



**ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

**Ayurveda**

**AN OBSERVATION ON THE EFFECT OF MENARCHEAL CARE IN REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH**

**KEY WORDS:** Menarche, Menstrual care, Reproductive health, *Rajaswala Charya*, *Arogyakalpadrumam*

**Sariga Haridasan\***

Padmalayam Kavallapara p.o Arani, Shoranur Pin -679523. \*Corresponding Author

**Dr Sithara Satheesan**

Assistant Professor Dept of Prasuti tantra and Striroga PNNM Ayurveda Medical College, Cheruthuruthy.

**ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Menarche defines the onset of menstruation in women's life. Menarche marks the beginning of a girl's reproductive life, and has an important implication for adolescent sexual and reproductive health outcomes. In Ayurveda women attaining menstruation is called *Rajaswala*. Menstrual care during menarche is an out thrown ritual in our society nowadays but they were practiced in earlier time and were given greatest importance. The prevalence of menstrual irregularities is increasing day by day so it is necessary to know the importance of menstrual care during menarche. Ayurveda *Acharya's* mentioned different *Charyas* for maintaining women's health, *Rajaswala Charya* is one among them. *Rajaswala Paricharya*, includes the life style and dietary modification which is explained in Ayurveda during menstrual phase which helps women to cope up with her psychological and physiological changes that take place in the body during the menstrual period. *Arogyakalpadrumam*, an Ayurvedic classical textbook have mentioned about the care that should be taken during menarche. The purpose of menarche care is to prevent menstrual abnormalities rather than pacifying the manifested abnormalities<sup>1</sup>.

**Method:** A survey was conducted in 100 girls of age group 20-35 years to know menstrual care they had taken during menarche to analyze the association of care during menarche and future reproductive health. A direct interview method with Questionnaire which contains 6 questions was used to know details about menstrual care.

**Result:** Among 63 participants who took menarche care only 3% experienced irregularity in their later cycles, whereas 32% (among 37 participants who did not undertake menarche care) experienced irregular menstrual cycles.

**Conclusion:** Menarche is a marker of girl's healthy transition from childhood into young adulthood. From this survey we can say that it will be better to take menarche care which help for strengthening reproductive health of women.

**INTRODUCTION**

Puberty is the period which links childhood to adulthood. It's the period which shows gradual development of secondary sexual characteristics and also there are certain physical and psychological changes which lead to sexual maturity and eventually fertility. Five important changes are evident during puberty and menarche is one among the five. Menarche is the first onset of menstruation in life, it may occur anywhere between 10 to 16 years and the peak time being 13 years. HPO axis also plays a vital role in reproductive health. Hypothalamus, anterior pituitary and ovaries work together to regulate menstrual cycle.

In Ayurveda there is a reference in *Arogyakalpadrumam* which emphasize the importance of menstrual care during menarche.

विज्ञाय कालविद् वैद्यो द्वादशशब्दस्थितां स्त्रियं  
 रजोदोषहरं तस्य विदधीत स्वयं विधिं ॥  
 यद्वा चतुर्दशे कुर्यात् अब्दे पञ्चदशेश्पि वा  
 तत ऊर्ध्वं तु कुर्यात्तं दृष्टे दोषपुरा तु न ॥  
 Arogyakalpadrumam 39/2

It says that menstrual care should be taken at the age of 12 years, and if it's not taken at 12 it should be done within 2 years that is 13 or 15 years and it should be continued up to 2 years. Its aim is to prevent menstrual abnormalities rather to pacify it.

In present scenario menstrual irregularities like menorrhagia, amenorrhoea, oligomenorrhoea, dysmenorrhoea are getting very common among adolescent group and women of reproductive age. This may be due to their faulty food habits and change in life style patterns. For proper functioning of reproductive system, *Doshas* should be balanced. Vitiated *Doshas* along with *Mithyahara viharas* leads to the manifestation of specific menstrual irregularities.

**Purpose of the study**

The study was conducted in a curiosity to know the

association of menarche care and present menstrual irregularity.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

1. Method adopted for the study: Survey study
2. Study population: 100 participants Survey was conducted among students, teachers and Practitioners of PNNM Ayurveda College.
3. Ethical consideration: Participation in the survey was voluntary and data gathered was anonymous
4. Inclusion criteria: Subjects were of age group between 20-35 years
5. Collection of data: Data was collected with help of a questionnaire. It consists of 6 questions.

**Figure -1 Questionnaire**

1	Age of menarche :
2	Menstrual care : taken/ not taken
3	If taken : a. No. of months/ days taken b. Internal - c. External - d. Any food restriction taken at that time -
4	Any menstrual abnormalities : a. Regular/ Irregular b. Pain- present /absent c. Clots- d. Interval- e. Duration- f. Bleeding pattern-
5	First conception at the age of-
6	Mode of delivery- Normal delivery baby/ caesarian baby

**OBSERVATIONS AND RESULT**

On examining the data obtained, it was found that among 100 participants, 63 had taken menstrual care during menarche and 37 had not taken menstrual care.

Among 63 participants who had taken menarche care, most of them had taken

#### Internally

- Raw egg with *Tila thailam*
- (For 5-7 days 5-10ml of *Tila Thaila* was given in empty stomach with a raw egg well mixed in it)
- *Ulli(Lasuna, Palandu) Lehyam*
- (1 tsp *Lehya* of garlic and shallot prepared with *Guda* and coconut milk was taken twice a day)
- *Kulatha Yusham*
- (*Kulatha* was given as *Yusha*)
- *Tila* with *Guda*
- *Methika Ks. as Panajalam*
- (*Methika* is boiled in water filtered and used)
- *Shashtikodana*

#### Externally

- *Taila Abhyanga*
- Turmeric application

#### RESULT

Out of 63 participants who had taken menstrual care, it was noticed that, only 2 of them are having menstrual irregularity and in those among 37 who had not taken menstrual care, 12 of them are experiencing menstrual irregularities presently.

Probability of menstrual irregularities in those who adopted menarche care is 0.03 and probability in those who had not adopted care is 0.32. So relative risk based on Odd's ratio is found to be 10.8.

#### DISCUSSION

Women's life is associated with drastic physiological and psychological changes during menarche, reproductive period, pregnancy, menopause and post menopause. Due to these changes, she is vulnerable for developing several pathologies which can even impair her fertility. In Ayurveda, *Acharya's* have mentioned several *Charya's* for women like *Rajaswala Paricharya*, *Rithumati Charya*, *Garbhini Charya*, *Soothika Charya*. Among these, *Rajaswala Paricharya* describes certain do's and don'ts which helps to maintain balance of *Dosha* status and proper menstrual functioning. These modifications are in the form of eating light meal, observing celibacy, to eat directly or in leaf or clay vessel, avoiding pungent and spicy foods, not to sleep during daytime, not to perform strenuous activities, avoiding use of scents in the form of anointments<sup>2</sup>.

In *Arogyakalpadrumam* it has mentioned that menarche care helps rather to prevent menstrual irregularities than to pacify the manifested menstrual abnormalities. Menarche care during menstruation and menstrual regimen place an important role in maintaining healthy reproductive cycle in women.

Most of the participants adopted both internal and external care as menstrual care.

#### Internal partake adopted by the participants:

Raw egg with *tila tailam*, *Ulli (Lasuna, Palandu) lehyam*, *Kulatha Yusham*, *Tila* with *Guda*, *Methika kashaya* as *Panajalam*, *Shashtikodana* and similar traditional practices followed by their family.

#### 1) Raw egg with *Tila tailam* :

*Tila taila* with *Theekna*, *Vyavayi Guna* and *Ushna veerya* with raw egg (nutrient-dense packed with protein, good fats, vitamin, minerals) acts as *Arthavajanaka* and *Garbhasaya shodhaka*<sup>3</sup>.

#### 2) *Ulli (Palandu and lasuna) Lehya*:

*Lehya* with *Lasuna (Vrishya, Deepana, Brihmana)* and *Palandu (Theekshanam)* administration can help to improve the *Rasa* and *Rakta Dathu Prasadamsa*.

#### 3) *Kulatha yusham*:

*Kulatha* is *Ushna*, *Param Pittaasrada*<sup>5</sup> and *Vatanulomi*<sup>6</sup>. It is *Katu vipaka* and *Ushna Veerya*, helps in *Arthavajanana* thereby facilitating normal menstrual flow and menstrual regularity.

#### 4) *Tila with Guda*

*Guda* with *Rakthavardhaka*, *Muthrashodhana*, *Vrishya*, *Kaphahrit*<sup>7</sup> when administered with *Arthavajaanaka*. drug *Tila (Balya, Ushna, Katu in Vipaka)*<sup>8</sup> helps to maintain the regularity of menstruation.

#### 5) *Methika Ks as Panajalam*:

*Methika (Katu Rasa and Vipaka, Vatakaphahara in Karma)*<sup>9</sup> having chemical constituents like alkaloids, flavonoids, saponins, tannins etc which are having anti inflammatory and analgesic property thus help to relieve pain during menstruation.

#### 6) *Shashtikodana*:

*Tridosahara* property<sup>10</sup> of *Shashtika (Madhura Rasa, Guru, Snigdha Guna)* helps in the overall nourishment of young female in pubertal period.

So all the internal medicines described above are in general having the property of *Deepana*, *Pachana*, *Arthavajanaka* with specific effect on *Rasa* and *Rakta Dathu*. So these herbs when taken can help to maintain the regularity of cycle with proper menstrual flow.

#### External administration adopted by participants:

*Taila abhyanga* with *Dhanwantharam taila (Sarvavatavikarajith, Ksheeneshu poojitham, Yonirogakshapaham)*<sup>11</sup>, application of turmeric and *Ushnajala snanam*.

*Taila abhyanga* (from 3<sup>rd</sup> day) helps in alleviating *Vata*, and antifungal and antibacterial property of turmeric (*Varnadathri, Vishagni*)<sup>13</sup> helps in preventing infections and *Ushna Jala Snana* being *Adhakayabalavaham*<sup>14</sup> helps to maintain the functions of *Apana vayu* as well.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The different guidelines given by Ayurveda classics for women during different phases of life are to make her physically and physiologically adaptive with the anatomical and physiological changes during different phases. Menarche being an important point bridging childhood and adulthood, at proper menarche care done at proper time can help women to restrain herself from various menstrual irregularities. Besides traditional practice there are Ayurvedic formulations that can be chosen according to *Prakriti* of each woman which help to balance *Doshas*. So adopting a proper menstrual care with proper hygiene practice will help women to maintain normalcy of reproductive system.

#### REFERENCES:

- [1] Kaikulagara ramavaryar, *Arogyakalpadrumam*, Samrat publishers, edited by Edakkad Narayanan Vaidyar et al, chapter 39 verse 2, 3 p. 492
- [2] Gujarathi Jasmine, Gujarathi Rithesh; Designer babies Current trends & ayurveda- published in e journal Rasmrutha Vol 5(25) Sept 2013
- [3] Vagbhatacharya, *Ashtanga Hridayam*, Bhishakacharya Hari Sastrri Paradakara, 9<sup>th</sup> ed, Chaukambh orientalia, Varanasi 2002, P.No 66
- [4] Vagbhatacharya, *Ashtanga Hridayam*, Bhishakacharya Hari Sastrri Paradakara, 9<sup>th</sup> ed, Chaukambh orientalia, Varanasi 2002, P.No 95, 96
- [5] Vagbhatacharya, *Ashtanga Hridayam*, Bhishakacharya Hari Sastrri Paradakara, 9<sup>th</sup> ed, Chaukambh orientalia, Varanasi 2002, P.No 77
- [6] Vagbhatacharya, *Ashtanga Hridayam*, Bhishakacharya Hari Sastrri Paradakara, 9<sup>th</sup> ed, Chaukambh orientalia, Varanasi 2002, P.No 80
- [7] Vagbhatacharya, *Ashtanga Hridayam*, Bhishakacharya Hari Sastrri Paradakara, 9<sup>th</sup> ed, Chaukambh orientalia, Varanasi 2002, P.No 64
- [8] Vagbhatacharya, *Ashtanga Hridayam*, Bhishakacharya Hari Sastrri Paradakara, 9<sup>th</sup> ed, Chaukambh orientalia, Varanasi 2002, P.No 78
- [9] Dr. JLN Sastrri, *Dravyaguna vijnana Vol-2*, Chaukambha orientalia, Reprint edition 2010, Varanasi, P.No 728
- [10] Vagbhatacharya, *Ashtanga Hridayam*, Bhishakacharya Hari Sastrri Paradakara, 9<sup>th</sup> ed, Chaukambh orientalia, Varanasi 2002, P.No 75
- [11] Vagbhatacharya, *Ashtanga Hridayam*, Bhishakacharya Hari Sastrri Paradakara, 9<sup>th</sup> ed, Chaukambh orientalia, Varanasi 2002, P.No 24
- [12] K.V Krishnan Vaidyar, *S Gopalapilla, Sahasrayogam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, Vidyarambham publications; 1122 kollam, P.No 286
- [13] Dr. JLN Sastrri, *Dravyaguna vijnana Vol-2*, Chaukambha orientalia, Reprint edition 2010, Varanasi, P.No 518
- [14] Vagbhatacharya, *Ashtanga Hridayam*, Bhishakacharya Hari Sastrri Paradakara, 9<sup>th</sup> ed, Chaukambh orientalia, Varanasi 2002, P.No 25