

Conceptual Study of AMA and its Role in the Pathogenesis of Amavata

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is an ancient system of medicine aiming for the maintenance of the health of a healthy individual and eradication of disease of a diseased person. Like the theories of tridosha, saptha dhatu and trmalas, the concept of ama is very important in ayurveda. In the ayurvedic view most of the diseases have their origin as ama dosha. Ama is considered as a toxin or undigested food particles which is produced due to hypofunctioning of agni or any disturbance in the normal state of agni. Ama is also considered as unripe or unmetabolized food particle. It will lead to various pathological conditions like grahani, amavata etc. The main cause of pathogenesis of amavata is imbalance of agni which leads to the production of ama and further leads to vata prakopa along with the impairment of other doshas. Ama has a very important role in diagnosing and treatment of diseases. So here an attempt is made to understand the concept of ama from the ayurvedic and modern perspective and also the role of ama in the pathogenesis of amavata.

KEYWORDS: Ama, free radicals, agni, amavata

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of ayurveda is to maintain the health of a healthy person and to treat the illness of a diseased person. In both these cases ama is having prime importance because ama is the root cause of all diseases. In a healthy person we have to prevent the formation of ama and in a diseased person we have to eliminate the produced ama. The concept of ama is equal to contemporary concept of free radical theory. Amavata is a disease in which there is aggravation of vata dosha and accumulation of ama takes place in the joints causing stiffness and pain. So here an effort is done to study the concept of ama and to understand its role in the pathogenesis of amavata.

NIRUKTI OF AMA

The word ama is derived from am dhatu with suffix a which means improper or partially digested matter¹.

Defenition according to various acharyas

According to Amarakosha ama is something that is not properly digested and needs further digestion.

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Acharya vagbatta stated that ama is the apachita or undigested or not properly digested anna rasa which has got vitiated within the amashaya due to the hypofunctioning of the ushma.²

Acharya Bhavamishra stated that the food which is not properly digested due to the hypofunctioning of agni is called ama, which is the basic cause of many diseases.³

Vijay Rakshit has given various views about ama. These are

1. It is unripe or partially digested ahara rasa.
2. It is the accumulation of malas
3. It is the initial stage of the vitiation of doshas.⁴

CAUSES OF PRODUCTION OF AMA

Agnimandya is considered as the main cause of ama. Ajirna bhojana (having food during indigestion), upavasa or abhojana (fasting), atibhojana (excessive intake of food), vishambhojana (irregular eating pattern), asatmya bhojana (habit of intake of

unsuitable food items), guru ahara sevana (intake of heavy food), ati sheeta and ruksha ahara bhojana, dushta bhojana (contaminated foods), virudha bhojana (incompatible food intake)⁵. These are the dietary factors which leads to the amaja condition. Manasika nidanas like chinta, bhaya, krodha etc causes amaja condition. Other factors like improper administration of vamana, virechana and snehana also causes ama formation.

SWAROOPA OF AMA

Ama possess guna like drava, guru, snigdha, pichila, tantumat, dourgandhya, avipaka, asamyuktham, vishasamalingatwa.⁶

SAMAVASTHA

The interaction between ama with dosha, or dushya produces samavastha.

Acharya vagbatta has mentioned clinical features of samavastha like srotorodha, balabramsha, gourava, anilamoodatha, alasya etc. Also commentator Arunadatta has mentioned features like anaha, kantadaha, antrakoojana, amlika etc.⁷

SAMA DOSHA LAKSHANA⁸

DOSHA	LAKSHANA
vata	Vibandha Agnimandya Tandra Antrakoojana Kati -parshwa vedana Shotha toda
pitta	Durgandha Haritha or shyava varna Guru amlodgara
kapha	Avila Tantula Sandra Kantalepa udgara

SAMA MALA

MALA	SAMA LAKSHANA
pureesha	Apsu avaseedhati Dourgandyam pichilam
mutra	Udakameha Ikshumeha

AMA IN CONTEMPERORY SCIENCE

At certain site due to the impairment action of free radical scavengers, increased production of free radicals take place. These free radicals look for a site which is weak and can easily take part in electron exchange with them. At this stage symptoms of the

disease becomes very clear. The similarities which we can see in ama and free radicals are that

1. ama is produced to inequilibrium of agni at various levels whereas free radicals are produced whenequilibrium between its generation and bodys primary defence is disturbed which includes the activity of certain enzymes like superoxide dismutase.
2. Avipakwatva ie ama can be considered as a incomplete/intermediate metabolic state whereas free radicals are the intermediary substances produced by certain enzymes which has to go to further metabolism.
3. The state of existence of ama is asamyuktha ie it exists in free state. The free radicals also remain in free state.
4. The guna of ama is told as dourgandhya as it is a impartially processed metabolite. The free radicals when causes damage to cell membrane and leads to putrifaction and foul smelling formation.
5. Ama is bahupichila. it sticks to the normal healthy tissues due to its pichila quality. Free radicals to attain structural stability quickly stick to healthy molecules.
6. Ama effects the whole body tissues. The free radicals affects all cells of body.

ROLE OF AMA IN THE MANIFESTATION OF AMAVATA

Generally, formation of ama and prakopa of vata are the main cause for the manifestation of the disease. It is mentioned by our acharyas that the disturbance in the normal state of jataragni (either vishamagni or mandagni) will be resulted according to doshik predominance ie vishamagni by vata and mandagni by kapha dosha. This disturbance in agni generates improperly digested food material which is termed as ama. This is the stage where ama is formed by the amarasa by the involvement of jataragni only, if indulgence of etiological factor is still continued in this stage, the disturbed jataragni leads to weak dhatwagni and bhutagni. This ama spreads throughout the body by vitiated vata especially towards the shleshmasthana, where by the action of impaired vata the ama becomes more morbid and arrives to dhamani. Here it mixes with vata, pitta and kapha and acquires various colours and become viscous. These properties of ama makes srothobhishyandana and dosha dushya sammurchana occurs. As a result the manifestation of amavata symptoms like hritgourava, dourbalya and jadyatha etc.of body occurs.

CONCLUSION

Ama means uncooked, unripe, immature and indigested food which is caused by the disturbance of the agni and results in various diseases like grahani, amavata etc. The physician will be able to treat the patients if he or she has proper knowledge about ama. So it is important to know about the concept of ama. Amavata is a complex of diseases, pathogenesis of which lies in the generation of ama after mandagni. This ama along with the vitiated vata and kapha dosha results in dosha dushya sammurchana and then generating the symptoms of amavata. As ama is playing a major role in the development of amavata. For proper treatment of disease knowledge about the ama and how this ama is contributing to the formation of the disease is very important.

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