



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Ayurveda

ROLE OF SAPHTHASARAM KASHAYAM IN THE MANAGEMENT OF MENSTRUAL DISORDERS – REVIEW ARTICLE

KEY WORDS: *Sapthasaram kashayam; artava; yoniroga; menstrual abnormalities;*

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ABSTRACT

Sapthasaram kashayam (SK) is one of the common formulations used in the management of gynaecological disorders. It is mentioned in *Sahasrayogam* in the context of management of *Gulma*. Like *Gulma*, vitiation of *vata* - especially *Apana* is considered to be an integral part in the pathogenesis of all diseases pertaining to female reproductive system or *yoniroga*. SK is a formulation that can bring about *anulomana* of *Apana* along with clearing the *artava-vaha srotas* ensuring proper formation of *bija* and *artava*. Ayurvedic classical textbooks along with available modern literatures were referred with an aim to interpret the actions of SK in the management of various menstrual abnormalities. It can be concluded that SK owing to its properties like *deepana, pachana, laghu, rooksha, ushna, anulomana, srotoshodhana* etc brings about normalcy where there is *vata-kapha* vitiation and establishes normal menstrual cycle. Thus it can be effectively used in conditions like spasmodic dysmenorrhoea, oligomenorrhoea, amenorrhoea etc.

INTRODUCTION:

*Sapthasaram kashayam*¹ (SK) is one among the formulations mentioned in the management of *Gulma* in the book *Sahasrayogam* (SY). SY is a compendium of ayurvedic formulations prevalent among the physicians of Kerala. 'Sahasra' means thousand and 'Yogam' means formulations. As the name suggests that the book contains thousand formulations pertaining to various diseases. SK is a formulation with wide applicability in various clinical conditions like constipation, low back ache, menstrual abnormalities etc. SK has also been mentioned in 'The Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia of India – Part 1' as '*Saptsara Kvatha Curna*'².

SK is a very commonly used formulation by the *Stree roga* physicians of Kerala owing to its wide range of applicability in different gynaecological conditions. SY explains the formulation in the context of *Gulma roga* and according to Ayurveda classics pathogenesis of all varieties of *Gulma* has involvement of *vata dosha* in it and has *shoola* or pain as the cardinal symptom. All the *yonirogas* are also associated with the vitiation of *vata* and their treatment primarily aims at normalizing *vata* prior to treating other *dosha*. The association of the common causative factor, *vata dosha*, in both the clinical condition justifies the use of SK in the management of gynaecological disorders.

Menstruation is the visible manifestation of cyclic physiologic uterine bleeding due to shedding of the endometrium following invisible interplay of hormones mainly through hypothalamo-pituitary ovarian axis. For the menstruation to occur, the axis must be actively coordinated, endometrium must be responsive to the ovarian hormones (estrogen and progesterone) and the outflow tract must be patent³. Excessive or reduced bleeding, inappropriately timed menstruation, amenorrhoea, pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS) and dysmenorrhoea are the most common complaints associated with menstrual cycle for which medical attention is sought.

According to ayurveda menstrual cycle is called '*rtuchakra*' and is composed of three phases, *rajahkala* (bleeding phase) which is dominated by *vata* and involves the expulsion of *artava* or menstrual blood, *rtukala* (proliferative phase) which is dominated by *kapha* and involves formation of *bija* or ovum and *rtuvyatita-kala* (secretory phase) which is dominated by *pitta*⁴. Though *vata dosha* is said to be dominant in the bleeding phase, it's invariably associated with all the changes during the cycle. *Samana vayu* maintains proper *parinama* in the *artava vaha srotas* and along with *Pachaka pitta* ensures proper formation of *bija* and *artava* from *rasa dhatu, vyana vayu* maintains proper circulation in the uterine vessels, *Apana*

vayu initiates menstruation while *prana* and *udana* ensures intact functioning of the hypothalamo-pituitary ovarian axis.

SK owing to its properties like *vata-kapha shamana, anulomana, pachana* etc is extensively used for managing menstrual disturbances like PMS, dysmenorrhoea, oligomenorrhoea, and amenorrhoea. It ensures correction of vitiated *vata* and helps in establishing a normal menstrual cycle.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Ayurvedic classical textbooks, modern medical textbooks, online articles and journals were reviewed to gain all the possible information regarding menstrual abnormalities and SK following which the information was critically reviewed based on the clinical observations to arrive at the following observations.

OBSERVATIONS:

According to the Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia of India – Part 1 the ingredients of SK contains one part each of *Varshabu, Vilwa, Kulatha, Eranda, Sahachara, Sunti* and *Agnimantha*. *Prakshepa dravyas* include *Guda (jaggery), Pippali, Saindhava lavana, Hingu* or *Sarpi* which are used according to the clinical conditions. Other *prakshepa dravyas* like *tila, taila*, etc are also being used. On observing the action of SK in various clinical conditions, following interpretations can be made,

- Dosha karma* : *Vata-kapha shamana, Pittakara, Apana anulomana*
- Agni karma* : *Deepana, Pachana*
- Mala karma* : *Malapravartaka, Mootrala*
- Srotho karma* : *Srothoshodana*
- Lakshanika karma* : *Shoolaprashamana, Ruchyam*

The properties and action of ingredients of SK can be summarized as below.

(Table 1)

Drug	Rasa	Guna	Veery	Vipaka	Karma
<i>Punarnava(Boerhavia diffusa)</i>	<i>Madhura Tiktha Kashaya</i>	<i>Laghu Rooksha</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Sophahara, deepana, lekhana, anulomana, rechana, rasayanarakthavardhaka,</i>
<i>Vilwa (Aeglema melos)</i>	<i>Kashaya Tiktha</i>	<i>Laghu Rooksha</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Vedanasthapa, grahi deepana, pachana, mriduvi rechana, yakrit</i>

Kulatha (Dolichocho biflorus)	Kashaya Madhura	Laghu Rooksha	Ushna	Katu	Grahi, moothr ala, medohar a, gulamahar a, pitharaktha krith
Eranda (Ricinus communis)	Madhura Kashaya	Snigdha Teekshn a Ushna	Ushna	Madhura	Deepana, bh edana, ama sodhaka, sop hahara, anga mardaprasa mana
Sahachara (Berleria prionitis)	Madhura Tiktha	ushna	Ushna	Katu	Sophahara, v edanapras amana, rakth asodhaka
Sundi (Zingiber officianale)	Katu	Laghu snigdha	Ushna	Madhura	Deepana, pac hana, bhed ana, sophaha ra, vedan thapaka, hrid ya
Agnimandh a (Premna integrifolia)	Katu Tiktha Kashaya	Laghu Rooksha	Ushna	Katu	Deepana, pac hana, anul omana, rakth asodhaka, vedanasthap aka, hriday- authejaka

DISCUSSION:

The aforesaid properties of SK makes it an ideal choice in the management of menstrual abnormalities and the action of the formulation in various clinical conditions can be interpreted as follows,

Pre-menstrual syndrome: PMS is a psycho- neuroendocrine disorder of unknown etiology where there is cyclic appearance of a large number of symptoms during the last few days of the menstrual cycle⁵. Symptoms usually include bloating, breast tenderness, swelling of extremities, irritability, anxiety, restlessness, increased appetite, anger, headache, fatigue, tiredness, insomnia etc. Most of these symptoms are enumerated under *Udavarta roga*, mentioned as one of the most important *upadrava vyadi of arsas*. *Udavarta* can also be seen in persons with vitiation of *vata* in the absence of *arsas* too. Here there is vitiation of *Apana vayu* which causes subsequent vitiation of other *vayu* along with other *doshas* producing the symptoms. Management principle of *Apana vayu* is to bring about proper *anulomana*. SK which has *anulomana* and *mala pravarthaka* property can be given with *prakshepa* like *Sukumara Ghrita*, *Hinguvachadi choornam*, *manasamitra vataka* etc in the management of PMS.

Dysmenorrhoea: Primary dysmenorrhea is one where there is no identifiable pelvic pathology and secondary dysmenorrhea is normally considered to be menstruation associated pain occurring in the presence of pelvic pathology. SK is found highly effective in the management of primary dysmenorrhoea. In primary dysmenorrhoea pain begins a few hours before or just with the onset of menstruation. The severity of pain usually lasts for few hours and is usually spasmodic in nature confined to lower abdomen; may radiate to the back and medial aspect of thighs. Other discomforts like nausea, vomiting, fatigue, diarrhoea, headache and tachycardia may also be associated with it. This condition can be clearly correlated to *Udavarta yoni roga* which is *vata* predominant condition characterised by discharge of blood with great difficulty and pain. The pain is usually relieved after the discharge of blood. The management of *Udavarta yoni roga* includes *vatahara* treatments like *snehana*, *swedana*, *snigdha anulomana* etc. The other clinical symptoms of dysmenorrhoea can be seen in *avarana* of *Apana vata* by *vyana* where the management principle is again *anulomana*. The *laghu*, *rooksha*, *ushna* and

anulomana guna of the formulation helps to reduce the spasm of the uterine musculature thus reducing pain and removes the *avarana* alleviating other clinical symptoms. Using *prakshepa* like *Ghrta*, *taila* etc can improve the efficacy of the formulation in the management of dysmenorrhoea

Oligomenorrhoea/Amenorrhoea: Menstrual bleeding occurring more than 35 days apart and which remains constant at that frequency is called oligomenorrhoea and amenorrhoea is considered as the absence of menstruation for 6 months or more in a woman in whom normal menstruation has been established⁶. This condition can be correlated to *nastartava* or *anartava* explained in classics where the normal flow of menstrual blood is blocked by *dosha* especially *kapha*. Though oligo/amenorrhoea can occur due to various conditions, SK is found to be effective in those which has an association of *Kapha dosha* in it. Hence the formulation can be used in oligo/amenorrhoea associated with conditions like obesity, Poly Cystic Ovarian Disease etc. Vitiation of *kapha* causes impairment in the proper functioning of *Agni* causing *ama* formation which leads to defective formation of *rasa dhatu*. Defective *rasa dhatu*, along with the vitiated *kapha* and *ama* which blocks the *artava-vaha srotas*, either fails to form proper *artava* causing anovulation and amenorrhoea or takes longer time for the formation of *bija* and *artava* causing oligomenorrhoea. Aim of an ayurvedic management in this condition should be to correct *Agni*, remove the *ama* ensuring proper *rasa dhatu* formation and to ensure *vata anuloma* for the proper formation of *artava*. SK with its *deepana*, *pachana*, *srotoshodhana*, *vata anulomana* and *kaphahara* property helps in proper conversion of *rasa dhatu* to its *upadhatu artava* thereby correcting the cycle.

CONCLUSION:

A normal menstrual cycle is usually considered as a sign of good reproductive health. Menstrual abnormalities are usually the primary symptom of other underlying pathologies of reproductive system which can lead to complications like infertility if left untreated. Ayurveda also considers proper formation of *artava* as a sign of normal *bija* or ovum development which is essential for the formation of *Garbha*. *Sapthasaram kashayam* ensures proper formation of *artava* and *bija* from the *rasa dhatu* and helps in correcting menstrually abnormalities and thus aids in conception. Hence the formulation can be considered as a promising candidate in the management of gynaecological disorders pertaining to menstruation.

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