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RESEARCH ARTICLE

CLINICAL EVALUATION OF AMA IN THE PATHOGENESIS OF SKIN DISORDERS

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Abstract

In Ayurveda, Ama is considered the root cause of many diseases. Ama contributes significantly to the onset and progression of the disease. Ama is derived from 'Am' Dhatu+ 'Nich' pratyaya. Ama is the substance which remains uncooked, immature and undigested. The formation of ama depends on various factors, including physical and mental factors, as described in the vitiation of Agni. This denotes impaired metabolism, which leads to the accumulation of toxins. These cannot be neutralized and are easily eliminated by the body. When toxins accumulate in body tissues and skin, they can lead to skin diseases such as Vicharchika, Mukhadushika, Switra, and Kitibhaktushta, as well as autoimmune conditions like systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) and scleroderma.

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Introduction:-

As a result of impaired *kaya agni*, *annarasa* is not properly digested, resulting in the production of Ama. The word Ama means uncooked, semi digested, immature, fermented non homologous substance in the body. This ama remains in the body and acts as a pathogenic factor in the production of various diseases; therefore, the synonym Amaya is used for vyadhi. In India, the Global Burden of Disease Study 2017 showed that cases of skin and subcutaneous diseases increased by over 53% between 1990 and 2017. This trend is not limited to India; worldwide, skin diseases are steadily increasing, but India's sharp rise highlights the seriousness of the issue. With skin-related disability increasing by more than half in just three decades, it is clear that skin health needs far more attention than it currently receives. According to Ayurveda, Skin diseases occur due to an imbalance of doshas and dhatus in the body. Two of the main causes of these diseases are an incorrect lifestyle (Vihara) and an incompatible diet (Ahara) against the season or prakriti of a person, which causes the generation of ama/ama visha in the body, which may be accumulated in the body tissues, skin, etc., contaminating them and causing skin diseases to manifest.

Materials and Methods:-

In the Vedic period, the terms Amaya and Amayam described ailments caused by the accumulation of a toxic substance known as Ama. Classical Ayurvedic texts from the Samhita period provide detailed insights into Ama as a central factor in disease development. For instance, Charaka Samhita addresses its role in abdominal disorders (Vimana Sthana, TrividhaKukshiya Chapter 2; Grahani Chikitsa – Chapter 15), while Sushruta Samhita elaborates

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on how Ama disrupts physiological balance, leading to digestive and systemic disorders (Sutra Sthana-DoshadhatuMalakshaya Vriddhi Vijnaneeya – Chapter 15; Uttara Sthana, AtisaraPratisheda – Chapter 40, including Ama Atisara Prakarana). The Sangraha period further enriched this understanding, as seen in Madhava Nidana (Amavata Nidana Prakarana) and Ashtanga Hridaya (Sutra Sthana), highlighting the interplay between Ama and Sama in disease manifestation. The gut microbiome regulates immune homeostasis through bidirectional communication with tissues and organs, establishing the gut-skin axis as a critical pathway linking intestinal and dermatological health. When gut dysbiosis occurs, harmful bacterial byproducts breach the compromised intestinal barrier and enter the systemic circulation, triggering widespread inflammation through pro-inflammatory cytokines that directly affect skin barrier function. Simultaneously, beneficial microbes that produce protective short-chain fatty acids are depleted, weakening immune regulation and creating an environment conducive to skin disease development. Manifestation of ama in various skin disorders.

Vicharchika:

Samprapthi of Vicharchika originates from Ama, a toxic byproduct of impaired digestion. Ama vitiates all three doshas, particularly Kapha, and subsequently contaminates rasa, rakta, mamsa, and lasika. Widespread contamination obstructs bodily channels, causing sanga and vimargagamana of the doshas. As a result, the corrupted rakta and mamsa tissues lead to a loss of integrity and laxity in the skin (twakshaithilya). This underlying pathology manifests as the characteristic symptoms of Vicharchika: intense itching (kandu), vesicular eruptions (pidika), profuse oozing (bahu srava), and cracking of the skin (sphutana)

Mukha dushika:

In mukhadushikaagnidushti that result in dusthi of pitta pradhanatridosha that causes urdhwagati of ama dosha finally result in rakta, meda and swedavahasrotodushti. It results in tiryakgamana to mukhapradesha results in mukhadushika.

Switra:

In switra there will be Jatharagnimandya results in Ama production. Here viharajanidana and purva karma results in rasa dhatwagnidushti along with dushti of brajakapitta, vyanavayu and tarpaka kapha at the level of skin. Brajaka pitta had a vital role in production of melanin. Here brajaka pitta dushti causes the melanocyte damage that results in reduction/absence of pigmentation of skin

Kitibhakushta:

Nidana sevana like aharaja (spicy food, junk food, dadhisevana in ushna Greeshma and Vasanta kala), viharaja (diwaswapna, exposure to cold air), manasika (stress) leads to jatharagni and rasa dhatwagnijanya ama which vitiates tridosha along with twak, rakta, mamsa and lasika and get sthanasamsraya in twak causing symptoms like shyavavarna, kinwakhara, Sparsha, parusha, rukshapidika and kandu

Systemic Lupus Erythmatosus:

Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (S.L.E) is classified as a collagen disorder. From an Ayurvedic perspective, semi-digested annarasa acts as an intermediate product that is neither properly absorbed nor eliminated. In this inappropriate form, it behaves like visha, triggering the formation of autoantibodies wherever it accumulates. Consequently, abundant nuclear and cytoplasmic autoantibodies are detected in the plasma, reflecting the autoimmune process

Scleroderma:

Scleroderma is an autoimmune connective tissue disorder in which endothelial damage is pivotal. In Ayurvedic terms, Ama, formed from impaired metabolism, resembles free radicals in its toxic action. Its properties (pichhila, durgandha, and asamsuddha) explain its role in cellular injury, offering a parallel between Ama pathogenesis and oxidative stress in modern science.

Results and Discussion:-

Ama, produced due to Agnimandya, acts as a toxic, sticky, non-homologous substance that obstructs srotas and disturbs dosha-dhatu balance. When localized in twak, rakta, mamsa, and lasika, it leads to a wide spectrum of skin manifestations

- Vicharchika aligns with eczematous conditions, where immune dysregulation and barrier dysfunction are observed, comparable to ama-induced tridoṣaduṣṭi.

- Mukha Dushika resembles acne vulgaris, explained through ama-pitta involvement and srotodushti.
- Switra correlates with vitiligo, where melanocyte destruction through oxidative stress mirrors the brajaka pittadushti.
- Kitibha Kushta parallels psoriasis, where metabolic toxins and immune activation cause scaling and itching, much like ama accumulation.
- Autoimmune disorders such as SLE and Scleroderma bear a striking resemblance to the concept of ama, acting as free radicals and intermediate toxins.

Ama can be seen at four levels according to the localization of deranging agni and the respective stage of Paka, where it is formed.

- **Apakwa Anna Rūpa Ama-** When agni (digestive fire) becomes weak, even light and easily digestible food (laghuāhāra) fail to get properly processed. Consequently, food remains uncooked or undigested, leading to ama formation.
- **Anna Rasa Rūpa Ama-** Under normal conditions, a healthy jatharāgni digests food to form anna rasa that nourishes tissues. When jatharāgni is impaired, incomplete metabolism produces improperly processed essence called anna rasa rūpa ama.
- **Mala Sanchaya Rūpa Ama-** Digestion naturally produces metabolic by-products (mala). In a balanced state, these malas are eliminated without causing harm. However, when they accumulate excessively, they become toxic and cause diseases. This pathological accumulation is referred to as mala sanchaya rūpa ama.
- **Rasa Shesha Rūpa Ama-** Sometimes, due to weak digestion (agnimāndya), food is only partially processed; some portions are digested, while others remain unprocessed. This leftover, improperly digested fraction of food essence is known as rasa shesha rūpa ama.

Āchārya Vāgbhaṭa, while describing saṃsargajavyādhi, explains that when doṣas with antagonistic properties interact, instead of neutralizing each other, they produce a toxic by-product termed ama. Similarly, Āchārya Caraka has elaborated on 18 types of viruddhāhāra (incompatible diets). Such diets stimulate the doṣas but fail to eliminate them, resulting in ama accumulation. In conditions such as aśoṣaviruddha, vīryaviruddha, guṇaviruddha, and satmyaviruddha, the opposing properties of food components counteract each other, impair digestion, and lead to the formation of ama. The persistence and accumulation of ama within the body acts as a fundamental pathological factor. In particular, its circulation and deposition in the tvak (skin) and related tissues contribute significantly to the origin and progression of various skin diseases. Thus, ama serves as a key element in the pathogenesis of skin diseases.

CONCLUSION:-

From an Ayurvedic perspective, ama is the central pathogenic factor underlying the development of skin diseases. Impaired agni leads to incomplete digestion and the generation of ama, which, once accumulated, contaminates the doṣas, dhātus, and srotas. Classical references from Caraka, Suśruta, and Vāgbhaṭa consistently emphasize its role in disease manifestation, whereas modern research correlates ama with metabolic toxins, immune dysregulation, and the gut-skin axis. The clinical features of conditions such as vicharchika, mukhaduṣikā, svitra, kitibhakuṣṭha, and even autoimmune disorders such as SLE and scleroderma highlight the involvement of ama in their pathogenesis. Thus, it is evident that ama is not merely a byproduct of impaired digestion but the root cause that initiates and sustains the pathology of skin diseases. Addressing ama through proper ahara, vihara, and śodhana therapies is fundamental for both prevention and management.

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