

A CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF ARTAVAHA SROTAS

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ABSTRACT

According to Ayurveda, health of a female starts in the fetal stage itself which describes the measures to yield a good female child. The distinctive anatomical and physiological features of women in each age group were well studied by the ancient sages of Ayurveda. Just as the river is cleansed by its flow the women are purified by the menstrual flow. That is the reason for the non-susceptibility of women to many diseases. The regimens to be followed during menstrual and post-menstrual periods are well advocated in Ayurveda.^[3] Disregard to these regimens is the leading cause for many of the gynecological and systemic diseases in women. In addition to the systemic diseases, 20 gynecological diseases are described, which are explained in the classics under the entity of Yonivyapad and all the Yoni Roga are the disease of anatomical components of Artavavaha Srotas (Reproductive system). Srotas (body channels) is considered as an important entity of the body and is responsible for the vahana (transferring) of dosha, dhatu etc. Whole body is considered as srotomaya (made of srotas).^[5] Among the types of Srotas, artavavaha srotas is given prime importance which is present only in females. The root of artavavaha srotas is considered as garbhashaya (uterus) and artavavahi dhamani (vessels carrying Artava). Injury to artavavaha srotas leads to infertility, dysperunia, and amenorrhea. As per context Artava can be considered as ovum and menstrual bleeding i.e. Beejarupi artava and drustaratva respectively. The Beejarupi artava released from ovary reaches the garbhashaya and unites with shukra (sperm) to form garbha (fetus). Artava which is accumulated in a month is drawn towards the vaginal orifice by vata through the dhamanis and this is called drustartava. Considering two dimensions of the word artava (beejarupi, drustartava) and garbha formation, mula of artavavaha srotas is being mentioned as garbhashaya and artavavahi dhamani. The release of Beejarupi artava will be fruitful when it reaches the garbhashaya and unites with shukra and forms garbha, hence garbhashaya is considered as one of the mula of artavavaha srotas. For a fruitful coitus (for formation of garbha) rajasrava kala plays an important role which is due to vahana of artava through artavavahi dhamani, hence artavavahi dhamani is considered as the mula of artavavaha srotas. Similarly srotomula of each and every srotas should be analyzed along with its mula and there is a need of further study in the field of srotas and srotomula.^[7]

KEYWORDS: Srotas, artava, garbhashaya, shukra, amenorrhea.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda explained different structures or parts of the Artavavaha Srotas which are similar to the structures of the female reproductive system. The term Bhaga is in Ayurveda refers to the Smaramandira and Yoni which shows similarity with Vulva. It is of 12 Angular in length. It seems to be the description of circumference of entire vulva instead of introitus of vagina. Thus the word Bhaga gives the meaning of Yoni, which denotes the external genital organs of female i.e. vulva or the introitus of vagina. Smaratpatra is situated in upper portion of the vagina similar to the clitoris which is highly stimulated/erectile structure during sexual act. The word Yoni in Ayurvedic classics refers to entire reproductive system and also as individual organs. The

word Yoni is used in different contexts to denote different organs of female reproductive system.^[13]

The Artavavaha srotas is one among the bahirmukha Srotas. The group of organs concerned with utpatti and visarjana of artava is called artavavaha srotas. Garbhashaya and artavavahi dhamanis are said to be mula of this Srotas. It plays very important role in carrying the menstrual blood out of the body during monthly menstrual cycle and thus maintains the health. When artavavaha srotas get vitiated it produces many artavavaha srotogata vikaras. Srotas are the pathway in the body in which physiology and pathology depends. Srotas which may carry the Aartava is called as Aartavavaha Srotas. Rutu, Kshetra, Ambu, Beeja are primary factors for the Garbhotpadana. Beeja refers to

Aartava, it is an important entity in female reproductive age, which is responsible for the formation of Garbha.^[9]

Srotas meaning channels or pores are present throughout the visible body as well as at the invisible or subtle level of the cells, molecules, atoms and subatomic state. It is through these channels that nutrients and other substances are transported in and out of our physiologies. It is also through these channels that information and intelligence spontaneously flow. When the flow of appropriate nutrients and energies through these channels is unimpeded, there is health when there is excess, deficiency or blockage in these channels disease can take root. Ayurveda is most ancient medical science having all the part of medical including anatomy, physiology, pathology, medicine etc. brief anatomical description of human body is given in Sharir-sthan of every text of Ayurveda. Srotasas are the peculiarity of Ayurvedic medical science describing the systems of body. Srotasas are considered as secretory channels of the body. Srotasas are the hollow spaces of our body which transport the parinam prad dhatu (essence of the food) from one place to another place. Srotasas are the systems or the part of the body systems or the secretory channels which are responsible for the secretions or transportation of Dhatus. Purush (Live being) is considered as the combination of Srotasas.^[16]

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Artava Nirukti

The word Ritu means Particular or specific time and Bhavam means Occurrence. Thus, the whole term denotes a substance of the body, which flows out at a specific time, or period is called as "Artava".^[11]

One of the synonyms for Artava is Rajah, the etymology of the Rajah is as follows-

That substance which stains the vagina, or the yoni is termed as Rajah, since its purity and impurity is to be tested by means of the stained it stains the cloth also and as such it is termed as Rajah.^[2]

Moolsthan Of Artavavaha Srotas

While considering the Moolsthan of any Srotas, following points are taken in consideration like Utpattisthan (origin point of view), Sangrahashtan (storage) and Vahanasthan (conduction). The Moolsthan or source is considered that without which the origin, maintenance and destruction of that specific carrier of body nutrient cannot be possible and the place which controls the entire functional dealings and processes of the specific carrier. In females, additional Srotas is explained named as Artavavaha Srotas. Ayurveda mentions the Garbhasaya and Artavavahi Dhamani as a Moolsthan of Artavavaha Srotas. Garbhashaya is mainly responsible for conception, production and expulsion Artava, from origin point of view.^[12] It shows same structural and functional characteristics of uterus along with ovaries and both have same pathological and clinical conditions after injury. Artavavahi Dhamani can

be taken as fallopian tube which conducts Artava (ovum) towards uterus during menstrual phase and ovarian and uterine vessels, Dhamana word refers to contraction, hence in this study as by contracting fallopian tube conduct the ovum so it works like an Artavavahi Dhamani. In Garbhashaya, the word Ashaya refers as cavity or space in that particular organ which are prime functional areas or cavities of the body.^[9] Garbhashaya is a space which helps in implantation and development of Garbha (foetus) here it doesn't refers to only a single organ but it is the hollow space in the body where various bio physiological activities happens. Yoni is a very important structure of female body, shaped as "Shankha Nabhi Akriti", contains three Avarta (circular folds) in its structure. Garbhashaya or Garbhashayya is an important structure situated in third Avarta of Yoni. Here the term Yoni has ample meaning represent the whole reproductive system of female in which shows three circular folds or subdivision yoni(vagina), Garbhashayamukha (cervical canal) and Garbhashayya (uterus) from external to internal respectively.^[5]

Definition Of Artava

Rakta reaching the uterus and coming out from Yoni for 3 days in every month is called Rajah.

The substance which is formed only in female from Rasa and is having colour of Rakta, flowing through the female genital tract, commencing at the age of 12 years and ceasing at the age of 50 years (except during Garbhavastha, Sutikavastha, Stanyakalavastha) and which flows for a duration of 3 to 7 days is called Artava.^[6]

Synonyms Of Artava

Artava, Shonita, Asrik, Raja, Rakt, Lohita, Rudhira, Pushpa.^[15]

Qualities Of Aartava

Normal Aartava flows without Piccha (sliminess), Daha (burning sensation), Arti (pain) i.e. normal Aartava which has equilibrium of Dosha will not have these three properties. It flows out 3 to 5 days, quantity is neither too excessive nor too less. Aartava appears like colour of Gunjaphala, Padma Sannibha (colour of the lotus petals, colour of insect Indragopa, colour of Shashaasrak (blood of rabbit), Laksharasop (colour of resin of laksha), Yadvasonaviranjayet (not stains to cloth).^[3]

Artava Pravritti Kala (Srava Kala)^[5,9,15]

Different Acharyas coated different Sravakaala of Aartava as below;-

According Various Samhita's	Artava Pravritti Kala (Srava Kala)
Bhaavprakash samhita	3
Asthang hridayam	3
Ashtang sangrah	3
Charak samhita	5
Harit samhita	7

Artava Nivritti Kala

All Samhitas have mentioned the Artava Nivritti Kala as 50 years.^[6,12,8]

Aartava Dushti

When Aartava gets Vruddhi, it produces symptoms like Atipravrutti (excessive flow of Aarthava), Angamarda (Body pain), Daurgandya (Bad smell). [When Aarthava gets Kshaya then it produces symptoms like Yatochita Kaala Adarshana (occurs at improper time), Alpata (less quantity), Yonivedana (vaginal pain).^[3]

Aartava Vaha Sroto Viddha Lakshana

If any injury to Aartavavaha Srotas that leads to Vandhyatwa, Maitunaasahishnuta, Aartava Nasha.^[10]

Symptoms Of Injury Of Artavavahasrotas

When the AartavaVaahini Dhamanis are injured, they cause:-

1. Vandhyata – infertility
2. Maithuna asahishnuta – Intolerance to sex, difficulty in sex or painful sex (dyspareunia)
3. Aartava naasha – Amenorrhoea or Dysmenorrhoea.^[8]

Management Of Artavavaha Srotodushti (Vitiation Of Artavavaha Srotas)

The vitiation of Artavavaha srotas should be managed on the lines of treatment of Yoni vyapad (vaginal, uterine disorders) and Artavavyapat (disorders of menstruation)¹⁵ Gynecology is the study of female organs of reproduction and their diseases. In Ayurveda, these are studied in 'Stree Roga Vigyan'⁵. Causes of Stree Roga (Gynecological diseases) are mainly:-

- i Artavadosha (Menstrual irregularities)
- ii Bijadosha (Defect in Ovum / genetic mutations)
- iii Abnormal diet and habits
- iv Excessive coitus etc.

Gynecological diseases are described as 'Yoni Vyapad' which are 20 in numbers and cover most of the diseases prevalent in this era. Diseases and their management can be understood as under - Yoni Vyapad^[16]:-

- 1) Pittaja (Pelvic Inflammatory Disease)
- 2) Shleshmiki (Trichomoniasis)
- 3) Raktayoni (Dysfunctional Uterine Bleeding)
- 4) Arajaska (Secondary Amenorrhoea)
- 5) Upapluta (Candidiasis)
- 6) Karnini (Cervical ectopy)
- 7) Vandhya (Primary Amenorrhoea)
- 8) Putraghni (Recurrent Pregnancy Loss)
- 9) Udavartini (Dysmenorrhoea)

10) Phalini (Cystocele)

11) Mahayoni (Prolapse).

12) Asrigdhara / ArtavaVyapad (Menstrual Irregularities).

13) Arbuda & Granthi (Tumours & Cysts) eg. Uterine Fibroid, Follicular Cysts.

14) Vandhyatva (Infertility).

15) Rajonivritti (Menopause).

Management of Stree Roga (Gynecological diseases) is by Panchakarma (five methods of purification) especially Uttar basti; Oral medicines and Local application of medicine in the form of oil, decoction, paste etc as vaginal tampons, douche, fumigation etc. The Ayurvedic treatment not only cures the pathology in reproductive organs but with holistic approach, treats the woman as a whole, thereby improving the general health also.^[8]

DISCUSSION

Artavavaha Srotas (channels which carry the menstrual blood). Their roots are located in Garbhashaya (Uterus), artavavahidhamanis (fallopian or uterine tubes or the arteries) which take part in supplying the uterine blood and also in the menstruation process.

Srotasses are appropriated from the root to any terminal piece of the design or body. Srotasses are situated inside the spaces of the body; they spread all through the body and convey fundamental materials. They are entirely unexpected designs from Siras (veins, lymphatics and so on) and dhamanis (supply routes, nerves).

Srotas are distributed from the root to any terminal portion or the structure of the body. Srotas are located within the spaces of the body, they spread all through the body and carry essential materials. They are totally different structures from siras (veins, lymphatics etc) and dhamanis (arteries, nerves). The Srotas has the colour of the dhatu (tissue) that they are carrying or transporting. They are of different shapes and sizes namely round, thick, large, small, macroscopic, and elongated and form network and branches. With the description, each and every cell can be considered as a srotas if the transportation mechanism is taking place in and out of the cell. While describing the varieties of srotas, Acharya Charaka specified that as many solid structures are present in the body, the same number and types of srotas are also present.

The srotas has the shade of the dhatu (tissue) that they are conveying or moving. They are of various shapes and sizes specifically, round, thick, huge, little, minuscule, and stretched and structure organization and branches. With this portrayal, every single cell can be considered as a srotas since the transportation component is occurring all through the phone. While portraying the assortments of Srotas Acharya Charaka determined that as numerous strong designs are available in the body, similar number and kinds of Srotas are likewise present.

The Srotamsi of ayurveda can be correlated with all the biological channels (blood vessels, lymphatics, and capillaries), pores, paracellular spaces, intracellular spaces etc. These are not only restricted to organs, systems, cells, but also to the nucleus of the cells. Several voltage gated channels in cell membrane which act as active transport of drugs in an out of the cells also considered as Srotamsi. Cells are also inter-connected by junctional channels and they share a common pool of small metabolites that pass freely from one cell to another. In metabolically active cells like epithelial and endothelial cells, these communicating channels are more pronounced. These cells are inter-connected by gap junction or nexus (Srotamsi).

CONCLUSION

Srotas are the channels different from the sira and dhamani, which carries nutrients to the body organs and widely spreads all over the body. It also carries waste material for the removal from the body, without srotas existence of life can not be possible. Every srotas have 2 mulasthana and function of this mulasthana is to produce the elements which flow through the srotas. If mulasthana is defective, srotas will be defective, but if srotas is defective, does not mean that mulasthana will be defective. Garbhashaya and artavavahi dhamani are the mulasthana of the artavavaha srotas. Garbhashaya is mainly responsible for the production of the artava, so it can be considered as the mulasthana of the artavavaha srotas of origin point of view. Artavavahi dhamani conducts artava towards uterus during menstrual phase.

The Srotas are of two types, Bahirmukhasrotas (External openings or apertures) and Antarmukha srotas (Internal channels of the body). Bahirmukha srotas are 10 in number. According to Acharya Charaka Antarmukha srotas are of 13 types and According to Acharya Susruta they are 11 pairs of Antarmukha srotas - Pranavaha, Annavaha, Udakavaha, Rasavaha, Raktavaha, Mamsavaha, Medovaha, Shukravaha, Mutravaha, Purishvaha and Artavavaha srotas. Acharya Susruta was the only one, who considered artavavaha srotas.

Knowledge of artavavaha srotas (anatomy and physiology of female reproductive system) is necessary to find appropriate etio-pathogenesis and treatment of gynaecological disorders. Ayurveda classics have put emphasis on applied aspect of science and hence instead

of describing micro structural details, they have described "sharira" wherever necessary. "Yoni" suggests the total genital path and Avarta of yoni explains various parts of genital path. Modern science explains analogous descriptions regarding vagina that it is a fibromusculo-membranous sheath communicating the uterine cavity by the outside of the vulva. It includes the excretory channel for the uterine secretion and menstrual blood. The location of "garbhashaya" is in third avarta of yoni, at the backside of the bladder, in between pittashaya and pakwashaya. Susruta quoted the "phalamntargata" which can be compared with beejagranthi (ovary).

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