



REVIEW ARTICLE

MANAGEMENT OF PEPTIC ULCER BY AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Due to change in life style and eating habits, an increasing frequency of gastric symptoms in persons can be observed now a days, the most common being peptic ulcer. Peptic ulcer in *Ayurveda* is considered a type of acid gastritis. This disorder is generally classified under *Grahani* disorder. *Acharya Charaka* describes some of common cause of peptic ulcer like deranged *Agni*. Due to deranged *Agni* or *Pitta vikara*, there are many localized disorders found one of them being gastric ulcer (*Annadrava Shoola*). The actual ulceration of the stomach wall which is the classic description of a peptic ulcer, is clearly due to excessive amount of heat or *prakupita pitta* in the body. According to modern aspect, peptic ulcer can be explained as imbalance between acid, pepsin, bile and gastric repair & defensive factors. The ulcer in the stomach is called gastric ulcer. In *Ayurveda* we can correlate gastric ulcer with "*Annadrava Shoola*". The aim of present article is to describe the role of *Ayurveda* in the management of peptic ulcer.

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INTRODUCTION

Peptic ulcer is a very common disease nowadays. In *Ayurveda*, *Vata*, *Pitta* or both are told as the causative factor of peptic ulcer. In short, peptic ulcer can be described as ulcers occurring in stomach and/or duodenal wall either due to discontinuation of mucosal lining or excess secretion of acid. This is important to know as knowledge of *Aetiology nidana* and *Pathogenesis samprapti* is required to treat any disease. The cause of most ulcers lies in a medley of *Vata* and *Pitta* provoking factors. Modern aspect of peptic ulcer can be explained as imbalance between the aggressive (acid, pepsin, bile etc.) and the defensive (gastric mucus and bicarbonate secretion, prostaglandins, nitric oxide, innate resistance of the mucosal cells) factors (Essentials of Medical Pharmacology, 2008). The ulcer in the intestinal tract is called duodenal ulcer and ulcer in the stomach is called gastric ulcer both together is called peptic ulcer. According to *Ayurveda* we can correlate duodenal ulcer with *Parinama Shoola* and gastric ulcer with *Annadrava Shoola*. The pain in *Annadrava Shoola* occurs during digestion or before digestion and after digestion. *Annadrava Shoola* occurs continuously and the patient is restless until he vomits (Madhava nidanam Poorvardha of Sri Madhavakara with Madhukosa Sanskrit Commentary). *Parinama shoola* is a pain which arises when digestion of food takes place. When *Vata*

aggravates due to its causative factor like dry food etc., it become, causes dominant and surrounds the *pitta* or *kapha* and cause *shoola*. This *shoola* is *Parinama shoola* (Madhava nidanam Poorvardha of Sri Madhavakara with Madhukosa Sanskrit Commentary by Srivijayaraksita and Srikanthadatta).

Samprapti

1. *Ayurveda* describes that *vata* enters the *rasa dhatu* in the *Annavaaha srotasa*. This *vimarg-gamana* of the *vayu* takes places due to the *avarana* of *kapha- pitta*. The membrane of the stomach and small intestine is unable to protect the underlying tissue from the normal or low levels of acid presence in the digestive system. The acid burn the tissue result produced hyperacidity and later in ulceration.
2. Anxiety and stress are main factors behind *Vataja* ulcer. The risk is increased if the person takes *Vata prakopka aahar* like *Alpa aahar*, *Ruksha aahar*, *Sheeta aahar*
3. *Ayurveda* describes that when *pitta* enters the *rasa dhatu* of *annavaaha srotas* excess acid secretion may give rise to *Pittaja* ulcer. This secretions overcome the protective mucous secretions of the intestinal lining. Resulting in hyperacidity and later in ulceration.
4. The intensity of stress is main factor behind *Pittaja* ulcer. The risk is increased if the person takes *Pitta prakopka aahar* like *ushana aahar*, *tikshana aahar* (diet of hot and spicy foods).

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Lakshanas (signs and symptoms)

Annadrava shoola

- Continuous pain
- Pain increases on taking food
- Pain is relieved after vomiting
- Precipitating factors- excessive acid production; consumption of *katu*, *amla*, *lavana* foods/ drinks; excessive alcohol intake; frequent use of NSAIDs or corticosteroids

Parinama shoola

- *Vatika parinama shoola- aadhmana, aatopa, mala-mutra avrodha, arati, gaatra- kampa*. This type of *shoola* subsides by the consumption of *snigdha* and *ushna* foods.
- *Paittika parinama shoola- trishna, daaha, arati, ati swedana*, increases by consumption of *katu-amla-lavana* foods, decreases by *sheetopchara*.
- *Sleshmika parinama shoola- vamana, hrillasa, murchha, manda shoola*, decreases by consumption of *katu, tikta, ushna* foods.
- *Dwandaja & tridoshaja shoola-* mixed symptoms according to the *dosha* involved.

Prognosis

Anna drava shoola- ekdoshaja shoola: saadhya

Dwidoshaja shoola: yaapya

Tridoshaja shoola: asadhya

Parninama shoola- ekdoshaja shoola: saadhya

Dwidoshaja shoola: yaapya

Tridoshaja shoola, with agni- mansa- bal kshaya: asadhya

Treatment

Various kinds of approaches are used to rectify this condition, since different aetiology are considered for the occurrence of peptic ulcer like; over production of gastric acid, sluggish secretion of protective gastric mucous etc. These reasons contribute to hyperacidity symptoms or consequent corrosion of the gastric mucosa. *Vattika* ulcers are healed by rebuilding the gastric mucous. Adopting an oily diet is helpful. *Rasa dhatu poshana* also leads to hydration and reconstruction of gastric mucosa. *Paittika* ulcer can be eradicated by reducing acid secretions and promoting secretion of gastric mucosa. A *sheeta, madhura* diet helps achieving these targets. By avoiding *katu, ushna* food, acid secretion is controlled which causes lesser damage to the gastric lining. Associated *rakta srava* can be managed by haemostatic drugs which are *kashaya, sheeta* like *praval pishti*. Such a patient should also be encouraged to avoid habits or lifestyle which increases *pitta* secretion like smoking, getting angry etc. Most of the cases of ulcers are caused by a combination of *vata* and *pitta*. Therefore, using drugs which prove beneficial in both are helpful. Below are few of the examples:

- **Shatavari:** *Asparagus racemosus*, is a climbing plant which grows in low jungles areas throughout India. This sweet and bitter herb is particularly balance *Pitta Dosh*. *Asparagus racemosus* is mentioned in various ancient literatures for the treatment of gastric ulcers, as

galactogogue, and also the stabilization of female hormones. The ulcer-protective effect of the methanolic extract from the fresh roots of the *Shatavari* extract has been studied in different animal models. It helped protect mucosal lining of the stomach, by increasing mucus secretion and at the same time keeping the production of acid and Pepsin (an enzyme secreted by the stomach linings) stable. Also roots of *Asparagus racemosus* showed considerable in-vitro antibacterial properties comparable with chloramphenicol (a strong antibiotic). *Helicobacter pylori* is a bacteria known to cause gastric ulcers and GERD. *Shatavari* helps combat that. Considering all these properties it make perfect sense to use *Shatavari* for gastric ulcers.

- **Yashtimadhu:** Also called *Glycyrrhiza glabra*, this drug has a sweet tasting glycyrrhizin which reduces gastric acid secretion and inhibits formation of peptic ulcers. Glycyrrhizin is a gastroprotective and it increases the rate of mucus secretion by the gastric mucosa. Glycyrrhizin is also responsible for the demulcent, expectorant and antitussive properties of *Yashtimadhu*. *Yashtimadhu* is beneficial in treating acid and is beneficial in reducing inflammation in the body. *Yashtimadhu* treats ulcers by accelerating mucin excretion by increasing the synthesis of glycoprotein at the gastric mucosa, prolonging the life of the epithelial cells and by its antipepsin activity. It is also beneficial in the management of aphthous ulcers or mouth sores. Paste of *Yashtimadhu* and *Tila* mixed with oil is used for healing of wound (*Vrinda madhava*).
- **Trapusa:** Locally known as *balam- kheera, Cucumis sativum* Linn. is said to show anti- ulcer activity. It reduces inflammation, thereby speeding up the healing of the ulcer. Its seeds are potent *rakta- pitta vikara nashaka* (Bhavprakasa Nighantu *et al.*, 2010). It reduces gastric acid volume in the stomach. It also has some anti- oxidant property (Gill *et al.*, 2008).
- **Kushmanda:** Also called as *Benincasa hispida* Thunb., its fruit has significant ulcer reducing action (Gill *et al.*, 2011). Its fruit juice is *pittashamaka, raktapitta prashmana* and *rakta samgrahaka*. These properties help to check the gastric secretion and provide relief in ulcers (Bhavprakasa Nighantu *et al.*, 2010).
- **Indravaruni:** *Citrullus colosynthis* Schrad. is said to possess antioxidant activity which helps in healing ulcers faster by reducing free radical damage (Gill *et al.*). Its fruit pulp is bitter and strong purgative which by rule, reduces *pitta*.
- **Karvellaka:** Fruits of *Momordica charantia*, are *pittashamaka* and *krimighna*. It is also seen that in the dose of 200-400mg/kg body weight is said to have shown gastric ulcers (Rao *et al.*, 2011).
- **Amalaki:** *Embllica officinalis* Gaertn., is a potent acidity regulator. It is a *rasayana, rakta- pittahara, sheetala, amlapitta nashaka, parinama shoolahara* (Bhavprakasa Nighantu *et al.*, 2010) These properties regulate reconstruction of tissues by reducing damage. It is *madhura vipaka* which pacifies *pitta*.

Conclusion

Most common cause of ulcers according to *Ayurvedic* aspect is *vata* and *pitta* or both together. So to treat the ulcer we need the drugs which pacify both *vata* and *pitta* or drugs which are *Shita* in *Virya* and *Madhura* in *Vipaka*. Both *Shatavari* and

Yashtimadhu are *vata* and *pitta* pacifying herbs and are *Shita* in *Virya* and *Madhura* in *Vipaka*. Along with this *Shatavari* has ulcer protective effect, it also increases mucous secretion so protects the mucosal lining of stomach and at last it has antibacterial effect which helps in combating the adverse effect of *Helicobacter pylori* which is most common cause of ulcer. Although one aetiology cannot be pin pointed out for causing peptic ulcers, the above ayurvedic drugs are seen to be beneficial to treat *amashayik vrana* or peptic ulcers.

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