

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW OF FOOD CRAVING AND BODY PHYSIOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is an ancient science of healthy and happy living. It applies their knowledge for the well being of humanity as primary aim of Ayurveda is *Swasthasya Swastham*. Human being changes their dietary pattern and life-style according to different season. Nature also binds them to change their lifestyle. But now a day, due to fast life style, stress and competitive life, humans neglects these changes and ultimately, they land up in disease. Therefore, it is very important to become conscious towards these changes. If one observes towards these body changes then he can prevent many diseases. So here is an attempt to focus on the concept of Food craving and body physiology.

Keywords: *Ayurveda, Craving, Amla, Garbhavastha*

INTRODUCTION

Food craving is defined as a strong urge to eat a certain food or type of food. It may be accordance with body demand or may be due to some psychological cause or due to eating disorder. *Shiryate tat Shariram* – This is well known fact of Ayurveda. Metabolism is the life process of all living being. It includes both anabolism and catabolism. In anabolism newer one is formed and in catabolism complex substances are break down in to simpler one. The food intake is a physiological way to fulfill body demand.(1) In certain condition like pregnancy there is craving for pickles, ice cream, cheese but actually no one knows that why pregnancy craving occurs; though there are few theories that represent some nutrition that the mother may be lacking and the craving is the body's way for asking what it needs. So here is an attempt to study on

the concept of Food craving and Body physiology with the help of Ayurvedic, Modern sciences and some routine day to day examples.

Aim: To study concept of food craving from available literatures

Literature Review

According to change in the seasons, human being changes their dietary pattern and life style. It is observed that according to various seasons human changes their *Aahar* and *Vihar*. In *Visarga kala*, *Jatharagni* increases and in *Aadankala* *Jatharagni* decreases.(2) These are physiological changes in body due to changes in external environment. Pathological conditions are due to *Dhatu Vaishamya* .(3) In early

stage body tries to compensate this stage by demanding a particular food and drink of specific *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Virya* and *Vipaka*. In case of *Vata Vriddhi* body demands for *Ushna* and in *Pitta Vriddhi* body demands for *Sheet Gunatmak Aahar* and *Vihara*. If these changes correct in initial stage then disease progression will be reverse back. One of the most common and famous example is, in the fourth month of *Garbhavastha* the foetal heart becomes active and there is more requirement of *Dhatu* for the growth and development of fetus, it can be express by mothers craving for specific *Aahara vihar*. *Garbhavastha* is a state in which all physiological functions are hyper stimulated in order to meet demand of growing fetus. The growth and development of fetus need more nutrition from mother. This cause extra workload on maternal *Dhatu* so she needs extra nutrition during *Garbhavastha*.(4).So body tries to fulfil this stage of diminutiation.

It is well known establish fact that the status of other *Dhatu* is depend on *Rakta* so it is very important to fulfil the *Raktalpata*. So at this stage there is craving for *Amla Dravya* like pickles, Lemmon, turmeric. When *Rakta Dhatu* diminishes to cause *Rakta Dhatu Kshaya* (anemia), initially body tries to compensate the changes by showing craving for *Amla sheet Rasa*.⁹
^{10 11} This condition can be observed in *Garbhiniavasta* by showing demand for *Amla Rasa* in second trimester due to *Raktalpata (anaemia)* .In *Kshyaya Avasta* body demands for particular type of food if the demand will be fulfilled then *Dhatu* comes in normal stage.

Actually there is no craving for particular food but it is craving for something in that food i.e. (craving for eating mud is suggestive of deficiency of iron and calcium). Charaka says that as desires of the fetus are expressed through the mother hence *dauhrudya* should always be fulfilled because the negligence or non fulfillment can cause abnormality or even death of the fetus (5). Craving for pickles or processed cheese hits, it may be due to hyponatremia and body is asking for more sodium. According to Rebarber "It's not that the body actually needs the specific food you are craving, but it may need something in that food

and your taste buds just interpret it as a craving for something specific". Stressed women are more prone to Sweet Craving and this condition is associated with increased basal leptin levels, larger hip circumference, and altered body composition.(6). One of the research studies investigates changes in macronutrient, micronutrient, and food group intakes across phases of the menstrual cycle among healthy women, and to assess whether these patterns differ by ovulatory status. Researcher found an increased intake of protein, and specifically animal protein, as well as an increase in reported food cravings, during the luteal phase of the menstrual cycle independent of ovulatory status. These results highlight a plausible link between macronutrient intake and menstrual cycle phase (7). Another study observed a broad reduction in cravings associated with weight loss. In addition, greater reductions in craving-trait were associated with greater weight change, but craving-trait was not a significant independent correlate of weight change when hunger was included in statistical models (8).

There are so many animal experiment was conducted to demonstrate that animal choose their food in accord with the need of their body .The experiment conducted on adrelectomiz salt depleted animals automatically selects drinking water with high concentration of sodium chloride in presence to pure water and this is often sufficient to supply need of body and prevent salt depletion. It is also seen in human that the patients of Addison's disease crave for food or a drink contains high sodium chloride. Experiment conducted on animal given injection of excessive amount of insulin develops a hypoglycemia and animals automatically choose sweet food among many sample. This fact also seen in human that the patient suffering from diabetes mellitus crave for sweet food .In D.M. due to insufficient , lack, low quality of insulin or insensitive insulin receptor extra cellular glucose cannot enter into interior of cell. So there is lack of glucose inside that's why patient crave for sweet food. The calcium depleted on parathyroidectomized animal automatically chooses drinking water with high concentration of calcium chloride.

Few Examples of Food Craving (9)

- **Acid or sour-** Body is full of toxins
- **Alcohol-** Imbalanced brain chemicals or mineral deficiencies
- **Beef-** Body low in phosphorus
- **Beverages-** Phosphorus deficiency
- **Bones-** Calcium deficiency
- **Caffeine-** Energy
- **Carbohydrates-** Yeast or eating triggered by specific emotions or brain hormone imbalances
- **Cheese-** Yeast infection, sulfite allergy (orange cheeses)
- **Chalk or plaster-** Calcium deficiency
- **Cold weather or prior to rain storms-** Mold allergies
- **Cravings, same time every day-** Decreased serotonin
- **Cravings, about the same time each day-** Cortisone cyclic rhythm changes.
- **Cravings, winter months-** Possible mold allergies
- **Dirt or Clay-** Mineral or trace mineral deficiency
- **Water-** Diabetes, Addison's disease
- **Ice cubes-** Iron or B6 deficiency
- **Ice Cream-** Calcium deficiency, yeast
- **Licorice-** Salt and/or water deficiency (Licorice increases retention of water therefore leading to High Blood Pressure)
- **Midnight snacks-** try eating frozen foods like melon/grapefruit
- **Milk-** Low calcium, diminished parathyroid function, poss. yeast
- **Nutritional supplements, cravings with-** wrong type of supplements
- **Pepper, black-** Chromium deficiency
- **PMS, cravings from-** Decreased progesterone, Trace mineral or vitamin deficiencies.
- **Pregnancy cravings-** Zinc deficiency
- **Salt-** Sodium deficiency or decreased sensitivity to salt
- **Smoking, cravings with-** Nicotine is suppressing insulin levels

DISCUSSION

All above are examples of physiological state but may be present in some pathological condition which is primarily due to *Dhatu Vaishmya*. Initially our body tries to correct this stage of *Dhatu Vaishmya* by demanding some particular food, drink of a specific *Rasa, Guna, Virya* and *Vipaka*. In case of diabetes mellitus the patient has craving for sweet foodstuff, here in DM there is a condition of hyperglycemia but though there is condition of less glucose inside the cell. When *Vata Dosha* aggravates body demands for *Madura Rasa*. According to various seasons *Aahara* and *Vihara* also goes to be changing like in winter our *Jatharagni* increase so it requires more food i.e. in more quantity and quality (*Matra and Swabhavvat Guru*). In summer our *Jatharagni* decrease so it requires less quantity and quality of food i.e. of low calorie of food (*Matra and Swabhavvat Laghu*).⁽¹⁰⁾

CONCLUSION

“Craving is the physiological way to fulfill body demand or to compensate deviated normal status of health. It is not that the body actually needs the specific food we are craving, but it may need something in that food and our taste buds just interpret it as a craving for something specific” If one realize towards craving of his body and correct deficit condition of body then he can prevent disease in future.

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