

REVIEW ARTICLE ON ARTAVA KSHAYA

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ABSTRACT

Background: Artava Kshaya is a frequently encountered menstrual disorder described in Ayurveda, characterised by diminished quantity, delayed onset, or irregular occurrence of menstrual bleeding, often associated with pain. In contemporary medicine, it can be correlated with conditions such as oligomenorrhea and hypomenorrhea. Modern lifestyle patterns, psychological stress, faulty dietary habits, and obesity have contributed significantly to its increasing prevalence.

Objective: This review aims to compile and analyse classical Ayurvedic concepts related to Artava Kshaya along with its modern correlations and therapeutic approaches. **Methods:** Classical Ayurvedic treatises and their commentaries were systematically reviewed alongside contemporary biomedical literature. Available clinical trials and research studies assessing Ayurvedic interventions in the management of Artava

Kshaya were also examined. **Results:** Artava Kshaya develops due to the imbalance of Tridosha, particularly aggravation of Vata and Kapha along with relative depletion of Pitta. Impaired Agni and obstruction within the Artavavaha Srotas further contribute to the condition. Clinically, patients present with delayed or irregular cycles, scanty bleeding, and dysmenorrhea. Ayurvedic formulations such as Shatapushpa–Shatavari Churna and Venuparvadi Kwatha have shown encouraging results in improving menstrual regularity and

flow. **Conclusion:** Early identification and personalised Ayurvedic management, including Shodhana therapies, internal medications, dietary regulation, and Rajaswala Paricharya, offer a safe and holistic non- hormonal approach to restore menstrual health and prevent long-term reproductive complications.

INTRODUCTION

The menstrual cycle is an essential physiological phenomenon in the reproductive life of a woman. It commences with menarche at puberty, continues throughout the reproductive phase with events such as conception, pregnancy, and lactation, and eventually ceases at menopause. Menstruation represents the cyclical shedding of the endometrial lining, which is initially prepared to support implantation; in the absence of fertilisation, this lining is expelled in the form of menstrual blood.

The quantity and duration of menstrual flow vary among individuals. According to Acharya Charaka, normal menstruation occurs at regular monthly intervals, lasts approximately five days, and is free from discomfort such as burning or pain. The flow should be neither excessive nor scanty, reflecting a balanced physiological state.

Artava Kshaya is a commonly observed gynaecological disorder, particularly in adolescent girls, and is characterised by reduced menstrual flow, delayed cycles, abdominal cramps, and low backache. If left unmanaged, it may progress to secondary amenorrhea or infertility. Despite its clinical importance, comprehensive and well-structured Ayurvedic approaches specifically addressing Artava Kshaya remain limited in the available literature.

The term **Artava Kshaya** is derived from two words—*Artava* and *Kshaya*. *Artava* denotes the menstrual blood that is discharged periodically, while *Kshaya* refers to diminution or depletion. Thus, when the quantity of *Artava* falls below its normal measure of four Anjali, the condition is termed Artava Kshaya or Kshinartava.^[1,2]

Clinically, Artava Kshaya manifests as irregular or delayed menstruation (Yathochita Kala Adarshanam), reduced menstrual flow (Alpata), and bleeding lasting for less than three days, often accompanied by vaginal pain (Yonivedana).^[3] Acharya Vagbhata attributed this condition to obstruction of the Raktamarga caused by aggravated Vata and Kapha, which interferes with the normal expulsion of menstrual blood. In modern terminology, this condition closely resembles oligomenorrhea—where cycles exceed 35 days—and

hypomenorrhea—where bleeding is scanty or lasts fewer than two days.^[4]

For normal menstruation to occur, the hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian (HPO) axis must function in harmony, the endometrium must respond appropriately to ovarian hormones, and the genital tract must remain unobstructed. Any disturbance in these mechanisms can result in menstrual irregularities.^[5]

Present-day lifestyle factors such as improper dietary habits, sedentary routines, emotional stress, metabolic disorders, and obesity significantly influence menstrual physiology. These factors disrupt the delicate neuro-endocrine regulation of the HPO axis, thereby increasing the incidence of conditions like oligomenorrhea and hypomenorrhea. Epidemiological observations suggest that approximately 13.5% of women experience oligomenorrhea, while about 12.95% suffer from hypomenorrhea.^[6]

Given the rising prevalence and the potential impact on reproductive health, a comprehensive understanding of the aetiology, pathogenesis, clinical manifestations, and Ayurvedic management of Artava Kshaya is essential.

PHYSIOLOGY OF ARTAVA UTPATTI

The formation of Artava (menstrual blood) is described in Ayurveda as a sequential metabolic process originating from ingested food. After digestion by **Jatharagni**, Ahara is divided into *Prasada* (nutritive portion) and *Kitta* (waste portion). The nutritive essence is further processed by **Rasagni**, leading to the formation of **Rasa Dhatu**.

From the subtle nutritive fraction (*Sukshma Ansha*) of Rasa Dhatu, the Artava-poshaka component is derived and subsequently transformed into mature Artava through the action of **Artavagni**. Simultaneously, the gross fraction (*Sthula Ansha*) contributes to the nourishment of Rakta Dhatu. Thus, Artava is considered an Upadhatu of Rasa and is dependent on proper functioning of Agni and uninterrupted flow through the Artavavaha Srotas.^[9]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present review was conducted by compiling and analysing information from classical Ayurvedic texts, their commentaries, and previously published research articles. Randomised and non-randomised controlled trials, observational studies, and case reports related to Artava Kshaya, hypomenorrhea, and oligomenorrhea published between the years 2000 and 2025 were included.

Electronic databases such as PubMed, Google Scholar, AYUSH Research Portal, Shodhganga, Research Gate, Scopus, and AYUSHDHARA were systematically searched using keywords including *Artava Kshaya*, *scanty menstruation*, *hypomenorrhea*, *oligomenorrhea*, and *Artavavaha Srotas*. Reference lists of relevant articles were also manually screened to ensure comprehensive data collection.

ARTAVA PARIBHASHA

Artava refers to the menstrual blood in women that is derived from Rasa Dhatu and is discharged periodically every month. It usually appears at around twelve years of age and continues until approximately fifty years. Under normal circumstances, the menstrual flow is expelled through the reproductive passage (*Apatyamarga*) without discomfort, burning sensation, or abnormal stickiness.^[7,8]

According to the Namaste Portal, the terms *Artavam*, *Pushpam*, *Artavasonitam*, *Antahpushpam*, and *Rajasravah* are used synonymously to denote the cyclical physiological uterine bleeding that occurs through the vagina for about three to seven days. In certain contexts, these terms may also represent ovulation and the functional activity of female reproductive hormones.

PARIBHASHA OF ARTAVA KSHAYA

Various Acharyas have described Artava Kshaya with slightly different perspectives

- **Acharya Sushruta** explained that Artava Kshaya is characterised by delayed or absent menstruation, prolonged intervals between cycles, scanty menstrual discharge, and associated pain in the vaginal region (*Yonivedana*).^[10]
- **Acharya Dalhana** further clarified that menstruation lasting less than three days, or absence of menses for more than a month, along with reduced quantity of menstrual blood and vaginal pain, should be considered abnormal and indicative of Artava Kshaya.^[11]
- **Acharya Bhavaprakasha** mentioned that women suffering from Artava Kshaya often develop cravings for pungent, sour, salty, hot, and heavy foods, reflecting the body's attempt to correct the underlying doshic imbalance.^[12]
- **Acharya Bhela** emphasised the role of Raktalpata and systemic imbalance in the pathogenesis. He stated that although blood circulates throughout the body, due to

pathological alterations and deficiency of Rakta, proper nourishment of Artava does not occur, leading to Artava Kshaya.^[13]

RAJAHSHRAVA KALA

Different Ayurvedic authorities have described varying durations for the normal period of menstrual bleeding:

1. **Bhela Samhita** – 3 days
2. **Ashtanga Sangraha** and **Ashtanga Hridaya** – 3 nights
3. **Charaka Samhita** – 5 nights
4. **Harita Samhita** and **Bhela Samhita** – 7 days
5. **Bhavaprakasha** – 5 days

These variations indicate that the duration of menstrual bleeding may differ among individuals while still remaining within the physiological range described in classical literature.

NIDAANA (CAUSES OF DISEASE) OF ARTAVA KSHAYA

For clarity, the causative factors of Artava Kshaya can be broadly classified into two major categories

- **Samanya Nidana** (general causes)
- **Vishesh Nidana** (specific causes)

Since Artava is considered an Upadhatu of Rasa Dhatu, any factor that leads to depletion or improper formation of Rasa Dhatu ultimately affects the production of Artava. Sushruta has indicated that diminution of Rasa contributes to the depletion of subsequent Dhatus, including Artava.^[14]

Charaka described several general etiological factors responsible for Dhatu Kshaya, such as excessive physical exertion, prolonged fasting, anxiety, improper dietary habits, exposure to excessive heat, fear, emotional stress, excessive alcohol consumption, night awakening, repeated purgation, suppression of natural urges, ageing, seasonal variations, and traumatic influences.

These factors, when present over a prolonged period, lead to depletion of Dhatus and Upadhatus, including Artava.^[15]

Sushruta also emphasised faulty dietary practices and inappropriate lifestyle as significant contributors to the vitiation of Artava. Additionally, the etiological factors responsible for **Vimsati Yonivyapada** are also considered capable of producing Artava Dushti.

VISHESH NIDANA

Specific causative factors are those that directly disturb the physiological process of Artava formation. These include derangement of

- Artavotpadaka Ahara
- Jatharagni and Rasagni
- Rasa Dhatu
- Artavavaha Srotas

As Artava is predominantly Pitta in nature, excessive intake of Vata- and Kapha-aggravating substances and behaviours leads to its depletion. Sushruta highlighted the combined influence of Vata and Kapha in obstructing the normal flow of Artava, whereas Vagbhata mentioned that vitiation of all three Doshas can produce Kshinartava.^[16,17]

The **Artavavaha Srotas** are two in number and are rooted in the **Garbhashaya** and **Artavavahi Dhamanis**. Injury or obstruction in these channels may lead to infertility, dyspareunia, or amenorrhea.^[18]

For practical understanding, the etiological factors can be categorised into five groups

1. **Aharajanya Hetu** – Dietary factors
2. **Viharajanya Hetu** – Lifestyle factors
3. **Manasika Hetu** – Psychological factors
4. **Abhighatajanya Hetu** – Traumatic causes
5. **Anyanya Hetu** – Miscellaneous causes

AHARAJANYA HETU (DIETARY FACTORS)

Diet plays a crucial role in the maintenance of Dhatu equilibrium. Improper dietary habits can vitiate Doshas and impair the formation of Artava.

Vata-vitiating foods include excessive consumption of pungent, bitter, and astringent tastes, as well as cold, light, and dry food substances.

Pitta-aggravating factors include excessive intake of hot, sour, and pungent foods or alkaline substances.

Kapha-vitiating dietary items include sweet, oily, heavy, sticky, and slimy foods such as black gram, sugarcane products, and meat from aquatic animals.^[19]

Both undernutrition (Abhojana, Alpabhojana) and overeating (Atibhojana, Adhyashana) adversely affect Agni and thereby disturb the formation of Artava.

VIHARAJANYA HETU (LIFESTYLE FACTORS)

Lifestyle practices that disturb the normal functioning of Doshas contribute significantly to the pathogenesis of Artava Kshaya.

Excessive physical exertion, excessive sexual activity, suppression of natural urges, night awakening, exposure to heat or smoke, and habitual day sleep are known to disturb the Dosha balance and impair reproductive health.^[20]

MANASIKA HETU (PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS)

Mental health plays a vital role in menstrual regulation. Emotional disturbances such as:

- **Chinta** (worry)
- **Shoka** (grief)
- **Bhaya** (fear)
- **Krodha** (anger)
- **Irshya** (jealousy)

can disturb the equilibrium of Vata and Pitta, ultimately affecting the hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian axis and leading to menstrual irregularities.^[21]

ABHIGHATAJANYA HETU (TRAUMATIC CAUSES)

Sushruta described that any trauma or injury affecting the Artavavaha Srotas can directly impair the production or discharge of Artava, resulting in Artava Kshaya.^[23]

ANYA HETU (OTHER CAUSES)

Certain miscellaneous factors also contribute to the condition:

- Excessive blood loss and tissue depletion aggravate Vata and reduce the nourishment of Artava.
- Over-nutrition and sedentary habits increase Kapha, which may obstruct the normal flow

of Artava.^[22]

PURVARUPA (PRODROMAL FEATURES)

Classical Ayurvedic texts do not explicitly describe specific prodromal symptoms of Artava Kshaya. However, Bhavaprakasha mentions that women suffering from this condition often develop a strong desire for foods possessing pungent, sour, salty, hot, and heavy qualities.^[24]

These cravings can be interpreted as the body's innate attempt to stimulate menstrual flow by seeking substances that possess Artava-pravartaka properties. Therefore, such dietary inclinations may be considered early indicators of developing Artava Kshaya.

RUPA (CLINICAL FEATURES)

Acharya Sushruta described the principal symptoms of Artava Kshaya as follows^[25]

1. Yathochita Kala Adarshana

Menstruation does not occur at the expected time or appears after prolonged intervals. Delayed menarche, usually beyond fifteen years of age, may also be suggestive of Artava Kshaya.

2. Alpartava

The quantity of menstrual blood is significantly reduced. If the menstrual loss is less than the classical measure of four Anjali or approximately below 25 ml, it is considered abnormal.^[26]

3. Yoni Vedana

Pain in the genital tract during menstruation is another important feature. Due to vitiation of Apana and Vyana Vata, the pain may be spasmodic, radiating, or intermittent in nature.^[27]

SAMPRAPTI (PATHOGENESIS)

The development of Artava Kshaya begins with continuous exposure to etiological factors (*Nidana Sevana*), which include both over-nutrition (*Santarpana*) and under-nutrition (*Aptarpana*) patterns of diet and lifestyle.

Consumption of heavy, unctuous, sweet, and cold foods, along with habits such as day sleep and physical inactivity, leads to Kapha and Meda aggravation. Conversely, excessive fasting, intake of dry and light foods, mental stress, night vigil, and overexertion provoke Vata Dosha. These contrasting but equally harmful influences disturb the equilibrium of Agni and Doshas.

As a result, **Agni Dushti** develops, manifesting either as *Mandagni* or *Vishamagni*. Impaired digestion leads to the formation of *Ama* and improperly processed Ahara Rasa, which fails to nourish Rasa Dhatu adequately.

Subsequently

- Rasa Dhatu becomes either depleted or qualitatively defective
- Rakta Dhatu receives inadequate nourishment
- Kapha and Meda cause obstruction (*Avarana*) in the channels
- Apana Vayu loses its normal directional movement

This sequence results in **Rasavaha and Artavavaha Srotorodha**, ultimately leading to:

- Impaired production of Artava
- Obstructed expulsion of menstrual blood
- Quantitative reduction of Artava

Thus, the culmination of these pathological processes manifests clinically as **Artava Kshaya**.

SAMPRAPTI GHATAKA OF ARTAVA KSHAYA

Dosha: Vata, Kapha (with relative depletion of Pitta)

Dushya: Rasa, Rakta, Meda, Artava **Agni:** Jatharagni and Dhatwagni Mandya **Ama:** Produced due to impaired Agni.

Srotas involved: Rasavaha, Raktavaha, Medovaha, and Artavavaha Srotas

Type of Srotodushti: Sanga (obstruction) and Siragranthi

Udbhava Sthana: Garbhashaya

Adhithana: Artavavaha Srotas^[28]

LINE OF TREATMENT (CHIKITSA)

The primary aim of treatment in Ayurveda is **Samprapti Vighatana**, i.e., breaking the chain of pathogenesis responsible for disease development.

In Artava Kshaya, the therapeutic approach should focus on

- Pacifying aggravated Vata and Kapha
- Enhancing diminished Pitta
- Correcting Agnimandya
- Clearing obstruction in Artavavaha Srotas

NIDANA PARIVARJANA

The foremost step in management is the complete avoidance of causative factors. Eliminating faulty dietary habits, correcting lifestyle errors, and addressing psychological stress are essential for preventing disease progression and ensuring sustained therapeutic benefit.

SHODHANA (PURIFICATORY THERAPY)

Dalhana explained that **Vamana** is particularly beneficial in Artava Kshaya because it removes excess Kapha without reducing Pitta. In contrast, Virechana, although useful for eliminating Pitta, may further decrease Artava if used indiscriminately.^[29]

Chakrapani clarified that both Vamana and Virechana may be employed judiciously depending on the patient's strength and the stage of disease, as both therapies help in removing obstruction from body channels.

Kashyapa categorised Artava Kshaya under **Anuvasana Sadhya Vyadhi**, indicating that it is generally manageable with appropriate treatment measures.^[30]

Vagbhata suggested that therapies which promote Pitta and Rakta are particularly effective in restoring menstrual flow.^[31]

USE OF AGNEYA DRAVYA

Since Artava is closely related to Pitta and Agni, substances possessing **Agneya properties** are considered beneficial in this condition. These drugs stimulate digestion, enhance tissue metabolism, and facilitate the production of Artava.

Dalhana recommended the use of:

- **Tila** (Sesame seeds)
- **Maasha** (Black gram)
- **Sura** (fermented preparations)
- **Shukta** (sour fermented substances)

These substances improve digestive fire and promote the formation and discharge of menstrual blood.^[32]

ABHYANTARA CHIKITSA (INTERNAL MEDICATION)

Choorna

- **Shatapushpa Churna** – acts as *Ritupravartini* and purifies the reproductive tract

- **Shatavari Churna** – possesses *Vrishya* and *Garbhaprasadana* properties.^[33]

Vati

- **Rajahpravartani Vati** – indicated in Rajorodha and painful menstruation
- **Nashtapushpantaka Rasa** – useful in cases of absent or markedly reduced menstruation.^[34,35]

Kwatha

A decoction prepared with

- Krishna Tila
- Karvi
- Kala Jeera
- Guda as Prakshepa

is traditionally used to stimulate menstrual flow.^[36]

Kalka

Preparations containing

- Japa Pushpa
- Jyotishmati leaves
- Durva Swarasa

are described as effective in promoting Artava when administered with appropriate Anupana.^[37]

STHANIKA CHIKITSA (LOCAL THERAPIES)

Varti

Medicated vaginal suppositories prepared with:

- Ikshwaku seeds
- Danti root
- Pippali
- Yava Kshara
- Snoohi Ksheera

are described in classical texts for facilitating menstrual flow and relieving obstruction in the genital tract.^[38]

PATHYA AND APATHYA IN ARTAVA KSHAYA

Pathya (Wholesome Regimen)

As Agneya substances counteract the cold and dry qualities of Vata and the heavy and slimy qualities of Kapha, their regular inclusion in diet helps restore Dosha balance.

Recommended dietary items include:

- Shali rice
- Yava
- Meat soup
- Fish
- Kulatha
- Fermented preparations such as Kanji.^[39]

Apathya (To Be Avoided)

All etiological factors responsible for Artava Kshaya—such as day sleep, night vigil, improper diet, and suppression of natural urges—should be strictly avoided to prevent recurrence of the disorder.

CONCLUSION

Artava Kshaya is a multifactorial menstrual disorder arising from impaired Agni, obstruction in reproductive channels, and depletion of Rasa and Rakta Dhatu. Kapha-induced obstruction and Vata dysregulation play a predominant role, while Pitta deficiency leads to reduced formation of Artava.

If not managed timely, the condition may progress to chronic menstrual disorders, polycystic ovarian syndrome, or infertility. Early identification and intervention are therefore essential.

Ayurvedic management, which includes Shodhana, Shamana, dietary correction, and adherence to **Rajaswala Paricharya**, offers a comprehensive and non-hormonal therapeutic approach.

Such treatment not only restores normal menstruation but also improves overall reproductive health and prevents future gynaecological complications.

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