

A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW STUDY OF SNAYU SHARIR IN AYURVEDA

¹*Dr. Namrata Mandip Mane, ²*Dr. Priyadarshani Yogesh Chavan, ³*Dr. Neha Rathod

¹Assistant Professor, Rachana Sharir Department, Dr. Deepak Patil Ayurvedic Medical College,
Borpadale, Kolhapur.

²BAMS MD, Assistant Professor Kayachikitsa Department, Dr JJ Magdum Ayurvedic Medical
College Jayasingpur, Kolhapur.

³Assistant Professor Rachana Sharira, Shree Veerpulkeshi Rural Ayurvedic Medical College
and Research Centre, Badami, Dist—Bagalkote.

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*Corresponding Author

Dr. Namrata Mandip Mane

Assistant Professor, Rachana Sharir
Department, Dr. Deepak Patil
Ayurvedic Medical College,
Borpadale, Kolhapur.



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ABSTRACT

In *Sharir Rachana*, *Snayu* plays a pivotal role as a structural component responsible for binding and stabilizing various parts of the body. Described elaborately by *Acharya Sushruta*, *Snayu* are essential for maintaining posture, enabling movement and supporting joint integrity. This article aims to explore the classical references, types, functions, clinical relevance and modern interpretations of *Snayu*, highlighting its anatomical and functional significance in Ayurveda.

KEYWORDS: *Snayu*, Tendons, Ligaments, *Snayugat vata*.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine, offers a unique perspective on human anatomy through its concept of *Sharir Rachana*. Among the various anatomical structures, *Snayu* holds a significant place as a connector, stabilizer and

supporter of body parts. The classical Texts describe *Snayu* as vital components that maintain the body's physical framework and facilitate movement.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

ETYMOLOGY AND DEFINITION

The term *Snayu* is derived from the *Sanskrit* root 'Sna- *bandhane*' meaning to bind or to hold. As per *Acharya Sushruta*, *Snayu* are the structures responsible for *bandhana*.

Acharya Sushruta defines *Snayu* as

Shariram sanyachhanti ye te snyayavah|| -Su. Sha.5/28 *Snayu* are those which hold or bind the body structures together. *Snayavo bandhanam prokta dehe mams asthi medsam*/- *Sha. Pu*

Snayu are *shanakar*, ropelike structures (just like a string of bow). Their main function is *bandhana* or binding. They bind together the *Mamsa*, *Meda* & *Asthi*.

UTPATTI

Developmentally the *Snayu* is originated from *pitruj bhav*.^[1] *Snayu* is formed by unctuous Portion of *Meda*. *Sira* and *Snayu* has the same origin, but *Sira* are formed by *mrudupak* of *meda* and *Snayu* are formed by *kharapak* of *meda*.^[2]

SNAYU AS UPDHATU

Acharya Charaka said that the *Snayu* is *updhatu* of *Meda dhatu*.^[3]

TYPES OF SNAYU

Snayuschaturvidha vidyastu sarvaa nibodh me/

Pratanvatyo vrutashcha pruthvyashcha sushirastatha||- *Su. Sha. 5/38*

Acharya Sushrut classified *Snayu* based on their structure and function into four types.^[4]

1. *Pratanvati*

Pratana means a tendril, a shoot, a low spreading plant. These are long fibers of network shaped. These are in *Shakha* and *Sandhi*.^[5] (*Su.sha.5/31*) These have branching pattern of like a creeper of tendrils.

2. *Vrutta*

Vrutta means round or circular. *Vrutta Snayu* are round/ circular cord like structure but large. They are also known as *Kandara*.^[6] According to *Bhavaprakash*, these are also present in *Shakha* and *sandhi*. (*Su.sha.5/31*)

3. *Sushira*

Sushira means porous, hollow or cavity. These are soft, porous fiber with lumen. These are located at the ends of the *Amashaya*, *Pakvashaya* and *Basti*.^[7] These are muscle fibers which form the orifices or sphincters of organs.

4. *Prithu*

Prithu means broad, large, wider. These are thick and flat in shape. These are in *Parshwa*, *Prushtha* and *ura* region.^[8] It may be fascia or aponeurosis of our body.

SANKHYA

As per Sushrut Samhita^[9]

900 *Snayu* are present in the body. Su.sha.5/29 600 in the *Shakha* (extremities) 120 in the *Kukshi* (Abdomen & flanks) 70 in the *Prishtabhag* (Back region) 110 in the *Uras* (Chest)

This classification highlights the functional dominance of *Snayu* in the limbs, reflecting their role in movement and locomotion.

PANCHBAUTIKATVA

According to *Ayurveda*, *Snayu* are composed mainly of:

1. *Prithvi Mahabhuta*- Imparts strength and stability.
2. *Vayu Mahabhuta*- Governs their function and elasticity.

Panchbhautikatva is crucial for understanding Pathological changes in *Snayu* due to *Dosha* imbalances.

SNAYU MARMA

Based on the predominant structure involved in the *Marma*, *Marmas* are classified into 5 types according to *Acharya Sushruta*^[10] and 6 types according to *Acharya Vagbhata*^[11] and one of them is *Snayu Marma*. Total 27 *Snayu marmas* are present in the human body including 4 *Aani*, 2 *Vitapa*, 2 *Kakshadhara*, 4 *Kurcha*, 4 *Kurchashira*, 1 *Basti*, 4 *Kshipra*, 2 *Amsa*, 2 *Vidhura* and 2 *Utkshepa marma*.^[12]

SNAYU AND SROTAS

Snayu is *moolasthan* (Origin) of *Mamsavaha srotas*.^[13]

FUNCTIONS OF SNAYU

Just as a boat built with wooden planks placed side by side, when fastened tightly by ropes in many ways becomes capable of carrying weight in water, steered by a man, similarly the human body will be able to carry weight, so long as the joints are fastened tightly by *Snayu* in many ways.^[14]

IMPORTANCE OF SNAYU

Acharya Sushruta has said that one, who knows *Snayu* externally as well as internally, can be able to pull the foreign particle (*shalya*) out of the human body with safety and without causing any pain.^[15]

Again, *Acharya Sushruta* said that the injuries of *Snayu* are more severe than *Mamsa*, *Sira*, *Asthi* and *Sandhi*, which is followed by excessive pain and delayed healing.^[16]

DISCUSSION

Though not completely identical, *Snayu* can be broadly correlated with:

1. Ligaments- Connecting bones to bones, stabilizing joints.
2. Tendons- Connecting muscles to bones, facilitating movement.
3. Fasciae and Aponeurosis- Providing structural support and tension distribution.

Snayu means ligaments and tendons are the *moolasthanas* of *Mamsavaha srotas*. Ligaments are hard tissues which hold or support the ends of the muscles and considered as root of muscle carrying channels. While tendons are hard structures which connect the muscles to the bones. Muscles are attached to the bones at their origin or at end place through tendons. Tendons can be considered as the channels of muscle tissue.

Clinical significance in Ayurveda

1. *Snayugata Vata*- A condition involving *Vatadushti* affecting *Snayu*, leading to stiffness, pain and restricted movement.
2. *Marma* relation- Many *marma* points are located at joints and intersections where *Snayu* are present (eg. *Kurcha*, *Aani*, *Janu Marma*). Injury to *Snayu* *Marmas* can lead to severe dysfunction.
3. Surgical considerations- *Shalya Tantra* emphasizes the preservation of *Snayu* during incisions and suturing. During surgery, great care is advised to avoid cutting *Snayu*.

CONCLUSION

Snayu Sharir represents a vital anatomical concept in *Ayurveda* that intricately combines physical structure with physiological function. Its classical descriptions are remarkably aligned with modern anatomical structures like ligaments and tendons. An in depth understanding of *Snayu* not only enriches *Ayurvedic* knowledge but also enhances clinical application in treating musculoskeletal disorders. Bridging ancient wisdom with modern insights can lead to more integrative and effective healthcare approaches.

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