

## AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE OF ENDOMETRIOSIS: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

Endometriosis is a chronic gynaecological disorder characterized by the presence of endometrial glands and stroma outside the uterine cavity. In modern medicine, its aetiology remains multifactorial involving hormonal imbalance, immune dysfunction and retrograde menstruation.<sup>[1]</sup> In *Ayurveda*, the pathogenesis involves *Agni*, vitiated *Rakta Dhatu* and *Srotorodha*, resulting in painful and irregular menstruation. Despite advances in modern medicine, its management remains challenging due to its recurrence and side effects of long term therapy. *Ayurvedic* management focuses on correcting *Dosha* balancing, enhancing *Agni*, removing *Avarana* and promoting proper flow of *Artava*. Therapeutic approach includes *Shamana* and *Shodhana Chikitsa* along with drugs having *Vata-Pitta Shamaka*, *Rakta Shodhaka* and *Lekhana* properties. This review highlights the *Ayurvedic* understanding of endometriosis and emphasizes a holistic approach that not only alleviates

symptoms but also addresses the root cause, offering a promising complementary and alternative therapeutic strategy.

**KEYWORDS** Endometriosis, *Vataja Yonivyapad*, *Udavartini Yonivyapad*, *Yapana Basti*.

## INTRODUCTION

Endometriosis is a estrogen dependent inflammatory condition affecting women, of reproductive age group. Endometriosis affects approximately 10% of women of reproductive age group, accounting for around 190 million cases worldwide.<sup>[2]</sup> The exact aetiology remains unknown with theories including retrograde menstruation, immune dysfunction, genetic predisposition.<sup>[1]</sup>

In Ayurveda, although endometriosis is not directly mentioned, its manifestations can be interpreted through *Yonivyapad*, particularly *Udavartini Yonivyapad* and *Vataj Yonivyapad*, where vitiated Vata causes abnormal movement of *Artava*.<sup>[3]</sup> Acharya Charak and Acharya Sushruta describes in *Vataja Yonivyapad*, *Artava Pravritti* occurs with significant pain,<sup>[4,7]</sup> Sushruta notes the presence of *Toda-Vat Vedana* (pricking pain).<sup>[5]</sup> The fundamental principles of *Ayurveda*, including the concepts of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Agni* and *Srotas* provide a comprehensive framework for understanding such complex disorders. From an *Ayurvedic* standpoint, endometriosis can be interpreted as a condition involving *Agnimandya* leading to *Ama* formation, *Srotorodha* and vitiation of *Apana Vata*, along with involvement of *Rakta* and *Pitta*. These factors collectively contribute to abnormal movement and localization of *Artava*, resulting in pain, inflammation and reproductive dysfunction. Thus understanding endometriosis through *Ayurvedic* lens not only provides insight into aetiopathogenesis but also opens avenues for integrative management strategies that emphasizes correction of underlying imbalances, thereby offering a more holistic approach to patient care.

## AIM

To review and analyse endometriosis from an *Ayurvedic* perspective, focusing on its correlation with *Yonivyapad* and the role of *Dosha–Dushya* involvement.

## MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

The study is comprehensive and literary review. The *Ayurvedic* classics, such as *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita* and *Ashtang Hridaya* with contemporary gynaecological references and recent research article were thoroughly reviewed to identify references related to *Yonivyapad*, *Artavavaha Srtotodushti*.

## Conceptual Correlation in Ayurveda

Ayurveda describes various gynaecological disorders under *Yoni Vyapad*, which share similarities with endometriosis. Conditions such as *Udavartini Yonivyapad*, *Vataja*

*Yonivyapad*, show clinical features like severe pain, irregular menstruation, and discomfort.<sup>[6,7]</sup>

### 1. *Udavartini Yonivyapad*

In *Udavartini Yonivyapad*, due to etiological factors such as suppression of natural urges and improper dietary and lifestyle habits, *Apana Vata* becomes aggravated and exhibits *Pratiloma Gati* (reverse movement) instead of its normal downward course. This leads to *Artavavaha Srotorodha* (obstruction in reproductive channels), resulting in painful and difficult menstruation, where relief is often experienced after proper flow.<sup>[6]</sup> This concept closely resembles the modern theory of retrograde menstruation, where menstrual blood flows backwards through the fallopian tubes into the pelvic cavity. The reverse movement of *Apana Vata* can thus be interpreted as facilitating this backward flow, allowing viable endometrial cells to implant on pelvic structures and initiate endometriotic lesions. Furthermore, the aggravated *Vata* in *Udavartini* is responsible for severe spasmodic pain, while associated *Pitta* movement contributes to inflammatory changes.<sup>[6]</sup> This can be correlated with the pathophysiology of endometriosis, which involves chronic pelvic inflammation, increased prostaglandin production and cytokine mediated responses leading to intense dysmenorrhea. The *Srotorodha* described in *Ayurveda* can be compared to the formation of adhesions and fibrosis seen in endometriosis, which further worsen pain and may contribute to infertility.

### 2. *Vataja Yonivyapad*

*Vataja Yonivyapad* is primarily characterized by *Apana Vata* vitiation which governs reproductive functions such as menstruation and ovulation. *Vataja Yonivyapad* can be correlated with endometriosis due to the predominance of *Vata*-mediated pain.<sup>[7]</sup> Vitiating *Vata* leads to disturbance in normal functions and directional movements. In endometriosis, one of the hallmark features is chronic pelvic pain and severe dysmenorrhea, which can be closely interpreted through the properties of aggravated *Vata*.

Further *Apana Vata* responsible for the proper downward movement of *Artava*. When vitiated, it causes *Vikrita Gati* (abnormal movement) leading to disturbed menstrual flow, irregular cycles and painful expulsion. Therefore, the functional impairment of *Apana Vata* can account for dysfunctional uterine activity which parallels abnormal uterine contractions and altered endometrial shedding seen in endometriosis. Additionally, *Vata* aggravation contributes to *Sankocha* and *Srotovaigunya* which can be interpreted as adhesions, fibrosis and distortion of pelvic anatomy seen in endometriosis.

### **NIDANA (ETIOLOGICAL FACTORS)**

Endometriosis can be understood under the concept of *Anukta Vyadhi*, where causative factors are interpreted through *Dosha* imbalance.

#### **1. Vataja Ahara-Vihara (Dietary Habits and Lifestyle Disorders)**

When *Vata* aggravation leads to *Rukshata and Srotorodha*, and *Ama* formation leads to *Agni* disturbance. This creates an unfavourable environment in the pelvic region, allowing displaced endometrial tissue to implant, persist and cause chronic inflammation. *Vata* also plays a major role in pain, which explains the severe dysmenorrhea seen in endometriosis.

#### **2. Vegadharan (Suppression of Natural Urges)**

*Vegadharan* interferes with the normal functioning of *Apana Vata*, causing obstruction and improper flow of menstrual blood.

#### **3. Manasika Nidana (Mental and Psychological Stress)**

In *Ayurveda*, the mind is closely connected with *Vata Dosha*, especially *Prana Vata* and *Apana Vata*. Persistent psychological stress leads to *Vata Prakopa*, *Apana Vata*, causes irregular menstruation, painful menstruation, obstructed or reverse flow of *Artava*. *Srotodushti* due to *Vata* aggravation and *Ama* causes *Sanga and Vimargagaman*.

### **SAMPRAPTI (PATHOLOGY)**

The *Samprapti* begins with exposure to *Nidana*. The *Nidana* primarily led to *Agnimandya*. Due to *Agnimandya*, *Ama* is formed, which circulates in the body and causes *Rasadhatu Dushti* eventually leading to *Raktadhatu Dushti*. *Dushit Rakta* along with *Ama*, affects the *Artavavaha Srotas*, producing *Srotodushti* in form of *Srotosanga*. Simultaneously, *Apana Vata* gets vitiated due to its *Chala* and *Pratiloma Gati*, results in *Vimargagamana* of *Artava*. Because of *Srtorodha* and vitiated *Vata*, the displaced endometrial tissue gets lodged in ectopic sites such as ovaries, peritoneal and pelvic cavity. *Pitta Dosha* contributes to *Daha*, inflammation and *Raktadushti*, leading to progressive irritation and pain. *Kapha Dosha* due to its *Guru* and *Sthira* properties, facilitates abnormal tissue growth, cyst formation and adhesions.

### Different Perspective of *Acharyas* regarding *Yonivyapad*

Aspect	<i>Charaka Samhita</i>	<i>Sushruta Samhita</i>	<i>Ashtanga Hridaya</i>
<b>Number of <i>Yonivyapad</i></b>	20 types described	20 types described	20 types described
<b>Main <i>Dosha</i> Involvement</b>	Emphasis on <i>Vata</i> as prime factor in <i>Yonivyapad</i>	Equal importance to <i>Tridosha</i> with structural involvement	Predominantly <i>Vata</i> with association of <i>Pitta</i>
<b><i>Udavartini Yonivyapad</i></b>	Caused by vitiated <i>Apana Vata</i> leading to reverse flow of <i>Artava</i>	Describes obstruction and severe pain during menstruation	Similar to <i>Charaka</i> , highlights painful menstruation due to <i>Vata</i>
<b><i>Vataja Yonivyapad</i></b>	Detailed description of pain due to aggravated <i>Vata</i>	Includes structural deformity and dryness features	Focus on pain and irregular menstruation
<b><i>Samprapti</i></b>	Focus on <i>Dosha-Dushya Sammurchana</i> , <i>Agnimandya</i> , <i>Srotorodha</i>	Emphasis on structural abnormalities and <i>Srotas Dushti</i>	Concise explanation integrating both
<b><i>Chikitsa</i></b>	<i>Shodhana (Basti, Virechana) + Shamana</i> therapy	Includes surgical interventions along with medicines	Emphasizes <i>Basti</i> , herbal drugs, and lifestyle
<b>Approach</b>	More physiological and systemic approach	More anatomical and surgical approach	Practical and concise clinical approach

## MANAGEMENT

### *Chikitsa Siddhanta (Principles of Management)*

The management of endometriosis in *Ayurveda* focuses on correcting the underlying *Dosha* imbalance, removing obstruction in channels, and restoring normal function of *Artava*. The principle includes *Vata Shamana*, *Agnideepana* and *Ama Pachana*, *Rakta Shodhana* and *Srotoshodhana*.

### *Shamana Chikitsa (Palliative Therapy)*

#### 1. *Vata Shamana (Pain Relief and Apana Vata Regulation)*

*Dashamoola kwatha*, *Eranda Taila Prayoga* aid in pacifying *Vata Dosha* which ultimately helps in reducing pelvic pain and spasmodic dysmenorrhea. With its Anti-inflammatory action it reduces irritation of ectopic endometrial growth.

#### 2. *Rakta Shodhana and Anti-inflammatory Action*

*Kaishora Guggulu* has known mode of action of *Rakta Shodhana* along with anti-inflammatory action. *Guggulu* component helps in reducing abnormal tissue growth and adhesions. *Mahamanjisthadi Kwatha* act primarily as a potent *Rakta Shodhaka* helping to

correct *Rakta Dushti* associated with endometriosis. By purifying the blood, it reduces inflammatory changes and congestion in pelvic tissues.

### **3. Lekhana and Srotoshodhana**

*Kanchanar Guggulu* acts through *Lekhana*(scraping) property, which helps in reducing abnormal growth such as ectopic endometrial tissues. By clearing *Srtorodha*, it improves tissue drainage and restores normal circulations in pelvic region.

### **4. Artava Shodhana and Hormonal Regulation**

*Ashokarishta* regulates uterine function, reduces excessive bleeding and dysmenorrhea. *Shatavari* act as *Rasayana* in female reproductive system, promoting nourishment and regeneration of *Artava Dhatu* and improving overall uterine health. It exhibits a hormone-modulating effect, helps maintain a balanced estrogenic environment.

### **5. Vedanasthapana**

*Eranda Taila* when administered orally in small doses, acts primarily through *Vata Anulomana*, facilitating the proper downward movement of *Apana Vata* and thereby relieving pelvic pain and associated constipation.

### **Shodhana Chikitsa (Purification Therapy)**

*Shodhana* therapy aims at expelling vitiated *Doshas*, correcting the root pathology and preventing recurrence.

#### **1. Virechana (Purgation Therapy)**

*Virechana* is the therapy of choice for eliminating vitiated *Pitta* and *Rakta Dushti*, which are responsible for inflammation, burning sensation and abnormal bleeding. By cleansing the gastrointestinal tract and *Raktavaha Srotas*, it reduces systemic inflammation, also improves liver function and hormonal metabolism, thereby indirectly regulating estrogen dominance seen in endometriosis. This results in reduction of pain, inflammation and menstrual irregularities.

#### **2. Basti Chikitsa (Medicated Enema)**

*Niruha Basti* (Decoction Enema), such as *Dashmoola Kwatha Basti* and *Erandmooladi Niruha Basti*, acts primarily by expelling vitiated *Vata* and *Ama* from the body, thereby addressing the root pathology of endometriosis. It helps reduce inflammation pelvic congestion. By promoting *Srotoshodhana*, it relieves obstruction and may help limit abnormal

ectopic endometrial growth.<sup>[8]</sup> *Anuvasana Basti* (Oil enema), using medicated oils like *Dhanwantaram Taila*, *Bala Taila* and *Sahacharadi Taila*, provides *Sneha* to counteract dryness and stiffness caused by aggravated *Vata*.<sup>[10]</sup> It effectively pacifies *Vata*, thereby relieving pelvic pain, spasms and discomfort. Additionally, it nourishes the reproductive organs, improves tissue strength. Its lubrication and rejuvenating properties also help reduce fibrosis and adhesions within the pelvic region.<sup>[11]</sup> *Yapana Basti*, including *Ksheera Basti* (Milk based) and *Mustadi Yapana Basti*, offers a unique combination of *Shodhana* and *Brimhana*.<sup>[12]</sup> It helps in improving fertility potential by strengthening *Artava* and enhancing uterine health. This type of *Basti* is especially beneficial in chronic and recurrent cases of endometriosis, where both tissue depletion and long standing *Dosha* imbalance are present, thus promoting sustained recovery from disease.

## DISCUSSION

Endometriosis, can be critically interpreted through the framework of *Yonivyapad* and *Artavavaha Srotodushti*. Among the various correlations, *Vataj Yonivyapad* and *Udavartini Yonivyapad* appear most relevant, primarily due to the dominance of pain and concept of vitiated *Apana Vata* causing abnormal direction of flow. Integrative understanding shows that vitiated *Apana Vata* causing reverse flow, along with *Artava Dushti* and *Srtorodha*, plays a central role in the initiation and progression of endometriosis. The correlation highlights that functional disturbances described in *Ayurveda* and precede structural pathology elaborated in contemporary medicine. *Guggulu* with its *Ushna*, *Tikshna* and *Sukshma* properties, helps pacifying aggravated *Vata* and *Kapha*, improves circulation and remove *Srtorodha*. The therapeutic effects of *Guggulu* are attributed to various phytochemicals present in it, mainly guggulsterones, terpenoids, steroids, flavonoids, essential oils and commipheric acids. Among these guggulsterones are considered the major active constituents responsible for its anti-inflammatory and anti-proliferative actions, these compounds inhibit inflammatory mediators such as NF-k8, TNF-  $\alpha$ , IL-1, IL-6 and COX-2 pathways, thereby reducing chronic pelvic inflammation and prostaglandins mediated pain commonly seen in endometriosis. Flavonoids and terpenoids provide anti-oxidant action, helping reduce oxidative stress which contributes to progression of endometriosis lesions.<sup>[13]</sup> *Ayurvedic* management principles seek to correct the root pathology in addition to relieving symptoms. *Virechana* enhances *Agni* and promotes digestion and metabolism, thereby reducing *Ama* production. By eliminating accumulated *Pitta* from *Koshta* and *Raktavaha Srotas*, it reduces inflammatory mediators responsible for pelvic pain and tissue irritation. *Virechana* also act on *Rakta Dhatu* by

removing *Rakta Dushti*. Since *Rakta* and *Pitta* have *Ashraya-Ashrayi* relationship, purification of *Pitta* simultaneously purifies *Rakta*. This helps reduce pelvic congestion, and inflammatory changes associated with ectopic endometrial implants. *Basti Chikitsa* mainly act by pacifying vitiated *Apana Vata*, thus *Basti* breaks *Samprapti* by correcting *Vata* imbalance, reducing inflammation and restoring normal reproductive function. Thus, *Ayurvedic* interpretation of endometriosis demonstrate a significant conceptual correlation between vitiated *Apana Vata*, *Ama* and *Srotorodha* with the inflammatory, proliferative and painful in nature of disease.

## CONCLUSION

Endometriosis can be analytically understood in Ayurveda as a Tridoshaja disorder with predominance of *Vata* and *Pitta* involving *Rakta Dhatu* and *Artavavaha Srotas*. *Agnimandya* leading to *Ama* formation *Srotorodha* and vitiated *Apana Vata* plays a central role in the disease pathogenesis. The concepts of *Udavartini Yonivyapad* and *Vataja Yonivyapad* closely correlate with retrograde menstruation, chronic pelvic pain. Thus *Ayurveda* provides a comprehensive and individualized approach to the management of endometriosis by addressing the correction of *Agni*, elimination of *Ama*, pacification of *Doshas* and restoration of normal functioning of *Artava*. Even though classical pronunciation offers solid conceptual support, more clinical and experimental research is needed.

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