



## Review Article

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### UNDERSTANDING OF MANDAGNI WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DIFFERENT VYADHI: A REVIEW

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#### ABSTRACT

Mandagni, a fundamental concept in Ayurveda representing weak digestive fire, holds profound implications for health and well-being. This abstract delves into the intricate understanding of Mandagni, shedding light on its definition, underlying causes, and far-reaching effects according to Ayurvedic principles. This exploration uncovers the multifaceted impact of Mandagni on digestive functions, elucidating symptoms such as indigestion, bloating, and lethargy. Moreover, it delves into Mandagni's role in contributing to nutritional deficiencies, toxin accumulation (Ama), metabolic disruptions, and the onset of chronic ailments, highlighting the interconnectedness of digestive health with overall systemic balance. A comprehensive review of Ayurvedic perspectives reveals insights into Mandagni's influence on mental and emotional states through the gut-brain axis, emphasising its holistic impact on mind-body wellness. Leveraging this ancient wisdom, Ayurveda offers tailored approaches encompassing dietary adjustments, lifestyle modifications, stress management techniques, and specialised therapies to restore Agni equilibrium and promote optimal digestion. By addressing Mandagni holistically, individuals can enhance nutrient assimilation, support metabolic vigour, and fortify resilience against diseases. This abstract serves as a foundational guide, encouraging a deeper understanding of Mandagni's significance and fostering integrative approaches to digestive vitality and holistic well-being in the modern era.

**Keywords:** Mandagni, Agni, Ayurveda, Ama

#### INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda explains the concept of Agni which means the transformation of substances in the universe as well as in the body. Acharya Charka has mentioned that the normality of Agni gives life enhancement, complexion, strength, health status, anabolic activity and lustre-ness of the body. The primary function of Agni is digestion at the gastrointestinal level, absorption and assimilation with various metabolic activities. Pitta is also responsible for digestion because Agni resides in pitta. The internal body constitution depends on the function of Agni. Inactive or suppression of Agni, the individual becomes ill and ultimately fatal and dies. Agni of an individual is Sama, then that person would be healthy, happy and have a long life.

If a person is vitiated, the whole metabolism will be disturbed, resulting in illness. Hence, Agni is said to be the base (mool) of life.<sup>1</sup>

Yuktam bhuktvato yukto dhatusamyam samam pachan  
(Aṣṭanga-hṛdaya: Sutra 1: 8)

If the Agni is in its normal state and the individual takes an appropriate quantity of food, then there will be proper digestion and assimilation, which leads to the maintenance of the Dosh and Dhātu. Agni is maintained with the help of Samana Vāyu, Pitta Dosh and Kapha should be in a state of equilibrium.<sup>2</sup>

Agni has 13 categories. Jatharagni looks after the functions of food digestion. Bhutagni (five types) turns all the Vijatiya Panchabhautika Dravyainto Sajatiya Panchabhautika Dravya (conversion of heterogenous to homogenous). Dhātvaṅni (7

types) performs synthesis and breakdown of tissues. Metabolic transformations occur after the consumption of food. That leads to the formation of two parts, Prasad (essence) and Kitta (excretory waste). (The Dosh and Dhātu, etc., get nourished by the Prasad part (nutrients). The Kitta part (metabolic waste) is to be excreted from the body in different manners such as Mūtra (Urine), Sweda (Sweat) etc.

In Ayurveda, the concept of Agni and Ahara Paka (Metabolic transformation) provides an extensive field of research in the present day. If there is suppression of Agni (power of digestion and metabolism), and If the person takes incompatible food, then it leads to indigestion, resulting in Dosh accumulation. This causes vitiation of Prana (a variety of Vāyu), Agni (enzymes responsible for digestion and metabolism) and Apana (another variety of Vāyu) and obstruction to the upward and downward channels of circulation. During abnormal morbid conditions usually, Agni is influenced by the Vata, pitta or kapha dosha which is entitled Vishamagni, Tikshnagni and Mandagni. We are enlightened by the detailed description of Mandagni in different diseased conditions.

#### Mandagni

Mandagni is a condition in Ayurveda characterized by a weakened or sluggish digestive fire (Agni). In Ayurvedic physiology, Agni plays a vital role in transforming ingested food into nutrients that can be absorbed and utilized by the body. When Agni is weak the digestive processes become inefficient, leading to incomplete digestion and the formation of toxic by-products known as Ama. This accumulation of ama in the gastrointestinal tract and tissues can disrupt normal bodily functions and contribute to various health issues

Mandagni creates many diseases such as Jwar (fever), Pandu (anaemia), Kamla (jaundice), Prameha (urinary system disease), Arsh (piles), Pratishtayaya (Rhinitis), Arochaka (anorexia), Plihodar (splenomegaly), kaphajaroga and Atisaar (diarrhoea).

Visheshtvabhuktbhaktnav-jwarapandurogakaamlaprameharsha pratishtayaarochakanadagnidurbalapliahakaphod-urustambhavarchibhedal<sup>3</sup>

### Causes of Mandagni

Several factors can contribute to the development of Mandagni. Irregular eating habits such as skipping meals or eating at irregular times can disrupt the natural rhythm of Agni. Consuming heavy, oily, processed or incompatible foods, such as combining dairy with fruits or consuming excessive cold foods, can also weaken Agni over time. Sedentary lifestyle habits, lack of physical activity, chronic stress, and emotional disturbances can further impair digestive functions and contribute to Mandagni. Understanding these causative factors is crucial in addressing Mandagni comprehensively.

**Heavy and Difficult-to-Digest Foods:** Consuming foods that are heavy, oily, greasy, or rich in fats and proteins can overwhelm the digestive fire, leading to sluggish digestion. Foods like deep-fried items, fatty meats, cheese, and excessive amounts of nuts and seeds are examples of heavy foods that can dampen Agni over time.

**Cold and Raw Foods:** Ayurveda emphasizes the importance of consuming warm, cooked foods to support Agni. Cold and raw foods, such as salads, raw vegetables, chilled beverages, and ice cream, can weaken digestive fire, especially when consumed in excess or during colder seasons.

**Processed and Refined Foods:** Refined sugars, refined flours, artificial additives, and preservatives can be challenging for the digestive system to process efficiently. These foods lack essential nutrients and fibre, further, it hampers Agni and contributes to digestive imbalances.

**Incompatible Food Combinations (Viruddha Ahara):** Ayurveda warns against combining certain foods that are incompatible and can disturb Agni. For example consuming fruits with dairy products, mixing milk with sour foods (like citrus fruits or yoghurt), and combining proteins with starches in large quantities.<sup>4</sup>

**Overeating and Irregular Eating Habits:** Eating large meals, intake of snacks excessively between meals, or irregular dietary patterns can strain Agni. Overloading the digestive system with more food than it can efficiently process leads to incomplete digestion, bloating, and sluggish metabolism.<sup>5</sup>

**Lack of Mindful Eating Practices:** Eating in a hurry, eating while stressed, or not paying attention to meal times and portion sizes can interfere with improper digestion. Ayurveda emphasizes mindful eating practices such as eating in a calm environment, chewing food thoroughly, and honouring natural hunger cues.<sup>6</sup>

### Signs and Symptoms of Mandagni

Individuals with Mandagni may experience a range of digestive disorders and systemic manifestations. Common symptoms include indigestion, bloating, gas, abdominal discomfort, constipation, and a feeling of heaviness or lethargy after meals. These symptoms reflect the body's struggle to digest and inability to assimilate the nutrients properly, leading to the accumulation of undigested food particles which leads to toxins. Systemic signs

of Mandagni may include dull complexion, bad breath, lack of appetite, fatigue, and reduced enthusiasm or motivation.<sup>3</sup>

The impact of Mandagni extends beyond digestive disturbances and can affect overall health and well-being. The accumulation of Ama due to weak Agni can lead to inflammation, immune system dysregulation, and metabolic imbalances. Over time, chronic Mandagni can contribute to the development of conditions such as obesity, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, autoimmune disorders, skin problems, and chronic fatigue syndrome. Addressing Mandagni is essential for digestive health and preventing and managing a wide range of systemic health issues.<sup>4</sup>

A condition known as Mandagni occurs when an Agni is unable to digest even a small amount of food within the stipulated time. Ayurvedic Acharyas have been described that Mandagni is the root cause of almost all diseases. Diminished Abhyavaharana Shakti, diminished Jarana Shakti, yastval paupayuktha mudara shirogurava kasa swasa praseka chardigatra sadanani krithva mahata kalena pachati (Intake of the small amount of food digests after long time), Udara Gaurava (Heaviness in the abdomen), Shiro Gaurav (Heaviness in the head), Antra kujana (Gurgling noise in the abdomen), Anaha (Flatulence), Kasa (Cough), Shvasa (Dyspnoea), Praseka (Excess salivation), Chardi (Vomiting or nausea), Mukha Shosha (Dryness of mouth), Gatra sadhana (Weakness), Lack of relish of food, feeling of cold, Vibandha (constipation) and lack of adjustment to environmental changes are clinical features noticed during the state of Mandagni. Mandagni creates a substance that functions in the body like an antigen and can trigger the autoimmune system. Here are some ways in which food can contribute to Mandagni.

### DISCUSSION

Mandagni is the main factor in diseases like Arsha, Grahani, Amavata and Atisara; here each condition again is an etiological factor for the manifestation of other diseases due to mild to severe forms of Agni vitiation. Food passes up and down the gastrointestinal tract due to Vidaha or weak Agni (Durbala), which causes some of the food to be digested while the rest remains undigested. The digested (Pakva) and undigested food (Apakva) move downwards, and this condition is called Grahani-Gada (sprue syndrome). In this condition, the entire food. Material usually remains in the state of Vidagdha (i.e., a part of it gets digested, the other part remaining undigested). In association with Trsna (morbid thirst), Arochaka (anorexia), Vairasya (altered taste), Praseka (excessive salivation) and Tamakashwas (asthma), the afflicted person voids stool in large quantities either in solid or liquid form. He also suffers from oedema in the legs and hands, pain in bones and phalanges, vomiting, fever and eructation metabolic smell, smell of ama (undigested food) and bitter as well as sour tastes.<sup>5</sup>

Arsha is commonly called "Piles" and is known as Haemorrhoids in medical terminology. This disease tortures the patient's prana like an enemy. The Mansankura (Manskilaka) formed in Gudamarga blocks the Gudamarga i.e. Gudmarganirodha and causes pain to the patient. Guda is one of the Sadyapranhar Marma.<sup>1</sup> Ashtomahagada means difficult to treat and can reoccur even after the good quality of management. According to Vagbhatacharya Mandagni is the prime cause of all diseases. So, the main cause of the anorectal disease is vitiation or irrationality of Jatharagni which leads to Constipation. As we know constipation increases back pressure on hemorrhoidal veins and produces haemorrhoids. Perianal skin is the most pain-sensitive region due to rich nerve endings. So even a mild form of disorder can create great pain for the patient and become more problematic over time and age.<sup>6</sup>

Aeshoatisharaanilgulfshophahridrogamandagnihitaa yaa  
pancholevividhanev ten siddha bhaveta saa cha sama tayeivou<sup>7</sup>

Medicated gruel (Yavaga) cures piles, diarrhoea, phantom  
tumours caused by Vayu, oedema, heart diseases and suppression  
of the power of digestion.

Gudaswathushoolamandagnipayyetu tama| trayushanm  
pillalimoola hingu schitram ||<sup>8</sup>

The patient suffers from oedema and pain in the anus, if there is  
suppression of the power of digestion.

Gyatava vatoalbanam ruksham mandagnim gudjaturam||<sup>9</sup>

The patient has piles caused by the predominance of aggravated  
Vayu, having Unctuousness and having less power of digestion.

Mandagnirvipakvam tu purisham yoatisaaryateI  
deepaniausdheyukam ghritmaatram pibetu sa ||<sup>10</sup>

If the patient has weak digestive power and voids undigested stool  
in excess, he should be given ghee cooked with Dipaniya drugs  
(ingredients that stimulate the power of digestion) to be taken in  
appropriate doses.

Common symptoms of abdominal disease - When stools (Vatadi  
Dosha or Utripurisha) increase due to the weakness of Jathragni,  
then different types of diseases arise. Especially Udara Roga  
arises due to the weak Agni and increase in the stool. When the  
Agni is suppressed by fine food, when the food is not digested  
properly, then there is an accumulation of Dosha in the stomach.  
That accumulation of Doshas blocks passages by contaminating  
the Prana Vayu and Apana Vayu to a greater extent. When the  
downward and upward passage gets blocked due to this, the  
contaminated stool and gas etc. impurities come between the skin  
and flesh and create flatulence in the abdomen and cause  
abdominal diseases.<sup>11</sup>

Niruha-Basti is contra-indicated. It is specially contra-indicated  
in the following conditions:

Abhukta-Bhakta (a person who has not taken food); and the  
person suffering from Nava-Jvara (freshly occurring fever),  
Pandu-Roga (Anemia), Kamala (jaundice), Prameha (obstinate  
urinary disorders including diabetes) and Arsas (piles); Pratisyaya  
(coryza), Arocaka (anorexia), Mandagni (suppression of the  
power of digestion), Daurbalya (weakness), Plihodara (splenic  
disorders), Kaphodara (obstinate abdominal ailments caused by  
aggravated kapha), Uru-Stambha (spasticity of thighs), Varco-  
Bheda (diarrhoeas).  
mandagniva hinguvaadikm churanaupyujita.<sup>14</sup>

In case of poor digestion, one should use Hingvadi Curṇa.

Mandagnou malinaimukthaipakadoshadhyasanchaye  
pranagnianan sandushya margarbungadhorotharan.<sup>13</sup>

Mandagni is the main causative factor for the development of  
Amavata. Amavata is one of the commonest crippling disorders  
caused by the impairment of Agni. Amavata is the most common  
disease among various joint disorders. The changing lifestyle and  
dietetic pattern are also manifested as the daily increment in  
patients. Mandagni and Vata play a significant role in the  
Stabdhdhata, Sandhigaurav, etc. So, the Amavata results from a  
combination of Ama and Vata. Due to Mandagni, both Ama and

Vata get vitiated and reach to joints and produce swelling, pain,  
and Disability, and thus, the disease is made.<sup>13</sup>

Mandagni is the most important among the causative factors of  
Ama. The most important factor in the pathogenesis of Atisara  
(diarrhoea) is Mandagni. Mandagni is the root cause of Amadosha  
and it is the crucial factor for the manifestation of most of the  
diseases including Atisara (diarrhoea). Amadosha results due to  
Agnidushti caused by Mithyaaharavihara, ultimately manifesting  
as Atisara (diarrhoea). Thus, faulty diet habits play an important  
role in the causation of Atisara (diarrhoea) and its treatment  
comprises suggestions to follow proper Aharavidhi Vidhana and  
to protect the Jathragni.<sup>14</sup>

Sakradapi pakvamatichidmamsashonitabalo  
mandagnivihitamukharasascha||<sup>15</sup>

it may be mixed with mucus (Ama) and sometimes, the stool may  
be free from mucus (Pakva).

There is a diminution of the muscle tissue, blood, and strength.  
The power of digestion (Agni) of the patient is suppressed.

Mandagnitvaaruchichhardipinasoutkaleshgaurave ||<sup>16</sup>

Suppression of the power of digestion. Anorexia, vomiting,  
chronic rhinitis, nausea and feeling of heaviness in the body.  
Ayurveda acknowledges the gut-brain connection, where the  
health of the digestive system influences mental and emotional  
states. Mandagni can lead to emotional disturbances such as  
anxiety, irritability, mood swings, and poor stress management.  
These emotional imbalances further exacerbate digestive issues,  
creating a cycle of physical and emotional discomfort.

The long-term effects of Mandagni increase the risk of  
developing chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes,  
cardiovascular diseases, autoimmune conditions, and  
inflammatory disorders. Weak Agni contributes to systemic  
inflammation, insulin resistance, hormonal imbalances, and  
compromised organ functions, laying the groundwork for chronic  
health challenges.

Gudaan krtava na chatra syadvihaaraaharyantrana  
mandagnitwam jwaram murcha mutrakrachamaarochakam||<sup>17</sup>

Sesame oil and powder of Trivrit should be added. By adding  
three Prasthas of the juice of Amalaki and half a Tula of jaggery,  
the recipe should be cooked over mild fire. From out of this paste,  
pills (Guda) of the size of Badara or Udumbara should be made  
out.

While taking this recipe there is no restriction on food and  
regimen. Intake of this (purgative) cures Mandagni (suppression  
of the power of digestion), Jvara (fever), Murcha (fainting),  
Mutra-Krcchra (dysuria), and Arocaka (anorexia).

Pinasa skustha navjwarara ajayayakshma kasa swasha  
galgrahagal gandaslipadme hamanda givirudhaa jiranna||<sup>18</sup>

Emetic therapy is indicated for the remaining ailments, especially  
for Pinasa (coryza), Kustha (obstinate skin diseases including  
leprosy), Nava-Jvara (freshly occurring fever), Raja-Yakṣma  
(tuberculosis), Kasa (cough), Savasa (asthma), Gala- Graha  
(spasm in the throat), Gala-Ganda (enlargement of the thyroid  
gland), slipada (elephantiasis), Meha (obstinate urinary disorders  
including diabetes), Mandagni(suppression of the power of  
digestion), Viruddhanna (ailments caused by the intake of  
mutually contradictory food ingredients), Ajirnaanna.

|Vamitascha viriktasha mandagnischa vilanghitha<sup>19</sup>

Agnipranavivradhartham kram peyadikam bhajet<sup>20</sup>

Mandagnikshinamasadviriktham na payayaethitani tatra peyaam<sup>21</sup>

Liquid gruel should not be given on the same day to a patient who has poor digestion, is not emaciated and has not been purgated properly.

Kshamenaatimridukoshtena mandagnina rukshena va atitkshnaushnaatilavanaatiruksham va peetamaushadham pittanilao pradushya parikartikamapadayati.<sup>22</sup>

If a person is debilitated, with highly soft bowels, has mild digestive fire or rough-takes highly drastic, hot, salty or rough drug, it vitiates Pitta and Vata and produces cutting pain. A person who has Mandagni (suppressed power of digestion and metabolism) and who was fasting because of emetic and purgation therapies, should be given a regulated diet in the form of Peya (in gruel), etc., for the promotion of his Agni and Prana (vitality).

According to Charaka Agni are 13 types, four types which are based on Bala, Tikshnagni, Mandagni, Vishmagni and Samagni. Jathragni is considered as prime among all the Agni. Jathragni digests the ingested food and it is superior to Dhatwagni dependent on it. Jathragni is also responsible for separating the food material into the essence part (Prasad) and the unfruitful (kitta) in our body.

If the Jathragni (Tikshna) or (Manda) it will cause an excessive or slowdown of other Agni and this disturbed action ultimately leads to various diseases.<sup>23</sup>

Agni (digestive fire), which digests food, has already been described before. It is of four types associated with balanced dosas and deranged one of the three types-irregular, intense and mild by Vata, pitta and kapha respectively; the fourth one (normal) is balanced due to the equilibrium of all Dosa.<sup>24</sup>

By them the vitiation of dosha leads to Visamagni, the Tiksnagni and the Mandagni respectively; while Samagni is produced by their equilibrium.<sup>25</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In the intricate web of health and well-being according to Ayurveda, the concept of Mandagni (weak digestive fire) emerges as a pivotal factor influencing overall health outcomes. The effects of Mandagni on various systems and functions underscore the importance of maintaining optimal digestive vitality for holistic wellness. Beyond the physical realm, Mandagni influences mental and emotional well-being, with imbalances in Agni contributing to mood swings, anxiety, and stress-related disorders. The gut-brain axis highlights the interconnectedness of digestive health with mental health, emphasising the need for a holistic approach to wellness. Addressing Mandagni involves a multifaceted strategy encompassing dietary adjustments tailored to individual needs, lifestyle modifications promoting regular exercise, stress management techniques such as Yoga and meditation, and Ayurvedic therapies aimed at rejuvenating Agni and eliminating accumulated toxins. By understanding the impact of Mandagni on health, individuals can take proactive steps towards digestive rejuvenation and overall vitality. Empowered by Ayurvedic principles, personalised care, and holistic lifestyle choices, individuals can unlock the body's innate capacity for

healing, resilience, and balanced well-being. Let us embark on a journey of nurturing digestive vitality, embracing the synergy of body, mind, and spirit for enduring health and harmony.

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