A conceptual study of rutuchakra (menstrual cycle)

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Abstract:

Ayurveda is an ancient science, which has both aspect of prophylactic and curative. To fulfil these purpose, Ayurveda has mentioned various Siddhant (Basic principals), Anatomy, Physiology, Various diseases with etiology, sign and symptoms, treatment etc.

In womanhood important physiological manifestation is Rutuchakra i.e. menstrual cycle further which gives her identity of motherhood. Menstruation is a cyclic process and repeats every month. If it is affected by various etiological factors then woman have to face different disorders eg. Aartavakshaya. Therefore this study were taken into consideration which has main objective to review menstruation in different Ayurvedic classic texts, to compare and evaluate data available on menstruation. It was reviewed in classic texts namely Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtang Sangraha, Ashtang Hridaya and Kashyapa Samhita.

Various terms are used in classic to denote menstrual blood and ovum at different places ie. Artava, Raja, Shonita, Lohita, Pushpa, Bija. Also has mentioned role of Doshas on menstruation i.e. like all other physiological processes menstruation is also governed by three Doshas viz. Vata, Pitta and Kapha.

Ayurvedic texts has mentioned the different approach of menstruation than that of Modern science and are helpful to know physiology of menstruation and to cure the diseased condition.

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Key words:-

Rutuchakra, Menstruation, Menstrual cycle

Introduction:-

Ayurveda is an ancient science, which has both aspect of swasthyarakshana (Prophylactic) and Vikarprashamana (Curative) which is the aim of Ayurveda according to Acharya Charaka. To fulfil these purpose, Ayurveda has mentioned various Siddhantas (Basic principals), Anatomy, Physiology, Various diseases with etiology, sign and symptoms, treatment etc.

Among various basic principals and physiologies described in Ayurveda Rutuchakra ie. menstruation. Which is important physiological manifestation in women further which gives her identity of motherhood. Rutuchakra is cyclic process and repeats every month in reproductive age of women.

Various terms are used in classic to denote menstrual blood and ovum at different places ie. Artava, Raja, Shonita, Lohita, Pushpa, Bija. Also has mentioned role of Doshas on menstruation i.e. like all other physiological processes menstruation is also governed by three Doshas viz. Vata, Pitta and Kapha.

It is influenced by different factors like Doshas, age etc. If it is affected by such factors then causes different menstrual disorders. Therefore it is necessary to study the Basic principals and physiological concept in Ayurveda to derive proper meaning and clinical aspect of that concept to cure and prevent disease.

Aim and Objective:-

1. To review Rutuchakra in different Ayurvedic classical texts.
2. To study Rutuchakra in detail.
3. To compare and evaluate literary data available on Rutuchakra.

Materials and Methods:-

Material-

Only literary material ie. Ayurvedic classical texts (Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtang Hridaya and Kashyapa Samhita) and commentaries were reviewed to collect the data during work.

Methods-

Literary data collected was compared and analysed on classical background to find similarities, dissimilarities and clinical approach in accordance to modern science.

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Literary review:

*Rutuchakra* is normal physiological process indicating womanhood. It is cyclical process and repeats every month. Each period of one month is divided into three i.e. *Rajahsrava kala*, *Rutukala*, *Rutuvyatitakala.*

*Rajahsrava kala* is different according to various Aacharyas. It is 5 days every month according to Charkacharya, 3 days according to Vagbhata, 7 days according to Bhel and Harita.

Various terms are used in classic to denote menstrual blood and ovum at different places. *Artava*, *Shonita*, *Rajah*, *Rakta*, *Lohita*, *pushpa*.

According to Sushrutacharya, Twelve and fifty years is the age of menarche and menopause respectively. Where Kashyapa mentioned the age as sixteen years. According Arundatta there may be slight variation in individual cases.

*Aacharyas* has mentioned characters of normal menstruation. According Charkacharya normal menstruation is that which is not associated with pain or burning sensation, excreted blood is not unctuous, not very scanty or excessive in amount. According Sushrutacharya colour resembles the red juice of lac, rabbit’s blood.

*Rutuchakra* is also governed by three *Doshas* where each *Dosha* predominates at a particular phase of menstruation.

Ayurveda Also has mentioned different *Pricharyas* (mode of living during menstruation).

It is clear that, Ayurvedic classical texts had provided detailed approach on the topic of menstruation. Such profundity about this topic will hardly ever found in Health Science branches other than Ayurveda.

Observation and Results:

After collecting literary data, it is observed that all texts has mentioned in one and same direction with few dissimilarities.

Menstruation is a physiological process which may vary person to person in normal range eg. Duration of menstruation 3-7 days for every cycle.

There were no statistical data as this is only conceptual study.

Discussion:

Ayurveda is complete life science including prevention as well as cure. Concepts of Ayurveda are focused to avoid disease, its recurrence and to cure it from base. Therefore Ayurveda has mentioned detailed...
physiology of menstruation which gives various aspects than that of mentioned in modern science.

As per collected data, some conditions are discussed here on the classical base.

Ayurveda has mentioned various words in which Artava, Shonita, Rajah, Lohita are used to denote menstrual blood or ovum at different places, while Rudhira and Pushpa denote only menstrual blood. Bija is used for ovum. Commentator Arundatta has specifically indicated to consider menstrual blood with word Artava⁷.

Various factors influence the menstrual cycle ie. Rasa, Rakta, Dhamnee, Dosha. Rajah is said to be an Updhatu of Rasa, which supplies nourishment to body. Commentator Arundatta has said Rajah as synonyms of Rakta. And Bhavmishra has mentioned Rajah as an Updhatu of Rakta. Ie. in classics Rajah is said to be formed from Rasa or Rakta which is actually two stages of its formation. The blood collected for the whole month by both the Dhamnees is brought down to orifices by Vayu for excretion. Specially Apan Vayu is responsible for this action⁸.

Physiological process of menstruation is governed by Doshas viz. Vata, Pitta, Kapha. Where each predominate in particular phase of menstruation⁹.

- **Rutukala-** This phase is mainly influenced by Kapha. According to Ayurveda for regeneration and growth Kapha is essential. It is a period of resembling proloferative phase.
- **Rutuvyatitakala-** This phase is influenced mainly by Pitta. According to Ayurveda Pitta is essential for various secretions in the body. It always act through medium of Rakta. Therefore this phase resembles the secretory phase.
- **Rajahsravakal-** This phase is mainly influenced by Vata. Vata always act through Dhamanees. In the phase of menstruation the spasm in the straight stem arterioles as a causative phenomenon of bleeding is similar to action of Vata through Dhamanees.

The proper balanced state of these three Doshas cause normal menstrual cycle while any sort of imbalance causes abnormality.

Ayurveda has also given mode of living in menstruation. Right from the beginning of menstrual flow, Woman should observe Brahmacharya, She should not take bath, Should not sleep during day time, should avoid exertion. Her diet should be light. The female is also advised to live in a happy calm mood.

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Conclusion:

- All classical texts had described almost same about menstruation.
- Ayurveda has given various aspects of physiology of menstruation than that of modern science which are helpful to aware of menstruation.
- As menstruation is governed by Doshas, their imbalance causes abnormality. Therefore it is necessary to have balance state of Doshas.

This conceptual study has its own limits up to reviewing concept.

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