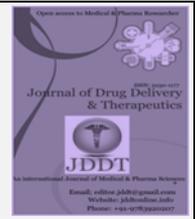


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Review Article

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

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### ABSTRACT

The Ayurveda mainly focuses to maintaining 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 *Dosha* 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.

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### Introduction

Ayurveda science elaborated different concepts related to disease pathogenesis and *Ama* is one of them described as toxins or antigen 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 Dosha*
- ✓ *Ama* with *Dhatu*s induces condition of *Sama Dushya*
- ✓ *Ama* with *Mala* induces *Sama Mala*

The above mentioned combinations of *Ama* with *Doshas*, *Dhatu*s and *Malas* resulted diseases like; *Amajeerna*, *Atisara*, *Grahani Dosha*, *Jwara* and *Amavata*, etc<sup>1-4</sup>.

When *Ama* mixes with *Vata* then it aggravates in lower 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 Dosha* 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<sup>2-6</sup>.

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 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*, *Dhatu*s and *Malas* by combining with them and causes diseases. General events related to pathological consequences of *Ama* depicted in **Figure 1**



Figure 1: General pathological events related to *Ama*.

The various pathological factors (*Samprapti-Ghatak*) associated with *Ama* are as follows:

- ❖ **Hetu:** *Agnidusti, Agnimandhkarak*
- ❖ **Adisthan:** *Mahasrotas, Viseshta Grahani*
- ❖ **Dosa:** *Tridosha*
- ❖ **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 *Tridosha*
- Disturbs nutritional supply to the tissue
- Diminishes potency of *Dhatus*

- Vitate *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 1: *Ama* towards disease pathogenesis

S. N.	Diseases	<i>Doshas</i> predominance
1	<i>Visuchika</i>	<i>Kapha</i>
2	<i>Vilambika, Atisara</i>	<i>Pitta</i>
3	<i>Alasaka, Amavata, Shotha</i>	<i>Vata</i>

**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 erythematodes, etc. can be considered as autoimmune diseases arises as response against *Ama* or antigen<sup>6-8</sup>.

### 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 Dasha*.

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

*Kapha Ama* can be corrected using 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 *Dhatu*s 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*.

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