



SUTIKASRAVA (LOCHIA) IN AYURVEDA – AN OBSERVATIONAL STUDY

Divya Pawar¹, Sameer Gholap²

¹Post Graduate Scholar, ²Associate Professor and Guide,
Department of Prasuti Tantra Avum Striroga, SMBT College and Hospital, Nandi Hills, Dhamangaon, Igatpuri
Nashik, Maharashtra, India

Email: divi.pawar94@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda gives importance to the care of mother and her baby at every phase of her life under antenatal care and post-natal care. A post-natal period comes just after the expulsion of placenta up to 6 weeks thus defined as Puerperium and duration called as Puerperium period. Lochia is a vaginal discharge for the first fortnight during puerperium. The discharge originates from the uterine body, cervix and vagina. It is a cleansing discharge which stays for ten or twelve days after delivery in common practice. Lochia is of 3 types Lochia Rubra, Lochia Serosa and Lochia Alba. In Ayurveda the term *Sutika* can be used only after the expulsion of placenta. *Sutika* is more prone to diseases due to aggravation of *Doshas*. Also, she is more prone to infections which is called as Lochial Infection. A 45 patient's observational data collected from *Ayurveda* College for the study.

Keywords: *Sutika*, *Sutika Kala*, *Sutika Srava*, Lochia etc.

INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda the term *Sutika* can be used only after the expulsion of placenta ^[1] *Kashyapacharya* has said until and unless *Aparapatana* takes place *stree* should not be considered as *Sutika*. This clearly indicates that *Aparapatan* (expulsion of placenta) is also very important

and it is also the part of delivery process. Lochia is the term given to the one-month period for women who go through after having a baby. It is mainly caused by the placenta coming away from the wall of your womb along with blood from any cuts or tears endured during

labour. It may contain Cramps, mini contractions especially on breast feeding which helps uterus to contract back to its normal size. Immediately after birth it is heavy and may lead to more maternity pads but later on decreases and lasts for 6 weeks. It is quite normal, and the blood may have musty smell similar to that of menstrual bleeding. Lochia actually consists of Discharge and blood from the area on the uterine wall lining to which placenta was attached during pregnancy [1].

- 1) The sloughed off endometrium which gets considerably thickened during pregnancy.
- 2) Blood and Mucus from the healing cervix.
- 3) Dead and necrotic tissue.

The blood in the Lochia comes mainly from the large raw area left on the inner uterus wall after the placenta detaches from it. While bleeding from this area controlled by contractions of the uterine muscles immediately after delivery thus it takes 2 weeks to heal. That's why bleeding is maximum in the first 2 – 3 days after the birth then decreases over next two weeks.

Aim and Objectives –

- To understand *Sutikasrava* (Lochia) in both *Ayurvedic* and *Allopathic* Perspectives.
- To observe 45 patients having *Sutika Srava* (Lochia) in *Sutikakala* (puerperal period).

Material and Method- Reviewing *Sutika Srava* (Lochia) in *Sutikakala* (puerperal period) *Ayurvedic* classics, commentaries also recently published books

and Research journals and modern science literature, the collection done and attempt to get co-relation between *Ayurveda* and Modern literature. An observation study done on 45 patients from *Ayurveda* College.

According to *Ayurveda* –

Sutika [2] :-

Sutayaschapi Tatra Syadapara Chenna Nirgata | Prasutaapi Na Suta Stree Bhavatyevam Gate Sati || (Ka.S.11/6)

Kashyapacharya has said until and unless *Aparapatana* takes place *Stree* should not be considered as *Sutika*. This clearly indicates that *Aparapatan* (expulsion of placenta) is also very important and it is also the part of delivery process.

Evam cha masadadhyardhanmuktaharadiyantrana | Gatasutabhidhana syata punaravartadarshanat || (Va.sha.1/100)

Prasuta sardhamasante dristhve va punartave | Sutikanamahina syaditi dhanvantarermatam || (Yo.ra.pa.6/10-2)

Sutika as per *Ayurvedic* literature references of *Ash-tanga Hridaya* and *Yogaratanakar* is she that should be considered for one and half month (45days) from the time of *Apatarpana* [3][4].

Sutikakala – The phase of regaining lost strength and attaining pre pregnant state of woman is called as *Sutika Kala*. It is stated by different *Acharyas* like,

Table 1:

Texts	Duration
<i>Sushruta</i> [5] <i>Ashtanga Hridaya</i> [6] <i>Ashtanga Sangraha</i> [7] <i>Bhavaprakasha</i> [8]	1 ½ month
<i>Charaka</i> [9]	5 – 7 days
<i>Kashyapa</i> [10]	6 months
<i>Yogratnakara</i> [11]	1 month
Modern Science	6 – 8 weeks

Sutika Srava - A cleansing discharge is called as lochia for ten or twelve days after delivery in common practice.

Synonyms

- 1) *Prasavashonitasrava*
- 2) *Yonirava*

Sutika Srava (Lochia) after delivery is denoted as good quality of *Sutikasharirakriya* (Puerperium Anatomy and Physiology).

Suterdhva te ye stravam ninditan shamayet budhan | Tasya asyamavarmpayamupayachet devataha || (Ka.S.)

Acharya Kashyapa has despicable and unhealthy. Because it contains *Kleda, Apra shesha* (Placental membranes) which once expelled out denotes *Garbhashaya Shodhana* (Cleaning of Uterus) [12] Along with *Sutika Srava* (Lochia) normally vaginal bleeding stays for 3 – 4 days. Vaginal bleeding is different in every female. Generally, it gets reduced after 3rd day. **Prano hi shonitam anuvartate** | But if vaginal bleeding persists even after that denotes *Vipannavastha* (Unhealthy). Vaginal bleeding is mentioned in *Rasatarangini* and given its treatment as well.

Garbhashayam Prasutaya Savyatham Sthanvichyutam | **Sankochatayatyashu Tatha Rak-tasravam Runadhhi Cha** | **Yonishcha Shithilabhuta Ssvasthanastu Prapadyate** | (*Rasatarangani*)

Sutika Srava Gandha (Odour) –

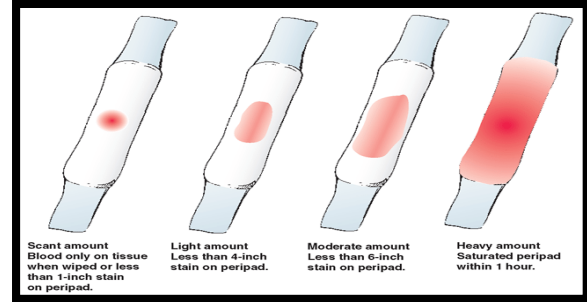
The odour of lochia varies from patient to patient day by day. Normally the odour is not offensive and is described like old meat or strong like perspiration. Severe offensive or more or less quantity is not good in *Sutika*. Lactating mothers shows less lochia secretion than non-lactating mothers due to natural uterus size reoccurrence. In lochia infection offensive odour is found more along with pain in abdomen by increasing reddish lochia. Douglas and Rhees has done research on lochia and found 21.6% Sterile and 56.3% nonsterile bacteria in it [13].

According to Modern Science –

Normal Puerperium [14] – Puerperium is defined following childbirth during which the body tissues, especially the pelvic organs revert back approximately to the pre-pregnant state both anatomically and physiologically.

Abnormal Puerperium – Any deviation from the definition of normal Puerperium like Pyrexia, PPH, Low-back pain, perineal pain, bowel problems, mastitis, psychological problems, thromboembolism, postnatal anaemia etc called as Abnormal Puerperium.

Lochia- Modern science have considered *Sutika Srava* and vaginal bleeding as ‘Lochia’. Which is divided in 3 factors like Composition, Colour and Quantity



A) Lochia Rubra or Lochia Cruenta –

It is the first stage of bleeding and occurs in the first 4 days after birth. The lochia is distinctly bright red in colour and begins a day or two after the birth. It is mainly composed of blood, small bits of membranes, sheds of decidua, fragments of chorion, amniotic fluid, vernix caseosa, cervical discharge and any meconium.

B) Lochia Serosa or Lochia Sanguinolenta - It is a second stage of bleeding. The lochia is pale brown in colour. It lasts for 4 to 9 days. It contains wound exudation, red and white blood corpuscles, mucous from cervix and vagina. It contains less blood and more serum and hence it is pale brown in colour. It becomes more watery in consistency.

C) Lochia Alba or Lochia Purulenta- It is a final stage of lochia for about 10 to 15 days and it's much less heavy with a yellowish white creamy in colour. It lasts from around the third week to the sixth week after birth. It contains decidual cells, fewer red blood cells which are made up of white blood cells, tissue cells, cholesterol, fat and mucus. It contains cervical mucus, debris from healing process in the uterus and vagina, organisms and markedly increased WBC's. The lochia is sterile for the first 2 – 3 days but then becomes colonised by the bacteria going off a typical lochia smell which is normal not be confused with the bad odour from lochia in postpartum infection. The quantity of lochia may be scanty after a premature delivery but more than normal after a twin pregnancy or other conditions where uterus becomes more than the average size during pregnancy.

Lochia Infection Symptoms- Lochia or postpartum infections can occur between on and ten days after giving birth through vaginal tract. They are,

1. Fever,
2. Haemorrhages,
3. Abdominal pain

Patients who undergone caesarean sections may have less lochia after 24 hours than who had vaginal deliveries.

Management Of Lochia –

- 1) Lochia doesn't need any specific management.
- 2) Use tampons or sanitary pads to prevent from bacterial infection.
- 3) Intercourse should be avoided to prevent from spreading of bacteria.
- 4) Regular bath with anti-infective agents.
- 5) Sitz bath should be followed.

Abnormalities of Lochia –

- 1) Secondary Postpartum Haemorrhage.
- 2) Pain in Abdomen. Lochia that remains red and abundant for longer than usual may indicate delayed involution of the uterus which may be because of retention of a piece of placenta within the uterus with infection,
 - 1) Excessive dilatation of the uterus.
 - 2) Complications during the delivery
 - 3) Injury of the uterus during the delivery
 - 4) Blood clotting disorder (Coagulopathy)
 - 5) Hypotonia of the uterus – the most common cause of the uterine bleeding after childbirth characterized by its low contractive activity^[15].

If placental tissue is retained the uterus remains enlarged and this may show on an ultrasound scan. Lochia with offensive odour may indicate infection. It is possible for red lochial discharge to still be present at 6 – 8 weeks. It is more commonly found after Instrumental Vaginal Delivery^[16].

OBSERVATION

- 1) 45 Patient's data collected from SMBT *Ayurveda* College.
- 2) Among them 14 (8 Primi + 6 Multipara) were undergone Caesarean section.
- 3) 28 (18 Primi + 10 Multipara) delivered by Full term vaginal delivery.
- 4) 3 (2 Primi + 1 Multipara) delivered from Instrumental Vaginal Delivery.
- 5) Criteria set according to duration like,

Mild	=	0 – 3 days
Moderate	=	4 – 6 days
Severe	=	≥ 7 days

Patients led 2 – 3 sanitary pads per day every 6 – 8 hours.

6) Results came with:

Mild = 14 LSCS + 2 Instrumental Vaginal Delivery = 16 patients

Moderate = 20 FTND + 1 Instrumental Vaginal Delivery = 21 patients

Severe = 8 FTND = 8 patients.

DISCUSSION

Sutika Srava is generally found after the delivery which is quite natural but if lasts for longer so that may be considered as secondary postpartum haemorrhage. From the above observation discussion can be drawn as During delivery 3 *Avarta* (Uterus, Cervix and Vagina) are included Thus *Sutika Srava* found more in those patients who undergone normal vaginal because baby comes out from these 3 ways thus complete opening takes place and let clots and blood pass through vagina in the form of lochia also *doshas* comes out and lasts for more than seven days. During Caesarean section (USCS or LSCS) Laparotomy is done and baby is taken out. As *Prasava* means delivery by Yoni (Vaginal canal) and to take baby out. Whereas in Caesarean section 1st *Avarta* (Uterus) is involved but not 2nd and 3rd *Avarta* (Cervix and Vagina) thus blood clots and huge blood is cleaned by surgeon as a result it doesn't lead lochia for more than 3 days in quantity too. During Instrumental Vaginal Delivery it is performed through vagina only but due *Sangha* (Obstructed pathophysiology) it can't be processed easily but if performed ideally and well then lochia duration and quantity is same as Vaginal delivery. Personal hygiene should be followed to prevent from the puerperal infection. Thus, *Acharyas* have explained *Sutika Paricharya* to prevent from aggravated *Doshas*. As it is observational study it can be conducted over more patients too.

CONCLUSION

Sutika needs proper care and management with specific diet. *Sutika Kala* i.e. Lochia is a vaginal discharge for the first fortnight during puerperium. It is cleansing discharge which is at first bright red then white and yellowish in colour at last. Lochia contains blood clots,

bits of membranes, blood corpuscles, mucus etc. which is highly prone for the infection. In the present study women who undergone full term normal delivery (FTND) has more day's lochia than Caesarean section and Instrumental vaginal delivery due to the involvement of 3 *Artava* which are completely involved in full term normal delivery (FTND) also somewhat in Instrumental vaginal delivery due to obstruction. In caesarean section baby is taken out abdominally and only 1st *Avarta* has been cleansed during procedure thus lochia is found for less days. As it is an observational study it can be conducted over more patients in future.

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