CRITICAL ANALYSIS ON THE CONCEPT OF AGNI

Kamath Nagaraj¹, Patel Yashesh², Lal Sarika³

¹Asst.Professor, Department of Kriya Shareera, Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College of Ayurveda & Hospital, Hassan, Karnataka, India
²Asst.Professor, Department of Shareera Kriya, Shree RMD Ayurvedic College & Hospital Valsad, Gujarat, India
³Under Graduate Scholar, Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College of Ayurveda & Hospital, Hassan, Karnataka, India

Revised 05-01-2020; Accepted 03-02-2020

ABSTRACT

Agni is believed to be the agency for any kind of transformation. It is a known fact that at each and every second multiple procedures of transformations take place in the body. These may be bio chemical or bio physical or any other type of bio transformations. Due to these constant transformation procedures, body grows, develops and lastly destroys too. Jatharagni situated below the Amasaya in Garahani is activated by Samana Vayu and digests the food which is taken in proper Matra and in proper manner. Ayurvedic concept of Jatharagni is best explained in the terms of Pittosma, unlike the Usma form of Agni in the animate world, because Pitta is a speciality of the living body.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Healthcare, Data, Research.

INTRODUCTION

The collection of specific procedures based on fundamental science for the development of society is termed as the applied science. Ayurveda being an applied science describes Agni in practical way. In Ayurveda, concept of Agni is one of the unique concepts. It is known fact that at each and every second multiple procedures of transformations take place in the body. These may be bio chemical or bio physical or any other type of bio transformations. Due to these constant transformations procedures, body grows develops and lastly destroys too. According to Ayurvedic principles, all these procedures cannot possible without Agni, as Agni is a media for any kind of transformation. The word Agni in this context does not mean fire with flame and smoke. The concept of Agni is basic concept of Ayurveda. This Siddhanta provides fundamental knowledge for understanding of the theories of Ayurveda viz. Ahara Pacana, Dhatu Utpatti, Vyadhi Utpatti, Ayu Parijñana etc. Concept of Agni in Ayurveda is quiet different than of philosophical concept. Various Indian philosophies describe Agni as an important Tatva (element) of the universe. Though there is some difference of opinions among philosophies regarding Utpatti of Agni, e.g. Samkhya describes it as one of the Mahabhaṭṭa generated from Rupa Tanmatra which is resultant of Tamasika Ahamkara. Vaisesika opines that Agni is one of the Karana Dravya which is eternal and one of the material cause of the entire universe. It further mentions types of Agni; one among them is Audaryagni which resides in the body of animate world performing the function of digestion and metabolism¹. Ayurveda deals with this kind of Agni only. Agni is believed to be the agency for any kind of transformation. It is a known fact that at each and every second multiple procedures of transformations take place in the body. These may be bio chemical or bio physical or any other type of bio transformations. Due to these constant transformation procedures, body grows, develops and lastly destroys too. Thinking on this line; it can be said that life is nothing but a constant process of transformations. Diseased state of the body is also some pathological changes either functional or structural. Thus the principle of Agni becomes vital as either the healthy or the diseased state can only be understood with understanding of changes². With the help of that particular Agni, the body substances can get nourishment and can perform their functions normally. This can be understood in the terms of wear and tear phenomena of each body cell. It is very clear that any of body cell cannot do anything without the help of Agni, therefore a Vaidya should always take care of Agni as the Prasama or Prakopa of

*Corresponding author:
Dr Nagaraj Kamath
Asst.Professor, Department of Kriya Shareera, Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College of Ayurveda & Hospital, Hassan, Karnataka, India
Email: nagaraj.kamath1989@gmail.com

Universal Journal of Pharmacy, 09(01), January-February 2020
Dosa, Dhatu and Mala are depended on the status of Agni. In other words, it can be said that homeostasis of Dosa etc can be maintained through Agni3. Although Agni is a single entity, Acarya Caraka describes 13 types of Agnis, according to its place and actions during food digestion, assimilation and metabolism. They are grouped under three broad headings, single Jatharagni, five types of Bhutagnis and seven types of Dhavagnis. These 13 types are mentioned for clinical purpose. These 13 types of Agnis perform their function at different level, right from Ahara Grahana to Dhatu Nirmana.

Jatharagni situated below the Asasaya in Garahani is activated by Samana Vayu and digests the food which is taken in proper Matra and in proper manner observing all the Ahara vidhivisesayatanas and Ahara Vidhividhana, in order to increase the longevity of life. All this process can be compared with that of the preparation of rice for meals in a vessel kept on a stove with fire under the vessel1.

All the classical texts of Ayurveda unanimously accept the importance of Jatharagni for the maintenance of health as well as manifestation of diseases. It is also an important factor to be considered while prescribing treatment. It is known fact that at each and every second multiple process of transformation take place in human body, these may be Bio-physical, bio-chemical or any other type of transformation process. The media or agency responsible for all these process is Jatharagni in human body. There are two types of procedures continuously going on in human body which are Caya and Apacaya and for that the body has got two synonym Deha and Sarira3. Deha means which continuously gets nourishment from food and on performing the essential activities living body wears out some of its portion continuously is called Sarira and this wear and tear phenomenon is balanced by Jatharagni6.

DISCUSSION

Importance of Agni has been seen in both the healthy and diseased condition. In healthy condition it is necessary for maintenance of health while in diseased condition it is important for diagnosis as well as treatment of the particular disease. Agni is important in all types of treatment like Samana, Sodhana And Sastrakarma. It is said that in the condition of Amajirna, a person is not able to take even food so, he should not be prescribed medicine at that time. Thus prevention and preservation of Jatharagni is one of the most important part of the treatment7.

Through Jatharagni, Bhutagnis illuminate and digest their individual nutrients. It has two aspects viz. an aspect correlates the Pacakagni to the Dhavagni and describes the outcome of the excitation or the inhibition, as the case may be of the latter; and an aspect which correlates the increase or decrease, as the case may be of the Dhatus to the quality and quantity of the nutrition supplied to them8. Moieties of Kayagni, located to in its own place, are distributed to and permeate to all the Dhatus. A decrease of it (Below the normal) makes for an increase of the Dhatu, while an increase of it (Above the normal) makes for a decrease of a Dhatu5.

According to Maharsi Susruta there is no other substance like Agni except Pitta, Maharsi Caraka also says that Agni performs its work through Pitta, Vaghbata in his text clearly says that only Pacaka Pitta can be correlated with Agni and all other types of Pitta are different than Agni. The Pitta as a whole itself can not be considered as Agni. Only the Agneya portion of Pitta can be considered as Agni. This is balanced and controlled by the Apya portion of Pitta. The doctrine of Agni-Soma may be remembered in this aspect. Whenever this Apya portion increases; Agni is in a state of diminution; Inspite of the aggravation of Pitta. This is observed in Pittaja Graha. As Hemadri commented on Astanga Hrdaya Su. 12, when due to predominancy of Tejasa Mahabhuta, Apyamsa (water part) of Pacaka Pitta gets ruined, it performs digestive functions and named as Pacakagni. Bheila Samhita has explained using the terms Agni and Soma the present in the Suryamandala of Nabhi, covered with Somamandala which regulates Agni. This is quite in accordance with the concept of Pittosma. The concept of Pittosma can be correlated with the modern concept of enzymes required for any reaction along with the energy which combinedly digest the food. Thus, Ayurvedic concept of Jatharagni is best explained in the terms of Pittosma, unlike the Usma form of Agni in the animate world, because Pitta is a speciality of the living body. In Astanga Samgraha Vrdhha Vaghbata quotes that according to a group of Acaryas; Agni is nothing but combined heat of Dosa, Dhatu and Malas.

CONCLUSION

Jatharagni situated below the Amasaya in Garahani is activated by Samana Vayu and digests the food which is taken in proper Matra and in proper manner observing all the Ahara vidhivisesayatanas and Ahara Vidhividhana, in order to increase the longevity of life. All this process can be compared with that of the preparation of rice for meals in a vessel kept on a stove with fire under the vessel. Importance of Agni has been seen in both the healthy and diseased condition. In healthy condition it is necessary for maintenance of health while in diseased condition it is important for diagnosis as well as treatment of the particular disease. Agni is important in all types of treatment like Samana, Sodhana And Sastrakarma.

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Source of support: Nil, Conflict of interest: None Declared