



Review Article

A LITERARY STUDY ON *MATRAVATASHNIYAD*: A QUANTITATIVE FOOD

Ramabai

Assistant Professor, Department of Samhita and Siddhanta, Dhanvantari Ayurveda College Hospital and Research Centre, Siddapur, Uttar Kannada District, Karanataka, India.

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ABSTRACT

Eating habits can cause obesity, diabetes, and increase certain risk factors for stroke, heart disease, and cancer and by depriving our bodies of the nourishment its needs can lead to poor nutrition. Rules for intake of food explained in Ayurveda can counter the food related disorders, *Matravatashniyad* is one among them. **Objective:** A review on *Matravatashniyad*. **Method:** Literary source of the present study is collected from the classical texts of Ayurveda, other Ayurvedic texts and Journals from Dhanvantari Ayurveda College Siddapura, Uttara Kannada District. **Discussion:** *Ahara Matra* based on *Angi*, *Dravya Bheda*, *Kukshi*, and *Rashi*. Person having strong, moderate and minimal digestive power ingest a food in maximum, moderate and less quantity respectively. Heavy food article should be taken either in three-fourth or half of own's satisfaction and food articles which are *Laghu* does not cause over satisfaction. Stomach volume divided into 3 parts, 1 part is assigned to food, 1 part for drink and one part left for *Vatadi Dosha* movement. Consumption of rice, meat and soup in total combined quantity and in different quantity as in whole food are essential. **Conclusion:** *Matravatahara*, right quantity of food promotes the health as well as enhance the life span.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda have the concept of *Tristhuna* for *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*, similarly *Ahara*, *Nidra*, *Brahmacharya* as *Trayopasthamba*. Whole life span of individuals depends upon these. *Ahara* is the first and foremost *Trayopasthamba* and it is considered as *Brahma* in *Upanishad*, best among things which sustains life. *Ahara Vidhividhana* are the rules for taking food for patient as well as healthy individuals. One should consume food article which are wholesome to the body like eat warm, unctuous food and in right quantity etc.

Derivation

The word *Matravatashniyad* divided into two words i.e., *Matra* and *Ashana*. *Matra* mean *Parimaanam* i.e., quantity, *Ashanam* word derived from *Ash* and *Lyt Pratyaya*, mean *Bhakshana* i.e., eating. *Matravatashniyad* mean one should consume food in proper quantity.

Definition

The quantity of food which does not disturb the normalcy and digest in due time is known as *Matravat ahara*.^[1]

Assessment of *Ahara Matra* (Proper Quantity of Food)

There is no fix quantity of food which can be considered as ideal quantity. Every human being is unique and differ from others, hence needs for everything are different from one person to another person, the hunger and quantity of food also differ from person to person. So it is not possible to decide a specific quantity of food, because quantity of food is depending upon *Agni* ^[2].

Agni

Table 1: *Aharamatra* depend upon *Agni* ^[3]

Agni type	Aharamatra
<i>Utkrusthta Agni</i> (strong digestive power)	<i>Utkrusthta matra</i> (excessive quantity)
<i>Madhyama agni</i> (moderate digestive power)	<i>Madhyama matra</i> (moderate quantity)
<i>Alpa agni</i> (mild digestive power)	<i>Alpa matra</i> (less quantity)

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Even though *Ahara matra* depend upon *Agni*, *Acharyas* explained quantity of food depend upon *Dravya*, *Kukshi* division, and *Rashi* mentioned in Table No. 2, 3 and 4. In these also *Agni* plays a role.

Dravya bheda

Table 2: Aharamatra depend upon Dravya bheda

Dravya	Charaka Samhita ^[4]	Sushruta Samhita ^[5]	Astanga Hrudaya ^[6]	Atsanga Samgraha ^[7]	Bhavaprakasha ^[8]
Guru (heavy food)	Tribhagasouhitya mardhabhaga souhityam ($\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ of one's satisfaction)	Ardhasouhitya ($\frac{1}{2}$ of one's satisfaction)	Ardhasouhitya ($\frac{1}{2}$ of one's satisfaction)	Tribhagasouhityam ardhabhaga Souhityam ($\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ of one's satisfaction)	Ardhasouhitya ($\frac{1}{2}$ of one's satisfaction)
Laghu (light food)	Natisouhitya (food does not cause over satisfaction)	Truptirishyate (till satisfaction)	Natisouhitya (food does not cause over satisfaction)	Natisouhitya (food does not cause over satisfaction)	Truptirishyate (till satisfaction)
Drava, dravottara (liquids)	-----	Namatragururishyate (should not take food in excessive quantity)	---	---	Namatragururishyate (should not take food in excessive quantity)

Kukshi (Stomach volume)

Table 3: Aharamatra depend upon Kukshi

Kukshi division	Charaka samhita ^[9]	Astanga hrudaya ^[10]	Atsanga Samgraha ^[11]	Bhava Prakasha ^[12]
3parts 1 part assigned to <i>Ahara</i> (food) 1 part to <i>Drava</i> (drink) 1 part to left for <i>Vatadi Dosha</i>	+	-	-	-
4 parts 2 part assigned to <i>Anna</i> (food) 1 part for <i>Pana</i> (drink) 1 part left for <i>Pavanadi Dosha</i> movement	-	+	+	+

Rashi

Rashi is the quantity of food to be taken.^[13]

It is of two types

1. Sarvagraha

Sarvagraha is account of a whole unit of food like intake of *Anna*, *Mamsa*, *Soopa* in *Pinda Roopa* i.e., total combined quantity.

2. Parigraha

Parigraha is account of part of a substance, or of individual parts of food, like taking *Anna*, *Mamsa*, *Soopadi* in different quantity as in whole food i.e., quantity of *Anna*, *Soopa* and *Mamsa* should be 1 *Kudava* (192g), 1 *Pala* (48g), and 2 *Pala* (96g) respectively.

Matravatahara Lakshana

Proper quantity of food is *Kuksheraprapidana* (does not exert undue pressure on the abdomen), *Hrudayasyanavarodhah* (does not cause obstruction in the proper functioning of the heart),

Parshvayoravipatanama (does not exert any pressure on the sides of the chest), *Anatigauravamudarasy* (does not leave a feeling of excessive heaviness in the abdomen), *Priranamindriyanam* (properly nourishes (satisfies) the sense organs), *Kshutpipasoparamah* (subsides hunger and thirst), after consuming which the person is able to perform activities such as *Sthana* (standing), *Asana* (sitting), *Shayana* (lying down), *Gamana* (walking), *Shwasa* (exhaling), *Prashwasa* (inhaling), *Hasya* (laughing), and *Samkathasu* (talking with ease), and is *Sayam pratasca sukhenaparinamanam* (easy to digest when taken in the morning and evening hours). Food consumed in the appropriate quantity enhances *Bala* (strength), *Varna* (complexion), and *Upachaya* (nourishment of tissues)^[14].

Benefits of Matravat Ahara

Food taken in appropriate quantity helps the individuals in bringing about *Bala* (strength), *Varna* (complexion), *Sukha* (happiness) and *Ayu*

(longevity) without disturbing the equilibrium of the *Dosha* and *Dhatu*s of the body^[15].

Amatra Ahara Lakshana ^[16]

Improper quantity of food divided into two types i.e.,

1. *Hina matra* (Deficient)
2. *Adhika matra* (Excessive)

1. Hina Matra Ahara Lakshana

The food taken in deficient quantity is said to be the cause of reduction in *Bala* (strength), *Varna* (complexion), and *Upachayakshayakara* (nourishment of body tissues), *Atruptikara* (non-satisfaction), and produce *Udavarta* (altered peristalsis and misplacement of *Vayu*), impairments in *Ayu* (life-functions), and *Vrushya* (virility), and *Ojas* (vitality), damage to the *Shareera* (body), *Manasa* (mind), *Buddhi* (intellect), and *Indriya* (sense

organs), inducing *Alakshmi* (inauspiciousness) and also became causative factor for *Vataja vikara* (disorders of *Vata*) ^[16]

2. Adhika matra ahara lakshana

Food taken in excessive quantity vitiates all *Doshas*. One who eats solid foods in excess and also drinks beyond satiation will have all the three *Dosha-Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* in stomach vitiated simultaneously due to their getting compressed by all the excess food. Thus, vitiated *Dosha* in the undigested food mass get localized into a part of the stomach, which then either obstruct the movements in the abdomen or suddenly get eliminated through upper and lower channels of the alimentary tract^[16].

They produce distinct features depend upon *Dosha* involvement in the person as follows

Table 4: Adhika matra ahara lakshana depend upon Dosha involvement^[16]

Dosha involvement	Lakshana
<i>Vata</i>	<i>Shula</i> (colic pain), <i>Anaha</i> (distension of the abdomen), <i>Angamarda</i> (body ache), <i>Mukhashosha</i> (dryness of the mouth), <i>Murchha</i> (fainting), <i>Bhrama</i> (giddiness), <i>Agnivaishmya</i> (variability in digestive power), rigidity in <i>Parshwa</i> (flanks)- <i>Prusta</i> (back) and <i>Kati</i> (waist), and <i>Akunchana</i> (contraction) and <i>Sthambana</i> (hardening) of <i>Shira</i> .
<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Jvara</i> (fever), <i>Atisara</i> (diarrhea), <i>Antardaha</i> (burning sensation inside body), <i>Trushna</i> (thirst), <i>Mada</i> (intoxicated state), <i>Bhrama</i> (giddiness), <i>Pralapa</i> (delirium).
<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Chardhi</i> (vomiting), <i>Aarochaka</i> (anorexia), <i>Avipaka</i> (indigestion), <i>Sheetajvara</i> (fever with cold), <i>Alasya</i> (laziness), <i>Gasragaurava</i> (heaviness in the body).

Ama pradosha

The quantum of food is cause of formation of *Ama*, not only quantum but also the use of *Anna* (diet) and *Pana* (drinks) which are *Guru* (heavy) to digest, and with properties like *Ruksha* (dry), *Sheeta* (cold), *Shuska* (dehydrated), *Dvista* (disliked by the consumer), *Vistambi* (constipation-causing), *Vidahi* (causing a burning sensation), *Asuchi* (unclean), *Virudha* (incompatible), and *Akala* (consumed untimely). Intake of food while the mind being afflicted with *Kama* (passion/desires), *Krodha* (anger), *Lobha* (greed), *Moha* (infatuation), *Irshua* (envy), *Hri* (bashfulness), *Shoka* (grief), *Mana* (conceit), *Udvega* (excitement) and *Bhaya* (fear) are also the cause of formation of *Ama*^[17].

Influence of Mental Status on Agni

Wholesome food, even taken in the right quantity, does not get digested if the mental state of the person is afflicted with *Chinta* (worry), *Shoka* (grief), *Bhaya* (fear), *Krodha* (anger), or *Dukha* (Sadness) and *Shayya* (day sleep) and *Prajagarana* (night awakening)^[18].

Ama Pradoshaja Vikara

Physician accepts two types of *Ama dosha* ^[19] i.e.,

1. *Visuchika*
2. *Alasaka*

1. Visuchika

The expulsion of *Ama dosha* (undigested food) through both upper and lower passages of the gastrointestinal tract is known *Visuchika* ^[20].

2. Alasaka

If a delicate person having weak digestive power and excess of *Kapha* in the body, habitually suppresses the *Vegas* (urges) of passing *Vata* (flatulence), *Mutra* (micturition) and *Purisha* (bowel movement) and at the same time consumes *Sthira* (solid), *Guru* (heavy), *Bahuruksha* (excessively dry), *Sheeta* (cold), and *Shuska anna* (dehydrated foods) in excessive quantities, his ingested food gets afflicted by *Vayu*. Even exerting pressure does not push the undigested food out of the passage since it is obstructed by *Kapha*, by excreta accumulated already, and also because of sluggishness caused by all these factors. This condition is called *Alasaka*. All the characteristic features of *Ama Dosha*, devoid of *Chardi* (vomiting) and *Atisara* (diarrhea), are manifested severely in *Alasaka*^[21].

Dandalasaka

The extremely vitiated *Dosha* moves towards oblique passages as the other passages are blocked by aggravated *Ama*. This will sometimes cause the body to become rigid, like a *Danda* (wooden rod/staff). This

incurable clinical condition is known as *Dandalasaka*^[21].

Amavisha

The *Ama dosha* of an individual who regularly consumes *Virudha Ahara* (incompatible diet), *Adhyasana* (multiple heavy meals (in short intervals)) and eats even in *Ajirnavastha* (before the previous meal is digested) is called *Ama visha* (clinical state of indigestion characterized by manifestation of toxic symptoms) because of resemblance of manifested symptoms to that of *Visha* (poisoning). It is considered incurable because of its acute presentation and also because of its contradictory line of management^[22].

DISCUSSION

A quantitative food play very important role in present scenario because due to occupational life style many individuals are neglecting their health, one such negligence is *Matravatashniyad*: A quantitative food. In Ayurveda thousands year back Acharyas have mentioned to take food in proper quantity based on *Agni, Dravya bheda, Kukshi, and Rashi*. *Agni* is very essential in deciding right quantity of food, individuals having *Utkrusta Agni* have food in *Utkrusta matra*, and *Madhyama, Avara agni* individuals have in *Madhyama Matra* and *Avara Matra* respectively, if not practice lead to *Amatravat ahara lakshanas* as explained above. Intake of food based on *Dravya* is also important, the quantity of food which are *Guru* such food should be taken either in three-fourth or half of owns satisfaction and food articles which are *Laghu* does not cause over satisfaction. *Guru ahara dravya* are *Prithwi* and *Ap Mahabhuta* predominant, having *Agni Asama Guna* (qualities are opposite to *Agni*), *Na Angisandhukshana swabhava* (not having capacity to increase digestive fire) and produce more *Dosha Prakopa* if taken upto the satisfaction except in case a person having good *Agni* and *Vyamabala*^[23]. *Laghu Ahara dravya* are *Vayu* and *Agni Mahabhuta* predominant, having *Agni Sama Guna, Angi sandhukshana swabhava* (having capacity to increase digestive fire) and produce less *Dosha, even though Laghu Ahara Drayas* are *Agni Sama* (similar to *Agni guna*) lead to *Agni Mandya* if taken over satisfaction, like how *Chakshu* by seeing the *Tejas* for long duration get destroyed or eyesight will be diminished or lost even though it is *Tejomaya*, perceives objects with the help of *Tejo Guna*^[24]. Quantity of food based on *Kukshi* (stomach volume), in *Ahara Khadya Dravya* part is more and *Dosha sthana* is less then also among *Murtha aharadi bhaga* there will be space for *Vatadi dosha*^[25]. *Rashi* is very important factor from the point of the concept of Balanced diet, because in this each food article is considered with respective to their body requirement.

CONCLUSION

Ahara is root cause for all living being which enhances *Bala* (strength), *Varna* (complexion) and *Ojas*. Like how oxygen is very essential for life, similarly *Aahara* too. *Agni* plays a very important role in deciding quantity of food. Ingestion of food based on lightness and heaviness of food article, stomach volume and *Rashi* (quantity) is also essential along with *Agni*. By following *Matravatahara* along with *Prakruti, Karana, Samyogadi Asta Ahara vidhi visheshayatana* one will not suffer from *Amatravajanya vikara* and provides strength, complexion, happiness, longevity without disturbing the normalcy.

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***Address for correspondence**

Dr. Ramabai

Assistant Professor,
Department of Samhita and
Siddhanta,
Dhanvantari Ayurveda College
Hospital and Research Centre,
Siddapur, Uttar Kannada District,
Karnataka, India,
Email: ramabhujang4@gmail.com
Ph: 9620137244

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