ANARTAVA – AN AYURVEDA PERSPECTIVE REVIEW ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

Literary meaning of absence of Artava is known as Anartava. The description of Anartava is found under different headings like Anartava, Nashtartava or Artavakshaya in our classics by different Acharyas. Absence of artava itself is not a disease but a symptom of an underlying disorder of female reproductive system. Ayurveda refers to menstruation as Artava or Rajah. Modern science & Ayurveda both offer treatment for the Anartava. In the most cases, modern science encourages the return of menses through the use of artificial hormonal therapy. Ayurveda offers more options and avenues for treatment that allow women to bring awareness to their own cycle. The literary review of all conditions with anartava in Ayurveda is reviewed with review of research on management of amenorrhoea.

Keywords: Menstruation, Anartava, Nastartava, Artavakshaya, Artava, Rajah.

INTRODUCTION: Anartava can be defined as absence or abnormal cessation of menstruation, which is a common clinical presentation for abnormalities of HPO axis. Amenorrhoea causes much physical and psychological problems to affected women. It has become a leading cause of infertility today which leads to an unhealthy family life. Due to changes in lifestyle, dietary habits, lack of exercise and various environmental factors the prevalence of amenorrhoea is higher now a days.1,2 The prevalence of amenorrhoea not due to pregnancy, lactation or menopause is approximately 3 – 4 %.3,4 It may be primary or secondary. Primary amenorrhoea is the term used when a girl has failed to menstruate by the age of 16 years in presence of normal secondary sexual characteristics or by 14 years if absence of signs of puberty such as breast development and growth of pubic and axillary hair. Secondary amenorrhoea is when there is absence of menstruation for three normal cycles or six months in a woman who has previous regular menstrual cycles. Amenorrhoea is again classified into physiological and pathological according to its etiological factors.

Primary Physiological amenorrhoea:- Before puberty i.e. 12 years, because of inadequate gonadotropin releasing factors. Secondary Physiological amenorrhoea:- During pregnancy as a result of production of large quantities of estrogen and progesterone by placenta and during lactation as menstruation is suppressed after labour or abortion because of production of prolactin hormone from anterior pituitary and partial suppression of Luteinizing hormone. This results in anovulation and amenorrhoea. Menopause is complete cessation of menstruation (mean age 51 years) due to exhaustion of supply of ovarian follicles.

Pathological amenorrhoea:- Again this can be sub classified as-
(a) Amenorrhoea without secondary sexual characteristics
(b) Amenorrhoea with secondary sexual characteristics
(c) With secondary sexual characteristics and non anatomic causes.

In our classics Anartava is described as the symptom but not as the disorder. Raja, Masikastrava, Rutustrava, Asruka, Shonita are the synonyms of Artava. 

Definition of Anartava (Nidana and Lakshanas)- Aggravated Vata and Kapha obstruct the passage of artava vaha srotas or orifices of channels carrying artava, thus artava is not evident leading to Anartava. Though Artava is not finished completely yet it is not discharged monthly due to obstruction of Artavavaha Srotasa by
doshas. The roots of Artavavaha Srotasa are uterus & uterine arteries, thus the endometrium is not supplied by uterine arteries so there is absence of menstruation. The condition is termed as Nashtartava by Sushruta & Anartava by Vagbhata. Acharya Bhela opines that, though blood circulates (in whole body) for 7 nights (day & night) yet being scanty and abnormal does not circulate (in reproductive system) leading to desiccation of Artava & body of a woman resulting in absence of menstruation. Acharya Bhavamishra has included Rajonash among 80 specific disorders of Vata.

**Classification of Anartava according to Ayurveda**

As the Anartava (amenorrhoea) is classified according to its origin i.e. primary or secondary and as per its etiology, we will classify the references available according to origin and etiology. The references of physiological amenorrhoea described in Ayurveda classics.

(a) **Swabhvik Anartava (Physiological Amenorrhoea)**

1. **Primary**
   (i) Balyavastha-janya Anartava (Before puberty)
   Here, the age for menarche, i.e. the age for initiation of menstruation is given as 12 years. Before puberty because of function of dhatu paripurnata and developing genital organs there is absence of menstrual function.  
   (ii) Garbhavastha –janya Anartava (During pregnancy)
   During pregnancy, there is avarodha in artava vaha srotas and hence there is absence of menstruation. Also Artava adarshan – amenorrhoea is said to be a symptom of Garbhini. (Vyakta Garbha Lakshana).

2. **Secondary**
   (ii) Sutika-kalina Anartava & Dugdhavastha-janya Anartava (Puerperium)

While mentioning the period of Sutika Kala or puerperium, some Acharyas have opined that, the woman should be called Sutika till reappearence of menstruation. The cause of amenorrhoea during this period is mentioned by Acharya Kashyap. According to him, soon after labour Rasa Dhatu goes for formation of Stanya and replenishment of Yoni and after Dhatu Paripurnata, again it reappears in the form of Artava periodically.  

(ii) **Vriddhavastha-janya Anartava(Menopause)**

The age of menopause i.e. permanent cessation of menstruation is given as 50 years and the cause is Dhatu Kshaya. As Artava is considered as Updhatu of Rasa Dhatu, in Jarawastha there is Kshaya of all Dhatus physiologically. Rasa Kshaya in turn leads to Kshaya of its Updhatu i.e. Artava which is clinically seen as menopause.

(b) Vaikarika Anartava (Pathological Amenorrhoea)

Anatomical, functional and all other disorders of female reproductive system are described under Yoni vyapad in ayurveda classics.

1. **Primary**
   (i) Shandhi Yonivyapad
   A female child born from mother afflicted with Vata, suffers from Shandhi Yonivyapad. According to Acharya charak, such female child born will have under developed breast and will dislike coitus; Whereas Sushrut had clearly mentioned Anartava and Astana i.e. no breast development as symptoms of Shandhi Yonivyapad. This seems to be genetic abnormality as in Turner’s syndrome (45 X0).

(ii) Vandhya Yonivyapad
   In Vandya Yoni, the Artava is destroyed. Commentator Dalhana mentions here that the only difference between Vandhya and Shandhi is presence and absence of breast development respectively.

In Charaka samhita, Vandhya is mentioned under bija, bijabhaga disorders.
In this verse, Acharya Charaka explains that if the Bija bhaga (Chromosome) responsible for the development of uterus is defective, then female child born will be Vandhya. Commentator Chakrapani further clarifies that as the Bija responsible for Garbhashaya and Artava are same, so here is absence of Garbhashaya and Artava both. Shandhi and Vandhya yoniyapad and Charaka’s description of Vandhya signifies Primary pathological amenorrhoea because of congenital abnormalities of female reproductive system.

2. Secondary
(i) Arajaska Yonivyapad
Elevated Pitta when reaches Yoni and Garbhashaya vitiates Asrika, the woman becomes emaciated and creates symptoms like pallor. Chakrapani further adds Anartava as symptom. This description seems to be of amenorrhoea because of systemic disorders or due to anorexia and athlete’s amenorrhoea, where absence of menstruation is because of decreased body fat which is necessary for normal menstrual function.

(ii) Yonishosha/Sushka
Suppression of natural urges during coitus and menstruation will lead to Nastartava. Apart from this, Artava kshaya, Nashtartava are other disorders mentioned separately because of different etiology. Dalhana had mentioned further causes of Kshaya such as Ati Samshodhana (e.g. Virechana – Pitta kshaya – Artava kshaya, Vigorous curettage – Asherman’s syndrome- secondary amenorrhoea), Ati samshamana (excessive use of pitta shamaka dravya – artava kshaya), Ati vyayama (excessive exercise – less BMI- athletic amenorrhoea), Anashana (nutritional amenorrhoea – dhatu kshaya – artava kshaya) Manastapajanya (Psycho – neurogenic cause – affect hypothalamus – decreased gonadotropins – amenorrhoea).

(i) Nashtartava
Absence of Artava in female is because of Avarana of Dosha. Here also Commentator Dalhana clarifies that Avarak Doshas are Vata and Kapha; as the treatment of Nashtartava mentioned here is Vata Kapha Hara. He also states that increased pitta will lead to excessive menstruation, so here Vata and Kapha should be considered as responsible Doshas. Further he says that here ‘Nashta’ means which is forming but not seen. This condition is seen in cases of obesity where excess of fat leads to disruption in hormones especially estrogen and in turn suppression of pituitary and hence amenorrhoea.

(ii) Artavavaha srotas vedha
Acharya Sushruta has mentioned a pair of Artava Vaha Srotas in Sharirsthana. Here Artavanasha is a complication of Vedha(trauam) in Artava Vaha Srotas. This can be the description of Amenorrhoea due to Asherman’s syndrome (Vigorous curettling of Endometrium).

(iii) Artava kshaya
Sushruta describes absence of menstruation, scanty menstruation and pain as symptoms of Artavakshaya.

(iv) Anartava as a nanatamaja vyadhi of Vata
Bhavprakash included rajonasha among the nanatmaja vyadhis of vata.

(v) Anartava as a complication of medo-vridhi
Due to vata avarodha anartva occurs in medovriddhi.

(vi) Anartava due to artava dosha
According to Sushruta ksheena artava dushti causes vitiation of pitta with vayu and leads to artava kshaya.

Yonirogas Causing Anartava
(i) Yoni-arsha
Artava nasha is one of the symptoms in yoni arshas.

(ii) Raktaj gulma
Kasyapa gives description of Rakta samsthirata (amenorrhoea) in Raktaj gulma26.

(iii) Rakta Arbuda leading to Anartava

According to Harita, Rakta samsthirata is also seen in raktu arbuda due to margaaavrodha of artava27. After viewing all the references in classics regarding Anartava, to get “Samanya rajo-pravritti” following elements should be intact:

- Apradushta beeja bhaga
- Apradushta garbhashaya,yoni,apatyapatha
- Samanya dhatu bala-especially rasa,rakta
- Samanya pitta karya-(dhatu pachana)

PROBABLE SAMPRAPTI OF ANARTAVA

Nidana

Sahaja
(Beeja-beejabhaga)

Garbhashya utpadaka beejadushti

Rachanatamaka vikruti
(Congenital malformations Of uterus)

ANARTAVA

Chikitsa sutra

(i) Nidana- parivargjana28- Nidana should be avoided and the disease conditions leading to anartava should be treated with their own treatment methods.

(ii) Swayoni-vardhana dravyas29- Drugs of same origin should be given which can promote the growth of uterus or artava.

- Samanya vata karya (conducting system of uterine)
- Apradushta artava vaha srotas

Following is the probable nidana and samprapti of Anartava.

Nidana

(a) Sahaja - Beeja, Beejabhaga, Beejabhagavaya vadhushit - Abnormal or absent Beejabhaga related to formation of Garbhashaya will lead to congenital structural abnormalities of uterus or absence of uterus causing Anartava.

(b) Jataja:- Vata kaphaja ahara vihara in kapha dominant prakriti woman may lead to Nashta artava because of avarana. Ahara and vihara leading to vitiation of doshas and kshaya of all dhatus can become a factor for anartava. Abhighata, Vyayama and ativyavaya can be taken as vihara nidana.

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because of obstruction due to aggravated kapha and vayu.

While mentioning the treatment of Artava kshaya, Sushrut has mentioned Shodhana and use of Agneya dravya as general principle of treatment. Dalhana while commenting on the above principle states that here Yamana should be applied for shodhana not Virechana because virechana causes kshaya of pitta which will further lead to artava kshaya as artava is considered to be agneya.

So, here Yamana karma which will decrease Saumya dhatu in body and increase Agneya guna – should be applied.

- **Virechana**: In Pittaja cases, where anartava is because of increased pitta & vata, Virechana helps to restore normal HPO axis. Commentator Acharya Chakrapani says that by use of purifying measures Srotasas are cleared. Yamana and Virechana clear upward and downward directed Srotasas respectively. Thus both should be used. Proper assessment of patient’s prakriti, agni etc should be done before prescribing Yamana and Virechana.

- **Basti**: Vata is the main dosha involving any disorders of yoni, basti will be the best treatment for restoring normal menstrual function. As Artava Pravritti is the function of Apana Vayu, its dysfunction is considered as main factor in any Artava Vyapada. Shatavaryadi Anuwasana Basti\(^3\), Baladi Yamaka Anuwasan Basti\(^3\), Palash Niruha Basti\(^4\) & Dashamuladi Niruha Basti\(^5\) is beneficial.

- **Uttar Basti**: Uttarbasti of Shatpushpa taila\(^6\) have shown encouraging results in Anartava or Artava Kshaya because of ovarian factor. Uttarbasti of Phalaghrita improves endometrial thickness. Apart from these, Uttarbasti of Dashmool taila can be given in Vataja conditions.

- **Varti**: Apamargadi varti, Varti prepared with bhusa patra pestled with taila ,Varti made up of Ikshvaku beeja, Dantimula, guda, madanaphala, kinva , yavashuka,.

- **Pichu**: Pichu made up of fine powder of karpasa beeja taila, haridra, saindhav lavana.

- **Nasya**: Nasya of Shatpushpa taila is indicated in Anartava in Kashyap Samhita.

**Shamana**

1. **Use of Agneya dravyas**

   Tila, Masha, Sura, Shukta, Dadhi, Matsya, Kulattha, Amla kanji, Gomutra are agneya dravyas used in Anartava. These dravyas should be used when there is anartava because of Avarodha (Vata kapha janya) and Kshaya.\(^7\)

2. **Shatpushpa and Shatavari**

   Orally, in basti, nasya, abhyanga as mentioned in Shatpushpa Shatavari Kalpadhaya of Kashyap Samhita.\(^8\)

3. **Internal medications**

   (A) Krishna tila kwath with guda.
   (B) Krishna tila, sheluka and Krishna jeeraka with guda.
   (C) Japa kusum with kanji.
   (D) Jyotishmati, swarjika, rajika, yavanika and asana
   (E) Milk medicated with drugs of jivaniya varga.

4. **Yogas**

   Rajapravartini vati, Kanyakohadi vati, Dashmoolarishta, Dashmoola kwath, Kumariasava, Nashtapushpanta rasa, Phala ghrita, Phala kalyanaka ghrita, Sheeta kalyanaka ghrita, Shatavari ghrita.

**Pathya**: According to predominance of Doshas Sura, Asava & Arishta should be used. Lashuna should be included in diet,
diet made with barley, milk, Mamsarasa, Sidhu, powdered Pippali & Bala Taila are beneficial in Yonirogas.

**Apathya:** Manda is Apathya according to Acharya Kashyapa.

Life style modification & Yoga therapy: Articles capable of increasing Pitta are beneficial. Milk is beneficial in all types of Artava Doshas. Yogic management is very important for women experiencing anartava. Most importantly it includes relaxation and minimizes the amount of stress that is part of their everyday lives.

1. Padmasana
2. Halasana
3. Dhanurasana
4. Sarvangasana
5. Shalabhasana
6. Bhujangasana
7. Paschimottanasana.

**DISCUSSION:** Anartava is an uncommon presentation in reproductive medicine. In treatment Shamans and Shodhana Chikitsa is described, Vata is the main Dosha for Yonirogas so Basti is the main treatment for the pacification of Vata. As Adhobhaga is the place of Apana Vata, by giving Basti it pacifies and its functions are regulated so there will be ultimately regulation of Artava. Uttarbasti with oral Ushna dravya or Rajah pravartaka dravya administration has shown better results in Artava Kshaya. Practically, in the patients of long term amenorrhoea, i.e. ranging from 2 months to 5 -6 months amenorrhoea responded immediately on Yoga basti with Shatpushpa taila and Dashmoola as main ingredients. Also the flow increased with administration of Uttarbasti of Shatpushpa taila. In cases with less endometrial thickness Phalaghrita should be used in Uttarbasti. Amenorrhoea because of loss of ovarian function also responds to Yoga basti and Uttarbasti. The mode of action of Yoga basti can be thought as Apana vayu anulomana and hence leading to Rajah pravartana which is the Karma of Apana vayu. Also the drayyas used in Uttarbasti acts on receptors present in endometrium. Improving Rasa dhatu and Rasa dhatvagni has also given good results in improving Rajah pravritti as it is considered updhatu of Rasa. Artava is Agneya Gunatmaka in nature so the use of Agneya Dravyas increases the Artava. We have to use the Artavajanana Dravyas for the decreased quantity of Artava. Articles described in Pathya are Vata Shamaka & Agnipradipaka so they increases Agni by correction of Agramandya and does the Rasa Dhatu Poshana which helps in Artava Vridhi. Thus according to predominance of Dosha and condition of patient treatment should be given. Ayurveda is a holistic science it describes various modalities for the treatment of disease so the lifestyle modification & Yoga therapy also helps to overcome the disorder to certain extent.

**CONCLUSION:** Ayurvedic treatment modalities have shown promising results in all cases of Anartava. There are many options in Ayurveda while in modern medicine we have very few options like HRT which have certain limitations for its use and have side effects. In sum Ayurveda offers treatment for Anartava (amenorrhea) that beyond what modern medicine allows. Ayurveda can not only offer the nutritional counseling for treatment of amenorrhea but it can offer much greater option for dealing with the root of the problem which lies in mind. Pranayam, yoga, shirodhara and more can thus leading to strength of ojas and balance of hormones. More research using different panchakarma and shamana treatment with objective analysis in cases...
of amenorrhea because of different pathological causes should be done.

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