

APATARPANA AS A CAUSE AND THERAPEUTIC MODALITY IN RUTUCHAKRA VIKARA

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1. ABSTRACT

Ayurveda emphasizes the importance of *ahara*(proper nutrition) for the sustenance of life and maintenance of health. *Apatarpana*—a state of inadequate nourishment or deliberate therapeutic depletion—is considered both a *nidana* for several disorders and a *chikitsa* in conditions arising from *Santarpana janya vyadhi*. Menstrual health is governed by *artava*, an *upadhatu* of *rasa dhatu*, and is expressed through the *rutuchakra*, which is highly sensitive to nutritional status and lifestyle factors. Classical texts describe the influence of *dosha* balance and *ahara-vihara* on menstrual rhythm, while modern science correlates these factors with the hypothalamic–pituitary–ovarian (hpo) axis and hormonal regulation. This article analyzes the impact of *apatarpana* on *rutuchakra*—both as a cause of menstrual disorders such as *artava kshaya*, *anartava*, *asrigdara*, and *yonivyapad*, and as a therapeutic modality in conditions like obesity, *pcod*, and *kaphaja artava dushti*.

2. INTRODUCTION: Ayurveda explains the role of proper food intake in maintaining health. All *ahara dravyas* and the human body are *panchabhautika*.^[1] Acharya Charaka states that food is transformed into *dhatu*s by the action of *ushma (jatharagni)*.^[2]

The *sara bhaga* of *ahara rasa* forms *rasa dhatu*, whose primary function is *tarpana* (nourishment). Proper nutritional status depends on *sauhitya matra*, *abhyavaharana shakti*, *jarana shakti* of *agni*, and individual constitution.^[3] *Santarpana* and *Apatarpana* are two nutritional states resulting from variations in *ahara* and *vihara*. *Artava*, an *upadhatu* of *rasa*,^[4] is produced cyclically every month, termed *rutuchakra*. *Acharya charaka* emphasizes that *sharira upachaya* occurs only when *dhatu*s, *ushma*, *maruta*, and *srotas* are unobstructed.

Modern lifestyle changes have significantly affected menstrual health, leading to *artava dushti* and *yonivyapad*, which are managed by adopting opposite therapeutic principles—*Santarpana* or *Apatarpana* accordingly.

3. CONCEPT OF APATARPANA IN AYURVEDA

The term *apatarpana*^[5] is derived from “apa” (absence) and “tarpana” (nourishment). *Shabdakalpadruma* defines it as *triptishoonya*—absence of satisfaction.^[6,7]

Synonyms- *langhana*, *upavasa*, *anashana*, and *pramitashana*.

Paribhasha -“*yat kinchit laghavakaram dehe tat langhanam smritam*” – whatever induces lightness in the body is termed *langhana*.^[8]

Thus, *apatarpana* denotes both pathological depletion and deliberate therapeutic lightening used in disease management.

4. RUTUCHAKRA^[9]

Phase	duration	dosha dominance	changes
1. <i>Rajasrava</i> (menstrual phase)	Charaka-5 days vag and b.p-3 days Harita and bhela- 7 days	Vata	expulsion अपानो..... आर्तव निष्क्रमण क्रिया
2. <i>Rutu kaala</i> (proliferative phase+ovulation)	12 or 16 days	Kapha	Increased chance of conception नवीन रज उपचय, औत्सुक्य, कामेच्छा etc.
3. <i>Rutuvyatita kaala</i> (secretory phase)	9 to 13 days	Pitta	पुराण रज, योनि संवृत्त, post ovulation, <i>ārtava</i>

			becomes <i>āgneya</i> , increases bbt by 1°f (thermogenic effect of progesterone)
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5. APATARPANA AS A NIDANA FOR MENSTRUAL DISORDERS

Prolonged use of *ruksha ahara*, excessive *langhana*, and *pramitashana* leads to *rasa-rakta-mamsa dhatu kshaya* and manifests as *karshya*. *Samana vata* and *pachaka pitta* play a major role in the pathogenesis, resulting in *agni dushti* and *anuloma kshaya* of *dhatus*. This leads to *apatarpanajanya vikaras*^[10] such as *kshaya* of *deha*, *agni*, *bala*, *varna* and *shukra mamsa* and *oja* as explained by *Acharya Charaka*. In women, this manifests as *artava kshaya*, *anartava*, *asrigdara*, and *yonivyapads* such as *udavartini* and *vataja yonivyapad*. Hence, *apatarpana* acts as a significant etiological factor for *rutuchakra* disturbances.

6. EFFECT OF APATARPANA ON RUTUCHAKRA

Effect Of Apatarpana In Rutu Kāla

Rutu kāla is the phase of *navīna artava nirmāṇa* and endometrial proliferation, governed predominantly by *kapha dosha*. *Acharya Vishwamitra* states that *tarpana* of the *garbhashaya* takes place during this period. This takes place with the help of *beejavaha siras* which resembles the *sukshma ksha*.^[11]

Kṣāra, *vamana*, *nasya* is contraindicated in *rtumati*,^[12,13]

Excessive *apatarpana* in the form of fasting, intake of *rūkṣa-laghu-tikṣṇa ahara*, smoking, or excessive physical exertion results in *kapha kshaya* and *vata prakopa*. This leads to impaired follicular development, reduced estrogen levels, and inadequate endometrial thickness. clinically, this manifests as *artava kshaya*, anovulation, and infertility.

Effect Of Apatarpana In Rutu Vyatīta Kāla

Rutu vyatīta kāla is dominated by *pitta dosha* and is responsible for the transformation of *navīna raja* into *purāṇa raja* and preparation of the endometrium for implantation.

Excessive *apatarpana* during this phase leads to *pitta kshaya* and abnormal transformation of *artava*. Modern correlations include decreased progesterone secretion and luteal phase defects.

As a result, *artava kshaya*, *vataja asṛgdara*, and early pregnancy loss (*garbha srava*) due to implantation may occur.

Effect Of Apatarpana In Rajasrava Kāla

Rajasrava kāla is a *vata-dominant* phase responsible for the expulsion of *artava* through the action of *apana vata*. The blood collected for whole month by both the *dhamanis* (uterine vessels and their endometrial capillaries) assuming slight black color and specific odour is brought downwards to vaginal orifice by *vayu* for excretion. So, *vata dosha* is predominant in *raja srava kala*.

Excessive *apatarpana* during menstruation, such as fasting or consumption of *rūkṣa ahara*, increases the *rūkṣa guna* of *apana vata* and causes *dhatu kshaya* and *acharyas* also mentioned contraindications in *raja srava kala* like *vyayama*, *swedana*, *vamana*, *nasyakarma* and *vyavaya* etc and its effects on baby.^[14]

This leads to painful menstruation (*kṛcchra artava*), scanty flow, irregular cycles, or occasionally *asṛgdara* due to exaggerated *chala guna* of *vata*.

7. APATARPANA AS CHIKITSA IN SANTARPANAJANYA ARTAVA VIKARA

While excessive *apatarpana* is harmful, judicious *apatarpana chikitsa* is essential in *santarpanajanya vyadhis*^[15] such as *pcod*, *arthavadushti* due to *stoulya*, *anarthava*, *kaphaja artava dushti*, and *kaphaja asṛgdara*, *arthava ativridhi*.

Procedures like *langhana*, *deepana*, *pachana*, and *shodhana* help remove *ama*, correct *kapha avarana*, and restore normal function of *apana vata*. This should always be followed by *bruhmana chikitsa* to prevent *vata prakopa*.

8. ROLE OF NUTRITION AND LIFESTYLE IN MENSTRUAL HEALTH

Modern dietary patterns involving calorie restriction, intermittent fasting, excessive workouts, and stress mimic *apatarpana* and adversely affect the HPO axis. Undernourishment leads to suppression of GnRh, FSH, and LH, resulting in amenorrhea and ovulatory dysfunction.

Thus, balanced nutrition is essential for maintaining *Rutuchakra Samyavastha*.

9. DISCUSSION

As per Acharya Charaka – the primary or root causes of all diseases are as follows. *Upahata ushma*: the impairment of *ushma*, particularly *jataragni* and *dhatwagni dushthi*. *Upahata maruta*: *vatakara ahara* (food) and *vihara* (lifestyle) leads to *vata prakopa*. *Upahata srotas*:^[16] *ama* (toxins) leads to *sroto dushthi*, causing obstruction in the Channels. when *jataragni Dusti* occurs due to *apatarpana janya ahara* and *vihara*, *rasadhatwagni ushma* impairment takes place, leading to *rasa dhatu kshaya*, which in turn leads to *ksheena arthava*. This can be correlated with conditions where hypogonadism occurs due to malnourishment from consumption of junk foods, spicy foods, erratic food intake (*pramitashana*), stress, improper sleep, injudicious use of hormonal pills and other medications.

Today's adolescents, who indulge in junk food, cold drinks, ice creams, and spend more time with electronic gadgets, are also habituated to *vegadharana*, especially *mala* and *mutra vegadharana*. Due to these habits, *vata prakopa* occurs, leading to conditions like *udavartini*, *vataja yonivyapat*, PMS, and PCOD. Additionally, the intake of excessive sugar, aerated drinks, and beverages, along with *abhishyandi ahara*, *avyayama*, *diwasvapna*, and *achinta*, causes *kapha prakopa*. This results in the formation of *ama*, *margavarana*, or *sroto dusti*, leading to conditions like *anarthava*, *arthava kshaya*, and PCOD. In these cases, *ekadesha vruddi* occurs and *anyadesha kshaya*. Initially, *apatarpana* should be carried out by *shodhana*. Later, to prevent *vata prakopa*, *bruhmana dravya* should be administered.

Injudicious use of hormonal pills or ocp's in order to correct irregular menstrual cycle leads to chronic suppression of hormones as well as endometrial function and patient presents with thin endometrium as well as anovulation which can be considered as *beshaja kshapita*.^[17] Here *apatarpana* is due to the *bheshaja*. *santarpana chikitsa* or *bruhmana chikitsa* should be given. Long term use of medicines which have *tikshna*, *ushna*, *ruksha* qualities should be avoided as they lead to *apatarpana*. On the whole today's life style not only leads to *santarpana janya vyadhi* but also causes *apatarpana janyavyadhi*, where *apatarpana* can be a cause for *vyadhi* or *apatarpana* can be a *chikitsa* for the *vyadhi*.

CONCLUSION

The ultimate function of *rutuchakra* is *garbhadharana*. Proper observance of *rajaswala paricharya* ensures menstrual health and healthy progeny. Menstruation itself performs *garbhashaya shodhana* every month, helping to balance the tridoshas. However excessive *apatarpana* or *santarpana* due to improper *ahara*, *vihara*, and *chikitsa* or *bheshaja* adversely

affects the menstrual cycle. Therefore, adopting appropriate *pathya* and the opposite therapeutic principle is essential for restoring balance.

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