



An Integrated Literary Review on *Grahani Roga* (IBS)

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Abstract

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) is a chronic functional gastrointestinal disorder causing abdominal discomfort, altered bowel habits, and bloating, significantly affecting quality of life. Ayurveda identifies IBS as *Grahani Roga*, caused by impaired *Agni* (digestive fire) and aggravated *Doshas*, primarily Vata and Pitta¹. Modern medicine emphasizes dietary regulation, pharmacotherapy, and psychological interventions². This review explores both Ayurvedic and modern perspectives and highlights integrative approaches combining diet, lifestyle, herbal therapy, probiotics, and stress management for holistic management.

Keywords

Grahani Roga, Irritable Bowel Syndrome, Ayurveda, Integrative Approach, Agni, Gut–Brain Axis

Aims and Objectives

1. To analyze literature on the pathophysiology and management of *Grahani Roga* (IBS) in Ayurvedic and modern medicine.
2. To compare therapeutic strategies of Ayurveda (*Grahani Chikitsa*) and conventional medicine.
3. To evaluate integrative management approaches for holistic patient care.

Materials and Methods

This literary review was compiled from:

- **Ayurvedic sources:** *Charaka Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Sushruta Samhita*¹.
- **Modern scientific databases:** PubMed, Scopus, Google Scholar, and WHO reports²⁴. Data were organized under Ayurvedic, modern, and integrative approaches.

Introduction

IBS affects 11–14% of the global population and commonly presents with abdominal pain, diarrhea, constipation, or alternating bowel habits⁵. Its pathogenesis is multifactorial, involving gut–brain axis dysfunction, intestinal dysbiosis, low-grade inflammation, visceral hypersensitivity, and psychological stress. Ayurveda classifies IBS under **Grahani Roga**, primarily caused by weak **Agni** (digestive fire) and aggravated **Vata** and **Pitta** doshas¹, leading to irregular digestion, toxin formation, and psychosomatic disturbances. Since both systems recognize the role of diet, lifestyle, and mind–body interaction, integrating Ayurvedic and modern perspectives provides a more holistic framework for long-term and effective management.

Ayurvedic Perspective of Grahani Roga (IBS)

- **Pathogenesis:**
IBS corresponds to *Grahani Roga*, primarily caused by **Mandagni** (impaired digestive fire), leading to accumulation of *Ama* (undigested toxins), disturbing Vata, Pitta, and Kapha¹⁰. Vata aggravation leads to irregular bowel movements and constipation, Pitta causes diarrhea with burning sensation, and Kapha causes heaviness and sluggish digestion. Chronic *Agni* impairment also affects *Dhatu* (tissues) and *Srotas* (body channels).
- **Clinical Features:**
 - Irregular bowel habits (constipation, diarrhea, or mixed)
 - Abdominal distension, pain, and bloating
 - Indigestion, loss of appetite
 - Fatigue and general weakness
 - Psychological disturbances like anxiety and irritability⁷
- **Treatment Principles:**
 1. **Deepana-Pachana:** Herbs like *Pippali*, *Chitraka*, *Shunthi* enhance digestive fire.
 2. **Grahi Dravyas:** Herbs like *Bilva*, *Kutaja*, *Musta* normalize bowel consistency.
 3. **Srotoshodhana:** Channel cleansing with *Triphala*, *Aragvadha* to remove toxins.
 4. **Rasayana:** Rejuvenation with *Ashwagandha*, *Shatavari* supports digestive and mental health¹².
 5. **Panchakarma:**
 - *Virechana* for Pitta-predominant IBS
 - *Basti* (therapeutic enema) for Vata-dominant IBS
 - *Abhyanga* and *Swedana* for general balance

6. **Lifestyle and Diet:** Regular meals, avoiding incompatible foods, reducing daytime sleep, and managing stress.

7. **Mental Health (Satvavajaya):** Yoga, meditation, and counseling.

Modern Perspective of IBS

- Etiology:**

IBS is multifactorial, involving gut–brain axis dysfunction, intestinal dysbiosis, low-grade inflammation, visceral hypersensitivity, stress, and altered gut motility²⁴. Genetics, dietary triggers, and immune dysregulation also contribute.

- Subtypes and Rome IV Criteria:** Diagnosis requires **recurrent abdominal pain ≥ 1 day/week for the last 3 months**, associated with stool changes, onset ≥ 6 months prior⁴.

IBS Subtype	Rome IV	Symptoms	Ayurvedic Equivalent	Dosha
IBS-C	Pain + hard stools	Constipation, bloating	Grahani (Vata type)	Vata
IBS-D	Pain + loose stools	Diarrhea, cramps	Grahani (Pitta type)	Pitta
IBS-M	Alternating stool	Constipation & diarrhea	Grahani (Vata-Pitta/Kapha)	Vata-Pitta / Vata-Kapha
IBS-U	Other patterns	Irregular bowel habits	Grahani (variable)	Variable

- Treatment:**

- Diet: Low-FODMAP, fiber supplementation²⁴
- Drugs: Antispasmodics, laxatives, antidiarrheals, probiotics⁵
- Psychological therapy: CBT, stress reduction, mindfulness
- Microbiome modulation: Probiotics, prebiotics, and diet adjustments⁶

Integrative Approach to IBS

An integrative approach combines **Ayurvedic and modern strategies** for holistic care³¹².

- **Diet & Lifestyle:** Low-FODMAP diet combined with Ayurvedic *Pathya-Apathya* rules. Regular meals, hydration, yoga, pranayama, and meditation.
- **Phytotherapy & Modern Drugs:** Ayurvedic herbs (*Kutaja*, *Bilva*, *Musta*, *Shunthi*) and complementary pharmacological agents like antispasmodics and probiotics⁵.
- **Gut Microbiota:** Probiotics with *Takra Kalpana* support healthy microbiome¹².
- **Stress & Mind-Body Management:** Ayurveda: *Satvavajaya Chikitsa*; Modern: CBT, mindfulness³.
- **Panchakarma & Rehabilitation:** *Basti*, *Virechana*, *Abhyanga*, *Swedana*.

- **Lifestyle Modification & Prevention:** Avoid daytime sleep, irregular meals, alcohol, and tobacco; promote stress reduction and physical activity.

Discussion

Grahani Roga (IBS) is a **psychosomatic disorder** that involves both gastrointestinal dysfunction and psychological disturbance. Modern medicine primarily focuses on symptomatic relief through dietary regulation, pharmacotherapy, and psychological interventions, but recurrences and incomplete cures are frequently observed. Ayurveda, in contrast, emphasizes correcting the root cause by restoring *Agni*, balancing doshas, and eliminating *Ama*, thereby addressing digestion as well as mental well-being. Therapies like *Deepana-Pachana*, *Grahi dravyas*, *Panchakarma*, and *Satvavajaya Chikitsa* strengthen the gut and calm the mind. An **integrative approach** combining both systems can simultaneously target gut physiology, microbiota, diet, stress, and lifestyle, ensuring not only symptom control but also improved long-term outcomes and enhanced quality of life.

Conclusion

Grahani Roga (IBS) significantly impacts quality of life. Ayurveda provides a holistic framework through *Agni* correction, dosha balance, and mind–body therapies, while modern medicine offers diagnostic clarity and symptomatic relief. An integrative approach combining diet, lifestyle, herbal therapy, probiotics, stress management, and selective pharmacotherapy ensures sustainable outcomes.

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