



Review Article

A CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF DIET IN GRAHANI WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MALABSORPTION

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ABSTRACT

Grahani which is the site of *Agni*, is so called because of its power to restrain the downward movement of undigested food and retains food till it is fully digested. Functionally weak *Agni* i.e. *Mandagni*, causes improper digestion of ingested food, which lead to *Amadosha* and it has pivotal importance in the pathogenesis of *Grahani Roga*. The main symptoms of Malabsorption are diarrhoea, loss of appetite, anorexia, and emaciation. The principle of diet for all types of *Grahani* is boost the *Agni* and reduce the *Ama* with the help of *Ahara Dravyas*, which included mainly *Kashaya*, *Madhura* and *Katu* in *Rasa*; *Laghu*, *Ruksha*, *Grahee*, *Deepana* and *Pachana* in *Guna*; *Ushna* in *Veerya* and *Katu* or *Madhura* in *Vipaka*. The diet regime suggested by *Ayurveda* helps in stimulation of *Agni*, which supports the digestion of food of appropriate quality, taken in required quantity and in right time for cure of *Grahani Dosh*a or Malabsorption. The 28 *Ahara Dravyas* of various classes studied in this research can be suggested for *Grahani* patients. Thus we can resume the bowel habit to normal, improve the overall nutritional status of patients and can prevent or reduce the complications of Malabsorption with the help of *Ayurvedic* principles of diet.

KEYWORDS: *Grahani*, *Agni*, Malabsorption, Diet, *Ahara*.

INTRODUCTION

Grahani (duodenum and the upper part of small intestine), which is the site of *Agni* (enzymes responsible for digestion and metabolism), is so called because of its power to restrain (the downward movement) of undigested food and retains food till it is fully digested.^[1] The term *Grahani dosha* implies the malfunctioning of *Agni*.^[2] There is no distinction between the *Ashraya* (substratum i.e. *Grahani*) and *Ashrayi* (the substance i.e. *Agni*).^[3] *Grahani* is described as an *Agni Adhishtan* by most of the *Acharyas*.

As it is said extinction of *Jatharagni* (enzymes located in gastrointestinal tract) leads to death; its proper maintenance helps a person to live a long life. ^[4] In view of the above *Anvaya Vyatireka Sambandha* (relationship of concord and discord), *Agni* is considered to be sine qua non for the maintenance of *Ayusha* (life).^[5] *Mandagni* (weak digestive power) is a root cause of *Amadosha* (undigested food) and it is the crucial factor for manifestation of most of the diseases. ^[6] Among them, *Grahani* is the prime disease of gastrointestinal tract and seen often in day-to-day practice. Functionally weak *Agni* i.e., *Mandagni*, causes improper digestion of ingested food, which lead to *Amadosha*. It has pivotal importance in the pathogenesis of *Grahani Roga*. *Grahani Roga* is one of the *Maharogas* (major systemic diseases) affecting the digestion and metabolism, which is hard to diagnose and difficult to be cured as it involves the entire metabolic pathways. ^[7]

In the era of fast food, diet and diet timings has been changed with sedentary lifestyle. Along with change in diet and lifestyle, one is all the time under terrific mental stress. All these causes disturbance to the digestive system; which result into many diseases, amongst which digestion and absorption disorders constitute an important group.

The main symptomology as mentioned in the texts are related to Malabsorption symptoms mainly diarrhoea, loss of appetite, anorexia, emaciation. Digestion and absorption of nutrients is a complex, highly coordinated and extremely efficient process; normally, less than 5 % of ingested carbohydrates, fats and protein is excreted in the faeces. Diarrhoea and weight loss in patient with a normal diet should always lead to the suspicion of Malabsorption.^[8] Observing the view of significance and title role of diet and lifestyle in *Grahani*, this article had tried to explore the food items recommended for *Grahani* patients by our ancient *Acharyas*.

Aim of Diet

There is nothing else except diet for sustaining the life of living beings. One is capable to make man disease-free only with the congenial diet. ^[9] It is also true that in both the conditions, viz. health and disease, the wholesomeness and the unwholesomeness is a prime factor to be thought about, as without proper diet, the use of any drug is futile.

The aim of diet in person suffering from *Grahani* can be stated as.

1. An enhancement in the *Agni* can improve the functioning of *Grahani*.
2. The reduction in *Amadosha* with the help of *Deepana* (appetizer), *Pachana* (digestant) and *Laghu* (easy to digest) *Dravyas*.
3. Correction in bowel habit in terms of volume and consistency as *Prakrit* (normal).
4. Improvement in overall nutrition.
5. Prevention or reduction in complications.

Properties of *Ahara Dravyas* (food items) for *Grahani*

- *Deepana* and *Pachana Dravyas*
- *Laghu* and *Grahee* (absorbant) *Dravyas*
- Diet which mitigates *Vata* (air), *Pitta* (bile) and *Kapha* (phlegm)
- Mainly *Kashaya* (astringent), *Madhura* (sweet) and *Katu* (pungent) in taste

- Typically *Grahani Rog Nashaka Dravyas* (food items of choice)

Choice of *Ahara Dravyas*

The *Ahara Vargas* (classes), screened and selected from different *Ayurvedic* classics, were based on

- (i) Properties (ii) Tolerance (iii) Availability of *Dravyas* (iv) Capacity of digestive power and (v) Predominance of the *Doshas* of the patient.

The *Ahara Vargas* are

- *Shukadhanya Varga* (Cereals)
- *Shamidhanya Varga* (Pulses)
- *Shaka Varga* (Vegetables)
- *Goras Varga* (Milk and products)
- *Phala Varga* (Fruits)
- *Harit Varga* (class of Greens)
- *Aharyogi Varga* (Adjuvants of foods)
- *Mamsa Varga* (Meat)

Table 1: *Ahara Dravyas* Recommended for *Grahani* Patients

English Name	Sanskrit Name	Rasa	Veerya	Vipaka	Guna
Rice ^[10]	<i>Shashtika</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Sheeta</i> (cold in potency)	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Laghu</i> , <i>Snigdha</i> (unctuous), <i>Grahee</i>
Green Gram ^[11]	<i>Mudga</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Laghu</i> , <i>Ruksha</i> (creates dryness), <i>Grahee</i>
Lentil ^[12]	<i>Masoora</i>	<i>Madhura</i> , <i>Kashaya</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Laghu</i> , <i>Grahee</i>
Red Gram ^[13]	<i>Adhaki</i>	<i>Kashaya</i> , <i>Madhura</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Laghu</i> , <i>Ruksha</i> , <i>Grahee</i>
Horse Gram ^[14]	<i>Kullatha</i>	<i>Kashaya</i>	<i>Ushna</i> (hot in potency)	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Laghu</i> , <i>Sara</i> (mild laxative)
Goat Curd ^[15]	<i>Chag Dadhi</i>	<i>Amla</i> (sour)	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Amla</i>	<i>Laghu</i> , <i>Grahee</i> , <i>Deepana</i>
Butter Milk ^[16]	<i>Takra</i>	<i>Amla</i> , <i>Kashaya</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Laghu</i> , <i>Ruksha</i> , <i>Grahee</i> , <i>Deepana</i>
Butter ^[17]	<i>Navneeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Grahee</i> , <i>Snigdha</i> , <i>Agnikrit</i> (stimulates <i>Agni</i>)
Cow Ghee ^[18]	<i>Gavyaghrat</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Guru</i> (difficult to digest), <i>Rochana</i> (enhances taste perception), <i>Agnikrit</i>
Honey ^[19]	<i>Makshika</i>	<i>Madhura</i> , <i>Kashaya</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Laghu</i> , <i>Ruksha</i> , <i>Grahee</i> , <i>Deepana</i>
Pomegranate ^[20]	<i>Dadima</i>	<i>Madhura</i> , <i>Kashaya</i> , <i>Amla</i>	<i>Anushna</i>	<i>Madhura</i> / <i>Amla</i>	<i>Laghu</i> , <i>Snigdha</i> , <i>Grahee</i>
Banana ^[21]	<i>Kadalee</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Guru</i> , <i>Vishtambhee</i> (restraining)
Bengal Quince ^[22]	<i>Bilva</i>	<i>Katu</i> , <i>Kashaya</i> , <i>Tikta</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Laghu</i> , <i>Snigdha</i> , <i>Grahee</i> , <i>Deepana</i> , <i>Pachana</i>
Jambool Tree ^[23]	<i>Jambava</i>	<i>Madhura</i> , <i>Kashaya</i> , <i>Amla</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Guru</i> , <i>Ruksha</i> , <i>Rochana</i> (stimulating appetite), <i>Vishtambhee</i>
Wood Apple ^[24]	<i>Kapittha</i>	<i>Kashaya</i> , <i>Madhura</i> , <i>Amla</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Laghu</i> , <i>Grahee</i>
Water Caltrops ^[25]	<i>Shrungataka</i>	<i>Madhura</i> , <i>Kashaya</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Guru</i> , <i>Grahee</i>
Kokum Butter Tree ^[26]	<i>Vrikshamla</i>	<i>Katu</i> , <i>Kashaya</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Amla</i>	<i>Guru</i> , <i>Ruksha</i> , <i>Grahee</i> , <i>Deepana</i> , <i>Grahanijit</i> (cures <i>Grahani</i>)

		<i>Amla</i>			
Nutmeg ^[27]	<i>Jatiphala</i>	<i>Tikta, Katu, Kashaya</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Laghu, Grahee, Rochana, Deepana, Maladaurgandhyahara</i> (destroying bad smell of faeces)
Water Lily ^[28]	<i>Shaluka</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Guru, Ruksha, Grahee</i>
Prickly Amaranth ^[29]	<i>Tanduliya</i>	<i>Tikta</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha, Deepana, Rochana</i>
Indian Sorrel ^[30]	<i>Changeri</i>	<i>Amla</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Amla</i>	<i>Ruksha, Deepana, Rochana, Grahani</i> (cures Grahani)
Radish ^[31]	<i>Moolaka</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Laghu, Rochana, Pachana</i>
Dry Zingiber ^[32]	<i>Shunthi</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Laghu, Snigdha, Pachana, Rochana</i>
Long Pepper ^[33]	<i>Pippali</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Anushna</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Laghu, Snigdha, Deepana</i>
Cumin Seed ^[34]	<i>Jeeraka</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha, Grahee, Deepana, Rochana</i>
Coriander Fruit ^[35]	<i>Dhanyaka</i>	<i>Kashaya, Tikta, Katu</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Laghu, Snigdha, Grahee, Deepana, Pachana</i>
Indian Hare ^[36]	<i>Shasha Mamsa</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha, Grahee, Vanhikrit</i> (stimulates Agni)
Partridge ^[37]	<i>Tittira Mamsa</i>	<i>Madhura, Kashaya</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Laghu, Grahee, Pathya</i> (wholesome)

Also *Ayurveda* has mentioned *Pathya* (wholesome) diet according to the *Dosha* predominance in *Grahani* as -

Vataj - *Peya* (thin gruel) prepared from decoction of *Panchakola*.^[38] *Yusha* (soup) of *Panchakola*, *Moolaka* with *Marich* (black pepper) and *Ghee*, *Yusha* of meat of birds and animals inhabiting arid and prepared by sizzling with *ghee*, or *Yusha* of meat of *Kravyada* (meat-eating) types of birds and animals, by adding *Dadima* and butter milk, *Aranala* (a sour drink), *Arishtha* (a type of alcoholic drink) as drinks^[39], *Yusha* of *Shigru* (drum stick) prepared with butter milk.^[40]

Pittaj - *Jangal Mamsa* (meat of animals of arid zone). *Yusha* of *Mudga*, *Khada* (a sour drink), added with *Dadima* and *ghee*.^[41]

Kaphaj - *Yusha* of dried *Moolaka* or *Kullatha*^[42] *Yusha* of *Chitrak* (*Plumbago zeylanica*) and *Moolaka*.^[43] *Peya* of *Ativisha* (*Aconitum heterophyllum*) with *Shunthi* made sour.^[44]

According to *Sushruta* drinking of *Gomutra* (cow urine) or *Ajamutra* (goat urine) early morning, drinking of *Sukhambu* (lukewarm water), and butter milk is helpful in *Grahani*.^[45]

DISCUSSION

As far as the aetiopathology of the disease is concerned, due to various unhealthy causes vitiation of *Pitta*(*Agni*) situated between *Amashaya* (stomach) and *Pakwashaya* (intestine) is responsible for the manifestation of the symptoms.

Symptoms - In *Grahani* the entire food material usually remains in the state of *Vidagdha* (i.e. part of it gets digested, the other part remaining undigested), in association with *Trishna* (morbid thirst), *Arochaka* (anorexia), *Vairasya* (distaste in mouth), *Praseka* (excessive salivation) and *Tamaka* (asthma), the affected person voids stool in large quantity either in solid or liquid form. Also suffers from oedema in leg

and hands, pain in bones and phalanges, vomiting, fever and eructation having metabolic smell, smell of *Ama* and bitter as well as sour tastes.^[46]

The symptoms of Malabsorption are in nature variable in severity. A few patients have apparently normal bowel habit but diarrhoea is usual and may be watery and voluminous and is bulky, greasy, frothy, pale, and unusually offensive. It can be guessed on the basis of nature of stool as - Bulky, pale and offensive stools which float in the toilet (steatorrhea) signify fat Malabsorption. Stool is bulky in Malabsorption of carbohydrate and water, floating in water in either high fat content or high gas, and explosive diarrhoea is classical of carbohydrate Malabsorption. Abdominal distention, borborygmi, cramps, weight loss and undigested food in stool may be present. Some patients complain only malaise and lethargy. These patients don't have rectal symptoms, mucus or blood in stool. Sometimes there is pain in periumbilical region. Pathophysiological basis of diarrhoea in Malabsorption is due to decreased absorptive surface, secretory activity of bile acids and osmotic activity of short chain fatty acid. Dull, vague poorly localized pain is due to excess flatulence. When flatulence is none foul it is carbohydrate Malabsorption and when foul it is protein.^[47]^[48]

Aetiology and pathogenesis^[49]

1. Intraluminal Malabsorption - occurs when deficiency of bile or pancreatic enzymes results in inadequate solubilisation and hydrolysis of nutrients. As a result fat and protein Malabsorption occurs. This may also occur in the presence of small bowel bacterial overgrowth.

2. Mucosal Malabsorption - results from small bowel resection or conditions which damage the small intestinal epithelium, thereby diminishing the surface area for absorption and depleting brush border enzyme activity.

3. Post mucosal Malabsorption – lymphatic obstruction prevents the uptake and transport of absorbed lipids. Into lymphatic vessels, increased pressure in these vessels results in leakage into the intestinal lumen, leading to protein-losing enteropathy.

Sampraptibhanga (Probable mode of action)

The ancient scholar used the principle of diet application for all types of *Grahani*, boost the *Agni* and to reduce the *Ama*, meaning the *Deepana Pachana* diet. To get an enhancing effect of *Agni* and reducing the *Ama*, they prescribed *Ahara Dravyas*, which included mainly *Kashaya*, *Madhura* and *Katu* in *Rasa*; *Laghu*, *Ruksha*, *Grahee*, *Deepana* and *Pachana* in *Guna*; *Ushna* in *Veerya* and *Katu* or *Madhura* in *Vipaka*.

As modern medical science states, Intraluminal Malabsorption occurs due to bile or pancreatic enzymes deficiency, by considering *Agni* as enzymes, *Agni* enhancing diet can increase these enzymes and interrupt the Malabsorption. In case of Mucosal Malabsorption which occurs due to depleting brush border enzyme activity, again *Agni* enhancing diet can regain the functioning of enzymes and can stop its pathogenesis. And by boosting the *Agni* which leads to reduction in *Strotas* (minute channels) obstructing *Amadosha*, the obstructive pathology in lymphatic vessels occurring in Post Mucosal Malabsorption can be corrected.

The modern science has given emphasis on Gluten free diet for the treatment of Malabsorption.^[50] The diet regime suggested by *Ayurveda* helps in stimulation of *Agni*, which supports the digestion of food of appropriate quality, taken in required quantity and in right time for cure of *Grahani Dosha*.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that, if a person takes food without the appropriate procedure, then he quickly succumbs to diseases like Malabsorption caused by the vitiation of *Grahani* because of his uncontrolled habits. It means proper diet has a key role in management of *Grahani* or Malabsorption. The 28 *Ahara Dravyas* of various classes studied in this research can be suggested for *Grahani* patients. The proactive approach need to be taken for prevention of *Grahani* with the planning of proper diet.

We can resume the bowel habit to normal, improve the overall nutritional status of patients and can prevent or reduce the complications of Malabsorption with the help of *Ayurvedic* principles of diet, because intake of wholesome food in appropriate quantity after the digestion of the previous meal helps a person to enjoy good health for a long time. With appropriate types of fuel in the form of varieties of foods and drinks, which are wholesome, the condition of *Jatharagni* should be suitably and carefully maintained, because the life and the strength of an individual are dependent upon it.

After a bird-eye view of present-day practice of diet and lifestyle including the method of food planning, raw ingredients, food combinations, and food

timings, holistic *Ayurvedic* principles of diet, *Pathyapathya*, etc., is certainly in a state where it is very indispensable to focus, if the complete health is to be maintained.

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