

Conceptual Review Study of Artavakshaya

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Abstract

Ayurveda is a branch of science which deals with maintaining the health and treating the diseased condition of the body. According to Ayurveda, health is defined as normalcy of Dosha, Dhatu, Agni, Mala and pleasant state of mind soul and senses. All dhatus should be kept in normalcy for healthy status. During formation of dhatus, its upadhatu and mala are produced. During the formation of Rasadhatu, its upadhatu are formed namely Stanya and Raja. This raja means Artava, is the monthly discharge of menses through female reproductive tract. This monthly discharge shows health status of female. It is essential for maintaining Swastha Avastha of female. Decrease in discharge of menses is called as Artavakshaya. This has not been separately mentioned as a disease in classical Ayurvedic texts. It has high prevalence in today's modern world due to unhealthy eating habits and sedentary lifestyle. It can lead to infertility. So it should be corrected as early as possible. So present study is an attempt to conceptualize the Artavakshaya.

Keywords : Ayurveda, female, Swastha, Artava.

Introduction:

Acharya Sushruta has mentioned 'Artavakshaya' or 'Nashtartava' as one of the causes of Vandhyatva. According to Ayurveda, Artava has two meaning, namely antapushpa (ovum) and bahirpushpa (artava). Most commonly Artava word is used for Bahirpushpa i.e. menstrual cycle. Acharya Charaka has described that shuddhaartava, Yoni and Garbhashaya are the essential factors for the production of garbha. This Bahir pushpa or Artava performs shodhana karma or purification of the body in females at every month. Women is called as

'Janani', due to her power of creation of new offspring of human beings. It has been mentioned in all the classical texts. Women are born for reproduction. She is called as 'Nari'. But she can become 'Mata' only after giving birth to child. The inability of women to give birth to new child is called as 'Vandhyatva'. Therefore it is very important work to cure the female suffering from Vandhyatva due to Arthavakshaya.

Menstruation is a clear indication of health of body of female. It's normal working shows healthy status. In today's modern era, there are drastic changes in the eating habits and lifestyle. They has been shifted from healthy eating and agile lifestyle to poor eating and sedentary lifestyle. It is the main point of concern for painful reproductive health problems. It

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is seen by more prevalence of menstrual related irregularities. Of this hypomenorrhoea has prevalence of 14 % and oligomenorrhoea has 18.3 %.¹In classical Ayurvedic texts, Artavakshaya (hypomenorrhoea) has not been explained as a typical disease. But it has been elaborated as a symptom of many gynaecological disorders. So it is need of the time to study Artavakshaya conceptually.

Aim :

To study concept of Artavakshaya.

Objectives

- To study the Ayurvedic literature of Artava according to Ayurvedic Samhitas.
- To study Artavakshaya.

Review of Literature:

Artavakshaya is most commonly occurring disease in women. It is one of the prodromal stage of Anartava or Nashtartava. It is the one of the Artavadosha. Artavakshaya have symptoms like irregular, painful and scanty menses. Artava is mentioned as Upadhatu of Rasa dhatu. It is produced from Rasa dhatu in female body and its colour resembles with Raktadhatu. It comes out periodically at regular interval through female genital tract. It starts at the age of 12 years, which is called as menarche. It ceases at the age of 45 to 50 years, which is called as menopause. It appears for the period of 3 to 7 days at every month. It does not appear during pregnancy, puerperal period and lactating period. For this, first we have to go through detail description of Artava.²

Synonyms :

Different words used to denote menstrual blood in Ayurvedic classics are as follows:

- 1) Artava
- 2) Shonita
- 3) Asruk
- 4) Raja

5) Rakta

6) Lohita

Role of Apana Vayu :

Menstruation is under the control of Apanavayu. Normal functioning of Yoni and Garbhashaya are also dependent on Apanavayu. Due to this, Apanavayu is mainly responsible for this monthly appearance of menstruation or Artava. It also helps in expulsion of foetus after completion of pregnancy period. Vitiating of Apanavayu causes disturbance of Artava. Artavakshaya will be caused due to vitiating of Apanavayu. This vitiating also causes miscarriage, abortion and foetal death due to lack of proper embryonic growth.³

Artava Chakra :

In all classical Ayurvedic texts, intermenstrual period has been considered as one month. This period of one month is divided into three phases –

1. Rajasrava Kala – 3 to 5 days
2. Ritukala – 12 to 16 days
3. Rutuvyatitakala – 9 to 13 days

Rasa dhatu and Artavavaha Srotas are the essential factors for formation of Artava.

Features of Shuddha Artava :

(a) Varna (colour)⁴

In Charak Samhita, varna of Shuddha Artava has mentioned as having resemblance with

1. Gunjaphala
2. Pudmalakta (Lalkamal/ red lotus flower)
3. Indragopa (an insect)

(b) Gandha (odour)⁵

In Sushrut Samhita, the odour is mentioned as Visrata (Amagandhitva) due to predominance of Prithvi mahabhuta. It is same as of Rakta.

(c) Matra (Quantity)

Acharya Vagbhata has mentioned 4 anjali is the Pramana of Artava.

(d) Duration of Menstrual Cycle**Table No. 1 : Duration of Menstrual Cycle**

S. N.	Acharya	Duration
1	Acharya Charaka (Charak Chikitsasthana 30/225)	5 days
2	Acharya Vagbhatta (Ashtang Hrudya Sharirsthana 1/7)	3 days
3	Acharya Bhavmishra (Bhavaprakash Chikitsasthana 68/10)	3 days
4	Acharya Harita and Bhel (Bhelasamhita Sharirsthana. 5/6, Haritasamhita Sharirsthana 1/8)	7 days
5	Modern Science	4-6 days

From above, it is cleared that reduced quantity of Artava from it's normal measurement is called as Artavakshaya.

Nidana :

Artava is an Updhatu. The factors which are responsible for Kshaya of Dhatus and Updhatus are also responsible for Artavakshaya, Vagbhatta has clearly mentioned that the Kshaya at Uttaradhatu depends upon the Kshaya of Purvadhātu. The excessive function of Dhatwagni may also cause the Dhatuup dhatu Kshaya. According to Sushruta, it has been stated that the only Rasa Kshaya is also one of the causative factors of Dhatukshaya.

Taking the above points into consideration, Acharya Charaka has explained Samanya Nidana of Kshaya of Dosha, Dhatu and Upadhatus. Therefore the Samanya Nidana of Kshaya or Dosha, Dhatu and Upadhatus are being given here to understand the aetiopathology in production of this disease also. There are Ativyayam, Anashana, Atichinta, Asatmya Ahara Sevana, Atapsevana, Bhaya, Manahsantapa, Atimadirapan, Prajagaran, Atisamsodhana, Vegavidharana, Vriddhavastha, Adanakala and Bhutopghata. According to Charaka, the above mentioned factors are Samanya Nidana of Dosha, Dhatu and Upadhātu Kshaya. These Nidanas of kshaya of Dosha, Dhatu and Upadhātu may also be considered for Artavakshaya, while Sushruta has

described the Mithya Ahara Vihara is the causative factors to produce the Dhatukshaya. So this has been taken as Samanya Nidana of Artavakshaya.

When we go for Vishesh Nidana of Artavakshaya, actually there is no description about this disease in Ayurvedic Classics. The factors which are responsible for production of Artava are vitiated by one or any other causes may lead to Artavakshaya. So these factors may be taken for Vishesh Nidana of Artavakshaya. The Artavotpadaka Ahara, Agni (Jathragni, Rasagni, Artavagni), Rasadhatu and ArtavavahaSrotas are the main factors for production of Artava vitiation of the above said factors may effect the production of Artava addition to this, Artava is an Agneya and Pittapradhana substance. So its opposite means Vata Kaphavardhaka Ahara Vihara have been taken as Vishesh Nidana of Artavakshaya.

For the proper understanding, the Nidana has been divided under 5 heading i.e.

(1) Aharajanya Hetu :**(a) Vata vitiating hetu :**

- According to Rasa - Atikatu, Tikta, Kashaya, Rasa predominant Ahara.
- According to Guna - Excessive intake of Sheeta, Laghu, Ruksha Ahara.
- According to Dravya - Excessive intake of Koddalaka, Mudga, Shyamaka, AtiShushkashaka etc.
- According to Pramana : Abhojana, Laghubhojana

(b) Pitta vitiating hetu :

- According to Rasa - Atikatu, Amla, Lavana Rasa predominant Ahara
- According to Guna - Excessive intake of Ushna, Vidahi Ahara.
- According to Dravya - Excessive intake of Kshara, Kurchika, Dadhi, Takra, Kanjisevana etc.

(c) Kapha Vitiating hetu :

- (i) According to Rasa - Atimadhura, Lavana Rasa predominant Ahara.
- (ii) According to Guna - Excessive intake of Abhishyandi, Guru, Picchila Ahara.
- (iii) According to Dravya : Excessive intake of Pista, Ikshu, Masha, Audaka, Mamsa, Anupa Mamsa etc.
- (iv) According to Pramana – Ati Bhojana, Adhyashana

(2) ViharajanyaHetu :**(a) Vata Vitiating hetu :**

- (i) Ati Vyavaya
- (ii) Ati Vyayama
- (iii) Ati Prajagarana
- (iv) Vega Dharasna etc.

(b) Pitta vitiating hetu :

- (i) Ayusha, Atapasevana, Agni, Dhuma Sevana etc.

(c) Kapha vitiating hetu :

- (i) Divaswapa, Alasya etc.

(3) Manashika Hetu :**(a) Vatavititanti nighetu :**

- (i) Chinta
- (ii) Shoka
- (iii) Bhaya etc.

(b) Pitta vitiating hetu :

- (i) Krodha
- (ii) Irshya etc.

(4) Anya Hetu :

(a) Vata vitiating hetu - AtiAshrikaShravana, Ragati Karshana, Dhatukshaya etc.

(b) Kapha vitiating hetu - Atisantarpana, sthaulya.

(5) Abhighata Janya Hetu :

This condition is described by Sushruta in in clinical features of 'vedha' of Artavavaha Srotas 'Vedha' means to get injury or trauma. So any type of injury or trauma of ArtavavahaSrotas may lead to Artavakshaya.

Samprapti :

Due to etiological factors, there is vitiation of doshas. This doshas causes vitiation of Rasa and Raktadhatu. It leads to decreased amount of Rasa and Raktadhatu. When rasa dhatu is in less quantity, its upadhatu will also be in less quantity. Agni of Artava decreases due to this visited doshas as well as dhatudushti. The Khavaigunya is also formed due to Nidana sevana and the dosha dushy asammutchhana. Due to khavaigunya in the artavavahasrotas, formation of Artava decreases in quantity and results in Artavakshaya.

Samprapti Ghataka :

- Dosha : Vata (Apana and Vyana)
Pitta (Pachaka)
Kapha (Kledaka)
- Dushya : Rasa, Rakta
- Upadhatu : Artava
- Agni: Jatharagnimandya; Dhatvagnimandya, Artavagni, (Sthanika) Mandya
- Srotas : Rasavaha, Artavavaha
- Srotodusti : Sanga
- Adhithana : Garbhashaya

Purvarupa :

Purvarupa of Artavakshaya is not described anywhere.

Rupa :

- 1) The menstruation (Artava) does not appear at the appropriate time or it may be delayed
- 2) Alpata – menstrual bleeding is less in quantity
- 3) Yonivedana - Vedana occurs in Yoni

Discussion and Conclusion :

- Artavakshaya is due to vatadosha (ApanaVayu and VyanaVayu) vitiation taking lead in the manifestation of the disease.
- Artava is mainly affected in Artavakshaya.
- Artavakshaya has symptoms like less duration of menstrual cycle, more interval between two cycles and pains during menses etc.
- Artavakshaya can be compared with oligomenorrhoea and Hypomenorrhoea in modern science.

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