

A CONCEPTUAL STUDY ON ARTAVAKSHAYA

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<https://doi.org/10.46607/iamj06p8032024>

(Published Online: March 2024)

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Article Received: 08/02/2023 - Peer Reviewed: 05/03/2024 - Accepted for Publication: 20/03/2024.



ABSTRACT

God has gifted women with the rare and unique phenomenon of giving rise to a new life. In this universe, only women have been placed in extreme worship places due to her power of *Janani*. That is why women are considered reflections of God in this world. The female body is one of nature's most beautiful and complex creations. The physiology of the reproductive system of a woman is different from that of her male partner to a great extent, as she has to intersperse the functions of conception and childbirth. Women undoubtedly are the ultimate source of human progeny. To fulfil this aim, nature has conferred unique anatomical and physiological characteristics in the women, collectively called *Streekarbhava*. One among them is the concept of *Rajahpravrutti*. In this present era, lifestyle and food habits increased stress, strain and restlessness, which expanded the spread of several menstrual disorders. *Artavakshaya* is a common one among all these. *Artavakshaya* has been described by *Acharya Sushruta*, and the clinical features of *Kshaya* of all the *Doshas*, *Dhatus*, *Updhatus* and *Malas*. Thus, it is the description of the deficiency of *Artava*, which is an *Updhatu* of *Rasadhatu*.

Key words: *Artavakshaya*, *Srotorodha*, *Agnimandya*

INTRODUCTION

The term '*Artavakshaya*' consists of two words: *Artava* and *Kshaya*. *Artava* is one of the essential factors for the production of '*Garbha*' in females, and it appears only when the woman attains puberty. *Kshaya* is

derived from '*Kshi*' *Dhatu*, which means "to cease" or to get reduced. The word '*Artava*' denotes two meanings; one is '*Bahirpushpa*', and the other is '*Antahpushpa*'. *Bahirpushpa* is the outward manifestation of

the appropriate work of *Antahpushpa*, which is necessary for conception. *Bahirpushpa* is considered menstruating. According to *Ayurveda*, normal menstruation is the indicator of a healthy and normal reproductive organ in which the duration of the intermenstrual period is one month, duration of blood flow is five days (Differ according to different *Acharyas*), *Na ati alpa na ati bahu* and not associated with *Phichhilita*, *Vedana* or burning sensation. The colour resembles *Gunjaphal*, *Padmaalaktak*, *Indragopa*, *Shasharik* and *Laksharas*. This is considered normal menstruation in *Ayurveda*. *Artavakshaya* is explained by *Acharya Sushruta* and is characterised by *Yathochitakala* – *adarshanam*, *Alpartava* and *Yonivedana*. In modern science, *Lakshana* of *Artavakshaya* can be correlated with certain menstrual disorders that are as follows:

- *Yathochita kala adarshanam*¹ as delayed menses or Oligomenorrhoea
- *Alpata* as Hypomenorrhoea
- *Yonivedana* as Dysmenorrhoea

So, when we compare the disease *Artavakshaya* with modern medical science, Oligomenorrhoea and Hypomenorrhoea can be correlated based on their signs and symptoms.

Nirukti of Artavakshaya-

“*Raktasya pramanahani*”, *Rakta – Raja/ Artava*, *Pramanahani-* decrease in amount.

Praman of Artava – 4 *Anjali*² (In a healthy person)

The term “*Artavakshaya*” consists of two words: “*Artava*” and “*Kshaya*”. The *Artava* is one of the essential factors for the production of *Garbha* in females and commences when women attain puberty. The word “*Kshaya*” has been derived from “*Kshi*” *Dhatu*, which means “to cease” or to get reduced. In *Vishalshabda Kosha Sagar*, the word “*Kshaya*” means “*Nyunata*” and “*Apachaya*”. According to *Acharya Charaka*, *Kshaya* means “*Hrasa*” and *Nyunata*. It represents the reduced quantity of *Artava* from its average measurement called “*Kshinartava*”. The *Artava* vitiated by *Dosha* is called *Artavadushti* and there is a description about *Artavadusti*³ in all the *Ayurvedic* texts.

References of Aartavakshaya in Ayurvedic text-

Reviewing our *Ayurvedic* classics, we found that “*Artavakshaya*” is not explained as a disease in any texts. It has been described very systematically as a symptom of so many gynaecological disorders in many classics.

Yonivyapadas related to Artavakshaya⁴:

- a) ***Lohitakshaya***: *Acharya Vagbhata* opined that due to vitiation of *Vata* and *Pitta* the *Raja* is decreased, and the woman suffers from burning, emaciation and changes in complexion. This condition is known as *Lohitakshaya*.
- b) ***Arajaska***: *Acharya Charaka* says that *Pitta* situated in *Yoni* and *Garbhashaya* vitiates *Rakta*, a woman becomes extremely emaciated and her complexion changes. This condition is known as *Arajaska*. *Chakrapani* in his teeka described amenorrhoea as a symptom of *Arajaska*.
- c) ***Vatala Yonivyapada***: *Charaka* writes that a woman of *Vata prakriti*, when consumes the *Vatapradhan* diet and indulges in other activities capable of aggravating *Vayu*, then provoked *Vayu* reaching the reproductive system, produces pricking and other pain, stiffness, sensation as if creeping of ants, roughness, numbness etc. local symptoms and fatigue or lethargy etc. other disorders of *Vata*. Due to *Vata*, menstruation starts with sound and pain, and menses are frothy, thin and dry.

Artavadushti related to Artavakshaya:

“*Ksheena Artavadushti*” means a reduced quantity of *Artava* from its average measurement due to the vitiation of *Doshas*. This condition is merely co-related with the “*Artavakshaya*”.

Jataharini related to Artavakshaya⁵:

Kashyapa has mentioned certain menstrual disorders, as *Shushka revati*, *Katambhara*, *Vikuta Jataharini* and these are the result of *Jataharini graha badha*. These three menstrual disorders can be considered as primary Amenorrhea because the following *Lakshanas* are found in these *Jataharini graha badhas*.

- a) ***Shushka Revati***: When a woman is 16 years old even then the menstrual phenomena does not take place and her *Sphika pradesha* is emaciated then

she is considered to be suffering from *Shushkarevati graha badha*.

- b) **Katambhara:** The woman who does not menstruate in the *Uchita kala* (appropriate time) and becomes *Krishha*, *Heenabala*, *Kruddha* and ultimately dies is known as *Katambhara*.
- c) **Vikuta:** When the menstrual discharge is *Vishama* in *kala* (time), *Varna* (colour) and *pramana* (quantity) from the very beginning and there is *Balahani* and *Ghani* in the woman then she can be considered as suffering from *Vikuta Jataharini*.

Nidana

Nidana is the first step of *Nidanapanchaka* towards *Vyadhyutpatti*. It can be classified into two types for convenience: *Samanya* and *Vishesh*. *Artava* is considered as *Upadhatu*. Consideration of *Samanya Nidana*, which causes effects on *Dhatu* and *Upadhatu kshaya*, also affect *Artava* and give rise to *Artavakshaya*. *Acharya Charaka* has explained *Samanya Nidana* of *Kshaya* of *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Upadhatu*, also known as *Samanya Nidana* of *Artavakshaya*. These are – *Anashana*, *Asatmya Ahara Sevana*, *Atimadirapana*, *Ativyayama*, *Atichintana*, *Atapasevana*, *Prajagarana*, *Vega Vidharana*, *Bhaya*, *Manah Santapa*⁶. If we deliberate about *Vishesh Nidana*, it can be said that specific factors responsible for aggravating the particular *Dosas*, coupled with non-observance of regulations related to the reproductive system, are the causative factors. *Acharya Kashyapa* says that use of Sternutatory drugs during menstruation⁷, consumption of excessive hot eatables and drinks⁸ and use of excessive medicines for cleansing purposes to the woman of *Mridu kosta* (having purgation with mild dose) having received oleation and sudation are the causes of all menstrual disorders. According to *Acharya Vagabhata*⁹ and *Acharya Sushruta*¹⁰. *Vata* and *Pitta doshas* are responsible for *Kshinartava*. Commentator *Dalhana* opined that the physiological process responsible for *Artava Utpatti* is described as ‘*Avrita Margatva*’ of *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha*.” Given the preceding references, the vitiation of *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* can be mentioned as a *Nidana* of ‘*Artavakshaya*.’

Purvarupa: It is not described in *Ayurvedic* classics.

Rupa:

In consideration of the definition of *Artavkshaya* given by *Acharya Sushruta*, the following symptoms can be taken as *Rupa*-

- I. *Yathochit kale adarshanam*: - means *Artava* does not appear at the relevant time or is delayed or Disappeared from the proper time.
- II. *Alpata*: - Menstrual blood is reduced in volume.
- III. *Yoni vedana*: - *Artava Pravrutti* is the function of *Apana Vayu*. Due to ‘*Artavakshaya*,’ vitiation of *Vata* occurs, causing ‘*Yoni vedana*,’ i.e., pain during menstruation.

Samprapti:

The *samprapti* (Etiopathogenesis) of *Artavakshaya* involves two mechanisms.

1. *Marga avarodha Janya*
2. *Dhatu kshaya Janya*

In *Marga avarodha janya artavakshaya*, there is involvement of *Kapha* or *Vata* alone or *Vata Kapha* together. According to *Sushruta*, *Vata Kapha* are the factors causing *Avarana* to *Artava vaha srotas*—the vitiated *Doshas* cause *Agnivaishamyam*. Due to impairment of *Agni*, improper digestion of victuals results in engenderment of *Ama annarasa*, which may further augment vitiated *Kapha*. This ultimately results in the hampering of *Apana vata* and the transportation of *Artava*. In *Dhatu kshaya janya Artavakshaya*, the vitiation of *doshas* affects *Rasadhatu* & its *Dhatwagni*—vitiated *Rasa Dhatu* and *Rasagni Mandya* cause *Srotodusti*. *Uttarottara Dhatvagnimandya* and *Uttarottara* vitiation of *Dhatu*s ensure the progression of the pathological events. So, there is *Rakta dhatu kshaya*, an *Anuloma kshaya*, and with the *Upadhatu* of *Rasa*, *Artava* gets vitiated, leading to *Artava dushti*. As there is a *Kshaya* of *Rakta dhatu*, *Pitta kshaya* also occurs, resulting in *Artavakshaya*. *Sushruta* has considered *Rakta* as *dosha* and mentioned it as a vitiating factor of *Artavakshaya*.

Samprati ghataka

Dosha - *Vata* (*Apana* and *Vyana*), *Pitta* (*Pachaka*), *Kapha* (*Kledaka*)

Dushya - *Rasa*, *Rakta*

Upadhatu - *Artava*

Agni - *Jathragnimandya*, *Dhatvagnimandya*

Srotas - Rasavaha, Artavavaha

Srotodusti - Sang

Adhithana – Garbhashaya

Sadhyasadhya:

In *Ayurvedic* classics, there is no description of the prognosis of *Artavakshaya*, but the prognosis of *Kshinartava* is described in *Artava Dushti*. *Acharya Sushruta* explained the treatment of *Artavakshaya*, which can be interpreted as either *Sadhya* or *Kashta-Sadhya Vyadhi*.

Chikitsa:

Chikitsa is *Samprapti Vighatana*. In *Artavakshaya*, there is vitiation or *Vruddhi* of *Vata* and *Kapha* along with *Kshaya* of *Pitta*, *Rasa* and *Rakta Dhatu* due to *Agnimandya*. Hence, all these *Samprapti Ghataka* should be considered to treat *Artavakshaya*. *Nidan parivarjan*: -Eradication of the causative factor is the first primary treatment of all disorders. Also, there are two types of *chikitsa*, *Shamana* and *Samshodhana*, which work on vitiated *Doshas* and establish the physiology of *Sharira*. *Acharya Charaka* described all gynaecological disorders in *Chikitsasthana* as '*Yoni Vyapada*'. *Yoni* does not spoil without *Vata*, so the treatment must first be '*Vatashamaka*'. '*Vayu*' is also *Pravartaka* of other *Doshas*, so regulation of *Vata Dosha* may indirectly affect another *Dosha*. According to *Acharya Sushruta*, *Artavakshaya* should be treated by use of purifying measures & *Agneya Dravyas*. *Agneya dravya* are used as they are *Pittavraddhikar*. By this, *Agni* is stimulated, which helps in the digestion of *Ama* and the formation of *Ahara Rasa*, which later forms the *Ras dhatu*, from which the *Artava* is formed. *Dalhana* explained *Shodhana* should be done by *Vamana* and not by *Virechana*¹¹. Because *Virechana* reduces *Pitta*, that reduces *Artava*. *Vamana* eliminates *Saumya Dhatu-Kapha*, resulting in a relative increase in *Agneya dhatu* of the body; consequently, the quantity of *Artava* increases. *Acharya Chakrapani* instructed that both *Vaman* and *Virechana karma* can be used to manage *Artavakshaya* because they clear upward and downward directed protasis (channels), respectively. *Acharya Kashyap* has mentioned that it is an *Anuvasan Sadhya Vyadhi*¹². In all disorders of *Artava*, using *Lasuna*, *Shatpushpa*, and *Shatavari*¹³ is beneficial.

According to *Acharya Charak* '*Basti Vata haranam*'¹⁴ and *Vata* plays a vital role in all types of *yonis roga*. So, *Basti* treatment is mentioned as the best treatment for menstrual disorders of women in *Ayurvedic* literature.

Acharya Vagbhata recommended *Pitta Vriddhikara* and *Rakta Vriddhikara Chikitsa* in *Artavakshaya*.

Pathyapathya:

Pathya15,16

- *Shali* rice and *Yava* etc. *Annam*, *Madya*, and *Mas-ham* can increase *Pitta*, which is beneficial.
- Fish, *Kulattha*, *Kanji*, *Takra*, *Sura* etc. be used in diet.
- *Lasuna* is beneficial.
- Light exercise, yoga

Apathya15,16

- *Ahara* is capable of aggravating *Nidanas*, which are contraindicated.
- *Diwaswap*
- *Ratri Jagarana*
- Excessive Exercise.
- Stress

CONCLUSION

In *Artavakshaya*, due to the vitiation of *Tridosha*, i.e. *Kapha Vata Vriddhi* and *Pitta Kshaya*, *Agni* is in *Mandavastha* at *Koshtha* and *Dhatu* level, which leads to *Ama*.

Utapatti, *Rasa Dhatu Dushti*, *Kapha Avarana* to *Vata Dosha* and *Artava Vaha Srotorodha*. The administration of *Shamana Aushadhi* in the form of *Agneya dravyas* and *Shodhana* procedures like *Vamana*, *Virechana*, and *Basti* as per *Dosha Dushya Sammurchhana* yields optional results in *Artavakshaya*.

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Source of Support: Nil

Conflict of Interest: None Declared

How to cite this URL:Sheetal Verma et al: A conceptual study on Artavkshaya. International Ayurvedic Medical Journal {online} 2024 {cited March 2024} Available from: http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/230_234.pdf