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Concept of *Artava* and its applied aspect in *Stree Roga*

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ABSTRACT

Women represent the cornerstone of a family's overall health. Healthy women, Healthy world embodies that women are custodians of family health; they play a critical role in maintaining the health and overall wellbeing of community. In *Ayurveda* word "*Artava*" denotes menstrual blood. *Artava* is related to 2 seasons i.e., it may be due to presence of *Ritukala* (ovulation period) and *Rajakal* (menstruation period) in women. Human body is controlled by the three energies called *Tridoshas* - *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* which are characterized under seven *Dhatus*. These *Dhatus* have *Updhatus* also. *Artava* (menstrual blood) is one of the *Updhatus* of *Rasa Dhatu*.^[1] The specific characteristics of menstrual blood with its physiological and pathological variation described in *Ayurveda* classics as *Shudhartava* and *Artavdhusti* respectively help in identifying the hormonal status of women. *Shudhartava* plays crucial role in maintaining women's healthy reproductive life. When *Artava* is not quite same as highlights of *Shudhartava* mentioned in classics then there may be *Artavdushti* or menstrual abnormalities like dysmenorrhoea, menorrhagia, amenorrhoea etc uterine disorders like endometriosis, adenomyosis, uterine fibroid, etc which may be cause of infertility. *Ayurveda* classics explains about colour, texture, specific smell, amount and other associated features like type of pain in various *Artavdushti*. So, only by observing menstrual blood variation we can find out the disease associated with it. Thus, study of *Artava* and *Artavdhusti* plays a very significant role in diagnosis of pathological disorders related with female reproductive system.

Key words: *Artava*, *Menstrual blood*, *Artavadhusti*, *Diagnostic tool*, *Panchindriya Pariksha*

INTRODUCTION

Life (Ayu) is the combination (*Samyoga*) of body, senses, mind and reincarnating soul. Ayurveda is the most sacred science of life, beneficial to humans both in this world and the world beyond. The main goal of

Ayurveda is to maintain the healthy status of human being as well as to treat any pathological condition. In order to treat any disease, pathology of that disease which is the basis of diagnosis and treatment is required. For diagnosis of any disease (gynaecologic disorders also) various types of *Pariksha* are mentioned in classics. Especially in gynaecological pathologies *Artava* or menstrual blood is the potent indicator tool for underline pathology.

Though the word *Artava* refers to menstruation or menstrual blood, ovum and ovarian hormones with reference to context in *Ayurveda*, yet *Artavadushti* act as a main diagnostic tool for various types of menstrual disorders.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

To study *Artava* and *Artavadushti* in detail as per Ayurveda and to understand clinical importance of *Artavadushti* as a diagnostic tool for *Streeroga*.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

All the information regarding *Artava* and *Artavadushti* are collected from ancient Ayurvedic literature (*Brihatrayee*), related journals, research and review articles, *Ayurvedic pharmacopoeia of India*.

Artava

From *Rasa (Dhatu)*, the *Rakta* named *Raja* is formed. *Rakta* reaching uterus and coming out for three days in every month is called *Artava*, which is formed in two stages. The hormones of hypothalamus to pituitary then to ovary and ultimately to their target organ i.e., endometrium is carried through *Rasa*, the plasma, in this endometrium the blood is accumulated and then discharged during menstruation. This very process has been explained by *Chakrapani* with the words *Avirbhava* (formation) and *Tirobhava* (discharge). Initially besides nourishment to endocrine glands as well as uterus and endometrium by *Rasa*, the transportation of hormones to target organs through *Rasa* (plasma) is essential, then the blood accumulated in hair thin branches of *Artavavimocini Dhamani* (uterine artery) is discharged during menstruation.

Artava is *Agneya*, has characteristics of *Rakta* (blood), forms *Garbha* (fetus) and is also essential for life. The dominant *Mahabhuta* in this is *Tejas*. In Ayurveda characteristics of *Shudha Artava* (pure menstrual blood) are explained. At first, the colour of *Shudha Artava* (pure menstrual blood) according to different *Acharyas*.^[2]

- *Gunjaphala Sannibham* - Blackish Red
- *Padma* - Pinkish Red
- *Aalaktsannibham* - Brownish Red
- *Indergopsankasm* - Bright Red
- *Shasakasruk Partimam* - Red
- *Ishatkrushna* - Slightly Blackish

Menstrual blood or *Shudha Artava*, has a texture of *Nipicha* meaning there are no clots or foaming and a smell of *Vigandh*^[3], meaning there is no extra smell. *Shudhartava* or pure menstrual blood should not have *Arti* or pain, *Daha* or burning. The several properties of

Dosha-vitiated *Artava* (menstrual blood) other than *Shudha Artava* (pure menstrual blood) are mentioned in classical writings that explain forms of menstrual disorder hearing *Artava Dushti* (menstrual disorder).

Artavadushti

Eight varieties of *Aartavadushti* are described in the classics. *Acharyas* has not addressed the specific causes of the eight menstruation diseases. According to *Kashyap*, *Nasya* during menstruation, eating extremely hot consumables and giving *Mridukostha* patients too many medications after *Snehana* and *Swedana* vitiate *Artava* which results in menstrual disorders. Thus, it may be inferred that *Aartavadushti* is caused by certain variables that contribute to *Dosha* vitiation in conjunction with predisposing factors.

Following are the 8 *Artavadoshas*^[4]

1. *Vataja*
2. *Pittaja*
3. *Shleshmaja*
4. *Raktaja - Kunapganthi*
5. *Vatapittaja - Kshina*
6. *Pittakaphaja - Putipuya*
7. *Vatakaphaja - Granthibhuta*
8. *Tridoshaja - Mutrapurishaganthi*

The vitiated *Artava* has no *Beeja*, and its clinical characteristics - such as color, discomfort etc. are in line with the *Doshas* that are involved. *Dalhana* explains that the clinical characteristics of *Artava* are identical to those of *Shukra*. *Harita* has discussed the clinical features and management of *Vataja*, *Pittaja*, and *Kaphaja Aratavadushti* in the context of *Bandhyatva* but he has not described *Aartavadushti*.

The idea of *Tridosha* and *Panchmahbhuta* or the "five great elements" is used in Ayurvedic writings. All things are composed of *Panchmahabhuta*. Menstrual blood or *Artava* is also *Panchmahabhautik* (with *Tejas* as the dominant *Mahabhuta*). In *Ayurveda*, *Tridosha* refers to *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*.

According to vitiated *Dosha*, menstruation blood or *Artava*, has a different colour and consistency. Because there were no such sophisticated laboratory methods in the past, the patient, *Rogi*, was examined using the following methods:

1. *Dashvidha Pariksha* (Ten-fold examination)
2. *Ashtvidha Pariksha* (8-fold examination)
3. *Shadvidha Pariksha* (6-fold examination)
4. *Trividha Pariksha* (3-fold examination)

Pariksha (examination) of *Artava* (menstrual blood) can be done with *Shadvidha Pariksha* (6-fold examination).

We comprehend the changes in menstrual blood color, texture, and fragrance based on *Dosha* under the title of *Artava Dushti* (menstrual disease). Menstrual blood or *Artava*, is visible and observable using the *Panchendriya* (five senses) system of Ayurveda. The following is a list of the alterations in *Artava* or menstrual blood, caused by various disorders of the female genital system.^[5,6]

Vataj Artavadusti: *Vataj Vrana* or reddish, blackish red, and dark violet, is the color of menstrual blood in *Vataja Artava Dushti*. *Artava* or menstrual blood, becomes thin, dry, frothy, and scattered (very small clots mixed with liquid substance), excreting slowly, irregularly with pain, especially piercing or perforating pain.

Pittaj Artava Dushti: In it the hue and agony of *Pitta* is found. The *Artava* (menstrual blood) vitiated by *pitta* is yellowish or bluish in colour, is free from unctuousness, smells like pus, fungus, blood or has putrid smell; the expelled blood is hot, connected with strong burning sensation and feeling of heat at the time of its excretion. *Harita* has added *Dysuria* to the symptom and classified the hue as resembling the *Japa* flower, saffron, or blood.

Kaphaja Artava Dushti: Menstrual blood or *Artava*, becomes vitiated by *Kapha* and is ejected as a white or yellowish discharge that is excessively thick, slippery, and unctuous in texture. It sinks in water. *Harita* also

causes increased tiredness, sleepiness, stiffness or inactivity, and urine retention.

Kunapagandhi Artavadusti (smells like dead body): *Rakta* or blood, is the cause of this menstruation illness called *Artavadusti*. When this condition exists, there is more red blood that comes out during the menstrual cycle, similar to fresh blood. Additionally, it is connected to burning sensations and heat.

Granthibhuta Artavadusti (non/in-complete liquefaction): It is brought on by the vitiation of *Vata* with *Sleshma* and is associated with traits of both *Doshas*, such as pain from *Vata* and immorality from *Kapha*.

Putipuya Artavadusti (putrid and purulent): Putrid and purulent *Putipuya*, also known as *Puya Artavadusti*, is caused by *Pitta* and *Kapha*. *Susruta* and *Vagbhata* believe that *Dosas* are caused by *Rakta* (blood) with *Pitta*, however *Vagbhata* disagrees. Other characteristics of *Pitta* and *Kapha* (heaviness, fever and heat from *Pitta*, burning sensation, etc.) are present in this menstrual illness.

Kshina Artavadusti (oligo zoospermia): *Pitta* combined with *Vayu* is the cause. Menstrual blood is sparse, menstruation is delayed, and vaginal pain is present with this disease. It also possesses the qualities of the *Pitta* and *Vata Dosas*.

Mutrapurisagandhi Artavadusti (smell like urine and faeces): It has characteristics of all three *Dosas* because it is the result of their vitiation.

DISCUSSION

In Ayurveda, we can use characteristics like color, consistency, odour and menstrual blood (*Artava*) to reach a diagnosis. Variations in menstrual blood are unique to *Dosha* vitiation and illnesses. Thus, from an *Ayurvedic* standpoint, *Artava Pariksha* or menstrual blood testing, is performed by *Panchindriya* or the five senses and will grow to be a highly significant diagnostic and therapeutic tool. Based on their most common symptoms, we may now associate menstruation disorders, such as *Artavadusti*, with a variety of illnesses. *Pittaja Artava Dusti* signs suggest

that it may be associated with illnesses like trichomonas vaginitis, chlamydia trachomatis, chronic pelvic inflammatory disease, neoplasm etc. The symptoms of *Kunapganghi* (dead body stench) *Artavadushti* (menstrual disorder) are associated with pyometra since they are caused by genital organ infections and cancer. *Granthi Artavadusti* with endometrial hyperplasia (not completely liquefying), *Putipuya Artavadusti*, a purulent and putrid condition accompanied by acute endometritis and cancer that might result in pyometra, *Ksheena Artavadusti*

(oligomenorrhea) in oligospermia *Mutrapureeshagandhi Artavadusti* has a fourth-stage cervical carcinoma. Atrophic vaginitis and hypoeestrinism in *Vataja Yonivyapad*. *Pittaja Yonivyapad*, a gynecological illness, is accompanied with a persistent inflammatory condition in the female genital tract. With Trichomonal or Monilial vulva vaginitis, *Kaphaja Yonivyapad*. *Saannipatiki Yonivyapad* suffers from a persistent reproductive system infection.^[7]

Various characteristics of Artava (menstrual disorders) in different diseases according to *Pancheindriya Pariksha*^[8]

<i>Sparsh Indriyapariksha</i> (consistency)	<i>Chakshu Indriya</i> (colour)	<i>Stroto Indriya</i> (<i>Shabda</i>)	<i>Rasa Indriya</i> (senses examination)	<i>Ghran Indriya</i> (smell)	<i>Vedana</i> (pain)	Other symptoms	Diseases
Frothy thin, rough, cold	Blackish, or reddish, or washing of flower <i>Palash</i>	-	<i>Kashaya</i> (astringent)	Smells like iron	With or without pain (in sacral cardiac and groin region)	-	<i>Vataja Asrigdara</i>
Thin, dry, frothy, Scattered	<i>Aruna</i> (red), <i>Krishna</i> (black), Violet, black	-	-	-	Perforating or piercing	-	<i>Vataja Artavadushti</i>
Thin, dry (absence of mucosa), frothy	<i>Aruna</i> (red), <i>Krishna</i> (black) pinkish	With sound	-	-	Severe pain in flanks and groin region	Numbness roughness, stiffness as if creeping of ants in yoni, fatigue, lethargy	<i>Vatik Yonivyapad</i>
Scattered, frothy, nonunctuous	Light red, black, yellow and blue	-	-	purulent and putrid smell	May or may not be	Heat and burning sensation	<i>Kshinartava</i>
Normal	Normal	-	-	-	-	Pain in <i>Yoni</i>	<i>Artavakshaya</i>
Free from unctuousness	Yellow or bluish	-	-	<i>Visragandhi</i> (like pus and putrid smell)	Burning sensation and feeling of heat	-	<i>Pittaja Artavadushti</i>
<i>Ushna</i>	Blue, yellow or black in colour	-	-	Like dead body	Burning sensation and feeling of heat	Fever, generalised heat, local suppuration	<i>Pittaja Yonivyapad</i>

Hot, does not coagulate	Blue, yellow in colour	-	Bitter (<i>Katu</i>)	Fishy smell	Pricking or burning sensation	In profuse amount menstrual blood, thirst, fever	<i>Pittaja Asrigdara</i>
Too much thick, slippery or lubricous	Whitish or slightly yellowish	-	-	<i>Kaphaja Gandha</i>	<i>Kandu</i>	Retention of urine, stiffness or idealness, lethargy, drowsiness and sleepiness	<i>Kaphaja Artavadushti</i>
Unctuous	Yellowish	-	-	-	painless	Itching, excessive coldness and dull pain in <i>Yoni</i>	<i>Kaphaja Yonivyapad</i>
Slimy, unctuous, cold, thick	Pale	-	Salty	-	Mild pain	Vomiting, anorexia Nausea, dyspnoea	<i>Kaphaja Asrigdara</i>
Slimmy	Yellow or resembling <i>Ghrit</i> , bone marrow or muscle fat	-	-	Foul smelling	Burning sensation	Fever, anaemia	<i>Sannipatik Asrigdara</i>
Unctuous	Whitish pale	-	-	-	-	Burning sensation and pain in <i>Yoni</i>	<i>Sannipatik Yonivyapad</i>
Thick, mucoid	-	-	-	purulent	Present	-	<i>Granthibhut Artavadushti</i>
	Red like fresh blood	-	-	Like dead body	Present <i>Pitta Vedana</i>	-	<i>Kunapagandhi Artavadushti</i>

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda is a field with a wealth of research. To employ *Artavapariksha* (the study of menstruation disorders) as a diagnostic or therapeutic tool, additional important research is needed. The consistency, colour, smell and other characteristics of *Artava* (menstrual disorders) vary throughout diseases. Therefore, it is a simple source to use when diagnosing ailments that are highlighted.^[9] *Ayurveda* provides a comprehensive

description of *Artava* (menstrual disorders) based on *Panchindriya Pariksha* (examination of senses). However, in the present era, we have much more sophisticated techniques to study the changes in menstrual blood in response to hormonal changes. We can study these *Artava* (menstrual disorders) changes in a different way in forms of proteomes by examining the visible menstrual blood or alternatively, we can say that it is the molecular relationship of color and texture change of menstrual blood that was examined in

traditional *Ayurvedic* medicine. Because of this, *Ayurveda* practitioners may focus on and comment on *Artava* (menstrual disorders). Due to the lack of clarity in this diagnostic area, numerous investigations on *Artavapariksha*, or menstrual blood, are ongoing and will be necessary in the future.

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