

**CONCEPT OF *PURISHVAHA SROTAS* IN THE PATHOGENESIS OF *ARSA*: A
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21018626>**How to cite this Article:** Dr. Jayashri B. Shinde*¹, Prof. Dr. Vinod Choudhari². (2026). Concept of *Purishvaha Srotas* In The Pathogenesis of *Arsa*: A Classical Ayurvedic Review. World Journal of Pharmaceutical and Medical Research, 12(7), 139-142.

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Article Received on 01/06/2026

Article Revised on 22/06/2026

Article Published on 01/07/2026

ABSTRACT

Arsa (haemorrhoids) is a commonly described anorectal disorder in Ayurvedic literature characterized by pain, bleeding, prolapse, and difficulty in defecation. The functional integrity of *Purisavaha Srotas*, which governs the formation and elimination of fecal matter, is essential for maintaining anorectal health. Disturbance in this *Srotas* plays a key role in the etiopathogenesis of *Arsa*. This paper presents a conceptual review based on classical Ayurvedic texts including *Charaka Samhita*, *Susruta Samhita*, and *Astanga Hrdaya*. The study highlights the role of *Apana Vayu* dysfunction, *Tridosha* imbalance, and *Gudapradesha* structural involvement in the development of *Arsa*. Integrating classical Ayurvedic understanding with modern anatomical interpretation may help improve preventive and therapeutic strategies in hemorrhoidal disease.

KEYWORDS: *Arsa*, *Purisavaha Srotas*, *Apana Vayu*, Ayurveda.**INTRODUCTION**

According to Ayurveda, the living body (*Sharira*) is composed of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala*, which are considered the essential constituents responsible for sustaining life. These vital components are transported throughout the body via the *Srotas* (channels), ensuring proper nourishment and physiological functioning. *Srotas* represent a unique and fundamental concept in Ayurveda, serving as the pathways necessary for the maintenance of health and survival. They are regarded as basic structural and functional units of the body. Any defect in their development or impairment in their function can lead to the manifestation of disease. Therefore, a thorough understanding of *Srotas* is crucial for promoting health, preventing illness, and improving medical care.^[1]

According to various Ayurvedic scholars, the concept of *Srotas* has been understood from different perspectives. Acharya Charaka described *Srotas* as subtle, colourless channels that acquire the characteristics of the substances flowing through them and possess openings that facilitate

the transport and exchange of *Dhatu*s and other body constituents.^[2]

In contrast, Acharya Sushruta clearly distinguished *Srotas* from *Sira* and *Dhamani*, considering them separate anatomical and functional structures.^[3]

Sira, *Dhamani*, and *Srotas* together constitute the body's transport system. They differ in their specific functions: *Dhamani* performs *Dhamana Karma* (transport with pulsation), *Sira* carries out *Sarana Karma* (transport without pulsation), and *Srotas* is responsible for *Sravana Karma* (flow or conduction under neutral pressure).^[4]

Acharya Sushruta has described the *srotomoola* of *purishavha srotas* as *pakwashaya* (colon) and *guda* (rectum). The area of passage where the *purisha* remain and passes through in the body termed as *purishvaha srotas* physiologically *purishvaha srotas* contain two part. 1st part *purish* formed called as *pakwashay* (colon) and 2nd part where formed *purish* expelled out is called as *guda* or *sthulguda* (Rectum).^[5]

Concept of *srotas* in *ayurveda* The formation of *srotas* begins during IUL guided by proper *agni* (metabolic activity) and their differentiation occur under the influence of *vayu*. The differentiation of fertilized zygote leads to development of multiple *srotas* from which various bodily structure originate.^[6]

The *Purishvaha Srotas* become vitiated due to suppression of the natural urge for defecation, excessive food intake, eating before the previous meal is fully digested, particularly in individuals who are emaciated and possess weak digestive power.^[7]

In modern anatomical and physiological understanding of the rectum and *Guda Sharir*, it is divided into two functional parts. The upper segment, which is related to the peritoneum, originates from the hindgut and lies above the rectum's middle fold. It functions primarily as a reservoir for faeces and can expand forward. The lower segment, which has no peritoneal covering, develops from the cloaca and is positioned below the middle fold. Under normal conditions, it remains empty, though in chronic constipation it may hold faecal matter, triggering the urge to defecate.^[8]

The causative factors responsible for the vitiation of *Purishavaha Srotas* include suppression of the natural urge for defecation (*Vegadharana*), excessive food intake (*Atyashana*), indigestion (*Ajeerna*), consuming food before the previous meal has been digested (*Adhyashana*), impaired digestive fire (*Durbalagni*), and a debilitated or emaciated physical state.^[9]

| No | Causative factor of purishvaha srotas |
|----|---|
| 1 | Defecation (<i>Vegadharana</i>) |
| 2 | Excessive food intake (<i>Atyashana</i>), |
| 3 | Indigestion (<i>Ajeerna</i>), |
| 4 | Consuming food before the previous meal has been digested (<i>Adhyashana</i>) |
| 5 | Impaired digestive fire (<i>Durbalagni</i>), |

According to the symptoms of *Purisha Kshaya*, when the quantity of stool is reduced, *Vata* moves excessively within the intestines, causing abdominal distension and upward movement toward the costal (rib) region. This condition is associated with increased passage of flatus and excessive flatulence.^[10]

According to *Sushruta*, *Apana Vayu* is situated in the lower part of the gastrointestinal tract, particularly the *Pakvashaya* (large intestine). Its primary role is to facilitate the downward expulsion of the foetus, faces, urine, semen, and menstrual blood at the appropriate time.^[11] Repeated straining increases pressure on *gudavali*. Hard faecal matter causes continuous friction and trauma.

According to Garnath Sen, *Pakvashaya* corresponds to the large intestine (*Vrihadantra*), where *Maladhara Kala* is situated. *Purishadhara Kala* plays an important role in

retaining faecal matter and separating waste material within the caecum (*Unduka*). The absorptive villi of the small intestine extract the nutritive essence from digested food, while the remaining residue passes into the caecum and forms faeces. According *Ghanekar* has described *Pakvashaya* as the colon, and in general Ayurvedic literature the term *Pakvashaya* is commonly considered synonymous with *Sthulantra* (large intestine).^[12]

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Acharya *Charaka* has described the location (*Sthana*), causative factors (*Hetu*), and symptoms of vitiation (*Lakshana*) of *Purishvaha Srotas* in the 5th chapter of *Vimanasthana*.^[13]

Acharya Sushruta has explained the location and features of vitiation of *Purishvaha Srotas* in the 9th chapter of *Sharirasthana*.^[14]

Ashtanga Sangraha discusses the location and manifestations of *Srotodushti* in the 6th chapter of *Sharirasthana*.^[15]

Ashtanga Hridaya describes the location and symptoms of *Purishvaha Srotas Dushti* in the 3rd chapter of *Sharirasthan*.^[16]

According to *Charaka*

पुरीषवहानां स्रोतसां पक्वाशयो मूलं स्थूलं गुदं च । च.वि 5/8

According to *Sushrut*

पुरीषवहे द्वे तयोः मूलं पक्वाशयो गुदं च । सुश्रुत शारीर स्थान 9/12/

According to *Ashtang Sangraha*

शकृद्वाहहनांनक्काशयः स्थूलं गुदं । अ स शा.६/४३

Mulasthanas of *purishvaha srotas* are *pakwashaya* and *sthulantra*.

One portion is used for the formation of *purisha* (*pakwashaya*) and other portion is used to help in defecation by receiving the defecation signals from rectum (*sthulantra*) to be used in initiation of defecation reflex (*guda* and *sthula guda*). So, it can be concluded that one portion of *purishvaha srotas* is involved in the formation of *purish* and other portion is involved in defaecation process for the expulsion of flatus and faeces.^[17]

Dusti of *Purishavaha Srotas* manifests as

दुष्टीलक्षणे - कृच्छ्रेण अल्पअल्प सशब्द शूलं अतिद्रवं अतिग्रथितं अतिबहु च उपविशन्तं दृष्ट्वा पुरीषवहानि अस्य स्रोतांसि प्रदुष्टानि इति विद्यात् । च.चि.१/२८

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1 | Constipation |
| 2 | Hard stool |
| 3 | Painful defecation |
| 4 | Incomplete evacuation |

These symptoms are commonly observed in patients of Arsa.

Arsa Samprapti

Ayurvedic texts explain that improper diet and lifestyle cause *Agni mandya* and *Vata prakopa*, particularly *Apana Vayu dusti*. This results in impaired bowel movement and excessive straining. Continued strain leads to Dosa accumulation in *Gudapradesha Rakta stambha* (venous congestion) *Mamsa* and *Meda dusti*. Development of *Arsa Sushruta* clearly explains the involvement of *Tridosha* and *Gudavalis* in the manifestation of *Arsa*.

From a modern anatomical perspective, haemorrhoids occur due to:

Increased pressure in hemorrhoidal venous plexus, Chronic constipation Weakening of supporting connective tissue, Prolonged straining during defecation. These mechanisms closely resemble the Ayurvedic explanation of *Apana Vayu* dysfunction. and *Purisavaha Srotas dusti*. Thus, classical Ayurvedic theory demonstrates strong conceptual correlation with modern pathophysiology.^[18]

Role of Puriṣadhara Kala in Arsa

Puriṣadhara Kala is responsible for retention and differentiation of fecal matter.

Disturbance of *Puriṣadhara Kala* may lead to excessive water absorption resulting in hard stools and chronic constipation.^[19]

Puriṣavaha Srotodushti as a Predisease State

Long-standing *Puriṣavaha Srotodushti* may be considered a precursor stage of *Arsa*.

Early management of constipation may prevent progression to clinical hemorrhoids.^[20]

Apana Vayu –Puriṣavaha Srotas Axis

Introduce the concept of the *Apana Vayu–Puriṣavaha Srotas* Axis. Normal bowel evacuation depends upon coordinated functioning of both. Disturbance in this axis may result in *Vibandha*, *Malasanga*, and ultimately *Arsa*.^[21]

Srotorodha as an Early Event

Srotorodha caused by *ama* may be considered the earliest pathological event.

Before visible hemorrhoidal masses develop, subtle functional disturbances of *Puriṣavaha Srotas* occur.^[22]

DISCUSSION

The concept of *Purisavaha Srotas* provides a functional understanding of bowel regulation and anorectal health. Disturbance in *Apana Vayu* leads to impaired evacuation, which becomes the initiating factor in *Arsa*.

Ayurveda emphasizes preventive measures such as

- 1) Proper diet (*Pathya Ahara*)
- 2) Regular bowel habits
- 3) Avoidance of excessive straining
- 4) Maintenance of digestive fire (*Agni*)

These preventive principles align with modern recommendations for haemorrhoid prevention. The integration of classical Ayurvedic knowledge with modern anatomical understanding can improve both prevention and management strategies.

CONCLUSION

Purisavaha Srotas plays a central role in maintaining anorectal physiology. Its dysfunction, particularly through *Apana Vayu* vitiation, forms the basis of *Arsa* pathogenesis. Classical Ayurvedic concepts provide a comprehensive framework that correlates well with modern anatomical and physiological explanations of hemorrhoidal disease.

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