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A conceptual view of Endometriosis through an Ayurveda Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Endometriosis is one of the most mysterious and fascinating benign gynecological disorders defined by implantation of functioning endometrial tissue outside the uterine cavity. The prevalence is about 10 percent. However, prevalence is high amongst the infertile women (30–40%) as based on diagnostic laparoscopy and laparotomy. It is estrogen dependent condition hence increases due to high estrogen level in the body and regression occurs during pregnancy & after menopause. Women with endometriosis are usually confronted with one or both of the two major problems—pain and infertility. Pain includes dysmenorrhea, dyspareunia, and chronic pelvic pain. In *Ayurvedic* it can be correlate with *Vataja Yonivyapada* on the basis of two symptoms dysmenorrhea and chronic pelvic pain. It can be correlate with different *Yonivyapada* on the basis of other symptoms. *Ayurvedic* management can be done on the basis of *Tridoshic* theory in which *Vata* is responsible for displacement of endometrial cells from their original location in the uterus to places outside the uterine cavity. *Pitta* responsible for involvement of blood, hormones, and menstruation as well as the inflammatory nature of the disease. *Kapha* responsible for increasing buildup of cells and overgrowing much like a tumor. So treatment approach can be *Ampachana* & correction of *Agni*, *Vaatanulomana*, *Mridu Virechana*, *Vatashamaka*, *Raktasravarodhaka*, *Granthihar* and *Lekhan Chikitsa*, etc. Life style and diet modifications are also to be advocated as their role in the establishment of any disease cannot be ignored.

Key words: Endometriosis, Tridosha, Ayurveda, Vataja Yonivyapada, Lekhan

INTRODUCTION

Endometriosis is one of the most mysterious and fascinating benign gynecological disorders defined by implantation of functioning endometrial tissue outside the uterine cavity. The prevalence is about 10 percent. However, prevalence is high amongst the infertile women (30–40%) as based on diagnostic laparoscopy and laparotomy.^[1] Endometriosis can occur at any site.

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The most common sites are the ovaries, the cul-de-sac including the Uterosacral ligaments, peritoneum overlying the bladder, sigmoid colon, back of the uterus, intestinal coils and appendix.^[2] The exact cause is still not clear; however, several theories are explained like the implantation theory, metaplasia theory, lymphatic theory, and blood born spread theory, immune deficiency theory, and genetic theory and so on. The endometrium stroma and glands in the ectopic site has got the potentiality to undergo cyclical change. Proliferative changes are constantly evidenced, secretive changes are absent in ectopic endometrium. The periodical shed blood may remain encysted, the cyst becomes tense and ruptures. As the blood is irritant, there is dense tissue reaction surrounding the lesion with fibrosis. It produces adhesions and puckering of the peritoneum. There may be the formation of Chocolate Cyst. In spite of dense adhesion amongst the pelvic structure, fallopian tubes remain patent.^[3] Endometriosis is reported in the ovaries, uterine ligaments, recto vaginal septum, pelvic

Peritoneum, laparotomy scars, vagina, umbilicus, hernia sacs, urinary tract, large and small intestine, appendix, umbilicus and rarely even in the pleura, diaphragm, arms, legs, kidneys etc. The clinical symptoms include nausea or vomiting and bloating, dysmenorrhea, dyspareunia, dysuria, dyschezia, lower abdominal pain, menorrhagia, irregular bleeding and chocolate cyst in later stages^[4] Although it is predominantly concluded that endometriosis has no cure or treatment. *Ayurveda* has detailed about the causes, factors that trigger endometriosis and therapies to recover from this condition.

Ayurvedic perspective of Endometriosis

In *Ayurvedic* it can be correlate with *Vataja Yonivyapada* on the basis of two symptoms dysmenorrhea and chronic pelvic pain. It can be correlate with different *Yonivyapada* on the basis of other symptoms. *Ayurvedic* methods of diagnosis are not based on histological examinations rather on the clinical presentations. We can deduce that endometriosis is not a single entity from an *Ayurvedic* point of view. It can be compared with the following:

Endometriosis symptoms	Ayurvedic correlation
Chronic Pelvic pain	<i>Vatika Yonivyapada</i>
Menorrhagia	<i>Rakta Yoni</i>
Dysmenorrhea	<i>Vatiki Yonivyapada</i> or <i>Udavarta Yonivyapada</i> .
Dyspareunia	<i>Paripluta Yonivyapada</i> ^[5]
Infertility	<i>Vandhya Yonivyapada</i> ,
Adhesions and Retroversion of uterus	<i>Antarmukhi Yonivyapada</i> .

Ayurvedic Pathogenesis

According to *Ayurvedic* physiology, *Artava* (the reproductive apparatus along with the menstrual blood and the ovum) is formed from the *Rasa Dhatu* (the first tissue formed after digestion and metabolism). When the food habits aren't the best, like an excessive indulgence is heavy, fried, oily, incompatible foods like fruits with milk, excessive junk

food, non-vegetarian dominant or dairy dominant food, overeating, etc. Other contributing factors are sedentary lifestyle, habitual constipation, suppression of natural urges like urination and stools, excessive stress, environmental factors, and drug abuse leading to endotoxins or toxic metabolite formation in the *Rasa Dhatu* leads to improper nutrition as well as altered immune response in the reproductive system overall leading to excessive endometrial growth. These toxins termed as *Ama* in *Ayurveda* which cause *Shrotorodha* in the *Artava* leads to *Vata Dosh Prakopa* and *Vatadosha Vimarggaman*. Due to dysfunction in the normal movement of *Vata Dasha (Apana Vata)*, there is a retrograde menstrual spill (reversed flow of menstrual blood) leads to these endometrial growths to implant in the other areas outside of the uterus.

Endometriosis - Imbalance of three Doshas

According to *Ayurvedic* classification, it is categorized under *Tridosha* imbalances under different circumstances. Overgrowth of cells is a *Kapha* imbalance. Since the location of the uterus and involvement of hormones as well as blood, it also indicates a *Pitta* imbalance. Since menstrual cycle involves movement it is also a *Vata* disorder. Imbalance of all three *Doshas* leads to endometriosis, more or less which indicates vitiation or lack of balance in *Tridoshas*. *Tridosha* role in endometriosis pathogenesis given in table below.

Doshas	Pathogenesis
<i>Vata</i>	The role of <i>Vata</i> is the displacement of endometrial cells from their original location in the uterus to places outside.
<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Pitta</i> problem because of the involvement of blood, hormones, and menstruation as well as the inflammatory nature of the disease
<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Kapha</i> problem due to the increasing buildup of cells and overgrowing much like a tumor

Ayurvedic Management

Endometriosis cannot be correlated to any single disease in *Ayurveda*. As discussed earlier the diagnosis,

hence has to be based on the *Ayurvedic* pathogenesis and balancing of *Tridosha's* and symptomatic. So, treatment approach can be *Ampachana* & correction of *Agni*, *Vaatanulomana*, *Mridu Virechana*, *Vatashamaka*, *Raktasravarodhaka*, *Granthihar* and *Lekhan Chikitsa*.

Mode of Treatment	Description
Ampachana & correction of Agni	<i>Deepan-Pachan</i> drug like <i>Panchkol Churna</i> , <i>Ampachakvati</i> , <i>Chitrakadi Vati</i> , <i>Agnitundi Vati</i> , <i>Sankh Vati</i> , <i>Vaishwanara Churna</i> , <i>Jirakadyarishta</i> etc. can be used to promote <i>Agni</i> and for <i>eliminativ</i> <i>Ama</i> from <i>Artavahasrotas</i> i.e., removal of obstruction in the <i>Srotas</i> .
Vaatanulomana	<i>Vatanulomak</i> drug like <i>Hingwastaka Vati</i> , <i>Hingwadi Churna</i> , <i>Avipattikara Churna</i> , <i>Abhayarista</i> , <i>Triphala Churna</i> , <i>Haritaki Churna</i> , <i>Trivrit Churna</i> , etc. drugs which helps in decreasing <i>Pratiloma Gati</i> of vitiated <i>Vata</i>
Mridu Virechana	<i>Mridu Virechana</i> can be given to correct the <i>Vatadosha Vimarggaman</i> and to balance <i>Pitta Dosh</i> a if there is any liver pathology involvement.
Vatashamaka	External oil massage with <i>Vata</i> pacifying oil like <i>Bala Taila</i> , <i>Dhanwanthara Tailam</i> , <i>Sesame oil</i> , etc. <i>Yoga Basti</i> procedure eliminate the <i>Ama Dosh</i> as from body and balances the <i>Vata Dosh</i> a. Drug formulation for <i>Niruha Basti</i> - (<i>Dashmool Kwatha</i> , <i>Erandmuladi Kwatha</i> etc.) and <i>Anuvasana Basti</i> - (<i>Sahchar Taila Dashmool Taila</i> etc.) can be given.
Raktasravarodhaka	<i>Pradarantaka Rasa</i> , <i>Bolabaddha Rasa</i> , <i>Pradarari Rasa</i> , <i>Pushyanuga Choor</i> na, <i>Puskaraleha</i> , <i>Asokarishta</i> , <i>Lodhrasava</i> , <i>Patrangasava</i> etc. which help in stopping bleeding and prevent formations of cyst.
Granthihar and Lekhan Chikitsa	<i>Kanchnara Guggul</i> having Antitumor activity.

	<i>Varunadi Kashaya</i> - Collection of <i>Kapha</i> removed by <i>Bhedana</i> <i>Shigru</i> leaf powder. <i>Kumari</i> - <i>Bhedan</i> , <i>Kaphshamak</i> and act on Liver. <i>Manjishtha</i> - Antitumor activity (<i>Pitta Dosh</i> a) <i>Gokshurdi Guggul</i> - Anti tumour activity (if <i>Kanchanar</i> not work) Other drugs having antitumor activity like <i>Sariva</i> , <i>Methika</i> can be used.
Vednasthapan Drugs	<i>Dashmoolarishta</i> , <i>Dashmool Kwatha</i> , <i>Ashokarishta</i> , <i>Maharashnadi Kashaya</i> , <i>Kumariasav</i> , etc. can be used for pain relief.

Pathya-Apathya

Favour warm, light and slightly oily, fresh home-cooked meals. Avoid dry, cold, excessively heating and fermented foods. Particularly avoid alcohol, caffeine (especially coffee), carbonated drinks, red meat and refined sugar or flour. Red wine, chili, coffee and red meat (all very heating) should be the first things to go. As mentioned, women should avoid exercise during menstruation and should keep their exercise relatively moderate throughout the month.

Yoga

- *Supta Matsyendrasana*
- *Ananda Balasana*
- *Balasana*
- *Supta Baddha Konasana*
- *Malasana*
- *Yoga Nidra*

CONCLUSION

The presence of endometrial-like tissue outside of the uterine cavity is referred to as endometriosis. It is a disease of theories. Vitiating of *Vata Dosh*a especially the *Apana* and *Vyana Vata* results in retrograde flow of menstruation and vascular spread of endometrial tissues. The ectopic implants of endometrium may get

enlarged with subsequent menstrual cycles. Treatment approach with *Ampachana* & correction of *Agni*, *Vaatanulomana*, *Mridu Virechana*, *Vatashamaka*, *Raktasavarodhaka*, *Granthihar* and *Lekhan Chikitsa*, etc. with life style and diet modifications endometriosis can be treated.

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