

REVIEW ON KASHTARTAVA (DYSMENORRHEA) AND ITS AYURVEDIC  
MANAGEMENT

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## ABSTRACT

Kashtartava is a broad term which covers all the problems and ailments that a woman may suffer from during or around menstruation. It includes both primary and secondary types of dysmenorrhea. In present-day life, women are effectively facing challenges encountered by stressful life resulting in Mithyaahara and Vihara, over exertion and malnutrition, this may direct to Vikruti in "Rituchakra" leading to various Vyadhi allied to menstruation. Ayurveda recommends Ritucharya and Dinacharya, diet modulation and Yoga in the form of Asanas, Pranayam and meditation on a regular basis so as to alleviate dysmenorrhoea effectively. Similarly, Uttarbasti, Garbhashaya Balya Aushadhi, Anuvasana or Matrabasti can also be administered if necessary.

**KEYWORDS:** Kashtartava, Dysmenorrhoea, Ayurveda, Menstruation.

## INTRODUCTION

Dysmenorrhea is the most common gynecological problem faced by women during their adolescence. A systematic review of studies from developing countries revealed that about 25%–50% of adult women and about 75% of adolescents experience pain during menstruation, with 5%–20% reporting severe dysmenorrhea or pain that is severe enough to prevent them from carrying out their day-to-day activities. In Ayurvedic texts, though various conditions are described in which menstruation occurs with pain but Kashtartava is not mentioned specifically. It is a symptom of various Yonivyapadas specially Udavarta, Vatala, Sannipatika etc. Acharya Charak has mentioned that Yoniroga can't occur without vitiation of Vata. As Vata is main causative factor it should be treated first.<sup>[3]</sup> According to Ayurveda, pain is an indication of Vata Vikriti – Vataadrite Nasti Ruja.<sup>[4]</sup> Pain is the main feature of Kashtartava, so it has strong relation with Vata dosha. In classical text it is explained that due to Vega Dharana of Vata, Mutra & Purisha the Apana Vata get vitiated and it gets Udhraavagami i, e normal Anulomak Gati of Apana Vayu changes to Pratiloma Gati and this vitiated Vata lifts the Yoni upward. And causes obstruction to flow of Raja. And then Raja comes out with great difficulty with severe shoola.

The treatment usually advocated in modern medicine, i.e., analgesics, antispasmodics, and/or oral contraceptive pills,<sup>[5]</sup> does not provide a long-lasting solution and, besides, may lead to serious adverse effects. As yet there is no treatment regimen that can relieve the entire

symptom complex of primary dysmenorrhea. Kashtartava, especially when it manifests as primary dysmenorrhea, is a Vata-dominant condition. In Ayurveda, Basti karma is the best choice of treatment for Vata dosha. All the Acharya has appreciated Basti as a unique form of treatment modality. Basti is said to Ardha Chikitsa Or Complete Chikitsa by Charakacharya.<sup>[6]</sup> And Dashmoola Taila is also Tridoshaghna & considered as best Vatahara. So, Dashmoola Taila Matrabasti is safe & effective in the management of Kashtartav.<sup>[7]</sup>

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Artava:** A substance of the body which flows out at the specific period of time is called as Artava. A substance which flows out from Apaty amarga without pain, burning and sliminess is known as Artava. Apana Vayu and Vyana Vayuis mainly responsible for Artava Utpatti.

**Kashtartava:** Kashtartava (dysmenorrhea) is not separately described as a disease. But there are many diseases in which Kashtartava is considered and described as a symptom.

**Nirukti:** The term Kashtartava is made of two words - Kashta and Artava.

**Kashta:** Painful, difficult, troublesome, ill, forced, wrong, unnatural, a bad state of thing.

**Artava:** Belonging to reasons, period of time, menstruation.

Thus, the word *Kashtartava* can be expressed as “*Kashtithena Muchyati Iti Kashtartava*” i.e., the condition where *Artava* is shed with great difficulty and pain is termed as “*Kashtartava*”.

### Sampraptighataka

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 Samsraya – Garbhashaya; Vyakti Sthana – Garbhashaya.

**Concept of Kashta (Pain) In Ayurveda in Relation to Kashtartava** Without *Vāta* there can not be any pain. Vata is the main responsible factor, though other *Doshās* only be present as *Anubandhi* to it. So, pain is produced due to vitiation of alone *Vata Dosha* or in combination with other *Doshās*.

*Sushruta* has described symptoms as roughness, stiffness, acute pain and pricking pain.<sup>[9]</sup> In this condition pain is more in comparison to other *Yoniyapada* (Gynaecological disorders) of *Vāta*. *Sannipatika Yoniyapada*. There is burning sensation and pain in vagina with yellowish and white unctuous vaginal discharges *Udavarta Yoniyapada*. *Charaka* says that the uterus is seized with pain, pushes the *Raja* (menstrual blood) upwards and then discharges with great difficulty and pain. The lady feels comfort after discharging the menstrual blood.<sup>[10,11]</sup> *Sushruta* has described it to be characterized by painful frothy menstruation, associated with other *Vatika* pain. *Indu* has added discharge of clotted blood.<sup>13</sup> *Yogaratakara* has added the discharge of frothy menstrual blood associated with *Kapha* with difficulty.

### MODERN REVIEW

#### Definition of Menstruation

Menstruation is a function peculiar to women and the higher apes. It may be defined as a “periodic and cyclic shedding of pregestational endometrium accompanied by loss of blood”. It takes place at approximately 28 days interval between the menarche and menopause. Menstruation is the visible manifestation of cyclic physiologic uterine bleeding due to shedding of the endometrium following invisible interplay of hormones mainly through hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian endometrial axis.

#### Definition of Dysmenorrhoea

The term dysmenorrhoea refers to painful menstruation. Dysmenorrhoea is a cramp labour-like pain in the lower abdomen that radiates to upper abdomen, waist and thighs and is sometimes accompanied by systemic symptoms like nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, headache and dizziness.

### Types of dysmenorrhea

There are two types of Dysmenorrhea

1. Primary dysmenorrhoea- The pain associated to ovulation.
2. Secondary dysmenorrhoea- The pain associated with ovulatory cycles caused by a demonstrable pathology.

### Differential diagnosis

1. Endometriosis
2. Adenomyosis
3. Uterine myoma
4. Endometrial polyps
5. Obstructive malformations of the genital tract

### Other causes of pain

Chronic pelvic inflammatory disease, Pelvic adhesions, Irritable bowel syndrome, inflammatory bowel disease, Interstitial cystitis.

### Sudden onset of Dysmenorrhoea

Pelvic inflammatory disease, Unrecognized ectopic pregnancy, Spontaneous abortion.

### Treatment

#### Life-style changes

Exercise regularly-minimum thrice a week Ensure sound sleep of at least 6-8 hours Avoid smoking and alcohol, reduce caffeine intake.

#### Diet

- Eat healthy, warm and fresh foods
- Eat 5-6 small meals
- Have fresh fruits like plums, dark grapes, apples, pomegranates.
- Eat more leafy vegetables
- Regularly use ginger in food preparations
- Avoid high fat and sugar
- Take supplements like calcium, magnesium, vitamin E, B6, B12.

**Yoga:** Yoga can help to reduce and prevent the severity of many ailments that specifically women's health and give strength, stability, and suppleness. Yogasanas are considered as the most convenient, drugless, and inexpensive method. Yoga is also found to have encouraging effect on increasing the pain threshold capacity in individuals. In Yoga, various types of Asanas have been mentioned. Among them *Ushtrasana*, *Bhadrasana*, *Gomukhasana*, and *Vajrasana* have a pain relieving effect.

### Ayurvedic Treatment

According to Ayurveda, menstruation is guarded by Vata Dosha. Derangement or aggravation of Vata Dosha gives rise to this symptom. The treatment, which alleviates Vata, gives excellent results in this disease. Panchakarma treatments like Uttarbasti, Anuvasana or Matrabasti are the treatments which will specifically target derangement of Vata in menstrual problems. Garbhashaya Balya

Aushadhi will also reduce associated symptoms.

As Vata is the main root cause for *Kashtartava*, so it should be alleviated first. Then other associated doshas should be treated.

- Virechana (purgation therapy) is beneficial for Yoni Rogas and Artava Rogas.<sup>[15]</sup>
- Acharya Sushruta says that in Yoni rogas Artava will be in dushtavastha and Artava suddhi should be attained by following shodhana (major purification therapies). For Artava Suddhi, after applying Deepana- pachana (appetizer and digestive), and Snehana (therapeutic oleation), Swedana (sudation therapy), five Shodhana measures should be used, after this Uttarbasti (basti administered through vaginal or urethral route) should be given repeatedly.<sup>[16]</sup>
- Uttarbasti should be given on the basis of vitiation of Doshas.<sup>[17]</sup>
- Ashtanga Hridaya also opines the same that, vata dosh should be primarily treated and then others. Uttarbasti and yoga's mentioned for yoniroga should be followed giving due consideration to the vitiated Dosh.<sup>[18]</sup>
- For Avrutta Apana Vayu, treatment should be Agnideepana (appetite stimulative), Grahi (absorptive), Vatanulomana (regularizing physiological movement of Vata dosha) and Pakvashaya Suddhi (purification of Intestines).

## DISCUSSION

Kashtartava word signifies generally as menstruation with severe pain in lower abdomen. In Primary Dysmenorrhea, the spasmodic nature of the lower abdominal muscles causes intense pain, which is intolerable for the female. Culturally, the abbreviation Primary Dysmenorrhea is widely understood in the world to refer to difficulties associated with menses, and the abbreviation is used frequently even in casual and conversational settings, without regard to medical rigor. In these contexts, the syndrome is rarely referred to without abbreviation, and the intensions of the reference are frequently broader than the clinical definition. Vata Dosha causes irregular menstrual cycles with scanty menstruation. In *Ayurveda* various treatment modalities are mentioned for the treatment of *Vata Rogas*.

## CONCLUSION

The disease 'Kashtartava' is not described in classics as an individual disease entity. Even then it is a symptom of various Yoni vyapad specially Udavarta (Upward movement of Vayu with retention of stool and urine), Vatala, Sannipataja etc. It is Tridosha Vyadhi with Vata predominance. Ayurveda views in Primary Dysmenorrhea as a Doshic imbalance that can potentially be impacted through balanced living and appropriate diet, herbal supplements, exercise, routine, Yoga, meditation, as well as nourishing inputs through all five senses. Ayurveda being a holistic medicine offers potential remedies which

are proved beyond doubt in solving the problem in gynaecological disorders successfully.

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