Medical Perspective on Ama as per Ayurveda and Modern Consideration: A Review

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ABSTRACT

The Ayurveda mainly focuses to maintain health status by preventing and treating diseases. The prevention and treatment of diseases only possible when physician aware about biochemical events and pathogenesis of disease. The knowledge about causative factors of disease helps to prevent disease prevalence and Ama is one such pathological factor that causes many diseases like; Grahani Roga, allergy and Amavata, etc. The ancient philosopher of Ayurveda described concept of Ama as biological entity responsible for many pathological events inside the body. Ama is considered as toxins produced due to the improper functioning of Agni therefore Ama can be considered as unripe or un-metabolized food material. Ama vitiates Doshas and disturbs Dhatu-samya, after combining with Dosa and mala Ama initiate pathogenesis of diseases. Present article summarizes Ayurveda and modern perspective related to Ama and its role in disease pathogenesis.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Ama, Toxins, Amavata, Auto-immune.

Introduction

Ayurveda science elaborated different concepts related to disease pathogenesis and Ama is one of them described as toxins or antigens which can trigger diseases pathogenesis. It is believed that hypo-functioning of Agni leads production of Ama which can combine with other biological entities and induces various pathological conditions as mentioned below:

- Ama with Vata & Pitta induces condition of Sama Doshya
- Ama with Dhatus induces condition of Sama Dushya
- Ama with Mala induces Sama Mala

The above mentioned combinations of Ama with Doshas, Dhatus and Malas resulted diseases like; Amojeeerna, Atisara, Grahani Doshya, Jwara and Amavata, etc. 1-4.

When Ama mixes with Vata then it aggravates in abdominal and disturbs functioning of colon and joints. The symptoms of Vata ama are dry mouth, astringent taste, constipation, dry skin, bloating, pain and arthritis.

When Ama mixes with Pitta Doshya then it accumulate at middle abdominal and affects functioning of small intestine and liver. Pitta ama circulates with blood, sour and acidic in nature and imparts bitter taste in mouth. This conditions causes heartburn, diarrhea, nausea and acid indigestion 2-4.

When Kapha mixes with Ama then it accumulate in stomach and chest, Kapha Ama possess foul smelling, create a salty taste in mouth, suppress appetite, sinus congestion and and tenderness.

Disturbed dietary habits, improper sleeping pattern, unethical conduct, excessive sexual indulgence, day time sleep and lack of disciplinary living regimen, etc. are some factors which can leads Agnimandya followed by production of Ama. Ama generally affects Tridoshas, Dhatus and Malas by combining with them and causes diseases. General events related to pathological consequences of Ama depicted in Figure 1
The various pathological factors (Samprapti-Ghatak) associated with Ama are as follows:

- **Hetu:** Agnidusti, Agnimandhkarak
- **Adisthan:** Mahasrotas, Viseshta Grahani
- **Dosa:** Tridosa
- **Srotas:** Annavah, Purisvah
- **Dusya:** Anna, Ras

The Ama produced by low level of Jatharagni and Bhutaagni possess heavy and sticky nature therefore blocks channels of body. The Ama when combined with Doshas termed as Amavisha which can causes chronic illness. The pathological events associated with Ama are as follows:

- Blocks minute channels thus affect circulatory process
- Ama aggravates Tridosa
- Disturbs nutritional supply to the tissue
- Diminishes potency of Dhatu
- Vitiate Agni and imparts feeling of uneasiness
- Causes lethargy, mental sickness and lack of enthusiasm
- Gas, diarrhea, bloating, bad smelling mouth and loss of appetite

**Characteristics of Ama**

- Unpleasant odour
- Deprives nutritional components of Ahara
- Possess tendency of accumulation
- Heavy and Sticky

**Different combination of Ama with Doshas and their pathological manifestations:**

Ama obstructs Srotas of body and can combine with Doshas to produces various diseases as follows mentioned in **Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. N.</th>
<th>Diseases</th>
<th>Doshas predominance</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Visuchika</td>
<td>Kapha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Vilambika, Atisara</td>
<td>Pitta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Alasaka, Amavata, Shotha</td>
<td>Vata</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Modern perspective of Ama as toxins and autoimmune diseases**

Autoimmune diseases occur due to the harmful response of self immune system when immune system stated attacking of body tissue as anticipated response against antigen/toxins or Ama. The inflammatory response occurs in autoimmune disorders triggered by Ama or antigen at cellular level.

Antigen vitiated Dosha, altered immune response which further damages tissues. Antigen/ Ama modulate signaling at cellular levels leading to incompatible autoimmune response that damage tissues. Ankylosing spondylitis, crohn’s disease, psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis, ulcerative colitis and lupus erythematoses, etc. can be considered as autoimmune diseases arises as response against Ama or antigen 6-8.
**Ayurveda management of Ama Doshas**

*Nidan Parivarjanan* means avoidance of causative factors helps to prevent harmful effects of Ama. Overeating should be avoided and food cooked properly need to be consumed. Hot, sour, heavy and oily food stuffs not recommended. Psychological stress can suppress Agni therefore should remain away from stress, anxiety, anger and grief. *Ama Pachan* substances recommended depending upon the Prakriti of an individual. *Agni Dipana* herbs, *Shodhan* therapy, *Swedana* therapy, *Snehana* and Yoga helps to eliminate Ama and vitiate Doshas.

Herbs which digest Vata like; *Trikatu, Ginger, Black Pepper, Cinnamon, Hing, Ajwan and Fennel*, etc. helps to softening accumulate Ama and eliminate aggravated Vata Dosha.

Similarly *Pitta Ama* can be pacified using bitter herbs, spices, coriander, cinnamon and lime. The detoxification measures also help to remove Pitta Ama.

For correcting *Kapha Ama* can use expectorants & emetics drugs. Pungent and bitter herbs help to pacify Kapha Ama. *Trikatu, Ginger, Pippali, Chitrak, Garlic, Vidanga* and *Tulsi*, etc helps to correct Kapha Ama.

**Pathya**
- Sour fruits & vegetables
- Whole grains & mung beans
- Spices, ginger, cinnamon and fennel
- Pumpkin seeds, mustard oil and flax seed oil

**Apathya**
- Sweet, sour and salty stuffs
- Mushrooms, nuts and dairy products
- Processed and starchy grains
- Red meat and shellfish

**Conclusion**

*Ama* formed at the levels of *Jatharagni* and *Dhatvagni* and initiated many pathological events inside the body. *Ama* further deteriorates digestive and metabolic activities, blocks *Strotas*, vitiated *Dhatus* and *Rakta* therefore causes various diseases including auto-immune disorders. Avoidance of *Virrudha Aahara*, fear, anxiety, restoring disciplinary daily regimen, Ayurveda drugs, detoxification measures, *Yoga* and considerations of concept of *Pathya* and *Apathya* helps to avoid prevalence of diseases associated with excessive production of *Ama*.

**References**