

A Review on Dysmenorrhoea.s.r to *Kashtartava*

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Abstract

In today's present day life, women are effectively facing challenges encountered by stressful life resulting in *Mithyaahar*&*vihar*, over exertion & malnutrition this may direct to *Vikruti* in "*Rituchakra*" leading to various *Vyadhi* allied to menstruation. *Ayurveda* recommends *Ritucharya* and *Dinacharya*, diet modulation and *Yoga* in the form of *asanas*, *pranayam* and meditation on a regular basis so as to alleviate dysmenorrhoea effectively. Similarly, *Uttarbasti*, *GarbhashayaBalyaAushadhi*, *Anuvasana* or *Matrabasti* can also be administered if necessary. Today stress is becoming an inescapable part of modern life. In the incessant quest for material comforts, a woman has been losing her health. The basic reason why women are reeling under myriad problems is because she has not been following the codes of healthy living. She has disregarded the codes for the bodily health as well as healthy mind also. Menstruation is a natural event as a part of the normal process of reproductive life in females. Due to today's sedentary lifestyle and lack of exercise, dysmenorrhoea is becoming today's burning problem throughout the world which causes discomfort for women's daily ensuing day to day activities and may result in missing work or school, inability to participate in sports or other activities. In the treatment of dysmenorrhoea, no addictive, analgesic, antispasmodics are prescribed which are not good for health for longer use. In *Ayurvedic* classics *Kashtartava* (dysmenorrhoea) is not described as a separate disease because women were not suffering much from this problem in that era because of pin pointed *Ritucharya*&*Rajasvalacharya*. According to *Ayurvedic* text, there are many other diseases in which *Kashtartava* is considered and is described as a symptom. Hence, this study is particular about the description regarding *Kashtartava* on the basis of scattered classical references.

Keywords: *Apatyamarga*, *Artava*, *Baddhartava*, Dysmenorrhoea, *Kashtartava*,

Artava: A substance of the body which flows out at the specific period of time is called as *Artava*. A substance which flows out from *Apatyamarga* without pain, burning and sliminess is known as *Artava*. *ApanaVayu* and *VyanaVayu* are mainly responsible for *ArtavaUtpatti*.

Kashtartava: *Kashtartava* (Dysmenorrhoea) is not separately described as a disease. But there are many diseases in which *Kashtartava* is considered and described as a symptom.

Nirukti: The term *Kashtartava* is made of two words- *Kashta* and *ArtavaKashta*: Painful, difficult, troublesome, ill, forced, wrong, unnatural, a bad state of Thing.

Artava: Belonging to reasons, period of time, menstruation.

Thus the word *Kashtartava* can be expressed as- *Kashtenamuchyatiitikashtartava* " i.e. the condition where *Artava* is shaded with great difficulty and pain is termed as "*Kashtartava*"

SampraptiGhataka

Dosha -VataPradhanaTridosha

Vata-Vyana, Apana

Pitta- Ranjaka, Pachaka

Kapha as AnubandhitaDosa

Dhatu-Rasa, Rakta, Artava

Upadhatu-Artava

Agni -Jatharagni, Rasagni, Raktagni

Srotasa -Rasa, Rakta and ArtavavahaSrotasa

Srotodushti-Sanga and Vimargagamana

Rogamarga-Abyantara

SthanaSamshraya-Garbhashaya

VyaktiSthana - Garbhashaya

Ayurvedic concept of pain related to *Kashtartava*

Acharya Charakahas mentioned none of the gynecological disease can be arise without affliction of aggravated *Vata*. *Vata* is the main responsible factor, though other *Doshas* only be present as *Anubandhi* to it. So pain is produced due to vitiation of only *VataDosha* or in combination with other *Doshas*.

Modern Review

Definition of Menstruation

Menstruation is a function peculiar to women and the higher apes. It may be define as a "periodic and cyclic shedding of progesterational endometrium accompanied by loss of blood". It takes place at approximately 28-days interval between the menarche and menopause. Menstruation is the visible manifestation of cyclic physiologic uterine bleeding due to shedding of the endometrium following invisible interplay of hormones mainly through hypothalamo-pituitary-ovarian endometrial axis.

Definition of Dysmenorrhoea

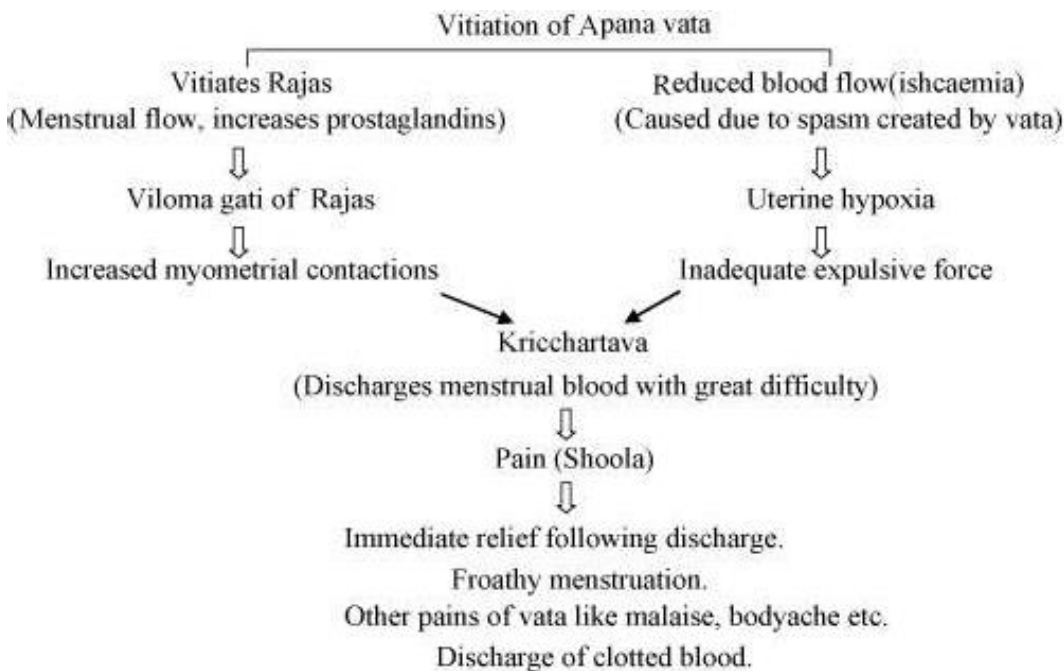
The term dysmenorrhea refers to painful menstruation. Dysmenorrhea is a cramp labor-like pain in the lower abdomen that radiates to upper abdomen, waist and thighs and is sometimes accompanied by systemic symptoms like nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache and dizziness.

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. 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 (due to *AlpaMamsaDathu*).

3. Disturbed Polarity of uterus: If the uterine polarity is disturbed menstrual blood is retained in the uterus and sets up painful contractions (due to *ApanaVata* which causes *Vilomagati* of *Rajah*).
4. Clotting of the menstrual blood: According to this view dysmenorrhoea may be caused by clotting the menstrual blood (*BaddhaArtava*), the clots being then difficult to expel (due to *Kapha*).
5. Degenerative changes in the nerves supplying the uterus (due to *VyanaVata*).
6. The muscle ischemia theory: It is suggested that the pain is due to ischemia of the uterine muscle during exaggerated uterine contractions (due to *Vata*).
7. Increased prostaglandins, endoperoxides, and metabolite.
8. Excessive decidual formation (due to *Kapha*).
9. Uterine mal-formation (*BeejaDosha*).
10. Corpus luteum- if there is no corpus luteum no dysmenorrhoea, as is illustrated by the painless bleeding of anovular menstruation.
11. Low pain threshold, General ill health (*AlpaSara*).
12. Psychological factors (*ManasikaKaranas*).
13. Environmental factors causing nervous tension (*Viharaja*).

Aetiopathogenesis



Types of Dysmenorrhea

There are two types of Dysmenorrhoea:

Primary Dysmenorrhea

Primary dysmenorrhoea is the pain associated to ovulation cycles, without demonstrable lesions that affect the reproductive organs. Primary dysmenorrhea is related to myometrial contractions induced by prostaglandins originating in secretory endometrium, which result in uterine ischemia and pain. In addition to the physiologic perspective, various psychologic theories have also been proposed, emphasizing the role of personality factors and attitudes about menstruation.

Secondary Dysmenorrhea

Secondary dysmenorrhoea is the pain associated with ovulatory cycles caused by a demonstrable pathology.

Differential diagnosis -The most important differential diagnosis of primary dysmenorrhoea is secondary dysmenorrhoea.

Secondary Dysmenorrhea:-

1. Endometriosis
2. Adenomyosis
3. Uterine myoma
4. Endometrial polyps
5. Obstructive malformations of the genital tract

Other causes of pain

Chronic pelvic inflammatory disease

Pelvic adhesions

Irritable bowel syndrome inflammatory bowel disease

Interstitial cystitis

Sudden onset of Dysmenorrhea

Pelvic inflammatory disease

Unrecognized ectopic pregnancy

Spontaneous abortion

Treatment as Per Ayurvedic Classics

1. These disorders (gynecological disorders) do not occur without vitiation of *Vata*, thus first of all *Vata* should be normalized, and only then treatment for other *Doshas* should be done
2. In all these gynecological disorders, after proper oleation and sudation, emesis etc. all five purifying measures should be used. Only after proper cleansing of dosasthough upper and lower passages, other medicines should be given. These emesis etc. cleansing measures cure gynecologic disorders in the same way as they cure the diseases of other systems.
3. In menstrual disorders caused by *VataDosha*, the specific treatment prescribed for suppressing that particular *Dosha* should be used. Recipes prescribed for *Yoni Rogasand Uttarbasti*etc. should also be used after giving due consideration to the vitiated *Dosha*.
4. Unctuous, hot, sour and salty articles should be used for the relief from menstrual disorders due to *Vata*. Sweet, cold and astringent substances for the purification of *Pitta* and hot, dry and astringent for *Kapha*
5. For *AvritaApanaVayu*, treatment should be *Agnideepan, Grahi, Vata, Anulomana* and *PakvashayaShuddhikara*

Treatment

Life-style changes

Exercise regularly-minimum thrice a week

Ensure sound sleep of atleast 6-8 hours

Avoid smoking and alcohol Reduce caffeine

Diet

Eat healthy, warm and fresh foods

Eat 5-6 small meals

Have fresh fruits like plums, dark grapes, apples,pomegranates.

Eat more leafy vegetables

Regularly use ginger in food preparations

Avoid high fat and sugar

Take supplements like calcium, magnesium, vitamin E, B6, B12

Yoga

Yoga activities can help to reduce and prevent the severity of many ailments that specifically women's health and give strength, stability, and suppleness. *YogaAsanas* are considered as the most convenient, drugless, and inexpensive method. *Yoga* is also found to have encouraging effect on increasing the pain threshold capacity in individuals. In *Yoga*, various types of *Asanas* have been mentioned. Among them *Ushtrasana*, *Bhadrasana*, *Gomukhasana*, and *Vajrasana* have a pain relieving effect.

Ayurvedic Treatment

According to *Ayurveda*, menstruation is guarded by *VataDosha*. Derangement or aggravation of *VataDosh* gives rise to this symptom. The treatment, which alleviates *Vata*, gives excellent results in this disease.

Panchakarma treatments like *Uttarbasti*, *Anuvasana* or *Matrabasti* are the treatments which will specifically target derangement of *Vata* in menstrual problems.

GarbhashayaBalyaAushadhi will also reduce associated symptoms.

Specific treatment

- *Snehana karma* (oleation) with *Trivrita Sneha*.
- *Swedanakarma*(hot fomentation).
- Oral use of *DashmoolaKsheera*.
- *Vasti* (enema) with *DashmoolaKsheera*.
- *AnuvasanaVasti* (oil enema), *Uttaravasti* (intra uterine oil instillation) with *Traivritasneha*.
- Poultice made of pasted Barley, wheat, *Kinva*, *Kusta*, *Shatapushpa*, *Priyangu*, and *Bala*.
- Intake of *Sneha* in oral form.
- *Swedanawith* milk.
- *Snehana* in the form of *AnuvasanaVasti&Uttaravasti*.

- Other measures which are capable of suppressing the *Vata*. *Rajah Pravartinivati*, *Kaseesadivati*, *Dashmoola tail*, *TrivrittailaforUttarvasti*.

Vata is responsible for all *Yoni Rogas* especially of *Udaavartini*. In *Ayurveda* various treatment modalities are mentioned for the treatment of *VataRogas*. Among them *Vasti* is the better treatment modality for *Vata*. *Vasti* is of two types based on the drug taken. *Niruha* or *KashayaVasti* in which decoction is taken, *Anuvasana* or *Snehavastin* which oil is taken as main drug. *Matravastin* a sub-type of *AnuvasanaVasti*.

Probable mode of action of *Matravasti*:

Matravasti has both local & systemic affects. It causes *Vatanulomana* thereby normalizing *ApanaVata*. 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 *Apanavayu* 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.

Discussion

Culturally, the abbreviation Primary Dysmenorrhea is widely understood in the world to refer to difficulties associated with menses, and the abbreviation is used frequently even in casual and conversational settings, without regard to medical rigor. In these contexts, the syndrome is rarely referred to without abbreviation, and the intensions of the reference are frequently broader than the clinical definition. The misery is going on endlessly. Thanks we have the solution.

Conclusion

Ayurveda views Primary Dysmenorrhea as a doshic imbalance that can potentially be impacted through balanced living that is characterized by *Dosha* appropriate diet, herbal supplements, exercise, routine, *Yoga*, meditation, as well as nourishing inputs through all five senses.

Ayurveda being a holistic medicine offers potential remedies which are proved beyond doubt in solving the problem successfully. *Vasti* is the best treatment for Dysmenorrhoea.

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