



PHYSIOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES AND IMPORTANCE OF SROTAS IN THE HUMAN BODY

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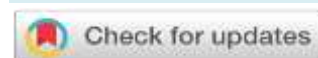
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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda describes a systemic biological transport system comprising gross and minute as well as very subtle channels transporting not only fluids, nutrients, and waste products but also energies and impulses in different biological settings. These channels are called srotas. In Ayurveda, Srotas play an important role. In Ayurveda classics, the term srotas is used as a dynamic inner transport system of body, mind, and spirit organization system. Each srotas is attached to a specific anatomical structure called Mool which influences the normal functioning of srotas. Srotas are the inner transport system of the body that provides a platform for activities of other important bio-factors like tri dosha, sapta dhathu, mala, agni, ojas, etc. In Ayurvedic classics, it has been described that the entire range of life processes in health and disease depends on the integrity of Srotas.

Keywords: Srotas, channels, pathways, transport System.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the first medical system to announce and describe the existence of innumerable Srotas, within the human body. Ayurveda has accepted the human body to be made up of innumerable Srotas (channels) which are responsible for performing all the physiological and functional activities. All dosha, dhathu, and mala perform their functional activities with the help of these Srotas. It has been a practice for a long, to recognize all the vyadhi lakshana. The term Srotas is derived from the root “Susravana” meaning to exude, to ooze, to flow, to filter. Those from which sravana or flow of the body substances takes place or those through which the materials flow in the body are called Srotas. Thus, they are the channels or pathways of the body through which the

materials needed for tissue building, nutrition and other nutrients flow from one corner of the body to the other. In other words, materials are transported through these Srotas from the place of production to the place of need. According to Sushruta, those which carry or transport materials like Prana (Life element), Anna (Food), Vari (Water), Masa, and Meda Dhathu are called Srotas. Charaka opines that there will be “Parinamanapadyamananam” meaning undergoing transformation indicates that the channel carries such tissue elements as are undergoing a transformation from their previous states. The channels of circulation do not carry the Sthira (Stable) dhathus but only such of the mobile dhathus are carried by them.

• Synonyms of Srotas¹

SR. NO.	SYNONYMS
1.	<i>Srotasa</i> (Channels)
2.	<i>Sira</i> (Vein)
3.	<i>Dhamani</i> (Artery)
4.	<i>Rasayani</i> (Lymphatic channels)
5.	<i>Rasavahini</i> (Capillary)
6.	<i>Nadi</i> (Duct)
7.	<i>Pantha</i> (Passage)
8.	<i>Marga</i> (Track)
9.	<i>Sharir Chhidra</i> (Spaces inside the body)
10.	<i>Samvrtaasamvrata</i> (Open or blind passage)
11.	<i>Sthana</i> (Site, locus)
12.	<i>Ashaya</i> (container)
13.	<i>Niketa</i> (Resorts)
14.	<i>Dhatavaha</i>
15.	<i>Kshaya</i>
16.	<i>Ayan</i>
17.	<i>Kha</i>
18.	<i>Srotansi</i>
19.	<i>Dwar</i>

• Characteristics of srotas

- Colour- The colour of srotas is similar to that of the dhatu they carry.
- Size- Anu (atomic in size or microscopic), Sthula (Gross or macroscopic),
- Shape- Vritta (cylindrical), Dirgha (long), Pratana

(reticulated)

Acharya Charaka has described thirteen major gross srotamsi simulating the major physiological systems of the body as known in the conventional modern system of medicine. In addition to these gross material channels, another important channel is Manova-

ha Srotas which carries impulses of thoughts and emotions. Sthula srotas along with their mulam have

been described for the purpose of the study of pathology and clinical medicine.

• **Types and Moola Sthana of Srotas by Charaka and Sushruta:**

S.N.	Name Of Srotas	ACHARYA CHARAKA ²	ACHARYA SUSHRUTA ³
1.	Pranavaha Srotas	Hridaya, Mahasrotas	Hridaya, Rasavahini Dhamani
2.	Udakavaha Srotas	Talu, Kloma	Talu, Kloma
3.	Annavaha Srotas	Aamashaya, Vamaparshva	Aamashaya, AnnawahiniDhamani
4.	Rasavaha Srotas	Hridaya, 10Dhamani	Hridaya, Rasavahini Dhamani
5.	Raktavaha Srotas	Yakrita, Pleeha	Yakrita, Pleeha and RaktavahiniDhamani
6.	Mamsavaha Srotas	Snayu, Twaka	Snayu, Twaka and RaktavahiniDhamani
7.	Medovaha Srotas	Vrikka, Vapavahana	Kati, Vrikka
8.	Asthivaha Srotas	Meda, Jaghana Pradesha	-----
9.	Majjavaha Srotas	Asthi, Sandhi	-----
10.	Shukravaha Srotas	Vrishana, Shepha	Stana, Vrishana
11.	Mutravaha Srotas	Vasti, Vankshana	Vasti, Medhra
12.	Purishavaha Srotas	Pakwashaya, Sthulaguda	Pakwashaya, Guda
13.	Swedavaha Srotas	Meda, Looma Koopa	-----
14.	Artavavaha Srotas		Garbhashaya, ArtavavahiniDhamani

• **Function of Srotas**

- All the body structural entities originated from Srotas.⁴
- Srotas serve as the conduct units for the Prasada Dhatu as well as Mala Dhatu are transported, and the formation of Sthayi Dhatu.
- Srotas maintain the structural entities of the body and prevent there diminish.
- Acharyas described that the entire range of life processes in health and disease depends on the integrity of Srotas.⁵
- Srotas carry Dhatu (tissues, elements, or their constituents) undergoing transformation to their destination.⁶
- Srotas are not only passages or channels for the flow of various substances but also Srotas are in specific their functions. Each Srotas provides nutrition to their respective Dhatu, only with requisite quantities, not others.
- Srotas are the inner transport system of the body that provides basic for activities of other important bio-factors like the three Dosha, the seven Dhatu, the Oja, the Agni, thoughts, and emotions.⁷

All the Dosha, Dhatu, and Mala are dependent on Srotas for their formation, transportation, and destruction.

• **Causes of Srotodushti**

The causes of vitiation of doshas are improper food habits and their activities. The expression of such vitiation is through the manifestation of diseases. The same causes which lead to doshadushti and Dhathu dushti are responsible for the vitiation of Srotas i.e., srotodushti.

• **Symptoms of Srotodushti**

The main signs of the vitiation of the channels are

- Atipravrutti: Increased flow or excess production of contents of the channel
- Sanga: Obstruction or stagnation of the flow of the content of the channel.
- Siragranthi: Appearance of nodules in the channel
- Vimargagamana: Diversion of the flow of the contents to an improper channel or flow in a path other than its own.
- Importance of Srotas⁸

The importance of srotas deals with the subject of inner transport systems of the living body in a unique, holistic style and presents almost a new way of understanding human biology. The living human body is comprised of innumerable micro and macro channels with specific functions. The tangible and intangible components of this [srotas](#) system are responsible for the transport and circulation of all kinds of biological fluids, energies, and impulses. Charaka's statement that our body is equipped with as many

micro-channels as the number of life events is an interesting way of looking at the circulatory system within the body. The subtle dimension of *srotovijnana* of [Ayurveda](#) seems to encompass all the minute structural and non-structural pathways and receptors which allow complex body functions. While deliberating on the micro-structural dimensions of *srotovijnana*, Ayurveda does not forget to reflect that it is applied bioscience that needs to be practiced by clinicians who may need to clinically examine the roots of these channels at a gross level. Hence, after initial reflection on the quantized micro-structures, Charak presents a very practical scheme of 13 gross channels or physiological systems for routine pathological considerations and clinical examinations in a patient. The following two aspects need to be kept in mind to understand the Ayurvedic concept of *srotovijnana*:

DISCUSSION

Ayurvedic classics proclaim that "Srotomayam hi shariram" means that the living body is a channel system and/or is comprised of innumerable channels which are designed as an inner transport system for divergent function, gross and subtle, biological and energetic. Ayurveda has given importance to Srotas for every Murthiman bhavas. Srotas are the channels different from sira and dhamani, which carries nutrients to the body organs and are wide spreads all over the body. It also carries waste materials for excretion from the body. Without Srotas, the physiological functions of the human body will not be possible. Every Srotas has two moolasthanas and the function of this moolasthana is to produce the elements which flow through the srotas. If moolasthana is defective, the srotas will be defective. But if srotas is defective, does not mean that moolasthana will also be defective. Pathological changes in the body are due to Sroto dushti, Srotosanga. Any imbalance in the srotas causes disease, so for the proper development of the

human body, the proper functioning of the Srotas is a must.

CONCLUSION

Srotas are simply hollow channels or spaces. According to Acharya Charaka "Srotomayamayampurusha" i.e, they have seen the body in the form of Srotas. The human body consists of Multiple and innumerable Srotas. Srotas indicate all Macro and micro-level descriptions pertaining to the exchange, transportation, and excretion taking place in the human body. Srotas along with their moolasthanas have been described for the purpose of the study of Anatomy-Physiology and clinical medicine. Understanding the concept of Srotas and Srotovajgunya facilitates the Vaidya for treating diseases. As long as Srotas perform their normal function, the body would be free from diseases.

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