INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF AYURVEDA360

ISSN
PRINT:
3048-7382
ONLINE:
3048-7390

AYURVEDA 360

PEER-REVIEWED
BIMONTHLY JOURNAL

2026
VOLUME 2
ISSUE 4
JANUARY-
FEBRUARY

www.ayurveda360.in/journal

Protocol Article

Conceptual Understanding of Pitta in Relation to Its Anatomical Structures

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.Abstract

Background: Āyurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine, is fundamentally based on the theory of Tridoṣa—Vāta, Pitta, and Kapha—which govern the functional and regulatory mechanisms of the human body. Among these, Pitta Doṣa is primarily responsible for digestion, metabolism, transformation, heat production, and various biochemical activities essential for maintaining physiological balance. Although Pitta is traditionally described in functional terms, its attributed actions suggest the presence of an underlying anatomical and physiological framework. Understanding these correlations may help bridge classical Āyurvedic concepts with contemporary biomedical science.

Aim: To study the concept of Pitta Doṣa in relation to its Sthāna (sites) and explore its possible anatomical and physiological correlations.

Methodology: This study follows a conceptual and literature-based approach. Classical Āyurvedic texts were critically reviewed to identify the functions and Sthāna of Pitta Doṣa. These descriptions were then interpreted using contemporary anatomical and physiological knowledge, with special emphasis on systems involved in digestion, metabolism, heat regulation, and biochemical transformation.

Conceptual Findings: Pitta Doṣa is not described as a single anatomical structure but as an integrated functional principle operating through multiple sites and mechanisms. Classical Pitta Sthāna correspond to regions of intense metabolic, enzymatic, and transformative activity in modern physiology. These functions are mediated by identifiable anatomical structures and biochemical agents, including digestive enzymes, bile, hormones, pigments, and neurotransmitters. This suggests that Pitta represents a collective functional system deeply rooted in anatomical and physiological processes.

Conclusion: Although Āyurveda does not describe microscopic anatomy, the functional attributes and Sthāna of Pitta Doṣa strongly indicate its association with specific tissues and physiological systems. Reinterpreting Āyurvedic concepts through modern anatomical perspectives enhances their scientific relevance and supports integrative approaches to understanding health and disease.

Keywords: Pitta; Tridoṣa; Doṣa Sthāna; Metabolism; Conceptual study

Access this article online	
Quick Response Code:	**Website:** www.ayurveda360.in/journal
	International Journal of Ayurveda360
	E-ISSN: 3048-7390 **Print ISSN:** 3048-7382
	Volume 2 Issue 4 : January-February 2026
	DOI: https://doi.org/10.63247/3048-7390.vol.2.issue4.7

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How to cite this article:
Soni P, Nandal A. Conceptual Understanding of Pitta in Relation to Its Anatomical Structures. Int J Ayurveda360. 2026;2(4):1053–1058. DOI: https://doi.org/10.63247/3048-7390.vol.2.issue4.7

Manuscript Received	Review Round 1	Review Round 2	Review Round 3	Final Updated Received
20/12/2025	30/12/2025	05/01/2026	15/01/2026	29/01/2026
Accepted	**Published**	**Conflict of Interest**	**Funding**	**Similarity Check**
31/01/2026	15/02/2026	NIL	NIL	<1 %

This journal is published under the tradename Ayurveda360 (Publications), registered under UDYAM-KR-27-0044910

Introduction

Āyurveda is distinguished by its unique theoretical framework of Tridoṣa—Vāta, Pitta, and Kapha [1], which governs the structural and functional organization of the human body. Although Doṣa are described as pervasive [2] and present at the cellular level, classical texts also identify specific anatomical locations where their functions are predominantly expressed, known as Doṣa Sthāna [3].

Pitta Doṣa governs digestion, metabolism, transformation, heat production, and energy exchange, encompassing all metabolic and catabolic activities of the body [4]. Possessing distinct Guṇa and Karma, and residing in defined anatomical sites, Pitta is regarded as a Dravya, as described by Ācārya Caraka. It is constituted by all five Pañcabhūta, with predominance of Agni [5], imparting qualities such as Uṣṇa, Tikṣṇa, Drava, and Alpa Snigdhata, which collectively facilitate its physiological functions.

The functional expression of Pitta varies across different anatomical locations, indicating that it cannot be represented by a single entity but rather as a group of functionally similar substances operating synergistically at distinct sites. While previous studies have extensively described the physiological role of Pitta, the anatomical structures underlying these functions remain insufficiently explored.

From the perspective of Racanā Śarīra and integrative anatomy education, correlating Pitta Sthāna with specific anatomical structures is essential for strengthening conceptual clarity, improving pedagogy, and facilitating integration with modern biomedical sciences.

Therefore, the present study aims to retrospectively identify and correlate anatomical structures based on the classical physiological functions attributed to Pitta Doṣa.

Aim

To conceptually analyze Pitta Doṣa in relation to its described Sthāna and corresponding anatomical structures.

Objectives

1. To review the concept of Pitta and its Sthāna as described in classical Āyurvedic texts.
2. To correlate the functional attributes of Pitta with relevant anatomical and physiological structures.
3. To explore the relevance of Pitta Sthāna through cadaveric visualization.

Research Question

- Is there any significant relationship between Pitta and its Sthānas as explained in the Samhitās?

Research Methodology

Study Design: Literary and conceptual study

Study Centre: P.G. Department of Racanā Śarīra, Institute for Ayurved Studies & Research, Kurukshetra-136118, Haryana

Literary Sources:

- Classical Āyurvedic literature related to Pitta
- Modern anatomical literature relevant to the topic
- Dictionaries, journals, conference papers, and previous dissertations

Exploratory Sources:

- Dissection of associated structures on two or more cadavers in the Department of Racanā Śarīra, IAS&R, Kurukshetra
- Observational and illustrative cadaveric study

Study Flow

To study the functional aspect of *Pitta* in detail through Ayurvedic literature

⬇

To study types of *Pitta* and their *Sthana* in detail through Ayurvedic literature

⬇

To study the modern aspect of *Pitta* through contemporary science

⬇

Establish relationship between *Pitta* and its *Sthana*

⬇

Visualize the *Sthana* of *Pitta* on cadaver

Ethical Approval

IEC Letter No. – SKAU/Acad./2024/11622-23

Outcomes

Primary Outcome:

- To establish a systematic correlation between Pitta Doṣa and its classical Sthānas based on their physiological functions and anatomical relevance.

Secondary Outcomes:

- Enhance conceptual clarity regarding the functional–structural basis of Pitta Doṣa
- Contribute to educational enrichment for undergraduate and postgraduate learners
- Support anatomical visualization of Pitta by associating classical

descriptions with identifiable anatomical structures

Significance of the Study

This study holds importance for both Āyurvedic scholarship and interdisciplinary medical understanding by correlating functional concepts such as Pitta Doṣa with anatomical and physiological frameworks. Identifying anatomical structures associated with classical functions of Pitta strengthens the structural basis of Āyurvedic physiology.

Establishing anatomical correlates enhances conceptual clarity, facilitates teaching, supports evidence-based inquiry, and promotes integration between traditional knowledge and contemporary biomedical sciences. Such an approach can aid holistic therapeutic strategies, improve clinical outcomes, and support wider acceptance of Āyurveda in global healthcare systems.

Table 1: Timeline of Proposed Works

Phase	Task	Date	Status	Description
1	Literary review of Āyurvedic texts	Dec 2024 – Feb 2025	Done	Conduct literature review
2	Literary review of modern texts	Mar 2025 – May 2025	Done	Conduct literature review
3	Analysis of reviewed literature	Jun 2025 – Aug 2025	Done	Data analysis and cadaveric dissection
4	Thesis writing & submission	Sep 2025 onwards	In progress	Draft, revise, and finalize thesis

Declarations

Conflict of Interest: The author declares that they have no conflicts of interest related to this work.

Funding / Financial Support: This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Author Contributions: The author has contributed to the conception, design, data collection, analysis, drafting, and approval of the final manuscript.

Ethical Approval: Not Applicable

Data Availability Statement: The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Acknowledgements: The authors would like to acknowledge the support of their institution, colleagues, and technical staff who contributed to this work.

Disclaimer / Views and Opinions: The opinions expressed in this article are solely those of the author and do not reflect the views of the International Journal of Ayurveda360 or its editorial board.

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