



PHYSIOLOGICAL ASPECT OF RAJASWALA PARICHARYA W.S.R. TO APANA VATA

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ABSTRACT **Background-** The term Rajaswala Charya in Ayurveda is an assortment of lifestyle rules and customs created especially for women during their menstrual cycle (Rajaswala). Throughout the menstrual cycle, these recommendations are meant to promote general health and wellbeing. Apana Vata, a subtype of Vata Dosha, plays a vital role in the reproductive functions of the human body. According to Ayurveda, it governs Artava Nishkramana (menstrual flow and ovulation), childbirth, and other elimination processes. Objective- This study aims to explore the physiological role of Apana Vata in Rajaswala Paricharya by drawing parallels between classical Ayurvedic concepts and contemporary scientific findings. **Material and Methods-** A comparative analysis of Ayurvedic literature and modern physiological studies was conducted to identify correlations between Apana Vata and Menstrual cycle. **Discussion-** Findings suggest that Apana Vata aligns with the functions of the neuroendocrine system, particularly in regulating reproductive physiology. Its role in menstruation, ovulation, and parturition can be associated with hormonal and autonomic control mechanisms in modern physiology. **Conclusion-** Understanding the physiological relevance of Apana Vata in the context of contemporary science may provide valuable insights for integrative approaches in gynecological health and treatment. Further interdisciplinary research may help bridge Ayurveda and modern medical science for holistic healthcare solutions.

KEYWORDS : Ayurveda, Rajaswala Paricharya, Apana Vata, Menstruation

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the ancient system of medicine, conceptualizes the human body as being composed of three fundamental components- Dosha, Dhātu, and Mala¹. Among these, Dosha govern physiological functions, Dhātu provide structural integrity and nourishment, and Mala facilitate the body's excretory processes. Vaa gati gandhanayoho ithi Dhathu. Vata is the one that having Gati or movement². The three Dosha—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha—are responsible for maintaining homeostasis, with Vata being the most significant, as it governs movement and regulates the actions of the other two Dosha. The significance of Vata Dosha in Ayurveda Kapha and Pitta, along with bodily tissues (Dhātu) and waste products (Mala), are inherently immobile. Their movement within the body depends entirely on Vata, just as clouds are carried by the wind³. Apana Vata, a subtype of Vata, is primarily located in the Pakvashaya (large intestine), Basti (urinary bladder), and reproductive organs, particularly vital as it controls the Nishkramana (elimination) processes of Mūtra (urine), Purisha (faeces), Shukra (semen), Artava (menstrual fluid and ovulation), and Garbha (foetus).

Artava, the periodical expulsion of blood through the vagina in an adult female, is a vital physiological process fundamental to the formation of Garbha (embryo). Its regularity and unobstructed flow are essential for maintaining reproductive health and ensuring a healthy progeny. In Ayurveda, Artava is regarded as an Upadhatu of Rasa Dhātu, signifying its origin from the nutritive essence of the body.

According to Charaka, normal Artava occurs monthly, lasts five days, is neither excessive nor scanty, and is free from pain, burning, or sliminess. Its color resembles jequirity seed, lotus, lac, or scarlet insect. These features indicate healthy reproductive function and balanced Dosha, essential for fertility and overall women's health⁴. Acharya Sushruta states that “the menstrual blood which resembles the blood of a rabbit or solution of lac and that which doesn't stain the cloth is greatly praised⁵.”

Apana Vata, plays a pivotal role in the regulation of the menstrual cycle through its dual actions of Dharana (retention) and Nishkramana (expulsion). Anatomically localized in the pelvic region, Apana Vata governs all downward physiological processes, including menstruation, urination, defecation, and parturition. During the premenstrual phase, the Dharana karma of Apana Vata is responsible for the retention and stabilization of the endometrial lining (Rajah) within the uterine cavity. This function ensures that the uterine environment remains conducive for potential implantation or, in the

absence of fertilization, prepares for cyclic shedding. Impairment of this retentive mechanism may result in pathologies such as Early menstruation, intermenstrual bleeding, or menorrhagia, which correlate with the Ayurvedic conditions of Asrigdara.

With the onset of menstruation, Apana Vata transitions to its Nishkramana Karma, facilitating the physiological expulsion of the endometrial lining through the vaginal canal. This expulsive function is essential for the cyclical clearance of the uterine contents, thereby completing the monthly reproductive cycle. Disruptions in Nishkramana Karma are often reflected in clinical presentations such as oligomenorrhea (Alpartava), dysmenorrhea (Kashtartava), or amenorrhea (Nashta Rajah). The synchronized function of both Dharana and Nishkramana is critical for normal menstrual physiology. Factors such as dietary irregularities, psychological stress, sedentary lifestyle, or excessive physical strain can disturb Apana Vata balance, leading to functional menstrual disorders. Therapeutic approaches in Ayurveda aim to restore the homeostasis of Apana Vata through interventions like Basti therapy, administration of Vata Shamaka Aushdhi, regulated nutrition, and lifestyle modifications, aligning traditional Ayurvedic principles with a holistic understanding of reproductive health.

This study aims to analyze the role of Apana Vata in female reproductive physiology, particularly in menstruation and ovulation, by drawing parallels with modern scientific perspectives.

While modern science attributes menstruation to the withdrawal of hormones (estrogen and progesterone), another crucial aspect is the vasospasm of spiral arteries, which leads to endometrial necrosis and shedding. The exact cause of this arterial spasm remains unclear, but studies suggest a significant role of the autonomic nervous system, including sympathetic and parasympathetic innervation. The sympathetic nervous system regulates uterine vasoconstriction, while hormonal fluctuations influence the uterine response to autonomic stimulation. This is evident in conditions like dysmenorrhea, where increased sympathetic activity leads to excessive uterine contractions and pain. Menstrual disorders are increasingly prevalent among Indian women. PCOS affects 3.7% to 22.5%, dysmenorrhea 45%, menorrhagia 17%, amenorrhea 21.3%, polymenorrhea 22.2%, and hypomenorrhea 15%⁶. Infertility impacts 11.8% of women⁸, while fibroids are seen in 37.65%⁹. Endometriosis affects around 42 million women¹⁰, and adenomyosis has a prevalence of 55%¹¹. These rising numbers underline the need for greater awareness and effective menstrual health management.

Aim-

To study the role of Rajaswala Paricharya in regulating Apana Vata.

Objectives-

To analyze the mode of action of Rajaswala Paricharya in maintaining the balance of Apana Vata and its relevance in the present era.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A comprehensive literature review was conducted using classical Ayurvedic texts, including Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita, to examine the concept of Vata Dosha and its subtypes, particularly Apana Vata and Rajaswala Paricharya. Modern textbooks and research articles were reviewed to understand the physiological aspects of menstruation.

DISCUSSION

Apana Vata holds distinct importance in physiological and Clinical Significance of female reproductive health due to its principal location in the Pakvashaya, a key site for the functioning of Vata as a whole. According to Ayurveda, menstruation is regulated by Apana Vata, which ensures the downward movement of Artava (menstrual blood). This process closely correlates with modern scientific explanations of endometrial shedding due to hormone withdrawal. A particularly noteworthy function of Apana Vata is Artava Nishkramana. The term Artava in Ayurvedic literature is used ambiguously—referring both to ovum and menstrual blood. However, given the prominence of monthly menstruation as a marker of female reproductive health, the context strongly supports interpreting Artava Nishkramana as the expulsion of menstrual blood.

Modern anatomical and physiological correlations further substantiate this association. The female reproductive organs are innervated by both sympathetic and parasympathetic fibers, and their functions are modulated by hormones such as estrogen and progesterone. Disruptions in autonomic balance, often observed in dysmenorrhea, reflect the intricate nervous regulation underlying menstruation and further hint at a neurological dimension of role of Apana Vata.

The physiological process of menstruation is governed by the three Dosha, each of which predominates in a specific phase of the cycle. During Rajasravakala (menstrual phase), Apana Vata governs the downward movement and expulsion of blood, coinciding with a drop in estrogen and progesterone, which causes the endometrial lining to shed. In Ritukala (ovulatory phase), Kapha Dosha supports regeneration of the endometrium, aligned with rising estrogen and a LH surge that triggers ovulation. During Rituvyatikala (luteal phase), Pitta Dosha dominates, reflecting increased progesterone secretion from the corpus luteum, which prepares the uterus for implantation through metabolic and secretory activity.

Apana Vata governs Artava Nishkramana, ensuring the timely and regular expulsion of menstrual blood. The term Dhamani, which is used in Ayurvedic texts to describe vessels, implies that vascular contractions facilitate menstruation. This concept aligns with modern physiology, where uterine artery vasoconstriction and ischemia lead to the shedding of the endometrial layer during menstruation. Due to adoption of western culture and fast life working, females opt to attend programs, heavy stressful work in Raja strava kala, which is prohibited by Acharya. Due to high mental pressure because of work load, family stress, competitive behavior in every place, more expectations lead to stress in her life, as result cortisol level increases in body, causes HPA axis dysfunction.

In today's fast-paced world, women often prioritize work and external responsibilities such as excessive walking (Pradhavana), loud or continuous speech during meetings or teaching (Atikathana), and prolonged exposure to high-volume sounds (Atisravana), along with extensive travel and physical exertion, especially during menstruation, can lead to vitiation of Vata Dosha. This imbalance is further aggravated by the consumption of Vidahi (pungent and irritant) foods and beverages, such as pani puri, pizza, Manchurian, instant noodles (Maggi), cold drinks, coffee, tea, smoking, and other forms of Viruddha Ahara (incompatible food combinations). These factors contribute to Raktavaha Srotas Dushti (vitiation of blood-carrying channels) and disturb the balance of key reproductive hormones like estrogen and progesterone, thereby leading to various menstrual disorders. Irregular routines, poor dietary habits, and increased consumption of junk food have led to a rise in health issues, particularly affecting menstrual and reproductive well-being. Vata Kapha Dushti leads to further Dhatu Dushti, affects Agni, as result it

causes menstrual disorders. In this context, Rajahswala Paricharya - the Ayurvedic regimen for women during menstruation holds great importance. Following this regimen helps maintain Dosha balance, supports proper menstrual function, and prevents complications. When menstrual health is nurtured through proper care and discipline, it directly contributes to better reproductive health. From the 1st to the 3rd day of menstruation, specific dietary guidelines are recommended to support the balance of Vata Dosha, which is primarily responsible for the menstrual process. Foods such as Shali rice with ghee, Yava daliya or Shastika rice kheer, Yava roti with two spoons of ghee, and natural sweeteners like Dhaga Mishri or Desi khand are advised. In cases of Artava Dushti, where Vata is the predominant vitiated Dosha, following this three-day dietary protocol during Rajaswala is crucial. It helps prevent Vata aggravation and ensures its proper functioning. Since Vata Dosha is a major causative factor in Yoni Roga (gynecological disorders) and Artava Vyapad (menstrual irregularities), adhering to this regimen is essential for maintaining menstrual and reproductive health.

Table 1 Rajaswala Paricharya Different Acharya

No.	Acharya	Rajaswala Paricharya
	According to Acharya Charaka12	From onset of menses to third night, she must follow: Brahmharya- In Mundakopanishad it has been quoted that Satya (truth), Tapa (penance), Samyak gyana (true knowledge), and Bramhacharya (celibacy) leads to self-knowledge. Eat in unbroken utensil placed in hand. Don't take any type of bath. Day 4: She should take head bath
	According to Acharya Sushruta13	From the day of onset of menstruation, the lady should observe Brahmacharya. Should avoid Divaswapana, application of Anjana, Ashrupat, Snana, Anulepan, Abhyanga, Nakha chedana, Pradhavan, Hasan, Kathan (talking too much), Sabda Sravan (listening of so many types of topics), Avlekha (combing) and (Ayas) fast wind (excessive travelling). Avoid excessive exercise. She should sleep on Darbha (specific sacred leafy plant) spread over ground. • She should eat Havisya ghee, Sali rice and milk) and Yava (barley and milk)
	According to Acharya Vagbhatta14	Avoid food which is Amla, Ushna, Katu, Lavan in nature. Take food in less quantity. Always concentrate on thinking good and auspicious things Avoid jewelry or make up
	According to Acharya Kashyap15	Use of Nasya (inhalations) and Vamana (emesis) are contraindicated during menses.

To achieve ideal menstrual health, Ayurveda advocates for a comprehensive approach that includes a Ahara (balanced diet), Vihara (lifestyle), and Achara (behavioral practices).

In terms of Ahara, it is advised to consume Laghu (light) and easily digestible foods to maintain a balanced Agni (digestive fire) without aggravating Vata. Ushna (Warm) and Snigdha (unctuous foods) are encouraged to support the proper flow of Apana Vata and prevent excessive dryness, while spicy, cold, and heavy foods should be avoided to prevent Vata aggravation, which could lead to pain and irregular cycles. Regarding Vihara, physical and mental rest is essential, as excessive activity or stress can disturb Apana Vata, leading to painful or irregular menstruation. Avoiding excessive exertion, heavy lifting, and intercourse ensures the proper functioning of Apana Vata without obstruction. Staying in a calm environment also helps balance Vata Dosha and promotes overall well-being. For Achara, observing cleanliness and simplicity maintains sattvic (pure) mental and physical health, while avoiding emotional stress and overstimulation is crucial. Since Vata is sensitive to emotions, maintaining a peaceful state of mind supports menstrual health and helps regulate the cycle.

Table – 2 Restricted Acts of Woman During Menstrual Cycle

Restricted acts of woman	Effect on female body
Divaswapana	Vata kapha dusti, if she is planning for child will also be lethargy

Use of Anjana	It effects on eye sight and Aalochaka pitta
Weeping	Abnormality of vision
Snana & Anulepana	Prone for diseases in future
Oil massage	Skin disorder, increase more blood supply towards skin and Sakha
Paring of nails	Deformity of nails
Fast racing	Vitiation of Vata unable to concentrate on any work
Laughing	Black discolouration of teeth, lips, tongue
Over talking	Vitiation of Vata, can't able to concise her talk
Over hearing	Vitiation of Vata, tinnitus, sensorineural hearing loss
Combing	Excess hair fall
Exposure to draughts and exertion	Insane
Use of Nasya	Yoni shosha, menstrual abnormalities

During menstruation, the physiological role of Apana Vata, which governs the downward elimination processes including menstruation, becomes particularly prominent. Rajaswala Paricharya prescribes specific restrictions to preserve the integrity of Apana Vata and ensure optimal reproductive health. Acts such as Divaswapana (daytime sleep), excessive weeping, and physical exertion can vitiate Vata, leading to symptoms such as lethargy, disturbed menstrual flow, and psychological instability. Use of Anjana, Nasya, and exposure to sensory overstimulation may affect the functioning of Alochaka and Prana Vata, further disturbing systemic balance. Activities like Abhayanga, Snana, and cosmetic applications during this period redirect physiological focus toward peripheral tissues, potentially hindering the natural downward flow of Apana Vata. Similarly, habits like over-talking, laughing, and combing can contribute to Vata aggravation, manifesting as hair fall, sensory disturbances, and impaired reproductive functions. These observations underscore the Ayurvedic emphasis on maintaining Apana Vata equilibrium during menstruation to support hormonal balance, mental stability, and future fertility outcomes.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, embracing Rajaswala Paricharya with awareness and understanding helps maintain the balance of Apana Vata, ensuring a smooth menstrual cycle and overall reproductive health. By following these time-tested Ayurvedic principles, women can prevent menstrual disorders and support their well-being, making it a practice of self-care rather than restriction. According to Rajaswala Paricharya, a good Artava (menstrual cycle) and general reproductive health depend on preserving the balance of Apana Vata. One can lower the risk of gynecological diseases and promote long-term health by adhering to the recommended regimen, which prevents the depletion or aggravation of Apana Vata. It is better to view Rajaswala Paricharya as a comprehensive and therapeutic strategy that supports a woman's physical and emotional well-being throughout her life, rather than as a limiting one.

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