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## ROLE OF PANCHAKARMA IN GYNAECOLOGICAL DISEASES

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Artava, Shonita, Asrika, Raja, Rakta, Lohita, Rudhir and Pushpa are some of the words used in the Ayurvedic classics to denote menstrual blood or ovum. Some Acharaya consider Artava as Updhatu of Rasa while others consider it as Updhatu of Rakta. Artava is Agneya and has characteristics similar to Rakta. According to Ayurvedic science, Artava, in various forms, maintains women's reproductive health. When Artava becomes vitiated, it can become the prime cause of diseases in women. Hence, Artava is considered a prime element in maintaining women's health.

As the normal function of *Artava* can maintain the balance in the female reproductive system, the same balance can get disturbed when there is vitiation of *Dosha*, manifesting conditions like *Artava Dusti* and *Yonivyapada*. *Panchakarma* can play a vital role in treating these abnormal conditions.

Keywords: Artavadusti, Panchakarma, Vamana, Virechana, Basti, Nasya, Raktamokshana

#### INTRODUCTION

The menstrual cycle is called *Rituchakra* in *Ayurveda*. Female health depends on the regularity of *Rituchakra*.

Acharya Charaka and Acharya Sushruta consider Artava as Updhatu of Rasa<sup>1,2</sup>. Acharya Bhavmishra and Acharya Shadangdhar have considered Artava as *Updhatu* of *Rakta*<sup>3</sup>. It is *Agnaye* on the property. It has characteristics of Rakta Dhatu and is responsible for the formation of Garbha <sup>5</sup>. According to Ayurveda, Artava is 4 Anjali in Praman, i.e., approximately four ounces<sup>6</sup>. According to Acharya Sushruta, normal menstrual blood resembles rabbit blood and does not leave marks on cloth when washed <sup>7</sup>. Acharya Charak has explained that normal menstruation has an interval of one month, a duration of five days, and is not associated with pain or burning sensation. The menstrual blood is neither very scanty nor excessive in amount and resembles the colour of Gunjaphala, a red flower (Padmalaktaka Sannibham), *Indragopa* 8. *Acharya Bharamishra* has explained that the colour difference is due to the fundamental constitution of an individual. Often, causative factors like eating very hot food or beverages or eating food against the basic constitution cause disturbances in menstruation. In Ayurvedic classics, most of the disorders described menstrual are Astaartavadusti (eight menstrual disorders)<sup>9</sup>. A short description of Nastartava, Artavakshaya and Artava Ativriddhi is also available.

#### ASTA ARTAVA DUSTI

There is no specific aetiology of these eight menstrual disorders. *Kashyap* says that the use of *Nasya* drugs during menstruation, consumption of excessive hot eatables and drinks and use of excessive medicines after *Shodhana* procedures to the woman of *Mridu Kostha* are the causes of all menstrual disorders <sup>10</sup>. All these can be the specific factors responsible for aggravating particular *Dosha*. The *Rituchakra* gets disturbed owing to various *Ahara* and *Vihara*, which influence the manifestation of *Artavadusti*. *Artava Dusti* has eight types: *Vataj, Pittaj, Kaphaj, Raktaja/Kunapagandhi, Granthibutha, Putipuya, Kshinaartava* and *Mutrapurishatulya*.

#### ARTAVA KSHAYA

In Ayurvedic classics, Artava is considered Upadhatu of Rasa or Rakta. The factors responsible for Kshaya of Dhatus and Upadhatus will also be responsible for Kshaya of Artava. Rasa or Rakta Kshaya leads to Uttarotar Dhatu Kshaya along with Artavakshaya.

Hence, *Dhatu Kshaya* is one of the causative factors for *Artavakshaya*.

Acharya Sushruta has explained Artava Kshaya Lakshana under Dosha Dhatu Mala Kshaya Vriddhi Vignanam. It occurs due to the vitiation of Vata & Kapha Dosha. In this condition, symptoms like Alpata (Scanty menstrual flow), Yoni Vedna (pain in the vagina), and Yathochithakala Adarshnam (irregular menstrual cycles) are seen 11. All this is due to Srotoavrodha. Shodhan and the use of Agneya substances should treat Artavakshaya.

#### ARTAVA VRIDDHI

Body aches, excessive bleeding during menstruation and a foul smell in menstrual blood characteristics of *Artava Vriddhi*. *Dalhana* has explained that this foul smell in menstrual blood is due to the similarity of *Artava* to *Pitta* (thus smells like *Pitta*) and has mentioned weakness and *Raktagulma* as its complications <sup>12</sup>. *Chakrapani* says that body ache is due to obstruction to the passage of *Vayu* due to increased *Artava*.

*Acharya Bhavamishra* has also given excessive bleeding during menstruation and foul smell in menstrual blood as symptoms of *Artava Vriddhi* <sup>13</sup>.

#### **ASRGDARA**

Excessive excretion of menstrual blood is known as Pradara or Asrgdara 14. Charaka says that increased Rakta (blood) gets mixed with Raja (menstrual blood), leading to an increased quantity of raja. Dalhana, while explaining general clinical features, says that excessive and prolonged blood loss during menstruation or even scanty blood loss during the intermenstrual period is known as Asrgdara. It can be manifested in a woman without any underlying cause, but it can also be seen in some cases with certain specific pathological changes in reproductive organs. Vagabhata has mentioned excessive bleeding during menstrual or intermenstrual periods as the main symptom. Cakrapani explaining Vataja, Yonirogas has said that these simulate Vataja, etc., a specific type of Asrgdara, and manifest intermenstrual bleeding also as a symptom. Asrigdhara can be manifested in a woman without any underlying cause, but it can also be seen in some cases with certain

specific pathological changes in reproductive organs. It is one of the conditions with excessive and prolonged bleeding.

#### **YONIVYAPAD**

In all types of *Yoniroga* (gynaecological diseases), after proper *Snehana* and *Swedana*, all *Panchakarma* procedures should be done to purify upper and lower passages properly. Only after purification should medicines be given according to the vitiated *Dosha*. After this, *Uttar Basti* should be used. *Yoniroga* does not occur without vitiation of *Vata Dosha*, so the first line of treatment should be the correction of *Vata*. Only after correction of *Vata* another *Dosha* should be treated. *Phalaghrita* <sup>15</sup>, *Brihat Shatavari Ghrita* <sup>16</sup>, and *Triphaladighrita* <sup>17</sup> are some of the drugs prescribed for *Snehapan* in *Yonivyapad*. *Palash Niruha Basti* <sup>18 and</sup> *Baladi Yamak Anuvasan Basti* <sup>19</sup> are some *Basti Yoga* given in *Yoniroga* and infertility.

# PANCHAKARMA IN MENSTRUAL DISORDERS

Panchakarma has proven to be very effective in menstrual disorders. To all the women suffering from Vataj, Pittaj, Kaphaj and Raktaj Artavadusti, different Panchakarma procedures like Vamana, Virechana, Basti and Nasya are suggested in Ayurveda.

स्रोहनं स्रोहविष्यन्दमार्दवक्लेदकारकम् । स्तम्भगौरवशीतघ्नं स्वेदनं स्वेदकारकम् ॥ <sup>20</sup>

Snehana and Swedana are part of Purvakarma of Panchakarma and help prepare the body during detoxification. Snehana is defined as the process which induces Sneha (unctuousness, oiliness), Vishyandana (liquefaction), Mardava (smoothness) and Kledana (moistness) on internal or external application. Snehana pacifies vitiated Vata Dosha, softens channels of the body and assists in removing Mala from the body. Swedan is a procedure that relieves stiffness, heaviness, and coldness from the body and induces sweating. Shatpushpa oil, Shatavari Ghrit, is given for menstrual disorders 21.

अपक्वपित्तश्लेष्माणौ बलादूर्ध्वं नयेत्तु यत् । वमनं तद्धि विज्ञेयं मदनस्य फलं यथा॥

*Vamana*, or therapeutically induced vomiting, is one of the significant *Panchakarma* therapies. It is indicated for the purification of the upper part of the

body. In Vamana, Kapha and Pitta, along with some gastric contents, are expelled from the body through the nearest route, i.e., the oral route. According to Acharya Sharangdhar, Vamana is a procedure which expels vitiated Pitta and Kapha forcibly<sup>22</sup>. Vamana helps purify internal toxins and balance the hormonal system. Vamanaa Karma is indicated in Kaphaj Artavadusti by using the decoction of Madanaphala Kalka<sup>23</sup>. In Arthava Kshaya patients, too, Vamana helps remove the Margavarodha by removing the Soumya Dhatu and increasing the Agneya Dhatu and, in turn, increasing the proper formation of the Artava. Virechana is a procedure applied to expel out vitiated Dosha through Adhobhaga (anal passage). It is considered the best therapy for Pitta Dosha<sup>24</sup>. The Virechana drugs, after entering the body, stimulate bowel movement for the expulsion of doshas through the rectum. Virechana is also helpful in diseases having Pitta dominance along with Kapha vitiation. Therefore, Virechana is useful in both Pitta and Kapha Dosha diseases. It is also indicated in Rakthaja disorders, Mansagata Vikara, Medogata Vikara, Sandhigata, Majjagata, Sukra Vikara, and Yoni Dosha. Virechanaa can be helpful in Artava disorders such as Asrgdara<sup>25</sup>. Virechana with Shyamak and latex of Gawakshi can also be given for Pittaj Artavadusti<sup>26</sup>. Virechana for Sanshodhana and Tila, Urad, Sura, etc., hot potency food will be used in Artava Kshaya<sup>27</sup>. Dalhana says that in Artavakshaya, only Vamana

should be done, not *Virechana*, because *Virechana* reduces pitta, decreasing *Artava*. In *Vamana*, *Saumya Dhatu* is removed, which results in a relative increase in the body's *Agneya Dhatu*; thus, *Artava* also *increases* 28. *Chakrapani has given that Vamana and Virechana clear upward and downward channels*, respectively, thus clearing *Srotasas* (channels). Therefore, both should be used<sup>29</sup>.

नाभिप्रदेशं कटिपार्श्वकुक्षिं गत्वा शकृद्दोषचयं विलोड्य ॥ संस्नेह्य कायं सपुरीषदोषः सम्यक् सुखेनैति च यः स बस्तिः ॥ Basti is a process in which drugs administered through Guda Maarga (rectal route) reach Pakwashaya (large intestine) and spread the Virya (potency) of the drug to Sarvasharira (whole body) and is quickly evacuated along with Purisha (stool) and Dosha<sup>30</sup>. This

procedure introduces medicated decoction or oils into the body through the rectum. Basti Karma is best given for Vataj disorders and can eradicate most of the diseases of Shakha, Marma and Kostha. According to Acharya Charaka, Basti is considered "Ardha *Chikitsa*"<sup>31</sup>. *Basti*, which can act on the enteric nervous system and thereby act on the Central Nervous System, further stimulates the Hypothalamo-Pituitary-Ovarian (HPO) axis. A well-coordinated HPO axis helps in the normalisation of the menstrual cycle. Jivantyadi Anuwasana Basti<sup>32</sup>, Mustadi Yapan Basti<sup>33</sup>, and Sahacharadi Yapan Basti<sup>34</sup> are some of the Bastis given for Artavadusti treatment. Acharya Sushruta has used Uttar Basti after using all the purificatory procedures of Panchakarma<sup>35</sup>. Shatviryadi Anuvasana Basti is indicated in Anartava or amennorrhoea<sup>36</sup>. Chandanadi Niruha Basti<sup>37</sup>, Madhukadi Anuvasana Basti<sup>38</sup>, and Mustadi Yapan Basti<sup>39</sup> are some of the Basti drugs given for Asrgdar treatment. Anuvasana Basti<sup>40</sup>, Uttar Basti for Sanshodhana and Tila, Urad, Sura, etc., hot potency food will be used in Artava  $Kshaya^{41}$ .

Nasya, although it is a straightforward procedure, has proven to be highly efficient in menstrual disorders. In this therapy, the medicine is administered through the nose in the form of Swaras (fresh juice), Kalka (paste), Kwath (decoction), etc<sup>42</sup>. It is beneficial in treating diseases in the upper clavicular region, but it also works indirectly on the whole body by acting on endocrine glands and the nervous system. Nasya has been given general treatment for all menstrual disorders<sup>43</sup>. Shatpushpa Taila<sup>44</sup> and Sahtvari Ghrit<sup>45</sup> Nasya are advised for Artavavyapad in menstrual irregularities like amenorrhoea, infertility. oligomenorrhoea, menometrorrhagia, early menopause, absence of menarche. Shatavari Ghrita<sup>46</sup>, Shatpushpa Taila<sup>47</sup>, Vasa Ghrita<sup>48</sup>, Vasa Swaras<sup>49</sup> can be used in Nasya for Asrgdar. In Infertility, Nasya from drugs like Narayana Taila50, Shatpushpa Taila51, and Bala Taila52 are mentioned.

*Raktamokshana* is a blood letting procedure used for therapeutic purposes. It helps remove morbid doshas along with blood from the body. Many diseases that are not alleviated by other treatments are relieved by *Raktamokshana*. It is indicated in *Raktaj* and *Pittaj* diseases. Those undergoing bloodletting from time to time never suffer from skin diseases, cysts, inflammatory swellings, or blood disorders.

#### CONCLUSION

Gynaecological diseases consist of all female genital disorders from the age of menarche to menopause. In Ayurveda, they may include Yonivyapada, Artava Vyapada, Pradara, Stan Granthi, etc. For all these diseases, eliminating vitiated Dosha from the body is needed, and almost all the gynaecological diseases are treated by Panchakarma Chikitsa, especially Shodhana Chikitsa. Thus, it should be the foremost line of treatment, as prevention is said to be better than cure.

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