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Pathophysiological Understanding of *Purishvaha Srotas Dushti* W.S.R. to the *Atisar*

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Abstract: The *Purishvaha Srotas* disorders regarding the gastrointestinal tract are diagnosed through an understanding of its function of digestion and evacuation. In Ayurveda, *Purishvaha Srotas* is described as a system that develops and expels feces and is equivalent to the large intestine and rectum in contemporary anatomy. The *Purishvaha Srotas Dushti* or vitiation in that particular system may leads several illnesses and *Atisara* is one of them, which appears as heightened frequency of *Drava Mala* that may be mingled with *Shleshma*. The usual causative factors include infections, parasitic infestation, food intolerance and diseases such as celiac disease. Knowledge of the physiological and pathological characteristics of *Purishvaha Srotas* helps in diagnosing *Sroto Viddha Lakshana* and *Sroto Dushti*, which forms the basis for efficient Ayurvedic treatment of various related diseases like *Atisara*. This review described pathophysiological understanding of *Purishvaha Srotas Dushti* W.S.R. to the *Atisar*.

Keywords: Ayurveda, *Purishvaha*, *Srotas*, *Atisara*, Pathology, Diarrhea

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Introduction

Mala is one of the three primary aspects of the living body; that usually involves waste materials like *Shakrit*, *Sweda* and *Mutra*. The undigested remnant (*Mala*) pushed out from the *Pakvashaya* by *Apana Vayu* via the rectum. *Purishvaha Srotas* is responsible for the formation, separation, and expulsion of feces. The *Purishvaha Srotas* is originated from *Pakvashaya* and *Sthulaguda*. This

Srotas also influenced by many etiological factors including obstruction of the defecation urge, excessive intake of food, taking food prior to the digestion of the former meal, and poor digestion, etc. Symptoms of vitiation are defecation difficulty, painful evacuation and passage of watery stools, etc. (Srikant Murthy, 1996; Shastri, 2003; Acharya, 2005a). Damage to *Purishvaha Srotas* is expressed

as symptoms such as *Anaha*, *Durgandha* and nodules in the intestine, etc. This *Srotas* is mainly involved in separation of waste, process of evacuation and stool formation, etc. The various anatomical structures of this *Srotas* are *Sthulantara*, *Unduka*, *Malashaya* and *Guda*. The *Purishvaha Srotas* also referred as *Nadi* of the *Guda* and *Antra*, *Asthi* behind the *Guda* (Srikant Murthy, 1996; Shashtri, 1997; Acharya, 2005a, b).

Anatomical and Physiological Aspects:

Digestion and the nutrition of body tissues described in ancient text in the context of *Rasa Vaha Srotas*, *Rakta Vaha Srotas* and *Maha Srotas*. *Antra*, both small and large intestines, and *Guda* are referred to as part of the *Maha Srotas*. Food that has been digested is separated into three parts; *Purish*, *Rasa* and *Mana*. In the same way, water is categorized into *Rakta*, *Prana* and *Mutra*. The function of *Guda* is mainly excretion and has a relation with the intestines. *Sharir Upanishad* categorizes *Guda* as *Karmandhra* for the removal of feces, whereas the *Trishikha Brahmana Upanishad* identifies *Apana Vayu* with *Guda*, *Uru*, *Janu* and *Medhra*, which is responsible for governing the downward excretion of the waste. *Acharya Charaka* mentions that *Grahani* and *Guda* are located on the left side of the body and hence enema is given while in a left lying position. *Oordhva Guda* is responsible for feces retention and *Adhara Guda* is that in which the feces are discharged. *Pakvashaya* and *Purishadhara* are other alimentary organs which derived maternally (Acharya, 1969, 2005 b; Shashtri, 1997).

Pathological Aspects:

Purishvaha Srotas morbidity symptoms include difficult or painful defecation, excessive or watery stools or constipation. *Purishvaha Srotas* disorders are caused by habits such as holding back the urge to defecate, excessive eating and improper digestion. The vitiation of *Purishvaha Srotas* results from inappropriate dietary habits and repression of natural urges. According to Ayurveda the main causes of vitiation includes *Sandharana*, *Atyashana*, *Ajeerna*, *Adhyashana*,

Durbalagni and *Krishasya*. These causes interfere with the normal functioning of *Purishvaha Srotas*, resulting in various disorders. The signs of *Purishvaha Srotas Dushti* are straining in defecation, defecation with sound, painful defecation, *Atidrava*, hard and dense stools, and *Atibahu*. *Purishvaha Srotas Dushti* leads many pathological conditions and *Atisara* is one of them. Considering this fact, present review further correlates pathological aspects of *Atisara* and *Purishvaha Srotas Dushti* (Acharya, 1969; Shashtri, 1997; Tripathi, 2004).

Atisara and Purishvaha Srotas:

Atisara (diarrhea) is a condition of excessive passage of loose or watery stools. It is mainly linked with the malfunctioning of *Purishvaha Srotas*, the channels tasked with the formation, transport, and excretion of feces. *Atisara* in Ayurveda is due to an imbalance of the *Doshas*, impacting the gut system and interfering with the normal function of *Purishvaha Srotas*. There are various types of *Atisara* as depicted in Figure 1.

As mentioned in Figure 1, *Vataja Atisara* is characterized by dry, frothy and frequent stools accompanied by abdominal cramps and dehydration. *Pittaja Atisara* is associated with yellowish, hot and odorous stools with burning and fever. *Kaphaja Atisara* involves thick, slimy, pale stools accompanied by heaviness and nausea. *Sannipataja Atisara* is a mix of all *Dosha* symptoms and *Bhaya-Shokaja Atisara* resulting from the emotional stress, which causes sudden diarrhea (Acharya, 1969; Tripathi, 2004).

Purishvaha Srotas Dushti involve in Atisara:

- *Ati Pravritti*
- *Viloma Gati*
- *Sangha*
- *Vimargagamana*

As mentioned above *Purishvaha Srotas Dushti* in *Atisara* is mostly due to *Ati Pravritti* caused by excessive peristalsis, but depending upon the predominance of *Dosha*, it may also manifest with



Fig. 1: Various types of *Atisara*.

Table 1: *Purishvaha Srotas Dushti* in *Atisara*

S. No.	<i>Dushti</i>	Explanation	Cause in <i>Atisara</i>	Pathophysiology
1	<i>Ati Pravritti</i>	Increased volume and frequency of stool expulsion.	Excessive irritation of the intestine due to <i>Vata</i> and <i>Pitta Dosha</i> vitiation leads to rapid, watery defecation.	Exaggeration of <i>Pitta</i> and <i>Vata</i> in the <i>Annavaha</i> and <i>Purishvaha Srotas</i> leads to increased secretion and peristalsis, causing loose stools.
2	<i>Viloma Gati</i>	Intestinal peristalsis is irregular and uncoordinated.	Vitiated <i>Apana Vayu</i> disrupts the normal directional flow of feces.	Uncontrolled intestinal movement results in stool inconsistency, alternating between loose and semi-solid forms.
3	<i>Sangha</i>	Obstruction in the intestinal pathways.	<i>Ama</i> , <i>Kapha</i> accumulation, or inflammatory responses block the normal passage of stool.	Straining with little output, mucus-laden stools, or a feeling of incomplete evacuation.
4	<i>Vimargagamana</i>	Stool passes into an abnormal pathway.	Severe <i>Vata</i> vitiation and <i>Agni Dushti</i> cause improper waste direction.	Loose stools may contain undigested food or blood and <i>Udakavaha Srotas</i> involvement can lead to dehydration.

Viloma Gati, *Sangha* and *Vimargagamana*. Excessive flow occurs usually with *Vata-Pitta* predominance, whereas *Kapha* and *Ama* involvement which may cause obstruction or changed movement. In *Atisara*, the *Purishvaha Srotas Dushti* may exist in various types as mentioned in Table 1 (Srikanthamurthy, 2008; Tripathi, 2004; Acharya, 2011).

Purishvaha Srotas is very much involved in the pathophysiology of the *Atisara*. *Pakvashaya*, which

is the main location of *Purishvaha Srotas*, is involved in absorption and formation of stool. But in *Atisara*, because of improper digestion and increased *Doshas*, its operation gets affected and it leads to excess elimination of watery stool. *Purishdhara Kala* that constitutes the intestinal mucosal covering and manages absorption of water and nutrients is vitiated, so that impaired assimilation occurs together with frequent diarrhoea-like stools. Apart from that, *Apana Vayu*

is responsible for downward passage of bowel movements which is also gets vitiated inducing abnormal motions (Srikanthamurthy, 2008; Tripathi, 2004; Acharya, 2011).

Treatment of Purishvaha Srotas Dushti:

- *Langhana* and *Peya* for *Agni Deepana* purpose.
- *Deepana-Pachana* therapy using *Trikatu* and *Hingwashtaka Churna*.
- *Stambhana* for non-infectious *Atisara* using *Dadima*, *Musta* and *Bilva*.
- *Shodhana* in chronic cases using *Virechana* therapy.
- *Basti Karma* for *Vata*-related *Atisara*.

Conclusion

The Ayurvedic view of *Purishvaha Srotas* combines physiological and pathological factors. *Guda* and *Pakvashaya* are the key excretory and digestive structures that are controlled by the movement of *Vayu*. *Agni*, *Doshas* and *Vayus* are responsible for fecal formation, absorption and elimination. Based on complete description of *Srotomula* of *Purishvaha srotas*, it can be described as one part is utilized for the construction of *Purisha* and other part is utilized to assist defecation by accepting defecation stimulus from rectum for utilizing in initiation of defecation reflex. *Purishvaha Srotas* morbidity manifests as difficult or painful stool, excess or watery bowel movements, or constipation due to primarily incorrect digestion, excess consumption of food, and the repression of spontaneous urges. Symptoms such as straining, painful evacuation, hard bowel movements, or excessive fecal output add up to the host of various disorders, one being *Atisara* (diarrhea). *Atisara* is linked to *Purishvaha Srotas* dysfunction as a result of *Dosha* imbalances, impairing the function of the gut. It is characterized by frequent motions, slimy stools and nausea with gastric disturbances. The role of *Purishvaha Srotas Dushti* in *Atisara* is *Ati Pravritti*, *Viloma Gati*, *Sangha* and *Vimargagamana*. All these types of *Dushti*

interfere with the normal function of the intestine, impacting the pathophysiology of *Atisara*.

Ethical Statement

No animal or microbes have been used or sacrificed for this study, hence Ethical Approval not required.

Author Contributions

Each author has contributed equally to the study's planning, analysis, writing, and editing. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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