



Review Article

Volume 15 Issue 06

June 2026

ASSESSMENT OF AGNI AND KOSTHA PARĪKṢĀ IN AYURVEDA

Akshika¹, *Dr. Mridu Sharma²

¹BAMS 3rd prof., Department of Panchkarma, Smt. Urmila Devi Ayurvedic College, Shri Guru Ravidas Ayurveda University, Punjab 146110 Email ID akshikas93@gmail.com

²Principal and Professor, Department of Panchkarma, Smt. Urmila Devi Ayurvedic College, Shri Guru Ravidas Ayurveda University, Punjab 146110

*Corresponding Author - Dr. Mridu Sharma, Principal and Professor, Department of Panchkarma, Smt. Urmila Devi Ayurvedic College, Shri Guru Ravidas Ayurveda University, Punjab 146110

Email ID: Midu2104@gmail.com

Abstract

Ayurveda gives great importance to the individual assessment of *Agni* and *Kostha* before planning diet, medicine, *Shodhana*, and daily regimen. *Agni* is the main factor responsible for digestion, absorption, metabolism, tissue nourishment, strength, immunity, and maintenance of health. Any disturbance in *Agni* may lead to improper digestion and formation of *Ama*, which becomes the root cause of many diseases. Therefore, assessment of *Agni Pariksha* helps the physician to understand the digestive capacity, appetite pattern, bowel habit, tolerance to food, and tendency toward indigestion. Similarly, *Kostha Pariksha* is an important clinical examination used to assess the nature of bowel movement and the dominance of *Dosha* in the gastrointestinal tract. On the basis of bowel pattern, *Kostha* is mainly classified into *Mridu Kostha*, *Madhyama Kostha*, and *Krura Kostha*. This examination is especially useful before administering *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Basti*, and other therapeutic procedures. Proper assessment of *Agni* and *Kostha* supports individualized treatment planning and helps in deciding the dose, drug selection, diet, and therapeutic approach. Thus, *Agni Pariksha* and *Kostha Pariksha* are essential tools in *Ayurveda* for understanding patient constitution, disease pathology, digestive status, and treatment response.

Keywords: *Agni, Kostha Pariksha, Agni Pariksha, Ama, Dosha, Ayurveda*

Introduction

In Ayurveda, Agni (digestive and metabolic fire) is considered the root of health and disease. Proper assessment of Agni and Koṣṭha is essential for diagnosis, treatment planning, and selection of Śodhana and Śamana therapies. Classical texts state that balanced Agni maintains āyu, bala, varṇa, ojas, and immunity, whereas impaired Agni leads to disease.¹

Agni: Concept and Importance

Agni refers to the power responsible for digestion, absorption, assimilation, and metabolism.

Types of Agni

समग्निर्मन्दतिक्ष्णौ च विषमोऽग्निश्चतुर्विधः। चरक संहिता – सूत्र स्थान (27/343)

- Jatharagni – Digestive fire in the stomach and duodenum
- Bhutagni – Five elemental fires
- Dhatvagni – Seven tissue-level metabolic fires
- Clinically, Jatharagni is most important.

Assessment of Agni (Agni Parīkṣā)

Arundhati commenting on A. H. Su-16/18, points out that the administration of Sinha (fats) without the consideration of Strength of Agni is irrational. According to Charaka (Vi. 8/89), Agni assessment depends upon the three components viz. Abhyavaharaṇa Shakti, (capacity to eat), Jaraṇa Shakti (Capacity to digest) & Ruchi (appetite). Unless all are considered, no proper assessment of Agni can be done.²

To decide the dose of Snehapana day to day index of capacity to eat (Abhyavaharaṇa Sakti) was designed where the test dose is divided by the actual given dose. The result of more than 1 shows diminution of capacity to eat less than 1 shows increase in capacity to eat. Further, for calculating Agnibala, (strength of digestive function), Abhyavaharaṇa index is to be multiplied with time required for digestion of the dose.³

Types of Agni

Sama Agni (Normal digestive fire)

- Proper digestion on time
- No heaviness after food
- Normal appetite

Mandagni (Low digestive fire)

- Dominant Dosha: Kapha
- Slow digestion
- Heaviness in abdomen
- Loss of appetite

Tikshnagni (Strong digestive fire)

- Dominant Dosha: Pitta
- Features:
- Very fast digestion
- Frequent hunger
- Burning sensation

Importance of Agni

अग्निमूलं बलं पुंसां अग्निमूलं च जीवितम्। अग्निमूलं च वर्णौजः अग्निमूलं च तेजसम्॥

(चरक संहिता – चिकित्सा स्थान 15/3)

Methods of Agni Assessment

- Appetite (Kṣudhā)
- Digestion time
- Post-meal symptoms
- Bowel regularity

Assessment of Koṣṭha (Koṣṭha Parīkṣā)

कोष्ठः दोषप्रकर्षेण ज्ञेयः शोधनकर्मण (चरक संहिता – सिद्धि स्थान 1/21)

Koṣṭha is the expression of bowel habit, Which depends on Prakriti (constitution). Generally, a subject with complaints of Constipation is considered as Krūra Koṣṭha (dry and hard bowels). This judgement may Be misleading as this may be an acquired Condition and so it is important to Distinguish between what is constitutional And what is acquired. Constitutional means The nature of bowel habit since from birth. The bowel habits were examined in Following way- frequency, consistency, Straining or efforts, time taken for proper Defecation, Satisfaction, previous encounters of diarrhea and constipation and previous Experiences of Purgatives and Laxatives.⁴

Types of Koṣṭha

- Mridu Koṣṭha – Pitta predominant
- Madhyama Koṣṭha – Kapha predominant
- Krūra Koṣṭha – Vāta predominant

Clinical Importance of Agni and Koṣṭha Parīkṣā

- Selection of Ahāra and Vihāra
- Deciding drug dosage

Applied utility

The knowledge of Koshtha helps in Predicting the duration of Snehana as Follows-

- Krura Koshtha – 7 days
- Mridu Koshtha – 3 days
- Madhyama Koshtha- 5days.

Discussion

Agni and *Kostha Pariksha* are important clinical tools in *Ayurveda* because they help the physician understand the digestive strength, bowel nature, metabolic status, and overall suitability of treatment in a patient. Proper functioning of *Agni* supports digestion, absorption, tissue nourishment, immunity, and maintenance of health, while disturbed *Agni* leads to incomplete digestion and formation of *Ama*, which is considered an important cause of disease. Assessment of *Agni* helps to identify whether the patient has *Samagni*, *Mandagni*, *Tikshnagni*, or *Vishmagni*, and this guides the selection of diet, medicine, dose, and treatment schedule. Similarly, *Kostha Pariksha* helps to assess bowel tendency as *Mridu Kostha*, *Madhyama Kostha*, or *Krura Kostha*, which is especially useful before planning *Shodhana Karma* like *Vamana*, *Virechana*, and *Basti*. A patient with *Mridu Kostha* may respond quickly to mild medicine, while a patient with *Krura Kostha* may require stronger or repeated intervention. Therefore, combined assessment of *Agni* and *Kostha* provides a practical base for individualized treatment planning, prevention of complications, and better clinical outcome in *Ayurvedic* practice.⁵

Conclusion

From above literature it is clear That, Acharyas (masters of Ayurveda) gave Great importance to both Agni & Koshtha While administering the Snehana Karma. So the above said

assessment criteria should be incorporated in clinical practice for the Effective and safer Snehana Karma.

Conflict of Interest –Nil

Source of Support -None

References:

1. Charaka- Charaka Samhita, commentary by Chakrapani and Gangadhara Kaviratna Kaviraja, Varanasi, Chaukambha Orientalia, 1991.
2. Agnivesha. Charaka Samhita, Vimana Sthana, Rogabhishagjitiya Vimana, Adhyaya 8. In: Acharya YT, editor. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Surbharati Prakashan; 2017. p. 276-283.
3. Agnivesha. Charaka Samhita, Chikitsa Sthana, Grahani Chikitsa, Adhyaya 15. In: Acharya YT, editor. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Surbharati Prakashan; 2017. p. 512-520.
4. Sushruta. Sushruta Samhita, Sutra Sthana, Aturopakramaniya Adhyaya, Adhyaya 35. In: Acharya YT, editor. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 2018. p. 151-158.
5. Vagbhata. Ashtanga Hridaya, Sutra Sthana, Doshabhediya Adhyaya, Adhyaya 12. In: Paradakara HSS, editor. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Surbharati Prakashan; 2019. p. 193-202.