

INTRODUCTION OF SROTAS IN AYURVEDA - REVIEW ARTICLE

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Article Received on 11/08/2020

Article Revised on 01/09/2020

Article Accepted on 22/09/2020

ABSTRACT

In Ayurveda Srotas plays a major role. Acharyas explained purusha as assumed to be made of innumerable Srotas. The equilibrium of dosha, dhathu and mala maintains health. To maintain continuity in the life cycle, these bodily elements have to be continuously regulated, nourished and replenished. Srotas are the channels or inner transport system of the body which is the site for the activities of other bodily elements like dosha, dhathu, mala, agni, etc. Among these some Srotas are micro and some are macro in structure and they adopt the same colour of particular dhathus of the body to which they belong. In Ayurvedic classics, it has been described that the entire range of life process in health and disease depends on the integrity of Srotas. Therefore the present article is an attempt to study the fundamental facts of Srotas.

KEYWORDS: Srotas, channels, pathways, Ayurveda, transport.**INTRODUCTION**

Ayurveda has accepted the human body to be made up of innumerable Srotas (channels) which are responsible for performing all the physiological and functional activities. All dosha, dhathu and mala perform their functional activities with the help of these Srotas. It has been a practice since long, to recognize all the vyadhi laskhana. The body is divided into small units depending upon their chief function or structure. Each unit comprises of many avayavas (Organs) and each organ is made up of innumerable Srotas. Hence these units are generally called Srotas.

Ayurveda is the first medical system to announce and describe the existence of innumerable Srotas, within the human body. The term Srotas is derived from the root "Susravana" meaning to exude, to ooze, to flow, to filter. Those from which sravana or flow of the body substances takes place or those through which the materials flow in the body are called Srotas. Thus, they are the channels or pathways of the body through which the materials needed for tissue building, nutrition and other nutrients flow from one corner of the body to the other. In other words, materials are transported through these Srotas from the place of production to the place of need.

According to Sushruta, those which carry or transport materials like Prana (Life element), Anna (Food), Vari

(Water), Mamsa, Meda Dhathu are called Srotas. Charaka opines that there will be 'Parinamanapadyamanam' meaning undergoing transformation indicates that the channel carry such of the tissue elements as are undergoing transformation from their previous states. The channels of circulation do not carry the sthira (Stable) dhathus but only such of the mobile dhathus are carried by them.

Srotas are the complex pathways or channels of the nervous system governed by Vayu for carrying out the functional and physiological activities of the human body. The following synonyms of Srotas Sira (Vein), Dhamani (Artery), Rasayani (Lymphatics ducts), Rasavahini (capillary), Nadi (Tubular conduits), Pantha (Passages), Marga (Pathways, tracts), Sharirachidra (Body orifices), Ashaya (Repertories), Niketa (resorts), Sthanas (Sites), Samvrutsamvrutani (open / closed passages).

Structure / Characteristics

Srotas may be sthula (Gross/macrosopic), Anu (Microscopic), Vrutta (Round), Deergha (Elongated) and Pratanasadrusha (Reticulated in nature). They are like lotus stalks, through them rasa nourishes the body. The colour and form of the Srotas is similar to the dhathu they support. Vagbhata considers two types of Srotas: Sthula (Perceptible) and Sukshma (Imperceptible). With today's technological advances, microscopic entities can

be counted in sukshma Srotas, with extended perspective abilities. Charaka has very clearly said that all the biochemical molecules under metabolic process (Parinamapadyamanadhathus) are held and carried within the Srotas. These Srotas are the functional pathways for nutritive (Prasadhakya) and non-nutritive or waste (Malakhya) molecules.

Types of Srotas

Through conceptually Srotas are innumerable, a certain number is assumed according to their specified functions. They are 13 in number according to Charaka and there are 11 pairs or 22 Srotas according to Sushruta who called them Yogavahi. Mainly Srotas is classified into two kinds, namely Bahya and Abhyantara Srotas. Bahya Srotas or Bahirmukha Srotas in males are 9 in number and in females it is 12 in number. Bahya Srotas are 2 nasa randhra, 2 karna randhra, 2 nayana randhra, 1 mehana randhra, 1 guda randhra, 1 vedana randhra. In females, 2 stana randhra and 1 rakthapatha. In addition to these gross material channels, some other important channels described are –

- **Manovaha Srotas** which carries impulses of thoughts and emotions.
- **Stanyavaha Srotas:** Channels which carry stanya (Breast Milk) are called Stanyavaha Srotas
- **Shabdavaha Srotas:** When aggravated Vata enters shabdavaha Srotas either alone or in association with Kapha, it produces Bhadriya
- **Samjnavaha Srotas:** Channels which carry buddhi is called Samjnavaha Srotas.
- **Swaravaha Srotas:** Channels which carry shabda is called Swaravaha Srotas.

After going through these different Srotas, we can classify them into three groups

1. First three which are associated with the intake of environmental elements are Pranavaha Srotas (Carrier of life or air), Annavaha (Carrier of food), Udakavaha (Carrier of water)
2. Middle seven are the purveyors of Rasa (Plasma), Rakta (Blood), Mamsa (Muscle tissue), Meda (Fat), Asthi (osseous tissue), Majja (Bone marrow or brain tissue) and Shukra (Semen)
3. Last three channels are namely Swedavaha (Carrier of sweat), Mutravaha (Carrier of urine) and Purishavaha (Carrier of faeces) No separate Srotas has been described for the shareerika dosha.

Srotomoola

Srotomoola is the area of influence, Chakradatta describes Srotomoola as the area from which Srotas evolves or arises. It is similar to root of the tree. It is also Prabhavasthana means the anatomical seat of respective Srotas. The main seat of Pathology of Srotas or are principal seat of manifestation of the diseases of that Srotas. The cause of morbidity of Srotas and the manifestations first strikes the moolasthanas of their respective Srotas. These moolasthanas can be categorized.

Function of Srotas

- 1) Grahana or sangrahana: Storage or collection
- 2) Sravana: secretes, oozing, discharge, exudates
- 3) Vahana: carry, conduction, transportation
- 4) Shoshana: Absorption, Assimilation
- 5) Nissarana: Elimination or excretion
- 6) Pachana: Digestion
- 7) Vivechana: Selectivity
- 8) Receptable
- 9) Diffusion
- 10) Perniation

Srotodushti

The causes of vitiation of doshas are improper food habits and their activities. The expression of such vitiation is through the manifestation of diseases. The same causes which lead to doshadushti and dhathodushti are responsible for the vitiation of Srotas i.e. srotodushti.

Srotodushti lakshanas

The main signs of the vitiation of the channels are

- 1) **Atipravrutti:** Increased flow or excess production of contents of the channel
- 2) **Sanga:** Obstruction or stagnation of the flow of content of the channel.
- 3) **Siragranthi:** Appearance of nodules in the channel
- 4) **Vimargagamana:** Diversion of the flow of the contents to an improper channel or flow in the path other than its own.

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda has given importance to Srotas for every Murthiman bhavas. Srotas are the channels different from sira and dhamani, which carries nutrients to the body organs and widely spreads all over the body. It also carries waste materials for the excretion from the body. Without Srotas, the physiological functions of the human body will not be possible. Every Srotas has two moolasthanas and function of these moolasthanas is to produce the elements which flow through the srotas. If moolasthana is defective, the srotas will be defective. But if srotas is defective, does not mean that moolasthana will also be defective. Pathological changes in the body are due to Sroto dushti, Srotosanga. Any imbalance in the srotas causes disease, so for the proper development of the human body, a proper functioning of Srotas is a must.

CONCLUSION

Srotas is merely a hollow channels or space. According to Charaka Acharya "Srotomayamayampurusha" i.e they have seen the body in the form of Srotas. Human body consists of Multiple and innumerable Srotas. Srotas indicate all Macro and micro level descriptions pertaining to the exchange, transportation and excretion taking place in the human body. Srotas along with their moolasthana have been described for the purpose of the study of pathology and clinical medicine. Understanding the concept of Srotas and Srotovaigunya facilitates the

vaidya for treating diseases. As long as Srotas perform their normal function, body would be free from diseases.

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