



Review Article

MANAGEMENT OF PRIMARY DYSMENORRHOEA WITH *GANDHARVAHASTADI KASHAYAM*

Vidhya Vijayan^{1*}, Harihara Prasad Rao², Rachana.C³

*1PG Scholar, ²Professor & HOD, ³Professor, Department of Rasashastra and Bhaishajya Kalpana, Karnataka Ayurveda Medical College, Mangaluru, Karnataka, India.

Article info

Article History:

Received: 21-06-2024

Accepted: 12-07-2024

Published: 10-08-2024

KEYWORDS:

Dysmenorrhoea,
Primary
Dysmenorrhoea,
Kashtarthava.

ABSTRACT

Menstruation pain is literally defined as dysmenorrhoea. It can cause lower abdominal pain and discomfort and usually happens right before or during the menstrual cycle. Primary dysmenorrhoea occurs frequently. It is the most common gynaecological issue affecting young women, especially those in their teens. According to Ayurveda, dysmenorrhoea and ailments like *Udavartini Yonivyapad* or *kashtartava* may be connected. *Vata* is prevalent in this *Tridoshaja vyadhi*. In addition to the disruption of *Rasa Dhatu*, there is an imbalance of *Apana Vayu*. In contemporary medicine, antispasmodics, analgesics, prostaglandin synthesis inhibitors, hormone treatment, and other medications are frequently used to treat primary dysmenorrhoea. In order to effectively reduce dysmenorrhoea, Ayurveda suggests adhering to *Ritucharya* and *Dinacharya*, as well as modifying food and practicing yoga on a regular basis, including *Asanas*, *Pranayama*, and meditation and the use of *Samana aushada*, which can reduce *Vata* along with *Snehana* (oleation), *Swedana* (sudation), and *Vasti* (enema). Ayurvedic medicine seeks to achieve *Vatanulomana*. Therefore, Ayurveda treats primary dysmenorrhoea with a more comprehensive approach.

INTRODUCTION

Derivation

Dysmenorrhoea refers to pain in the lower abdominal and pelvic areas during menstruation. The term is derived from 'dys' (difficult, defective), 'men' (moon, lunar cycle), and 'rrhoea' (flow or discharge). This pain can begin before menstruation starts, continue during the bleeding, and persist for several days afterward.^[1]

The menstrual cycle is a normal physiological function. This monthly cycle is regulated by female hormones. The word '*Arthava*' in Ayurveda refers to menstrual blood. During her fertile years, from menarche to menopause, every woman with a healthy reproductive system releases *Arthava* once a month. A regular menstrual cycle promotes a woman's physical and emotional health and aids in the cleansing of the body. Menstrual blood must be pure, healthy, and devoid of *dosha* vitiation in order for this to occur.

Ayurveda mentions that *Shuddha arthava* to be '*Nispiccha Daha Arti*' i.e. normal menstruation is devoid of slimy discharges, burning sensation and pain.^[2]

Dysmenorrhea is painful menstruation along with abdominal cramps. Primary dysmenorrhoea affects over 70% of teenagers and 30-50% of menstruating women.^[3] The menstrual cramps are severe enough to prevent a person from doing day-to-day activities. It is classified into two types: primary dysmenorrhoea and secondary dysmenorrhoea. Primary dysmenorrhea is not associated with any pelvic pathology and is often linked to prostaglandin production whereas secondary dysmenorrhea results from underlying pelvic conditions like endometriosis, fibroids, or pelvic inflammatory disease. Primary dysmenorrhoea is associated with lower abdominal pain, back pain, nausea, and headaches which occur before or during menstrual periods.^[4] In Ayurvedic texts, *Kashtartava*, or painful menstruation, isn't categorized as a separate disease. Instead, various conditions where menstrual pain occurs are mentioned, such as *Kukshishoola* (abdominal pain), *Vatala yoni* (vaginal disorders), and *Udavartini Yonivyapad* (specific types of vaginal disorders).^[5] The term *Kashtartava* is derived from '*Kashta*' meaning painful and '*Artava*' referring to menstrual flow. Thus, *Kashtartava* can be interpreted as '*Kashtthena Muchyati*

Access this article online	
Quick Response Code	
	https://doi.org/10.47070/ijapr.v12i7.3322
Published by Mahadev Publications (Regd.) publication licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)	

Iti Kashtartava', where *Kashthena*^[6] refers to the condition of great difficulty and *Muchyati*^[7] means shedding or expulsion. Thus, *Kashtartava* can be understood as the condition where menstrual flow is expelled with significant difficulty and accompanied by pain.

According to Acharya Charaka, all gynecological disorders, including dysmenorrhea is caused due to imbalance of *Vata Dosha*.^[8] This imbalance typically arises from unhealthy lifestyle choices and the suppression of natural bodily urges.^[9] He explains that when natural urges are suppressed (*Vegavarodha*), *Apana Vayu* becomes aggravated, it reverses its normal direction, and occupies the entire vaginal canal (*Yoni*). This reversed *Apana Vayu* then pushes menstrual blood (*Raja*) upwards, resulting in pain and discomfort during menstruation.

Primary dysmenorrhea isn't life threatening, but it greatly affects a woman's daily life. Severe cases can reduce efficiency of a woman and contribute to mood swings, feelings of loneliness and reduced engagement in social activities.^[10]

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

- To describe characteristics of normal menstruation according to Ayurveda.
- To categorize and describe concepts relevant to dysmenorrhoea or *Kashtartava* from Ayurvedic classics.
- To describe the effect of holistic line of treatment for Primary dysmenorrhea with *Gandharvahastadi Kashyam*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The review is based on various classical Ayurvedic texts. Along with this, an extensive literature search on the web was also conducted using keywords such as *Kashtartava*, dysmenorrhoea, menstrual pain, menstruation etc to gather relevant published data.

Characteristics of *Shuddha Artava*^[11]

The characteristic of normal menstrual blood is described in Ayurveda classics as '*Shuddha artava*'. This helps in identifying the hormonal status of a women. *Shuddha artava* plays a crucial role in maintaining women's healthy reproductive life. According to Ayurvedic literature, the characteristics of normal menstruation are as follows:

Masaat – Which comes once in a month

- *Nispiccha daha arti* – Which is devoid of slimy discharges, burning sensation and pain
- *Pancha ratri anubandha* – Duration of bleeding is upto 5 days
- *Na eva ati bahu artavam* – Menstrual blood is not excessive

- *Na ati alpam artavam* – Menstrual blood is not scanty
- *Gunja phala savarnam* – Colour of menstrual blood resembles fruit of *Gunja*
- *Padma sannibham* – Resembles colour of red lotus flower
- *Alaktaka sannibham / Laksha rasa upamam* – Colour of red juice of lac.
- *Indragopa sankasham* – Resembling the colour of red velvet mites
- *Shasha asruk pratimam* – Resembles the colour of rabbit's blood
- *Vaso na viranjayet / Dhautam cha virajyamanam* – Doesn't stain the clothes or can be easily washed off.
- *Gandha* (smell): There should be no *Durgandha* (foul odor), it should have a natural, non-offensive smell
- *Anavrita* (regularity): It should occur at *Niyata Kala* (regular monthly intervals) without significant *Vilamba* (delays) or *Ayatha Kala* (irregularities).

Ayurvedic concept of pain related to *Kashtartava* [12]

Ayurveda states that vitiation of *Vata Dosha* is the cause of *Kashtartava*. The following are the reasons for painful menstruation:

- 1. *Vata Dosha* Vitiation:** *Vata Dosha* governs the body's mobility and fluidity. Menstruation discomfort is caused the vitiation of *Apana Vayu* (form of *Vata*).
- 2. *Vegavarodha* (suppression of natural urges):** When natural urges in the body are suppressed, *Apana Vayu* becomes aggravated and causes it to move in the reverse direction.
- 3. *Pratiloma Gati* (reverse movement of *Apana Vayu*):** When *Apana Vayu* is irritated, it goes upward rather than downward as usual, causing numerous disruptions in the abdomen and pelvic areas.
- 4. *Sanga* (Blockage):** The menstrual flow becomes blocked (*Sanga*) due to the *Pratiloma Gati* of *Apana Vayu* (*Rajasrava*). This obstruction puts pressure on the lower abdomen and pelvic area, causing pain and discomfort.
- 5. Additional Factors:** In addition to *Vata Dosha*, *Kashtartava* may also be influenced by *Pitta Dosha*, which produces heat and inflammation, and *Kapha Dosha*, which produces heaviness.

Management of Primary Dysmenorrhoea

Ayurveda advocates both *Shodhana* (purificatory therapy) and *Shamana* (palliative therapy), along with *Pathya Ahara* (diet) and *Vihara* (lifestyle), according to the severity of the condition.

Pathya Ahara (diet)

Eat healthy, warm & fresh food

Keep hydrated

Avoid spicy, oily, processed and junk foods

Reduce white sugar intake

Avoid caffeine

Avoid drinking alcohol

Pathya Vihara (lifestyle)

Regular exercise – Minimum thrice a week

Sound sleep – Minimum 6-8 hours

Avoid smoking

Practicing Yoga – Helps to strengthen the body.

Ushtrasana, *Bhadrasana*, *Gomukhasana*, and *Vajrasana* have pain- Relieving effects.

Practicing Meditation daily – Helps to strengthen and relax the mind

Shodhana Chikitsa

Purificatory therapy is advised according to the severity of the condition. Treatments that balance *Vata* is very effective in Dysmenorrhoea. *Panchakarma* therapies like *Uttarbasti*, *Anuvasana*, and *Matrabasti* specifically target *Vata*-related menstrual problems.

Role of Gandharvahastadi Kashayam in Dysmenorrhoea [13]

Gandharvahastadi Kashayam is a unique formulation mentioned in *Sahasrayogam*. It is *Vata shamaka* (alleviates *Vata*), *Agni baladayaka* (strengthens digestive fire), *Ruchikara* (improves taste) and *Malashodaka* (cleanses bowels). This *Yoga* is *Tikta Kashaya Rasa* and *Ushnavirya*.

The ingredients of *Gandharvahastadi Kashayam* are:

Gandharvahastha (Eranda): Ricinus Communis

Chirabilva: Holoptelea Integrifolia

Hutasha (Chitraka): Plumbago Zeylanica

Shunti: Zingiber Officinalis

Haritaki: Terminalia Chebula

Punarnava: Boerhavia Diffusa

Yavasa (Dusparsha): Alhagi Pseudalhagi

Bhumithala (Musali): Phyllanthus Niruri

All these drugs are *Deepana* in nature. In *Kashtartava* or dysmenorrhoea the *Agni* (digestive fire) gets vitiated to *Dosha* imbalance. This *yoga* helps to restore the balance of *Agni*. The drugs like *Shunti*, *Haritaki* and *Eranda*, have *Sulaprasamana* (alleviates pain) property which helps to relieve pain associated with dysmenorrhoea. *Eranda*, *Chirabilva*, *Haritaki* and *Punarnava* are *Shophagna* (reduces inflammation) in nature. *Chirabilva*, *Sunti*, *Haritaki* and *Musali* have *Anulomana* properties. This helps to restore the imbalance of *Apana vayu* which occurs in *Kashtartava*. The *Rasayana* action of *Citraka*, *Punarnava* and *Haritaki* helps to regain strength and nourishes the body. *Eranda* is also a highly efficacious *Vayastapana*

drug. The *Anupana* used for the *yoga* are *Saindhava* and *Guda* which also helps to restore *Apana vata vaigunya*.

DISCUSSION

Dysmenorrhoea is a common menstrual problem that greatly affects women's quality of life, work productivity, and health. Ayurvedic texts describe it as a symptom of various diseases, primarily linked to an imbalance of *Vata Dosha*. As per Modern medicine, dysmenorrhoea is due to the overproduction of uterine prostaglandins, leading to increased uterine contractions and pain. Treatment is usually done using non-steroidal, anti-inflammatory drugs to manage pain and inflammation. Ayurveda recommends normalizing *Vata* first, followed by balancing *Pitta* and *Kapha*, using treatments like medicated enemas, oils, and ghee. *Gandharvahastadi Kashyam* mentioned in Ayurvedic texts has both anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties. This is thus an effective medicine for primary dysmenorrhoea.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda considers primary dysmenorrhoea a result of *Dosha* imbalance that can be managed through a holistic approach. This includes a *Dosha*-specific diet, herbal supplements, regular exercise, consistent routines, *yoga*, meditation, and nourishing the body. *Gandharvahastadi Kashyam* mentioned in *Sahasrayogam* with its properties like *Vata shamana*, *Shooloahara* etc. is effective in relieving symptoms associated with primary dysmenorrhoea.

REFERENCES

1. Dysmenorrhoea Period pain: Symptoms, Diagnosis & Treatment. Intituto Bernabeu. [Internet]. Available from: <https://11nq.com/FA1kz>
2. Acharya YT. Charaka Samhita of Agnivesha. 5th ed. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 2001; 276
3. Dysmenorrhoea. American Family Physician. [Internet]. [cited Aug 2021]. Available from: <https://encr.pw/Wn1Hl>
4. Dutta DC. Textbook of Gynaecology. 6th ed. New Delhi: Jaypee Brothers Medical Publishers; 2013; 88-190
5. Tiwari P. Ayurvediya Prasutitantra Evam Striroga. Varanasi Chaukhambha Orientalia; 2002;139
6. Monier William M. Sanskrit- English Dictionary. Varanasi: Bharatiya Granth Niketan; 1960; 266
7. Vamana Shivaram Apte. Hindi-English Dictionary. Pune: Education Society's Press; 1933
8. Acharya YT. Agnivesha. Charaka Samhita. Varanasi Chaukhambha Surabharati Prakashan; 2002; 356
9. Shastri K, Chaturvedi G, Upadhyay Y, Sastri RD, Pandey G. Agnivesha Charaka Samhita. Varanasi Chaukhamba Sanskrit Series; 1998; 843

10. Prevalence of Dysmenorrhoea and its effect on the quality of life of Female undergraduate students in Nigeria. Journal of Endometriosis and Uterine Disorders. [Internet]. [cited March 2024]. Available from: <https://shorturl.at/yqVFL>
11. Murthy KRS. Ashtanga Hridaya. 1st ed. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Surbharti Prakashan; 1997; 332-34
12. Murthy S. Sushruta Samhita. 1st ed. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Vishvabharati; 1991; 150-55
13. Dr. Sahadevan CD. Oushadha Yoga for Roga. 1st ed. Ernakulam: Sterling Print House Pvt. Ltd; 2022; 11

Cite this article as:

Vidhya Vijayan, Harihara Prasad Rao, Rachana.C. Management of Primary Dysmenorrhoea with Gandharvahastadi Kashayam. International Journal of Ayurveda and Pharma Research. 2024;12(7):31-34.

<https://doi.org/10.47070/ijapr.v12i7.3322>

Source of support: Nil, Conflict of interest: None Declared

***Address for correspondence**

Dr. Vidhya Vijayan

PG Scholar,
Department of Rasashastra and
Bhaishajya Kalpana,
Karnataka Ayurveda Medical
College, Mangaluru, Karnataka,
India.

Email id: vidhyaajgd@gmail.com

Disclaimer: IJAPR is solely owned by Mahadev Publications - dedicated to publish quality research, while every effort has been taken to verify the accuracy of the content published in our Journal. IJAPR cannot accept any responsibility or liability for the articles content which are published. The views expressed in articles by our contributing authors are not necessarily those of IJAPR editor or editorial board members.

