



Review Article

LACTOSE INTOLERANCE: AN AYURVEDIC LITERARY REVIEW

Ashwita deshpande^{1*}, K. Geetha², K. Anasuya³

¹PG Scholar, ²Assistant Professor, ³Principal and I/C HOD, Dept. of Ayurveda Samhitha and Siddhanta, Dr. B.R.K.R Govt. Ayurvedic College & Hospital, Hyderabad, Telangana, India.

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, a divine science of life, transferred from immortals to mortals for the welfare of mankind. It precisely emphasize on maintenance of health, for this purpose it describes the use *Nitya sevaniya dravyas* and *Rasayana dravyas* accordingly. Among them, milk is considered as best and is compared with nectar. But now a day, many people are diagnosed as lactose intolerant, where as in Ayurvedic texts '*Satmya*' is mentioned as *Guna of Dugdha*. In the text *Sushen Nighantu* we find a term '*Dudgha asatmya*' which seems similar to lactose intolerance, the symptom *Adhmana* is referred to it. Also in text like *Ajirna Manjari* and *Kshemakutuhalam* we find treatment for *Ksheerapanajanya ajirna*. But any symptoms are not told. This disease comes under the umbrella of *Anukta vyadhi*. Acharya Charaka has given guidelines to treat *Anukta vyadhi*. An effort to understand lactose intolerance in Ayurvedic point of view will be made here. A literary study to find references, probable correlation and comparison of *Ksheera pana janya ajirna* and lactose intolerance will be done in this article.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the science of life preaches various principles for the maintenance of healthy life and treatment of diseases. For the earlier one, proper functioning of *Trayopasthambha* i.e., *Ahara*, *Nidra*, *Brahmacharya* is important. *Ahara* is told as *Annam vruttikaranam srestam*. In the list of *Nitya sevaniya dravyas*, *Ksheera* which is crowned as *Ksheeram jeevaniyanam*^[1] is mentioned. Lactose intolerance is defined as inability to digest lactose, a sugar found in milk and milk products. This condition often runs in families and can affect both children and adults^[2]. Inability to digest (or) indigestion is termed as *Ajirna*. We don't find any symptoms of *Ksheerapana janya ajirna* in any classical Ayurvedic texts except *Sushen Nighantu*. But in texts like *Kshemakutuhalam*, *Ajirna Manjari*, *Ayurveda Mahodadi (Sushen Nighantu)* we find references of *Ajirna* caused by *Ksheerapana* and its treatment protocol.

AIM AND OBJECTIVE

The main aim of this article is to bring light on the possible correlation and comparisons of lactose intolerance in Ayurvedic point of view with its treatment modalities.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

As per need of the study classical texts like *Ajirna Manjari*, *Kshemakutuhalam*, *Ayurveda Mahodadi (Sushen Nighantu)* and other *Samhitas*, related articles are referred.

OBSERVATIONS

Anukta vyadhi- The diseases that are not mentioned in the text or newly identified are categorized under *Anukta vyadhi*. One should not be ashamed of inability to name a disease, since all the disorders cannot be given standard names. There are innumerable diseases caused by the same vitiated *Dosha* according to variations in etiology and location of the symptoms exhibited. Hence one should initiate any kind of treatment after acquiring complete knowledge of the nature of the disease as well as its pathogenesis, location and etiological factors. The physician must initiate the treatment after knowing all these things, rationally and accordingly^[3].

We must diagnose the *Doshas* involved by the symptoms exhibited by patient. The common symptoms of lactose intolerance are as follows-

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Abdominal pain, nausea, bloating, gas and diarrhea^[2] which may be correlated with symptoms of *Ajirna* mentioned in Ah.su.8/25-30 as *Sula*, *Utklesa*,

Vistambha, *Adhmana*, *Ati pravrtti* of *Mala*^[8] respectively.

Table 1: Probable correlation of symptoms of Lactose intolerance and *Ajirna* ^[2,8]

S.no	Lactose intolerance	<i>Ajirna</i>
1	Abdominal pain	<i>Sula</i>
2	Nausea	<i>Utklesa</i>
3	Bloating	<i>Vistambha</i>
4	Gas	<i>Adhmana</i>
5	Diarrhea	<i>Ati pravrtti</i> of <i>Mala</i>

We also find direct reference of mentioning of *Ajirna* due to *Ksheerapana* and its treatment modality in *Ajirna manjari*^[4] and *Kshemakutuhalam*^[5] books.

Dugdha asatmyata is the manifestation of lactose intolerance in Ayurveda, with *Adhmana* as its symptom, which is discussed in *Sushen Nighantu*^[6] with its treatment.

Table 2: Treatment of *Ajirna* caused due to *Ksheerapana* along with their references ^[4,5,6]

S.no	Type of <i>Ksheera</i>	Reference	Treatment
1		<i>Ajirna Manjari</i>	Gets cured in 15 days
2		<i>Ajirna Manjari</i>	<i>Takra</i>
3	<i>Mahisha ksheera</i>	<i>Ajirna Manjari</i>	<i>Saindhava lavana</i>
4	<i>Nari ksheera</i>	<i>Ajirna Manjari</i>	<i>Saindhava lavana</i>
5	<i>Surabhi paya</i>	<i>Ajirna Manjari</i>	<i>Manda, Kosna jala</i>
6	<i>Nari ksheera</i>	<i>Ajirna Manjari</i>	<i>Sankha churna</i>
7	<i>Gavya ksheera</i>	<i>Ksemakutuhalam</i>	<i>Takra</i>
8	<i>Dugdha asatmyata</i>	<i>Sushen nighantu</i>	<i>Nagara, Pippali</i>

DISCUSSION

As stated the main aim of Ayurveda is *Swasthya rakshanam* and *Roga prashamana*, for this very purpose the *Bhesaja* are also classified as *Swasthyasya urjaskaram* and *Roganut*. Under the heading of *Swasthyasya urjaskaram* the drugs having *Karma* like *Jeevaniyam* and *Rasayanam* falls.

- प्रीणनं बृंहणं वृष्यं मेध्यं बल्यं मनस्करम् ॥
जीवनीयंसर्वप्राणभृतां सात्म्यं ॥ cha.su.1/108
- प्रवरं जीवनीयानां क्षीरमुक्तं रसायनम् ॥ cha.su.27/218
- क्षीरं जीवनीयानां ॥ cha.su.25/40

Ksheera has both *Jeevaniya* and *Rasayanam karma* in it along with *Vrushyam*, *Medhyam*, *Brhmanam* etc. *Ksheera* is crowned as *Jeevaniyanam srestam*^[1] with many other benefits which helps to maintain the health of an individual.

Lactose intolerance is a digestive disorder usually caused by a deficiency of an enzyme in the body called lactase. The inability to fully digest the sugar 'lactase' leads to nothing but improper digestion or indigestion.

In Ayurveda, it is believed that both, the condition of health and disease are dependent on *Agni*, which is directly responsible for digestion.

One may not find direct symptoms of *Ajirna* due to *Ksheerapana* in classical Ayurvedic text but we find

many reference of treatment meant for the same, which has been tabulated earlier.

Generally for any *Vyadhi*, Ayurveda prescribes *Nidana Parivarjana* as *Upasaya* but *Ksheera* has many benefits to it for maintenance of health of an individual, so it is not advisable to discard it from our diet completely. We may encounter many *Anukta vyadhi* in future also but as stated by Acharya Charaka the treatment of *Anukta vyadhi* can be done by knowing the below;

An effort has been made to make probable correlation for better understanding of lactose intolerance with Ayurvedic point of view using the guidelines led by Acharya Charaka i.e., knowing *Hetu*, *Vyadhiprakruti*, *Dosha*, *Samprapti*, *Adhithana*^[3].

Hetu (Etiology): Lactose intake- *Ksheerapana*

Vyadhiprakruti (Nature of disease): Mild - *Mrdu*

Adhithana (Location): As all the symptoms exhibited involve GIT - *Mahasrotas*

Dosha involved

(A) Predominant

Adhmana - Vata

(B) Miscellaneous

Sula - Vata

Utklesa - Kapha

Vistambha - Vata

Atipravrtti of *Mala - Vata*

(By above list, the *Doshas* involved may be concluded as *Vata-kapha*)

Samprapti (Pathogenesis)

Different persons may appear to have more or less sensitivity to ingestion of lactose, variable degrees of abdominal distension and other complaints. When lactose is ingested it stimulates an influx of water into lumen of small intestine and the production of gas leads to distention of colon^[7].

Here we may indirectly assess that the *Vruddhita Vata-Kapha dosha* takes *Sthana Samsraya* in *Ama-Pakvashaya* which leads to *Adhmanadi lakshanas*.

Treatment

We find a term called "*Dugdha Asatmyata*" in text *Ayurveda Mahodadhi (Sushen Nighantu)* where the symptom *Adhmana* is mentioned and also the treatment protocol is told for it as follows:

As compared to milk, mix half amount of water in milk and add *Nagara* and *Pippali* to the milk and boil till only milk is left behind^[6].

Nagara alleviates *Kapha* and *Vata* due its *Katu rasa* and *Ushna guna* respectively, and by the same properties it increases *Pitta dosha*. It also have the properties like *Deepana, Pacana, Rochana, Grahi, Shoolaprasamana*, these prove its usefulness in dealing with *Dugdhasatmya*^[7].

Pippali in *Sushka avastha* have *Katu rasa* which alleviates *Kapha* and in *Ardra avastha* due to its *Snigdha guna* and *Madhura vipaka* alleviates *Vata*. Due to its *Kaphavaatshamaka, Deepana, Pacana, Shoolaprashamanan karma*, it is beneficial in case in *Dugdhasatmya*^[7].

In texts like *Ajirna Manjari* and *Kshemakutuhalam*, the *dravyas* like *Takra, Saindhava lavana, Manda, Kosna jala, Sankha churna, Nagara, Pippali* are told to treat the *Ajirna* caused by *Ksheerapana*.^[4,5]

CONCLUSION

It is not possible to give nomenclature for every disease but a wise physician should be able to

treat a disease whether it is mentioned in classical text or not by using his *Yukti* in understanding the disease based on the symptoms presented. Acharya Susruta has mentioned about *Anukta vyadhi* and led down guidelines on how to tackle them. By using the same, an effort has been made in this article to understand Lactose Intolerance in Ayurvedic point of view. The only symptom of *Dugdha Asatmyata* is *Adhmana* mentioned in *Sushen Nighantu*. But for treatment of *Ksheerapana janya ajirna* the *Dravyas* like *Takra, Saindhava lavana, Manda, Kosna jala, Sankha churna, Nagara, Pippali* have been mentioned. A physician should try to understand the *Nidana Pancaka* of disease before starting its disease of any *Anukta vyadhi*.

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***Address for correspondence**

Dr. Ashwita deshpane

PG Scholar

Dept. of Ayurveda Samhitha and Siddhanta, Dr. B.R.K.R Govt.

Ayurvedic College & Hospital, Hyderabad, Telangana, India.

Email:

ashwitadeshpane25@gmail.com

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