

# A Critical Analysis of *Ritumati Swasthavritta* w.s.r. to Menstrual Hygiene and Reproductive Health; a Review Study

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## ABSTRACT

Maximum disease in women mainly occurs due to some kind of infection and related to menstrual disorders. Ignorance of small problems causes major problems like nutritional deficiency, infertility, congenital abnormality in new born, stillbirth, premature birth and may be cancer. All these gives the compromised Quality of life. Objective: To establish the importance of *Ritumati charya* for menstrual hygiene and reproductive health. Material and Methods: Different databases such as PubMed, Scopus, DHARA, Google Scholar, J-Gate Plus, Science direct were searched using keywords like Menstrual health, Menstrual hygiene, sexual activity during menstrual cycle, STD, endometriosis with the help of Boolean operators “AND,” “OR” and “NOT.” Filters like clinical trials and free full text were applied. Discussion: Due to change in daily lifestyle, exercise, food, stress level, anxiety or work quality of menstrual blood is also changed, but due to mild variations is ignored by lady. Proper food in nutrition and quantity is required during menstruation. Milk and its product it is a *Satvika* food. Conclusion and Result: Adequate amount of nutrition and physical activity at proper time is good for maintenance and promotion of health otherwise it may causes different types of disease. Due to rejection of *Rajaswala charya / Ritumati charya* in women of reproductive age causes infectious and different types of diseases.

**KEYWORDS:** *Ritumati, Charya, Swasthavritta, Menstrual health, Hygiene*

## INTRODUCTION

Menstruation is a natural fact of life and a monthly occurrence for the 1.8 billion girls, women, transgender men and non-binary persons of reproductive age [1]. Yet millions of menstruators across the world are denied the right to manage their monthly menstrual cycle in a dignified, healthy way. In the developing country the condition of reproductive age group female (age from 14 to 45 years) is more alarming. At Menarche is the onset of menstruation, the time when a girl has her first menstrual period girls not properly aware about menstruation. Ignorance, Gender inequality, discriminatory social norms, cultural taboos, poverty and lack of basic knowledge often cause many problems in women and adolescent girls. Maximum disease in women mainly occurs due to some kind of infection and some related to menstrual disorders.

Ignorance of small problems causes major problems like nutritional deficiency, infertility, congenital abnormality in new born, stillbirth, premature birth and may be cancer. All these gives the compromised Quality of life. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines QOL as “the individuals’ perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns.” Along with hygiene, change in life style of adolescent and more prepared food variety with different preservatives increases the problems of adolescent girls (13-18 years)[2].

Now a days incidence of early menopause, primary and secondary infertility, elective instrumental and surgical delivery, general gynaecological disorders

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like dysmenorrhea, PCOD, Premenstrual syndrome etc. increases gradually in both developed and developing country. Disease pattern shifted toward Communicable disorders to non-communicable in developed country. Non-communicable diseases are multifactorial, have many factors for all these but at maximum extant lifestyle drift is more important. Menstrual cycle is very strong responsible part for good health of women, proper nutrition and physical activities are very closely associated with menstrual health. As per *Acharyas, Ritumati Charyais* important to all women but more for reproductive age group of women. Good quality of *Artava* (Menstruation) is base for best progeny[3]. It reflect the importance of reproductive system and overall health of the women.

### Aims & Objectives:

To establish the importance of *Ritumati charya* for menstrual health.

### Material & Methods

Classical textbooks such as *Charak Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Astanga Hridaya* and its commentary, *Bhavaprakasha Samhita, Sharangadhara Samhita*, were reviewed to analyse the *Ritumati Charya* as mentioned and its importance. Different databases such as PubMed, Scopus, DHARA, Google Scholar, J-Gate Plus, Science direct were searched using keywords like Menstrual health, Menstrual hygiene, sexual activity during menstrual cycle, STD, endometriosis with the help of Boolean operators “AND,” “OR” and “NOT.” Filters like clinical trials and free full text were applied. Among those the research papers containing data regarding the menstrual health, menstrual hygiene, STD, endometriosis, stress and menstrual disorder and infertility were reviewed in detail.

### Review Study

#### Quality of Menstrual Blood (*Shudhartava*)

Quality and quantity of menstrual blood represent the health of women. In healthy condition 3-5 days menstruation without pain at every 28 days cycle and menstrual blood colour resembles with blood of rabbit, *Laksharasa* or *Gunja Phala* (Abrus precatorious) i.e. red colour like this seed [4]. Menstrual blood is clear and absence of any glandular or clotted blood, foul smell and do not stain permanently the silk cloth [5].

#### Disorder of Menstrual Blood (*Dushtartava*)

Due to faulty diet and lifestyle three *Dosa* (*Vata, Pitta & Kapha*) and *Rakta* vitiate menstrual blood which

changes its quality in various way like Pain, colour, consistency, quantity and smell[6].

Change in colour of menstrual blood is mainly due to vitiation of *Vata, Pitta* or *Kapha Dosa* in early stage of vitiation. After some years quality of menstrual blood is changes continuously due to vitiation of more than one *Dosa*. Total eight types of *Artavadushti* are explained with the vitiation of one, two or three *Dosa* and blood simultaneously. *Vataja, Pittaja*, and *Kaphaja Artavadushti* are due to vitiation of only one *Dosa*. These three are easily curable but due to vitiation of *Rakta* and involvement of two *Dosa* type are difficult to cure and three *Dosa* involved are non-curable.

### Types of *Dustaartava*

1. ***Vataja Artavadushti***- Due to vitiation of *Vata Dosa*
2. ***Pittaja Artavadushti***- Due to vitiation of *Pitta Dosa*
3. ***Kaphaja Artavadushti***- Due to vitiation of *Kapha Dosa*
4. ***Kunapagandhi Artava***- *Kunapagandhi* type of *Artava Dushti* is due to vitiation of *Rakta* (general Blood)
5. ***Ganthi Artava***-*Ganthi Artava Dushti* is due to vitiation of *Vata & Kaph Dosa*
6. ***Puti- Pui Artava***-*Puti- Pui Artava Dushti* is due to vitiation of *Pitta & Kapha Dosa*
7. ***Ksheena Artava***-*Ksheena Artava Dushti* is due to vitiation of *Pitta & Vata Dosa*
8. ***Mutra- Purisha Gandha Varna Artava***- *Mutra- Purisha Gandha Varna Tulya Artava Dushti* is due to vitiation of *Tridosha*

### Cause of *Artava Dushti*-

#### ***Ritumati charya* (Life style during menstruation):**

Lady follow the *Brahmcharya* and other some dietary and life style related specification during menstrual cycle i.e. minimum three days of menstruation. For good health of lady and future progeny follow the *Ritumaticharya* and avoid the some upcoming congenital or special characteristics in progeny. According to different Samhita some dietary and life style related specifications are advised as bellow in table 1[7] to [9]

**Table: 1 Ahara-Vihara Specifications for Ritumati**

S.N.	Ahara-Vihara Specifications	Diet and Lifestyle Specification
1.	<i>Ksheer</i>	Milk
2.	<i>Ghee</i>	Ghee
3.	<i>Shalidhanya</i>	<i>Oryza Sativa</i>
4.	<i>Yava (Yavanna Vishesh)</i>	<i>Hordeum Vulgare</i> Linn
5.	<i>Kshaireyam (Ksheer Siddham)</i>	Milk products
6.	<i>Shuklavasam</i>	Wear clean, white or light colour dresses
7.	<i>Brahmcharini</i>	Avoid shearing of dress, bed and other personal items and avoid sexual indulgence
8.	<i>Divasvapan</i>	Avoid the day time and more sleep time hours
9.	<i>Ashrupat &amp; Rodanam</i>	Avoid sadness or cry
10.	<i>Pradhavan</i>	Avoid running, jumping, more walking
11.	<i>Ayasa</i>	Avoid More physical and mental exertion
12.	<i>Atishabdashravana Atikathanahasya</i>	Avoid More laughing, talking,
13.	<i>Marutasevana</i>	Avoid direct exposor of strong wind
14.	<i>Atisnana</i>	Avoid more bath
15.	<i>Anulepana</i>	Avoid more application of massage (dry or wet),
16.	<i>Abhyanga</i>	Avoid application of oil massage

### Discussion

Change in quality and quantity of menstrual blood is influenced by individual variation, two women suffering from identical disorder may describe entirely different colour, smell, duration and quantity of menstrual blood. Sometime same women have different quality of menstrual flow in different cycle. Due to change in daily lifestyle, exercise, food, stress level, anxiety or work quality of menstrual blood is also changed, but due to mild variations is ignored by lady.

Proper food in nutrition and quantity is required during menstruation. Milk and its product it is a *Satvika* food[10]. Menstruation is process of cleaning, wear and tear for reproductive system. Use of *Oryza Sativa*, *Hordeum Vulgare* Linn, milk and its product are helpful in this process, and prevent the accumulation of extra fat and debris in the channels or *Shrotas*[11].

Every time maintain personal hygiene, wear clean white or light colour dress, Avoid shearing of dress, bed and other personal items. Because of easy infection, low immunity have more chance of urogenital infection, have more antigen antibody reactions in vaginal mucosa [12],[13] and avoid sexual indulgence. Vaginal intercourse or non-coital sexual activity leading to orgasm during menstruation increases the risk of endometriosis in women during reproductive age. (Mollazadeh S, 2019,December). During menstruation follow the celibacy in daily life for minimum three days. Distinct association were found in the study between sexual intercourse adjuring menstruation and STDs experiences[14].

Avoid **untimely sleep** like day time and more sleep time hours. It vitiate all three *Dosa* and channels and later vitiate the *Artava*[15].

Any **mental trauma** or tension, bad behaviour, sadness or cry decreases the mental health and may causes depression, anxiety, insomnia and infertility or decrease the fertility rate[16].

**Exercise** induced endorphin release acting as a mood stabilizer. As endorphins acts as natural opiates the happier the individual outside the healthier inside with better healing and good immune system increasing the quality of life.[17] Regular physical activity decreases the dysmenorrhea but during menstruation more physical and mental stress increases the *Vata Dosa*, only normal physical and mental activity is recommended. Menstruating lady avoid running, jumping, more walking, more physical and mental stress. In Long-distance runners and other types of athletes have more chance of hypothalamic amenorrhoea (FHA), secondary amenorrhoea or severe oligomenorrhoea. Women have unambiguously decreased spontaneous LH pulse frequency with intact pituitary responsiveness to GnRH. This neuroendocrine disturbance may be relevant to exercise-associated amenorrhoea, since pulsatile LH release is a prerequisite for cyclic ovarian function.[18](Veldhuis JD, 1985).

**Table: 2 Different types of Artavadushti and Disorders[19]**

S.N.	Artavadushti	Gynaecological disorders
1.	<i>Vataja Artavadushti</i>	Oligomenorrhoea with dysmenorrhoea caused by nutritional deficiency.
2.	<i>Pittaja Artavadushti</i>	Inflammatory condition of reproductive organs, cellulitis with oligomenorrhoea
3.	<i>Kaphaja Artavadushti</i>	Chronic endometritis, endocervicitis
4.	<i>Kunapagandhi</i>	Early stage of endometrial carcinoma
5.	<i>Ganthi Artavadushti</i>	Cervical carcinoma
6.	<i>Puti- Pui Artavadushti</i>	Acute endometritis with pyometra
7.	<i>Ksheena Artavadushti</i>	Hypoestrogenic oligomenorrhoea due to nutritional deficiency and more spicy food
8.	<i>Mutra- Purisha Gandhi Artava dushti</i>	Cervical carcinoma III or IV stage

### Conclusion

Adequate amount of nutrition and physical activity at proper time is good for maintenance and promotion of health otherwise it may cause different types of disease. Due to rejection of Rajaswalacharya Ritumacharya in women of reproductive age causes infectious and different types of Carcinoma like cervical carcinoma. Proper prevention of the different conditions of infertility, gynaecological disorder, promoted the menstrual health and hygiene in respect of good progeny of future.

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