

Review Article

Understanding Aruchi (Anorexia): An Ayurvedic prespective

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ABSTRACT:

Aruchi is the term for the condition of where the individual sufferer's loss of taste in food and loss of appetite. This is known as Anorexia in modern aspect.

This condition arise due to stress, sedentary lifestyle and wrong eating habbits and in case of some disease like Jwar, Rajyakshma, Amplapitta, Pandu, Atisar, Grahani.

Aruchi according to ayurveda is a condition manifested due to annavaha srotas and associated with rasavasa srotas.

Aruchi is not a disease it is a symptom which present in many of the disease as a primary symptom. So we have to treat Aruchi with the help of ayurvedic prespective.

KEY WORDS: Aruchi, Annavaha srotas, Rasavaha srotas, Anorexia

INTRODUCTION:

Aruchi is the term for the condition of where the individual sufferer's loss of taste in food and loss of appetite. The three doshas that are not in equilibrium produces Aruchi. Vata dosha (prana, udana and samana) in association with pitta (pachaka) play vital role in bringing about hunger. Hunger stimulaes proper perception of taste for normal perception of taste kapha (bodhaka-existing in mouth), prana vata (existing in head and neck) and samana vata (persisting in stomach) along with pachaka pitta should have proper co-ordination. If the relation is hampered / disturbed, anorexia is caused.

Aruchi:

Definition-

The literal meaning of the Sanskrit word is - Not finding proper taste the tasteful and good food even if one is hungry. (Bhavaprakasha) This can be compared to Anorexia.

Paryaya-

Various type of other word like Aruchi, Asyavairasya, Ashradha and bhaktadwesh has also been used as

synonyms.

Bhaktadwesh- A mean no sooner the person hear the name of the food or remember it or looks at the food or touches the food there is aversion for the food.

Anannabhilasha- due to anger, fear etc the person does not feel like eating his food.

Bhede (Type)-

1. Vataja
2. Pittaja
3. Kaphaja
4. Tridoshaja
5. Psychological (ch.chi.8/58)

Hetu(Causes)-

1. Psycological condition
2. Psycological cause are fear, anger and greed
3. All type of diet which is too heavy,oily,and sweet
4. Indigestion and loss of digestive fire
5. Secondary to worm infestation, anemia, jaundice, kaphaja disorders etc
6. Food poisoning

Samprapti:**Rupa-****Vataja Aruchi-**

Mouth become dry with astringent taste and sometimes there is pain in the chest. There could be coating on the teeth and becomes sour.

Pittaja Aruchi-

Mouth becomes bitter with burning sensation of heat and foul smelling

Kaphaja Aruchi-

Mouth becomes sweet. There are symptoms like heaviness, sensation of cold all over the body and constipation.

Tridshaja Aruchi-

In this type, mixed symptoms of all above types are seen.

Manasaja Aruchi-

This is caused by psychological reasons and in this type the predominant symptoms along with improper taste is lack of appetite also. (Ch. chi. 8/61 & Ch.chi.26/201)

Normal mechanism of hunger as per ayurveda:

To put it in simpler term, fire and air are required for the process of burning. Similarly, pitta (in the form of digestive fire / digestive strength) and air (normal wind in stomach plus process of peristalsis, digestive strength- digestive fire) should co-ordinate well to maintain good digestion strength. Good digestion strength means, good hunger, means interest in food. Person finds good taste in his food. (Taste perception is aided by kapha dosha).

Impaired vata and pitta at the level of stomach leads to depleted digestion strength, in turn lead to tastelessness in tongue and hatred towards food.

Samanya chikitsa:

The line of treatment should be, mouthwashes, delicious food and drinks, keeping the patient happy and consolation. (Ch.Chi26/211-213)

Both external and internal purification of the channels involved in the pathogenesis is important in the treatment. Similarly maintaining proper oral hygiene is also advised. (Ch. Chi26/208)

Yoga Ratnakara and Nighantu Ratnakara have suggested to use basti, vaman and virechana depending on the predominance of dosha with kavala, dhumapan, gandusha and use of sour, salty

and pungent food and herbs.

Herbs of choice are matulung, nimb, ginger, maricha, cumin, asafetida and rock salt.

Vishesha chikitsa:**Vataja Aruchi-**

Physician should use basti treatment in vataj type, Bhaishajya Ratnavali has suggested that if the patient is strong, first vamaana should be done by giving decoction of vacha and then mixture of vidanga, pippali, yavakshara, rasna, ela, rocksalt and shunthi should be given to the patient.

Give mixture of kushtha, sauvarchala, jeeraka, sugar and maricha with honey. one can also use this mixture for karala. Give the mixture of tvak, musta, ela and dhanyaka.

Pittaja Aruchi-

Vamana should be given in pittaja type and then give the patient mixture of rocksalt, honey and ghee.

Give mixture of amalaki, ela, padmaka, ushira, pippali, chandana and kamala with honey. The same mixture can be used for kavala.

Kaphaja Aruchi-

Vamana should be given by using the decoction of nimb; and later on mixture of ajamoda powder should be given.

Mixture of lodhra, chavya, haritaki, trikatu and yavakshara should be given with honey, or used for kavala. Similarly mixture of cinnamon, daruharidra and ajamoda is useful for treating this type of Aruchi.

Similarly considering the constitution of the patient, ne should use various types of panaka-drinks containing sour and sweet fruits; avaleha-jam or jelly of fruits; takra- buttermilk; shadava- mixture of salts and herbs, and various powders or churna.

What is Anorexia?

Anorexia Nervosa is a psychological and potentially life-threatening eating disorder. Those suffering from this eating disorder are typically suffering from an extremely low body weight relative to their height and body type.

Often referred to as BMI (Body Mass Index) is a tool that treatment providers often use to assess the appropriateness of body weight for an individual struggling with an eating disorder. Additionally, observations of eating patterns, exercise, and personality traits may give indications of an anorexia diagnosis. Those struggling with anorexia frequently fear gaining weight and have a distorted body image.

They often believe they appear much heavier than they are.

Additionally, women and men who suffer from this eating disorder exemplify a fixation with a thin figure and abnormal eating patterns. Anorexia nervosa is interchangeable with the term anorexia, which refers to self-starvation and lack of appetite.

Major Types of Anorexia:

There are two common types of anorexia, which are as follows:

- Binge/Purge Type – The person struggling with this type of eating disorder will often purge after eating. This alleviates the fear of gaining weight and offsets some of the guilt of having ingested forbidden, or highly restricted food. The compensatory purge behavior by the individual with Binge/Purge Type anorexia may purge by exercising excessively, vomiting or abusing laxatives.
- Restrictive – The individual suffering from restrictive anorexia is often perceived as highly self-disciplined. They restrict the quantity of food, calories and often high fat or high sugar foods. They consume far fewer calories than are needed to maintain a healthy weight. This is a heartbreaking form of self-starvation.

Causes of Anorexia:

It has been said that genetics load the gun and environment pulls the trigger in eating disorders. This eating disorder is based on genetic predisposition, personality traits, and environmental factors.

Examples of environmental factors that would contribute to the occurrence of this eating disorder are:

- The effects of the thinness culture in media, that constantly reinforce thin people as ideal stereotypes
- Professions and careers that promote being thin and weight loss, such as ballet and modeling
- Family and childhood traumas: childhood sexual abuse, severe trauma
- Peer pressure among friends and co-workers to be thin or be sexy.

Examples of biological factors include:

- Irregular hormone functions
- Genetics (the tie between anorexia and one's genes is still being heavily researched, but we know that genetics is a part of the story).

Anorexia Signs & Symptoms:

An individual suffering from anorexia nervosa may

reveal one or several signs and symptoms such as:

- Chronic restrictive eating or dieting, beyond the norm
- Rapidly losing weight or being significantly underweight and emaciated
- Obsession with calories and fat contents of food
- Engaging in ritualistic eating patterns, such as cutting food into tiny pieces, eating alone, and/or hiding food
- Continued fixation with food, recipes, or cooking; the individual may cook intricate meals for others but refrain from partaking
- Amenorrhea: an abnormal absence of menstruation, or loss of 3 consecutive menstrual cycles
- Depression or lethargic stage
- Development of lanugo: soft, fine hair that grows on face and body
- Reported sensation of feeling cold, particularly in extremities
- Loss or thinning of hair
- Avoidance of social functions, family, and friends. May become isolated and withdrawn.

CONCLUSION:

According to Ayurveda, anorexia is caused by an aggravation of vata, pitta and kapha doshas, and psychological factors such as fear, anger and stress, leading to incomplete digestion of food. This leads to the formation of ama (mucus). This ama blocks the gastrointestinal channels of the body and thus disturbs the sense of taste.

The following contribute to this condition: inactive lifestyle; oily, sweet and heavy foods; snacking between meals; and having meals in a disturbed atmosphere, such as eating while watching television.

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