



Review Article

MENSTRUAL IRREGULARITY THROUGH THE LENS OF AYURVEDA: A REVIEW OF ARTAVA KSHAYA

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ABSTRACT

Artava Kshaya is a common menstrual disorder in Ayurveda, characterized by delayed, irregular, or scanty menstruation, often with pain. It correlates with oligomenorrhea and hypomenorrhea in modern medicine. Lifestyle changes, stress, poor diet, and obesity have increased its prevalence. This review aims to present the Ayurvedic concept and management of Artava Kshaya with modern correlation. **Methods:** Classical Ayurvedic texts and their commentaries were reviewed along with relevant modern medical literature. Available clinical studies and trials evaluating Ayurvedic therapies in Artava Kshaya were analyzed. **Results:** Artava Kshaya arises from Tridosha imbalance, mainly increased Vata and Kapha with reduced Pitta, along with Agnimandya and obstruction of Artavavaha Srotas. Symptoms include delayed or irregular cycles, scanty flow, and menstrual pain. Ayurvedic treatments such as Shatapushpa-Shatavari Churna and Venuparvadi Kwatha improved menstrual regularity and flow. **Discussion:** Artava Kshaya in Ayurveda denotes oligomenorrhea and hypomenorrhea, with delayed (<3 days), scanty flow, and vaginal pain. It stems from Vata-Kapha dosha imbalance (especially Apan Vayu), impairing Artava vaha srotas and Ras and Rakta dhatu due to poor diet and lifestyle and excess Kaphaj foods, which weaken Agni and generate Ama. Management includes Shodhana (Vamana, Virechana, Basti), Dosha-specific Shamana drugs, yoga and lifestyle changes to bolster Agni and clear Ama, especially useful for adolescents. Modern views link it hormonal imbalances on the HPO axis from nutrition deficits and stress. **Conclusion:** Early, individualized Ayurvedic management using medicines, Panchakarma, lifestyle correction, and Rajaswala Paricharya offers a safe, holistic, and non-hormonal approach to restore menstrual health and prevent complications.

INTRODUCTION

The menstrual cycle is a vital physiological process in a woman's reproductive life. It begins with menarche during puberty, continues through the reproductive years with phases like conception, pregnancy, and lactation, and concludes with menopause. Menstruation occurs when the endometrium, which naturally prepares to support a fertilised gamete, is shed, and in the absence of conception, this lining is expelled as menstrual flow.

The amount of menstrual blood varies among women. According to Acharya Charaka, normal menstruation occurs at monthly intervals, lasts for about five days, and is free from pain or burning sensations. The menstrual flow should neither be too scanty nor excessive.

Artavakshaya, a prevalent reproductive disorder characterised by scanty menstruation in adolescent girls, highlights its symptoms, such as irregular and delayed menstruation, abdominal cramping, and lower back pain, often leading to amenorrhea or further complications like infertility. The existing literature lacks comprehensive treatment approaches specifically from an Ayurvedic perspective for managing Artava Kshaya.

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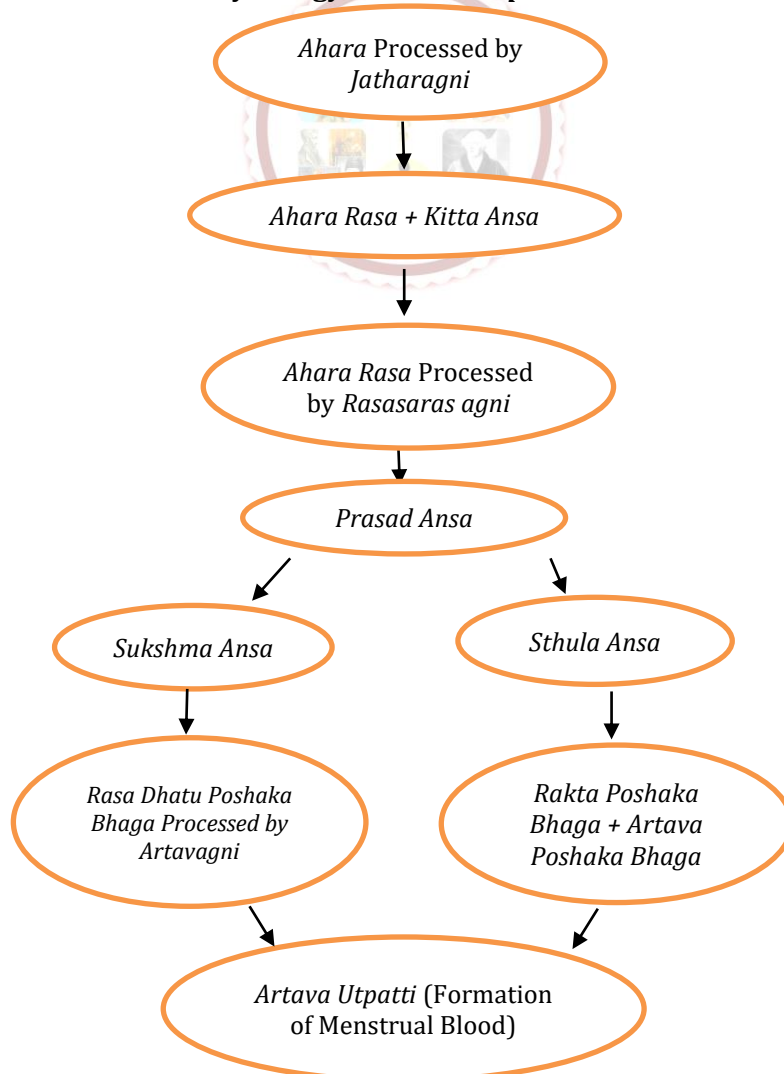
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The term *Artava Kshaya* is formed from two words: *Artava* and *Kshaya*. *Artava* refers to *Ritodbhava*^[1] *Artava*, where *Ritu* means a fixed or specific period, and *Bhava* denotes occurrence. Hence, *Artava* signifies the bodily substance that is discharged at a particular time. *Kshaya*, on the other hand, comes from the root *Kshi*, which means decline or diminution. Therefore, when the quantity of *Artava* decreases from its normal measure of 4 *Anjali*, the condition is described as *Artava Kshaya* or *Kshinartava*.^[2] In *Artavakshaya*, the menstrual cycle becomes irregular (*Yathochitakala Adarshanam*), with reduced flow (*Alpata*), lasting for less than three days, and is often accompanied by pain in the vagina (*Yonivedana*)^[3]. According to *Acharya Vagbhata*, the obstruction of the *Raktamarga* by *Vata* and *Kapha doshas* hampers the normal menstrual discharge. In modern terms, this condition can be correlated with oligomenorrhea (menstrual cycles occurring at intervals longer than 35 days) and hypomenorrhea (menstrual bleeding lasting less than 2 days or scanty flow).^[4]

responsive to the ovarian hormones (estrogen and progesterone), and the outflow tract must be patent.^[5] The menstrual cycle, being highly intricate, is easily influenced by factors such as improper dietary habits, sedentary lifestyle, physical or emotional stress, metabolic disturbances, and obesity. These factors disturb the normal physiology and ultimately impair the hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian (H-P-O) axis, resulting in menstrual irregularities like oligohypomenorrhea. In today's context, the prevalence of menstrual disorders is significantly high. At present, menstrual abnormalities have become common among women. Research indicates that around 13.5% of women experience oligomenorrhea, while 12.95% suffer from hypomenorrhea. The growing incidence and severity of these conditions highlight the need for focused attention and effective solutions. Therefore, this study aims to comprehensively explore the aetiology, pathogenesis, clinical features, and evidence-based management of *Artava Kshaya*.^[6]

For menstruation to occur, the axis must be actively coordinated, the endometrium must be

Physiology of *Artava Utpatti*^[9]



MATERIALS AND METHODS

All information has been compiled from previous research studies, i.e., Ayurvedic randomised and non-randomized control trials, observational studies on *Artava Kshaya* and hypomenorrhea and oligomenorrhea within the duration year 2000-2025, those conducted at different centres and published in various peer-reviewed journals which are available on Pubmed, Google Scholar, Ayush Research Portal, Ayush Dhara, Shodh Ganga, Research Gate, Scopus. The reference lists of various relevant articles were manually searched using keywords *Artava Kshaya*, scanty menstruation, hypomenorrhea, oligomenorrhea and *Artava vaha srotas*.

Artava Paribhasha

Artava refers to the menstrual flow in women, which is formed from *Rasa Dhatu* and naturally occurs every month, usually lasting for about three days. It generally begins around the age of twelve and continues until about fifty years of age. The menstrual blood is expelled through the *Apatyamarga* (reproductive passage) in a healthy state - without pain, burning sensation, or excessive stickiness.^[7,8]

According to Namaste Portal, *Artavam/ Pushpam/Artavasonitam/Antahpushpam/Rajasravah/ Sonitam* refers to monthly periodic physiological uterine bleeding through the vagina, with the duration of 3-7 days symbolising the forthcoming fertile period; also used in some contexts for ovum and the functionality of female reproductive hormones.

Paribhasha of Artava Kshaya

Rajahsrava Kala

The duration of *Rajahsrava Kala* (menstrual flow) has been explained differently by various *Acharyas*:

1. <i>Bhela Samhita (Purvakhanda, Garbha 2/204)</i>	3 Days
2. <i>Ashtanga Sangraha (Sharira 1/10), Ashtanga Hridaya (Sharira 1/7)</i>	3 Nights
3. <i>Charaka Samhita (Chikitsa 30/225)</i>	5 Nights
4. <i>Harita Samhita (Sashthasthana 1/9), Bhela Samhita (Sharira 5/6)</i>	7 Days
5. <i>Bhavaprakasha (Purvakhanda 2/204)</i>	5 Days

Nidaana (Causes of disease) of Artava Kshaya

For convenience, the causes can be understood under two headings:

- *Samanya* (general) and
- *Vishesh* (specific)

Samanya Nidana

Since *Artava* is an *Upadhatu* of *Rasa Dhatu*, any factor that depletes *Rasa Dhatu* can also lead to *Artava Kshaya*. *Sushruta* notes that *Rasa Kshaya* contributes to *Dhatu Kshaya* ^[14]. *Charaka* ^[15] lists cause such as excessive exertion, fasting, worry, unwholesome diet, excessive heat exposure, fear, mental stress, overuse of alcohol, night vigil, repeated purgation, suppression of

- According to *Acharya Sushruta*, the symptoms of *Artava Kshaya* are as follows: menstruation either does not occur at the expected time, is delayed, or the interval between periods becomes prolonged (*Yathochita Kaala Adarshanam*); the menstrual flow is scanty (*Alpa Artava Pravrutti*); and there may be pain in the vaginal area or lower abdomen (*Yonivedana*). ^[10]
- According to *Acharya Dalhana*, if the menstrual flow (*Artava-srava*) lasts for less than three days, or if menstruation does not occur even after a month, and when a reduced quantity of menstrual blood is accompanied by pain in the vagina (*Yoni-vedana*), it is considered abnormal. ^[11]
- According to *Acharya Bhavaprakasha*, in *Artava Kshaya*, women crave pungent, sour, salty, hot, heavy, and irritant foods. These preferences reflect the body's attempt to pacify vitiated *Vata* and enhance *Pitta*. ^[12]
- According to *Acharya Bhela*, although blood flows through the entire body, due to certain imbalances (*Vikruti*) and deficiency of blood (*Raktalpata*), it fails to properly nourish the *Artava*, which ultimately results in *Artava Kshaya*. While *Acharya Sushruta* mainly focused on describing the clinical symptoms, *Acharya Bhela* provides a deeper insight into the underlying causes and development of the condition. ^[13]

natural urges, old age, seasonal changes, and afflictions (*Bhutabhighata*) as general causes of *Dhatu* and *Upadhatu Kshaya*, which apply to *Artava Kshaya* as well. *Sushruta* further emphasizes faulty diet and lifestyle as important general causes. Additionally, the *Vimsati Yonivyapada Nidanans* are also considered as causes of *Artava Dusti*.

Vishesh Nidana

Specific factors involve disturbances in the process of *Artava* formation. These include vitiation of *Artavotpadaka Ahara*, *Agni (Jatharagni and Rasagni)*, *Rasa Dhatu*, and *Artavavaha Srotas*. Since *Artava* is predominantly *Pitta* in nature, excessive *Vata*- and

Kapha-promoting diet and lifestyle directly lead to its depletion. *Sushruta* highlights the combined role of *Vata* and *Kapha* [16], while *Vagbhata* mentions that vitiation of all three *Doṣhas* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*) can cause *Kshinartava*. [17]

Aartava Vaha Srotas are two in number, having roots in *Garbhashaya* and *Aartava Vahi Dhamanis*; injury to these produces infertility, dyspareunia and amenorrhoea. [18] *Acharyas* have different opinion regarding the modern concept of '*Aartava Vaha Srotas*'.

Aharjanya Hetu

For better understanding, the *Nidana* (causative factors) are classified under five categories:

1. *Aharjanya Hetu* (Dietary factors)
2. *Viharjanya Hetu* (Lifestyle factors)
3. *Manasika Hetu* (Psychological Factors)
4. *Abhighatajanya Hetu* (Traumatic factors)
5. *Anya Hetu* (Miscellaneous Causes)

Table 1: Aharaja Hetu of Artava Kshaya[19]

S.No.	Vitiating Hetu	Vata	Pitta	Kapha
1.	Ahara Rasa	Pungent (<i>Katu</i>), bitter (<i>Tikta</i>), and astringent (<i>Kashaya</i>) in taste.	Excessive pungent (<i>Katu</i>), sour (<i>Amla</i>), and salty (<i>Lavana</i>) tastes.	Rich in sweet (<i>Madhura</i>) and salty (<i>Lavana</i>) tastes.
2.	Ahara Guna	Cold (<i>Sheeta</i>), light (<i>Laghu</i>), and dry (<i>Ruksha</i>) in nature in excessive amounts.	Hot (<i>Uṣna</i>) and pungent or irritating (<i>Vidahi</i>) in nature.	Oily and sticky (<i>Abhishyandī</i>), heavy (<i>Guru</i>), and slimy (<i>Picchila</i>) in nature.
3.	Ahara Dravya	Green gram (<i>Mudga</i>) and black gram (<i>Shyamaka</i>), as well as very dry vegetables (<i>Ati shushka shaka</i>).	Alkaline substances (<i>Kshara</i>), curd (<i>Dadhi</i>), buttermilk (<i>Takra</i>), and fermented gruel (<i>Kanji</i>).	Pistachios (<i>Pista</i>), sugarcane (<i>Ikshu</i>), black gram (<i>Maṣha</i>) and aquatic meats (<i>Anupa Mamsa</i>).
4.	Ahara Pramana	Abhojana, Atyalpa Bhojana	-	Atibhojana, Adhyashana

Viharjanya Hetus

Table 2: Viharaja Hetu of Artava Kshaya [20]

Vata vitiating Hetu	Pitta vitiating Hetu	Kapha vitiating Hetu
Ati Vyayama Ati Vyavaya Ati Prajagarana (sleeplessness/ being awake) Vega Dharana, Ratri Jagarana (wakefulness at night)	Atapasevana, Dhuma Sevana	Divaswapna

Manasik Hetu

 [21]

Vata	Pitta
1. Chinta 2. Shoka 3. Bhaya	1. Krodha 2. Irshya

Anya Hetu (Other Causes)

 [22]

- **Causes that aggravate Vata:** Excessive blood loss (*Ati Ashraka Srava*), and depletion of body tissues (*Dhatukshaya*).
- **Causes that aggravate Kapha:** Overnutrition (*Ati Santarpana*), *Achinta*.

Abhighata Janya Hetu (Causes Due to Injury or Trauma)

Sushruta describes that any injury (*Vedha*) to the *Artavavaha Srotas*-the channels responsible for transporting *Artava*- can result in *Artava Kshaya*. [23]

Purva Rupa

The early signs of *Artava Kshaya* (scanty or reduced menstrual flow) are not directly described in the classical Ayurvedic texts. However, *Bhavaprakasha* mentions that women suffering from this condition often develop cravings for foods like spicy (*Katu*), sour (*Amla*), salty (*Lavana*), hot (*Ushna*), heavy (*Guru*), and pungent or burning (*Vidahi*) items, as well as fruits, vegetables, and certain drinks. [24]

Since these types of foods are known to stimulate and increase menstrual flow, the desire for them can be understood as the body's natural response to the deficiency of *Artava*. Therefore, these cravings themselves can be seen as the early signs (*Purva Rupa*) of *Artava Kshaya*.

Rupa (Symptoms)

According to *Sushruta*, the symptoms of *Artava Kshaya* (reduced or scanty menstruation) can be explained as follows [25]:

1. Yathochita Kaala Adarshana (Delayed or irregular appearance of menstruation)

- If the first period (menarche) occurs later than usual, around the age of 15 years or more, it may indicate *Artava Kshaya*.
- If the gap between periods is unusually long.

Samprapti (Pathogenesis)

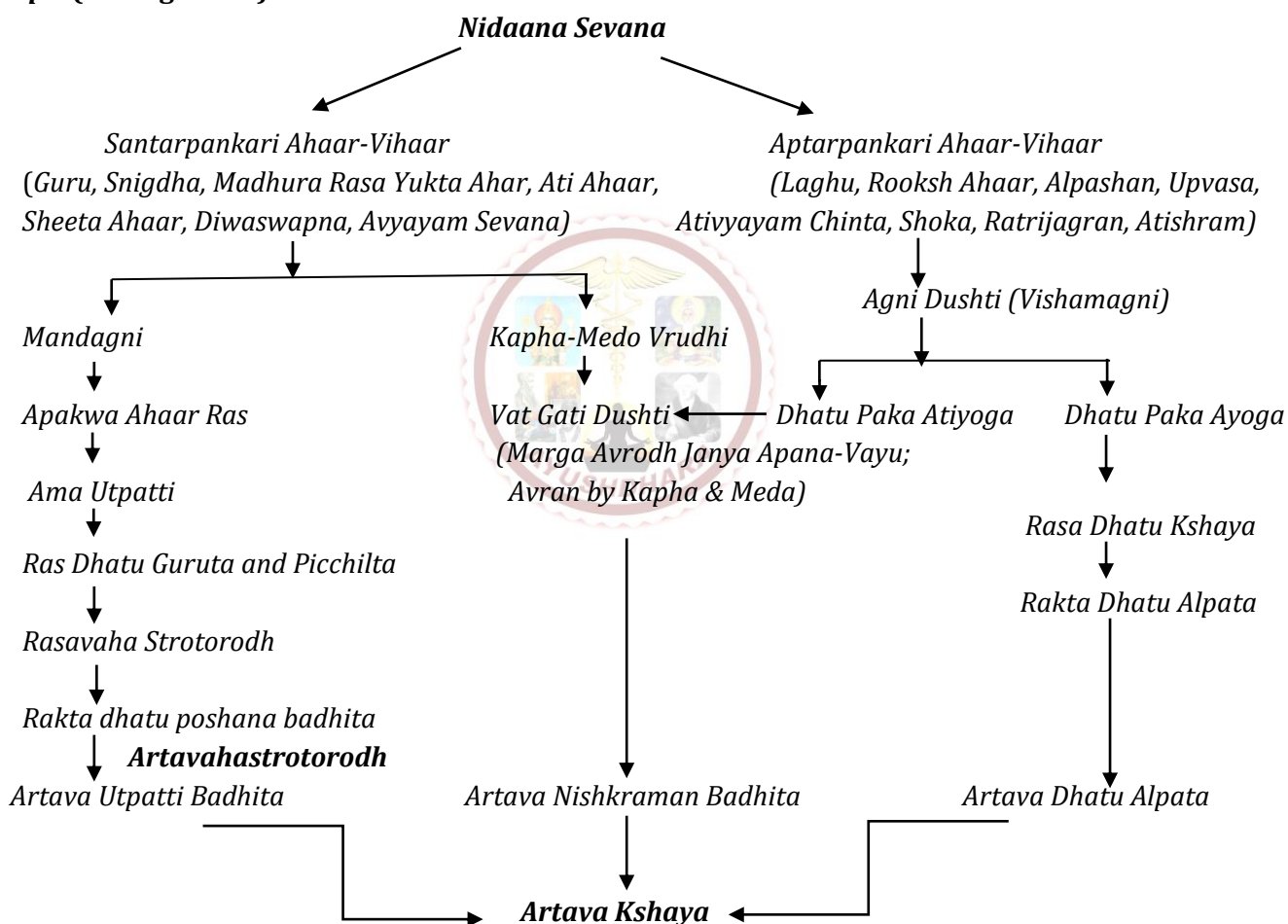
- If the menstrual bleeding lasts for less than 3 days (shorter than the normal duration) as *Acharya Dalhan* stated that normal menstrual bleeding is usually of 3 days.

2. Alpartava (Scanty flow)

- The term "*Alpa*" means "small or less quantity."
- If the menstrual flow is very light, i.e., less than 4 *Anjali* (traditional measure) or less than about 25 ml (mean blood loss per menstrual cycle is 25-30ml) [26], it can be considered *Artava Kshaya*.

3. Yoni Vedana (Pain in the genital tract)

- Due to disturbed *Vata Dosha* (especially *Apana* and *Vyana Vata*), women may experience pain during menstruation. [27]
- This pain can be spasmodic (cramp-like), radiating, and occasional in nature.



Samprapti Ghatak of Artava Kshaya [28]

Dosha: Vata, Pitta, Kapha	Udbhava Sthana: Garbhashaya
Dushya: Rasa, Rakta, Meda, Artava	
Agni: Jatharagni, Dhatwagni Mandhya	Adhishthana: Artava Vaha Srotas
Ama: Jathargni Mandhya Janya Dhatwagni Mandhya Janya	
Srotas: Rasa, Rakta, Meda, Artava Vaha Srotas	
Srotodushthi Prakar: Sanga and Siragranthi Prakara	

Line of Treatment (*Chikitsa*)

The main aim of *Chikitsa* is *Samprapti vighatana* – Breaking the disease pathogenesis.

In *Artava Kshaya*:

- *Vata* and *Kapha* are aggravated.
- *Pitta*, *Rasa* and *Rakta dhatu* are reduced.
- The root cause is *Agnimandya* (weak digestive fire).

So, treatment should address all these factors.

Nidana Parivarjana

The first step is to stop the factors that cause or worsen the condition. This is the foundation of long-term relief.

Shodhana (Cleansing Therapy)

- *Dalhana* explains that *Vamana* (emesis) is better than *Virechana* (purgation) here.^[29]
 - Because *Virechana* reduces *Pitta*, which would further reduce *Artava*.
 - *Vamana*, on the other hand, removes excess *Kapha* and increases the relative strength of *Agneya* elements in the body, thereby improving *Artava* production.
- *Chakrapani* adds that both *Vamana* and *Virechana* can be used, but only after assessing patient strength and proper dosage, since both clear blocked body channels (*Srotas*).
- *Kashyapa* ^[30] classify *Artava Kshaya* (*Alpartava*) as an *Anuvasana Sadhya Vyadhi*, meaning it is usually treatable with proper efforts.
- *Vagbhata* ^[31] suggested that treatments which increase *Pitta* and *Rakta* help manage *Artava Kshaya* (reduced or scanty menstruation).

Use of *Agneya* (which elevates *Pitta dosha*) Substances

In *Artava Kshaya*, there is:

- Qualitative deficiency of *Pitta*, and
- Quantitative reduction of *Artava*.

Hence, medicines and foods that enhance *Agni* and

Pathya-Apathya in *Artava Kshaya*

***Pathya*:** As *Agneya Dravya* has *Ushna virya* hence easily balances out the *Ruksha*, *Sheeta guna* of *Vata* and *Snigdha*, *Picchila guna* of *Kapha* so the use of *Agneya Dravya* in *Artava Kshaya* relieves *Kapha dosha*, which does the *Avaran* of *Vata dosha*.

- *Shali rice*, *Yava*, *Madya*, and *Mansa*, which are capable of increasing the *Pitta dosha*, should be consumed.
- Fish, *Kulath*, *Kanji*, etc. should be consumed.^[39]

***Apathya*:** All the *Nidaan* of *Artava Kshaya* should be excluded, such as *Diwaswapna*, *Ratrijagran*, etc.

increase *Pitta* are useful. *Acharya Dalhana* ^[32] mentioned these items as:

- *Tila* (Sesame seeds)
- *Maasha* (Black gram)
- *Sura* (fermented drinks)
- *Shukta* (fermented sour preparations)

These stimulate digestion, improve *Pitta*, and thus promote *Artava*.

Abhyantara Chikitsa

a. *Choorna*^[33]

- *Shatpushpa*- *Ritupravartani* & *Yonishukravishodhini*
- *Shatavari*- *Vrishya*, *Pushpprajakari*

b. *Vati*

- *Rajahpravartani Vati*^[34]- *Rajorodh*, *Kastaraj*
- *Nashtapushpantaka ras*^[35]- *Nashta Pushpa*

c. *Kwath*^[36]

- *Krishna Tila* (*Sesamum indicum*), *Karvi*, *Kala Jeera* (*Nigela sativa*) and *Guda* (Jaggery) as *Prakshep-Raj Pravartan*

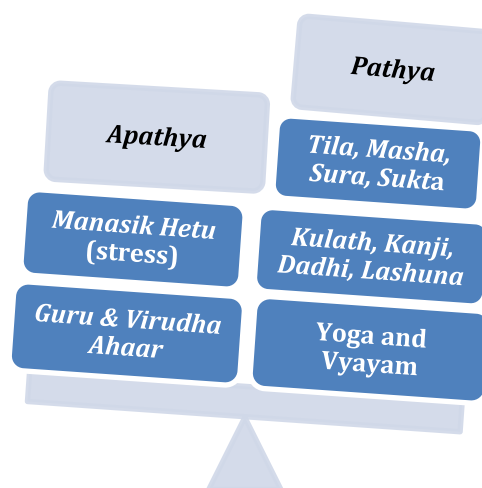
d. *Kalka*^[37]

- *Japa Pushpa* (*Hibiscus rosasinensis*) along with *Kanji* and *Jyotishmati* leaves (*Centella asiatica*) (Fried in *Ghrith*), along with *Durva* (*Cynodon dactylon*) *Swaras*- *Artava Pravartana*
- *Jyotishmati Pushpa* (*Centella asiatica*), *Swarjik Kshar*, *Vacha* (*Acorus calamus*), *Peeta Shaal Pushpa* - *Artava Pravartana*

Sthanika Chikitsa

a. *Varti*^[38]

- *Ikshwaku Beej* (*Lagenaria siceraria*), *Dantimool* (*Baliospermum montanum*), *Pipali* (*Piper longum*), *Guda*, *Madanphal* (*Randia spinosa*), *Surabeej*, *Yava Kshara*, *Snoohi Ksheer* (*Euphorbia neriifolia*)- *Raj Pravartan*.



Clinical Evidence from Various Studies

1. A Randomised control clinical trial was carried out on 60 *Artava Kshaya* (irregular, scanty and painful menses) patients aged between 18 and 40-years having complaints of irregular, scanty and painful menstruation. Divided into 2 groups. They were administered *Shatapushpa* and *Shatawari churna* (group A) and OC pill (group B) for three months in a dose of 5 g daily with cow *Ghritha* and *Guda*; as per the standard schedule, OC pills were given once a day.

Result: Both the therapies were effective in increasing the duration of *Artava strava*, but *Shatapushpa Shatawari Churna* is more effective in relieving *Alpata* of *Artava strava* Kalavadh^[40].

2. A case study of a 19-year-old female patient with a complaint of irregular menstruation since menarche associated with weight gain. A detailed history with all physical examination and laboratory investigation was carried out. All the laboratory investigations were found normal, but the PCOD finding came in the USG. *Kusumanjanani Yoga* 10ml thrice a day has prescribed orally for 2 months. Patient was advised to follow up after 1st cycle.^[41]

Result: Patient had her menstruation regularly with normal menstruation. Even after cessation of medicine, she got her menstruation in 1 month.

3. Total 18 clinically diagnosed and confirmed cases of *Artava Kshaya* were registered for the present clinical trial. The cases were selected from the O.P.D./I.P.D. of the P.G Department of Prasuti-Tantra and Stri Rog, National Institute of Ayurveda (NIA), Jaipur, with informed consent. Out of which 15 patients completed the course of the trial. *Venuparvadi Kwatha* was selected to evaluate its efficacy in the management of *Artava Kshaya*.

Result

Statistically very significant results (P value<0.01) were found in the interval of menstrual cycle and amount of flow.^[42]

DISCUSSION

Artava Kshaya in Ayurveda refers to menstrual problems such as oligomenorrhoea and hypomenorrhoea, where periods come late, irregularly, or last for less than 3 days, and the flow is very scanty. Sometimes there may also be pain in the vaginal area.

According to Ayurvedic principles, this condition arises due to an imbalance among the three *Doshas-Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* with particular involvement of *Apana Vayu*, whose dysregulation plays a central role in its pathogenesis. This affects the body

tissues and channels responsible for menstrual flow. Common causes include:

- Wrong diet and lifestyle
- Suppression of natural urges
- Overconsumption of *Kaphaj Ahaar*

These factors increase *Kapha* and *Vata*, reduce *Pitta*, weaken *Agni* (digestion), create *Ama* (toxins), disturb *Rasa Dhatu* and block *Artava Vaha Srotas* (reproductive channels). Because of these disturbances, symptoms of the disease appear.

Management in Ayurveda includes:

- *Shodhana* (cleansing therapies) like *Vaman*, *Virechana* and *Basti*.
- *Shamana* medicines chosen according to *Dosha* imbalance.
- Integrating *Yoga* and *Vyayam* also aids in *Samprapti Vighatan* of the disease.
- Simple lifestyle steps can help stop *Ama* (toxins) from building up and improve *Agni* (digestion). These habits are especially helpful for adolescent girls who are experiencing *Artava Kshaya*.

Modern science explains similar conditions through hormonal imbalances, poor nutrition, and stress, which affect the hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian (HPO) axis.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda links *Artava Kshaya* to issues like blocked channels, weak digestion, poor tissue metabolism, and problems in the reproductive pathways. In oligo-hypomenorrhoea, *Kapha* is mainly increased, with *Vata* and *Pitta* also disturbed. This *Tridosha* imbalance and weak *Agni* disrupt tissue metabolism in *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Meda*, and menstrual channels. Overtime this can lead to long-lasting menstrual problems.

By managing *Artava Kshaya* early, we can prevent future gynaecological problems like PCOS and infertility. Treatment should be chosen based on the root causes of *Artava Kshaya*. A combination of oral medicines, lifestyle changes and following *Rajaswala Paricharya* (Ayurvedic menstrual care guidelines) can effectively reverse the condition. This approach, if followed prevent further diseases and can be a good alternative to hormonal therapy.

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