

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF MEDOVAHA SROTODUSHTI IN PRAMEHA

^{*1}Dr. Shruti Bahuguna, ²Dr. Tarun Deoli and ³Dr. Sanjay Kumar Singh

¹P.G. SCHOLAR, Pg Department of Rog Nidan Evum Vikriti Vigyan, Rishikul Campus, Uttarakhand Ayurved University, Haridwar, Uttarakhand.

²P.G. SCHOLAR, Pg Department of Rog Nidan Evum Vikriti Vigyan, Rishikul Campus, Uttarakhand Ayurved University, Haridwar, Uttarakhand.

³M.D. (AYU) Professor, P.G. Department of Rog Nidan Evum Vikriti Vigyan, Rishikul Campus, Uttarakhand Ayurved University, Haridwar, Uttarakhand.

Article Received on
15 November 2024,

Revised on 05 Dec. 2024,
Accepted on 26 Dec. 2024

DOI: 10.20959/wjpr20251-35136



***Corresponding Author**

Dr. Shruti Bahuguna

P.G. SCHOLAR, Pg
Department of Rog Nidan
Evum Vikriti Vigyan,
Rishikul Campus,
Uttarakhand Ayurved
University, Haridwar,
Uttarakhand.

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, with its roots in the Vedic tradition, offers profound insights into the intricate connections between the body, mind, and environment, guiding us towards a balanced, harmonious, and healthy life. It describes a complex biological transport system comprising both gross and subtle channels, known as *Srotas*, which facilitate the flow of fluids, nutrients, and waste throughout the body. These channels are essential for the creation and nourishment of bodily tissues, as well as the elimination of waste products that can contaminate the body. The health of *Srotas* is crucial for maintaining vitality, and any vitiation or obstruction in them can lead to various pathological conditions, including those associated with lifestyle disorders such as diabetes. In particular, the *Medovaha Srotas* plays a key role in the pathogenesis of conditions like *Madhumeha* (diabetes), thus it is important to know and thoroughly understand the level of involvement of *Medovaha Srotas* in *Prameha Rog*. This knowledge is not only vital for curing the disease but also for preventing its predisposition, offering a boon for future generations.

KEYWORDS: *Srotas, Medovaha Srotas, Prameha, Madhumeha.*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, deeply rooted in the Vedic tradition, emphasizes the interconnectedness of the body, mind, and environment for achieving optimal health. Central to this understanding is the concept of *Srotas*—biological channels responsible for the flow of fluids, nutrients, and waste. Among these, the *Medovaha Srotas*, which governs the transport *Meda Dhatu*, plays a pivotal role in metabolic processes. Its imbalance is closely linked to the development of *Madhumeha* (diabetes), a lifestyle disorder. Understanding the functioning of *Medovaha Srotas* is essential not only for managing *Madhumeha* but also for its prevention, ensuring long-term health and vitality.

REVIEW OF MEDOVAHA STROTAS

Ayurvedic classics proclaim, "*Srotomayam hi Shariram*,"^[1] meaning the living body is a complex system of innumerable channels designed to transport substances for various functions. The term *Srotas* refers to both the macro channels and pathways in the body, encompassing not only the visible anatomical structures but also the subtle channels at the cellular, molecular, atomic, and subatomic levels. These channels are essential for the transport of nutrients and other substances in and out of our physiological systems. *Srotas* not only plays a vital role in the manifestation of the disease but also are the prerequisite for maintaining the basic physiological function of the human body. They work as communicating channels especially for nutrients tissue/temporary tissues which are to be utilized for formation of permanent *Dhatu*.

According to *Acharya Charaka*, the causes of *Medovaha Srotodushti*^[2] include *Avyayama*, *Divasvapna*, *Atimedhya Bhaksana*, and the consumption of *Varuni*-type wine. These factors lead to the formation of *Ahararas* with *Ama* properties. As a result of *Medodushti*, the channels related to the forthcoming tissues become blocked or obstructed.

Medovaha Srotodusti Laksana^[3]

1. *Acharya Charaka*, in the *Vimana Sthana*, mentioned that the symptoms of *Medovaha Srotodusti* are similar to those of *Medapradosaja Vikara* (disorders of fat tissue). These clinical features resemble the mentioned eight *Dosha* of the *Atisthula Purusa* and are premonitory symptoms of *Prameha Roga*.^[4]
2. *Acharya Sushruta* described the *Viddha Laksana* (abnormal signs) of *Srotasa*. Which includes symptoms such as *Svedagamanama* (excessive sweating), and *Snigdhangata*

(smooth and oily skin), *Talusosa* (dryness of the palate), *Sthulasophata* (obesity with swelling), and increased thirst.

REVIEW OF MEDA DHATU

Meda dhatu, the fourth dhatu in the sequence of tissue formation in *Ayurveda*, is vital for the body's metabolism and energy balance. It is primarily responsible for the process known as *Snehana*^[5] (nourishment and storage of fat in the body). *Meda Dhatu* is formed as a byproduct of *Mamsa Dhatu* (muscle tissue), through the transformative action of *Mamsa Agni*^[6] (the digestive fire of muscle tissue). This process ensures that the body has an adequate reserve of fat for energy storage and insulation.

Any disruption in the proper functioning of this system can lead to imbalances, manifesting as either *Meda Vriddhi*^[7] (excessive fat accumulation) or *Meda Kshaya* (reduction of fat). *Meda Vriddhi* can contribute to conditions like obesity, while *Meda Kshaya* can result in emaciation or a deficiency of fat in the body, leading to weakness and a lack of energy.

REVIEW OF PRAMEHA

The term '*Prameha*' has two parts. '*Pra*' meaning abundant, and '*Meha*' meaning 'passing of Urine'. The term diabetes has been derived from the Greek term '*Diabainein*' which means 'to cross through a siphon' i.e., continuous free flow of water and applied to mean elimination of large quantity of Urine. Thus, the terms '*Prameha*' and '*Diabetes*' carry similar meaning. Interestingly enough the terms *Madhumeha* and Diabetes Mellitus are analogous *Madhu* ad *Mellitus* mean honey and thus *Madhumeha* and Diabetes Mellitus mean passing of large quantity of sweet urine.

Ten *Dushya*^[8] are implicated in the pathogenesis of *Madhumeha*, but in its predisposition *Meda Dhatu* and *Medovaha Srotas* play a primary role. Thus, having an extensive knowledge of them is a crucial milestone in the journey toward gaining a deeper understanding of *Prameha*.

The Ayurvedic texts describe 20 types of *Prameha*^[9], including 10 *Kaphaj*, 6 *Pittaj*, and 4 *Vataj* types, while acknowledging that variations in the disease can occur depending on the presence or absence of provoking or mitigating factors in the body.^[10] The manifestation of *Prameha* depends on the interaction between causative factors, *Dosha*, *Dushya*, and the body's defense mechanisms, which may also influence the onset, severity, and progression of

the disease. The text categorizes *Prameha* into ten curable *Kaphaja* types, six palliative (*Yaapya*) types, and four incurable *Vataja* types.^[11]

Excessive amount of vitiated *Kapha Dosha* plays a predominant role in the predisposition of *Prameha*, with *Meda Dhatu* being a key *Dushya* involved in the disease's development.^[12] *Acharya Sushruta* notes that if all *Prameha* are not treated promptly, they can progress to *Madhumeha*, which is considered incurable.^[13] *Madhumeha*, one of the four *Vatik* types of *Prameha*, is also known as *Ojo Meha*^[14] due to its impact on the *Oja Dhatu*, regarded as the supreme essence of vitality in the body. The characteristic clinical features of *Madhumeha* include sweetness in both the urine and the body.^[15]

Nidan of *Prameha* includes^[16] - Over-indulgence in the pleasure of sedentary habits, excess sleep, curds, soup of the meat of domesticated and aquatic animals and animals inhabiting marshy land, milk and its preparations, freshly harvested food articles, freshly prepared drinks, preparations of jaggery and all *kapha*- aggravating factors are responsible for the causation of *Prameha*.

Premonitory symptoms of *Prameha*^[17] - Sweating, foul body odor, flabbiness of the body, liking for constantly lying on the bed, sitting, sleeping and practicing sedentary life, a feeling as if the cardiac region is covered with extraneous material, dryness of throat and palate, sweet taste in the mouth, burning sensation in hands and legs and swarming of ants on the urine.

Acharya Charaka and *Acharya Sushruta* both describe two types of *Pramehi*, each requiring distinct treatments. *Acharya Charaka* classifies *Pramehi* into *Sthula* and *Krishha* types^[18], while *Acharya Sushruta* categorizes it into *Sahaja* (congenital) and *Apathyanimittaja*^[19] (acquired due to improper lifestyle and faulty dietary habits).

DISCUSSION

Acharya Chakrapani has classified all the *Dhatus* into two types on the basis of their function of *Poshana*.

1. *Poshak* (*Asthayi/mobile*): The substance/*Dhatu* that circulates through the *Srotas* of each *dhatu* to fulfil its role in nourishing and supporting the stable *Dhatu*.
2. *Poshya* (*Sthayi/stable*): The *Dhatu*, which remains stable and intact, is nourished by the *Asthayi Dhatu* of the same nature or origin.

The vitiation of *Srotas* occurs when any attribute, either resembling that of the *Dosha* or possessing the potential to disrupt the quality of the *Dhatu* (*Vigunta*), leads to an imbalance. This disturbance ultimately results in *Srotodushti*, or the dysfunction of the channels, causing various pathological conditions.^[20]

Medovaha Srotas plays a key role in the transportation of the transforming *Meda Dhatu* as well as the transudation of nutrients essential for *Meda Dhatu* metabolicity. Any type of vitiation in the *Medovaha Srotas* causes pathogenesis which appears as metabolic problems in the body. In *Ayurveda*, metabolism is viewed as the central function of *Agni*, or digestive fire, which governs the balance and transformation of nutrients in the body. *Ayurveda* emphasizes the preservation of health rather than merely the eradication of disease. It posits that improper dietary habits and the derangement of different *Agni* leads to the accumulation of *Ama*^[21], or a toxic byproduct, which becomes the root cause of all metabolic disorders. When there is formation and amalgamation of *ama* at the level of *Meda Dhatu*, it results in the development of vitiated/*Dushti* of *Meda Dhatu*.

Meda Dhatu Dushti can manifest in two forms

- 1) *Badh Meda*
- 2) *Abadh Meda* (free-flowing lipids)

Excessive accumulation of this vitiated *Meda* leads to *Sthaulya Roga* (obesity). Obesity, as a primary risk factor, plays a significant role in the development of diabetes by further aggravating the deranged metabolic processes.

As per the WHO, Diabetes Mellitus (DM) is defined as a hetero-genous metabolic disorder characterized by common feature of persistent hyperglycaemia (with or without glycosuria) with disturbance of carbohydrate, fat and protein metabolism.

In the *Charaka Samhita*, *Viman Sthana*, it is clearly stated that the *dushti lakshanas* (pathological signs) of the *Medovaha Srotas* are the same as the *dosha* associated with *Atisthula* (obesity) and the *Purvaroop* (early signs) of *Prameha* (diabetes). This suggests that the disturbances in the fat metabolism can lead to conditions like obesity, which in turn predispose individuals to diabetes. From a modern medical perspective, obesity is recognized as a key risk factor for the development of type 2 diabetes, as it contributes to insulin resistance, metabolic dysfunction, and inflammation. This ancient Ayurvedic insight mirrors

contemporary understanding, emphasizing the importance of *Medovaha Srotodushti* and involvement of *Meda Dhatu* in diabetes. The vitiation of the *Meda Dhatu* within the *Medovaha Srotas* is a key aspect of this connection. *Badh Meda* can be correlated with obesity. While *Abadh Meda* corresponds to the elevated levels of free fatty acids in the body.

Truncal obesity, in particular, is strongly associated with an increased risk of diabetes. Obesity leads to elevated levels of plasma leptin, tumour necrosis factor-alpha, and non-esterified fatty acids, all of which contribute to insulin resistance. The global rise in obesity is likely driving the increasing prevalence of type 2 diabetes, as obesity impacts both insulin action and beta-cell function.

Talking about the *Abadh Meda*, (correlated with free fatty acids) A very common metabolic abnormality associated with diabetes is dyslipidaemia, which is characterized by a spectrum of quantitative and qualitative changes in lipids and lipoproteins. A common pattern of lipid abnormalities, known as diabetic dyslipidaemia, includes hypertriglyceridemia, reduced high-density lipoprotein (HDL)-cholesterol concentration and a shift towards small dense low-density lipoprotein (LDL). Diabetic dyslipidaemia is a widespread condition, in which insulin resistance is considered the driving force behind the characteristic lipid abnormalities. All three components, are metabolically linked, with hypertriglyceridemia being the dominant feature.

There is sufficient evidence in Ayurveda to establish a connection between *Medovaha Srotodushti* and *Prameha* (and not only just the *Lakshana* being the same), as the *Nidana* (causes) for both conditions show striking similarities. (As both are *Santarpanjanya Vyadhi*) Additionally, the treatment protocols for both are comparable, with an emphasis on weight reduction to prevent further progression of the disease in each case.

CONCLUSION

This article highlights the importance of addressing the root causes of diabetes, particularly focusing on the imbalances in *Meda Dhatu* (fat tissue) and *Medovaha Srotas* (the channels responsible for transporting fat) rather than simply managing the disease's symptoms. By identifying and correcting these deeper, underlying imbalances, a more holistic and effective treatment approach can be achieved. Understanding the critical role of *Meda Dhatu* and *Medovaha Srotas* in the development of *Prameha* (diabetes) provides a foundational framework for treatment that goes beyond mere symptomatic control.

This approach emphasizes the necessity of early intervention to correct these imbalances, ultimately leading to improved long-term outcomes. Rather than merely suppressing the symptoms of diabetes, it is crucial to address the deeper causes of the disease to prevent complications and enhance overall health. Early correction of these imbalances can not only help in managing diabetes more effectively but also contribute to reducing the risk of chronic complications, thus improving the patient's quality of life and long-term prognosis.

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