



Rajaswalacharya is the Swasthavritta in Female-A Conceptual Study

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ABSTRACT

Menstrual cycle in Ayurveda is called *Rituchakra*, consists of three phases - *Rajasravakala*, *Rutukala* and *Rutuvyateetakala*. Its proper onset denotes a normal functioning H-P-O axis and healthy reproductive system. *Ritumatcharya* plays an important role as a preliminary purificatory procedure which prepares women for healthy conception. *Rajaswalacharya* is the regimen laid down from the 1st day to three consecutive days of menstruation. It includes *Bhramacharya*, avoid religious customs, use of *Darbhakushashayana*, use of *Ajarjarapatra*, avoid all types of ornaments, cosmetics such as *lepa*, *Anjana*, *Abhyanjana*, avoid laughing, talking loudly and excessively etc. The food advised during these days should be *Laghu*, *Snigdha*, *Sheetaveerya*, *Madhuravipaka*.

In recent times there has been a drastic lifestyle changes with abundance of food and more sedentary existence leading to a metabolic, endocrinal, reproductive functional imbalance. The erratic life style and increased stress and strain have resultantly expanded the *Dushti* of *Artava* and *Artavavahasrotas*. As a result, the diseases of *Artava* are manifested in the form of *Ashtaartavadushti*, *Asrigdara*, *Yonivyapad*, and leading to a major threat i.e. infertility. So, following *Rajaswalacharya* & *Pathyaapathya* is the need of hour to reduce the morbidity in *Artavavahasrotas*.

Key Words: *Rajaswalacharya*, *PathyaApathya*, *Swasthavritta*, *H-P-O axis*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda the invaluable system of medicine helps gain better health and add quality to the life. This is accomplished by following the *paricharyas* i.e. the conduct to be followed on day to day basis -the *Dinacharya* and to be followed in different seasons- the *Ritucharya*. Similarly, there are conducts told to be followed by the women specifically during different phases of life they are *Rajaswalacharya*, *Garbhini Paricharya* and *Sootika Paricharya*. Among these the most neglected is the *Rajaswalacharya*. Menstruation is the unique phenomenon to females. The onset of

menstruation is one of the most important changes occurring during the adolescent period. The first menstruation i.e. menarche occurs between 11 and 15 years of age. The onset of the menses denotes an intact Hypothalamo-Pituitary-ovarian axis, functioning ovaries, presence of responsive endometrium to the endogenous ovarian steroids and patent uterovaginal canal. Menstruation is still regarded as something unclean or dirty in the Indian society. Although it is a natural process it is linked with several misconception which sometimes lead to adverse health outcomes. Hygiene related practices during menstruation are



of utmost importance. The paricharyas told in our classics helps women to deal with the changes occurring during different phases of life. Similarly, the *Rajaswalacharya* mentioned helps women to adapt herself to the physiological changes occurring during the menstrual cycle. When followed properly helps in the conception of a healthy foetus. However, the *Rajaswalacharya* is not followed in present days as the women have become career oriented and have stood up to the level of men in all the fields, due to which the life of women has turned hectic and stressful. There is a major importance given to the food habits during those days which has almost vanished. Thus, it is very difficult or rather next to impossible to follow the regimen as mentioned. Due to the adaptation to the western way of life there is aversion or rather ignorance towards our classical science. The so-called outdated system has lost its importance in today's generation. In past few years there has been a drastic rise in the menstrual problems and infertility which is posing as a major threat to the present-day population. The symptoms like lower abdominal pain, back pain, mood swings, nausea etc are considered as associated symptoms of menstrual cycle and as normal. But our classics has mentioned that a normal menstruation should be devoid of pain burning sensation. So, this study aims to find out the effect of *Rajaswalacharya* on the menstrual health.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

□ To study the effect of *Rajaswalacharya* on the menstrual health.

OBJECTIVES

1. To compile all the references regarding the *Rajaswalacharya* from the classical literature.
2. To make a comprehensive study on menstrual health from modern literature.
3. To study the scientific concept behind the regimen and its effect on the physiology of menstrual cycle when not followed.
4. To study the adaptation as per today's requirements.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was carried out with the help of all the references in ayurvedic texts and modern science.

DISCUSSION

By studying all the references of *Rajaswalacharya* one can conclude the fact that the *Rajasrava Kala* is dominated by *Vata Dosha* and physiological digestive disturbance.

Why predominance of vata dosha during rajasravakala?

During *Rajasravakala* there is shedding of endometrium and outflow of the menstrual blood from the vagina is the main function of *Vata*. Physically and mentally the female feels low, disturbed due to the menstrual blood oozing out from the vagina & fear of stains on the cloth, leads to further disturbance the *Vata Dosha*, hence the regimens prescribed in *Rajaswalacharya* aims at normalising the functions *Vata Dosha*.

A person having *Agnimandya* ¹



Menstruation is a naturally occurring cleansing process and acts as a *Shodhana* therapy in a woman, it leads to natural decrease in the *Bala* of the female due to blood loss. The main diet mentioned by *Sushruthacharya* is the *Havishyanna*² – a meal made up of *Shali*, *Ghruta* and *Ksheera*. All these ingredients are *Balya*, *Bruhmaneeya*, *Rasayana*. Hence *Havishya* plays a vital role in maintaining the *Agni* and improving the *Bala* of female during *Rajasrava Kala*. The other diets to be followed are *Alpa Matra Ahara*, *Laghu Ahara*, *Yavanna*, *Payasa* which should mainly aim at *Karshana* and *Koshtashodhanarth*³.

Apathya

The women should avoid food which is *Tikshna*, *Ushna*, *Vidhahi*, *Amla* and *Lavana Rasa Yukta*. She should also avoid *Vidahi* and *Vishtambhi*, *Ati Guru Ahara*. One should restrain herself from all sort of exercises, avoid application of *Lepa* and *Abhyanga*.

1. Observe Chasity³- a *Rajaswala* should not have coitus.

1. Oxytocin is released during the act and causes antiperistaltic movements in the uterine walls.

2. The pH level of vagina is 3.8- 4.5 throughout the month, but during menstruation there is rise in the pH because of the outflow of blood therefore, there are chances of yeast growth in yhat environment rapidly. There are chances of transmission of diseases like STD hence, advised to maintain celibacy⁴.

2. Avoid bathing- The water flowing over the back during bath has a peculiar effect on the *Saptha Chakras* one of them being the *Mooladhara* which

is nearest to the reproductive system. The water flow may hinder the outflow of the menstrual blood. According to modern physiology there is increase in the body temperature during menstruation. Hypothalamus is the temperature regulating centre in the body. So, when head bath taken, there will be fluctuation with temperature leading to irregular flow of the menstrual blood from the body⁵.

3. Avoid exercises- excessive travelling, walking etc increases the *Vata Dosha* in the body which is already predominant in the body during the menses. Complete rest is mandatory to avoid the vitiation of *Vata Dosha* hence, the traditional practice of sitting at a place.

4. Women should sleep on mattress made out of darbha

Darbha is considered to be *Stambaka*, due to its *Sheeta Veerya*. It is also considered to be as *Rakshoghna*. According to the scientific study made on *Darbha* it is concluded that it absorbs heavy radiation and is also anti-microbial in nature. The women in *Rajasrava kala* is vulnerable to all types of *Bhuta* and *Jataharani*. Hence, *darbha* is used to avoid all sorts of ill effects on the women.

5. Women should avoid Chinta, Shoka and have good thoughts.

Oestrogen level in a woman are closely related to women's emotional wellbeing as it effects the brain which controls the emotions. The rise in the oestrogen helps to suppress the stress hormone adrenaline and cortisol⁶. During menstruation the level of oestrogen hormone is low which may lead



to severe mood swings. So, the women should avoid stress and harbour only good thoughts to overcome the instability of emotions.

6. *Women should have little quantity of food.*

Once there is menstruation there is increase of prostaglandin. These are important as they can cause contraction of uterus to slough off the uterine lining during menstruation. Excess prostaglandin can cause severe cramping, diarrhoea and gurgle noise as it causes increased contractions and motility of smooth muscles of the digestive tract⁸. As mentioned in classics one should have *Yava* which is *Laghu*, *Balya*, *Sthairyakara* promotes stability. So, it is good to have *Yava* during menstruation. Similarly, milk and ghee are sweet, unctuous, refreshing, strength promoting, mind promoting vitalising, promoting union in injuries, wholesome for all human beings.

7. *Avoid Nasya Karma during menstrual cycle*

The hypothalamus produces GnRH in turn releasing LH and FSH from the anterior pituitary which again stimulates the ovaries to secrete oestrogen and maintains the menstruation. During the menstrual cycle if *Nasya karma* is done then the *Teekshnatha* of the *Nasya Aushada* leads to disturbance in HPO axis in turn affecting the oestrogen secretion due to which there may be dryness in the yoni leading to *Yonisosha*.

CONCLUSION

From the above reasoning we can postulate that when the paricharyas are not followed it leads to reducing the *Bala* & *agni* with vitiation of *Samana Vata*, *Pachaka Pitta*, and *Kledaka Kapha* in turn producing *Aama* which effects the formation of

Rasa Dhatu by *Dhatvagni Mandya* leading to *Uttarotara dhatu Kshaya* finally ending up in *Artava Dushti* and *Artavanasha*. The ultimate goal of following the various *Paricharyas* is to normalise the function of *Vata* dosha and thus, maintaining the health of the reproductive system. Any *Dushti* of *Vata* not only causes various gynaecological disorders but also effect the fertility in women. As per modern science menstruation depends on the level of oestrogen, progesterone and testosterone. These hormones have specific control over the emotions of a female, over body temperature, physiology of digestion and also sexual act of female. Hence a lot of fluctuations in these hormones hamper the equilibrium of health. During these if the above said acts are performed it will lead to many complications like PCOS, infertility etc. But now a days in the era of modernisations it is quite impossible to follow the *Rajaswalacharya* meticulously but can be modified accordingly to one's ease like:

1. Intake of small quantity of food like wheat, barley with plenty of liquid like milk, fruit juices and ghee. Avoid intake of untimely, spicy and junk food.
2. Avoid head bath with too cold or hot water rather can clean oneself with warm water to maintain personal hygiene.
3. Avoid performing heavy exercises, jogging or other strenuous activities.
4. Trying to be stress free by harbouring good thoughts.
5. Avoid sexual contact.



So, when the *Vata Dosha* and *Agni* are maintained and avoided from further *Dushti* it helps to maintain the *Bala* in turn the *Swasthya* in female. Thus, helping her in conception of healthy fetus. As the quote goes- “A Healthy Women Is the Precursor of a Healthy Progeny”. Thus, it can be aptly said that *Rajaswalacharya* is the *Swasthavritta* in females.

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