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## CONCEPT OF MENSTRUAL FLOW IN RELATION TO PREDOMINANCE OF INHERENT BIOLOGICAL CONSTITUTION (PRAKRUTI)

### AUTHORS

1. Vinita Patil, PG Scholar, Department of Kriya-Sharira, Parul Institute of Ayurved, Vadodara, Gujarat, India.
2. Deepika Chaudhary, Asst. Prof, Department of Kriya-Sharira, Parul Institute of Ayurved, Vadodara, Gujarat, India.
3. Vikram Sharma, Asst. Professor, Department of Rachna-Sharira, Shree Swaminarayan Ayurvedic College, Kalol, Gujarat, India.
4. Sunil Nikhate, Reader, Department of Kriya-Sharira, Parul Institute of Ayurved, Vadodara, Gujarat, India.
5. Vaidehi Raole, Professor and Head, Department of Kriya-Sharira, Parul Institute of Ayurved, Vadodara, Gujarat, India.

### **Abstract:**

Ayurveda is serving the ailing humanity since the creation of life is not behind in recognizing the most pragmatic feature of a woman. There is many normal physiological phenomenon taking place in the body which is carried out in a cyclic manner. Among all these physiological changes, Menstruation (Aartava) is an essential physiological function of women during their reproductive age. The practice of Ayurveda, the traditional medicine of India, is based on the concept of three major constitutional types (Vata, Pitta and Kapha) defined as "Prakriti". In the era of modern science, evidence has surfaced connecting the concepts of *tridosha* and *prakriti* with metabolic pathways, chronic diseases, and various genotypes. Such evidence has thrown up insights about the universality of Ayurvedic concepts as well as their apparent association with concepts in current science. This review was undertaken to consolidate the evidence of such associations which exist between *prakriti* and menstrual cycle (artava) in females.

### For Corresponds:

**Name of Author: Dr. Vinita Patil**  
**Email: drvinitapmt@gmail.com**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Menstruation is a beautiful hormonal change that takes place every month in woman's life. There is a harmonious coordination between the hormones & the shedding of the endometrium that takes place every month indicating the normal menstruation. Geographical conditions, racial factors, nutritional standards, environmental influences and indulgence in strenuous physical activity can affect hormonal status and menstruations of woman.

There is a sharp increase in the incidence of same in modern age hence requires better understanding about the menstruation which will lead to the appropriate solutions and remedies. A slight deviation in the menstruation which may be excessive or low is filled with fear of some serious pathology of internal genital organs.

In the modern world, the Life style, food habit and lust for unnecessary desires have increased stress, strain and restlessness which have resultantly increased menstrual irregularities or variations. Artava dusti is very important among gynecological problems.

According to Ayurveda, normal menstruation is the indicator of healthy and normal reproductive organ in which inter menstrual period is 28 days approximately one month, duration of blood flow is five days (differ according to different opinion of Maharshis) but not associated with pain or burning sensation. The menstruated blood is not unctuous, not very scanty or excessive in amount.

As the nature and pattern of all the physiological and psychosomatic processes are dependent on the biological constitution of doshas ie the Prakruthi, the pattern and nature of menstrual flow should also show some relation to the Prakruthi of the individual. Therefore by understanding the nature of menstrual flow in women the reproductive health can be maintained by administering required diet and regiments.

Menstrual blood in Ayurveda is called as Artava. As far as present work is concerned, the word "Artava" has been restricted to "Bahirpushpa" (menstrual blood)

## **MENSTRUAL FLOW ( ARTAVA) AND PRAKRUTI:**

Menstrual flow Artava is defined as the monthly exclusion of blood through the vagina of an adult woman<sup>1</sup>. It is one of the most important physiological processes which enable the formation of Garbha. Therefore the periodical artava (*menstrual flow*) is necessary for a healthy progeny. Artava is considered as the *Upadhatu* of *Rasa*<sup>2</sup>. It is produced cyclically and being directed by *Vata* and is expelled through the vagina<sup>3</sup>.

As far as modern science is considered, menstruation is the process where there is flow of blood from the uterus through the vagina occurring primarily in humans, determined by a complex interplay of hormones<sup>4</sup>.

*Prakruti* is the inherent constitution of an human being based on the predominance of *Dosha* determined at the time of conception which cannot be changed during whole life<sup>5</sup>. Qualities of *Dosha* are expressed on body because of its dominance and it is known as *Deha Prakruthi*. It is the record or consideration of body features internal as well as external. Depending on the type of *Dosha* that is predominant in the *Sukra* and *Shonita* at the time of merger, also depending on the food and activities of the pregnant women, uterus and type of season *Prakruthi* is determined<sup>6</sup>. Human body is constitution of three *Doshas* and all physiological functions are depending on *Doshas*. *Prakruthi* of each individual is determined from the time of conception itself. So every human being is specific in his/her own constitution of *Prakruthi*. As the physiological function depends on *Doshas*, then there will be a relation between the characteristics of all physiological functions with individual *Prakruthi* and so with menstrual flow also.

#### **CHARACTERISTICS OF SUDDHA ARTAVA**

The main characteristics described under the heading of —Shuddha Aartava, in Charaka Samhita<sup>7</sup> are as follows:

Aartava – Which discharges monthly Which is without sliminess Without burning sensation Without pain Discharges upto five nights Neither in excess nor scanty Whose color is like gunjaphala, red lotus, aalakta, indragopa.

Charak Chikitsa sthan 30 is sampurita by Drudhabala. Therefore, it should be considered as the work of Redactor Acharya Drudhabala

Related to these characteristics, opinion of other aacharyas is taken into consideration. These are: The artava which is like rabbit's blood or like liquid lakh, which does not stain cloth after washing with water<sup>8</sup> or it leaves redness (lauhityam) when it's stain on cloth is washed with water. Again, the color of normal artava should be ishat krushna lohit or ishat krushna rakta i.e. slightly blackish red. Smell of normal artava should be vigandha i.e. vishishta gandha.

As per the different Ayurveda classics characteristics of Artava can be categorized under following heads:

- Colour: It is like color of gunjaphala, padma, aalakta, indragopa, liquid lakh, rabbit's blood. Or slightly blackish red.

- Odour: It has typical odour and
- Unstaining property: It does not stain the cloth after washing with water.
- Amount of Artava: 4 anjali or the amount is neither in excess nor scanty.
- Mucus is not present

There are a large number of recognizable phenotypic features described for the prakruti types. Of these, the key features include the following:

**Key distinguishing features for prakriti**

**VATA**<sup>9</sup>

1. Thin body frame, does not gain weight
2. Skin dry, rough, dark complexion, cracked
3. Hair dry and splitting
4. Quick performance of activities
5. Variable and/or poor appetite.
6. Physical working capacity less, resistance to disease usually poor
7. Prefers warm or hot food and climate.
8. Scanty perspiration, variable thirst
9. Tendency for constipation
10. Light sleep with many dreams
11. Prone to anxiety, worry and depression, unpredictable nature

**PITTA**<sup>9</sup>

1. Medium body frame
2. Skin delicate, reddish complexion, warm to touch
3. Good/excessive appetite
4. Feels warm/hot sensation
5. Prefers cold food and climate, intolerance to hot food and climate
6. Tendency for loose motion
7. Excessive thirst and perspiration
8. Bright eyes, reddish sclera, yellow iris, sharp penetrating vision
9. Hair soft, premature graying, baldness
10. Intelligent, sharp memory, hot tempered, brave, jealous, aggressive, commanding nature

**KAPHA**<sup>10</sup>

1. Large, board body frame, tendency to gain weight
2. Skin thick, soft, smooth, firm, glossy, fair complexion
3. Good stamina but slow in physical activities
4. Deep and pleasant voice
5. Moderate appetite
6. Moderate perspiration, low thirst
7. Deep and sound sleep
8. Large eyes, calm, stable with whitish sclera
9. Hair thick, oily, wavy dark coloured
10. Calm, cool, joyful, polite good nature

**Distinct properties of doshas:**

There are distinct properties of each dosha. The main properties of Vata dosha are – dry, cold, light, subtle, clear, rough, astringent taste, responsible for movements and catabolic in nature<sup>10</sup>. Pitta dosha possesses properties of hot, unctuous, sharp, liquid, spreading, sour-pungent-bitter taste, responsible for digestion and metabolism<sup>10</sup>, Kapha dosha possesses the qualities of cold, heavy, soft, oily, stable, slimy, sweet taste and anabolic in nature<sup>11</sup>.

**DISCUSSION:**

**Artava of Vata pradhan prakruti women** is more likely to associated with :

- Severity of pain: Pain is the main symptom of vata. Acharya Sushruta has clearly mentioned that there is no pain without the involvement of Vata.
- Periodic flow/less flow is observed due to the properties like lightness and periodic exacerbations of secretions
- Scanty menstrual blood loss due to light(laghu) & dry( ruksha) properties of Vata. And irregularity in menstrual cycle due to Chala/Visham guna.
- Artava Blackish Red in Colour. Vata is responsible for Karshnya ( black discoloration)

**Artava of Pitta Pradhana Prakruti women** are more likely to experience:

- High fluidity & excess flow due to the liquid (drava) & spreading (sara) properties of Pitta.

- Heavy amount of menstrual blood loss due to hot, fluidic, sharp properties of Pitta dosha
- Artava Blood Red in colour due to dominance of hot properties of Pitta dosha .

**Artava of Kapha Pradhana Prakruti women** is more likely to experience:

- Moderate flow/stable /with clots/slimy due to the manda, Sandra, pichila properties of kapha.
- Moderate amount of blood loss due to properties like stable, slow, heavy, cold ( manda, guru, shita)
- Artava Moderate (Pale) Red in colour. Kapha is responsible for Shwaithya (white discoloration).
- Maximum presence of mucus due to the slimy & heavy (pichila & guru) property of Kapha Dosh

### **CONCLUSION:**

Proper functioning of the body and its system depends upon the balance of three Doshas. All physiological functions are carried out by these Doshas. Menstruation is also one of the important physiological functions of female reproductive system. On the basis of Dosha pre-dominance Prakruthi of each individual is determined from the time of conception itself.

As the physiological function depends on Doshas, then there is a relation between the characteristics of menstrual blood flow (artava) functions with individual Prakruthi.

Hence, understanding the Doshic dominance of prakruti and adequate application of medication, proper diet and regiments is required to improve quality of reproductive life of women and also to restore the optimal action of menstrual cycle which is very crucial to maintain the health of women.

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