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Irritable Bowel Syndrome: An Ayurveda Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The prevalence of psychosomatic diseases are increasing day by day. Irritable bowel syndrome is one of the commonly occurring disease under psychosomatic disease. IBS is basically a functional gastrointestinal disease having symptoms like altered bowel, abdominal pain which is relieved with defecation, passage of mucous with stool etc. The condition of IBS affects more than 4 million people all around the world. It can be a long lasting problem that changes the way of living and lifestyle if not treated. Treatment of IBS includes medication along with, modification of diet, along with modification of lifestyle where stress is the precipitating factors for the disease. Some patients are prescribed antipsychotic drugs for it. The approach for the disease in Ayurveda is quite different with the drug and diet.

KEYWORDS

Psychosomatic diseases, IBS, lifestyle, Ayurveda



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INTRODUCTION

IBS is a common gastrointestinal disorder that many people have characterized by chronic abdominal symptoms in absence of major mechanical, inflammatory or biochemical disease. IBS is a functional disorder which means either the muscles of the organs or the nerves that control the organs are not working normally and as a result, the organs do not function normally. IBS causes a great deal of discomfort and distress but does not lead to any serious disease. The person having IBS knows how intense the disorder can be and how it can cause significant disruption in their ability to attend to the tasks of daily life. IBS is the seventh most common outpatient diagnosis with a rate of 10.6% visits per thousand populations per year.

Clinical symptoms include altered bowel habit which might be constipation and diarrhea predominant, abdominal pain, gas and flatulence, mucous in stool and some upper gastrointestinal symptoms like, dyspepsia, heart burn, nausea vomiting etc.

DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA: Rome -II criteria¹

At least 12 weeks of continuous or recurrent abdominal pain associated with any two below mentioned features

- Relieved with defecation.
- Onset associated with frequency of

stool.

- Associated with a change in form (appearance) of stool

From the symptoms of IBS the idea can be drawn that there is involvement of *prana, samana, apan vayu, pachak pitta* and *purusa* and *annavaha srota dusti*. Derangement of *agni* plays an important role in pathogenesis of the disease.

Disease alike to IBS:

(Symptomatic similarity)

Grahani: Vataja Grahani, Sangraha Grahani

Atisar: Vataja, and Kaphaja atisar

Pravahika

Grahani:

*Vataja grahani nidana:*² (ch.ci.15.59-60)

Ahar: katu, tikta, kasaya ahar, (foods, having pungent, bitter, astringent taste), *ati ruksha sheeta bhojan, pranitanan* (intake of less food) *anasan* (fasting).

Viharaja nidana: Vega nigraha (suppression of natural urges, *ati maithuna* (excessive sexual intercourse).

Vataja Grahani Lakshana: ³ch/ci/61-62)

Cirat dukha drava sukha with difficulty, liquid stool, hard, thin, sometime mixed with mucous, and with sound), *punah punah, srujet varchah* (increase frequency of stool), *jirna jiryati* (delayed digestion), *adhman* (abdominal distension), *manasa sadan* (depression) *sukta paka* (acidity), *Daurbalya* (weakness), Other symptoms –



khara angata (roughness of body), *kantha sosha* (dryness of mouth), *kshut trishna* (hunger or thirsty), *Timir* (darkness), *karna swana* (tinnitus) *parsha uruvankshana griva uru ruja* (pain in flanks, thighs, pelvic region, neck), *visuchika* (chest pain with pricking pain in body), *hridpeeda* (cardiac pain), *Sarva rasanam griddhi* (craving for all taste)

Sangrah grahani:

Lakshana:⁴ (MN/Ch.4/1,2,3)

Antrakujan (gurgling sound in abdomens) *drava seta ghana snigdha sakatibedanam sakrit* (passage of stool which is loose, heavy, cold form with pain), *amam bahu sa picchila sa sabda manda vedana* (stool containing) undigested food, mucous, with sound and mild pain), *paksad rasad dasad va nityam va* (type of chronic occurrence). *divya prakopa ratri santi* (aggravation on day relief during night time). *Dourbalya, sadana* (looseness of body).

Madhav mentioned the disease *asdurvigyeya* (difficult to understand) *ducikitsa* (different to treat) *cirasthayi* chronic and caused by *ama* and *vata* mainly.

Here symptoms quite similar to IBS.

Atisar:

Vataja-atisara:

- *Ahar: ruksha alpa bhojana* (eating less and dry food), *pramitsan* (irregular

timing of food intake), *Teekshna madya sevan* (strong alcoholic drink)

- *Vihar: Vata, atopa, vyayama vyavaya atimatra sevana* (excessive intake of air, sun, exercise, sexual intercourse).

Lakshana of vataja amatisar:

Vijjala (watery stool), *vipluta* (spreading) *avasadi* (when stool placed on earth on it gets soaked), *ruksha*.

Kaphaja atisar:

Nidan: ⁵(Ch.Ci.19/6)

- *Ahar: Guru, Madhur, sheeta, snigdha, ahar sevan* (intake of food which are heavy, sweet, oily and cold excessively).

- *Vihar: Diva swapna* (excessive day sleep) *achinta* (inactivity of *mana* and *sarira*).

Lakshana ⁶(Ch.Ci.19/3)

Snigdha sweta picchila mala (stool of slimy, unctuous, whitish in nature).

Krute api akruta samgyah (feeling of incomplete evacuation), *slesmaspahita alpa alpa shula gukta pravahika mala* (less amount of food passing frequently with pain), *guru udara vasti vangasena* (heaviness in abdomen, pelvic & bladder region), *nidra alashaya, sadana* (insomnia, laziness) *annadwes* (anorexia).

Pravahika: ⁷(Su.Utt.40/138)

Nidan: Excess intake of food.



Lakshana: Muhur muhur pravahana, balasa yukta i.e. frequent passage of stool containing mucus accompanied by pain and straining. Through there is little similarity with IBS, *prabahika* is a very different disease. While going through the Ayurvedic literature it is clear that, there is no specific disease that have some symptoms similar to IBS. The common thing is that all these diseases mentioned above have one common etiology *agnidusti*. So, there is a stage of *Grahani dosha* in IBS.

Aharaja Nidana:

Viruddha, visamasan, ahita bhojan, atibhojan, ajeerna, adhyasan.

Viharaja nidana: *Vega vidharan*

Manasik: *Susruta* said that digestion is not proper in a person having *irsha, bhaya, krodha, soka*⁸ (Su.Su.46/500-501). Again these factors lead to *agni dusti*. So, both anxiety and depression having impact on IBS as per Ayurveda also.

Krimi:

Krimi also causes *Agni Mandya*. So, it can be taken as causative factor.

Again recent study says that a subtype of IBS seen 1 in 10 patient is secondary to infection.

Symptoms of IBS according to involvement of Dosa:

Vata predominance:

1. *Drava mala* (diarrhoea predominant)

2. *Udar shola* (abdomen pain)
3. *Mugur muhur mala* (\uparrow frequency of stool)
4. *Atopa* (flatulence)
5. *Phena, sasula mala* (frothy stool with sound)
6. *Parikartika* (pain in anus)
7. *Kshaya* (ematiation)
8. *Manasa sadana* (asthenia of mind)

Pitta predominance:

- *Aruchi* (anorexia)
- *Drava mala* (liquid stool)
- *Amla udgar* (acidic eructation)

Kapha predominance:

- *Aruchi, agni sadan*
- *Chardi, krita api akrita samgya*

Samanya Lakshana:

- *Muhur baddha muhur drava* (alternate constipation and diarrhoea)
- *Udar shola* (abdominal pain)
- *Atisristam* (increase frequency)
- *Adhman* (abdomen distension)
- *Krute api krute samgyah* (feeling of incomplete evacuation)
- *Slesma yukta mala* (mucous in stool)
- *Aruchi*

Manasa sadana

Agni derangement is the main cause of IBS which is due to incompatible *ahar vihar* and mental disturbance.



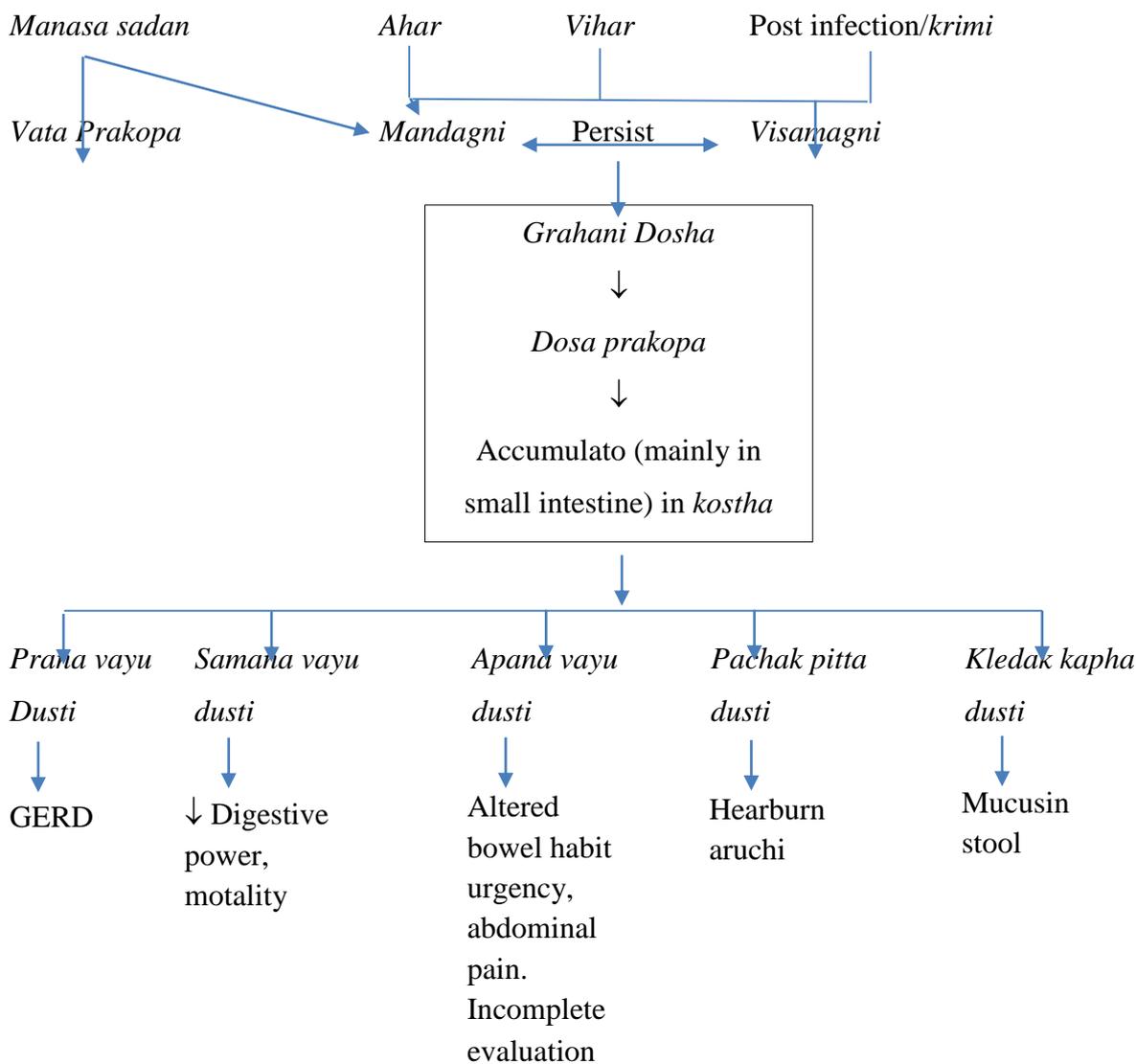
Samprapti Ghatak:

- *Dosha- tridosaja*
- *Dushya – ahar rasa*

➤ *Srota dusti – atipravriti, sangya*

Agni – manda, visama

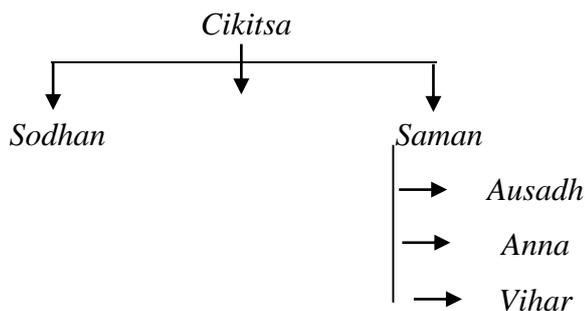
PROBABLE SAMPRAPTI:



➤ *Originating sthan – kostha*

Cikitsa:

Roga marga – abhyantar





Satvavajay cikitsa (Psychic treatment/ Consoling)

Counselling is the prime part of treatment. Physician should explain the disease to the patient with its chronicity, relapse and recurrence to the patient. Charak said diverting the mind from incompatible objects comprises satvavajay cikitsa. Since pranayama involves a lot of attention and concentration of mind followed by an initiation of relaxed emotional state, so it is the best way to keep the mental stress away. Recurrence will occur depending up on the stressful situations.

YUKTIVYAPASRAYA CIKITSA

Sodhan:

Srota dusti is the root cause of every disease. So, for proper transformation of each *dhatu* and removal of mala *sodhan* is very important.

Snehan & Swedan:

IBS is *vata predominant* disease. So, *Snehan & Swedana* will be beneficial for IBS. These therapy should be given as *Purvakarma* before giving panchakarma therapy.

Virechan:

Virechan is indicated in any types of GI disorder and pitta predominant disease. Again *virechan* is indicated for mental diseases like *unmad, apasmar* etc. whereas IBS is a psychosomatic GI disease, so *virechan* will be beneficial in this condition.

Virechan helps in enhancement of Agni and improves bowel movement. In IBS there is *agni mandya* and there is disfunction of intestinal movement.

Vasti:

In Ayurveda, *Vasti* is said to be “*Ardha cikitsa*” as it controls *vayu*. *Vayu* is responsible for elimination of excretas from the body. *Vasti* treatment helps to provide happiness, long life, strength intelligence, clear voice, rejuvenation etc⁹ (Ch/Si/1/27) Acharya charaka has indicated *Anusasan* and *Niruha vasti* in *Grahani* according to condition or symptom

Ausadhi:

IBS is the disease mainly arises due to *Agni dusti*, Agni is the prime factor responsible for digestion and metabolism. Drugs having *deepan* and *pachan* quality will be more beneficial in this case. In *diarrhoea* predominant IBS drugs having property of *Grani, tikta* and *kasay* rasa and *ushna virya* will be effective. In constipations predominant IBS drugs should have some *sara guna*. Apart from that *Medhya gana* drugs will also have some good effect on this disease as it is psychosomatic in origin.

Anna:

- *Sukadhanya varga: sastik, Sali, mudga, tuvari* etc.



- *Krittana varga*:: *peya, belapi, beswara etc*
- *Shka varga*: *changeri, vastik, vrihati, vartak, punarnava*
- *Phala varga*: *dadim, bilva, vriksamla, matylunga, neembu*
- *Ausadh varga*: *saidhav, hingu, haritaki, dhanyak*
- *Jala varga*: *koushna jala*
- *Dugdha varga*: *takra*

(Ch/Ci/15/119) In disease like IBS where *mandagi* is the main cause *Tarka* is very beneficial¹⁰. It is an excellent drink to simulate Agni having quality of *grahi* and *Laghu* for which it is easy to digest. It does not causes vitiation of pitta as it has *madhura upaka*. Because of *kasay ras, ushna, ruksha* and *vikashi guna* it is good for *kapha* aggravation. For *madhur* and *Amla* rasa it is good for counteracting *kapha*. Freshly prepared *takra* does not cause burning sensation. Even in disease like *udar, arsha* also it is benifical. It can even as medication as well as can be addicted in daily diet.

Diet and behavior is very important win over a disease. A proper diet is that which is according to the *Prakriti* of the body and should undergo digested in proper time and it depends on Agnibala¹⁰. Diet is said to be *pathya* when it helps in promotion of health and bring happiness in both body and mind

without obstructing channels along with that it correct *Panchamahabhoutic* composition.

Abhojan, ajirna, atibhojan, asatmya ati guru, sita, ruksha, *atisnighdha, ahar* should be avoided which will weaken the *Jathar agni* and further production of *ama*.



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