Dysmenorrhoea (Kashtartava): An Ayurvedic Perspective

Bhagyashri Patil, Rahul Kamde, Vijay Bhalsing, Kirti Bhati

Abstract
In present day life women are effectively facing challenges encountered by stressful life resulting in Mithya Ahar, vihar, over exertion & malnutrition this may direct to vikruti in “Rutuchakra” leading to various vyadhī allied to menstruation. Ayurveda recommends rutucharya and dinacharya, diet modulation and yoga in the form of asanas, pranayam and meditation on a regular basis so as to alleviate dysmenorrhoea effectively. Similarly, Uttarbasti, Garbhashaya balyaushadhi, anuvasan or matrabasti can also be administered if necessary.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Kashtartava, Menstruation, Dysmenorrhoea

1. Introduction
Today stress is becoming an inescapable part of modern life. In the incessant quest for material comforts, a woman has been losing her health. The basic reason why women are reeling under myriad problems is because she has not been following the codes of healthy living. She has disregarded the codes for the bodily health as well as healthy mind also.

Menstruation is a natural event as a part of the normal process of reproductive life in females. Due to today’s sedentary lifestyle and lack of exercise, dysmenorrhoea is becoming today’s burning problem throughout the world which causes discomfort for women’s daily ensuing day to day activities and may result in missing work or school, inability to participate in sports or other activities. A systematic review of studies in developing countries performed by Harlow and Campbell (2002) has revealed that about 25-50% of adult women and about 75% of adolescents experience pain during menstruation, with 05-20% reporting severe dysmenorrhoea or pain [1].

In the treatment of dysmenorrhea, no addictive, analgesic, antispasmodics are prescribed which are not good for health for longer use. During menstruation, many women experience gastrointestinal upsets which are increased by analgesics and anti-inflammatory drugs, which also produce headache, dizziness, drowsiness and blurred vision.

In Ayurvedic classics Kashtartava (dysmenorrhea) is not described as a separate disease because women were not suffering much from this problem in that era because of pin pointed Ritucharya & Rajasvalacharya. According to Ayurvedic text there are many other diseases in which Kashtartava is considered and is described as a symptom. Hence, this study is particular about the description regarding Kashtartava on the basis of scattered classical references.

2. Artava
A substance of the body which flows out at the specific period of time is called as Artava [2]. A substance which flows out from Apaty amarga without pain, burning and sliminess is known as Artava [3]. Apana Vayu and Vyana Vayuis mainly responsible for Artava Utpatti [4].

3. Kashtartava
Kashtartava (dysmenorrhea) is not separately described as a disease. But there are many diseases in which Kashtartava is considered and described as a symptom.

3.1. Nirukti
The term Kashtartava is made of two words- Kashta and Artava

Kashta: Painful, Difficult, troublesome, ill, forced, wrong, unnatural, a bad state of Thing.

Artava: Belonging to reasons, period of time, menstruation.

Kashtena - with great difficulty [5].
Thus the word Kashtartava can be expressed as- “Kashtenamuchyavattii kashtrartava” i.e. the condition where Artava is shaded with great difficulty and pain istermed as “Kashtartava”. 

4. Sampraptighataka

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<tr>
<th>Dosha</th>
<th>Vata Pradhan Tridosha</th>
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<td>Vata</td>
<td>Vyana, Apana</td>
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<td>Pitta</td>
<td>Ranjaka, Pachaka</td>
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<td>Kapha</td>
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<td>Dhautu</td>
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<td>Srotasa</td>
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<td>Udhibhavasthana</td>
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<td>SthanaSamsrshaya</td>
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<td>VyaktiSthana</td>
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5. Ayurvedic concept of pain related to Kashtartava

Acharya Charaka [6] has mentioned none of the gynecological disease can be arise without affliction of aggravated Vata. Vata is the main responsible factor, though other doshas only be present as Anubandhi to it. So pain is produced due to vitiation of only vatiadosha or in combination with other Doshas.

Modern Review

6. Definitions of Menstruation

Menstruation is a function peculiar to women and the higher apes. It may be define as a “periodic and cyclic shedding of prostegational endometrium accompanied by loss of blood”. It takes place at approximately 28-days interval between the menarche and menopause [11]. Menstruation is the visible manifestation of cyclic physiologic uterine bleeding due to shedding of the endometrium following invisible interplay of hormones mainly through hypothalamo-pitutary-ovarian-endometrial axis[12].

7. Dysmenhorrhoea

7.1 Definition

The term dysmenorrhea refers to painful menstruation. Dysmenorrhea is a cramp labor-like pain in the lower abdomen that radiates to upper abdomen, waist and thighs and is sometimes accompanied by systemic symptoms like nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache and dizziness [17,18].

7.2. Etymology

The word „dysmenorrhoea” has a Greek origin. Dis-men-o-re’ah
Dis: Prefix meaning difficult, bad, painfulness; Monthrei: To flow
Thus, Dysmenorrhea-meaans painful or difficult menses [13].

7.3. Types of dysmenorrhea

There are two types of Dysmenorrhea.

7.3.1. Primary dysmenorrhea-

Primary dysmenorrhea is the pain associated to ovulation cycles, without demonstrable lesions that affect the reproductive organs. Primary dysmenorrhea is related to myometrial contractions induced by prostaglandins (Pgs) originating in secretory endometrium, which result in uterine ischemia and pain [14,15]. In addition to the physiologic perspective, various psychologic theories have also been proposed, emphasizing the role of personality factors and attitudes about menstruation [16].

7.3.2. Secondary dysmenorrhoea-

Secondary dysmenorrhea is the pain associated with ovulatory cycles caused by a demonstrable pathology.

8. Differential diagnosis

A. The most important differential diagnosis of primary dysmenorrhea is secondary dysmenorrhea.

Secondary dysmenorrhea

1. Endometriosis
2. Adenomyosis
3. Uterine myoma
4. Endometrial polyps
5. Obstructive malformations of the genital tract

B. Other causes of pain

1. Pelvic inflammatory disease
2. Pelvic adhesions
3. Irritable bowel syndrome
4. Interstitial cystitis
5. Chronic pelvic inflammatory disease

C. Sudden onset of dysmenorrhoea

1. Pelvic inflammatory disease
2. Unrecognized ectopic pregnancy
3. Spontaneous abortion

9. Treatment as Per Ayurvedic Classics

9.1 Treatment

Life-style changes

Exercise regularly-minimum thrice a week

Ensure sound sleep of at least 6-8 hours

Avoid smoking and alcohol

Reduce caffeine

Diet

Eat healthy, warm and fresh foods

Eat 5-6 small meals

Have fresh fruits like plums, dark grapes, apples,
pomegranates.
Eat more leafy vegetables
Regularly use ginger in food preparations
Avoid high fat and sugar
Take supplements like calcium, magnesium, vitamin E, B6, B12

Yoga: Yoga activities can help to reduce and prevent the severity of many ailments that specifically women’s health and give strength, stability, and suppleness. Yogasanas are considered as the most convenient, drugless, and inexpensive method. Yoga is also found to have encouraging effect on increasing the pain threshold capacity in individuals. In Yoga, various types of Asanas have been mentioned. Among them Ushtrasana, Bhadrasana, Gomukhasana, and Vajrasana have a pain relieving effect.

Ayurvedic Treatment: According to Ayurveda menstruation is guarded by vata dosha. Derangement or aggravation of vata dosha gives rise to this symptom. The treatment, which alleviates vata, gives excellent results in this disease. Panchakarma treatments like Uttarbasti, amuvasa or matrabasti are the treatments which will specifically target derangement of vata in menstrual problems. Garbhashaya balya aushadhi will also reduce associated symptoms.

10. Discussion
Culturally, the abbreviation Primary Dysmenorrhea is widely understood in the world to refer to difficulties associated with menses, and the abbreviation is used frequently even in casual and conversational settings, without regard to medical rigor. In these contexts, the syndrome is rarely referred to without abbreviation, and the intensions of the reference are frequently broader than the clinical definition. The misery is going on endlessly. Thanks we have the solution.

11. Conclusion
Ayurveda views Primary Dysmenorrhea as a doshic imbalance that can potentially be impacted through balanced living that is characterized by dosha appropriate diet, herbal supplements, exercise, routine, yoga, meditation, as well as nourishing inputs through all five senses.

12. Reference