

Concept of *Asrigdara* in *Ayurveda*

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Abstract

Menorrhagia is a commonest gynecological problem characterized by cyclic bleeding in excessive amount or duration or both among 30% of women in reproductive age.¹ Menorrhagia is defined as cyclical bleeding which is either excessive in amount or duration or both and occurs at normal intervals.² Menorrhagia describes menstrual bleeding lasting for longer than 7 days or menstrual blood loss exceeding 80ml from normal secretory endometrium after normal ovulation.³ In Ayurvedic classics, Menorrhagia is termed as *Asrigdara*, means excessive discharge of blood per vaginum.⁴ *Asrik* means blood or menstrual blood and *Dara* means *Deerana* or excessive discharge. Hence the disease in which there is excessive discharge of blood during menstruation is known as *Asrigdara*.⁵ Due to *Pradirana* (excessive excretion) of *Raja* (Menstrual blood) it is named as *Pradara*, and because there is *Dirana* (excessive excretion) of *Asrik* (Menstrual blood) hence it is known as *Asrigdara*.⁶ All types of *Asrigdara* causes body ache, pain in lower abdomen, excessive haemorrhage, feebleness, fainting, giddiness, thirst, burning sensation, delirium, pallor, drowsiness and other disorders caused by *Vata*. Since, *Asrigdara* is mainly due to vitiation of *Vata* and *Pitta doshas*; hence the treatment should be based on the use of drugs which are having *Vata* and *Pitta shamak* properties.

Keywords: *Asrigdara*, *Yonivyapada*, Dysfunctional Uterine Bleeding.

Introduction

Ayurveda is one of the most ancient systems of medicine in the world. It advocates a complete promotive, preventive and curative system of medicine. It is divided into eight branches amongst which "*Kaumarbhritya*" is one of them. Under this branch all the obstetrics and gynaecological and paediatrics condition have been dealt.⁷

Menstruation is a function peculiar to women and high apes. Normal menstruation may be defined as cyclic physiological shedding of endometrium associated with uterine bleeding occurring at approximately 28 days interval between the menarche (onset of menstruation) and the menopause (cessation of menstruation). The duration of menstruation (mens) is about 4-5 days and the amount of blood loss is estimated to be 20 to 80 ml with an average of 35 ml.⁸ Menstrual dysfunction is the cause of discomfort, trouble and disruption of a healthy life which affects many millions of women in both the developed and developing countries. When normal

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menstrual bleeding pattern altered in context of duration, amount, colour and cycle this condition is called *Artavadushti*. *Asrigdara* is also a form of *Artavadushti*. *Asrigdara* (Menorrhagia) can be occur due to many reasons which includes altered menstrual cycle, emotional stress, lack of proper nutrition, pregnancy, use of medications including birth control pills and sexual arousal.

In Ayurvedic classics, all the gynecological disorders comes under *Yonivyapad*. Most of the *Yonivyapad* have characteristic properties of *Asrigdara* (Menorrhagia) such as *Lohitkshara yonivyapad*, *Raktyoni*, *Putraghni yonivyapad*, *Asrija yonivyapad*. *Asrigdara* (Menorrhagia) is not a disease, it is a symptom of many diseases.

The word *Asrigdara* has been described in *Brihatrayee* i.e. *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita* and *Astanga Hridaya*. For excessive bleeding per vaginum the word *Asrigdara* has described in *Sharangadhara Samhita*, *Bhava Prakash*, *Yoga Ratnakar* and in commentary on *Charaka Samhita* by *Chakrapani*. According to *Acharya Charaka*, the disease in which there is excessive flow of *raja* is called *Asrigdara*.⁹ According to *Acharya Sushruta* abundant and/or prolonged menstruation during menstrual and/or intermenstrual period and different from the features of normal menstrual blood is known as *Asrigdara*.¹⁰ In *Asrigdara*, *Acharya Sushruta* and *Madhava* have noted *angamard*, *vedana*, debilitation, faintness, mental confusion, thirst, dyspnoea, feeling of darkness, burning sensation, convulsion, delirium, anemia, drowsiness and disorders of *Vata*.^{10,11}

Nidana (Etiology) of *Asrigdara*: In *Ayurvedic classics* different *Acharyas* have described different causes of *Asrigdara* in their texts. *Asrigdara* is the disease of vitiated *Rakta* and *Pittavrita Apana Vayu*.¹²

In Ayurvedic texts etiology of *Asrigdara* are dietetic, psychological and due to abnormal habits. *Acharya Charaka* described only dietetic causes which produce emaciation or obesity and pelvic congestion. *Acharya Madhav*, *Bhavprakash* and *Yoga Ratnakara* included *Viharjanya* and psychological causes, which produce chronic inflammation and vasomotor disturbances, which causes abnormal uterine haemorrhage. These causes are described in details below:

- 1. *Aharjanya* causes :** Excessive *amla*, *lavana* and *katu ahara* causes *vidaha* (burning sensation) and fatty meats, *krishara* (Rice cooked with pulses), *payasa*(rice cooked with milk), curd, wine, *shukta*, *adhyasana*, *ajirnasana*, *viruddha ahara* etc. vitiate *Pitta* in turn *Rakta* and already vitiated *Vata* mixed with vitiated *Rakta*, increase its volume which reaches in *Rajovaha siras* of uterus and ultimately increases menstrual blood.¹³
 - *Lavana ahara* (salty foods) vitiate *Pitta* and *Pitta* vitiate *Rakta* and may produce internal haemorrhage.
 - *Katu ahara* (pungent foods) produces *Vatika* disorders it vitiates *Vata* and *Pitta*. *Katu rasa* dissolves blood clots.
 - *Amla ahara* (sour foods) vitiate *Pitta* and *Pitta* vitiate *Rakta*. If *amla rasa* is used in excess it aggravates *Pitta*.

- *Shukta ahara* irritates *Rakta*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*.
 - Fatty meats of domestic and aquatic animals are heavy and hot. They aggravate *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*.
 - Curd has *Amla vipaka* and *Ushna virya*, so it vitiates *Vata* and *Pitta*. *Amla rasa* dissolves blood clots.
 - All wines have *Amla rasa*, *Ushna virya* and *Amla vipaka*. All these factors vitiate *Pitta*.
 - *Adhyasana* is to take meal after some time of taking meal, it causes *ajirna*.
 - *Ajirna* (Indigestion) is caused by *agnimandhya* which leads to improper digestion and further formation of *ama*. This *ama* is also called *amavisha* and works like endotoxin. These toxins combine with *Pitta*, produces *Paittika* disorders.
 - *Krishara* is heavy and *vistambhi*. It aggravates *Pitta* and *Kapha*.
2. **Viharjanya causes** : Riding on animals, long distance walking, excessive sexual intercourse, frequent abortion, any kind of trauma, exhaustion due to any cause, sleeping in day time, carrying heavy load are the causes of *Pradara*.

Abortion (*Garbhapata*) can produce inflammation of reproductive system. It is one of the causes of abnormal uterine bleeding.

3. **Psychological factors** : According to *Acharya Madhava*, *Shoka* is also the cause of *Asrigdara*.

Grief influences women's psychology, which in turn may influence ovarian hormones via hypothalamus, pituitary and ovarian pathway.

Emotional and nervous disorders are as important in causing excessive uterine bleeding. Anxiety, tension, change in environment, marital upset and over work are common factors. These factors operate possibly through endocrine system, which influences hypothalamus, but more probably through autonomic nervous system which controls blood vessels supplying to the pelvic organs.

Samprapti (Pathogenesis) of *Asrigdara* : According to *Acharya Charaka*, the woman who intakes excessive sour, salty, pungent etc. food her *Vata* with *Rakta* gets aggravated and vitiated. This vitiated *Vata* with *Rakta* increases in its amount due to above causes and then *Raja* carrying vessels of the uterus, this increases immediately the amount of *Raja* due to its mixture with increased blood; because of increase in amount of blood it named as *Asrigdara*. Since in this condition excessive blood is discharged hence it is known as *Pradara*.

According to *Acharya Bhela* if body blood goes to abnormal passage, the woman suffer from *Pradara*.¹⁴

Madhava Nidana, *Bhavprakasha* and *Yoga Ratnakara* have mentioned that use of incompatible diet and wine, eating before the previous meal is digested, indigestion, abortion, excessive coitus, riding, emaciation, grief, walking, weight lifting, trauma and day sleeping are the causes of *Asrigdara*.^{15,16}

Samanya lakshan (General clinical features) of Asrigdara : According to *Acharya Charaka*, general clinical features of *Asrigdara* is presence of excessive blood during menstruation. *Charaka* also describes 4 types of *Asrigdara* and their individual *lakshan* and *chikitsa* depending upon the *doshik* involvements.¹⁷

Acharya Sushruta describes that when menstruation comes in excess amount or for prolonged period or both in normal cycle or in intermenstrual period and also in scanty amount for a short duration which is different from the features of normal menstrual blood or which denotes the *lakshanas* of specific *doshas* as described in *Shonita Varniya Adhaya* is known as *Asrigdara*.¹⁸

Generally all types of *Asrigdara* are associated with *Angamarda* (body ache) and *Vedana* (pain). If the disease persists for longer duration, it leads to *Bhrama* (giddiness), *Murchha* (unconsciousness), *Dourbalya* (weakness), *Tama* (darkness in front of eyes), *Daha* (burning sensation), *Trishna* (excessive thirst), *Pralapa* (irrelevant talks), *Tandra* (drowsiness), *Panduta* (anemia), and various other *Vatika* disorders.¹⁹

Acharya Vagbhata describes the excessive bleeding during menstrual cycle or intermenstrual period is the *lakshana* of *Asrigdara*.²⁰ *Bhavprakasha*, *Madhava Nidana* and *Yogratnakara* have also explained that body ache and pain is present in all types of *Asrigdara*.

Classification of Asrigdara : According to *Acharya Charaka*, *Asrigdara* has been classified into four types i.e. *Vataja*, *Pittaja*, *Kaphaja* and *Sannipataja*. *Acharya Sushruta* has not given any classification for *Asrigdara* but mentioned all types of *Asrigdara* along with their general clinical features. Most of *Acharyas* have mentioned four types of *Asrigdara* in their classical texts-

1. *Vataja Asrigdara*
2. *Pittaja Asrigdara*
3. *Kaphaja Asrigdara*
4. *Sannipataja Asrigdara*

(1) Vataja Asrigdara- According to *Acharya Charaka*, using the *ruksha ahara vihara* vitiates the *Vayu*, which then carries *Rakta* and gives rise to the *Vataja* form of *Asrigdara*. Menstrual blood that has been expelled in this situation is frothy, thin, rough, blackish or reddish in colour, or resembles washing of a *Palasha* flower, and it may or may not be painful. This *Vayu* causes extreme discomfort in the pelvis, sacral region, back, groin, and cardiac region.

Blood vitiated with *Vata dosha* has been described as frothy, reddish or blackish in colour, rough, thin, flows swiftly, does not coagulate, has an after taste called *kashaya*, smells like iron, and is cold, according to *Sushruta* and *Vagbhata*.

According to *Madhava Nidana*, *Bhavprakasha*, and *Yogratnakara*, this type of *Asrigdara* is characterised by rough, reddish, foamy menstrual blood that is discharged frequently in little quantities and is linked to a variety of *Vatika*-like pains.

(2) Pittaja Asrigdara- According to *Acharya Charaka*, using sour, salty, hot, and alkaline items excessively might causes *Pradara*. Menstrual blood in this is hot, blue, yellow, or blackish in colour, occurs in copious amounts repeatedly and is painful. It produces burning, redness, thirst, mental confusion, fever, and giddiness.

Menstrual blood that has been vitiated by *Pitta*, according to *Acharya Sushruta* and *Acharya Vagbhata* can turn blue, yellow, green, blackish, or resemble water that has been mixed with smoke, *rasanjana*, or cow's urine. It can also smell musty or fishy and has a bitter flavour that ants and flies don't like but it does not coagulate because it is *ushna*.

According to *Madhav Nidana*, *Bhav Prakasha*, and *Yogratnakara*, in *Pittaja Asrigdara* the menstrual blood is blue, yellow, black, or red in colour, gush of hot blood comes frequently with power, and is characterized by burning and pricking pains etc.

(3) Kaphaja Asrigdara- According to *Acharya Charaka*, excessive ingestion of *guru ahara vihara* and other similar substances vitiates the *Kapha* which then creates *Pradara*. Menstrual blood that is ejected in this situation is discharged with only minor pain and is slimy, pale, heavy, cold, mixed with mucus, and thick. There are also additional symptoms including coughing, anorexia, nausea, dyspnoea, and vomiting. *Chakrapani* agreed that intermenstrual bleeding and *Kaphaja Asrigdara* characteristics were present in the *Kaphaja yonivyapada*.

According to *Acharya Sushruta*, *Kapha*-vitiated blood resembles water mixed with red ochre and is unctuous, cold, thick, and slimy. It excretes extremely slowly and coagulates like a muscle.²¹

Acharya Vagbhata who accepted *Acharya Sushruta* point of view, added that the fluid has a pale appearance like *Kovidara* flower, becomes clotted in the form of fibres, stops flowing at the site of wound opening, tastes salty, and smells like fat.²²

Excreted blood mixed with *ama* is described as being slightly slimy, pale, and resembling washing of a rice plant by *Madhava Nidana*, *Bhava Prakasha*, and *Yogratnakara*. Pain has been mentioned in the *Madhukosha* commentary, while *Bhavaprakasha* mentioned comparatively more bleeding.²³

(4) Sannipataja Asrigdara- *Acharya Charaka* describes that in *Sannipataja Asrigdara* all three *dosha*'s clinical characteristics are present.²⁴ When severely ill and anemic woman consumes diet capable of aggravating all the three *doshas*, then her excessively aggravated *Vayu* withholding *Kapha*, which is already burnt due to fire of *Pitta*, is foul smelling, slimy, yellow and has acquired opposite properties, discharges is through the vaginal passage, along with this it is also discharged with force of *vasa* (fat) and *meda* (muscle fat) burnt with *Pitta*, thus simulating *ghrita*, marrow of muscle fat. The woman who has such discharges and who also experiences persistent thirst, burning, fever, anaemia, and weakness is incurable.

According to *Acharya Sushruta*, blood that has been vitiated by *Sannipataja* has the characteristics of all three *doshas*, appears *kanji* like colour, and smells bad. The ejected blood

at *Tridoshaja Asrigdara* smells bad, looks like bone marrow, and has colours like honey, *ghrita*, and *Harital*.²⁵

Treatment : Principle of treatment of *Asrigdara* has described under following headings-

- *Nidana parivarjana*
 - *Dosha shamana*
 - *Dosha shodhana*
 - Specific treatment for *Asrigdara*
1. ***Nidana parivarjana-*** *Nidana parivarjana* is the main principle of treatment which includes identification of cause of particular disease and steps of its prevention.
 2. ***Dosha shamana-*** *Shamana chikitsa* should be given according to predominance of *doshas* or in other words it is a symptomatic treatment. Various medicines are explained in *Ayurvedic classics* for the management of *Asrigdara*. Some of these medicines are listed below:
 - i. ***Churna (Powder):*** *Pushyanuga Churna, Laksha Churna with Ghrit, Salmali Pushpa Churna, Sarpunkha Root.*
 - ii. ***Vati (Tablets):*** *Kutajadi Vataka, Shilajatu Vataka, Shiva Gutika.*
 - iii. ***Kwatha (Decoctions):*** *Darvyadi Kwatha, Panchvalkala Kwatha, Ashoka Valkal Kwath/Ksheerpaka.*
 - iv. ***Aasava/Arista (Alcoholic preparations):*** *Ashokarista, Lodhrasava, Patrangasava, Madhvasava.*
 - v. ***Ghritas (Medicated Ghee):*** *Changeri Ghrita, Shalmali Ghrita, Draksha Ghrita.*
 - vi. ***Tailas (Medicated oils for external use):*** *Guduchyadi Taila, Bala Taila, Mahanarayana Taila, Chandana Bala Lakshyadi Taila.*
 - vii. ***Rasa Bhasma (Herbo mineral preparations):*** *Bola Parpati, Chandrakala Rasa, Pradarantaka Louha, Pradararipu Rasa.*
 3. ***Dosha shodhana-*** *Shodhana chikitsa* is considered as very important part of *Ayurvedic chikitsa*. *Panchakarma* should be done according to the *dosha* involved. In *Asrigdara*, *Virechana* and *Basti* has been described by *Acharyas*.
 - i. ***Virechana:*** *Acharya Kashyapa* has described the use of *Virechana* in *Asrigdara*. Since in *Asrigdara*, predominant *dosha* is *Pitta* so *Virechana* serves as the best *shodhana* therapy. Some common *ghrita* used for *Virechana* in *Asrigdara* are-
 - *Vasa Ghrita*
 - *Mahatikta Ghrita*
 - ii. ***Basti:*** Since in *Asrigdara*, *Vata dosha* is also aggravated so the use of *Basti* has been described by *Acharyas*.
 - ***Niruha basti for Asrigdara are:***
 - Kushadi Asthapana Basti*
 - Lodhradi Asthapana Basti*

Chandanadi Niruha Basti

- **Anuvasana basti for *Asrigdara* are:**

Shatapushpa Taila Basti

Madhukoshiradi Basti

4. Specific treatment for *Asrigdara*- In Ayurvedic classics various medications in the form of pastes, powders, medicated milk, *modaka*, *avaleha* etc. have been mentioned.

- Treatment on the lines of *Adhoga Raktapitta* is to be applied.
- *Asrigdara* should be treated on the lines of *Raktarshas*, *Raktatisara*, *Guhyaroga* and abortions.
- Treatment of *Asrigdara* to be done as done in case of *Raktayoni* i.e. *Rakta sthapana aushadha* to be used after giving due consideration to the association of *doshas*.

Conclusion

Asrigdara has been very close resemblance with dysfunctional uterine bleeding which is defined as excessive abnormal uterine bleeding for which no organic pathology or pelvic pathology can be found. *Asrigdara* commonly occurs in active reproductive stage. *Asrigdara* not only includes excessive bleeding during menses but it also includes the prolonged duration, shortened intermenstrual period i.e. menorrhagia, polymenorrhoea, etc. Menorrhagia is mainly occurs due to increased total bleeding surface area of endometrium and due to increased vascularity. Since, *Asrigdara* is mainly due to vitiation of *Vata* and *Pitta doshas*, so the treatment should be based on the use of drugs which are having *Vata* and *Pitta shamak* properties.

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