

An Anatomico-Clinical Study of Artav-Vaha Srotas W.S.R. to Dysmenorrhoea

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ABSTRACT

According to Acharya Shushrut there are two roots of Artav-vaha srotas, Garbhasaya (uterus) and Artav - vaha dhamani. Here artav-vaha srotas antermukh srotas which is also known as yogvahi srotas. Here Artava is the menstrual blood and Artav vaha Srotas is the part of female reproductive system which is responsible for the formation of menstrual blood and the passage which carry the menstrual blood during menstrual cycle. We can consider all the systems including hormones secretory glands which are responsible for the formation of menstrual blood and its mensuration at right time eg. Ovary and its follicle. Due to the injury in Artav vaha srotas infertility, sexual intolerance, amenorrhoea, dysmenorrhoea symptoms can be seen. Ayurveda is most ancient medical science having all the part of medical including anatomy, physiology, pathology, medicine etc. brief anatomical description of human body is given in Sharir-sthan of every text of Ayurveda. Srotas are the peculiarity of Ayurvedic medical science describing the systems of body. Srotas are considered as secretary channels of the body. Srotas are the hollow spaces of our body which transport the parinam prad dhatu (essence of the food) from one place to another place. Srotas are the systems or the part of the body systems or the secretory channels which are responsible for the secretions or transportation of Dhatus. Purush (Live being) is considered as the combination of Srotas. According to Acharya Sushruta there are two roots of Artav-vaha srotas, Garbhasaya (uterus) and Artav - vaha Dhamani. Here artav-vaha srotas antermukh srotas which is also known as yogvahi srotas. Here Artava is the menstrual blood and Artav vaha Srotas is the part of female reproductive system which is responsible for the formation of menstrual blood and the passage which carry the menstrual blood during menstrual cycle. We can consider all the systems including hormones secretory glands which are responsible for the formation of menstrual blood and its mensuration at right time eg. Ovary and its follicle. Due to the injury in Artav vaha srotas infertility, sexual intolerance, amenorrhoea symptoms can be seen. Ayurveda explained different structures or parts of the Artavavaha Srotas which are similar to the structures of the female reproductive system.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, artav-vaha, srotas, female, dysmenorrhoea, menstrual, hormones, ovary

INTRODUCTION

Dysmenorrhoea refers to the symptom of painful menstruation. It can be divided into 2 broad categories: primary (occurring in the absence of pelvic pathology) and secondary (resulting from identifiable organic diseases). Roots of artav-vaha Srotas mentioned Garbhashaya and Artav vaha

dhamani. Garbhashaya is the uterus or womb which is the reservoir of artava (menstrual blood) in the endometrium till the date of menstruation. According to acharya shushrut the position of Garbhashaya is in the third whorl of yoni (vagina) and its shape is like rohitmatsya much (rohu fish). Acharya Dalhan says

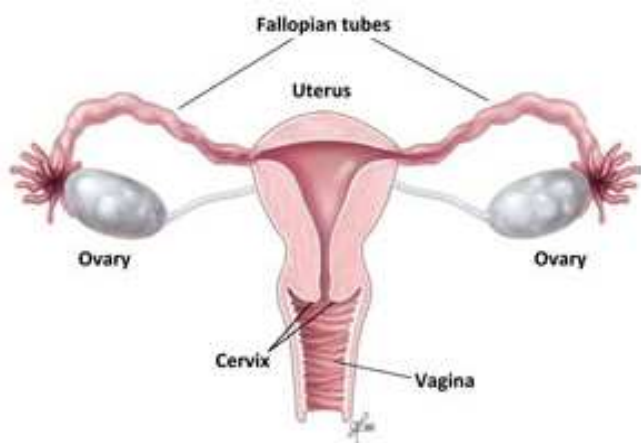
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that the opening is narrow and cavity is very large in shape. Here the artava formation is done under the influence of the estrogen and FSH. The hormones are secreted by the pituitary and ovary are also the part of artava vaha srotas. When mensuration occurs the flow of artava is through uterine cavity toward the cervix and vagina. Here uterine cavity, cervix and vagina is also the artava-vaha damani (passage) which is the root of artava-vaha srotas.

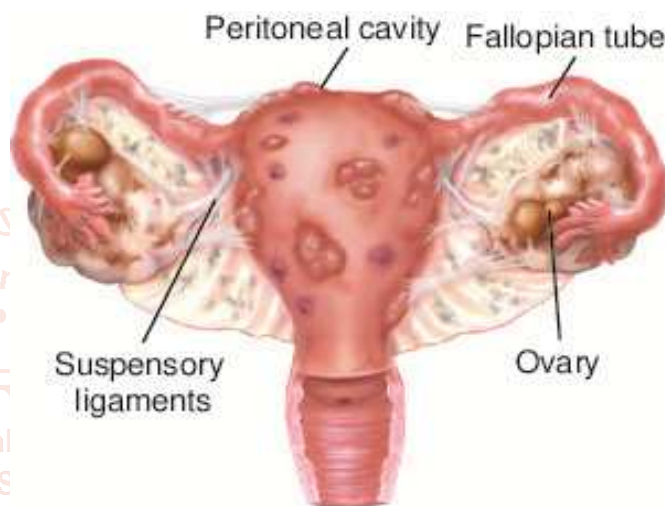


Finally we can consider as artav vaha Srotas to the whole female reproductive system. Due to the injury in any part of artav vaha Srotas there may be infertility, amenorrhea, dysmenorrhoea and pain during sexual act. It may happen due to the injury of uterus, uterine tubes, vaginal wall, cervix and their surrounding viscera. Srotas sharir wsr to artava-vaha Srotas and its anatomical consideration with modern anatomy it come to know that whole female reproductive system is considered as the artav vaha srotas. Though opening of the vagina is considered as Bahirmukh Srotas but that is also a part of artava vaha Srotas that is yogvahi srotas. Mainly the endometrium, uterine and ovarian vessels, and hormone secretory glands are the roots of artava-vaha srotas.[1,2]

Endometriosis, the condition was first described by Carl von Rokitansky in 1860. Endometriosis is one of the most mysterious and fascinating benign gynaecological disorders. By definition, endometriosis is occurrence of benign ectop endometrial tissues outside the cavity of the uterus. These islands of endometriosis are composed of endometrial glands surrounded by endometrial stroma.

Endometriosis is the deposition of endometrial tissue at abnormal sites in the body (usually in the pelvic area) instead of its normal position, as the lining of the womb. As a result hormonally active tissue, which continues to bleed on a monthly basis, may end up depositing around the pelvis, fallopian tubes, ovaries, rectum and intestinal area. Consequently, every

month this abnormally situated menstrual tissue builds up, bleeds and sheds blood and cells. Problems arise because the tissue may be in the pelvis or abdomen rather than in uterus. With endometriosis there is no route for escape and so old blood and cells that deposit in the pelvis may cause congestion and pelvic, intestinal and rectal pain, painful periods, fertility problems etc. Symptoms commonly found are pelvic pain, sacral backache, menorrhagia, dysmenorrhea, dyspareunia, bloody urine or stools, infertility, acute abdominal symptoms, and pain upon defecation, urination or intercourse. The signs are masses on palpation, retroversion of the uterus, tenderness and visible bluish nodules.[3,4]



Charaka says that a woman of vata prakriti, when consuming improper diet and indulges in other activities capable of aggravating vayu; thus provoked vayu reaches the reproductive system and produces pricking and other pains, stiffness, sensation as if creeping of ants, roughness and numbness, local symptoms and fatigue or lethargy etc. Due to vata, menstruation appears with irregularity and is painful, frothy, thin, and dry (absence of mucous).

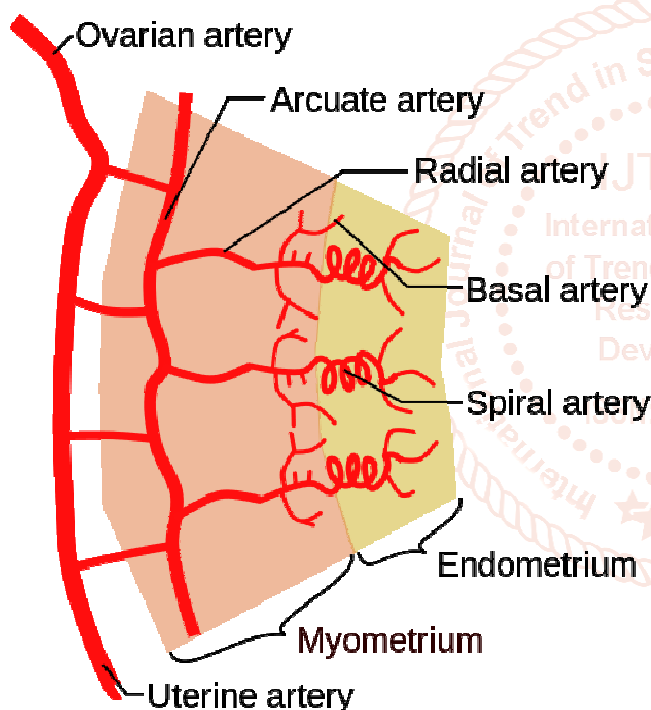
Chakrapani has explained that this type of bleeding from the vagina may occur even during the intermenstrual cycle. Sushruta has described roughness, stiffness, pricking pain, etc.; local symptoms only. Both Vagbhatas have included local symptoms of feeling stretching, vaginal flatulence and scanty, blackish pinkish menstruation. This disorder produces severe pain in the groin region and flanks, and disorders of gulma (abnormal growths/tumors) etc.; vatika disorders[5]

Discussion

Madhavnidana, Bhavaprakash and Yogratnakar have followed Sushruta. In this condition pain is more in comparison with other gynecological disorders of vata dosha. All the classics have described stiffness, roughness, hyperesthesia etc. as the symptoms seen in estrogen deficiency; and pain etc. as the clinical

features of vaginal neuralgia. Vagbhata has included displacement and vaginal flatus in symptoms, often seen with lax perineum especially associated with estrogen deficiency. Considering the description of all the classics together, vatika yonivyapada may be considered similar to endometriosis associated with laxity of perineum. Endometriosis is oestrogen dependant and manifests during the reproductive years. It is associated with pain and infertility. Dysmenorrhoea is the pain during or before menstruation. Dyspareunia is the pain during intercourse. Chronic pelvic pain is the non menstrual or non cyclical pain lasting at least six months, strong enough to interfere with daily activities and requiring medical or surgical treatment. [6]

In today's world dysmenorrhoea is emerging as a burning issue as the population of dysmenorrhoeic women is increasing day by day. This is explained as an udavartini yoni vyapad in ayurveda.



The main clinical feature of udavartini is rajah kricchrata (painful menstruation). It affects approximately 50-60% of women of reproductive age. But there is lack of effective medicament till date. There is a need to solve this emerging problem. Panchakarma therapy offers a ray of hope for udavartini. Also ayurvedic herbals offer potential management which is proved beyond doubt in solving the problem successfully. Severe dysmenorrhoea is most prevalent in young single women leading sedentary life and its frequency has some economic importance. The incidence of dysmenorrhoea is affected by social status, occupation and age, so groups of college students, high school girls, factory workers and women workers of armed forces each

provide different statistics. Its treatment is of great importance to the physician in view of interruption of the patient's economic, social and personal life.[7]

Clinically, Dysmenorrhoea can be classified into primary and secondary according to whether it dates from the menarche or it develops after a phase of painless cycles. A pain which is of uterine origin or directly due to menstruation. This is true dysmenorrhoea and is also described as primary, spasmodic, intrinsic, essential and functional. A pain which arises in an organ or tissue other than the uterus and which is merely associated with menstruation. This includes congestive dysmenorrhoea as well as other types. According to Ayurveda, the clinical entity characterized by pain, difficult expulsion of menstrual blood due to upward movement of rajas (menstrual blood) propelled by vitiated vata. The upward movement is called as Udavrittam

Due to movement of flatus etc., natural urges in reverse direction, the aggravated vayu (Apana vayu) moving in reverse direction fills yoni (uterus). This yoni seized the pain, initially throws or pushes the rajas (menstrual blood) upwards, then discharges it with great difficulty. The lady feels relief immediately following discharge of menstrual blood. Since in this condition rajah (menstrual blood) moves upwards or in reverse direction, hence it is termed as Udavartini. Besides painful and frothy menstruation, there are other pains of vata (body ache, general malaise etc.). In madhukosha commentary all around movement of vayu is said to be the cause of pain. The discharge of frothy menstrual blood associated with kapha .[8]

Implications

Mechanism of pain production

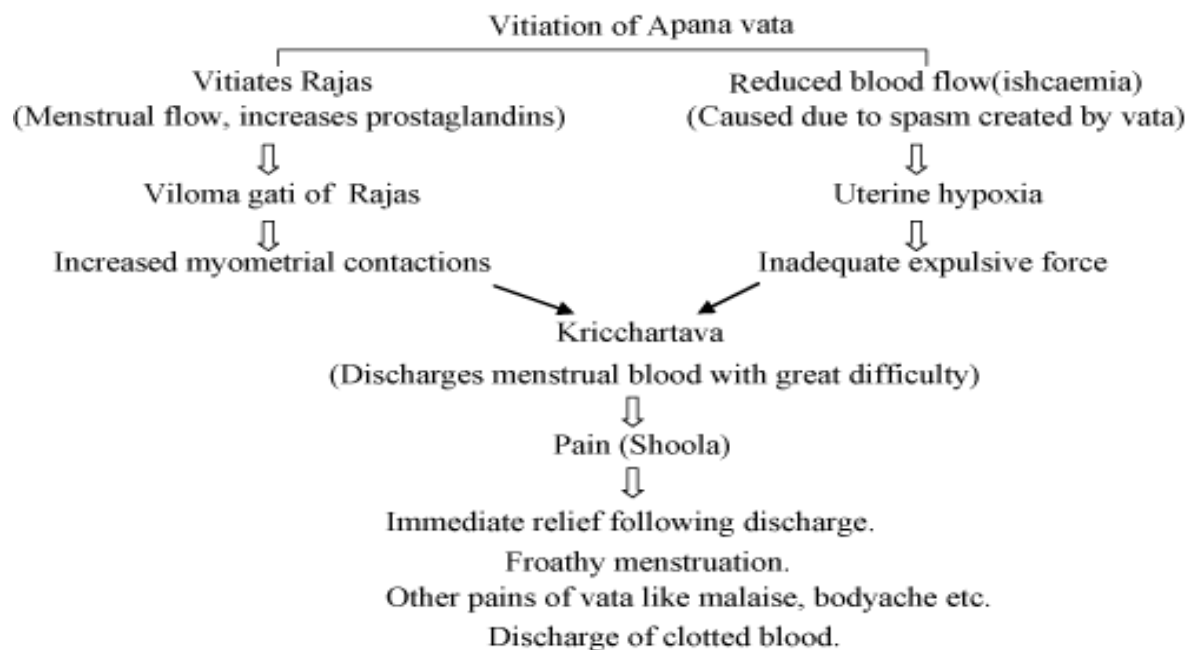
1. The Obstructive theory: This theory is that there is obstruction to the outflow of blood by the acute bend in the uterus at the internal os, by stenosis of the internal os, aggravated by premenstrual congestion, and that the retained blood then sets up irregular, spasmodic and painful contractions occurs [9, 10]. As per Ayurveda this obstruction is caused due to vata.
2. The Hypoplasia theory: The uterus as remained in the prepubertal state, with a small corpus, relatively long cervix and under developed muscles which is unable to expel the menstrual blood. The retained blood sets up painful contractions [11] (due to alpa mamsa dathu).
3. Disturbed Polarity of uterus: If the uterine polarity is disturbed menstrual blood is retained in the uterus and sets up painful irregular

contractions [11] (due to apana vata which causes viloma gati of Rajas).

4. Clotting of the menstrual blood: According to this view dysmenorrhoea may be caused by clotting the menstrual blood (baddha artava), the clots being then difficult to expel [12] (due to kapha).
5. Degenerative changes in the nerves supplying the uterus [13] (due to vyana vata).
6. The muscle ischemia theory: It is suggested that the pain is due to ischemia of the uterine muscle during exaggerated uterine contractions [12,13] (due to vata).
7. Increased prostaglandins, endoperoxides, and metabolite [14]

8. Excessive decidual formation (due to kapha).
9. Uterine mal-formation (beeja dosha).
10. Corpus luteum- if there is no corpus luteum no dysmenorrhoea, as is illustrated by the painless bleeding of anovular menstruation [15].
11. Low pain threshold, General ill health (alpa sara).
12. Psychological factors [16] (manasika karanas).
13. Environmental factors causing nervous tension (viharaja).

All the evidence suggests that vata is the main factor for Udaavartini yoni vyapad.



Results

Reasons for dysmenorrhoea can be summarised as:

Mithyahara (unwholesome diet): especially the use of vata prakopaka aharas. Mithya viharas (Abnormal mode of life):doing coitus in abnormal positions, coitus with multiple partners, coitus by a man of big sized penis with a weak woman, use of foreign bodies for sex etc comes under this category. These can produce infections or affect the psychology of the patient and results in Yonivyapada. Vegavarodha (withholding urges): especially of adhovayu (flatus), mootra (urine), mala (fecus) results in the vitiation of apana vata. Pradushta artava can be the ectopic endometrium or the abnormal hormone changes and the resultant menstrual abnormalities.[17]

Specific nidanas or treatments

Sneha karma (oleation) with Traivrita sneha.

- Sweda karma (hot fomentation).
- Oral use of Dashamoola ksheera.
- Vasti(enema) with Dashamoola ksheera.

- Anuvasana vasti (oil enema), Uttara vasti (intra uterine oil instillation) with Traivrita sneha.
- Poultice made of pasted Barley, wheat, kinva, Kusta, Shatapushpa, Priyangu, Bala.
- Intake of sneha in oral form.
- Sweda with milk.
- Sneha in the form of Anuvasana vasti & Uttara vasti.
- All other measures capable of suppressing the vata.[18]

Conclusions

Vata is responsible for all yoni rogas especially of Udaavartini. [19] In Ayurveda various treatment modalities are mentioned for the treatment of vata rogas. Among them vasti is the better treatment modality for vata [20]. Vasti is of two types based on the drug taken. Niruha or kashaya vasti in which decoction is taken, Anuvasana or sneha vasti in which oil is taken as main drug. Matra vasti is a sub-type of Anuvasana vasti.

Matra vasti has both local & systemic affects. It causes Vatanulomana thereby normalizing Apana vata. Gut is a sensory organ consisting of neural, immune & sensory detectors and cells, and provides direct input to local (intra mural) regulatory systems and information that passes to CNS or other organs. Vasti may stimulate the enteric nervous system and thus it can influence CNS and all bodily organs. Vasti may act on the neurohumoral system of body by stimulating CNS through ENS. It thereby restores the physiology at molecular level. It can also act on the inflammatory substances like prostaglandins and vasopressin etc. vasti may also help to excrete increased prostaglandins. Visceral afferent stimulation may result in activation of the Hypothalamo-pituitaryadrenal axis and Autonomous nervous system, involving the release of neurotransmitters like serotonin and hormones. Thus, it normalizes the neurotransmitters, hormonal and neural pathways and relieves all the symptom complex emerged as a result of neurohormonal imbalances in the patients of dysmenorrhoea. Spasm caused by vitiated Apana vayu causing obstruction to the flow of menstrual blood is the general underlying pathology. Taila enters into the srotas and removes the sankocha (spasm) by virtue of its sookshma, vyavayi and vikasi i.e., fast spreading nature.[19,20]

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