. *Anila Mudhata* (impaired activity of *Vata dosha*)
6. *Apaki* (indigestion)
7. *Nisthivana* (excessive salivation)
8. *Mala sanga* (constipation)
9. *Aruchi* (lack of taste)
10. *Klama* (lethargy)

Sama-Nirama Dosha Lakshan [14-15]

Dosha	Sama	Nirama
Vata	<i>Vibandha</i> , <i>Agnisada</i> , <i>Tandra</i> , <i>Antrakujana</i> , <i>Vedana</i> , <i>Shotha</i> , increase in symptoms when <i>Snehana</i> is used.	<i>Vishudha</i> , <i>Ruksha</i> , <i>Nirvibandha</i> , <i>Alpa vedana</i> , <i>Snehana</i> decreases the symptoms.
Pitta	<i>Durgandha</i> , <i>Harita</i> , <i>Shyava</i> , <i>Amla</i> , <i>Ghana</i> , <i>Guru</i> , <i>Amlika</i> , <i>KanthaHrida Daha</i> .	<i>Tamra</i> or <i>Peeta Pitta</i> , <i>Ati Ushna</i> , <i>Katu Rasa</i> , <i>Asthir</i> , <i>Pakva</i> , <i>Rodhana</i> , <i>Pachana</i> , <i>Balya</i> .
Kapha	<i>Avila</i> , <i>Tantu</i> , <i>Styana</i> , <i>Kanthauplepa</i> , <i>Durgandha</i> , <i>Kshudhanash</i> , <i>Udgarnash</i> .	<i>Fenil</i> , <i>Pindita</i> , <i>Pandu</i> , <i>Chedaka</i> , <i>Mukhshodhaka</i> , <i>Gandharahit</i> , <i>Madhur Rasa</i> etc.

Sama - Nirama Dhatu Lakshan

When *Dhatu*s mixes with the *Ama Dosha*, then they are known as *Sama Dhatu* or *Dushya* and the symptoms produced by these are same as that of the *Dhatu Pradoshaja Vikaras*. It can be simply treated by *Ama Pachana*.

Sama - Nirama Mala Lakshan

<i>Mala</i>	<i>Sama</i>	<i>Nirama</i>
Purisha	<i>Guru, Plavate Jale</i> (Immerse in water), <i>Durgandhita, Pichhila</i> (Sticky), <i>Bhransha</i> (Lack of form)	Absence of <i>Sama Dosha</i> symptoms.
Mutra	<i>Mutra Roga</i> (eg. Turbid urine high density) <i>Kukshi Roga</i> etc.	Absence of symptoms of <i>Sama Mutra</i> i.e., urine is clean, odourless etc.

Amavisha

Being the excessive *Ama* condition when there is no avoidance of aetiological factors, *Ama Dosha* is now characterized as a poison i.e., *Amavisha*. *Amavisha* is a serious toxic condition comparable to acute states of poisoning. *Acharya Vagbhata* states that, in a person who consumes mutually incompatible food substances or ingests heavy or indigestible food articles arises a condition called as *Amadosha* which exhibits a symptomatology comparable to that of *Visha* and hence, is harmful. *Amavisha* which is intensely toxic in nature, may endanger life and as the line of treatment of *Amadosha* and *Visha* are of opposite kind, the former has to be treated as one of the fatal prognoses. [Ch.V.2/12]

Ayurvedic management of Ama Dosha

Depending upon the type and severity of the *Ama*, main three approaches has been advised to treat *Ama Dosha* i.e.

1. *Langhana*
2. *Langhan Pachana*
3. *Shodhana*

Langhana means the restriction of diet or nutritious intake or fasting to rest the digestive and metabolic apparatuses of our body. *Langhana Pachana* means prescribing active medications along with the fasting. It is helpful in digesting the *Ama*. *Shodhana* means purification process or detoxification. It helps in removing the *Ama dosha* from the body altogether.

Other *Acharyas* had also described the measures to tackle with the *Ama Dosha* that are as follows:

- *Nidana Parivarjanam*
- *Langhana*
- *Swedana*
- *Ama Pachana*
- *Agni Dipana*
- *Panchakarma* i.e. *Vaman, Virechan, Nasya* etc.
- *Yoga*
- *Pranayama*
- Sour fruits and vegetables, ginger, fennel, mustard oil etc. are beneficial.

Processed and starchy food items, dairy products, salty stuffs are not beneficial and are *Apathya*.¹⁶⁻¹⁹

DISCUSSION

In *Ayurveda*, *Ama* is one of the most important fundamental concepts to recognize the pathogenesis

of diseases. As per *Acharya's*, *Ama* is the root cause of many diseases due to *Mandagni*. Due to *Jatharagnimandya*, the undigested *Ahara Rasa* forms *Apakva Ahara Rasa* known as *Ama*. In *Amashaya*, *Apakva Ahara Rasa* undergoes *Shukratva* (fermentation), and after some time that is known as *Ama Rasa* or *Ama*. – Later on, the *Ama* develops different pathogenic conditions during interlinkage with *Doshas*. Further, this *Ama Dosha* gradually becomes more toxic and accomplishes the qualities of *Visha* (poison) and known as *Amavisha*. After reviewing all these facts, it can be concluded that *Mandagni* is the root cause of the production of *Ama* but the *Agni* is not specified by most of the *Acharya's*. So, it is quite clear that the *Ama* will be produced anywhere in the body if *Agni* is not working properly. *Ama* is produced from *Ahara rasa* when it is not properly digested in the case of *Jatharagnimandya* but in the case of other *Agni's* undigested or partially digested metabolites may be *Ama*. *Amashaya* is mentioned as the place of origin of *Ama*. But considering the *Agni* at different levels *Ama* can be produced at different levels at different sites in the body. All *Acharya's* were having the same opinion that *Ama* is the root cause of many diseases. In various diseases, the main cause is the imbalance of *Doshas*. The general symptoms of *Ama* are helpful to determine whether the vitiated *Doshas* are *Saama* or *Nirama*. *Acharya Charka* mentioned that firstly, *Saama* (with *Ama*) – *Nirama* (without *Ama*) condition should be examined and then the line of treatment must be decided. The importance of *Ama* can also be observed by symptoms of *Saama-vyadhi* as it becomes easy to distinguish whether the *Lakshana* is *Saama* or either *Nirama*. To get a better line of treatment, it is very important to distinguish the disease as *Saama* or *Nirama*. *Ama* pathogenesis portrayed in the light of *Nidana panchaka* and *Shatkriyakala* along with the clinical manifestation of *Saama* condition are worth appreciation from clinicians. Different treatment principles are advised

for *Saama* and *Nirama*'s condition. In *Saama avastha - aprapana* is the main treatment whereas in *Nirama avastha - Santarpana* is advised. To avoid all kinds of *Vyapada* while treating the patient the knowledge of *Sama* and *Nirama* is necessary.

Balanced diet and lifestyle

To prevent the recurrence of *Ama*, *Ayurveda* emphasizes a balanced lifestyle. This includes eating fresh, seasonal foods that are easy to digest, practicing mindful eating, and engaging in regular physical activity. Additionally, managing stress through meditation or yoga can keep *Agni* strong and digestion healthy.

Ama is a critical concept in *Ayurveda*, representing the toxic byproducts of poor digestion that can cause a range of health problems. The key to preventing *Ama* lies in maintaining a strong *Agni* through mindful eating habits, stress management, and regular physical activity. *Ayurvedic* remedies such as fasting, herbal therapies, and *Panchakarma* can help in eliminating existing *Ama* and restoring balance to the body.

CONCLUSION

According to *Ayurveda*, *Ama* is one of the most important concepts to diagnose the pathogenesis of the disease. As mentioned in various *Ayurveda* texts the *Ama* is responsible for the development of many diseases. *Agnimandya* leads to the formation of *Ama*. *Ayurveda* attributes the cause of any disease to an imbalance in one or all of the *Doshas* and for successful treatment of a particular disease *Vaidya* has to determine, whether the imbalanced *Dosha* is *Saama* or *Nirama*. If *Vaidya* can understand this stage well and give its drug as per *Avashta*, it will give miraculous results.

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