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A Review Article On Management Of *Amlapitta*: An *Ayurvedic* Approach To Hyperacidity

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ABSTRACT:

Amlapitta is among the most commonly occurring diseases in society. It can be found in any age group, class, or community. The phrase “*Amlapitta correlated with hyperacidity*” refers to a set of symptoms caused by an imbalance between the acid-secreting and acid-neutralizing mechanisms inside the body that normally protect the stomach and proximal intestine. The stomach naturally produces the acid needed for digestion, and excessive acid generation results in acidity. In India, the prevalence is reported to be between 7.7% and 30%, usually less than 10% in most studies. Dietary factors associated with it include the use of spices and non-vegetarian food. Our *Acharyas* state that it results from the vitiation of *Kapha* and *Pitta Doshas*. *Swamarga Chikitsa* is recommended for the management of *Amlapitta*. *Pitta Shamana* manages *Amlapitta* through *Vamana* and *Virechana*.

Hyperacidity can be understood in *Ayurveda* under the umbrella of *Urdhwarga Amlapitta*, differentiated from the symptoms of *Pittaja Grahani*, *Sama Pitta*, and *Vidagdha Jeerna*. Patients show improvement in symptoms such as flatulence, nausea, indigestion, acid regurgitation, and retrosternal burning. Significant relief in *Amlapitta* has been observed with lifestyle and dietary changes combined with *Pravala Panchamruta Rasa*, *Laghu Sutshekhara Rasa*, and *Avipattikara Churna*.

KEY WORDS: *Amlapitta*, *Swamarga Chikitsa*, *Vidagdhajeerna*, *Vamana* and *Virechana*.

INTRODUCTION:

In *Ayurveda*, *Mandagni* is considered the main cause of many diseases. Poor dietary habits such as *Adhyashana* (eating again before previous food is digested), *Vishamashana* (irregular diet in terms of time and quantity), and improper behavioral patterns like *Vegadharana* (suppression of natural urges), either individually or collectively, contribute to the vitiation of *Doshas* (fundamental bodily bio-elements). Across all age groups, digestive problems are common and often neglected due to contemporary lifestyle patterns and ignorance of one's *Prakriti*.

In India, the prevalence ranges from 7.6% to 30%, with less than 10% reported in many studies. Dietary factors associated with this include the use of spices and non-vegetarian food ^[1]. *Amlapitta*, known as gastro-esophageal reflux, develops due to malfunctioning of the esophageal sphincter. It is a very common ailment that also affects children.

The *Ayurveda*-described illness *Amlapitta* presents with several characteristic symptoms and signs. Many *Ayurvedic* texts mention *Amlapitta* dating back to the *Samhita* period. Classical texts such as *Kashyapa Samhita*, *Yoga Ratnakara*, and *Bhaishajya Ratnavali* provide a detailed description of this illness. *Amlapitta* is considered a *Pitta Pradhana Vyadhi* (Pitta-dominant disease) because of symptoms including *Amlodgara* (sour and bitter belching), *Hritkantha Daha* (heartburn), *Gaurava* (heaviness), *Avipaka* (indigestion), *Klama* (fatigue), *Aruchi* (loss of taste), *Utklesha* (nausea), *Antra Kujana* (gurgling intestinal sounds), *Hritshula* (chest pain), and *Vidbheda* (diarrhea) ^[2].

Along with *Vata* or *Kapha*, *Pitta* weakens the *Jatharagni*, leading to *Jatharagnimandya* (decline of digestive fire). Excess indulgence in etiological factors and an improper lifestyle vitiate *Vata* and *Pitta Dosh*. Under these conditions, the consumed food becomes *Vidagdha* (improperly digested) due to *Mandagni*. It remains in the abdomen for some time before turning into *Shukta* (acidified). At this stage, the warning signs of *Amlapitta* appear, known as *Vidagdhajirna*—indigestion caused by acidic cycle. Furthermore, vitiated *Pitta* combines with *Shukta* and leads to *Pitta Amavisha Sammurchhana*, a mixture of undigested food and unmetabolized *Rasa*. This condition is recognized as *Amlapitta* ^[2].

Nidana (Etiological factors):

“विरुद्धष्टाम्लविदाहिपित्तप्रकोपिपानान्भुजो विदग्धम् | पित्तं स्वहेतूपचितं पुरा यत्तदम्लपित्तं प्रवदन्ति सन्तः ||” ^[3]

1. *Aharaja Nidana* ^[4] (Dietary Factors):

Eating excessive quantities of foods with *Amla* (sour), *Lavana* (salt), and *Katu* (pungent) tastes; drinking excessive amounts of alcohol, caffeine, and fermented foods such as yogurt or vinegar; eating at unusual times or skipping meals; binge eating or prolonged fasting; *Viruddha Ahara* (consuming incongruent food combinations), such as milk with fish or fruits with dairy products—all these can lead to *Amlapitta*.

2. *Viharaja Nidana*^[5] (Lifestyle Factors):

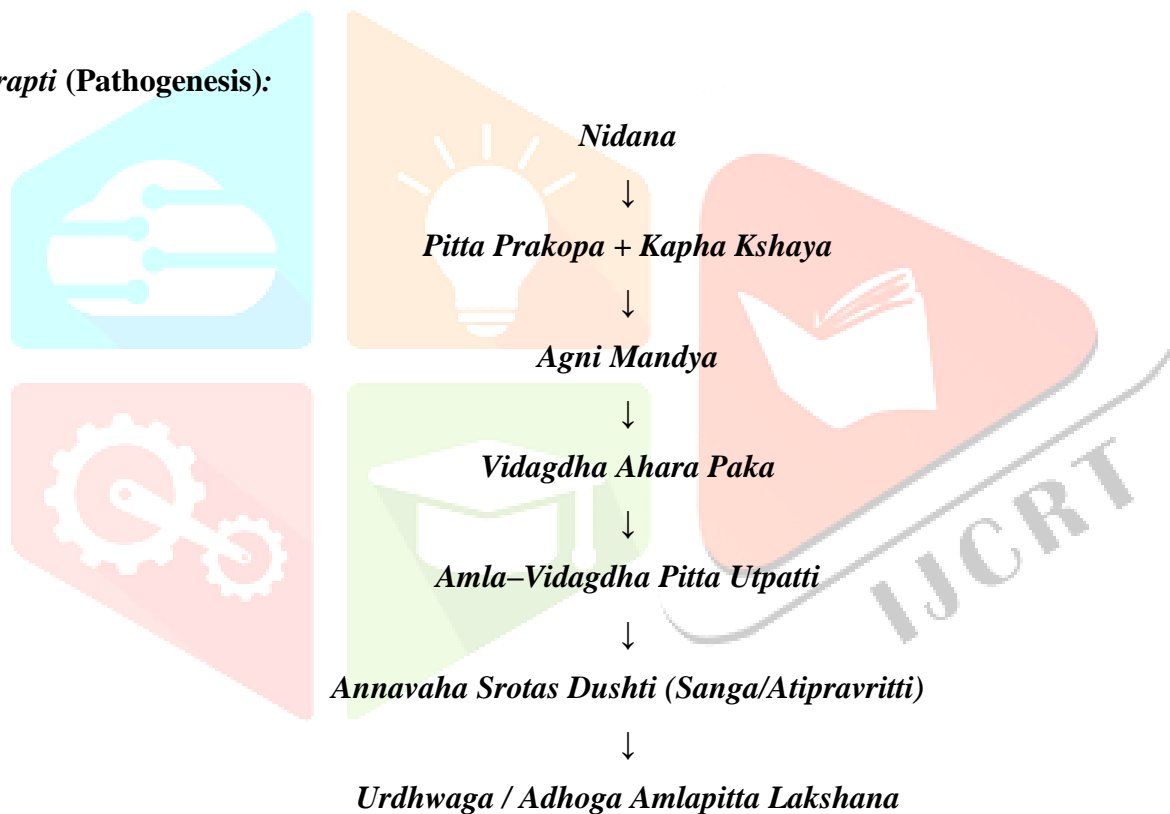
A sedentary lifestyle or insufficient physical activity impairs digestion and weakens *Agni*, especially when one lies down immediately after meals. Excessive heat or prolonged exposure to sunlight further aggravates *Pitta*. Dietary habits, lifestyle patterns, and psychological factors together contribute to the development of *Amlapitta*.

3. *Manasika Nidana* (Psychological Factors):

“मात्रयाऽप्यभ्यवहृतं पथ्यं चान्नं न जीर्यति। चिन्ताशोकभयक्रोधदुःखशय्याप्रजागरैः॥”^[6]

Even wholesome food, when consumed in proper quantity, does not get digested if a person is affected by anxiety, grief, fear, anger, sorrow, improper sleep, or sleeplessness. Continuous stress, worry, or anger disturbs the gut–brain axis and increases gastric acid secretion. *Vega Dharana* (Suppressing natural urges) such as urination or defecation, disturbs *Vata* and indirectly affects *Pitta*.

Samprapti (Pathogenesis):



Lakshanas (Symptoms):

“अविपाककलमोत्कलेशतित्ताम्लोद्गारगौरवैः | हृत्कण्ठदाहारुचिभिश्चाम्लपित्तं वदेद्भिषक् ||” [7]

S.No.	<i>Urdhwaga Amlapitta</i>	<i>Adhoga Amlapitta</i>
1.	<i>Tiktamlodgara</i> (Sour or acidic belching).	<i>Amashayadaha</i> (Abdominal discomfort or pain)
2.	<i>Hritkanthadaha</i> (Heartburn or burning sensation in the chest and throat)	<i>Antra Kujana</i> (gurgling sounds in intestines, flatulence and bloating).
3.	<i>Utklesha</i> (Nausea and occasional vomiting).	<i>Daha in guda</i>
4.	<i>Avipaka</i> (Indigestion)	<i>Atisara</i> (Diarrhea or loose stools with a burning sensation)

Samprapti Ghatakas (Components of Pathogenesis)

Dosha- *Pitta (Pradhana)* with association of *Kapha (Kledaka)*

Dushya- *Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa (secondary), Kledaka Kapha*

Agni- *Mandagni* → *Vidagdhajirna* → *Amlabhava*

Srotas- *Annavaha Srotas (main), Rasavaha Srotas (secondary)*

Srotodushti- *Sanga & Atipravritti*

Udbhavasthana- *Amashaya*

Adhishthana- *Amashaya* → *Grahani* → *Urdhwajatrugata region*

Vyaktasthana- *Amlapitta symptoms in upper GIT*

Chikitsa Siddhanta (Treatment Principles):

“पूर्वं तु वमनं कार्यं पश्चान् मृदु विरेचनम् । कृतवान्ति विरेकश्च सुस्निग्धस्यानुवासनम् ॥” [8]

Ayurvedic therapy for *Amlapitta* primarily comprises detoxification procedures to eliminate the underlying *Dosha*, the use of medicines to pacify the vitiated *Doshas*, and avoidance of factors that promote disease progression. In *Amlapitta*, *Vamana* should be performed first to remove *Kapha*, followed by **mild Virechana** to eliminate *Pitta*. Thereafter, a light diet is advised, and finally cooling, soothing medicines are administered to heal the stomach and restore digestive balance.

The Ayurvedic approach to treating *Amlapitta* (hyperacidity) can be understood from two perspectives:

1. General principles of management, and
2. Symptom-specific management.

Acharya Charaka states that most diseases can be managed through three primary approaches:

1. *Nidana Parivarjana*

This involves avoiding the *Nidana* (causative factors) responsible for the illness. *Sushruta* emphasized the importance of *Nidana* in calming the vitiated *Doshas*. Therefore, it is crucial to avoid all root causes such as improper eating habits and unhealthy lifestyle practices. Foods that are *Ushna* (hot), *Teekshna* (sharp), *Vidahi* (producing burning), *Vishtambhi* (causing obstruction), and *Pittavardhaka* (increasing *Pitta*) should be strictly avoided^[9].

Regular meal timing should be maintained. Foods excessively spicy, oily, salty, or heavily seasoned with garlic and chili should be restricted. Beneficial fluids include lemon juice, kokum juice, sweet lime juice, pomegranate juice, and *amla* juice. Water infused with *Shatavari Kalpa*, or water processed with *Musta*, *Parpatak*, *Ushir*, *Chandan*, *Udichya*, *Shadangaodaka*, *Laja*, or coriander seeds is recommended.

Milk may be taken alone, or combined with *Dadimpak* (pomegranate syrup), *Gulkand* (rose petal jam), or *Amla Murabba* for relief. Suitable vegetables include all leafy greens (except *methi*, which should be avoided), white pumpkin, bitter gourd, and okra. Fruits such as dried figs, fresh figs, pomegranates, sweet lime, black grapes, and black raisins are beneficial.

2. *Shodhana*

Shodhana involves cleansing therapies that remove the vitiated *Doshas* from their root location. Detoxification follows a specific sequence for safety and effectiveness:

- ***Vamana*** is performed first when *Doshas* are located in the *Amashaya* (stomach). It effectively eliminates *Kapha*, preventing obstruction during subsequent therapies.
- ***Mild Virechana*** is performed next to remove *Pitta*, especially after adequate *Snehana* (oleation), which helps pacify and clear residual *Vata*.
- ***Anuvasana Basti*** (oil enema) nourishes and balances *Vata*, completing the purification.
 - If *doshas* reside in the *Pachyamanashaya* (small intestine), ***Virechana*** is preferred.
 - When *doshas* are located in the *Pakwashaya* (colon), ***Anuvasana Basti*** is the ideal therapy.

Thus, the *Ayurvedic* approach focuses on restoring *Agni* and improving digestion, which is central to managing *Amlapitta*.

3. *Shamana Chikitsa*

Shamana therapy employs medicines that counteract the aggravating factors and pacify the *doshas*. *Dosha-shamaka* medicines are used for palliative management. *Ayurvedic* literature describes several herbal and classical preparations with *Pitta-shamaka* properties useful in *Amlapitta*.

Shamak Dravyas are substances that reduce aggravated *Pitta*. They are generally:

- *Tikta* (bitter) in taste
- *Sheeta Virya* (cooling in potency)
- *Madhura Rasa* (sweet taste)
- *Snigdha Guna* (unctuous) ^[10]

These properties help soothe the inflamed gastric mucosa, reduce acidity, and stabilize digestive function.

Common Formulations:

- *Churna* : *Avipattikara*^[11], *Pathyadi*, *Triphala*^[12], *Hingvadi Eladi*, *Amalakyadi*^[13],
- *Kwatha/Kashaya*: *Patoladi*, *Aragwadadi*^[14],
- *Vati*: *Shankha vati*^[15], *Drakshadi Gutika*^[16]
- *Ghrita* : *Shatavari Ghrita* , *DrakshadiGhrita*, *Narayana Ghrita*^[17],
- *Khandapaka*: *Narikela Khand*^[18], *Pippali Khand*, *AmlapittantakaModaka*, *Shoubhagyashunthi paka*
- *Rasa*: *Kamadudha Rasa*^[19], *Sutashekhara Rasa*^[20], *Amlapittantaka Rasa*, *PravalaPishti*^[21], *Mukta Pishti*, *Shankha Bhasma*^[22]
- *Rasayanas* : *AmalakiRasayana*^[23]

Satvavajaya Chikitsa

Satvavajaya Chikitsa is a non-drug therapeutic approach in Ayurveda focused on mental discipline and emotional regulation. It aims to prevent the mind from engaging with harmful thoughts, negative emotions, and external stressors. In hyperacidity, psychological stress plays a major role in aggravating symptoms and lowering quality of life, making this therapy an essential component of treatment.

Modern therapeutic modalities aligned with *Satvavajaya* include Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), biofeedback, hypnotherapy, and relaxation techniques. Practicing mental relaxation and stress-reducing techniques enhances treatment outcomes. *Ayurvedic* herbs such as *Shatavari*, *Yashtimadhu*, *Amalaki*, *Shunthi*, *Guduchi*, and *Ativisha* act as mental rejuvenators and digestive tonics, supporting overall recovery.

5. *Pranayama and Yoga*

Managing *Amlapitta* requires incorporating yoga and pranayama because they balance the *Doshas*, reduce mental tension, and improve digestive function^[8].

Recommended *Asanas*:

- ***Pawanmuktasana***: Helps reduce bloating and improves digestion; performed after meals.
- ***Vajrasana***: Enhances gut motility and digestion.
- ***Bhujangasana***: Stimulates *Agni* and strengthens digestive power.
- ***Shavasana***: Relaxes the entire body and reduces stress.

Techniques in *Pranayama*:

- ***Sheetali Pranayama***: Cooling breath that calms *Pitta*.
- ***Sheetkari Pranayama***: Reduces internal heat and soothes the mind.
- ***Anulom–Vilom***: Balances *Doshas* and improves gut–brain harmony.

Pathyapathya ^[24]

Pathya (Wholesome Diet):

- Prefer bitter-tasting foods (*Tikta Rasa*): karela, methi, neem, moringa, aloe vera, green tea, etc.
- **Grains**: Barley, wheat, aged rice, green gram, lentils, *Laja*, *Saktu* with sugar and honey.
- **Vegetables**: Bitter gourd, *Patola*, ash gourd.
- **Fruits**: Pomegranate, Indian gooseberry (*Amalaki*), wood apple (*Bilva*).
- **Milk**: Goat milk; cow's milk from animals living in forested regions.
- **Drinks**: Coconut water, lukewarm water, cold milk, buttermilk, aloe vera juice, ginger tea, fennel tea.
- **Millets**: *Bajra*, *ragi*, *kangani*, *sama*, *sanwa*, *kodara*, *rajgira*, *kuttu* — best consumed with ghee.

Apathya (Unwholesome Diet & Activities):

- Heavy, greasy, fermented, or incompatible foods (e.g., bread, yogurt with fish).
- Pulses like *Kulatha*, *Masha*; newly harvested grains; sesame seeds; curd; alcohol.
- Suppression of natural urges, late-night eating, excessive fluid intake, prolonged sun exposure, daytime sleep.
- Negative emotions such as worry, anger, grief, and fear.

Prevention:

As the saying goes, “Prevention is better than cure.” *Ayurvedic* prevention of *Amlapitta* emphasizes:

- Avoiding salty, oily, sour, and spicy foods.
- Not skipping meals or eating late at night. Since metabolism aligns with daylight, digestion is strongest during the day and weakest at night. After sunset, the body enters rest-and-repair mode, not digestive mode; hence *Ayurveda* recommends a light dinner taken before sunset.
- Quitting alcohol and tobacco.
- Including bitter vegetables (e.g., bitter gourd, ash gourd) in the diet.
- Avoiding stale, overcooked, or contaminated food.
- Ensuring food is freshly prepared, warm, and consumed mindfully.

Following *Ashta Aaharavisheshayatana*^[25]

1	<i>Prakriti</i>	Food's Natural quality	Milk – cooling	Choose per body type
2	<i>Karana</i>	Processing	Cooking, fermenting	Makes food digestible
3	<i>Samyoga</i>	Combination	Milk + Honey	Avoid incompatible foods
4	<i>Rashi</i>	Quantity	Moderate portion	Avoid over/under eating
5	<i>Desha</i>	Habitat/Region,	Hot/cold areas	Adapt food to climate
6	<i>Kala</i>	Time/Season,	Summer/winter	Time-based diet
7	<i>Upayokta</i>	Consumer,	Body type, health	Individual suitability
8	<i>Upayoga-samstha</i>	Method of intake		Calm, focused eating Ensures good digestion

Following *Aahara Vidhividhana*

1	<i>Usna</i>	Warm food	Stimulates digestion
2	<i>Snigdha</i>	Unctuous food	Nourishes, lubricates body
3	<i>Matravat</i>	Proper quantity	Avoids over/undereating
4	<i>Jirye</i>	After digestion of previous meal	Prevents toxin formation
5	<i>Viryaaviruddha</i>	Compatible food	Avoids harmful combinations
6	<i>Desa & Upakarana</i>	Proper place & utensils	Clean, peaceful environment
7	<i>Na Ati Drutam</i>	Not too fast	Ensures proper chewing
8	<i>Na Ati Vilambitam</i>	Not too slow	Maintains warmth and taste
9	<i>Ajalpan Ahasyan</i>	No talk & laugh while eating	Mindful eating improves digestion
10	<i>Atmanam Abhisamiksya</i>	Self-awareness	Eat per your capacity & need

DISCUSSION

Amlapitta directly affects the *Annavaha Strotas*. It is a psychosomatic disorder in which both dietary indiscretions and psychological factors play significant roles. The teachings of *Acharya Charaka*—specifically *Ahara Vidhividhan* and *Ashta Aharavidhivisheshayatana*—are essential for both the prevention and management of this condition. These dietary principles should be reviewed before meals and followed during food intake.

The vitiation of *Pitta Dosha* and the improper functioning of *Amla Rasa* are the major contributors to the *Samprapti* (pathogenesis) of *Amlapitta*. *Amla Rasa* and *Amla Vipaka* also play crucial roles in the progression of this disease.

Like any illness, the disease process in *Amlapitta* is based on fundamental Ayurvedic components including *Dosha*, *Dushya*, *Strotas*, *Adhisthana*, *Agni*, and *Ama*. *Urdhvaga Amlapitta* is associated with symptoms of *Annavaha Strotas Dushti*, whereas *Adhoga Amlapitta* is linked to symptoms of *Purishvaha Strotas Dushti*.

Acharya Charaka has provided a detailed description of *Amlapitta* and its treatment strategy, reflecting the significance and widespread occurrence of this disorder. According to *Acharya Charaka*, *Anupa*

Desha is considered an *Ahita Desha* (unfavorable habitat), and residing in such regions increases the likelihood of developing *Amlapitta*. Furthermore, *Acharya Kashyapa* advises that if all forms of treatment fail, relocating to a different place may help in managing the condition^[26].

CONCLUSION

To maintain good health, it is essential to adhere to proper dietary guidelines. Consuming food in the appropriate quantity and quality helps in preventing and managing *Amlapitta* (hyperacidity). Individual digestive capacity should always be considered while eating. Following dietary *Pathya-Apathya* not only alleviates symptoms but also helps soothe the gastric mucosa, reduces inflammation, and regulates digestive secretions—all of which contribute significantly to the management and prevention of *Amlapitta*.

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