

SROTOMAYAM HI SHARIRAM- A REVIEW ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

Srotas is well known concept of Ayurveda. Srotas are described as inner transport system concerned with the transportation of healthy dhatus and mala. Ayurvedic texts depicts the dynamic and inner transport system of the body-mind-spirit organization. The living body is a channel system and is comprised of innumerable number of srotas designed as inner transport system both gross and subtle, tangible and intangible, biological and energetic. The srotas are distributed all over the body as a climber spread over a wall by sending its branches and sub branches.

KEYWORDS: Srotas, Srotomoola, Poshyadhatu, Channel, Pathways.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is considered as the Upveda of Atharveda.^[1] Ordinarily it follows the basic teachings of Vedas. It is an ancient science originating in India, adopts its own holistic biology, based on the theory of **Triguna, Tanmatra, Tridosha, Saptadhatu, Agni, Ama and Srotas**. It is impossible to attain the consummate health without Ayurveda.

Srotas is well known concept of Ayurveda. They are considered as inner transport system that transports dhatu under metabolic transformation. Some authors interpret, Srotas as microvascular channels specialized for exchange of materials. The word "Srotas" is derived from the Sanskrit root "**Sru Gatau**"^[2] meaning to go, move, continue, filter, flow, leak, secrete etc. In practice Srotas is defined as "**Sravanata Srotansi**"^[3] meaning the structures of the body related to flowing i.e. the channels carrying the prepared healthy dhatu to its destination.

Ayurvedic classics proclaim "**Srotomayam hi shariram**" that the living body is a channel system and is comprised of innumerable number of channels designed as inner transport system both gross and subtle, tangible and intangible, biological and energetic.^[4]

Ordinarily the word "Srotas" is used as a generic term indicating all macro and micro channels and pathways operating in living organism.^[5] As the cloth is prepared from various threads, the body is a group of srotas. The cloth has no identity, if all of its threads get separated, similarly the body is comprised of various srotas

carrying different dhatus and the body loses its identity without srotas.

INTERPRETATION

The word "**srotas**" is derived from sanskrit root "**sru**" by the agam of "**tut**" and appended by the suffix "**asun**" from the sutra "**suribhyam tut cha**" of bhavadigana.^[6] "**Sravatiiti**" by this it means that srotas is where "**sravan kriya takes place with motion**". **Amarkosha** defines "**srotas**" as the natural exudation or movement of water.^[7] Acharya Charak defines srotas as the means that are figured to conduct furnished dhatus to their destination. Acharya Chakrapani has explained this as "**the sravan of rasadi poshya dhatu**". Acharya Shushrut has described srotas as hollow, porous fine passages different from sira and dhamani, which convey rasadi poshya dhatu to the body i.e. they circulate and provide nutrition to the body.

SYNONYMS OF SROTAS

Analyzing and interpreting the various synonyms of srotas it is found that srotas is used as a generic term meaning all the channels either micro or macro, various openings and pathways. The various synonyms of srotas are

- Srotansi (opening, passages, channels)
- Sira (veins),
- Dhamani (Arteries)
- Rasayani (lymphatics)
- Rasvahini (capillaries)
- Nadi (Vessels)
- Pantha (Channels)

- Marg (Tracts)
- Sharirchidra (openings)
- Ashaya (repositories)
- Niketa (resorts)
- Samvratasamvratra (blind and open apertures).^[8]

CHARACTERISTIC OF SROTAS

1. **COLOUR:** The colour of srotas is same as that of the dhatu it carries.
2. **SHAPE:** Reticulated, long, circular and cylindrical.
3. **SIZE:** Sukshma and Sthula.

CLASSIFICATION OF SROTAS

- **Sukshma srotas:** They are innumerable and spread all over the body. They are considered as life factors operating in the life processes.
- **Sthula srotas:** They are countable and classified as.
 - **Bahiramukha srotas:** They are 9 in number. Sharangadhar called them as “Randhra”. Randhra can be asserted as the openings of the body. Nose, ear and eyes have two openings while anus, urethra and mouth have one opening i.e. a total of nine openings.^[9]

- **Antarmukha srotas:** Various authors have different views about their number. Sushrut counted them 11 pairs^[10], while Charak said 13 srotas^[11] and the fourteenth one “Artavavaha srotas” is described in Garbhaprakaran of Sharir-sthana. So, a total of 14 srotas are enumerated by acharya Charak. Along with it another important srotas called Manovaha srotas is affirmed by both acharyas. Acharya Charak in Indriya-sthana and acharya Sushrut in Uttartantra. Manovaha srotas carry impulses of thought and emotions.^[12,13]

MOOLA OF SROTAS

Chakrapanidutta has alleged the Moola as “**Moolam iti prabhav stanam**” which means that the moola of any srotas is its anatomical seat in the body, in other words the revelation of diseases is from this principal seat and the pathology of that channel is initiated from the moola. The knowledge of moola is important as in case of the disease of any srotas the Shodhan or Shaman chikitsa is impossible to complete without their anatomical seat.

Following are the Srotas and their Moola

S.N	Srotas	Charak	Sushrut	Moola
1	Pranavaha	+	+	Hridaya, Mahasrotas (C), Rasavahi Dhamani (S)
2	Udakavaha	+	+	Talu, Kloma
3	Annavaaha	+	+	Amashaya, Vama-Parshva (C), Annavahini Dhamani (S)
4	Rasavaha	+	+	Hridaya, Dasha-dhamanya (C), Rasavahi Dhamani (S)
5	Raktavaha	+	+	Yakrita, Pliha, Raktavaha dhamani (S)
6	Mansavaha	+	+	Snayu, Twak, Raktavaha dhamani (S)
7	Medovaha	+	+	Vrkka, Vapavahan (C), Kati (S)
8	Asthivaha	+	-	Meda, Jaghan
9	Majjavaha	+	-	Asthi, Sandhi
10	Shukravaha	+	+	Vrashana, Shef (C), Stana (S)
11	Mutravaha	+	+	Vasti, Vankshana (C), Mendhra (S)
12	Purishavaha	+	+	Pakvashaya, Sthoolguda (C), Guda (S)
13	Swedavaha	+	-	Meda, Lomakooapa
14	Artavavaha	+	+	Garbhashya, Artavavahi dhamani (S)

Acharya Charak has uttered thirteen srotas, of which seven are for seven dhatus, three for mala and three for intake of nutrients materials like food, water and air.^[14]

No srotas is counted for the doshas. Shushrut has alleged eleven pairs of srotas. He did not count Asthi, Majja and Sveda vaha srotas, but included Artava-vaha srotas. Acharya Dalhana in his tika has said that moola of Asthi-vaha srotas is Meda and that of Majjavaha srotas is Asthi, which are distributed all over the body that's why it is impossible to describe the characteristics of these srotas.

The difference in counting of srotas may be because, Sushrut Samhita is a Shalyatantra pradhan book while Charak Samhita is concerned with diseases. That is to say that Charak has considered srotas moola in context of pathological involvement of srotas in Nija type of

diseases while Shushrut has described srotas for Srotoviddha-lakshana i.e. injury to their moola.

FUNCTIONS OF SROTAS

- Srotas are the channels that carry the furnished dhatus and mala to their destination.
- Srotas are the inner transport system of body having divergent functions, which provide base to other biological factors like Oja, Agni, emotions etc.
- The entire range of life processes in health and disease depends on the integrity of srotas.
- All the dosha, dhatu and mala are dependent on srotas for their formation, transportation and destruction.
- Each srotas provide nutrition to their respective dhatu or mala not others in requisite quantity.^[15,16] Srotas are the passages for the flow of air, water,

food, all dhatus and mala but also, they are specific to their functions.

CONCLUSION

The term srotas, as used in Ayurvedic texts depicts the dynamic and inner transport system of the body-mind-spirit organization. It indicates all ranges of the structural and functional units from the grossest to the subtlest, designed to carry specific materials, molecules, messages, impulses, emotions and thoughts under a unique holistic coordination in a unified field. Therefore, it is very true that they are innumerable and the whole body is covered with the srotas as the climber spreads all over the wall by sending its branches and sub-branches. Srotas along with their moola are described for the purpose of the physiology, pathology and surgery and clinical medicine. Each srotas is specific to its carrier dosha, dhatu, mala and other material. So, a complete knowledge of srotas with their moola and viddha-lakshana can help the vaidhya to take decisions accurately with respect to treatment and prognosis.

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