

A REVIEW ON ANATOMICAL DESCRIPTION ON ARTAVAVAHA SROTAS AND ARTAVDUSHTI W.S.R. ARTAVAKSHAYA

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ABSTRACT

In Ayurveda due importance is given to the health of the women because health of family, society and nation largely depends on the health of its women. Frequency of Menstrual disorder is raising in today's era which is precursor of infertility and other problems. Artavakshaya explained by Acharya Sushruta is the most common disease in women. Artavakshaya can be correlated with Oligomenorrhoea. Artavakshaya is one of the menstrual disorders which indicate scanty menstrual flow associated with pain in variable duration where vitiation of vata and kapha are predominant. From Vedic period it has got indirect references. There is high prevalence of this condition in society. Statistics says that out of 80.7% women suffering from irregular menstrual cycle, 19.3% are suffering from oligomenorrhoea.^[1] So it requires more attention.

INTRODUCTION

Brief anatomical description of human body is given in Sharir-sthan of every text of Ayurveda. Srotas are the channels of the body through which the materials needed for tissue building, nutrition and other nutrients flow from one corner of the body to the other, we can tell that the materials are transported through the channels from the place of production to place of need (Gangadhara).^[2]

Srotas are innumerable because every body constituent has its own srotas. Sushruta has described eleven pairs of srotas, Artavavaha Srotas is one of them. In Ayurvedic script, for every named srotasa, an organ governing its function is said to be its moola sthana. According to Acharya Sushruta there are two roots of Artavavaha srotas, Garbhasaya (uterus) and Artavavaha Dhamani.^[3] Here artavavaha srotas is antermukh srotas which is also known as yogvahi srotas. Here Artava is the menstrual blood and Artavavaha Srotas is the part of female reproductive system which is responsible for the formation of menstrual blood and the passage which carry the menstrual blood during menstrual cycle. Artavavahi Srotas can be means for blood vessels and capillaries of the Uterus and fallopian tubes.

We can consider all the systems including hormones secretory glands which are responsible for the formation of menstrual blood and its mensuration at right time eg. Ovary and its follicle.^[4]

Artavavaha srotas viddha lakshana

According to Acharya Sushruta the trauma on the Artavavaha srotas causes infertility, sexual intolerance, amenorrhea symptoms can be seen. Vayu is also vitiated by Abhigata. So, here, again vitiated vayu causes sanga and dhatu Kshyatmaka sthiti in artava vaha srotas followed by Artavanasha (anovulation).^[5]

Artavavaha Srotas which are similar to the structures of the female reproductive system.

The following is the short description of Artavavaha srotas given in ancient classics:-

1) Yoni

In Ayurvedic classics the word Yoni is referred to the entire reproductive system as well as to all individual system as well as to all individual organs respectively. With reference to Yoni other few word are also found in the classics to denote the different parts of genital system like Bhagvistra, Garbhachhidra, Garbhashaya,^[6] Apatyapatha.^[7] etc.

Hence it can be concluded that the word Yoni is used to denote the entire female genital organs.

According to Acharya Sushruta, the shape of yoni resembles with the conch cell with three Avarta and the Uterus or the bed of the foetus lies in the third upper most Avarta.^[8] In fact the

Yoni and Garbhashaya are the two parts of the female genital tract, one being the external and the other internal.

2) Garbhashaya

The word Garbhashaya is composed of two words i.e. Garbha and Ashaya. The word Ashaya means the place to rest. Thus, the Garbhashaya means the space or place where the foetus lies or develops.^[8]

Sharangadhara has counted three extra Ashayas in the females including the Uterus. The Garbhashaya is situated in between the Pittashaya and Pakwashaya while Gananathsen has mentioned the location in between the mootrashaya and Pakwashaya.

Acharya Sushruta has mentioned the shape of Garbhashaya like the mouth of Rohit Fish (This peculiar fish having broadness at the centre trunk) and getting narrowed at its mouth (is found only in Bengal). In Ayurved Dipika commentary, commentator has mentioned the shape of Garbhashaya as Kshudratumbi Phala which is having its mouth down wards and its shape is somewhat flattened.

3) Beeja granthi: Beeja Granthi or ovary is the part of female genital organ in which the Beeja is stored, matured and expelled out in proper time. But a detailed description about Beeja Granthi is not mentioned in Ayurvedic classics. When described about the viddha lakshana of Artavavaha srotas, any abnormalities or trauma to the Artavavaha srotas may cause of Vandhyatva, Maithunasahatva and Artavanasha. These symptoms mainly Artavanasha and Vandhyatva are two main deals with the function of ovaries. But no description about the structure of ovaries are seen. In the chapter dealing with the treatment of Ashmari Acharya Sushruta has confined to avoid injury to eight vital parts. Among which means two Phala srotas indicates to ovaries. In Sushruta sharir Sthana and also in Chikitsa Sthana, the word Antargata Phala which directly refers to ovary.^[9] So, all above references show the direct description about ovary and Beeja Granthi, Phala, Antargata Phala as a synonyms of the ovary.

4) Artava

Artava nirukti: The word Ritu - Particular or specific time Bhavam-Occurrence Thus, the whole term denotes a substance of the body, which flows out at a specific time, or period is called as "Artava". One of the synonyms for Artava is Rajah, i.e. that substance which stains

the vagina or the yoni is termed as Rajah, Since its purity and impurity is to be tested by means of the stained cloth it stains the cloth also and as such it is termed as Rajah. The Artava being red in colour and in fluid form is denoted by the word Shonita or Rakta and is found in Updhatu form in the females only,^[10] It commences at the age of 12 Yrs, and ceases at the age of 50 years, except during pregnancy puerperal period & lactating period a duration of 3 to 7 days is called as Artava.

Acharya sushruta has also described the Artava in Mukul or bud form during the childhood which is Avyaktavastha under the influence of time and age factors the Artava makes its appearance.^[11]

Acharya Charaka explained that the colour of Shuddhartava should resemble with the Gunjaphala, Padmalakta (red lotus flower), Indragopa (an insect) While Acharya Sushruta has compared the colour of Shuddhartava with that of Shasha Asrik (Rabbit blood) or Laksha rasa and has mentioned the characteristics that it should not stain the cloth after washing.^[12]

Certain words have been used for the Beeja i.e. Asrik, Shonita, Artava, Rajaha, Antahpushpa etc. in different Ayurvedic classics. But the word Antahpushpa only indicates the Beeja or ovum. Other words denotes both ovum and menstrual blood.

- **Artavakshaya**

Acharya Sushruta explained artavakshaya in doshadhatu mala kshayavruddhivigyanam in sutrasthana. Artava is formed by rasa dhatu after proper metabolization of rasa dhatu by its dhatwagni and bhutagni.^[13] The kshaya of rasa dhatu cause artavakshaya and raktakshaya will develop simultaneously.

The Artava vitiated by Dosha is called Artava Dusti and there is a description about Artavadusti in all the Ayurvedic texts The term "Artavakshaya" consists of two words viz. "Artava" and "Kshaya". The word "Kshaya" has been derived from "Kshi" dhatu, which means "to cease" or to get reduced. According to Acharya Charaka the word Kshaya means "Hrras" and Nyunata. It means the reduced quantity of Artava from its normal measurement is called as "Kshinartava".

Acharya Sushruta while describing the Artava Doshas, has mentioned Kshinartava as one of the Artava Doshas and Kshinartava is one of the synonyms of Artavakshaya. In Sutrasthana

also, he has mentioned the Artavakshaya Lakshanas.^[13] and Chikitsa in Dhatu upadhatu Kshaya Vriddhi Chapter.^[14] Bhel has described about Alpartava and Virkrit Artava but here also Alpartava and Artavakshaya both the synonyms.

The author of Astang Hridaya, Astang Samgraha and Sarangadhara samhita have not used the word Artavakshaya but they have mentioned Kshinartava and Artavakshaya both are the synonymous terms. In Charaka samhita, Madhava Nidana and Bhavaprakasha there is no description about "Alpartava" and "Vikrit Artava" but here also Alpartava and Artavakshaya both are synonyms.

In Artavakshaya, quantity (Pramana) as well as duration (intermenstrual period) of menstrual flow is reduced and does not last for three days, these are accompanied with a decrease in quantity of Artava. Going through the modern literature, in this disease scanty and infrequent menstruation resembles with alpa & aniyamita Artavapravriti. According to modern, the scanty periods are considered as the precursor of amenorrhoea.^[15] So, the causes, types and treatment of scanty menstruation are the same as that for amenorrhoea.

Nidan of Artavakshaya

Acharyas have not described any specific etiology of these eight menstrual disorders. Kashyapa says that administration of (Nasya) any sternutatory drug during menstruation, consumption of excessive hot eatables and drinks and use of excessive medicines for cleansing purposes to the woman of mrudu kosta (having purgation with mild dose) having received oleation and sudation are the causes of all menstrual disorders. It can be said that specific factors responsible for aggravation of particular doshas, coupled with non-observance of regulation related to reproductive system are the causative factors.

Above mentioned all the Nidanas are mainly responsible for Vata Prakopa. Due to these above said Nidanas, Vata gets aggravated and causes 'Dhatu- Kshaya'. Because of this Dhatu Kshaya Rasa Dhatu decreases and that ultimately causes the Kshaya of its upadhatu i.e. Artavakshaya.

Lakshana of Artavakshaya

Artavakshaya is characterized by yathochita kala adarshanam, alpartava and yonivedana. It can be compared with oligomenorrhoea and hypomenorrhoea based on their signs and symptoms. Menstrual bleeding occurring more than 35 days apart and which remains

constant at that frequency is called oligomenorrhoea. And when the menstrual bleeding is unduly scanty and lasts for less than 2 days it is called hypomenorrhoea.^[15]

The description of the cardinal symptoms of Artavakshaya runs as follows

1) Yathochitakala adarshanam

It means that the menses (Artava) does not appear at the appropriate time or it may be delayed. The time when a girl attains the menarche. In such cases of Artavakshaya, delayed menarche may also be present due to varying factors. Sometimes the duration will be less than normal. As per different Ayurvedic literature, duration is concluded to be that of 3 to 7 days. In this disease, the duration will not be regular. Also the interval between the two cycles (Artavachakra Kala) will also be irregular.

2) Alpata

This is the second cardinal symptom of Artavakshaya. The word alpata means Kshudrapramana. Acharya Charaka did not mention its exact quantity.

3. Vedana

Due to Artavakshaya, Vedana occurs in Yoni. Mainly Apana and Vyana Vayu, are aggravated due to Artavakshaya and Srotorodha.

Chikitsa of Artavakshaya

It's Separate treatment is not available in detail, may be due to the reason that it is a symptom of so many Gynaec disorders. Acharya Sushruta has devoted one separate chapter named in Dhatu upadhatu Kshaya Vridhhi to emphasise the importance of Shuddhartava. In that chapter he has categorically mentioned that the remedy described for the treatment of Nastartava is also applicable in the treatment of Kshinartava or Artavakshaya.^[16] He has also described certain principles in Sutrasthana and same has described by Vagbhata in Sharira Sthana. The principles laid down by them are as follows.

- The Samsodhana therapy (use of purifying measures) Chakrapani says that by use of purifying measures srotas are cleared. Emesis and purgation clear upwards and downwards directed channels respectively. Use of Basti (i.e. Niruha, Anuvāsana or Uttarbasti) is beneficial in Artava nasha. All the references show that Basti is effective treatment in Artavanasha and in Artava dushti.^[17]
- The judicious use of Agneya Dravyas.^[17]

- The use of Swayoni Vardhaka Dravyas i.e. having the same seat of origin on basis of Dravya, Guna and Karma.
- The drugs capable of increasing the Rakta (menstrual blood) should be used.

Treatment of oligomenorrhoea

If the patient is not sterile and otherwise normal no treatment is necessary. If in addition infertility is a problem, treatment may required to induce or increase the frequency of ovulation. If any cause, treatment depends upon the cause. Improvement of general health by diet, haematinics and rest. Endocrine deficiency, if any, should be corrected.

CONCLUSION

In Ayurveda due importance is given to the health of the women because health of family, society and nation largely depends on the health of its women. Ayurveda gives due importance to Shuddha Artava. Acharya Charaka has described that for the production of the "Garbha" the Shuddha Artava and Garbhashaya are the essential factors and vitiated Artava is one of the cause for Yonivyapada.

Acharya Sushruta has mentioned to Artavakshaya is one of the cause of Vandhyatva and has devoted one separate chapter regarding the importance of Shuddhartava. The artavakshaya should be treated by the use of purifying measures. Basti can be used with beneficial effect. Use of Basti (i.e. Niruha, Anuvasana or Uttarbasti) is beneficial in Artava nasha. All the references show that Basti is effective treatment in Artavanasha and in Artava dushti.

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