

## ROLE OF VIRUDDHAHARA IN CAUSING INFERTILITY- A CONCEPTUAL STUDY

<sup>1</sup>P Deepika Bhat, <sup>2</sup>Ramadevi G, <sup>3</sup>Mamatha K V<sup>1,2</sup>Prof. and HOD, <sup>3</sup>Prof. and Principal, Department of Prasooti Tantra & Streeroga, SDMCA, UdupiCorresponding Author: [pdeepikabhat@gmail.com](mailto:pdeepikabhat@gmail.com)<https://doi.org/10.46607/iamj10p8062024>

(Published Online: September 2024)

Open Access

© International Ayurvedic Medical Journal, India 2024

Article Received: 20/08/2024 - Peer Reviewed: 17/09/2024 - Accepted for Publication: 24/09/2024.



## ABSTRACT

In the present era, many lifestyle disorders are caused by unhealthy food habits and practices; infertility is one of them. The incidence has increased due to diversified daily routines, faulty food habits, and westernization, which affect the endocrine system and physiological factors. These issues can cause irregular menstruation, ovulation disorders, PCOS, fallopian tube blockage, endometriosis, hormonal disorders, and uterine abnormalities, ultimately leading to infertility. The Ayurvedic explanation of 'Viruddhahara' is a unique concept. Acharya Charaka mentioned *Shandhya* and *Santanadosha* while listing the diseases caused by *Viruddhahara*<sup>1</sup>. *Viruddhahara* impairs *Rasadhatu*, which leads to the *Dushti* of its *upadhatu*, *Artava*(Menstrual blood). Long-term practice of *Viruddhahara* (unhealthy food habits) causes *Artavadushti* and also affects the ovum, menstrual blood, and ovarian hormones. *Viruddhahara* significantly affects the *Garbhasambhava samagri*. The practice of *Satmya Ahara* and *Vihara* can help avoid multiple causative factors of infertility, such as *Beeja dosha*, *Artava* or *Shukradushti*, and *yonivyapat*. Infertility is also caused by obesity and other diseases resulting from faulty food habits.

**Keywords:** *Viruddhahara*, Infertility, Lifestyle disorders

## INTRODUCTION

Infertility is defined as the inability to conceive within one or more years of regular unprotected coitus.<sup>2</sup> In Ayurvedic terminology, there is a concept described,

which is called *Viruddhahara*; it means incompatibility of food substances taken together. Taken individually, a certain way is beneficial for health, but when

consumed in the wrong way or in combination, it proves to be a causative factor for various physical and mental diseases. Infertility is one among them. *Viruddahara* is a foodstuff/drug which dislodges the *doshas* but does not expel them from the body.<sup>3</sup> There are eighteen types of *viruddha* described in Samhita. Medicines and diets that vary with *desha, kala, agni, matra, satmya, dosha, samskara, veerya, etc.*, are all unwholesome.<sup>4</sup>

*Trayopastambha* constitutes *Ahara, nidra and brahmacharya*<sup>5</sup>. These principles are essential for maintaining health and balance in the body and mind.

When these pillars are neglected, it can lead to various health issues, including infertility-

1. *Ahara (Diet)*: *Ahara (Diet)*: Poor dietary choices, which include *Viruddhahara*, can lead to nutritional deficiencies and imbalances. An inadequate intake of essential nutrients can affect hormonal balance and reproductive health. For instance, diets high in processed foods and low in vitamins and minerals can impair ovulation in women and reduce sperm quality in men. These dietary imbalances can also contribute to *Shonita Dushti*,<sup>6</sup> or menstrual irregularities, as improper nutrition disrupts the formation and quality of *Artava* (menstrual blood). Ultimately, the quality of *Ahara* directly influences the health of *Shonita*, impacting overall fertility and reproductive outcomes.

2. *Nidra*-Inadequate sleep can cause hormonal imbalances and disrupt reproductive health by affecting menstrual cycles in women and testosterone levels in men.

3. *Brahmacharya*-Additionally, the principle of moderation in sexual activities is crucial, as both excessive indulgence and extreme celibacy can lead to fatigue, stress, and negatively impact fertility.

When any of these pillars are out of balance, they can create a cascade of physical and mental health issues that may ultimately lead to infertility

The aetiology of infertility due to *viruddhahara* is two-fold –

A) General health of the lady, which mainly depends on *Ahara* and *Vihara*

B) health of ovum

More commonly found examples of *Viruddhahara* are the consumption of milk and fruit together, taking a cold glass of water before having a cup of tea or coffee, not following the particular regimen advised for a specific disease, consuming milk and fish together, and eating fruits that are not ripe or are overripe. Additionally, intake of milk after eating garlic, sour liquids with milk, hot honey, and equal quantities of honey and ghee, as well as faulty foods like pizza, burgers, pastries, cakes, French fries, potato chips, and sugary drinks can hamper the body's functions, such as metabolism, absorption, and excretion, adversely affecting an individual's fertility. There is a reference from classical texts: the fetus becomes *Vaikrita* (distorted) or *agarbha* (even absent) indeed by practicing or habituating oneself to consume non-salutary *rasa* (apathetic *rasa*), by *vegadharana*, or again due to the blemishes of the uterus (*yoni dosha*).<sup>7</sup>

There are references available in the classics as the direct relation between *manas* and *Viruddhahara*.<sup>8</sup> *Rasa* is a result of adequately digested food. Therefore, it is capable of nourishing all the body's constituents. The mind, a subtle and unique sense organ, first derives nourishment from the *rasa*. Thus, any abnormality of *rasa* is manifested as psychosomatic symptoms like *asraddha*(restlessness) and *aruchi*(tastelessness) to indicate a state of increased *rasa*. In contrast, *shabdahishnuta*(irritability) and *giddiness* indicate the depleted *rasa* state.<sup>9</sup> Mental state is a significant factor in causing infertility, as a good state of *manas* helps in the retention of conception.<sup>10</sup> Taking into consideration the aetiology of female infertility, proper intercourse, receptivity of the uterus, cervix and vagina to a sperm, patency of fallopian tubes, and fertilising capacity of ovum are essential factors for conception. However, in some instances, even in the presence of these factors, conception does not take place where the role of *Ahara* can be considered. Hence, this article explains the role of *viruddhahara* in infertility.

#### AIM AND OBJECTIVES

To discuss *Viruddhahara* as one of the causes of infertility.

#### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Samhithas, Modern textbooks, Research papers, articles and journals were thoroughly reviewed.

#### EFFECTS OF VIRUDDHAHARA ON DHATU AND INFERTILITY

*Ahara* and *agni* are related. *Viruddahara* leads to *agnidushti*. Suppose *rasa* is not formed correctly because of the malfunctioning of *agni*. In that case, the result is

a highly contaminating metabolite called ama, which can contaminate all the dhatus and alter its inherent nature. Thus, *Viruddahara* leads to *agnidushti* and *ama*, causes dosha imbalance and leads to vitiation of all the *dhatus* and *upadhatu*s, including *sukra* and *artava*.

Considering *Uttarottara dhatu poshana*:<sup>11</sup>*Viruddahara*, which does not result in good quality of *rasadhatu*, influences the quality of *shukradhatu* and *artava*.

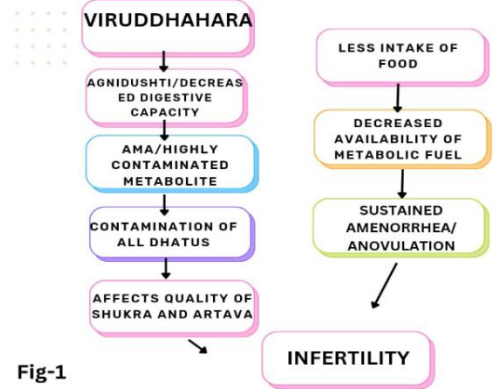


Fig-1

Fig.1 Effect of *Viruddhahara* on *Agni* and *dhatu*

*Garbhadhana-Garbhasambava samagri and Shatdhatu:*

*Garbhasambhava* *samagri* are *Ritu*(fertile period), *Kshetra* (Uterus),*Ambu* (nutrient fluid) and *Bija*(*Shukra*&*Shonita*),<sup>12</sup>*Shatbhavas* are *maatrija*, *pitruja*, *aatmaja*, *satvaja*, *rasaja*, *satmyaja* *bhaavas*<sup>13</sup>and *Shatdhatus* are *antariksha*, *vayu*, *agni*, *toya*, *bhumi*, *chetana dhatu*, are considered as important factors for conception/*Garbhaadhana*. Abnormalities in any of these factors could cause infertility. *Viruddahara* affects *Garbhasambhava samagri* and *Shatbhava* consequential into an inability to conceive or inability to retain the conception products, leading to Infertility.

*Ritu*

*Ritu* implies *kala*, which is suitable for *Garbhagrahana* or its conception. Regularising the menstrual cycle is essential for the ritual (Fertility period). *Rutukala* is a period of *kapahapradhanyata*, which, if affected by *vata* or *pitta* predominance due to *Ahara*, would not help in conception(Fig-2). *Viruddhahara* may cause abnormalities in the endocrine system, thereby leading to defects in the menstrual phase, luteal phase and also ovulation. Hence, the union of sperm and ovum, which takes place during the *ritual*/fertile period, failed, leading to infertility.



Fig-2

Fig 2-Influence of *ahara* on *Ritukala*

*Kshetra*

*Shuddha Garbhashaya* is required for conception. *Rasa*, formed from *Ahara*, is responsible for the proper nourishment of *Garbhashaya*. For a woman affected by *yonidosha*, the foetus in her does not get retained.

Similarly, *dosha* in *Bahya yoni* or conducting channels(*Nirvahinyam*).<sup>14</sup>Vitiation of *Vatadi doshas* due to *Viruddhahara* leads to unfavourable conditions in *Yoni* affecting implantation, fertilisation and

ovulation. (Fig-3,4). Also, the Intake of *Viruddhahara* causes hormonal imbalances. Higher levels of estrogen can affect the endometrial tissue of the uterus

and lead to inflammation and pain. Also, high levels of estrogen lead to fibroid development and growth. All these lead to infertility.

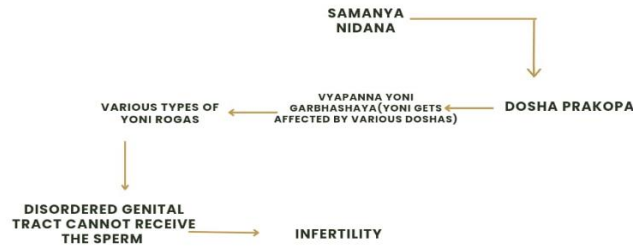


Fig-3

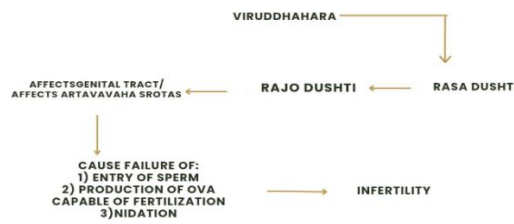


Fig-4

Fig 3-4: Influence of *Viruddhahara* on *Kshetra*

Ambu:

*Ambu* is *Aharapakotpanna Rasadhātu*, according to *Acharya Dalhana*<sup>15</sup>. It is formed from *Ahara* and taken by the mother. The nourishment of the mother and embryo is dependent on the *Rasa*. Also, *Garbhasravi* or *Mrutavatsa* types may result from disorders of *ambu*. *Ambu* affects fetus growth and successful completion of the pregnancy period, i.e., lack of fetal nourishment, which can cause miscarriages and stillbirth.

Beeja:

Habituated intake of *Viruddhahara* impairs *shukra* and *artava* quality due to abnormal *rasadidhaatu* formation. Since *shukra* is very potent, structurally complex and dense tissue derived from ingested food in a very condensed, concentrated form, its loss can have far-reaching effects on the body. Any sense organs and mind

can also stimulate all the *Mahabhutas* to participate. Therefore, all ancient Indian sciences have emphasised the proper consumption of *Ahara*. There is a simile given in the classics, a Reference from *Bhelasamhitha*. Just as a plant does not grow very well if the seed is disordered, conception does not occur due to blemishes of mother and father. Therefore, the couple should have nourished themselves perfectly with proper foods and *rasas* and then go into a union together in secrecy.<sup>16</sup> *Viruddhahara* would lead to abnormality in *rasadhaatu*, which in turn affects *beeja*, i.e., *Sukra* and *Artava*(Fig-5). Naturally, the availability of metabolic fuels affects reproduction in human beings by suppressing ovulation. *Viruddhahara* may interfere with oogenesis and spermatogenesis, leading to Infertility.

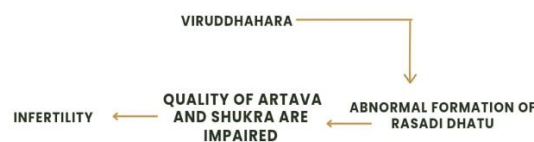


Fig 5-Effect of ahara on beeja

Artavadushti and Infertility

Artava is the Upadhatu of Rasa Dhatu. Artava is formed from the Prasadabhaga of Rasadhatu and is responsible for the formation of Garbha. Also, Shukra is formed from Rasa.<sup>17</sup> In a broader sense, Artava refers to ovum, menstrual blood, and ovarian hormones. Diseases of Artava lead to infertility.<sup>18</sup> Artava vitiated by

different doshas results in Beejarupi Artavadushti in the form of anovulation, which produces infertility. (Fig-6) Nashtartava is one of the main causes of Vandhyatwa. This is how Rasau, which is derived from digested food, is a cause of infertility.

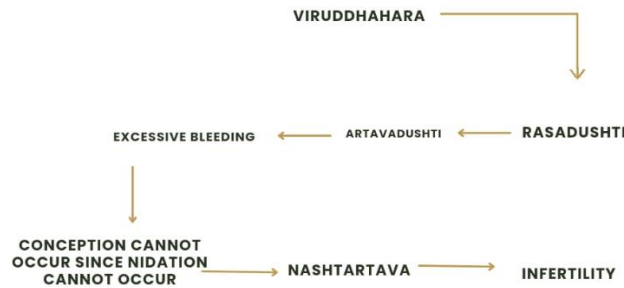


Fig-6: Role of Viruddhara in causing Artavadushti

Effects of Viruddhahara on Hormones

Normal hormones help achieve good-quality eggs and sperm. These hormones are derived from the components present in our food. Nutritional amenorrhea, the associated reduction in ovarian estrogen, can produce

infertility (Fig. 7). Viruddhahara may lead to abnormal hormone formation (GnRH, LH, FSH, hypothyroidism, hypopituitarism, adrenal hyperplasia, hypogonadotropic hypopituitarism). So, avoiding viruddhahara helps the proper secretion of hormones.

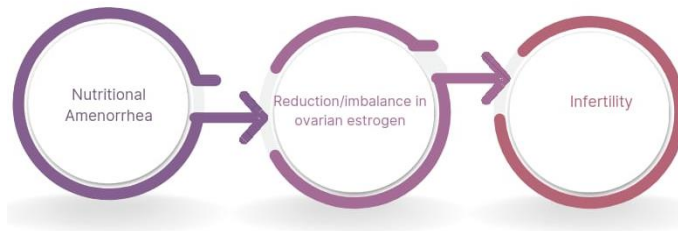


Fig-7

Fig -7: Effect of Viruddhahara on hormones

Infertility- Santarpana, Apatarpana Vyadhi:

Diseases are classified as Santarpana and Apatarpana vyadhi. Klaibhya is considered Santarpanajanya Vyadhi,<sup>19</sup> Due to this, a man may be unable to perform sexual intercourse, which includes sexual desire disorders, sexual arousal disorders, erectile disorders

or sexual pain disorders. As Shukrakshaya is considered Apatarpanajanyavyadhi, ultimately, both lead to Infertility. Hence, Viruddhahara would cause infertility. It shows that nutrition plays a vital role in deciding fertility.

Dhatukshaya and Infertility

Rasadhatwagnimandya and the resultant Artavadushti can be considered *Nidana* to *Vandhyatwa*(Fig-8). Nutritional infertility may be caused due to sustained amenorrhea due to conditions like anorexia nervosa. For example, women expected to maintain a slender body type (like dancers, models, artists, and athletes) may remain amenorrhoeic until they increase their

food intake. Recently, an increasing number of women have entered the military and the rigours of basic training which often result in amenorrhea. Recent works indicate that amenorrhea in such conditions could be more likely due to low energy availability rather than the stress of exercise. In these instances, Viruddhahara can lead to *Nashtartava* causing *Vandhya*.<sup>20</sup>



Fig-8

Fig-8 Dhatukshaya and infertility

Infertility as a Nidanarthakara Roga

Metabolic syndromes caused by *viruddhahara* can have a significant influence on infertility. *Viruddahara* causes obesity, Diabetes, Anemia, Hyperlipidemia, and hypertension, which doesn't produce good quality sperm and ovum and causes infertility, either by direct damage to oocyte health and differentiation or by

indirect interference with the pituitary-hypothalamic axis, resulting in dysfunctional oogenesis. *Viruddahara* may also cause *Vatarakta* and *Rajayakshma*(progressive diseases) to have a stage of *Dhatukshaya*, which may deplete *shukradhatu*, too, leading to Infertility. Also, in diseases like *Pakshaghata*, a person may be unable to copulate.



Fig-9

Fig -9- Infertility as Nidanarthakara roga

**DISCUSSION**

Nowadays, people are habituated to *Viruddhaahara* and *Vihara*, i.e., food intake at inappropriate times without considering their appetite, wrong combinations of food, and improper sleep and work patterns. All these lead to *dosha vikriti*, resulting in improper

formation of *dhatu*s, which causes reduced sperm count, motility, and decreased spermatogenesis in males and in females, adversely affecting the HPO axis and leading to defective oogenesis, amenorrhea, or excessive menstruation, thus affecting the fertility of the couple. The food is processed at three levels,

viz., *Jatharagni* (gross conversion from food to fluid state), *Panchamahabhutagni* (the fluid is subjected to further digestion to convert it into the Panchabhautic attributes), and *Dhatwagni* (the tissue metabolism). *Dhatwagni* finally takes the fluid and converts it into a subtle form that -

A) can replenish its tissue

b) form the seed of next Dhatu

Viruddhara can affect this conversion of *Aharaa* into *Dhatu*(*shukra*) and *Upadhatus*(*artava*), thus leading to infertility. It also influences *Dhatwagni*, causes *Dhatukshaya* and *Dhatu vikriti* to impair *bala*, which is essential for conception. It also vitiates *doshas*, causing various gynaecological conditions. In classics, there are references quoting the relationship between food and fertility. Intercourse with a physiologically disturbed lady is afraid, sorrowful, angry, unwilling for intercourse, or with an intense sexual urge or a lady with digestive disturbances (*Matsushita*, hunger or thirst) becomes a futile one<sup>21</sup> So, Food plays a noticeable role in the balanced status of dhatu as well as the fertility. So, avoiding *viruddhahara* and following proper food habits helps *Sadvritta palana* achieve fertility. However, if a person is habituated to an unwholesome diet and drugs or if they are taken in small quantities or taken by a person having digestive solid power or by a young person or by one who has undergone therapy or who has a strong psyche due to physical, the unwholesome of the diet doesn't have any effect.<sup>22</sup>

## CONCLUSION

*Aahara* is *Bheshaja*. An individual's well-being depends upon the kind of food he or she consumes. In Ayurveda, it is said that *Shareera* is formed predominantly by *dosha*, *dhatu*, and *mala*. *Viruddhahara* has a pathological effect on all these three components, leading to Infertility. So, *Nidanaparivarjana*, avoiding *Viruddhahara*, is essential in mitigating infertility and thus achieving maximum fertility chances. *Nityasevaneeya Ahara*, *Ahara Vidhividhana*, *Achara rasayana*, *Hitahara*, *Satmyahara* and *Sadvritta*

*Palana* is the solution for all the health issues and Infertility.

## REFERENCES

1. Acharya Y T, editor. Commentary of Chakrapani on Charaka Samhitha. Sutrasthana: Atreyabhadra kapeeya Adhyaya, Chapter 26, Verse 102. Varanasi: Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 2015:150.
2. Dutta DC. Textbook of Gynaecology. 8th ed. Varanasi: Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 2015:188.
3. Acharya Y T, editor. Commentary of Chakrapani on Charaka Samhitha. Sutrasthana: Atreyabhadra kapeeya Adhyaya, Chapter 26, Verse 85. Varanasi: Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 2015:150.
4. Acharya Y T, editor. Commentary of Chakrapani on Charaka Samhitha. Sutrasthana: Atreyabhadra kapeeya Adhyaya, Chapter 26, Verse 86. Varanasi: Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 2015:150.
5. Acharya Y T, editor. Commentary of Chakrapani on Charaka Samhitha. Sutrasthana: Trisarashaneeya Adhyaya, Chapter 11, Verse 35. Varanasi: Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 2015:74.
6. Acharya Y T, editor. Commentary of Chakrapani on Charaka Samhitha. Chikitsasthana: Yonivyapatchikitsita Adhyaya, Chapter 30, Verse 28. Varanasi: Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 2015:636.
7. Sharma PV, editor. Bhela Samhita. Text with English translation by Dr K.H. Krishnamurthy. Asamanagotriyadhyaya Shareera Adhyaya, Chapter 3, Verse 4-5. Varanasi: Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 199.
8. Vagbhata. Ashtanga Sangraha. Translated by Prof. K.R. Srikantha Murthy. Sutrasthana: Viruddhanna Vijnaneeyam Adhyaya, Chapter 8, Verse 11. Varanasi: Chaukambha Orientalia; 1995:201.
9. Acharya Y T, editor. Commentary of Chakrapani on Charaka Samhitha. Sutrasthana: Vividhashitapeeteeya Adhyaya, Chapter 28, Verse 9-10. Varanasi: Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 2015:179.
10. Acharya Y T, editor. Commentary of Chakrapani on Charaka Samhitha. Sutrasthana: Yajjhapurusheeya Adhyaya, Chapter 25, Verse 40. Varanasi: Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 2015:132.
11. Acharya Y T, editor. Commentary of Chakrapani on Charaka Samhitha. Chikitsasthana: Grahaneedosha-chikitsita Adhyaya, Chapter 15, Verse 16. Varanasi: Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 2015:514.
12. Acharya Y T, editor. Sushruta Samhitha of Sushruta. Shareerasthana: Shukrashonitashuddhishareeram

- Adhyaya, Chapter 2, Verse 33. Varanasi: Chaukambha Orientalia; 2017:348.
13. Acharya Y T, editor. Sushruta Samhitha of Sushruta. Shareerasthana: Garbhavakrantishareera Adhyaya, Chapter 3, Verse 33. Varanasi: Chaukambha Orientalia; 2017:354.
14. Sharma PV, editor. Bhela Samhita. Text with English translation by Dr K.H. Krishnamurthy. Asamanagotriyadhya Shareera Adhyaya, Chapter 3, Verse 5. Varanasi: Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 199.
15. Acharya Y T, editor. Sushruta Samhitha of Sushruta. Shareerasthana: Shukrashonitashuddhi Shareera Adhyaya, Chapter 2, Verse 33 commentary. Varanasi: Chaukambha Orientalia; 2017:348.
16. Sharma PV, editor. Bhela Samhita. Text with English translation by Dr. K.H. Krishnamurthy. Asamanagotreeya Shareera Adhyaya, Chapter 3, Verses 2-3. Varanasi: Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 199.
17. Acharya Y T, editor. Commentary of Chakrapani on Charaka Samhitha. Chikitsasthana: Grahaneedoshachikitsita Adhyaya, Chapter 15, Verse 17. Varanasi: Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 2015:514.
18. Shastri PH, editor. Commentaries of Arunadatta 'Sarangasundara' and 'Ayurveda Rasayana' of Hemadri on Ashtangahridaya of Vagbhata. Shareerasthana: Garbhavakrantishaareera Adhyaya, Chapter 1, Verse 10. Varanasi: Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 2018:364.
19. Acharya Y T, editor. Commentary of Chakrapani on Charaka Samhitha. Sutrasthana: Adhyaya, Chapter 16, Verse 15. Varanasi: Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 2015:97.
20. Acharya Y T, editor. Sushruta Samhitha of Sushruta. Uttarantra: Yonivyapatpratishedha Adhyaya, Chapter 38, Verse 10. Varanasi: Chaukambha Orientalia; 2017:669.
21. Acharya Y T, editor. Commentary of Chakrapani on Charaka Samhitha. Sharirasasthana: Jatisootriya Shareera Adhyaya, Chapter 8, Verse 6. Varanasi: Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 2015:341.
22. Acharya Y T, editor. Commentary of Chakrapani on Charaka Samhitha. Sutrasthana: Atreyabhadrakapeeya Adhyaya, Chapter 26, Verse 106. Varanasi: Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 2015:151.

**Source of Support: Nil**

**Conflict of Interest: None Declared**

How to cite this URL: P Deepika Bhat et al: Role of viruddhahara in causing infertility- a conceptual study. International Ayurvedic Medical Journal {online} 2024 {cited September 2024} Available from: [http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/565\\_572.pdf](http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/565_572.pdf)