

Critical Review on Artava Kshaya

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ABSTRACT

The basic physiology of the menstrual cycle is a complex mechanism. This involves sequence of phases in coordination with the hypothalamus, anterior pituitary, ovary and endometrium. Normalcy and rhythmic menstruation are prime factors for normal reproduction.

The menstrual cycle with all its complexities can be easily perturbed and lead to Oligomenorrhoea and Hypomenorrhoea, the most common conditions seen in the present era. Its prevalence from different studies is 13.5% and 12.95% respectively. In classics, based on the pathophysiology of *Lakshana* by considering *Dosha*, *Dushya*, *Agni*, *Srotas* etc. this condition can be considered as *Artava Kshaya*. It is *Agnimandhyajanya Vikara* having *Bahudoshavastha* with *Kapha Vata Dushti* where *Kapha* produces *Avarana* to *Vata Dosha* and obstructs *Artava Vaha Srotas*. So, *Deepana Pachana*, *Shodhana* followed with *Shamana Chikitsa* corrects the pathophysiology *Artava Kshaya*.

KEYWORDS: *Artava Kshaya*, *Agnimandhyajanya Vikara*, *Shodhana Chikitsa*, *Vamana Karma*, *Virechana Karma*

INTRODUCTION

The menstrual cycle is essential physiological phenomenon observed in female reproductive era. It starts with menarche in puberty followed by conception-pregnancy and lactation in middle age that completes with menopause. Menstruation involves shedding of endometrium - a natural preparation to provide a bed for fertilized gamete, when fails resulting in menstruation. The quantity of menstrual blood varies from woman to woman. *Charaka* stated that normal menstruation has a one-month interval between two menstrual cycles, five days duration of menstrual discharge and is not associated with pain or burning sensation. *Artava* should not be very scanty or excessive in amount.

In classics, most of menstrual disorders have been described in the context of *Ashta Artava Dushti*, *Artava Kshaya*, *Anartava*, *Kashtartava*, *Nashta Artava*. *Artava Kshaya* is a disease which commonly seen as a symptom of many reproductive pathologies. Based on symptoms it can be correlated with oligo-hypomenorrhoea.

The menstrual cycle with all its complexities can be easily perturbed by unhealthy dietic habits, and

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altered/sedentary lifestyle, physical and emotional stress, metabolic disorders and obesity. This alters the physiology and ends with disruption of 'H-P-O' axis which leads to menstrual irregularities like oligo-hypomenorrhoea. In the current scenario prevalence of menstrual complexities is high in society. Now a days menstrual abnormalities are very common in women. According to different studies 13.5% and 12.95% of women are suffering from oligomenorrhoea and hypomenorrhoea respectively.^{1,2} The occurrence and severity of problem demand for attention and solution. Thus here an attempt has been made to understand the etiology, pathogenesis, symptoms and treatment of *Artava Kshaya* in detail.

Etymology:

Artava Kshaya word is derived by combination of two words viz *Artava* and *Kshaya*. *Ritodbhavam Artavam*. *Ritu* word refers to a particular or specific time. The word *Bhavam* refers to occurrence or product. The whole term refers to a body substance that flows out at a specific time or period is as called *Artava*.

Kshaya word is derived from *Kshi Dhatu* means to cease or to get reduced. According to *Charaka Kshaya* is *Hrasa, Nyunata*. According to *Vishala Shabda Kosha Sagar*, it is *Nyunata, Apachaya*. The reduced quantity of *Artava* from its normal *Pramana* is called *Artava Kshaya* or *Kshinartava*.

Paribhasha:

Ayurvedic classics describe menstrual disorders in the context of *Ashtartava Dushti*. A very short description of *Rajonasha, Nashtartava* and *Artava Kshaya* is available. *Sushruta* explained symptoms of *Artava Kshaya* as *Yathochita Kaala Adarshanam* (menstruation does not appear at its appropriate time or it is delayed or prolonged intermenstrual period), *Alpa Artava Pravrutti* (scanty menstruation), *Yonivedana* (vaginal or lower abdominal pain). *Dalhana* added when *Artava Srava Kaala* is less than three days or *Artava Darshana* does not take place after one month and reduced *Artava Pramana* is associated with *Yoni Vedana*,³ *Bhavaprakasha* along with above symptoms added that she desires *Katu, Amla, Lavana Rasatmaka* and *Ushna, Vidahi* and *Guru Ahara*. These are all qualities opposite of *Vata* and vitiated *Vata* results *Artava Kshaya*. Women desire for a *Dravya* which helps in *Vata Shamana* and *Pitta Vriddhi*.⁴ *Acharya Bhela* has described that even though the blood circulates throughout the body, it cannot nourish *Artava* due to *Vikruti* and *Raktalpata* that leads to *Artava Kshaya*.⁵ *Sushruta* description is clinical feature, whereas *Bhela* has elaborated upon etiopathogenesis of the disease.

Nidana

The causative factors explained in classics can be divided into for the sake of convenience, viz. *Samanya* (general) and *Vishesha* (Specific)

Samanya Nidana In classics, *Artava* is considered as *Updhatu* of *Rasa Dhatu*. The factors responsible for *Rasa Dhatu Kshaya* are responsible for *Artava Kshaya*.

According to *Sushruta*⁶ *Rasa Kshaya* is one of the causative factors of *Dhatukshaya*.

Considering all factors, *Charaka*⁷ explained *Ativyayam, Anashana, Atichinta, Asatmya Ahara Sevana, Atapsevana, Bhaya, Manahsantapa, Atimadirapan, Prajagaran, Atisamsodhana, Vegavidharana, Vriddhavastha, Adanakala* and *Bhutopghata* as *Samanya Nidana* of *Dosha, Dhatu* and *Upadhatu Kshaya*. These *Nidanas* are considered for *Artava Kshaya*.

Sushruta described *Mithya Ahara Vihara* as causative factor for *Dhatukshaya*. It is *Samanya Nidana* of *Artava Kshaya*.

Vimshati Yonivyapada Nidana considered as *Nidana* of *Artava Dushti*.

Vishesha Nidana

The factors responsible for *Artava Utpatti* if vitiated by any cause lead to *Artava Kshaya*. These factors are taken as *Vishesha Nidana* of *Artava Kshaya*.

- The Vitiated *Artavotpadaka Ahara, Agni (Jathragni, Rasagni), Rasadhatu* and *Artavavaha Srotas* are main factors for *Artava* vitiation. *Artava* is *Pittapradhana Agneya* in nature. So opposite *Vata Kaphavardhaka Ahara Vihara* are *Vishesha Nidana* of *Artava Kshaya*.
- *Sushruta* has clearly mentioned that, main causative factor that come into action in the production of *Artava Kshaya* are *Vata* and *Kapha Dosh* in combined form.⁸
- *Acharya Vagbhata* said that, *Vata, Pitta* and *Kapha* in combined form are main causative factors for *Artava Kshaya (Ksheenartava)*. So, causes for vitiation of *Vata, Pitta* and *Kapha Doshas* are mentioned as *Nidanas* of *Artava Kshaya*.⁹

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

1. Aharajanya Hetu
2. Viharajanya Hetu
3. Manasika Hetu
4. Anya Hetu
5. Abhighata Janya Hetu

1. *Aharajanya Hetu* –**Table No: 1 Aharaja Hetu of Artava Kshaya.**

Sl. No	Vitiating Hetu	Vata	Pitta	Kapha
1.	Ahara Rasa	Ati Katu, Tikta, Kashaya Rasa predominant Ahara.	Ati Katu, Amla, Lavana Rasa predominant Ahara.	Ati Madhura, Lavana Rasa predominant Ahara.
2.	Ahara Guna	Excessive intake of Sheeta, Laghu, Rukhsa Ahara Sevana	Excessive intake of Ushna, Vidahi Ahara.	Excessive intake of Abhishyandi, Guru, Picchila Ahara.
3.	Ahara Dravya	Excessive intake of Mudga, Shyamaka, Ati Sushka Shaka	Excessive intake of Kshara, Dadhi, Takra, Kanji Sevana etc.	Excessive intake of Pista, Ikshu, Masha, Audaka, Mamsa, Anupa Mamsa.
4.	Ahara Pramana	Abhojana, Atyalpa Bhojana	-	Atibhojana, Adhyashana

2. *Viharajanya Hetu***Table No: 2 Viharaja Hetu of Artava Kshaya.**

Vata vitiating Hetu	Pitta vitiating Hetu	Kapha vitiating Hetu
Ati Vyayama Ati Vyavaya Ati Prajagarana Vega Dharana Ratri Jagarana	Atapasevana Dhuma Sevana	Divaswapna Alasya

3. *Manasik Hetu***Table No: 3 Manasik Hetu of Artava Kshaya.**

Vata vitiating Hetu	Pitta vitiating Hetu
Chinta Shoka Bhaya	Krodha Irshya

4. *Any Hetu -*

A. **Vata vitiating Hetu** - Ati Ashrika Shrivana, Ragati Karshana, Dhatukshaya etc.

B. **Kapha vitiating Hetu** - Ati Santarpana, Sthaulya.

5. **Abhigata Janya Hetu** - This condition is described by Sushruta in clinical features of 'Vedha' of Artavavaha Srotas 'Vedha' means to get injury or trauma. Any injury or trauma of Artavavaha Srotas may lead to Artava Kshaya.¹⁰

Purva Rupa:

Purva Rupa of Artava Kshaya is not described in classics. In *Bhavprakasha* specific desire of the women suffering from Artava Kshaya have been enlisted i.e. she desire *Katu, Amla, Lavana, Ushna, Vidahi, Guru Ahara* and *Phala Shaka* and beverages etc.¹¹

Katu etc. *Ahara* increase Artava thus, the desire to consume these substances is probably due to deficiency of Artava. Hence it can be considered as *Purvarupa* of Artava Kshaya.

Rupa:¹²

Vyaktavastha of *Vyadhi* is *Rupa*. *Sushruta* explained the symptoms of Artava Kshaya as-

1. **Yathochita Kaala Adarshanam -**

The following interpretations are considered for *Yathochita Kaala Adarshana*-

- Delayed menarche- Occurring at the age of 15 years or later can be considered as Artava Kshaya.
- Prolonged intermenstrual period.
- Duration of menstruation less than normal duration i.e. less than 3 days.

2. **Alpartavam –**

According to *Shabdakalpadruma* “Alpa” means “Kshudra Pramana.” If menstrual blood flow is in less quantity i.e. less than 4 *Anjali* or less than 35 ml it should be considered as Artava Kshaya.

3. Yoni Vedana-

Due to *Artava Kshaya*, vitiation of *Vata* mainly *Apana* and *Vyana Vata* causes *Yoni Vedana*.¹³ *Yoni Vedana* can be considered as spasmodic, radiating, and infrequent pain during menstruation.

Sthanika Lakshana:

Table No: 4 Sthanika Lakshana of Artava Kshaya.

Dosha	Artava Varna	Artava Srava Swarupa	Yonivedana
Vata	Arun, Krishna	Tanu, Phenil, Ruksha	Todadi Vedana
Pitta	Neela, Pita	Apichchhila	Daha
Kapha	Shukla	Thick	Kandu

Sarvadehika Lakshana:

In *Artava Kshaya*, *Vata* and *Kapha Doshas* get provoked and *Pitta Dosha* is reduced so *Kapha Vriddhi* and *Pitta Kshaya Lakshanas* are observed.

Lakshanas due to vitiation of

- *Vata Dosha* – *Adhmana, Krishata, Daurbalya, Vibandha, Katishula, Sandhishula, Angamarda, Anidra.*
- *Pitta Dosha* – *Agnimandhya and Prabhahani.*
- *Kapha Dosha* – *Aruchi, Medovriddhi, Alasya.*

Manasika Lakshana:

Healthy mental state is dependent upon healthy body state and vice versa. In *Artava Kshaya*, body is not in a balanced state of *Doshas, Dhatus, and Malas*. *Manas* gets affected that leads to lack of concentration, *Chinta, Glani* etc.

Other Lakshana:

Artava is *Updhatu* of *Rasa*, *Lakshanas* of *Rasavaha* and *Artavavaha Srotodushti* are observed. *Rasavaha Srotodushti Lakshanas* - *Aruchi, Virasata, Alasya, Tandra, Angamarda, Pandu, Srotorodha, Napunsakata, Shaithilya, Mandagni, Tamodarshana* and *Bhrma*. *Artavavaha Srotodushti Lakshanas*- *Maithun Asahishnutva, Vandhyatva* and *Artavanasha*.

Samprapti:

In *Artava Kshaya*, *Mithya Ahara- Vihara, Manasika Bhavas* including stress and other etiological factors *Tridosha* as well as *Agni* vitiation ensues. Which results in augmentation and accumulation of *Kapha Dosha* and *Vata Dosha*. Due to impairment of *Agni*, improper digestion of victuals results in engenderment of *Ama Annarasa* which may further augment vitiated *Kapha*. Vitiated *Rasa Dhatu* and *Rasagni Mandya* cause *Srotodushti*. Progression of the pathological events is ensured by *Uttarottara Dhatvagnimandhya* and *Uttarottara* vitiation of *Dhatus* and withal the *Upadhatu* of *Rasa, Artava* get vitiated lead to *Artava Dushti*. Moreover, circulation of *Ama Anna Rasa* may further increase *Srotorodha*.

Vitiated *Rasa* and augmented *Kapha* along with *Vata Dosha* engender *Dosha Dushya Sammurchna*. Simultaneously *Shukragni* fail to perform their work congruously which is destruction of male hormones results excessive androgen in body. In this *Avastha, Medogata Lakshanas* like *Granthi* etc. *Vata Lakshanas* like *Angamarda, Agnimandya, Apravriddhi* or *Asamyaka Pravritti* of *Artava, Kaphaja Lakshana* like *Manda Pravritti* or *Apravriddhi* of *Artava, Sthoulya* etc. may be observed.

Organopathological changes start developing their various signs and symptoms in different system of the body i.e. oligomenorrhea, hypomenorrhea, polycystic ovaries, hirsutism, acne, hair fall etc. *Doshadushya Sammurchna*, if not treated leads to manifestation of *Rupa* of *Vyadhi* designated as *Artava Kshaya*.

Progression of disease untreated with manifestation of complication results *Dirghakala Anubandha Lakshana* eg. Infertility.

Samprapti Ghataka-

Table No: 5 Samprapti Ghataka of Artava Kshaya.

Dosha: Vata, Pitta, Kapha	Udbhava Sthana: Pakwashaya
Dushya: <i>Rasa, Rakta, Meda, Artava,</i>	Sanchara Sthana: <i>Sarva Sharira, Yoni</i>
Agni: <i>Jatharagni, Dhatwagni Mandhya</i>	Adhishthana: <i>Artava Vaha Srotas</i>
Ama: <i>Jatharagni Mandhya Janya Dhatwagni Mandhya Janya</i>	Vyaktashthana: <i>Artava Vaha Srotas, Stree Beeja Granthi, Sarva Sharira</i>
Srotas: <i>Rasa, Rakta, Meda, Artava Vaha Srotas</i>	Rogamarga: <i>Abhyantara</i>
Srotodushti Prakara: <i>Sanga and Siragranthi Prakara</i>	Roga Prakruti: <i>Chirakari</i>

Sadhya-Asadhyata

In *Ayurvedic* classics, prognosis of *Artava Kshaya* is not mentioned but *Sushruta* explained treatment of *Artava Kshaya*. By which it can be interpreted that *Artava Kshaya* is either *Sadhya* or *Kashta-Sadhya Vyadhi*.

Chikitsa –

Chikitsa is *Samprapti Vighatana*. In *Artava Kshaya*, there is vitiation or *Vruddhi* of *Vata* and *Kapha* along with *Kshaya* of *Pitta*, *Rasa* and *Rakta Dhatu* due to *Agnimandya*. Hence all these *Samprapti Ghataka* should be considered to treat *Artava Kshaya*.

Nidana Parivarjana is the basic management of all diseases. In *Artava Kshaya*, *Hetus* should be avoided in order to get permanent relief.

Artava Kshaya should be treated with *Samshodhana* with *Agneya Aushadhi*. *Dalhana* explained *Shodhana* should be done by *Vamana* and not by *Virechana*. Because *Virechana* reduces *Pitta* that reduces *Artava*. *Vamana* eliminate *Saumya Dhatu-Kapha* resulting into a relative increase in *Agneya Dhatu* of body, consequently *Artava* quantity increases.

As per *Chakrapani Tika* - Purifying measures clear *Srotasa* (Channels). *Vamana Karma* and *Virechana Karma* clears upward and downward directed channels respectively, thus both should be used, giving due consideration to the dosages of drugs used for purification and fitness of the patient.

In *Artava Kshaya* there is qualitative *Kshaya* of *Pitta* and quantitative *Kshaya* of *Artava*. The use of *Agneya Dravyas* is beneficial in *Artava Kshaya* because of *Agnivardhaka* and *Pittakara* properties that helps in *Samprapti Vighatana*. So *Pittavardhaka Dravyas* like *Tila*, *Masha*, *Sura* and *Shukta* should be used in treatment of *Artava Kshaya*.

According to Kashyapa and Vagbhata

Artava Kshaya or *Alpartava* is *Anuvasana Sadhya Vyadhi*.¹⁴

Vagbhata stated that *Pitta Vriddhikara* and *Rakta Vriddhikara Chikitsa* beneficial in *Artava Kshaya*.¹⁵

In classics, many drugs are mentioned to treat *Artava Kshaya*, *Alpartava*, *Ksheenartava* and *Anartava*. Some of them are given below-

Abhyantara Chikitsa**Table No: 6 Abhyantara Chikitsa Yoga for Artava Kshaya.**

Sl. No	Aushadhi Kalpana	Name of Yoga
1.	<i>Kwatha</i> ^{16,17}	<i>Tila, Karvi, Guda Kwatha, Krishna Tila Kwatha with Guda; Mishreya, Methika, Muli, Garjara, Shatapushpa Kwatha.</i>
2.	<i>Choorna</i> ^{18,19}	<i>Shtapushpa Choorna, Jyotishmati, Sarjikshara, Rajika, Ugra, Asana Choorna.</i>
3.	<i>Vati</i> ^{76,77}	<i>Raja Pravartini Vati, Ritukari Vati, Kanyalauhadi Vati, Boladi Vati, Nashta Pushpantka Rasa.</i>
4.	<i>Modaka</i> ^{78,79}	<i>Ashvathamuladi Modaka, Agastiharitaki Modaka</i>
5.	<i>Ghrita</i> ^{80,81,82,83}	<i>Phala Ghrita, Brihat Shatavari Ghrita, Kumara Kalyana Ghrita, Kalyanaka Ghrita, Maha Kalyanaka Ghrita.</i>

Sthanika Chikitsa**Table No: 12 Sthanika Chikitsa Yoga for Artava Kshaya.**

Sl. No	Chikitsa	Name of Yoga
1.	<i>Basti</i> ^{84,85,86}	<i>Anuvasana Basti – Shatavryadi Taila; Uttara Basti - Shatapushpa Taila, Arka Pushpa Taila, Kashmariphalati Ghrita.</i>
2.	<i>Varti</i> ⁸⁷	<i>Ikshwaku Beeja, Danti, Chapala, Guda, Madanaphala, Surabeeja, Yavashuka, Snuhi Kshira Varti</i>

Pathya- Apathya**Pathya-**

Use of *Agneya Ahara Dravyas* relieves *Kapha Dosha* which does *Avarana* to *Apana Vata*. As *Agneya Dravyas* have *Ushna Virya*, it maintains the normalcy of *Ruksha & Sheeta Guna* of *Vata*, *Snigdha & Pichhila Guna* of *Kapha*.

- *Shali rice, Yava etc. Annam, Madhya, Mamsa* and substances which are capable of increasing *Pitta* should be beneficial.⁸⁸
- Fish, *Kulattha, Kanji, Takra, Sura* etc. should be used in diet.⁸⁹
- *Lasuna* is also beneficial.⁹⁰
- *Tila, Masha, Sura, Sukta* should be used.⁹¹
- Fish, *Kanji, Tila, Udaswihcha, Dadhi*.⁹²
- *Yoga* and *Vyayama*.

Apathya-

Ahara which are aggravating *Nidana* are contraindicated.

Divaswapna, Ratrijagarana.

Stress.

Discussion:

A study of *Ayurvedic* literature reveals references to signs and symptoms and management of *Artava Kshaya* in detail by *Charaka, Sushruta*, etc. With the help of its clinical presentation and *Dosha Dushya Siddhanta of Ayurveda*, it can be well understood and managed. In *Artava Kshaya* due to the vitiation of *Tridosha* i.e. *Kapha Vata Vriddhi* and *Pitta Kshaya*, *Agni* is in *Mandavsatha* at *Koshtha* and *Dhatu* level, *Ama Utapatti, Rasa Dhatu Dushti, Kapha Avarana to Vata Dosha and Artava Vaha Srotorodha* is present. Also, it is *Bahudoshavastha*. So, *Shodhana* therapy plays an important role in the management of *Artava Kshaya*. By the administration of *Vamana, Virechana, Bast* like *Shodhana* procedures and *Shamana Aushadhi* as per *Dosha Dushya Sammurchhana* yields optional results in *Artava Kshaya*.

Conclusion:

Ayurvedic principles suggest a correlation between *Artava Kshaya* and various conditions such as *Avaranjanya Vikara, Agni Vikruti, Nashtartava, Dhatwagni Mandhyajanya Vikara, Artava Vaha Sroto Dushthi* and more. When examining the symptomatology of oligo-hypomenorrhea from an *Ayurvedic* perspective, it becomes evident that there is an emphasis on the predominance of *Kapha Dosha*, accompanied by vitiation of *Vata* and *Pitta Doshas*. This *Tridosha* imbalance, coupled with *Agni Dushti* (impaired digestive fire), disrupts the functioning of *Dhatwagni* (metabolic fire responsible for the transformation of tissues) in the *Rasa, Rakta, Meda*, and *Artavavaha Srotas* (channels responsible for transporting nutrients and waste products) over time. Consequently, patients may suffer from the consequences of this imbalance for the rest of their lives.

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