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## Ayurvedic Approach to PCOS-A Critical Review

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### ABSTRACT:

**Introduction-** Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is a common chronic anovulatory disorder with androgen excess in women of reproductive age. It is a multifactorial, multisystem disorder but, obesity & insulin resistance are often associated. The patient with symptoms of menstrual irregularities, excess androgen (hirsutism, acne alopecia), and USG shreds of evidence of >2-9 mm size arranged in the cortex of the ovary.

**Aims:** To explore and understand ayurvedic theories and practices on PCOS.

**Material and methods:** The Charaka Samhita, a classical Ayurvedic book, was thoroughly examined to compile a list of relevant references together with Sanskrit commentary. Internet searched to locate study papers and related material.

**Conclusion:** According to the Ayurveda PCOS is studied, and its pathogenesis tried to be established. *Kapha Vata* predominant *tridoshaja vikara & agnimandhya* is the main reason for pathogenesis. So, it can be effectively treated by *tridosha* pacifying, *agnivardhak chikitsa* with *uttarvasti*.

**Keywords-** PCOS, *Pushpaghani jataharini*, *Aartavakshaya*, *Anartava*.

## INTRODUCTION

*Jataharini* has described by Acharya Kashyapa in *Revati Kalpaadhyaya* of *Kalpasthan* in Kashyapa Samhita. The word *Jataharini* comprises of two words: *Jata+Harini*. (*jata*-one who is born) +*harini* (to enrapture) means *jataharini* is one which kills or effects the embryo, foetus, neonate, menses and the child till 16 years of age. *Jataharini* is a group of disease that affects the women during their different stages of life. It not only affects the women but also their fetus, neonates and children. *Pushpaghani Jataharini* is one of them which affect the women at their reproductive age. *Jataharini* destroys *beeja-rupa artava*, destroys bodies, destroys the foetus, destroys the born children, destroys the being born or to Be born. The woman who had menstruation in time.

But it is useless (without fruit). The one whose hair follicles are gross and loamy, that is called *Pushpaghani jataharini*.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVE

- To understand the concept of the menstrual cycle according to the Ayurved.
- To understand the role of *tridosha* in the development of follicles in the ovaries.
- To understand the etiology & pathogenesis of PCOS, as per Ayurveda theories.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The data are collected from the Ayurvedic Samhitas, journals & articles on google & from previous studies.

### Critical Review

PCOS is a lifestyle disorder of females of reproductive age



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group & a most common form of chronic anovulation with androgen excess, excluding other causes of hyperandrogenism like non-classical congenital adrenal hyperplasia, androgen secreting adrenal tumors, hyperprolactinemia etc. It is considered as a heterogeneous, multifactorial, multisystem endocrinopathy.

**Ayurveda And Pcos**

- *Anartava, Nastartava, Artavkshaya, Vandhya yonivyapat, Pushpaghni jataharani, Granthibhoot artvadushti* and *Santarpanthotha nidana* can be compared with PCOS.
- Predominantly *Kapha Vataj* disorder involving *Rasa, Rakta, Meda, Asthi, Shukra, Artava (Raja upadhatu ) and Rasavaha, Medovaha, Asthivaha, artavaha Srtotasas.*
- *Kaphadushti Agnimandya(Jatharagni+ Dhatwagni) Vandhyatva, sthaolya,* etc.
- *Vatadushti* -Painful, Scanty, Irregular menses.
- *Pittadushti* - Acne, hair fall, heart diseases. Hirsutism.

In ayurvedic literature, mainly 4 factors are stated essentially for the conception & maintenance of their quality is emphasized for good pregnancy outcomes.

**Ritu**- appropriate time (ovulating time)

**Kstera**-field (whole reproductive tract)

**Ambu** -proper nourishment

**Beeja** – ovum, menstrual blood, hormones, *Artav*

Out of all the four factors, *artava* has great importance, as normal physiology of the other three factors depends on the normal functioning of *artava*. “*streenam garbhopyogi shyaat artavam Sarva sammtam*”. In ayurvedic literature, the *artava* word is used for *Antaha Pushpa* – hormones & ovum and *Bahaya Pushpa* – menstrual blood. Features of *bahya Pushpa and rituchakra* can help to predict the physiology of *antaha Pushpa*. When the *antaha Pushpa* (hormones) is functional physiologically than the *bahya Pushpa* (menstruation) shows features of *shudha artava* if there is no anatomical deformity in the genital Although in Ayurveda description of PCOS is as such not present but to some extent few diseases simulated as described by some Scholars-

1. ***Pushpaghani jataharni***- “*vrutha pushpam*” & “*sthula Loma gandasha*”: Menses occurs regularly at the usual time. And the women suffering from this type of infertility have obese cheeks covered with hairs. Description of obese cheeks may indicate central obesity which is found in PCOS as steroid hormones, mainly androgen have increased. Also, there is an indication of hirsutism, which

is again due to androgen excess [17]. The name *Phuspaghani* here indicates, infertility due to anovulation or due to the formation of bad quality of ovum or defective endometrium.

2. ***Vikuta jataharni***: Menses are irregular in terms of duration, color, and amount. In the anovulatory and oligo-ovulatory cycle menses are either scanty or excessive in terms of amount either there is oligomenorrhoea or amenorrhoea. Menses may vary in duration of bleeding and color, according to the interval at which menstrual bleeding starts. It seems to be due to oligo ovulation or anovulation found in PCOS [18].
3. ***Artavakshaya*** “*yatho uchita kalam aadarshanam alptaa va yoni vedana cha*”: In *artava kshya* there are features of oligomenorrhoea, scanty menses, and painful menses explains PCOS only partially. Since acharyas mainly focused on the description of *bahaya atarva Lakshana* (menstrual blood) not the other, signs of androgen excess and the presence of cystic ovaries have not been explained [15].
4. ***Granthibhut artava dushti***: As *artava* word used for an Ovum, hormone, and menstrual blood. We see in *beeja roopi artava/ovum* is anovulation cystic ovaries if we consider that the antaha artava/hormones get vitiated by excess *Kapha* and *Vata*. And the *bahaya artaval* menstrual blood will also form clots, either with the scanty or heavy flow depending on dosha predominance. Or there may be hyperplasia of the of the endometrium from polyps. In the *nidana of Nasta artava*, Acharya Vagbhata has explained that obstruction of channels *artava* is not evident, the patient remains amenorrheic [18].

**Development of PCOS is attributed to combination of**

- **Environmental factors**- like lifestyle modifications in form of sedentary life, over eating without proper Gap between meals, work load, mental stress etc.
- **Genetical factors** – it has sometimes family history.
- Obesity & Insulin resistance are recognized as important factors.

**Diagnosis of PCOS is based upon the presence of 2 of following 3 criteria (ASRM/ESHRE)**

- **Oligoovulation or Anovulation** – manifest as menstrual abnormalities- Amenorrhoea/Oligomenorrhoea
- **Androgen excess**- clinically manifest as hirsutism, Acne, Hair fall. -biochemically as testosterone >2ng/ml

- **USG evidences if PCOS-** >>12 follicular cyst measuring 2-9mm
- By symptoms and signs of PCOS we can consider it as *Vata kapha* predominant *tridhoshaj artava dushti*. As *Vata* is responsible for division of cells (granulosa, theca cells), rupture of follicle etc. *Pitta has paaka karma* so is associated with conversion of androgen to estrogen & maturity of follicle. *Kapha* has nutritive function so along with *Vata* it helps in proliferation of ovarian follicles. PCOS cannot be completely correlated to any one disease described in Ayurvedic literature but to some extent few diseases can be simulated as described by some Scholars
- An unvitiated female genital tract only can lead in to proper sexual function & perfect pregnancy with a healthy & virtuous progeny. *Artava* represent the healthy state of reproductive system following a rhythm & cyclicality in female genital physiology. Thus, we can consider 3 Physiological concepts under *Artava*.
- ***Dhatu (updhatu) rupa artava – hormones***
- ***Beeja rupa artava – ovum***
- ***Rajahsrava rupa artava- menstrual flow***

#### ***Samprapati (Pathogenesis) Of Pushpaghni Jataharini***

Intake of heavy, foods which increases secretion (*Abhishyanda*), sweets, cold, spicy and junk foods in frequent intervals (*Vishamasana*) (Flow Chart 1) Causing to *Pushpaghani Jataharini* leading to symptoms like anovulatory menstrual cycles, increased facial, body hairs (Menstruation does not appear in its Appropriate time or delayed “*Sthula-lomasha-ganda*” i.e. cheeks are Corpulent and covered with hairs.” Channels carrying *Aartava* are obstructed by *Vata and Kapha*, so not discharged monthly.)

#### **Treatment Of Pcos As Per Ayurveda**

- “*Nidana Parivarjana*” (avoid the causative factors) is said to be the very first step towards the management of PCOS. As *Agnimandya*, *Medovridhhi*, *Apana Vayu* and *Kapha dushti* plays the major role in the pathogenesis of the syndrome, so taking above fact into the consideration, *Pathya Ahara-Vihara* (dietary regimen & exercise) is to be used.
- For *Agnimandya and Aampachana*, use of *Trikatu Churna* . *Chitrakadi Gutika*, *Shadushana Churna*, *Haritaki Churna*, *Hingwashtaka Churna*” is to be done in order to palliate the *Srotovarodha* and to facilitate the *Apana-Vatanulomana*.
- For *Medovridhhi*, use of *Takrarishta*, *Madhu like lekhanadravyas* (scrapping agents) along with *Yava*, *yavaka*, *kulattha* etc. as *aahara* (diet) is mentioned by

Acharya Charaka in *chikitsa of Atistula* (obese). Moreover, lifestyle- modification as well as regular exercise is also emphasized

- To remove the Sanga (obstruction) of *Aartavavah Srotas,Uttar-Basti(douche)* is given with *Dhanvantari Taila*.
- *Vamana Karma* (emesis) – as it alleviates the *Srotovarodha* by eliminating vitiated *Kapha*. As *Kapha is soumya* in prakriti, decrease in *Kapha* consequently increases *Aartava of Aagneya* nature
- *Shatpushpa and Shatavari Churna* (*Asparagus recemosus Willd.*) are to be used in females with deficiency or loss of *Aartava*, women getting their menstruation but not conceiving.
- *Kanchanara Guggulu*”, *Sukumara Ghrita*” for reducing the size of formed ovarian cysts.
- *Pathadi Kwath* mentioned by Acharya Sushruta in *Vatakaphaja Aartava dushti* given orally along with the *matra- basti of Shatpushpa taila*” after the cessation of menstrual cycle for seven days is found efficient due to its properties of *Aampachana*, *agnideepana*, *Vatanulomana*, *Srotoshodhana and Vata-Kaphashamana*.
- *Narayana taila*, *Rasona Kalpa*, *Pushpadhanva Rasa* and *Kumaryasava* is indicated in *Nashta pushpa*.
- Regular practice of Yoga i.e. *Uttanapadasana*, *Sarvangasana*, *Halasana*, *Mayoorasana*, *Surya-namaskara*, *Vakrasana* and *Sheersasana* in amenorrhea and, while *Sarvangasana*, *Sheersasana*, *Halasana*, *Bhastrika* and *Ujjayi pranayama* in female sterility, are indicated.

## **DISCUSSION**

According to Ayurveda, the disorder is caused by vitiated *Vata and Kapha doshas* and *Rasa-Meda-Mamsa-Rakta dhatus dushti*. The main objective of the *chikitsa* is-

- To flame the *Jathragni and dhatvagni* with the use of *Deepana- pachana dravyas* to correct the *Agnimandya*.
- To remove the Sanga of *Aartava-vaha srotas and Srotoshodhana* through various *Samshodhana karmas* to balance the imbalanced doshas i.e. reduction of *Kapha and Anulomana of Apana Vata*; to nourish the *dushta dhatus* and to regulate the irregular menstrual cycle.
- To reduce the weight through *Lekhana dravyas*, *Pathya aahara- vihara* and regular exercise to regulate the hormonal imbalance
- To reduce the size of already formed ovarian cysts through *Kanchanara Gugglu & Sukumara Ghrita as Kanchanara* is very useful in treating extra growths or tumors<sup>17</sup>.

- To enhance the chances of conception with the use of *Shatpushpa and Shatavari Churna*. As *Shatavari* (*Asparagus recemosus* Willd.) is known for its phytoestrogenic 48 properties.”

## CONCLUSION

PCOS is a frustrating experience for women. As the infertility cases increasing recent days mainly caused by PCOS which is the complex of syndromes like Irregular periods, Weight gain, Excess androgen, Polycystic ovaries. From an Ayurvedic perspective this can be considered under the *Pushpagni Jataharini* in which the *Nidana, Lakshana* areas that of the cause and PCOS. So Based on the *Samprapthi, Dosha Dushya* involvement, and *Roga Lakshana Samshodhana* will be the line of management for the condition.

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**(Flow Chart) *Samprapati* (Pathogenesis) Of *Pushpaghni Jataharini***

