



ISSN 2456-3110

Vol 8 · Issue 12

December 2023

Journal of
**Ayurveda and Integrated
Medical Sciences**

www.jaims.in

JAIMS

An International Journal for Researches in Ayurveda and Allied Sciences



Maharshi Charaka
Ayurveda

Indexed

Conceptual study of *Sira*

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is an ancient medical science which have proved for more than 5000 years ago. *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala* are regarded as the fundamental elements of the human body. In addition to these components, *Sira* is a significant entity in which *Rasadi Dhatus* and *Ojas* flows from one place to other in the body. It is one among the *Marma Vastu*. In *Ayurveda*, the word *Sira*, *Dhamani* and *Srotas* are used interchangeably. All of these structures are present very closely and are minute and serves different functions in the body. Two chapters in *Shareera Sthana* in particular have been provided by *Acharya Sushruta* to explain the *Sira*.

Key words: *Sira*, *Dhamani*, *Srotas*, *Marma Vastu*, *Ojas*, *Dhatu*.

INTRODUCTION

Sira Shareera is beautifully explained in *Shareera Sthana* of *Sushruta Samhita*. The word meaning of *Sira* is flow,^[1] so *Sira* is the structure in which something flows from one part of the body to another.^[2] *Rasadi Dhatus* and *Ojas* are flows in *Sira* from one *Avayava* to another.^[3] It is the *Pitrija Bhava*.^[4] The *Moola* of *Sira* is *Hridaya* and *Nabhi*. It is one among the of *Marma Vastu*.^[5] In *Ayurveda*, the word *Sira*, *Dhamani*, and *Srotas* are used interchangeably. All of these structures are present very closely and are minute and serves different functions in the body.^[6] In general, *Sira* nourish the body. The *Rasadi Dhatu* flows through *Sira* and nourishes the body.

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Submission Date: 11/10/2023 Accepted Date: 17/11/2023

Access this article online

Quick Response Code



Website: www.jaims.in

DOI: 10.21760/jaims.8.12.26

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The literature related to *Sira* is collected from the classical text of *Ayurveda* and research articles.

DISCUSSION

Utpatti of Sira

Sira are formed from *Mridu Paka* of *Sneha Bhaga* of *Medas*.^[7]

Sira is formed from the *Rakta Dhatu*.^[8]

Siramoola

Sira which are present in the body are connected to *Nabhi* the seat of *Prana*, similar to the axle hole being surrounded by spokes, from there, they spread to all directions.^[9] From the *Nabhi*, *Siras* spread upwards, downwards and side wards in the body as that of venations of leaf.^[10] There are 10 *Moola Siras* which are connected to *Hrudaya*, which carries *Ojas* throughout the body through these *Sira*.^[11]

Branching pattern of Sira

Sira spread in the body like water channels in a garden.^[12] *Sira* begins at a distance of two *Angulas* from *Hrudaya*, when they take their first branch. The second branch emerges at a distance of one *Angula* from the first branch, the third branch emerges at a

distance of half an *Angula* from the second branch, and additional branches emerge at a distance of *Yava* and *Yavardha*, respectively.^[13] The branching pattern of *Siras* are similar to the venations in the leaf which spreads in the whole body.^[14]

Sira Sankhya^[15]

Total number of *Siras* are 700. There are 40 *Mula Siras*. They are

Vatavaha - 10

Pittavaha - 10

Kaphavaha - 10

Raktavaha - 10

When the 10 *Vatavaha Sira* carrying *Vata* arrive at the seat of *Vata* they divide into 175 number. In the same way each *Pittavaha Sira*, *Kaphavaha Sira* and *Raktavaha Sira* divide into 175 number after reaching their respective *Sthana*.

Thus, together become 700 in number.

Table 1: list of *Sira Sankya* according to *Sushruta*

Type of <i>Sira</i>	Division	Sub division
<i>Vatavaha Sira</i>	10	175
<i>Pittavaha Sira</i>	10	175
<i>Kaphavaha Sira</i>	10	175
<i>Raktavaha Siras</i>	10	175
Total	40	700

Classification of *Sira* based on location^[16]

There are 400 *Sira* in *Shakha* region, 136 in *Koshta* and 164 in *Jatrurdhwa* region.

Shakha

100 in each *Sakthi* and *Bahu*.

Vata carrying *Sira* are 25 in one *Sakthi*, the same are in the other *Sakthi* and *Bahu*. Similar number of *Siras* present in *Vatavaha*, *Pittavaha*, *Kaphavaha* and *Raktavaha Sira*.

Koshta

Table 2: List of *Sira* in *Koshta*

Location	<i>Vatavaha Sira</i>	<i>Pittavaha Sira</i>	<i>Kaphavaha Sira</i>	<i>Raktavaha Sira</i>	Total
<i>Shroni</i>	8	8	8	8	32
<i>Parshva</i>	4	4	4	4	16
<i>Prishtha</i>	6	6	6	6	24
<i>Udara</i>	6	6	6	6	24
<i>Vaksha</i>	10	10	10	10	40
<i>Koshta</i>	34	34	34	34	136

Jatrurdhwa region

There are 41 *Vatavaha*, *Pittavaha*, *Kaphavaha* and *Raktavaha Siras* each in *Jatrurdhwa* region.

Table 3: List of *Jatrurdhwagata Sira*

Location	<i>Greeva</i>	<i>Karna</i>	<i>Jihwa</i>	<i>Nasika</i>	<i>Netra</i>
<i>Vatavaha</i>	14	4	9	6	8
<i>Pittavaha</i>	14	2	9	6	10
<i>Kaphavaha</i>	14	2	9	6	10
<i>Raktavaha</i>	14	2	9	6	10

Characteristics of *Sira*^[17]

Vatavaha Sira - filled with *Vayu* and *Aruna Varna* (yellowish orange).

Pittavaha Sira - warm and *Neela Varna* (blue).

Kaphavaha Sira - cold, stable and *Goura Varna* (white).

Raktavaha Sira - neither too hot nor too cold and *Rohini Varna* (reddish).

Functions of *Sira*

They perform *Akunchana*, *Prasarana* etc. functions of body.^[18]

Vatavaha Sira

Prevention of all activities being hindered and the prevention of delusion in mental processes. When the

aggravated *Vata* accumulates in its own *Sira*, many diseases of *Vata* develop in the body.^[19]

Pittavaha Sira

Complexion of the skin, taste perception, increases *Jataragni*, maintenance of health etc. When *Pitta* aggravated, *Pitta* accumulates in its own *Sira* and many diseases of *Pitta* develop in the body.^[20]

Kaphavaha Sira

Lubrication of the body, stability to joints, increases strength. When *Kapha* aggravated, *Kapha* accumulates in its own *Sira* and many diseases of *Kapha* develop in the body.^[21]

Raktavaha Sira

Supplying nutrition to tissues, bestowing complexion and tactile sensation to the skin. When *Rakta* aggravated, *Rakta* accumulates in its own *Sira* and many diseases of *Rakta* develop in the body.^[22]

These *Sira* are not distinct, all *Sira* are *Sarvavaha*, but depending on the dominance of substance flowing in *Sira* they are classified so.

Vedhya Sira

Sira which can be punctured for therapeutic purpose.

Total *Vedhya Sira* are 602.

Avedhya Sira^[23]

Sira which cannot be punctured.

Table 4: List of Avedhya Sira

Location	Number
<i>Shakhas</i>	16
<i>Koshtha</i>	32
<i>Moordha</i>	50
Total	98

Table 5: Avedhya Sira in Shakha^[24]

Location	Number
<i>Jaladhara</i>	4

<i>Bahvi \ Urvi</i>	8
<i>Lohitaksha</i>	4
Total	16

Table 6: Avedhya Sira in Koshtha^[25]

Location	Number
<i>Vitapa</i>	4
<i>Katikatarun</i>	4
<i>Parshwa</i>	2
<i>Brihati</i>	4
<i>Udara</i>	4 - on either side of <i>Romarajya</i>
<i>Hridaya</i>	2
<i>Stanamoola</i>	4
<i>Stanarohita</i>	4
<i>Apalap</i>	2
<i>Apastambha</i>	2
Total	32

Table 7: Avedhya Sira in Moordha^[26]

Location	Number
<i>Krikatika</i>	2
<i>Vidhura</i>	2
<i>Matrika</i>	8
<i>Manya</i>	2
<i>Neela</i>	2
<i>Hanu Sandhi</i>	4
<i>Jihva</i>	4
<i>Nasa</i>	5
<i>Netra</i>	2

Karna	2
Lalaata	7
Shanka	2
Moordhni	8
Total	50

Clinical Aspect of Sira

1. When the incision done in wrong place, if *Sira* are injured then it causes severe pain, delay in wound healing and formation of muscular sprouts.^[27]
2. *Sira Dagdha Lakshana* are elevated ulcer with black colour and with cessation of *Srava*.^[28]
3. *Shalakadi Yantras* are used to perform *Dahan Karma* as it does the *Sankochana* of *Sira* and prevent the excessive loss of blood.^[29]
4. *Sira Shaithilya* (emptiness of blood vessels) is seen in *Shonita Kshaya*.^[30]
5. *Sira Poornatwa* (fullness of blood vessels) is seen in *Rakta Vriddhi*.^[31]
6. During *Karna Vyadhana*, if *Kaalika Sira* are injured it causes fever, burning sensation, pain and swelling. If *Marmarika Sira* are injured it causes pain, fever and nodular swellings. If *Lohitika Sira* are injured it leads to *Manyasthambha*, *Apatanak*, *Shiro Graha* and *Karna Shoola*.^[32]
7. When *Alepa* is done in *Pratiloma* direction medicine enters in the hair follicles, and absorbs in the body through the *Swedavaha Sira*.^[33]
8. *Siragata Vrana Lakshana* are in fresh wound there is excessive bleeding and in chronic condition there is profuse pus discharge which is thin in consistency, sticky and blackish in colour.^[34]
9. Damage of *Sira* without the involvement of *Marma* leads to bleeding which resembles *Indragopa Kita* and vitiation of *Vata* leading to various diseases.^[35]
10. *Siragata Vata Lakshana* are pain, contraction and dilatation of *Sira*.^[36]

11. *Avabahuka* is a condition in which aggravated *Vata* contracts the shoulder joint.^[37]
12. *Siraja Granthi* is a condition in which vitiated *Vata* does the compression, contraction and drying of the *Sira* and leads to elevated, tortuous swelling.^[38]
13. *Snayu*, *Dhamani*, *Srotas* and *Sira* is also present in *Mamsadhara Kala*.^[39]
14. *Raktadhara Kala* is present in the *Sira*.^[40]
15. *Sira Jala* is present in wrist and ankle.^[41]
16. Injury to *Mamsavaha Srotas* leads to *Siragranthi*.^[42]
17. When *Vayu* enters the *Nimeshini Sira* causes excessive movement of eyelids known as *Nimesha*.^[43]
18. When *Shabdavaha Sira* gets afflicted with *Vata* and *Kapha* leads to *Bhadirya*.^[44]

CONCLUSION

Sira takes origin from the *Nabhi*, which is seat of *Prana*, and spread all over the body just like the nave of a wheel supports the spokes. In *Ayurveda*, the word *Sira*, *Dhamani* and *Srotas* are used interchangeably. All of these structures are present very closely, have got different natures, origin and are minute and serves different functions in the body. Some says all 3 are homologous structure because similarity of their character, function and minute nature of their structure. In most of the *Ayurvedic* context structure *Sira* is explained can be congruous to blood vessels and in some cases to nerves. For example, in case of injury or vitiation of *Shabdavaha Sira* can cause deafness.

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How to cite this article: Manisha Mahadev Kattikar, Anju Thomas. Conceptual study of Sira. J Ayurveda Integr Med Sci 2023;12:175-181.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.21760/jaims.8.12.26>

Source of Support: Nil, **Conflict of Interest:** None declared.
