

Ayurveda's Physiological Explanation of Agni and Digestion

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Abstract—Agni, the Ayurvedic idea of biological fire, is what makes all of the body's metabolic and digestive processes work. It regulates the conversion of food into nutrients, energy, and tissues essential for sustaining life and health. Balanced Agni (Samagni) maintains physiological equilibrium, while its imbalance (Agnidushti) is considered the primary source of disease manifestation. This conceptual paper examines the diverse manifestations of Agni—Jatharagni, Bhutagni, and Dhatvagni—and assesses their digestive and metabolic functions from a physiological perspective. The research connects Ayurvedic descriptions to contemporary ideas about how enzymes work, how hormones control the body, and how cells use energy. It stresses how important it is to have a complete understanding of digestion and metabolism in order to stay healthy.

Some of the words used are Agni, Digestion, Jatharagni, Bhutagni, Dhatvagni, Ama, and Metabolism.

I. INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda calls Agni the biological fire that controls all digestion (Aharapaka) and metabolism (Dhatupaka). It's not just about heat; it's about the inner intelligence that turns food into energy and tissues. The Charaka Samhita says that Agni is what keeps people alive. When it works right, it keeps you healthy and helps you live a long time. When it breaks down or stops working, you get sick and die. This deep knowledge makes Agni the most important part of life.

Ayurveda says that there are 13 different kinds of Agni: one Jatharagni, five Bhutagnis, and seven Dhatvagnis. They all do different but related jobs. The balance of these fires keeps digestion in check (Samagni), but any disturbance causes Ama (metabolic toxins) and disease to form. Contemporary physiology acknowledges that enzymatic digestion, hepatic metabolism, and cellular respiration represent modalities of energy transformation that embody these Ayurvedic principles.

This paper aims to clarify the concept of Agni from a physiological standpoint and to relate it to contemporary understandings of metabolism, enzymatic activity, and cellular energy generation.

Classification of Agni

According to old Ayurvedic texts, there are thirteen different types of Agni. The first one, Jatharagni, is the main fire that helps digest food in the stomach and Intestines. The five Bhutagnis are like the five elemental fires in the Panchamahabhutas. They turn the food we eat into basic substances that our bodies can use. The seven Dhatvagnis are fires that keep the seven dhatus—Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa, Meda, Asthi, Majja, and Shukra—metabolizing at the level of the tissue. Agni works all the time, from big digestion to small cellular metabolism, through these thirteen forms. This creates a full physiological chain of energy change.

Jatharagni

Jatharagni, the main digestive fire, is in the stomach and small intestines. It is in charge of the first step in breaking down food so the body can use it. According to Ayurveda, food goes through three stages of digestion: Avasthapaka, which is the sweet stage; Amla, which is the acid stage; and Katu, which is the pungent stage. Modern physiology discusses the gastric, duodenal, and intestinal stages of digestion. These are the same things. Jatharagni is like the work of gastric and intestinal enzymes like amylase, pepsin, and lipase, as well as hydrochloric acid and bile that break down food. When Jatharagni is working properly, it breaks down food and absorbs it well. When something goes wrong with Agnimandya, it makes you lose your appetite, feel heavy and bloated, and build up Ama. In modern medicine, these kinds of problems are similar to indigestion, dyspepsia, or malabsorption syndrome.

Bhutagni

Bhutagni After the first digestion, Bhutagni changes the nutrients that have been taken in into forms that are good for human cells. There are five elemental Bhutagnis: Prithvi, Ap, Tejas, Vayu, and Akasha. Each one works on different parts of food that come from the food's basic qualities. This selective assimilation makes sure that nutrients from outside the body work well with the body's internal systems. Bhutagni functions similarly to hepatic and intermediary metabolism in physiological terms. The liver is where most of these changes happen. It oxidises, reduces, conjugates, and stores nutrients we eat so our

bodies can use them. Bhutagni's activity is also connected to biochemical processes that involve enzymes and coenzymes, getting rid of toxins from metabolites, and making important biomolecules like proteins, fats, and glycogen. So, Bhutagni is the body's way of knowing how to use what we eat to keep us healthy.

Dhatvagni

There are small fires called dhatvagnis in all seven body tissues. Rasagni is in plasma, Raktagni is in blood, Mamsagni is in muscle, Medagni is in fat, Asthyagni is in bone, Majjagni is in marrow, and Shukragni is in reproductive tissue. These fires keep the body's metabolism and nutrition going all the time. Dhatvagnis use complex biochemical processes to control how tissues grow, develop, and heal. In modern physiological analysis, they pertain to intracellular enzymatic activities, mitochondrial oxidation, and hormonal regulations that control tissue-specific metabolism. For each Dhatu to get enough food and do its job in the body, the dhatvagnis must work right. If these small fires get hurt, they can cause degenerative diseases, metabolic imbalances, or tissue loss.

Physiological Patterns of Digestion (Different Kinds of Jatharagni)

Ayurveda classifies functional variations in Jatharagni into four primary categories: Samagni, Vishmagni, Tikshnagni, and Mandagni. When all three Doshas—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha—are in balance, digestion is steady and efficient. This is called Samagni. People with Samagni tend to be healthy, have good skin, and have strong immune systems. When Vata controls Vishmagni, digestion becomes unpredictable and irregular. People like this have an unpredictable appetite, bloating, and a tendency to get constipated or gassy, which are all signs of modern irritable bowel disorders. Pitta is the main part of Tikshnagni, which makes the digestive fire too strong. It makes you very hungry, gives you heartburn, and speeds up how quickly you digest food. This could be due to gastritis, peptic ulcers, or excessive gastric acid. People with Kapha have a weak digestive system, which makes them feel heavy, slow, and like they are storing food that hasn't been digested. It is similar to metabolic diseases such as diabetes, obesity, and hypothyroidism. So, keeping Samagni in balance is good for both your digestive health and your health in general.

Agni's Role in Health and Illness

Ayurveda says that Agni is the source of life, or Moolam Dehasya. When Agni is in balance, it makes sure that digestion is complete (Aharapaka), tissue metabolism is effective (Dhatupaka), and Ojas, which is the essence of vitality and immunity, is made. Ama forms when Agni is

weak and digestion doesn't work right. This stops the body's transport and metabolic pathways (Srotas). Agnimandya, Prameha, Grahani, and Amavata are all signs that something is blocking the flow of energy in the body. Agni's state has an impact on key aspects of physical health, including strength (Bala), complexion (Varna), enthusiasm (Utsaha), radiance (Prabha), and longevity (Ayu). A person is healthy, has a lot of energy, and can fight off illness when Agni is strong. On the other hand, when Agni is weak or unstable, it hurts all of the body's functions, such as mood, immunity, and metabolism. Regulation of Agni for Health One of the most important goals of Ayurveda is to keep Agni in balance and bring it back into balance when it gets out of balance. Some of the classical methods are Deepana, Pachana, Langhana, Shodhana, and Brimhana. is the use of herbs like Trikatu, Pippali, Chitraka, and Hing to get the digestive system going and help enzymes work better. Changing your diet and using herbal remedies can help you get rid of Ama, which are metabolic toxins that block channels. Like Panchakarma, Langhana and Shodhana are fasting and cleansing treatments that help the body get rid of toxins and lower its metabolic load. Brimhana therapies use Rasayana herbs and healthy foods to strengthen tissues and give you energy back once your digestion and metabolism are back to normal. Aharavidhi Vidhan is another thing that Ayurveda talks about a lot. These are rules for how to eat well. These include being aware of what you eat, when you eat it, how much you eat, and not mixing foods that don't go together (Viruddhahara). You can improve Agni function even more by following your body's natural circadian rhythms, getting enough sleep, exercising moderately, and managing stress.

II. DISCUSSION

From a contemporary physiological standpoint, the Ayurvedic notion of Agni embodies the cohesive operation of digestive enzymes, hormones, and oxidative cellular mechanisms. Jatharagni is related to digestion in the stomach and intestines, Bhutagni is related to metabolism in the liver, and Dhatvagni is related to cellular respiration and anabolism at the tissue level. This conceptual paper investigates the various manifestations of Agni—Jatharagni, Bhutagni, and Dhatvagni—and evaluates their digestive and metabolic functions from a physiological standpoint. The study links Ayurvedic descriptions with modern concepts regarding enzyme functionality, hormonal regulation of the body, and cellular energy utilisation. It emphasises the significance of a comprehensive understanding of digestion and metabolism for the preservation of optimal health. Keywords: Agni, Digestion, Jatharagni, Bhutagni, Dhatvagni, Ama, and

Metabolism are some of the words used.

Final Thoughts

Agni is the most important part of Ayurveda's way of keeping the body in balance and metabolism. It controls all of the steps in digestion, absorption, and feeding the tissues. When Agni works right, it makes sure you get the right nutrients, energy, and health. When it is disturbed, it makes Ama build up and diseases form. The balance of Agni is the basis of Ayurvedic health maintenance. This is done by eating the right foods, living the right way, and using herbal remedies. Recognising Agni as a multifaceted metabolic process connects traditional Ayurvedic knowledge with modern physiology, showing that Ayurveda is still a useful, all-encompassing, and preventive healthcare system.

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