

A CRITICAL REVIEW ON 'MAHASROTAS' AND IT'S APPLIED ASPECT

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the oldest system among all life sciences, which have been invented in India thousand years back and strongly rooted as a traditional healthcare practice. In Ayurveda, the knowledge of *Rachana Sharir* is very important for better understanding of diseases. The term 'Mahasrotas' is mentioned by *Acharyas* in various Ayurvedic classics, which shows it's importance in the proper functioning of the body. *Acharya Vagbhata* used the word '*Antahkoshtha*' for *Mahasrotas*.^[1] *Mahasrotas* can be taken as Alimentary canal or Digestive system. This is literary study, which focuses on concept '*Mahasrotas*' and it's applied aspect.

KEYWORDS: *Mahasrotas*, *Koshtha*, *Annavaha srotas*, *GI tract*.

INTRODUCTION

Primary aspects of Ayurveda concern with *Rachana Sharir*. *Srotas* is most important terminology in *Rachana Sharir*, which indicates all the micro and macro channels and pathways operating in living organism. The *srotas*, which is prime is calls as a '*Mahasrotas*'.

According to *Acharya Charaka* and *Sushruta*, '*Mahasrotas*' is termed under the perception of *Annavaha srotas*. So, *Mahasrotas* is whole alimentary canal from *Mukha* (Mouth) to *Guda* (Anus).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

1. Ayurvedic texts *Charak samhita*, *Sushrut samhita* and *Ashtang hrudaya*, Ayurvedic dictionaries are referred.

2. Use of internet- Articles, Periodic journals , Online research portals

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The word itself explanatory, *Mahat – srotas*, '*Mahachhidrani*'^[2] that means 'great channel'.

Antah koshtho mahasrot aampakvshayashrah / - A. Hru. Su. 12/46

Acharya Vagbhat used the word '*Antahkoshtha*' for *Mahasrotas*. The *Antahkoshtha* relates with *Amashaya* and *Pakwashaya*. Acharya Charak in *Vimansthan* told that *Mahasrotas* is nothing but '*Koshtha*' and also proved that in *samprapti* of *Chhardi*.^[3] and *Gulma*.^[4]

Synonyms – *Koshtha*, *Sharirmadhya*, *Mahanimna*, *Aam-pakvshaya*.^[5]

Acharya Charak has defined the extent of *Mahasrotas* in human body. It is the whole Gastrointestinal tract from *Mukha* to *Guda*.

Organs of *Mahasrotas*

1. *Mukha* – Oral cavity i.e. *Mukha* is one of the complex structure, which consists of seven different parts like *Oshtha*, *Danta*, *Dantamoola*, *Jivha*, *Talu*, *Gala* and *Sarvsar*. *Mukha* is one of the important *Bahirmukha srotas*.
2. *Annanalika* – It is also called as '*Vamparshwa*'. *Annanalika* is the narrow tube that extends from *Mukha* to *Amashaya* and transports food bolus.
3. *Amashaya* – The site of partially digested food (*Aam*) in the body is called *Amashaya*. Chakrapanidatta has divided it into *Urdhwa* and *Adho Amashaya*.
4. *Grahani* – *Grahani* is described as an *Agni Adhishtana* by most of *Acharyas*. Ingestion, digestion, absorption and assimilation of *ahara* is regulated by *Grahani*.
5. *Pakwashaya* – The site which hold the *Pakwa mala* is called *Pakwashaya*. It is main organ related to site of *Vata dosha*. It is *Koshthanga* and *Ashaya*. It plays an important role in formation of urine and digestion of food.
6. *Guda* – *Guda* is located below *Pakwashaya*. It is one of the *Vata sthana*, *Pranayatana*, *Bahirmukh srotas*, *Koshthanga* and *Sadyo Pranahara Mamsa Marma*. It has two parts – *Uttar guda* and *Adhar guda*. *Uttar guda* is seat of *purisha* reservoir and *Adhar guda* is the *purisha* evacuator.

Lalapinda, *Yakrit*, *Angnyashaya*, *Pittashaya* are the accessory organs.

Srotas

*Charakacharya in Vimansthan,^[6]
and Sushrutacharya in Sharirsthan,^[7]*

Explained Annava srotas in Srotas sharir. Annava srotas are those channels in the body which transport the food and liquid. The group of organs conserved with anna grahana, anna pachana, sara- kitta vivechana and absorption of sara bhaga is called as Annava srotas. So it is also called as aMahasrotas.

Purishvaha srotas is the site where Mala vivechana takes place. Pakwashaya and Sthul Guda are moolasthanas of Purishvah srotas which are present in Mahasrotas.^[8]

Mahasrotas is moolasthanas of Pranavaha srotas.^[9] The respiratory symptoms in Pranava srotodushti could be because of disturbance in the organs of Alimentary canal. According to Modern anatomy, In the process of respiration, diaphragm and other major Thoracic and Abdominal muscles play a major role in smooth functioning of Pranava srotas.^[10] Disequilibrium in Abdominal and thoracic cavities and pressure on diaphragm due to Udavarta, Chhardi are predisposing factors for Pranava srotas diseases. So dynamics of Mahasrotas seem to have profound influence over dynamics of Pranava srotas.

Kala

Pittadhara Kala is placed in between Amashaya and Pakwashaya and has main function to digest all type of food, which comes from Amashaya.^[11] While Purishdhara kala is placed in the Antahkoshtha, between last parts of Laghvantra and starting part of the bruhadantra known as a Unduka. Here Mala vibhajana takes place.^[12] According to this, Pittadhara kala and Purishdhara kala both are related with digestive system.

Abhyantar Rogmarga

Koshtha or Mahasrotas is considered as 'Abhyantar Rogmarga' among three of Rogmarga. The diseases are more oriented and caused in the Alimentary tract. According to Acharya Charaka, Jwara, Atisara, Chhardi, Alasaka, Visuchika, kasa, shwasa, Hikka, Anaha, Udara, Pleeharoga, Koshthashrita visarpa, Shotha, Gulma, Arsha and Vidradhi are vyadhi of Abhyantar Rogmarga.^[13]

RESULTS AND OBSERVATIONS

From the above explanation, It can be interpreted that the *Koshtha* is nothing but *Mahasrotas*.

Mahasrotas extends from Mouth to Anus. *Pittadhara kala* and *Purishdhara kala* is whole digestive system only. *Annavah srotas* can be relate with upper GI tract and *Purishvah srotas* with lower GI tract. *Mahasrotas* plays an important role in functioning of *Pranvah srotas* The sufficient knowledge about term *Mahasrotas* may help in *Abhyantara rog marga chikitsa*.

CONCLUSION

Mahasrotas is great channel present within the trunk region and we can compare it directly with the alimentary canal. According to Ayurveda, all diseases are due to improper digestion. So this study gives us insight about the proper meaning of *Mahasrotas* and parts involved in it which will be beneficial to *Vaidyas* to treat the patient.

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