

# Review of Ancient Ayurvedic Literatures on the Types, Etiopathogenesis and Symptomatology of 'Atisar' (Diarrhoea)

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**Abstract:** Ayurveda, the science of life has dealt with prevention and promotion of health as well as cure of the diseases. There are several texts of ancient era like Charak Samhita, Sushrut Samhita, Astanga Hriday, Madav Nidan, Sharangadhar Samhita, Bhavaprakash have discussed a lot regarding various diseases as well as the disorders of gastrointestinal tract. 'Atisar' is a disease of gastrointestinal tract refers the symptoms of constant oozing out of the liquid fecal matter from the anus. These features are more or less similar to the features of Diarrhoea of modern science. The present study is an effort to gather the ancient information regarding the aetiology, pathogenesis, sign and symptoms, differential diagnosis etc. of the disease 'Atisar' (Diarrhoea) in a methodical manner. This article could show the excellence and skill of our classics in their way of explaining the disease process as well as diagnostic procedure. The doshic (vata, pitta, kapha) involvement and varieties of 'Atisar' (Diarrhoea) have also been furnished here in this topic in a methodical manner for an easy execution of specific diagnosis.

**Keywords:** Diarrhoea in Ayurveda, symptomatology of 'Atisar'

## 1. Introduction

The disease named 'Atisar' refers the sense that constant oozing out (Ati and Sarana) of the liquid fecal matter from the anus. 'Atisar' of Ayurvedic view is almost synonymous to the term of Western view 'Diarrhoea'<sup>1</sup>. The Greek word 'Dia' means 'through' and 'rhein' means 'to flow' which defines a condition where faeces are discharged from the bowel frequently and in liquid form. In etiology of 'Atisar' it has been mentioned by Maharshi Sushrut<sup>2</sup> that, the excessive use of extremely heavy (hard to digest), oleaginous, dry, hot, cold, fluid, thick and incompatible articles of food eating irregularly at improper time (unaccustomed article of fare), indigestion, eating before the digestion of the previous meal, excessive use or misuse of any lardaceous substances (sneha and sweda) etc, use of any poison, fright, grief, impure drinking water, the excessive liquor, change of seasons, indulgence of aquatic sports, voluntary repression of any natural urging (of the body) or germination of parasites in the intestine are the causes which bring on attack of 'Diarrhoea'. Madhav Nidan<sup>3</sup> of madhav kar (900 AD) also stated the same etiology of 'Atisar' in the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Purbardha. It is necessary to mentioned here that 'Maharshi Charak' (2500 BC/1000 BC) in 'Charak Samhita' and Vagbhatta (400 AD) 'Astanga Hriday' as well as other classics mentioned the similar, etiologies in their respective texts. In pathogenesis of 'Atisar' it has been mentioned by Maharshi Sushrut<sup>2</sup> that, the liquid part (Apa-dhatu) of the body in aggravated and carried down wards by the 'vayu', impairs the fire in the stomach (fire of digestion) and mixing with the fecal matter, in painfully and constantly emitted through the anus.

## 2. Materials & Methods

**Materials:** The ancient Ayurvedic texts of Vedic period, Samhita period Sangraha period & Modern period have been taken into consideration to review regarding 'Atisar'.

**Methods:** Chronologically studied the texts and methodically represented in this article in diagrammatic order to justify the past thought with correlation to present view on 'Atisar' (Diarrhoea).

## 3. Results & Observation

### Premonitory symptoms

'Atisar' in general (samanya purvarupa) sushrut and Madhav Kar<sup>3</sup> stated

1. Piercing pain in the region of heart, umbilicus, rectum, abdomen and kuksha (sides of the abdomen).
2. Sense of numbness of the limbs.
3. Stoppage of passing flatus, stool urine.
4. Distention of abdomen.
5. Indigestion.

### Sign of symptoms of 'Atisar' in general (samannya Rupa):

1. Constant oozing out (Ati and sarana) of the liquid fecal matter from the anus

**Table 1:** Types of Atisar as per different classics

Sl no.	Name of the classics	Name of the texts	No. of the types	Name of the types
1	Charak	<i>Charak Samhita</i>	6	V,P,K,T,B,S
2.	Susrata	<i>Susrata Samhita</i>	6	V,P,K,T,S,A
3.	Vagbhatta	<i>Astanga Hridayam</i>	6	V,P,K,T,B,S
4.	Sarangadhar	<i>Sarangadhar Smhita</i>	7	V,P,K,T,B,S,A
5.	Madhav kar	<i>Madhav Nidanam</i>	6	V,P,K,T,S,A
6.	Bhav Mishra	<i>Bhavprakash</i>	6	V,P,K,T,B, & S

(V = Vataisar, P = Pittatistar, K = kaphatistar, T = Tridosaja Atisar, B = Bhayaja Atisar, S = Sokaja Atisar, A = Amaja Atisar, B&S = Bhaya Sokaja Atisar).

**Table 2:** Sign and symptoms of different types of 'Atisar'

Sl. No.	Type of Atisar	Common features	Special features	Characteristic feature at G.I Tract	Other associated of stool features
1.	<i>Vataja Atisar</i>	Frequent passage of loose stools	<i>Sula</i> (colicy pain) rumbling sound in intestine. Constant movement of intestine (with <i>Apana</i> wind)	Frequent emissions with flatus of a scanty, frothy dry ( <i>ruksha</i> ), brown coloured (yellowish black)stool	Suppression of urine a gone feeling in the Waist, in the thighs and in the legs.
2.	<i>Pittaja Atisar</i>	Do	Emitter with sharp or acute force suppuration and inflammation of affected organs	Stool is fetid, hot, yellow, slightly red-coloured or resembles the washing of meat.	Thirst, epileptic fits (fainting), burning sensation, perspiration, fever.
3.	<i>Kaphaja Atisar</i>	Do	A sense of constant urging is complained of and each motion only creates the apprehension of a fresh one in the mind	Stool becomes loose and constant, gets mixed with the lump of mucus and looks white comes out without sound	Drowsy sleepy, heaviness of limbs, nausea, disrelish for food horripolation, lassitude.
4.	<i>Tridosaja Atisar</i>	Do	Above mentioned all the features or few features may arose simultaneously	<i>Baraha sneha</i> (fats of pig) or resembles the washings of meat or the features of above mentioned three <i>Atisar</i> may arise. Simultaneously varied colour of stools	Drowsiness, swoon, lassitude, dryness of the mouth, thirst.
5.	<i>Bhayaja Atisar</i>	Do	Pain in abdomen	Dark red like <i>kakanathi</i> ( <i>Gunja</i> ) without fecal matter, with or without bad smell	Do
6.	<i>Sakaja Atisar</i>	Do	Do	Do	Do
7.	<i>Amaja Atisar</i>	Do	Pain in abdomen, <i>toda</i> ( <i>vatollhan</i> ), <i>daha</i> ( <i>pittollhan</i> ), <i>gourav</i> ( <i>kafhollan</i> )	Stool of different colour (as per doshic involvement with tenesmus	Do

#### 4. Discussion

In modern science there are several types<sup>1</sup> of Diarrhoea which are acute Diarrhoea (Bacterial, virus parasitic, fungal, due to drug etc) chronic diarrhoea, travelers diarrhoea, diarrhoea in AIDS patients, diarrhea in homosexual men without AIDS, diarrhoea patients in an ICU etc. similarly in Ayurveda '*Atisar*' or Diarrhoea are also of different types like *vataja*, *pittaje*, *kaphja*, *sannipatic*, *bhayaja*, *sokaja*, *amaga* etc. In almost all '*Atisar*' or diarrhea common feature is frequent passage of loose motion from anus. As Ayurveda gives maximum important to *dosic* involvement so etiology as well as symptomatology are closely related to the variety specific. A basic sense behind symptoms and signs of all diseases that pain caused by aggravation of *Vata*, burning sensation comes for *pitta* and *kapha* brings *gourava* (heaviness) so these give the identical features towards manifestation of the symptoms. The frequency of motion will be more or motility of bowel will be severe in case of '*vatic Atisar*' where nature of stool will be less in fluidity (*ruksha*), in '*pittaja Atisar*' passing of stool with burning sensation and

with different colour that's reddish, brownish etc. could be the common features and in '*kaphaja Atisar*' fluidy part along with mucus will be the identical with the feeling of heaviness of rectum. In '*sannipatic Atisar*' no special features could be appear in relation to pain, frequency as well as characteristic of the features. '*Charak*' mentioned *bhayaja* and '*sokaja Atisar*' along with four (4) common varieties i.e. *vataja*, *kaphaja*, *pittaja* and *tridoshaja*. So, it is interesting to note here that diarrhoea for psychological causes like bhay (fear) soka (sadness) have been considered by him and both those type have been supported by vagbhatta, Shrangadhar, Bhabamishra. Mahershi Sushrut supported the type sokaja but discarded *Bhayaja* type and included one separate type i.e. *Amaja*, which was fully supported by Madav Kar. Sharangadhar has made a bridge between the opinion of Charak and sushrut by classifying Atisar into seven (7) types i.e. *Vataja*, *Pittaja*, *Kaphaja*, *Tridosaja*, *Sokaja* and *Amaja*. Through such difference of opinion it has come to light that the physical (sharirik) and psychological (manasik) and manodaihik (psychosomatic) involvement is necessary for genesis and manifestation of the disease

'Atisar'. The factors related to mithyahaar (faulty dietary regimen), mithyavihaar (faulty conducts or habits) give rise to aggravation of vata pradhan Trodosha (vata, pitta, kapha) which leads to derangement of the equilibrium state of Kostha (G.I Tract) or Annabaha maha srota, specially Purishbaha srota (feces system<sup>8</sup>) as well as lowering of Kosthagni (digestive fire) produces 'Ama' (undigested food material) are the usual Ayurvedic pathogenesis of 'Atisar' which ends into a state where excessive and frequent passage of loose motion from anus persists is known as 'Atisar'.

## 5. Conclusion

From above discussion it could be concluded that ancient Ayurvedic classics had the profound knowledge on aetiology, pathogenesis as well as symptomatology of diarrhoea in the name of 'Atisar'. The vived Ayurvedic description of the disease Atisar (diarrhea) showed a ray to the scholars of modern medicine towards there scientific work on the said field.

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