

PHYSIOLOGICAL STUDY OF SHUKRA DHATU WITH RESPECT TO INFERTILITY IN FEMALE

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ABSTRACT

In *Ayurveda*, *Shukradhatu* is considered as Saar (essence) of all seven *Dhatu* and it is meant principally for reproduction. The word 'Shukra' is derived from root 'Shuch' with suffix 'Rak' which means pure or excellent. *Shukravaha Strotas* is main location of *Shukradhatu*. In male Principle organ of this *Dhatu* is penis and testis. *Shukra sthana* in female explains anatomical structure and physiology of the uterus and associated organs. *Shukradharakala* is important structure in context to location of *Shukradhatu* spread all over body. *Shukradhatu* can be best term to be described as the factor that nourishes both the male and female reproductive tissues and its secretions. Its main function is *Garbhotpadana* – reproduction. In women the status of *Shukradhatu* is responsible for regulation of menstrual cycle and formation of ovum. Any deviation in *Shukradhatu* leads to pathogenesis. Vitiating of *Shukradhatu* shows *Shukradhatu dusti* in the form of *Vridhhi* and *Kshaya*. This vitiating may lead to infertility. So it is an important entity in context to reproduction. Structural defect in uterus, abnormality in *Aartav*, (irregular menses, PCOD, unovulation, etc) are some of the causes of infertility in female.

Keywords: Reproduction, *Shukradhatu*, *Shukravaha Strotas*

INTRODUCTION

Shukra means bright, pure, and radiant. *Shukradhatu* is produced by *Posaka* (unstable) *Majjadhatu* flows through the *Shukravaha srota* into the *Shukradharakala* and is digested by the *Shukragni*¹. In *Ayurveda*, the term has often been used to refer both the male semen

and the female egg, as they contain the essence of all other *dhatu*s (tissues) of the body². *Shukra* is the seventh and final *dhatu* in the *dhatu*s formation cycle³. A person who passes healthy *Shukra* has a brightness of confidence, with eyes and skin that seem to radiate light. A

sensitive individual can perceive this light. Others may notice it as luster or may simply feel the strength and confidence of the one who possesses it. At times, two distinct terms are used to describe the male and female seed. *Shukra* universally applies to sperm, but can also apply to the entire makeup of semen. *Artava* is the equivalent term used to mean ovum⁴. However, *Artava* also refers to the menstrual blood, and *Updhatu* of *Rasa dhatu*⁵. Thus, *Shukra* is the best term to describe the factor that nourishes both the male and female reproductive tissues and its secretions. Its main function is *Garbhotpadana* – reproduction⁶. According to *Sushruta*, preparing for conception (*Garbhotpadana*) can be easily compared to the process of farming. Just like the health of a crop depends on the quality of soil, seed, timing of sowing, and amount of watering it gets, the health of a baby depends on the health of its parents. For a pregnancy to be healthy and successful, a couple needs to take care of the four essential factors such as Sperm/Ovum (Seeds), Uterus (Soil), Nourishment (Water), Time for Conception (Timing of Sowing)⁷. Infertility has been defined as failure to conceive after frequent unprotected sexual intercourse for one or two years in couples in the reproductive age group^{8,9}. The rate of infertility is becoming fast a common phenomenon in today's hectic stressful life. Some of the common causes of infertility are Life style, occupation, lack of awareness about normal sexual life and family life, depression, sexually transmitted diseases, late marriages some unknown causes male infertility, female infertility, or infertility to both.

CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF SHUKRA DHATU

The *Shukra* which is unctuous, dense, slimy, sweet, nonirritating and white (transparent) like a crystal is to be known as pure or normal¹⁰. *Sushruta* added some quality of *Shuddha* (pure) *Shukra*. Smell of pure *Shukra* is like honey¹¹. Its colour is like oil or honey and it is liquid in nature. Due to soft, slimy and liquid quality it can transverse across the vagina and unite with ovum. Due to coldness it does not produce any burning sensation when it comes in contact with vaginal epithelium.

FUNCTION AND PHYSIOLOGICAL MEASURES OF SHUKRADHATU IN FEMALE

Prime function of the *Shukradhatu* is sustenance and nourishment of the body. This *Dhatu* is meant principally for reproduction¹². Reproduction is not local function of ovary to produce the ovum and fertilized ovum during sexual act. It is function of entire body, mind and intention towards the sexual act. Therefore support of this *Dhatu Shukradharakala* is present all over the body¹³. *Shukradhatu* gives rise to valour and courageness, makes amorously disposed towards opposite sex, increase his strength and amateness. Physiological measure of *Shukradhatu* is half *Anjali*¹⁴.

Gananatha sen has explained Physiology of *Shukradhatu* in female as *Antah-Shukra* and *Bahi-Shukra*¹⁵:-

Rasa → *Rakta* → *Mamsa* → *Meda* → *Asthi*
Majja → *Shukra*. *Shukradhatu* is formed *Antah-Shukra* and *Bahi-Shukra*. *Antah-Shukra* act as in both sexes *Bala Varana Upachaya*, development of secondary sexual character, reproductive organ and individual sex spermatogenesis in male and development of breast, oogenesis in female. *Bahi-Shukra* acts as formation of sperm with spermatic fluid in

male and secretions of Bartholin, cervical glands during coitus in female. *Artav* or *Raja* is *Updhatu of Rasadhatu*¹⁶.

PATHOLOGICAL ASPECT OF SHUKRADHATU

Pathological aspect of *Sukra dhatu* includes the *Vridhhi* (hyper) or (*kashya*) hypo state of *Sukradhatu*. It is occurred due to concept of *Samanya* and *Vishesh*. When *Sukradhatu* is increased beyond the limits it produced *Sukrashmari*¹⁷. According to *Vagbhat*, there is increased desire for sex when *Shukradhatu* in body is increased¹⁸.

CAUSES OF INFERTILITY

According to *Ayurveda* infertility occurs when “*Shukra dhatu*” does not get the proper nutrition which can happen due to poor digestion, lack of balanced diet. Few other causes which also can be a cause of infertility are:

1. Sexual overindulgence is also a cause of “*Shukrakshya*” (decrease of “*Shukra dhatu*”) and can sometimes lead to *Klebya* (impotency)¹⁹.
2. Mental disturbances like anxiety, depression and insomnia can also be a cause of infertility.
3. Eating extra hot and spicy food increases the *Pitta* in our body and weakens the formation of “*Shukra dhatu*” inside our body which ultimately delay chances to conceive.
4. Even controlling your sexual urges for longer period of time can lead to “*Veerya-avarodha*” and can result in decreased libido²⁰.

TREATMENT OF INFERTILITY

Infertility as a medical problem had been described by *Ayurveda* thousand years ago.

Ayurvedic scholars explored infertility by improving a couple's overall health in order to increase their chances of conceiving without any medicinal interference. There are two kinds of foods and herbs which help enhance *Shukra dhatu*, and therefore helps enhance fertility. One is called *Brinhan* and these foods enhance *Shukra* by enhancing all the seven *dhatu*s. *Vrishya* foods and herbs target *Shukra dhatu* in particular.

Enhancement of “Shukra dhatu” in body:

For healthy conception, the quantity and quality of “*Shukra dhatu*” is very critical. It is important to enhance “*Shukra dhatu*” in order to increase the reproductive capacity and health in both male and female. There are many foods and herbs that specifically enhance the “*Shukra dhatu*” in both men and women and are known as *Vrishya*. The qualities of *Vrishya dravya* whatever is sweet, unctuous, vitaliser, bulk-promoting, heavy and exhilarating²¹. They include food items like *Musali*, *Shatavari*, *Sarkara*, *Ashwagandha*, *Masa*, *Kapikacchu*, milk.²²

Say no to spicy food: In *Ayurveda* “*Shukra dhatu*” have *Sheet* (cold) *Guna*²³ which means that *Shukra* needs a *Sheet guna pradhana Aahar-vihar* in order to support fertility²⁴. Thus too much hot spicy food can decline the quality of “*Shukra dhatu*” and can oppose the enhancing of sperm and ovum. So, if a person is too much inclined towards food products which are spicy and hot in nature then it can result in less quantity and quality of sperm and less motility of the spermatozoa. It can also lower the quality of ovum in women.

DISCUSSION

Shukra dhatu is an important entity because it directly takes part in reproduction. Deficiency

or vitiation of *Shukra dhatu* directly affects the fertility hence vitiation of *Shukra dhatu* should be avoided. In the society many females suffering from infertility also show the symptoms of have Irregular menses, PCOD, unovulation, etc which cause infertility because in such women function of *Shukra dhatu* is not properly carried out. The measure of *Shukra dhatu* is half *Anjali* so it should be maintained with proper diet. According to Sharangdhar, *Musalī*, *Shatavari*, *Sarkara*, *Ashwagandha*, *Masa*, *Amalki* and milk are *Shukra Vardhak Dravya*. *Acharya Charaka* explain 10 *Shukra* promoting herbs in *Mahakashaya* chapter.²⁵ According to *Acharya Susruta* *Shukra dhatu* takes one month for the generation but the food like milk, ghee and drug like *Withania Somnifera* are instant produces the *Shukra dhatu* hence these substances are known as Aphrodisiac substances. Pure *Shukra* is soft, slimy and liquid in nature. Smell of this *Dhatu* is like honey. It is also non-irritant. The Individuals having excellence of *Sukra dhatu* are popular in women and they have good physical and sexual strength. These persons are endowed with happiness, health, wealth, honour and progeny. It is pure *Dhatu* hence it does not have any waste product however according to *Ashtang Hrudaya Ojas* is *Mala* of *Shukra dhatu*. So it is important entity for the sustenance, nourishment and especially for reproduction.

CONCLUSION

Reproductive health, in both men and women, depends on the health of the reproductive tissue or *Shukra dhatu*. In women, *Shukra* creates the ovum as part of the monthly cycle, and in men the semen is formed due to sexual stimulation. The *Shukra* is created as part of a long chain of metabolic transformations. It

starts with the digestion of food, then goes on to transformation of food to nutrient fluid, blood, muscle, fat, bone, bone marrow, and finally, to *Shukra* tissue. Thus the *Ayurveda* provides a truly comprehensive and balanced approach for treating infertility.

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