

LITERATURE REVIEW ON SHLESHMALA YONIVYAPAD (VULVOVAGINITIS)

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<https://doi.org/10.46607/iamj08p8022024>

(Published Online: January 2024)

Open Access

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Article Received: 31/12/2023 - Peer Reviewed: 11/01/2024 - Accepted for Publication: 17/01/2024.



ABSTRACT

Women are the pioneers of any Nation; they comprise half of the world's population. They are the key to sustainable development, and the quality of life in families depends on them. Any disorder that hampers women's general, mental, and reproductive health should be considered and require medical attention. *Ayurvedic* texts discuss the subject of women's reproductive organ diseases under the subject of *Yonivyapads*. All *Ayurvedic* texts have described twenty *Yonivyapads* covering almost all gynaecological disorders. *Shleshmala Yonivyapad* is one of them, occurring due to vitiated *Kapha Dosh* having signs and symptoms like abnormal vaginal discharge, itching, coldness, and pain. Vulvovaginitis is the inflammation of the vulva and vagina due to several conditions like various infections, improper hygiene and dietary habits, etc. It is a frequently observed condition in gynaecological practice in today's era. Its symptoms are more or less similar to that of *Shleshmala Yonivyapad*. Hence, an effort has been made to gather information available in texts on this disease in both aspects i.e. *Ayurveda* and modern, for better understanding and curing the patients.

Key words: *Yonivyapad*, *Shleshmala*, vaginitis, vaginal discharge.

INTRODUCTION

Women play a vital role in the genesis of the human race. God has gifted them with the unique phenomenon of giving birth to a child. In *Ayurvedic* texts, gynaecological disorders are discussed under

Yonivyapads. The word *Yonivyapad* consists of two words viz *Yoni* and *Vyapad*. Word '*Yoni*' denotes female genital tract as a whole that is including external and internal female genital organs whereas the word

'Vyapad' means disorder or ailments. Hence, the word *Yonivyapad* refers to diseases of *Yoni* (female reproductive organs). Though all the classics have described twenty *Yonivyapads*, there exist many differences of opinion regarding causative *Doshas*. *Acharya Charaka* has described eleven due to vitiation of *Vata*, three due to *Pitta*, one each due to *Kapha* and *Sannipata* and the remaining four due to vitiation of two *Dosha* together.

In contrast, *Acharya Sushruta* has described five disorders under each *Dosha* and five due to all together, i.e. *Sannipata*. *Shleshmala Yonivyapad* is one of the twenty diseases of *Yoni* characterised in classics. Some have named it *Shlesmiki Yonivyapad*, and others have called it *Kaphaj Yonivyapad*. It is one of the common problems which affects women both physically and psychologically and hampers their day-to-day activities. When a woman follows the *Kaphaj* and *Abhisyandi* diet and the daily regime, it causes the vitiation of *Kaph Dosha* in *Yonimarga*, leading to *Pandu*, *Picchila Srava* from the vagina along with *Kandu*, *Sheetalta* and some degree of pain. Usually, it is secondary to inflammatory conditions of the vagina and cervix having symptoms like change in colour and consistency of vaginal discharge, itching, and backache.

AIM

To study and review the *Ayurvedic* and modern literature on *Shleshmala Yonivyapad*.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This literary study was made after reviewing all the *Ayurvedic* classics, modern gynaecology textbooks, and related journals and articles.

DEFINITION

Shleshmala Yonivyapad is described as a condition where symptoms of *Pandu*, *Picchila* discharge from the female genital tract, i.e. *Yoni*, occurs with *Sheetalta* (cold on touch), *Kandu* and *Manda Ruj*, along with *Artava Dusti* and *Panduta*.

Kapha, vitiated due to excessive use of *Abhisyandi* substances, reaches the reproductive system and causes (*Picchila*) unctuousness, coldness (*Sheet*), itching (*Kandu*) and dull pain in the vagina. The woman

looks anaemic and discharges yellowish, unctuous menstrual blood in the opinion of *Acharya Charak*.¹ *Chakrapani* has equated this with *Kaphaj Asrigdara* because yellowish discharges per vaginam are also present during the intermenstrual period.²

Acharya Sushruta has given only local symptoms such as unctuousness, itching and excessive coldness.³

Vagbhata followed *Maharishi Charak*. However, they have included painless and yellowish discolouration of the vagina also.

Acharya Madhav Nidana, *Bhavaprakasa* and *Yogaratnakara* followed *Acharya Sushruta*.

ETIOLOGY (Nidana)

There are two types of *Nidana*, viz *Samanya* and *Vishesh*.

1. *Samnya Nidana* refers to the common causes of all the *Yonivyapads*. They are categorised under the following⁴

a. *Mithyachara*: The heading includes *Mithya Ahara* (abnormal diet) and *Mithya Vihara* (abnormal mode of life). Various environmental factors operating either during the embryonic life of the girl (congenital abnormalities) or at a later life also come under this heading.

b. *Pradushtartava*: *Artava* refers to the female sex hormone, ovum and menstrual blood. Any deviation in these is also responsible for various gynaecological problems.

c. *Bija dosha*: Various chromosomal or genetic abnormalities come under this group. *Charaka* says that abnormalities of *Bija* (*Artava* or ovum) are responsible for the development and malformations of the uterus.

d. *Daiva* or God: Unknown or idiopathic factors come under this group.

2. *Vishesh Nidana* – Specific causative factors of *Shleshmala Yonivyapad* include *Abhisyandi Ahara*, *Kapha Prakopaka Ahara Vihar*, and also *Vataprakopaka Ahara Vihar*. *Abhisyandi Ahara* is defined as *Ahara*, which increases *Srava*. Those products with *Picchila Guna* and *Guru Guna* can vitiate the *Rasavaha Strotas* and cause *Avarodha*, leading to *Gouravam*, i.e. heaviness in the body, are called *Abhisyandi Dravyas*. e.g. curd. As they have *Guna Sadharmyata* with *Sleshma*, it causes *Sleshma Prakopa*.

Vata Prakopaka Ahara-vihara also plays a vital role in the manifestation of disease. All Acharya's mentioned Vata Prakopa as one of the leading causes of all Yonivyapads.

Kapha Prakopaka Ahara-Masha, Mahamasha, Godhuma, Tilapishta vikruti, Dadhi, Dugdha, Krushara, Payasa, Ikshu vikāra, Anupamamsa, Vasa,

Visamrunala, Kaseruka, Shrungataka, Madhuraval-liphala etc.

Kaphaprapakopa Vihara: Divaswapna, vyayama, Aalasya, Samashana, Adyashana.

PATHOGENESIS (Samprapti)⁵

Nidan sevan (Kapha and vata vardhak and abhisyandi ahara vihar)

↓
Vitiation of Kapha

↓
Kapha starts to accumulate in its own space.

↓
This accumulation leads to Prakopa Avastha.

↓
This provoked and spread Kapha there after getting lodged in the Artava Vaha Srotas or the genital system.

↓
Causes symptoms of Shleshmala Yonivyapad

SAMPRAPTI GHATAK⁶

- Doshā – Kaph and vata
- Dushya – Rasa, Rakta & mamsa
- Srotas – Rasavaha, artavaha, raktavaha
- Srotodusti Lakshan – Atipravritti
- Adhistan – Yoni
- Rogamarga – Abhyantara
- Sthanasamsraya – Yonimarga

SIGN AND SYMPTOMS (Rupa)

Symptoms	Charak	Sushruta	Vagbhata	Madhav nidan	Bhav prakash
Yoni picchila	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sheetalta	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kandu	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Aplavedana	✓	×	×	×	×
Avedana	×	×	✓	×	×
Panduta	✓	×	✓	✓	✓

COMPLICATIONS(Upadrava)

There is no particular complication mentioned for *Shleshmala Yonivyapad*. But whatever complication mentioned for *Yonivyapad* in general can be considered as the complication of *Shleshmala Yonivyapad*.⁷ Different *Acharyas* said that yoni of women afflicted with *doshas*, or diseases suffer from-

- Bandhyatva* (Infertility)
- Arsha* (Haemorrhoids)
- Pradar* (Menometrorrhagia)
- Gulma* (Abdominal distension)
- Stambha* (Numbness)
- Shula* (Pain)

PRINCIPLES OF TREATMENT (Chikitsa Sidhant)

GENERAL PRINCIPLES⁸

1. *Nidana parivarjan*, i.e. eradication of the cause.
2. *Yonivyapada* disorders do not occur without vitiation of *vata*; thus, first of all, *vata dosha* should be normalised, and only then treatment for other dosha should be done.
3. In all these *Yonivyapads*, after proper *Snehan* and *Swedana* (oleation and sudation), *Panchkarma* procedures like *Vaman*, *Virechan*, etc., should be used. Only after adequate cleansing for *Doshas* through *Panchakarma* other medicines should be given.
4. The purifying measures should be used in proper sequence as mentioned in texts. The drugs used in these procedures should be according to the vitiation of *Dosha*. This should follow use of *Uttarbasti* (uterine instillation).
5. The use of purgatives and medicated milk is beneficial.
6. *Sthanik Chikitsas* like *Pichudharana*, *Yonipurana*, *Yonidhupana*, *Avachurnan*, *Parisheka*, *Pralepa*, *Beshavar*, *Bandha* etc are used according to the necessity.

TREATMENT PRINCIPLES SPECIFIC TO SHLESHMALA YONIVYAPAD

1. *Kaph Dosha* has *Snigdha* and *Shita* properties, according to *Samanya Vishesh Sidhant* (i.e. *Dravyas* having similar properties will cause an increase in dosh or *Dhatu* and *Dravyas* of opposite nature

reduce them). All *Acharyas* have mentioned the use of *Ruksha* and *Ushna* treatment.⁹

2. *Uttar Basti* given in *Kaphaj Yonivyapad* have *Katu Rasa* drugs and should be mixed with cow's urine.¹⁰
3. Local application of a paste of *Trivrut* (*Operculina Turpenthum*).¹¹
4. Use of *Vartis* (pessaries) made of *Tikshna* and *Katu* drugs like *Arkadi Varti* and *Pippalyadi Varti*.¹²
5. *Pichu* (oil-soaked tampons) soaked in *Udumbaradi Tail* is also beneficial in *Shleshmala Yonivyapad*.
6. Following of *Pathya* and *Apathya-Pathya*

• The use of *Taila*, *Sidhu*, *Yavanna*, and *Pathyarista* (*Abhayarista*) are pleasant.

• Use of *Asava*, *Arista*, *Lasuna* and diet having an abundance of milk and *mamas ras*.

• For women, *Lasuna*(garlic) acts like nectar. (*Kashyap*)

Apathya

• *Madhura-amla-lavan pradhan ahara*.

• *Abhishyandi Ahara*.

• *Manda* is contraindicated in the case of *Yoni Rogas*. (*Kashyap*)

• *Divaswapna*

• *Maithuna* etc.

DRUGS INDICATED IN SHLESHMALA YONIVYAPAD

Internal medicine:

Churna (powder preparations)

• *Pushyanug Churna*

• *Pippalyadi Churna*

Ghrita (medicated ghee)

• *Phala Ghrita*

• *Brihat shatavari ghrita*.

Kwath(decoctions)

• *Nyagrodhadi kwath*.

• *Maharasnadi kwath*

Asava

• *Patranga asava*.

• *Lodhra asava*.

External Medicine

Pichu (oil-soaked tampons)

- *Udumbaradi taila.*
- *Dhatakyadi tail*

Varti(pessaries)

- *Pippalyadi varti.*
- *Arkadi varti.*

Prakshalan (medicated wash)

- *Kariradi kwath*
- Decoction of *Rajabrikshadi* group of drugs.
- Continuous flow of *Kwath* of *Guduchi, Triphala, Danti.*
- *Kwath* of *Triphala* mixed with *Takra, Gomutra.*
- *Panchavalkal kwath*

Kalka (paste application)

- *Shyama (Trivrit) Kalka Dharan*

Basti (medicated enema)

- *Palash niruha basti.*
- *Guduchyadi rasayan basti.*
- *Satavaryadi anuvaasan basti.*
- *Baladiyamak Anuvasan basti*
- *Dhatakyadi taila Anuvasan basti.*
- *Uttaravasti with katu ras pradhan* drugs in *Gomutra.*

VULVOVAGINITIS

Vulvovaginitis i.e. Vulvitis and Vaginitis are inflammation of the vulva and vagina. It is a frequently observed condition in gynaecological practice, which may sometimes emerge as a dangerous outcome. Vulvovaginal inflammation can cause discomfort and discharge with itching, redness, and sometimes burning and soreness. All healthy women have bacteria and other organisms in the vagina. The balance of organisms and the typical acidity of the vagina both act to prevent overgrowth of specific organisms. Vaginal infections occur when bacteria, fungi or other organisms grow uncontrolled and lead to symptoms of infection. Infectious organisms can also be introduced into the vagina by improper hygiene or unprotected coitus, or any foreign substance.

VULVITIS (VULVAL INFECTION):

Vulvitis is inflammation of the external genital organs of the female (the vulva). The vulva includes the labia, clitoris, and vestibule.

Causative factors for vulval infection: -

A-Vulvitis due to specific infection- like Bacterial, Fungal, Pyogenic (Non-Gonococcal), Sexually transmitted disease, etc.

B-Vulvitis due to sensitive reaction (Contact Vulvitis)¹³ The vulval skin is susceptible to many agents (primarily chemicals) that may produce contact dermatitis. Such agents include drugs used locally to cure pruritus, douche, soap, detergent etc. The vulva is intensely inflamed. Local reactions to undergarments made from synthetic material are also common.

VAGINITIS (VAGINAL INFECTION):

Vaginal infection, also known as vaginitis or vaginosis, is one of the most frequent reasons that women seek care from their gynaecologist. When both the vulva and vagina are inflamed, the disorder is called vulvovaginitis.

Causative factors of vaginitis¹⁴ -

Several reasons can cause vaginitis. Bacteria, yeast, and other microorganisms may cause vaginal infections.

1. Bacterial-

I. **Specific** - like Gonococcal, Tubercular, Syphilitic, Lympho-granuloma venererum.

II. **Nonspecific** - Various mixed pathogens, like E. coli, streptococci, etc., are recoverable on culture in this group.

2. Parasitic and fungal -Trichomonas vaginitis, Monilial vaginitis etc.

3. Secondary causes- Include all varieties of vaginitis in which the primary cause is not vaginal. Chemicals, drugs, douches, tampons, trauma, and foreign body, such as vaginal pessary, contraceptives etc., are all causative, especially if forgotten and left inside for an extended period. Growth on the cervix, especially carcinoma cervix or a cervical polyp, is always infected and may cause secondary vaginitis.

4. Oestrogen deficient vaginitis - as seen in vulvovaginitis in children and as senile vaginitis in postmenopausal women.

GENERAL SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF VULVOVAGINITIS

Vulvovaginitis is characterised by one or more of the following signs and symptoms.

1. Increased volume of vaginal discharge.

2. Abnormal colour of vaginal discharge- Discharge is white, thick, and cheesy in consistency in Candidiasis, greyish in bacterial vaginosis and yellowish or greenish in trichomoniasis.

3. Vulval itching (Pruritis Vulvae): - The discharge causes vulva irritation, and patients complain of itching or irritation.

4. Dyspareunia: - Due to severe vulvovaginitis vagina is very sore. Also, because of intense itching, the vulva and vagina are ulcerated and tender. The patients experience severe pain during coitus.

5. Vaginal walls become sore and red.

6. Irritation and burning on the vulva (inner and outer lips around the vagina) and in the vagina, including around the urethra.

7. Change in vaginal pH.

MANAGEMENT-

Use of antihistamines, antibiotics, antiprotozoals, steroid ointments & antifungal drugs, maintaining personal hygiene and wearing clean, dry, pure cotton undergarments are the only treatments.

DISCUSSION

Gynaecological disorders have found immense importance in the field of medicine because women have a unique function of giving birth. In Ayurveda, women's health care is related in a separate section, where the term *Yonivyapad* includes the majority of gynaecological disorders. *Shleshmala Yonivyapad* is chiefly the local/regional pathology affecting the *yonimarg*, mostly the visible vulva-vagina; the main characteristic features of this condition are the presence of itching in the vagina and unctuous discharges. Intake of *Mithya Ahara*, *Atisnigdha* and *Abhishyandi Ahara* vitiates *Kapha Dosha* in *Yonipradesha* leading to excess *Shweta Srava* which is *Snigdha* (artificial), *Pandu Varna* (whitish in colour) and *Picchila* (sticky in nature) associated with *Kandu* (severe itching). *Acharya Charak* has mentioned the presence of dull pain, while *Acharya Vagbhata* says it to be a painless state. For treating *Kaphaj Yonivyapad* the *Nidaan Sevan* has to be stopped immediately, usage of *Ruksha*, *Ushna Shaman Dravyas* are beneficial to abolish the causative factors from the root itself. Whenever *Shodhan* is

required, one must undertake *Sarvang Snehan-Swedan*, *Vaman*, *Virechan*, *Asthapan Basti*, *Uttarbasti*, *Raktamokshan*, and even *Nasya* as needed. This helps to abolish the ill effects of *Abhishyandi Dravyas* on all the systems of the body. Though modern correlation is not easy, observing signs and symptoms of *Shleshmala Yonivyapad* appears to be closely related to vulvovaginitis. It is an inflammation or infection of the vulva and vagina, a common condition that affects females of all ages—usually caused by a change in the average balance of vaginal bacteria, infections by other microbes, reduced oestrogen levels after menopause and in childhood, exposure to chemical irritants, foreign body and unclean practice. The symptoms of vulvovaginitis vary and depend on their cause. In general, symptoms can include irritation of the genital area, itching, inflammation around the labia and the perineal regions, increased, strong-smelling vaginal discharge, discomfort while urinating, pain in the lower abdomen, change in vaginal pH, etc. These symptoms are more or less similar to those of *Shleshmala Yonivyapad*. Hence, vulvovaginitis can be correlated to *Shleshmala Yonivyapad*.

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Source of Support: Nil

Conflict of Interest: None Declared

How to cite this URL:Komal Agarwal et al: Literature review on shleshmala yonivyapad (vulvovaginitis). International Ayurvedic Medical Journal {online} 2024 {cited January 2024} Available from: http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/153_159.pdf