

AYURVEDIC VIEW OF DYSMENORRHOEA (KASHTARTAVA)***¹Dr. Pallavi Vijay Jedhe, ²Dr. Rahul Rajmal Muttha, ³Dr. Prakash Rambhau Kanade**¹PG Scholar Dept. of Prasutitantra Streerog, PMT's Ayurved College Shevgav.²Associate Proffeser Dept. of Prasuti Tantra Stree Rog, PMTS Ayurved College Shevgav.³HOD, Professor Dept. of Prasuti Tantra Stree Rog PMTS Ayurved College Shevgav.***Corresponding Author: Dr. Pallavi Vijay Jedhe**

PG Scholar Dept. of Prasutitantra Streerog, PMT's Ayurved College Shevgav.

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ABSTRACT

Dysmenorrhoea is defined as painful uterine cramps occurring during menstruation, severe enough to interfere with routine activities. It is one of the most common gynecological problems among adolescent girls and women, significantly affecting academic performance, work productivity, and overall quality of life. The condition may arise due to anatomical and functional abnormalities of the uterus. In Ayurveda, Kashtartava is not described as an independent disease entity but is understood as a symptom associated with various gynecological disorders such as *Kukshishoola*, *Vatala Yoni*, and *Udavartini Yonivyapada*. The term “Kashtartava” literally denotes a condition in which Artava (menstrual blood) is expelled with difficulty and pain. Classical *Ayurvedic* texts emphasize the fundamental role of Vata Dosha in the pathogenesis of gynecological disorders.

KEYWORDS: Kashtartava, Ayurveda, Udavartini Yonivyapada, Artava, Yoni Vyapad.**INTRODUCTION**

Kashtartava can be defined as painful menstruation (dysmenorrhoea), which presents as a symptom complex in many gynecological disorders. In Ayurvedic literature, dysmenorrhoea is described under various conditions such as Kashtartava, *Kukshishoola*, *Vatala Yoni*, and *Udavartini Yonivyapada*, which are classified under *Striroga* (Ayurvedic gynecology).^[1]

According to classical texts, aggravation of Vata Dosha—particularly Apana Vayu—is the principal factor responsible for the manifestation of the disease. The vitiated Vata disrupts the normal flow of Artava (menstrual blood), leading to painful and difficult menstruation.^[2]

Nirukti

The Kashtartava word is made of two words Kashta (painful, difficult) and Artava (menstruation).^[3] the word Kashtartava can be expressed as “*Kashthena Muchyati Iti Kashtartava*,” where *Kashthena* refers to the condition of great difficulty and *Muchyati* means shedding or expulsion.

Sampraptighatak

- Dosha - Vata pradhana tridosha.
- Vata - Vyana, Apana.
- Pitta - Ranjaka, Pachaka.
- Kapha as Anubandhita Dosha..
- Dhatu - Rasa, Rakta, Artava
- Upadhatu – Artava.
- Agni - Jatharagni, Rasagni, Raktagni.
- Srotasa - Rasa, Rakta and Artavavaha Srotasa.
- Srotodushti - Sanga and Vimargagamana.
- Rogamarga – Abyantara.
- Sthana samshraya – Garbhashaya.
- Vyakti sthana – Garbhashaya.

Ayurvedic Review

Acharya Charaka^[4] has mentioned none of the gynecological disease can be arise without affliction of aggravated Vata. Vata is the main responsible factor, though other doshas only be present as Anubandhi to it. So pain is produced due to vitiation of only vatadosha or in combination with other Doshas.

Kashtartava As A Symptom References**Charaka Samhita**

Saruka vataki yonivyapada (Ch./chi./30/10-11)
 Rajah Krichchha Udavartini Yonivyapada (Ch./chi./30/25-63)
 Saruja Vataja Asrigdara (Ch./chi./30/211-213)

Sushruta samhita

Rajah Krichchha Udavarta Yonivyapada (Su./utt./38/9-11)

Ashtanga sangraha

Sarujam Vataja Artava Dushti (A.S./sha./01/24)
 Rajah Krichchha Udavarta Yonivyapada (A.S./utt./38/36)

Ashtanga hridaya

Sarujam Vataja Artava Dushti (A.H./sha./01/10)
 Rajah Krichchha Udavarta Yonivyapada (A.H./utt./33/33-34)

Harita samhita

Saruja Vataja Artava Dushti (H.S./tri./48/13)

Modern Review**Dysmenorrhoea definition**

The term **dysmenorrhoea** refers to painful menstruation. It is characterized by cramp-like, labor-type pain in the lower abdomen that may radiate to the upper abdomen, lower back (waist), and thighs. It is often accompanied by systemic symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, dizziness, and general malaise. The severity of pain may range from mild discomfort to incapacitating pain that interferes with daily activities.^[5]

Etymology

The word dysmenorrhoea is derived from Greek.

- **Dys** – difficult, painful, or abnormal
- **Men** – month
- **Rhein (rrhoea)** – to flow

Thus, dysmenorrhoea literally means “painful or difficult menstrual flow.”

From a modern medical perspective, dysmenorrhoea may occur due to increased prostaglandin production, uterine hypercontractility, pelvic congestion, hormonal imbalance, psychological stress, or underlying pelvic pathology.

In Ayurvedic understanding, it is primarily associated with aggravation of Vata Dosha, particularly Apana Vayu, which governs the normal flow of menstruation.

Types of Dysmenorrhoea

There are two main types of dysmenorrhoea

Primary Dysmenorrhoea

Occurs in the absence of any identifiable pelvic pathology.

- Commonly seen in adolescents and young women.
- Usually begins within a few years of menarche.
- Pain is mainly due to increased prostaglandin secretion causing uterine contractions.

Secondary Dysmenorrhoea

- Associated with underlying pelvic pathology.
- More common in older women.
- Causes may include conditions such as endometriosis, fibroids, pelvic inflammatory disease, or adenomyosis.
- Pain may begin before menstruation and persist longer than primary dysmenorrhoea.

Both types significantly impact physical, emotional, and social well-being, requiring appropriate evaluation and management.

MANAGEMENT

Ayurveda considers Tridosha (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha) as the fundamental regulatory principles of physiology and pathology. Therefore, while planning treatment for any disease, correction of Dosha imbalance is of primary importance. In dysmenorrhoea (Kashtartava), Vata Dosha—particularly Apana Vayu—is regarded as the chief causative factor; hence, its management is prioritized.

Classical Ayurvedic texts describe various formulations and therapeutic procedures for the management of dysmenorrhoea. These include.

- Sushruta Samhita – Advocates the use of fresh juice of Rasona (garlic) in the morning for relief of pain associated with Udavarta (abdominal pain and distension).
- Phala Ghrita – A medicated ghee preparation beneficial for gynecological disorders and regulation of menstrual function.
- Jeerakadi Modaka – Useful in correcting digestive fire and pacifying Vata.
- Maharasnadi Kwatha – Effective in alleviating Vata-related pain.
- Shatavaryadi Anuvasana Basti – Oil-based enema therapy indicated for Vata disorders of the reproductive system.
- Baladi Anuvasana Basti – Strengthening and Vata-pacifying therapeutic enema.^[6]

Panchakarma (Five Purificatory Therapies)

In Ayurveda, Panchakarma refers to the five principal bio-purificatory procedures designed to eliminate vitiated Doshas and restore physiological balance. In severe or recurrent cases of dysmenorrhoea (Kashtartava), Panchakarma therapies may be employed after proper Purva Karma, which includes Snehana (oleation) and Swedana (sudation). These preparatory measures help soften tissues and mobilize Doshas for effective elimination.

The five principal procedures include

- Vamana (Therapeutic Emesis): Indicated primarily for Kapha disorders, it eliminates aggravated Doshas through the upper route.
- Virechana (Therapeutic Purgation): Mainly for Pitta disorders, Virechana expels vitiated Doshas via the lower gastrointestinal tract.
- Basti (Medicated Enema Therapy): Considered the most effective therapy for Vata disorders, Basti regulates Apana Vayu, alleviates pelvic pain, and normalizes menstrual flow.
- Nasya (Nasal Administration of Medications): Administering medicated oils or powders through the nasal route helps balance Doshas affecting the head, hormonal regulation, and nervous system.
- Raktamokshana (Bloodletting Therapy, if indicated): Applied in specific conditions where vitiated blood (Rakta) contributes to the pathology.

These Panchakarma procedures not only cleanse the system but also provide symptomatic relief in gynecological disorders, including dysmenorrhoea. By eliminating aggravated Doshas, restoring normal flow of Apana Vayu, and correcting systemic imbalances, Panchakarma forms an integral part of Ayurvedic management of painful menstruation.^[7]

Treatment for Avrita Apana Vayu^[8]

In Ayurveda, Avrita Apana Vayu refers to the obstruction of Apana Vayu, the sub-type of Vata responsible for the downward flow of menstrual blood, urine, and feces. Obstruction of Apana Vayu can lead to dysmenorrhoea, constipation, urinary difficulties, and lower abdominal discomfort.

The treatment focuses on restoring the normal flow of Vata and includes the following approaches.

- Agnideepana (Enhancing Digestive Fire): Correcting impaired Agni (digestive fire) helps in proper metabolism and prevents the formation of Ama (toxins), which can obstruct Vata flow.
- Grahi (Promoting Absorption): Therapies and herbs with Grahi properties improve nutrient absorption, reduce intestinal stasis, and facilitate smooth Vata movement.
- Vata Anulomana (Facilitating Downward Flow of Vata): Specific herbal formulations and procedures are used to normalize the direction and flow of Vata, especially Apana Vayu, ensuring proper elimination and menstrual discharge.
- Pakvashaya Shuddhikara (Purification of Lower Gastrointestinal Tract): Procedures like Basti (medicated enemas) and other cleansing therapies are employed to remove obstructions in the colon, which helps in unblocking Apana Vayu and alleviating associated symptoms.

These interventions collectively restore the natural downward flow of Apana Vayu, relieve menstrual pain, and prevent recurrence of dysmenorrhoea.

Role of Yoga in Dysmenorrhoea Management^[9]

Yoga is a natural, drug-free approach that can help reduce both the intensity and frequency of menstrual pain. It works by increasing the pain threshold, improving flexibility, enhancing mental stability, and promoting overall physical and emotional well-being. Regular practice of specific yoga asanas can also improve blood circulation to the pelvic region, relieve uterine cramps, and relax tense muscles.

Some yoga poses particularly beneficial for dysmenorrhoea include.

- Ushtrasana (Camel Pose)-Opens the abdomen, stretches the back, and relieves lower abdominal tension.
 - Bhadrasana (Gracious Pose)-Supports pelvic alignment, promotes relaxation, and eases menstrual discomfort.
 - Gomukhasana (Cow Face Pose)-Stretches hips and thighs, reduces muscle tension, and improves circulation.
 - Vajrasana (Thunderbolt Pose)- Promotes proper digestion, strengthens pelvic organs, and aids in relaxation.
- These asanas, when practiced regularly under proper guidance, help alleviate menstrual cramps, reduce stress, and contribute to overall relief from dysmenorrhoea.^[10]

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present article is based on a comprehensive literary review of classical Ayurvedic texts, along with relevant modern books and peer-reviewed journals. References were collected and analyzed from the Brihattrayee, namely the Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya, including their respective Sanskrit commentaries and available Hindi translations.

DISCUSSION

The herbs used in Kashtartava (Dysmenorrhea) act either directly or indirectly in alleviating symptoms. Primary dysmenorrhea is widely recognized as painful menstruation without any underlying pelvic pathology. From an Ayurvedic standpoint, Kashtartava is primarily associated with the vitiation of Vata Dosha, particularly Apana Vata, which governs the downward movement of menstrual blood.

The spasmodic pain experienced during menstruation is mainly attributed to aggravated Vata, as Vata is responsible for movement and pain (Shoola). Therefore, the therapeutic approach. Ayurveda emphasizes Vatashamaka (Vata-pacifying) herbs and formulations.

The herbal remedies used in dysmenorrhea commonly possess

Vatashamaka property - pacifying aggravated Vata and reducing spasmodic pain.

Balya (nourishing) property, strengthening the reproductive system.

Vedanasthapana property - analgesic effect.

Shoolahara property - relieving colicky pain.

By correcting the imbalance of Vata and nourishing the reproductive tissues (Artava Dhatu), these herbs help in reducing uterine cramps, regulating menstrual flow, and improving overall menstrual health. Thus, in Kashtartava, the central role of Vata in causing cramps is well recognized, and the management primarily focuses on Vata-shamana therapy along with supportive nourishment.

CONCLUSION

According to Ayurveda, dysmenorrhea is primarily caused by an imbalance of the doshas, particularly Vata dosha. Ayurvedic management emphasizes restoring this balance through a holistic approach that includes a dosha-appropriate diet, herbal supplements, regular physical exercise, yoga, meditation, and mindful nourishment of the five senses.

Evidence and traditional practice suggest that Ayurvedic treatments can provide significant relief from menstrual pain. Through the use of natural remedies and lifestyle modifications, dysmenorrhea can be effectively managed, improving overall well-being and quality of life.

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