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A bird view on Ayurvedic management of Hyperacidity

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ABSTRACT

Acidity and heartburn are increasingly becoming common lifestyle disorder. Busy lives, hectic schedules, mental stress, rat-race anxiety and not enough time to eat are some of reasons causing acidity and hyperacidity problems. Hyperacidity refers to a set of symptoms caused by an imbalance between the acid secreting mechanism of the stomach and proximal intestine and the protective mechanisms that ensure their safety. It is one of the most common symptoms affecting 70% of population. Etiology includes lifestyle or dietary habits, a medical condition, or the use of some medications, stress etc. It is characterized by acid regurgitation, heartburn, nausea, acidic taste in mouth, sour or bitter belching indicating *Vikruti* of *Pachaka Pitta*, *Samanavayu*, *Apana Vayu*, *Kledaka Kapha*, *Agni* and *Ahara*. In Ayurveda Hyperacidity can be explained under broad umbrella of *Urdwaga Amlapitta*, *Vidagdhajeerna*, *Saamapitta Laxana*, *Pittaja Grahani Laxana*. With time hyperacidity gets complicated, thus arresting the progress of disease is one of the important steps which are achieved through *Pathyapathya* and *Nidana parivarjana*. *Satvavajaya chikitsa* empowers the patient to deal with stress which is one among the common triggers. *Vamana* and *Virechana*, facilitates the expulsion of vitiated *Dosha* from the body, there by cures the disease from root. Hence Probable *Chikitsa* of Hyperacidity in Ayurveda includes *Nidana Parivarjana*, *Shodana*, *Shamana*, *Rasayana*, *Yoga* and *Pranayama*.

Key words: Hyperacidity, Agni, Pachakapitta, Kledaka Kapha, Samana Vayu, Vamana, Virechana

INTRODUCTION

Acidity is the common term used by common people and it is one of the most common symptoms affecting the larger population in the India. Hyperacidity comprised of two words i.e., Hyper + Acidus which

means excess & sour respectively and it refers to a set of symptoms caused by an imbalance between the acid secreting mechanism of the stomach and proximal intestine and the protective mechanisms that ensure their safety.^[1]

The stomach normally secretes acid that is essential in the digestive process. When there is excess production of acid in the stomach, it results in the condition known as hyperacidity.^[2]

In Ayurveda, the main culprits involving are *Ahara*, *Pranavayu*, *Saman Vayu*, *Apana Vayu*, *Pachaka Pitta*, *Bodhaka Kapha*, *Kledaka Kapha*, *Agni* and any *Vikruti* among these may leads to Hyperacidity.

Hence Hyper acidity, in Ayurveda can be explained under broad umbrella of *Urdwaga Amlapitta*, *Vidagdhajeerna*, *Saamapitta*, *Pittaja Grahani*.

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Hyperacidity is known to affect almost 70% of the population and new research now shows it to be the precursor for not just peptic ulcer, but also cancer of the stomach and the esophagus. Modern era's changing life style along with changing food culture and depending upon one's body constitution, irregular and improper food habits, busy stressful lifestyle and westernization are the main culprits of an obstinate disorder escalating in its prevalence,^[3] which can be included under the *Aharaja*, *Viharaja* and *Manasika Karanas* explained under vitiation of *Agni*. All of them accelerate the vitiation of *Dosha*, *Dravstva* of *Pachaka Pitta* and *Snigdhatta* of *Kledaka Kapha*, *Sheeta Guna* of *Vata* causes vitiation of *Agni* there by disturbing action of *Agni* leading to manifestation of disease.^[4]

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To study, discuss and elaborate the different Ayurvedic concepts related with Hyperacidity.
2. To study the different causes of Hyperacidity and its Ayurvedic Management.

Causes of Hyperacidity

'Hurry', 'Worry', and 'Curry' are the three main reasons for the disease and result from lifestyle or dietary habits, a medical condition, or the use of medications, stress etc.,

Common causes of Hyperacidity

Dietary factors (Fatty, oily or spicy foods), Faulty eating habits / Fast Food (Overeating or eating too quickly), Too much caffeine, alcohol, chocolate or carbonated beverages, smoking, tobacco.

Wide range of health conditions, related to GIT

GERD, Peptic ulcer disease, Gastritis, Infection, especially with *H. Pylori*, Esophagitis, Dyspepsia, Hiatus hernia.

Disease conditions other than gastro intestinal tract

Thyroid disease - Hypothyroidism, Diabetes (Gastroparesis), Obesity, Depression, Stress, Pregnancy.

Medications

Antibiotics, Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, Aspirin, Tricyclic antidepressants such as Amitriptyline, Imipramine, Angiotensin converting enzyme [ACE] inhibitors, Angiotensin II receptor antagonist, Potassium supplements.^[5]

In Ayurveda causes of Hyperacidity can be considered under following Headings:

The *Nidanas* which are explained under vitiation of *Agni*^[6] can be considered for Hyperacidity:

<i>Aharaja Nidana</i>	<i>Viharaja Nidana</i>	<i>Manasika Nidana</i>	<i>Others</i>
<i>Atyambupana</i>	<i>Vegadarana</i>	<i>Irsha</i>	<i>Vamana,</i> <i>Virechana,</i>
<i>Atimatra Bhojan</i>	<i>Swapnavivaryaya</i>	<i>Bhaya</i>	<i>Sneha</i> <i>Vibrama</i>
<i>Abhojana</i>	<i>Ratrijagarana</i>	<i>Krodha</i>	<i>Rutu, Kala,</i> <i>Desha</i> <i>Vaishamya</i>
<i>Vishamasama</i>	<i>Divashayana</i>	<i>Dweshha</i>	
<i>Asatmyaahara</i>		<i>Chinta</i>	
<i>Sandushtabhojan</i>			
<i>Food Related- Atiruksha, Atisnigdha</i>			
<i>Atiushna</i>			
<i>Atiteekshna</i>			
<i>Ati Amla-lavana</i>			
<i>Gurubhojana</i>			

Other factors explained in Ayurveda which can be considered as causes of Hyperacidity:

Ahara

Ayurveda places special emphasis on *Ahara* and believes that healthy nutrition nourishes the mind, body, and soul. According to Ayurveda the living human body and diseases that afflict it are both the product of *Ahara*. *Ahara* is considered as one of the key pillars (*Upsthambhas*) of life in Ayurveda.^[7] In today's world, altered habits of food consumption may lead to various diseases. Hence causes in *Ayurveda* includes *Atyambupana*, *Atimatra Bhojan*, *Abhojana*, *Vishamasama*, *Asatmyaahara*,

Sandushtabhojan, Atiruksha, Atisnigdha, Atiteekshna, Ati Amla-lavana, Gurubhojana.^[7]

Agni

Agni is considered as protector of human body whereas *Ama* is the main cause of disease.^[8] The main cause is the indiscretion in taking food which leads to imbalance of *Three Doshas* further vitiates functioning of *Agni*.^[9] The condition of *Agni* can be *Mandagni, Teekshnagni* or *Vishamagni* as there may be vitiation of individual or all *Three Doshas* can be seen in Hyperacidity.

Pranavayu

While explaining the *Karma* of *Pranavayu*, *Acharyas* states that *Pranavayu* is responsible for intake of food in *Mukha* then into *Annavaha Srotas*,^[10] so any *Vikruti* *Panavayu* hampers its function which leads to *Agni Vikruti* causing Hyperacidity.

Samana Vayu

Samana Vayu stays nears *Agni* and its *Sanchara Sthana* is *Kostha*. The Function of *Samana Vayu* explained as *Grahana, Vivechana, Munchana* of *Anna Dravya*.^[11] Hence when there is vitiation of *Samana Vayu* it hampers the mixing of food into digestive juices and digestion which further leads to Hyperacidity.

Pachaka Pitta

Pachaka Pitta situated between *Amashaya* and *Pakwashaya*.^[12] It is responsible for *Pachana, Vivechana* of *Chaturvidha Annapana*.^[13] Hence any *Vikruti* in *Pachakapitta* causes increased or decreased secretion of digestive juices and impairing digestion causing Hyperacidity.

Kledaka Kapha

Kledaka Kapha does *Bhinna Sanghata* i.e., softens, liquefies food so that *Agni* can reach up to smaller particles and can digest properly^[14] when *Vikruti* in *Kledaka Kapha* food remains in stomach for longer duration due to stagnancy which causes *Amatva* causing Hyperacidity.

Bhodaka Kapha

Bhodaka Kapha resides in tongue^[15], first step of digestion starts from here so when there is vitiation in *Bhodaka Kapha* it hampers the digestion further it vitiates the remaining *Dosha* in stomach leading to Hyperacidity.

Annavaha Srotas

Any *Vikruti* in *Annavaha Srotas* right from *Mukha* to *Guda* leads to the pathogenesis of Hyperacidity. *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned the *Mula Sthana* of *Annavaha Srotas* as *Amashaya* and the symptoms caused by its *Dushti* as *Annanabhilasha, Aruchi, Avipaka*^[16] are mainly concerned with Hyperacidity.

Symptoms of Hyperacidity

Hyperacidity is characterized by a burning pain in the chest that usually occurs after eating (Retrosternal burning), Pain that worsens when lying down or bending over, Bitter or acidic taste in the mouth, Sour or bitter belching, Nausea, Throat burn, Regurgitation of food or sour substance, Gaseous distention of abdomen, Heaviness in abdomen.^[17]

In Ayurveda Hyperacidity can be explained under broad umbrella of *Urdwaga Amlapitta, VidagdhaJeerna, Saamapitta Laxana, Pittaja Grahani Laxana*.

Urdwaga Amlapitta

Amlapitta is a condition where *Amlaguna* increases due to *Samata*. Due to increase in *Amla Guna* and *Vidaaha Guna* of *Pachaka Pitta* leading to *Kanta, Hrut Daaha, Avipaka, Amoldgara, Tiktodgara, Prasek*.^[18]

VidagdhaJeerna

Caused due to vitiation of *Pitta Dosha (Pachaka Pitta)*. It is characterized by *Bhrama, Daha, Trushna, Murcha, Amlodgaara, Sweda Pravrutti*.^[19]

Sama Pitta Lakshana

When *Pitta Dosha* combines with *Ama* it produces *Sama Pitta Lakshanas* among which he explained *Amleeya Pitta* and *Hrut Daha* which can be considered under hyper acidity.^[20]

Pittaja Grahani

While explaining *Pittaja Grahani* Acharyas explained *Lakshanas* as *Amlodgara*, *Hrut Kanta Daha* and *Aruchi*.^[21]

Probable Ayurvedic management of Hyperacidity

By considering above mentioned *Chikitsa Sutras*, *Chikitsa* of hyperacidity in *Ayurveda* can be considered as

Nidana Parivarjana

1st step in treating any disease avoiding *Ahaaraja* - *Viharaja Nidanas* like dietary factors (Fatty, oily or spicy foods), Faulty eating habits/ Fast Food (Overeating or eating too quickly), Too much caffeine, alcohol, chocolate or carbonated beverages, smoking, Tobacco. *Manasika Nidanas* such as Depression, Stress, Anxiety etc. which aggravates the condition. Avoiding *Nidanas* helps to increase well beingness of an individual hence maintains good health.

Yukti Vyapashrya Chikitsa

It includes *Shodana* and *Shamana*, and *Shodana* includes *Vamana* and *Virechana*

Vamana

Vamana therapy has substantial role in treating Hyperacidity. As it is conducted when there is vitiation of *Apakwa Pitta* and *Kapha*.^[22] The hyperacidity is caused due to disturbance in *Dravata* and *Ushnata* of *Pachaka Pitta* & *Snighdhata* of *Kledaka Kapha*. As *Vamana* is indicated in *Apakwa pitta* & *Kapha*. Before conducting *Vamana*, *Deepana* and *Pachana* help to digest the *Ama*, make the *Dosha Nirama* and increases the *Agni*. It is told that *Doshas* should be removed through nearest root, as hyperacidity is a disease of *Amashaya Samudbhava*, Hence *Vamana* is the 1st line of treatment. *Vamana* does *Indriya Shudhhi* and *Mana Prasadana* ^[23] as stress is the one of cause for hyperacidity. The symptoms like *Chardi*, *Amlodgara*, *Kanthdaha*, *Hrutdaha*, *Utklesh*, *Avipaka* may get reduced due to *Apakwa Pitta* & *Kapha Nirharana*, *Ashaya Shudhhi*, *Ama Dosh Nirharan*, *Shuktata Nash*, *Vidagdhtanash* done by *Vaman*.

Drug of choice for Vamana

Kapha Dosha Prakopa: *Pippali*, *Madanaphala*, *Saindava Lavana* with *Ushna Jala*

Pitta Dosha Prakopa: *Patola*, *Vasa*, *Nimba*

Virechana

Virechana is best measure for *Pittaja* disorders and when *Pitta* associated with *Vata* and *Kapha* as *Shodhana*.^[24] The main pathological factors associated with hyperacidity are *Pachaka Pitta*, *Kledaka Kapha*, *Samana Vayu*, *Ama* and vitiated *Agni*. Hence *Virechana* is also line of treatment.

Effect at *Dosha* level - *Virechana* helps to expel the excessive *Dravata* of *Pitta*, *Snigdhta Kapha* & even it acts as *Vatanulomana*.

Effect at *Ama* & *Agni* - Due to *Ushna*, *Tikshna*, *Sukshma*, *Vyavayi*, *Vikasi*, of *Virechana Dravya* they clears *Ama* & helps in *Agni dushti* and at level of *Srotas* it acts as *Srotoshodana*.

Mana Indriya Prasadana property of *Virechana* helps in rectifying the psychological factors involved.

Shamanoushadis

Churnas: *Avipattikara Churna*, *Pathyadi Churna*, *Triphala Churna*, *Hingvadi Churna*. *Eladi Churna*, *Amalakyadi Churna*.

Kwath / Kashaya: *Bhunimbadi Kwath*, *Chinodbhavadi Kwath*, *Patoladi Kwath*, *Dashang Kwath*, *Argwadadi Kashaya*.

Vati: *Drakshadi Gutika*, *Shankhavati*, *Kshudavati*.

Ghrita: *Shatavari Ghrita*, *Drakshadi Ghrita*, *Panchatiktaka Ghrita*, *Narayana Ghrit*.

Kandapaka: *Kushmanda Khanda*, *Narikela Khanda*, *Soubhagyashunti*, *Pippali Khanda*, *Amlapittantaka Modaka*.

Rasaushadis: *Kamadugha Rasa*, *SoothshekaraRasa*, *Amlapittantaka Rasa*, *Lilavilas Rasa*, *Pravala Pisti Mukta Pisti*, *Amlapittantaka Loha*, *Shanka Bhasma*, *Pravala Bhasma*.

Rasayana: *Madiphala Rasayana*, *Amalaki Rasayana*.

Satvavajaya Chikitsa

Satvavajaya Chikitsa is a nonpharmacological approach aimed at control of mind and restraining it from unwholesome *Arthas* (objects) or Stressors.^[25] It mainly acts as nootropics as brain tonics, memory and cognitive enhancer. In Hyperacidity Stress is also one of the factors plays important role and even Hyperacidity effects one's quality of life, Hence *Satvavajaya Chikitsa* is an also line of treatment.

Options may include: Cognitive behavioral therapy, Biofeedback, Hypnotherapy, Relaxation therapy

Single drugs used in Hyperacidity: *Shatavari, Yashtimadhu, Amalaki, Shunthi, Guduchi, Ativisha.*^[26]

Yogasana in Hyperacidity: The Asanas gives abdominal compression and gently massages the internal organs. These help to tone the internal organs functioning and improve blood circulation, improves digestion, stimulates bowel movements and reduces formation of gas.^[27]

Recommended Yogasana in Hyperacidity: *Halasana, Vajrasana, Pawanamuktasana, Pashimottasana, Suptabhadhakonasana, Bhujangasana, Matsyasana.*

Pathyapathya**Pathya**

- *Ahara - Tikta Bhuyishta Ahara* should be always preferred.
- *Annavarga - Yava, Godhuma, Purna Shali, Mudga, Masura, Harenu, Lajja Saktu with Sita and Madhu.*
- *Saka Varga - Saka* which possess *Tikta* and *Laghu Gunas* like *Vasa, Vastuka, Karavellaka, Patola, Kushmanda*
- *Phala Varga - Dadima, Amalaki, Kapittha*
- *Dugdha Varga - Godugdha* of animals in *Jangala Pradesha*
- *Pana - Narikela jala, Sukoshna Jala*

Apathya

- *Ahara – Guru Bhojana, Vidahi, Virruddhasana, Kulatha, Masha, Navanna, Tila, Dadhi, Madya Sevana,* Fermented foods like bread.

- *Rasa - Lavana, Amla, Katu rasa Pradhana Dravyas,*
- *Vihara - Vega Dharana, Adhyasana, Atiusna, Athyambupanam, Atapasevena, Divaswapna*
- *Manasika - Chinta, Krodha, Shoka, Bhaya*

Prevention^[28]

As the saying goes “Prevention is better than cure” it is better to avoid all the causative factors of Hyperacidity.

1. Avoid excessive salty, oily, sour and spicy foods
2. Avoid heavy and untimely food
3. Avoid smoking and alcohol intake
4. Food should consist mainly of bitters like bitter gourd, matured ash gourd
5. Include barley, wheat, old rice and green gram in diet.
6. Avoid overcooked, stale and contaminated food.
7. The food must be properly cooked
8. Follow mental relaxation techniques

DISCUSSION

Manifestation of a disease depends upon the intensity of conjunction of *Nidana, Dosha* and *Dushya*. *Amashaya* is the seat of *Samana Vayu, Pachaka Pitta, Kledaka Kapha* and also the root of *Annavaha Srotas* whereas *Grahani* is the seat of *Agni. Samana Vayu, Pachaka Pitta* and *Kledaka Kapha* may involve in the *Sthanasamshraya* at *Amashaya* where disease manifestation takes place. *Dravatva* of *Pachaka Pitta* and *Snigdhatva* of *Kledaka Kapha*, *Sheeta guna* of *Vata* causes vitiation of *Agni* and produces *Ama*. Due to *Shuktapaka, Ama* gets vitiated and produces *Amavisha* and disease manifests. Excessive *Drava Guna* of *Pitta* diminishes the potency of digestive enzymes, increased *Teekshna, Ushna Guna* irritates the gastric mucosa causing the inflammation. Increased *Guru, Sheet, Snigdha Guna* of *Kapha* blocks the *Ushma Guna* of *Agni* and *Kledaka Kapha* does improper *Bhinnasanghata* of food thus food remains in the stomach for longer duration leading to *Shuktata* of *Anna*. When there is vitiation of *Sheeta,*

Chala guna of *Vata* leading to improper peristaltic movement and when there is vitiation of *Samanavata*, it is unable to perform its *Deepana Karma* causing vitiation of *Agni* and disease manifests.

Pathophysiological factor for hyper acidity includes:

Reduced LOS pressure, reduced esophageal clearance mechanism which can be correlated with *Pranavayu* vitiation. Delayed gastric emptying can be correlated with *Kledaka Kapha* and *Samana Vayu* vitiation. Impaired gastric acid secretion and Inflammation of the gastric mucosa is due to *Pachaka Pitta* vitiation causing Hyperacidity.

Other causes of Hyperacidity include improper life style and dietary habits, Inflammatory conditions such as Gastritis, Esophagitis, Peptic ulcer, Muscular dysfunction like Achalasia, GERD, Hiatus hernia. Malignant conditions like Esophageal carcinoma, Gastric carcinoma.

Probable management of Hyperacidity due to improper life style includes:

Nidana Parivarjana, *Langhana*, *Shamanoushadis* like *Avipattikara Churna*, *Hingvadi Churna*, *Narikela Lavana* etc, Life style measures, *Pathyapathya*, *Yoga* and *Pranayama*.

Probable management of Hyperacidity due to inflammatory condition includes:

Here inflammatory condition indicates vitiation of *Pitta Dosh*. Hence treatment protocol includes *Nidana Parivarjana*, *Shodana – Vamana* and *Virechana* but *Vamana* should be carried out carefully with precautions with less quantity of *Vamana dravya* and *Lavana* as there is already inflammation it may cause erosion and bleeding. *Shamanoushadi* including drugs having *Madhura Vipaka* and does *Deepana Pachana* so that it does not irritate the gastric mucosa should be advised like *Sutashekara Rasais* having *Shuddha Gairika* acts as *Pittashamana* due to its sheeta *Virya* and even it is having *Vrunaropana* property acts as anti-inflammatory helps in healing. *Laghusuta shekara Rasa*, *Avipattikara Churna*, *Amalaki Churna* and *Yashtimadu Phanta* because of *Madura Vipaka* does *Pitta Shamana* and acts as

Vrunaropana along with these Life style measures and Relaxation techniques are advised.

Probable management of hyperacidity due to muscular dysfunction includes:

Here Muscular dysfunction indicates vitiation of *Vata Dosh* so treatment protocol includes *Nidana Parivarjana*, *Shodana - Virechana* is best than the *Vamana* as there is muscular dysfunction in Achalasia, GERD conducting *Vamana* may leads to complications. *Shamanoushadi* like *Hingvadi churna*, *Ajamodadi Churna*, *Hingvashtaka Churna*, *Hingvadi gutika* which having *Hingu*, *Ajamoda* as main ingredients acts as *Vatanulomana* and *Pachana Karma* hence improves peristaltic movements reducing regurgitation, and functions as carminatives thus beneficial in treating Hyperacidity.

Probable management of hyperacidity due to hyperacidity due to malignancy includes:

Nidana Parivarjana, *Shodana* such as *Mrudu Virechana* can be conducted as the *Bala* of patients is less in malignancy conditions conducting *Shodana* is contraindicated but by considering *Bala* of patient *Mrudu Virechana* can be conducted. *Rashaushadis* like *Dhatri Lauha*, *Shanka Bhasma*, *Rajata Bhasma*, *Loha bhasma* can be used as *Bhasmas* are in the oxide form helps to neutralizes the acid in the stomach, Calcium contents *Bhasmas* are alkaline in nature can select for Hyperacidity and even they boost up the immunity with antioxidant property. *Rasayana* such as *Madiphala Rasayana*, *Amalaki Rasayana* can be advised.

CONCLUSION

Treatment of Hyperacidity is based on, *Rogi bala*, *Roga bala*, *Prakruti*, *Vikruti*, *Ahara*, *Desha*, *Kala*. *Pathyapathya* has great role in treating Hyperacidity “*Kashyapa* explained as milk is poured into curd pot immediately attains sourness, in the same way, repeatedly eaten food gets improperly digested and attains *Vidagdhatta*”. With time hyperacidity gets complicated, thus arresting the progress of disease is one of the important step achieved through *Pathya Apathya*. *Satvavajaya chikitsa* empowers the patient

to deal with stress which is one among the common triggers. *Shodhan Chikitsa* facilitates the expulsion of vitiated *Dosha* from the body, there by cures the disease from root and is conducted on the basis of *Roga bala* And *Rogi bala*. *Yoga* and *Pranayama* helps in acidity by increasing circulation in stomach and intestine, improves digestion, stimulates bowel movements and reduces formation of gas. Hence selective combination of *Pathyapathya*, *Shodana*, *Shamana* along with *Yoga* and *Pranayama* plays effective role in treating Hyperacidity.

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