

PCOS –A CRITICAL REVIEW THROUGH AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is known as science of living beings. It concerns over the maintenance of health of healthy living beings and restoration of health of the diseased ones. In order to keep *Tridoshas* in state of healthy equilibrium and digestion and metabolism in proper order, *Ayurveda* recommends a specific daily routine called *Dincharya*. An uneventful, the ever changing trends in *lifestyle* have exposed man to a variety of lifestyle disorders. *Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS)* is one such *lifestyle* disorder affecting 30-40% of young girls in their reproductive age in India. It can be correlated with *Artava Kshaya* which is *vata kapha pradhan rasapradoshaja vyadhi*. *PCOS* is also called as the mother of all *lifestyle* disorders in women. *PCOS* is a syndrome manifested by amenorrhea, hirsutism and obesity associated with enlarged polycystic ovaries. The exact cause of *PCOS* is unknown. However, it has certainly been linked to hormonal imbalance, insulin resistance resulting in hyperinsulinaemia as well as genetic factors. The sedentary *lifestyle*, lack of exercise, poor diet and stress etc. have also been contributory factors. So adopting *vata kaphahara* and *pitha vridhikara ahaar vihaar* & Lifestyle modifications, we can manage this disease through *Ayurveda*, which is devoid of side effects.

Keywords: *Ayurveda, PCOS, Artava kshaya, Lifestyle, Dincharya.*

INTRODUCTION

PCOS is most common endocrinopathy in women of reproductive age, resulting from insulin resistance and the compensatory hyperinsulinemia. There is no direct reference in *Ayurveda* for *Polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS)*. The clinical features of the *PCOS* can be compared with clinical features as seen in *Artavakshaya*. It is considered under *rasapra-*

doshaja vyadhis and have an equal involvement of *Dosha, Dhatu* and *Upadhatu*.

Artava is an *upadhatu* of *rasa* & *pitta* is predominant *dosha* in *rakta* which is responsible for *agnayatav* of it. Among menstrual disorders, *Artava Kshaya* is the one which indicates scanty menstrual flow associated with pain, variable

duration where vitiation of *Vayu* and *Kapha* are predominant.

Artava kshaya is due to *avarana* by *doshas* like *Kapha* or *Vata* or *Kapha-vata*. So it can considered that *PCOS* (Poly Cystic Ovarian Syndrome) mainly carries the features of *Artavakshaya*, *kaphadusti* & *medodusti*.

PCOS is a condition where a hormonal imbalance affects follicular growth during the ovarian cycle causing the affected follicles to remain in the ovary. The retained follicle changes into a cyst and with each ovarian cycle a new cyst is formed leading to multiple ovarian cysts. *Lifestyle* modifications are considered first line treatment for *PCOS*. *Acharyas* have given importance to *Dincharya*, *ritucharya* & *ritumaticharya*, following these properly, it is easy to cure *Artava kshaya*.

CAUSES –

Now a day due to present lifestyle change there is a change in *ahara* & *viharas* which inturn cause *lifestyle* diseases, like obesity, depression, chronic backache, diabetes and hypertension. 68% Indian working women suffer, 53 per cent of them skip meals and go for

junk food due to work pressure and deadlines and stress etc. have also been contributory factors. The sedentary *lifestyle*, lack of exercise, excessive intake of food, changing quality of foods, day sleep etc leads to *kapha prakopa* and mental states like sadness, stress, excessive thoughts etc leads to *vata prakopa*. Eating before the digestion of previous foods also leads to *vataprakopa*. This vitiated *doshas* leads to vitiation of *agni* which further vitiates *dhatu*s, *malas* and *srotas*. Mainly vitiation of *rasa*, *rakta*, *mamsa*, *medho*, *asthi* and *sukra dhatu*s *artava upadhatu*, *rasavaha*, *raktavaha* and *artavavaha srotas* takes place.

Artava is an *Upadhatu*, formed from *Rasa* within a month after proper metabolization of *Rakta dhatu* by its *Dhatwagni* and *Bhutagni*. The decrease or *kshaya* of *Rakta dhatu* causes *Artava kshaya*.

Approximately 50-60% of women with *PCOS* are obese. Unknowingly we are creating environment for *PCOS*. The high intake of carbohydrates, especially refined carbohydrates & high fatty diet will quickly turn to sugar & causes elevated levels of insulin.

PCOS patients have high insulin resistance.

Table 1: ARTAVA KSHAYA NIDANAS ACCORDING TO DIFFERENT ACHARYAS

<i>Vagbhata</i>	<i>Susruta</i>	<i>Caraka</i>	<i>Kashyapa</i>
The <i>vruddhi</i> & <i>kshaya</i> of <i>uttardhatu</i> depends upon <i>vruddhi</i> & <i>kshaya</i> of <i>purvadhatu</i> .	The <i>rasa dhatu kshaya</i> is one of the causative factors for <i>dhatu kshaya</i> as <i>artava</i> is <i>upadhatu</i> of <i>rasa dhatu</i> .	The <i>samanya nidana</i> of <i>kshaya</i> causes <i>Artava kshaya</i> .	Use of <i>nasya</i> during menstruation.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

In *Artavakshaya*, *Kapha* predominance manifests as increased weight, sub fertility, hirsutium, diabetic tendencies and coldness. *Pitta* predominance manifests as hair loss,

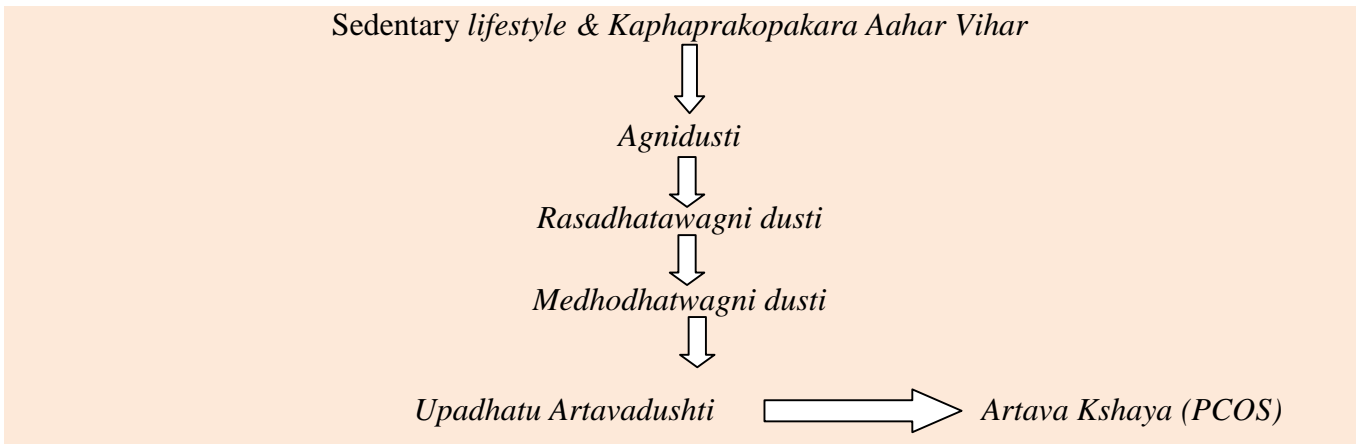
acne, painful menses, clots and heart problems. *Vata* predominance manifests with painful menses, scanty or less menstrual blood and severe menstrual irregularity.

There is marked decrease in female sex hormones which may lead to develop certain male characteristics like; excess hairs on the face & chest, decrease in breast size, deeper voice & thinning of hair.

Other symptoms include: acne, weight gain, anxiety or depression & infertility. Bilateral ovaries can be palpated on internal examination.

There is no direct reference in *Ayurveda* for polycystic ovarian syndrome (*PCOS*). The clinical features of the *PCOS* can be compared with clinical features as seen in *Artavakshaya*.

SAMPRAPTI:



SAMPRAPTI GHATAKA'S

Dosha- Vata – Apana vata, Samana vata

Pitta –Pachaka pitta

Kapha –Kledaka kapha

Dushya- Rasa, Rakta

Upadhatu- Artava

Agni –Jataragni, Dhatavagni

Srotas-Rasavaha, Raktavaha

Srotodusti- Sanga

Udbhvastana –Amasaya

Adhithana- Garbhsaya

Sancharasthana- Sarva shareera

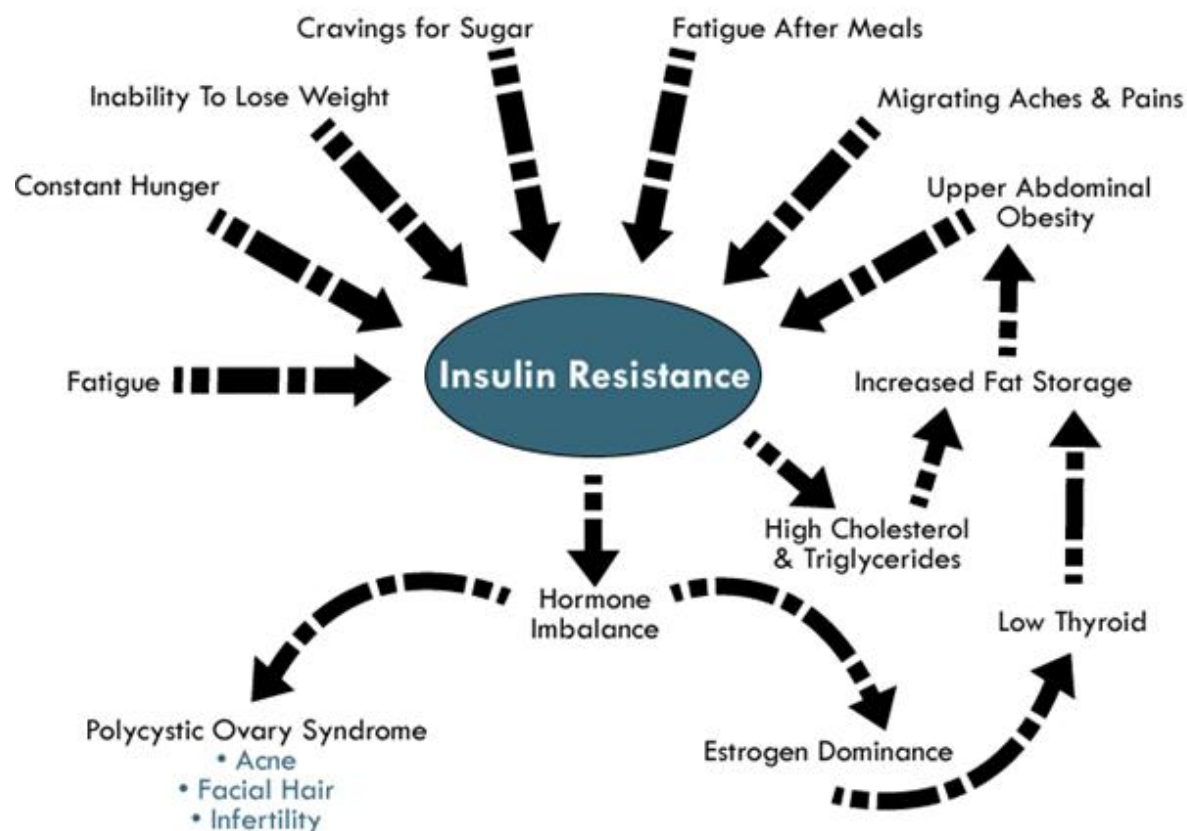
Vyakta sthana – Yoni, Garbhasaya.

आर्तवक्षये यथोचितकालादर्शनमल्पता वा

(. . /)

The meaning of *alpa* is *kshudra pramana*. This may be considered as reduced menstrual flow. In *Artava kshaya* both *pramana* & *avadhi* are altered from the normal i: e. 3-5 days with 4 *anjali pramana* (35ml according to modern), *Yoni vedana* is due to vitiation of *apana vata*. It is due to vitiation of *apana vata* resulting from inadequate *abhipoorana* of *garbhashaya* because of depleted *artava*.

PATHOPHYSIOLOGY:



INVESTIGATIONS:

- History including family history
- Physical examination
- Hormonal Essay: LH: FSH, E2, Testosterone, Androstenedione, SHBG, Prolactin, TSH, T3, T4 & Fasting Insulin level.
- FBS, Total Cholesterol.
- Pelvic ultrasound scans for the ovarian features of polycystic ovaries.

Treatment –

Nidanaparivarjanam is the first line of treatment in all types of diseases as per *Ayurveda*. Elimination of the cause is essential in treating and preventing diseases especially *PCOS*. Acharyas have mentioned *samshodhana* & *samshamana* treatment.

Lifestyle modifications are considered first line treatment for *PCOS*. By following proper *dincharya* it is easy to cure *PCOS*.

Pathyas according to *Acharyas* are fish, kulatha, tila, masa, gomutra, jiggery, buttermilk & curd & *pittavardhaka ahaar*. *Acharyas* have advised to include *lahsuna*, *jeeraka*, *tila* & *hingu* in diet. *Lahsuna* is considered as *amrita* in *stree rogas*. *Ayurveda* advises to choose low Glycemic Index (G.I) foods. – such as cauliflower, tomatoes, onions, peaches, apples, and grapefruit for those suffering from *PCOD*. These food items help in lowering the rise in blood sugar levels. The diet plan should be made as per individual requirements and degree of insulin resistance. Eating at regular intervals is advised strongly. Restriction of junk food is

another major aspect. Medication along with yoga and diet, works wonders in women with PCOD. Relaxation plays a key role in Polycystic Ovarian Disease. *Pranayama's* (breathing exercises) are powerful to help calm the mind. Yoga can also help in weight loss, relieves stress and improves blood circulation to the ovary, thus naturally curing PCOD.

Practicing the same on a regular basis makes the journey called womanhood, a wonderful experience. The management of this disease should be started as soon as diagnosed because the women with PCOS are at increased risk of developing a number of chronic conditions & non- insulin dependent diabetes mellitus.

DISCUSSION

Artava kshaya is one of the important diseases pertaining to *artava*. It is characterised by delayed, scanty menstruation associated with pain along reproductive tract. It can be correlated to *PCOS*. In this age of modernization and urbanization, menstrual disorders have become common due to faulty food habits, lifestyle, stress etc... In modern medicine *PCOS* is treated by hormonal therapy. *Ayurvedic* literature advocates *Shodhana*, *Agneya dravya upayoga* & by following proper *dincharya* & *ritumaticharya*.

CONCLUSION

PCOS is a frustrating experience for women. Obesity has long been associated with menstrual irregularity, particularly in women with upper body obesity. The sedentary *lifestyle*, lack of exercise, poor diet and stress etc. are contributory factors towards obesity. Obesity leads to hormonal imbalance which further causes *Artavakshaya* or *Artava vrddhi* depend-

ing upon the stage. There is currently no ideal medical cure for women with *PCOS* that fully reverses the underlying hormonal disturbances and that treats all clinical features. The oral contraceptive pill, used in allopathy does improve hyperandrogenism, and insulin sensitizers reduce insulin resistance in *PCOS*, but the side effects of this hormonal therapy lead to many complications. And certain surgical procedures such as ovarian drilling, assisted Reproductive technologies are too costly, which most of the women find unaffordable. The importance of *Ayurvedic* management of *PCOS* lies in the cost effective way of its treatment and the total lack of side effects. Reduction of weight in obese women and correction of *lifestyle* is prime requirement for treating *PCOS*.

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