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Concept of *Maha Srotas* - A literary review on the basis of fundamental principal

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ABSTRACT

Background: Gastrointestinal tract is largest *Srotas* and term as *Maha Srotas*. The *Doshas*, *Vata Pitta*, *Kapha* also circulate through *Srotas*. But obstruction of *Srotas* is cause of *Sroto Dusti* (*Sroto Vyadhi*) and it disturbs Physiological functions of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Malas*. **Material and Methods:** Literary research based on Study of Ayurvedic Samhitas and published research articles. **Result:** *Srotas* is internal transport system of the body and represents by *Mahasrotas* has been given a place of fundamental importance in Ayurveda both in health and disease. The obstruction of *Mahasrotas* responsible for many physiological abnormalities, similarly transportation of disturbed *Doshas* through *Srotas* leads various disease thus proper working of *Maha Srotas* is essential for retaining good health. **Conclusion:** The *Srotas* not only help in nutritional transportation but also support healing process. *Srotas* maintain physiological balance through exchange of *Doshas* and *Dhatu*. *Maha Srotas* transports factors that cause the *Prakopa* (Aggravation) or *Samana* (Allevation) of *Doshas*. *Dosha* get vitiated due to *Apathaya Aahar Vihara* causing *Khavagunya* and disease process occurs. So as to know the prognosis and treat the disease, Knowledge of *Maha Srotas* is necessary.

Key words: *Srotas*, *Mahasrotas*, *Annavahasrotas*, *Channels*, *Sroto Dusthi*.

INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda great emphasis has laid upon concept of *Srotas* and got immense importance because the Sharir or Purush is assumed to be made of innumerable *Srotas*. The Ayurvedic Samhitas described anatomical and physiological concepts of *Srotas* is broadly. Total 13 *Srotas* are described by Charaka and Sushruta has described 11 *Srotas*. *Srotas* is derived from "*Sru Gatou*"

root which means filtering, flowing, leaking, secreting etc. *Srotas* is the functional channel within the living body, concerned with one exclusive vital functions. *Srotas* are the base of transformation of nutrients in biological elements, being the metabolic center of that particular *Dhatu*, transport of nutrients and waste products. *Srotas* which is the transport system of the body has many synonyms like *Srotamsi*, *Siras*, *Dhamnis*, *Rasayanis* etc.

Ayurvedic Nidan (Diagnosis) & *Chikitsa* (Treatment) are built on fundamental principal like *Panchmahabhuta*, *Triguna*, *Tridosha*. Conceptually body has as many *Srotas* as it contains the biochemical entities and all metabolic activities take place in the concerned *Srotas*. *Srotas* is nothing but the space (*Akash / Avakash*) defined by boundaries of *Panchmahabhautik* entity. The *Doshas*, *Vata Pitta*, *Kapha* also circulate through *Srotas*. But obstruction of *Srotas* is cause of *Sroto Dusti* (*Sroto Vyadhi*) and its disturb Physiological functions of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Malas*.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

Literary research based on Study of Ayurvedic Samhitas and published research articles.

DISCUSSION

In Ayurveda, great emphasis has laid upon concept of *Srotas* and got immense importance because the *Sharir* or *Purush* is assumed to be made of innumerable *Srotas*.^[1]

Srotas is derived from 'Sru Gatou' root which means mooring, filtering, flowing, leaking, secreting etc.^[2]

Srotas is internal transport system of the body. Total 13 *Srotas* are described by Charak while Susruta has described 11 *Srotas*.^[3]

The *Srotas* is gastrointestinal tract is largest *Srotas* and term as *Annavaha Srotas* or *Maha Srotas* and *Annavaha Srotas* is commonly described by both Acharya. *Annavaha Srotas* have their origin in *Aamashaya* and the left lateral side. The symptoms such as loss of desire for food, anorexia, indigestion and vomiting indicate the affection of *Annavaha Srotas*.^[4]

Specific functioning of *Srotas*

Anna Vaha Srotas performs function of nutritional supply since it covers esophagus & gastrointestinal tract. *Prana Vaha Srotas* perform function of transportation of *Vayu* since it moves through heart & respiratory tract.

Rasa Vaha & Rakta Vaha Srotas transport *Rasa & Rakta* through the heart venous, arteriole circulatory system.

Sweda Vaha & Meda Vaha Srotas performs detoxification since it covers subcutaneous fat tissue & sweat glands along with micro pores of the skin.

Mano Vaha & Majja Vaha Srotas responsible for neuronal and sensory transportation since *Mula*, *Marga & Mukha* of this *Srotas* belongs from brain, spinal cord & nervous systems along with sense organs & *Marma* points etc. *Sukra Vaha*, *Artava Vaha & Rajah Vaha Srotas* transported essential component throughout the reproductive and sexual organs since these *Srotas* belongs from testicles, ovaries & aerieole of the nipples.

Stanya Vaha Srotas help in lactation since their routes covers lactation glands, lactiferous ducts & nipple.

Purisha Vaha Srotas help for the circulation of *Dushti Vayu* from cecum, rectum and intestine then through anal orifice.

Mutra Vaha Srotas helps for detoxification through urinary tract.^[5-9]

Physiological significance of *Srotas*

There is much diversity in the *Srotas*, as there is in the elements that compose the structure of the body. All body entities which are present in the body possess their own '*Srotas*'. All body entities get replenished in own *Srotas*. We can understand from this quotation that, at the time of Charaka Samhita, knowledge of the internal transport system of the body had reached a high degree of development. The living body is nothing but the resultant of aggregation of innumerable '*Srotamsi*', that are transporters of factors which causes *Prakopa* (excitation) or *Shamana* (alleviation) of *Sharira Doshas*.^[10]

CONCLUSION

Ayurvedic classics proclaim "*Srotomayam hi Shariram*" means living body is a channel system comprised of innumerable channels which are designed as inner transport system for divergent functions gross, tangle and intangible, biological and energetic. *Annavaha Srotas* describe in Ayurvedic epics is related to structural and functional units associated with mechanical and chemical digestion in esophagus, stomach and small intestine. Acharya Charaka in *Vimansthan*, and Acharya Sushrut in *Sharirsthan*, Explained *Annavah Srotas* in *Srotas Sharir*. *Annavah Srotas* are those channels in the body which transport the food and liquid. The group of organs conserved with *Anna Grahana*, *Anna Pachana*, *Sara- Kitta Vivechana* and absorption of *Sara Bhaga* is called as *Annvaha Srotas*.^[11,12] So it is also called as a *Mahasrotas*.

The internal transport system of the body, represented by *Srotas*, has been given a place of fundamental importance in Ayurveda-both in health and disease - an importance, which recent developments in the field of

medicine have begun to emphasize. No any structure in the body can grow and development or waste and atrophy, independent of *Srotas* that transport all seven *Dhatus*, which latter are constantly subjected to transformation. The *Srotas* sub-serve the needs of transportation. When the integrity of *Srotas* is impaired both *Sthayi* and *Asthayi Dhatus* involved, and morbidity spreads by one *Dhatu* vitiating other and *Srotas* another *Srotas*. The obstruction of *Mahasrotas* responsible for many physiological abnormalities, similarly transportation of disturbed *Doshas* through *Srotas* leads various disease thus proper working of *Maha Srotas* is essential for retaining good health.

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