



Review Article

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DIETETICS MANAGEMENT IN UDAVARTINI YONIVYAPAD (DYSMENORRHEA): A REVIEW

Swati Bhandari ^{1*}, Divya Badwal ¹, Ruby Rani Agarwal ²

¹ P.G. Scholar, Department of Rog Nidana Evum Vikriti Vigyan, Rishikul Campus, Uttarakhand Ayurveda University, Haridwar, India

² Professor & Head of Department, Department of Rog Nidana Evum Vikriti Vigyan, Rishikul Campus, Uttarakhand Ayurveda University, Haridwar, India

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*Corresponding author

E-mail: swati.bhandarisb92@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Dysmenorrhea is a medical condition characterized by severe uterine pain during menstruation. It is one of the most common gynaecological complaints observed. It has a high impact on women's quality of life resulting in a restriction of daily activities, a lower academic performance, and poor quality of sleep and has negative effects on mood, causing anxiety and depression. Dysmenorrhea is explained as an Udavartini Yonivyapad in Ayurveda. The main clinical feature of Udavartini is rajahkricchrata i.e., painful menstruation. Today's stressful modern lifestyle and faulty food habits i.e., increased consumption of oily and junk food is leading to a higher incidence of dysmenorrhea. In modern medicine, dysmenorrhea is treated by oral hormonal pills, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, and analgesics. Long term use of these produces side effects. Thus, these are not the solution to the problem. The role of diet has been well considered as an etiological factor responsible for causing dysmenorrhea. Ayurveda has given importance to diet and regimen as a part of Chikitsa. Thus, taking an appropriate diet (Pathya Ahara) and avoiding a faulty diet (Apathya Ahara) will help in prevention as well as reducing the symptoms of dysmenorrhea.

Keywords: Udavartini Yonivyapad, Dysmenorrhea, Pathya Ahara, Apathya Ahara.

INTRODUCTION

Menstruation is an important indicator of women's reproductive and endocrine health. It is a natural event as a part of the normal process of reproductive life in females. The same menstruation can cause problems if it is associated with unbearable pain-causing dysmenorrhea. The disease dysmenorrhea can be correlated with Udavartini Yonivyapad in Ayurveda. It is one among the twenty Yonivyapads described in Ayurvedic Samhitas and mainly is Vata dominant. Udavarta is derived from the word 'ut + avarta' i.e., upward direction of Vayu. Acharya Charaka first described Udavarta in Nanatmaja Vikara of Vata¹ and then in Chikitsa Sthana. He explained Rajas (menstruated blood) gets pushed in an upward direction by the aggravated Apana Vayu due to obstruction in its normal flow which means it attains Anuloma Gati. Then discharges it with great difficulty resulting in painful and frothy menstruation. The women feel relief immediately after the discharge of menstrual blood. Since in this condition the Artava moves upwards direction hence it is termed as Udavartini.² Sushruta explained it as painful and frothy menstruation along with other types of pain caused by Vata.³ Ashtanga Hridaya⁴ and Ashtanga Sangraha⁵ have described that pain in Udavarta Yonivyapad is due to aggravated Vata moving in the reverse direction with a discharge of frothy menstrual blood. Madhava Nidana⁶ has followed Acharya Sushruta.

The burden of dysmenorrhea is greater than any other gynaecological complaint. A recent systemic review of the world literature on chronic pelvic pain reports the prevalence of dysmenorrhea ranging between 17% and 80%.⁷ More than 50% of post-pubescent menstruating women are affected by dysmenorrhea, with 10-12% of them having severe dysmenorrhea with incapacitation for 1-3 days each month.^{8,9} Early menarches, long menstrual periods, body mass index (BMI), smoking and

psychological disturbances are several associated factors that increase the risk duration and severity of dysmenorrhea found in the prevalence studies.¹⁰ This condition is occurred due to stressful life resulting in Mithya Ahara-Vihara, overexertion & malnutrition which is the main cause of this disease. Different diet modulations Dinacharya and Ritucharya, Yogasanas mentioned in Ayurvedic classics helps to cures and prevent this condition on regular basis.

Modern view

Dysmenorrhea means painful menstruation of sufficient magnitude to incapacitate day to day activities. Types of Dysmenorrhea are- Primary and Secondary.

Primary Dysmenorrhea is one where there is no identifiable pelvic pathology. The incidence of primary dysmenorrhea of sufficient magnitude with incapacitation is about 15-20%. The mechanism of initiation of uterine pain in primary dysmenorrhea is difficult to establish. It is predominantly confined to adolescent girls. It usually appears within 2 years of menarche and pain begins a few hours before or just with the onset of menstruation. The severity of pain usually lasts for few hours, may extend to 24 hours but seldom persists beyond 48 hours. The pain is spasmodic with other discomforts like nausea, vomiting, fatigue, diarrhoea, headache etc. Treatment includes oral contraceptives and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.

Secondary Dysmenorrhea (Congestive) is normally considered to be menstruation associated pain occurring in the presence of pelvic pathology. The patients are usually in their thirties, more often parous. Common causes include Cervical stenosis, chronic pelvic infection, pelvic endometriosis, uterine fibroids, endometrial polyp pelvic adhesions and pelvic congestion.

Clinical features are dull pain situated in the back and in front without any radiation. It usually appears 3-5 days before the Period and relieves with the start of bleeding. The treatment aims at the cause rather than the symptom. The type of treatment depends on the severity, age, parity of the patient.

This present study aims to compile different Dravyas used as Pathya and to establish the advice of Pathyapathya (Ahara & Vihara) for prevention and reducing the symptoms of Udavartini Yonivyapad. To manage Udavartini Yonivyapad (dysmenorrhea) through diet.¹¹

PATHYA AND APATHYA IN UDAVARTINI YONIVYAPAD (DYSMENORRHEA)

Pathyas described in Udavartini Yonivyapad (dysmenorrhea) as mentioned in classics

- Vata is the main culprit in Udavartini, hence it is obvious that Vatashamaka and Vata-anulomaka dravyas are the first line of treatment.
- Tridosha Shamaka foods specially Vata Shamaka Dravyas
- Yava (Barley)¹²
- Lashuna Prayog¹³
- Ushna, Laghu and Snigdha foods¹⁴

Apathyas described in Udavartini Yonivyapad (dysmenorrhea) as mentioned in classics

- Vatala foods
- Manda (serum of boiled rice)¹⁵
- Tikshna, Ushna, Katu foods¹⁶
- Sura, Arista, Asava, Lahsuna Swarasa in the early morning
- Ksheera, Mamsayukta Bhojana in Dhatukshayaja conditions

Some common remedies to include in daily diet to get relief from dysmenorrhea

- Aloe Vera - In Sanskrit, this herb is called Kumari meaning "young maiden". Aloe Vera is widely respected as being highly supportive of women's reproductive system. It can be taken in the form of juice (made from pulp) to help with menstrual cramps.
- Asafoetida (Hing) - It is another natural remedy for painful menses. Fry Asafoetida in a little ghee and take this mixture thrice daily.
- Carom (Ajwain) seeds- A common spice in Indian households, helps to fight menstrual cramps when taken with a cup of boiling water.
- Ginger- This spice lowers the level of pain-causing prostaglandin. Have ginger solution twice a day to lower the pain.
- Fennel- The anti-inflammatory properties in fennel can help relax the muscles in the uterus relieving the cramps and discomfort during periods. Add one teaspoon of fennel seeds to a cup of boiling water and heat it for 5 minutes.
- Cumin seeds (Zeera) - Cumin has a relaxing effect, and its anti-spasmodic and anti-inflammatory properties are useful for getting rid of menstrual cramps.

Diet- To include

- Eat healthy, warm, and fresh food
- Eat leafy green vegetables
- Increase fibre in the diet
- Have nuts like almonds and walnuts

- Increase water intake
- Have herbals teas like Chamomile, mint tea
- Include fruits in diet: apples, berries, oranges etc.
- Include legumes like beans, peas, lentils etc.
- Include vitamin B supplement in the diet
- Have magnesium-rich foods like spinach, almonds, peanuts, papaya etc.
- Include salmon in the diet as they are a rich source of omega 3-fatty acids
- Include eggs in the diet as they are rich in vitamin B6, D and E
- Include dark chocolate as they are a rich source of magnesium and fibre

Diet - To avoid

- Avoid high fat and sugar
- Cut fats, red meat, caffeine, dairy products
- Avoid carbonated drinks
- Decrease salt intake
- Reduce caffeine intake
- Avoid smoking and alcohol
- Avoid animal products: fish, poultry, meats
- Avoid carbonated drinks
- Avoid spicy and acidic foods

DISCUSSION

Many women are suffering from hormonal imbalances. Dysmenorrhea is one of the emerging problems in today's world. While most women experience minor pain, dysmenorrhea is diagnosed when the pain is severe to limit normal activities or requires medication. It not only results in physical symptoms but also mental symptoms such as depression and anxiety, degrading the women's quality of life. Modern treatment includes the use of oral hormonal pills, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, analgesics which has potential side effects on long term use. Thus, it is not a permanent solution. There is a need to solve this emerging problem. Ayurveda provides alternate solutions that work at the root level. Acharyas indicated the importance of Pathya ahara by stating that if a patient intake wholesome food, then there is no need for medicine and if a patient continuously consumes unwholesome food, then also there is no need for medicine. In the latter case, medicine will not be effective. Therefore, following a proper diet (Pathya ahara) and avoiding a faulty diet (Apathya ahara) can be helpful in prevention as well as reducing the symptoms of dysmenorrhea. Also, Vata is the main culprit in Udavartini, hence it is obvious that Vatashamaka and Vata-anulomaka dravyas are the first line of treatment.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda shines a light on potential dietary factors that can increase menstrual pain and remedies (Pathya ahara) that can not only reverse the pain but increase the overall feeling of well-being. Thus, Ayurveda provides a holistic approach to the problem. The role and importance of diet (wholesome foods) in dysmenorrhea can be better understood through the article. Modification in food habits and following Pathya (wholesome) and avoiding Apathya (un-wholesome) in the primary stage of Dysmenorrhea can treat this condition. Treat it in the early stage is important because if neglected it may result in complications with a poor prognosis.

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