



## Role of *Viruddha Ahara* in the Genesis of *Amavata*

Saini Neera<sup>1</sup>, Pal Pradeep Kumar<sup>2</sup>, Byadgi P S<sup>3</sup>

1. Ph.D Scholar, Dept of Vikriti Vigyan, Faculty of Ayurveda, IMS, BHU, Varanasi -221005.
2. Junior Redident, Dept of Vikriti Vigyan, Faculty of Ayurveda, IMS, BHU, Varanasi -221005.
3. Asst. Professor, Dept of Vikriti Vigyan, Faculty of Ayurveda, IMS, BHU, Varanasi -221005.

### ABSTRACT

Those substances that cause an unnatural increase in the humors but do not expel them out of body are called *Viruddha ahara*. Hence, they are more antagonistic than nourishing to the tissues. Many of food materials mentioned in this context in treatises cannot be identified. The interaction is more important. There is concept of drug-drug or food-drug interaction in modern medicine also. In today's era most of these incompatibilities can be explained chemically and ultimately, leading to *ama* formation in body. *Amavata* develops due to conglomeration of *ama* and *vata*. According to *Ayurveda*, *ama* plays an important role in the pathogenesis of this disease, which is formed mainly due to decrease in digestive power. *Acharya Madhava* has described various types of *nidana* responsible for the development of *Amavata* and *viruddha ahara* is one of them which plays the most crucial point in today's era. *Viruddha ahara* causes vitiation in *agni* causing vitiation in *doshas* and vice-versa.

**Keywords:** *Viruddha ahara*, *Amavata*, *Ama agni*.

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\*Corresponding Author Email: [psbyadgi@rediffmail.com](mailto:psbyadgi@rediffmail.com)

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## INTRODUCTION

The unbalanced state of tissues, *doshas*, and waste products is defined as disease<sup>1</sup>. Disease *Amavata* has been named because it develops due to conglomeration of *ama* and *vata*. When *vata* gets vitiated due to consumption of *vata* aggravating factors and *ama* develops due to consumption of diet and activities which favours sluggishness of *agni* and favours the development of *ama* later both *ama* and *vata* enter the *trika* region and *sandhi pradasha* (various joints of body) and leads to *stabdhatata* (stiffness) of body joints. This condition is known as *amavata*<sup>2</sup>. *Amavata* is one of the commonest crippling disorders caused by the impairment of *agni*. *Amavata* further leads to deterioration in the form of physical deformities as well as mental frustration.

### *Ama*

During the digestion, the food is broken down into smaller and smaller particles till they are broken down ultimately into fine particles, which can be easily absorbed and assimilated. Incomplete or partial digestion of food, due to decrease in digestive power leads to *ama* formation<sup>3</sup>. *Ama* resulting from incomplete digestion of food accumulates slowly in genetically weak organs. The term *Amavata* is the combination of *ama* with *vata*. In this *ama* acts like an antigen produced in the body and *vata* is one of the three *dosha* which is aggravated and vitiated in this disease.

**Viruddhahara (Incompatibilities of food):** Those substances that cause an unnatural increase in the humors but do not expel them out of body are called *viruddha ahara*<sup>4</sup>. Hence, they are more antagonistic than nourishing to the tissues. Many of food materials mentioned in this context in treatises cannot be identified. The interaction is more important. There is drug-drug or food-drug interaction in modern medicine also. In today's era most of these incompatibilities can be explained chemically. *Viruddha ahara* (Incompatibilities) according to various factors is divided into different types- *Guna viruddha*, *Sanskara viruddha*, *Sanyoga viruddha*, *Desha viruddha*, *Kala viruddha*, *Matra viruddha* etc.

#### 1) *Guna viruddha* (Diet having opposite properties)

In the present era such incompatibility can be defined as acidic fruits with milk. This may be because milk gets denatured on combining with acid. Now we can think that there is HCl in our stomach also but the explanation is that curdling inside the stomach is not harmful. Ex- Mango shakes banana shakes<sup>5</sup> etc.

#### 2) *Sanskara viruddha* (Faulty preparation of diet)-

Heated honey or honey mixed with warm water should not be consumed. Heating oil changes its characteristics. Oils that are healthy at room temperature can become unhealthy when heated above certain temperatures. A 2001 parallel review of 20-year dietary fat studies in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Spain found that polyunsaturated oils like soya, canola, sunflower, and corn oil degrade easily to toxic compounds when heated. Prolonged consumption of burnt oils led to atherosclerosis, inflammatory joint disease, and development of birth defects<sup>6</sup>.

**Products of oil-** Repeated use of same oil for the preparation of edibles. When oil is heated again & again, creates more oxidation and if consumed may create more oxidative stress creating more free radicals. Oxidative rancidity occurs when fatty acids are exposed to oxygen in the presence of heat or light, resulting in the formation of hydro peroxide compounds. This hydro peroxide in turn forms aldehyde molecules. Oxygenated aldehyde is toxic compounds that cause oxidative stress in the cells of body and may increase the risk of degenerative illness and atherosclerotic disease. Hydroperoxide fatty acids may also have a detrimental effect on the fat-soluble vitamins A & E.

**Refined sugar-** Refined sugar depletes minerals. Thus we should replace mineral depleting refined sugar and sweeteners with maple syrup, honey, or stevia. All these decrease the production of HCl and favour the hypo functioning of *agni* resulting in the formation of *ama*.

### 3) *Samyoga viruddha* (Diet having opposite properties)

*Consumption of Jangala or anupa* meat with honey, milk and sprouted seeds is an example of abnormal diet. The diet on combination develops properties harmful to the body which is present originally in none of the items. Carbohydrates and protein should not be eaten in equal amount at the same time. Digestion is strongly influenced by pH (the level of acidity) in the stomach and small intestine. Starch is digested by mechanical action in the stomach and by enzymes in the mouth and small intestine that work in an alkaline environment. In contrast, proteins are digested by enzymes that work under highly acidic conditions. For the most part this digestion occurs in the stomach with the aid of enzymes that thrive in the acidity caused by the stomach's production of hydrochloric acid. If protein and starch are mixed in the stomach, then two things happen. The time for the stomach to empty is increased and the food that emerges is a mixed bolus that is highly acid. Since the enzymes that break down starch cannot function, there is pain and discomfort<sup>7</sup>. Fruit should be eaten alone – not with meals. Combined eating of carbohydrate, Protein, Starch etc. in more quantity causes the disturbance of digestion and metabolism inside the body leading to improper digestion and manifests *ama*.

#### 4) *Desha viruddha* (Food taken not following the habitat condition) –

If people of *anupa desha* take diet having *kapha guna* dominant properties, will vitiate *dhatu*. *Desha* relates to the habitat. It determines the quality or characteristic of an individual due to the climate adaptation to any region, how a person becomes adapted to food and life style. According to *Acharya* every individual is adapted to a particular region in relation of *ahara, vihara* & treatment also. If he is transferred to a different *desha*, he will feel distress. Medicines of other *desha* will not work affectively. It can be understood as people living in high altitude become adapted to low oxygen in atmosphere & they have no distress and body physiology regulate it by increasing total Hb concentration & RBCs count in blood. If a person of *sadharana desha* goes that high altitude feels excessive distress. Persons of coastal areas feel much distress due to temperature variation in *sadharana desha*. There are many other examples defining *desha satmya*<sup>8</sup> in relation of *ahara*, & in relation of treatment

- People of eastern areas [of India] are habitual of taking fish, and they felt no distress even on daily routine.
- People of *Sindha* are habitual of taking milk.
- People of *Malaya* mountain range are habitual of taking rhizome, roots and fruits.
- People of southern part (of India) use *peya*.
- People of northern & western - habitual of taking *mantha* (porridge).
- People of middle part are habitual of taking barley, wheat, milk.

The food and medicine of one *desha* is not suitable for other *desha* because any individual is suited for his / her atmosphere. Example- Imported food and medicines.

#### 5) *Kala viruddha* (Food taken not following the rules of *Ritucharya*)-

In rainy season *vata prokopa* occurs naturally, if person consumes diet predominantly has *vata guna*, it will cause more *vata* vitiation and individual may suffer from *vata* diseases. As a person having joint disorder, takes pea will suffer from more joint pain. Not following the seasonal regimens brings equilibrium of *doshas* leading to abnormal functions of *agni*, as a result *ama* develops inside the body. Other concept of *kala* is related to age (*Avastha*) - In this respect it can be said, as we get older, stomach acid production tends to decrease, especially if there is any chronic illness which leads to formation of *ama*.

#### 6) *Matraviruddha*–

This group includes those substances which possess the property of *viruddhahara* only on combination in specified amount as

- *Madhu* (Honey) and *ghrta* (Ghee) in equal quantities.

➤ *Madhu* (Honey) and rain water in equal quantities.

**Again 18 varieties of *viruddha ahara* described in *Charaka Samhita*–**

1. *Desha viruddha*
2. *Kala viruddha*
3. *Samyoga viruddha*
4. *Matraviruddha*
5. *Sanskara viruddha*

All the above five has been described above.

**vi) *Agni viruddha* (Digestive power incompatibilities)** - Food not taken according to digestive power. This includes dietary practices which are not in accordance with the power of digestion (*Agni*) such as –

- A *mandagni purusha* (Having mild power of digestion) - Consuming drugs and diet which are *guru* (Heavy to digest) leads to formation of *ama*.
- A person with *tikshanagni* (Sharp digestive power) taking food items which are *laghu* (Easy to digest) leads to increase in *vata dosha*.
- This group also includes taking food at variance with irregular and normal power of digestion.

**vii) *Satmya viruddha* (Habituation incompatibilities)**

If a person is wholesome to take *katu* and *ushana virya* things if he takes *madhura* and *sheeta virya* things suddenly it will cause vitiation in *dosha* and *dhatu*s. In other way if person is wholesome to take alcohol in his routine life in large amount and if he tries to avoid it, he has to face much problems mentally as well physically<sup>9</sup>. In the same way if an individual is addicted to take fish in routine life, if he tries to avoid it, he has to face many problems mentally. *Ayurveda* says eating food to which one is not habituated would also cause sudden imbalance of *doshas*.

**viii) *Dosha viruddha* (Humors incompatibilities)**

Utilization of diet and drugs has qualities similar to that of *doshas* but at variance with the habit of the individual. If a person with *vata* constitution eats dry food, person with *pitta* constitution eats hot and pungent food and person with *kapha* constitution eats fatty and sweet food in excess, it would result in increase of the same *dosha* in his body.

**ix) *Virya viruddha* (Potency incompatibilities)**

It is the usage of substances with opposite potencies such as an *ushna virya* (A hot potency) *dravya* (Substances) with a *sheeta virya* (Cold potency substances) *dravya*. Ex-milk with fish. In this fish is of *ushna virya* while milk is of *sheeta virya*<sup>10</sup>.

**x) *Kostha viruddha* (Gut incompatibilities)**

It is the usage of diet and drugs not in accordance with the bowel. For example – administration of mild purgative in a small dose to a person with *krura kosthha* (Constipated bowel) or vice – versa<sup>11</sup>.

**xi) *Krama viruddha* (Sequence incompatibilities)**

Taking meals not following the correct pattern for example –

- Intake of food without clearance of bowel or bladder
- Intake of food when not hungry
- Not taking food when hungry and so on<sup>12</sup>.

**xii) *Parihara viruddha* (Compensation incompatibilities)-** Intake of substances which are contraindicated as–

- Intake of hot things after taking pig meat.
- Intake of hot water after taking *madhu*(Honey).<sup>13</sup>

**xiii) *Upachara viruddha* (Social incompatibilities)-**Intake of ghee followed by cold water drinking. It may be so because ice water after meals inhibits production of stomach acid causes hypo functioning of *agni* leading to formation of *ama*.

**xiv) *Paka viruddha* (Cooking incompatibilities)-**Improperly processed food and infective food causes digestive problems and develops sluggish functions of *agni* and manifest *ama*. Raw food items which are difficult to digest leads to formation of *ama* and green leafy vegetables would increase *vata dosha* in body.

**xv) *Hrid viruddha* (Unpleasant)-**

*Hrid* here refers to the like and palatability of the person, so this type includes the consumption of those substances which are not liked by the person or are not palatable to him. It may be understood as eating when upset. Hydrochloric acid secretion may be completely inhibited by stress, emotion, or worry. It is the low-grade, long-term, emotionally oriented life stress, which are the more culprits here. Intense stress caused by high stress situations or desire for high achievement is associated more with HCL over (hyper) secretion and peptic ulcer disease (at least initially). As the stress continues, the body is exhausted and HCL production is no longer adequate<sup>14</sup>.

**xvi) *Sampad viruddha* (Defective in qualities)** It has a lot of importance in today's era as we are following such edible items.

- Eating packed food.

- Eating food refrigerated for a long period<sup>15</sup>.
- Using vegetables which are stored in cold storages for long period<sup>16</sup>
- Whole food, super food, multi vitamins restores the vitamins and minerals that are needed for HCL production – especially B vitamins – niacin, thiamine, pyridoxal-5-phosphate (the active form of vitamin B6)<sup>17</sup>.
- Eating a nutrient deficient diet of processed and fast foods<sup>18</sup>
- Lack of sufficient minerals in the daily diet<sup>19</sup>
- Excess carbohydrate consumption and poor food combining<sup>20</sup>
- Drinking ice water with meals<sup>21</sup>

All these are causes of low Hydrochloric Acid and causes disequilibrium of *dosha*, *dhatu*, mala etc. and favour the development of *ama*.

**xvii) Avastha viruddha (Condition incompatibilities)**- It is the consumption of substances having qualities contra dictory to the state of health for example – An old age person consuming less amount of food or food which is dry in nature (*Ruksha*), cold in potency (*sheeta virya*) and easy to digest (*Laghu*) or consumption of *kapha* aggravating factors by a person after sleep

**xviii) Vidhi viruddha (Norms incompatibilities)**<sup>15</sup>-This includes the diet and drug pattern not in accordance with the rules of eating for example –

-Taking meals in public.

-Food intake immediately after eating.

Food should be taken in relaxed mood and at peaceful place. Avoid eating when upset as emotional upset can stop the production of HCL leading to *ama* formation. Food should be chewed thoroughly to stimulate digestive enzymes in the mouth, and to break up foods into the smallest particles possible for better digestion.

All the above stated types of *viruddha* ultimately cause hypo functioning of *agni* which leads to formation of *ama*.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Ama* resulting from incomplete digestion of food accumulates gradually in cells and tissues. Diet is important for maintenance of health. However, if one does not use his discretion regarding selection of his food in relation to place, time, constitution, etc<sup>16</sup> resulting into development of diseases. *Viruddhaharas* may give rise to many chemical reactions inside the gastrointestinal tract and initiating inflammatory process due to aggravated and imbalanced *dosic* rhythm. It may affect each and every cell of the body and alters chemical constituents inside the body. Digestive

enzymes or hormones greatly disturbed in the gastrointestinal tract leading to development of toxic like end product known as *ama*. Some varieties of *ama* may be responsible for the excitement of the causative factors of a particular disease or creates a favourable atmosphere for the manifestations of the disease. Certain incompatible diet is more harmful in certain environmental conditions and surroundings. Ancient *Acharyas* observed elaborately the qualities of each and every food substances and their effect on the cells and tissues of healthy as well as diseased individuals of various constitutions. Hence, there are references of dietary factors as etiological factors which trigger the inflammatory process as well as aggravate many diseases conditions. Hence, in almost all diseases *Ayurveda* advices the avoidance of certain food items, which have a tendency to aggravate the disease and consumption of certain food items that have a beneficial effect on the recovery from the diseases. Aggravated *vata* fills up the emptiness in the body passage and produce various kinds of disorders which affect the whole body or localized in a particular region in combination with other fundamental factors of the disease. Turnbaugh and coworkers suggested that a set of core microbiome is present in humans living in a certain habitat. Variability among individuals could arise due to the host lifestyle, diet, health, immune system and environment. This concept is also described in *Ayurveda* i.e erratic diet and lifestyle causes variability in gut. Our gut is the primary port of entrance for various environmental antigens that can be in the form of food or infectious agents. The intestinal microflora forms an immunological barrier between the environment and the intestine and helps to maintain a healthy gastro-intestinal tract. While the skin surface is protected by several layers of epithelial cells, the mucosal surface including that of the digestive, urogenital tract, respiratory, eye and ducts of exocrine glands is covered mostly with a single-layered epithelium. Mucosal surfaces, therefore, require more effective protection that can efficiently dispose the majority of external agents. The mucosal surfaces have a strongly developed and highly specialized immune system, the mucosa-associated lymphoid tissue (MALT) that harbours the majority of immunologically active cells in the body. The preferential induction of inhibition of the responses to non-dangerous antigens (mucosal tolerance) is a characteristic feature of mucosal immunity distinguishing it from systemic immunity. This may be correlated normal *kapha*. *Amavata* results from the complex interactions between *vata*, *kapha*, *ama*, environmental factors and the immune system<sup>17</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

Combination of opposite qualities of food substances, the majority of the power filled qualities

overpowers the weaker qualities. The combination of two substances which are not having an affinity for each other is termed as *viruddha ahara*. Concept of *viruddha ahara* in the context of dietetics and various combinations are said to be responsible for the causation of diseases. It may be concluded that food substances having no affinity at all may be defined as *Viruddha* or *Viruddhahara*. Incompatible diets are increasingly causing gastrointestinal disturbances and favours the genesis of *ama* which in turn initiates inflammatory processes inside the body as a result *Amavata* develops.

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