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Aarti Shinde

PG Scholar, Department of

Prasuti & Striroga, LKR

Ayurvedic Mahavidyalaya &

Research Institute, Gadhinglaj,

Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India

Prasad Lomte

Guide & H.O.D, Department of

Prasuti & Striroga, LKR

Ayurvedic Mahavidyalaya &

Research Institute, Gadhinglaj,

Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India

A conceptual study of rasa dhatu as the guiding principle for preserving women's health and its function in prasuti tantra and stree roga

Aarti Shinde and Prasad LomteDOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.22271/phyto.2025.v14.i3i.15435>**Abstract**

Rasa dhatu is the term for the vital fluid, also known as plasma that is created during food digestion and sustains a number of physiological processes. It is thought to be the first dhatu to form following digestion and is in charge of providing nourishment for all other dhatus ^[1]. Rasa dhatu keeps the body hydrated, boosts the immune system, regulates body temperature, and makes it easier for nutrients and oxygen to reach cells.

Aims and Objectives: Artava is the upadhatu that comes from rasa, and the proper development and operation of rasa dhatu are essential for controlling the female menstrual cycle. The goal is to determine the pathophysiology of illnesses in women that are dependent on their Rasa Dhatu state.

Methods: Rasa dushti is the primary cause of most health problems that women experience during various stages of life, such as puberty, reproductive age, pregnancy, puerperium, or after menopause. This study includes the effects of Agni, the role of different causative factors, the state of dosha vitiation, and the identification of rasa dhatu dushti symptoms in women with different pathologies ^[2]. As a result, women's health concerns must be addressed, and they must receive prudent Ayurvedic treatment to enhance their quality of life.

Keywords: Rasa dhatu, artava, Agni, role in prasuti tantra, stree roga, ayurvedic management

Introduction

An individual's Arogya is maintained by a rasa dhatu in prakruta awastha that possesses jeevana and poshaka qualities. According to Acharya Sushruta, the body's health is maintained by the sama awastha of Agni, dhatu, dosha, and mala. As a result, an individual's Agni and rasa dhatu become crucial in directing the functions of cells and tissues. As the rasa dhatu's upadhatu, artava plays a part in preserving the artavavaha srotas' function. The rasaja bhava of garbha explains that the first dhatu rasa, which aids in the growth and development of the foetus during pregnancy, sustains and initiates the very foundation of human life. In sutikaavastha, the rasa dhatu is crucial to the creation of sthanya, which is regarded as the rasa's upadhatu ^[3].

Conditions like garbhasosha and garbhakshaya can result from the vikriti of rasa dhatu during pregnancy; in sutikaavastha, vitiated rasa dhatu can cause ashtadushti. Stanya dosha, astanya, or alpastanya; the vikrit rasa dhatu can also disrupt the artava chakra, resulting in yonivyapadas such as artavadushti, astavakshaya, and udavartini ^[4]. A woman with conditions associated with prasuti tantra and stree roga can benefit from health benefits if she receives the right kind of treatment.

Rasa Dhatu

Definition of Rasa Dhatu in the Ayurvedic medical system, Rasa Dhatu is the first and most basic of the seven primary tissues (dhatus). It is regarded as the fundamental component of food that sustains all other bodily tissues. अन्नरसाद रसधातुः प्रवर्तत । रसधातुः सवधातना प्रधानम् ॥ ^[5] Rasa Dhatu is made^[1] from the essence of food, or Anna Rasa. The most important of all the tissues is Rasa Dhatu.

Rasa Dhatu's functions include

- तर्पित वधयित धारयित यार्य-ित चाट्टहृतकन कमणा।(स. स. 14 /3) ^[6]
- रसात् स्तन्यो ततो रक्तमसृजुः कण्डराः सिराः। (च. च. 15 / 17)
- **Tarpana:** Body nourishment at any age.
- **Vardhana:** Development and growth (particularly in children).
- **Yapana:** Stopping the complete deterioration of dhatu (during old age).

Corresponding Author:**Aarti Shinde**

PG Scholar, Department of

Prasuti & Striroga, LKR

Ayurvedic Mahavidyalaya &

Research Institute, Gadhinglaj,

Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India

- Dharana/Jeevana: Stabilising and maintaining the dhatu (during middle age).

Rasa dhatu's function in embryogenesis

Rasa dhatu serves as the sole food source for the developing embryo. Through the placenta and umbilical cord, the fetus's heart is joined to the mothers. This placental circulation provides the foetus with nutrient fluid, or rasa dhatu. Rasa dhatu provides the nutrition needed for growth and development. Because it is made of materials with all six tastes, this supports the fetus's strength and complexion. Additionally, this rasa facilitates lactation and provides nourishment to the mother's body. [Sthana Sharira Cha. Sa. 6/23] ^[7].

गर्भस्य खलु रसनिमित्ता मारुताध्मानिनिमत्ता च परिवृद्धिर्भवति ॥५७॥ (Su. Sa-4/57) ^[8].

After the embryo is created, it grows by being nourished by vayu adhmana and ahara rasa.

Rasadhatu in Nabhinadi's nourishment and placenta formation

- तथाच भोजः गर्भो रुणाद्धि स्रोतांसि रस रक्त वाहनि वै। रक्ताज्ज रायुर्भवति नाडी चैव रस्तमिका। (Su. Sa 3/31, dalhana tikka) ^[9]-Dalhana cites Bhoja's statement that jarayu is born out of rakta and that garbha obstructs both raktavaha nadi and rasa.
- मातुस्तु खलु रसवहायां नाड्यां गर्भनाभीनाडीप्रति-बद्धा, साऽस्य मातुराहाररसवीर्यमभिवहती । तेनोपस्रेहेनास्याभीवृद्धीर्भवती । (Su. Sa 3/31)-Garbha's nabhi nadi is connected to the mother's rasavaha nadi. The essence of the mother's ahara rasa is thus carried by the umbilical cord, and the foetus develops via upasneha.

Role of Rasa dhatu in garbhini

Sadhyogruhita garbha lakshana in garbhini

तत्र सद्यगृहीतगर्भाया लिङ्गानी श्रमो ग्लानिः पिपासा सखिसदनं शुक्रशोणितयोरवबंधः स्फुरणं च योनेः/ (su sha 3/ 13) ^[10]

Rasa Dhatu's role in the development and sustenance of the developing foetus is highlighted by symptoms like glani, pipasa, and sakthisadana, which show an increased demand on it to support the growing embryo.

Vyakta garbha lakshana in garbhini

अकामतश्छर्दयति गंधादुद्विजते सुभात् । प्रसेकः सदनं चापि गर्भिण्या लिंगमुच्यते । (Su Sha 3/13) This refers to pregnancy-related symptoms such as chhardi, gandha, and praseka. Since Rasa Dhatu is in charge of providing nutrition and preserving the body's equilibrium, these are indications of its influence.

Garbhini Pandu

Pandu Garbhini Vitiated Pitta then depletes sneha, oja, rasa, rakta, and other dhatus, causing sithilata and guruta. When rakta is lacking, paller (panduta) develops, Garbhini Prameha.

Garbhini Prameha

It begins with improper diet and lifestyle (Pramehakāra Āhāra and Vihara), leading to the formation of Ama and the imbalance of the three doshas (Tridosha prakopa). This imbalance affects body tissues (Rasa, Vasa, Rakta, Lasika, Mamsa, Meda, Kleda, Majja, Oja, Sukra), leading to abnormalities in the urinary system (Mutravahi Srotas and Vastimukha), and eventually results in Prameha, marked by the excretion of excess tissue elements.

Prasava's role for rasa dhatu

पूर्ण गात्रो भवति यदा स रसभावितः। दादा प्रसौत्यथाकाशं गर्भः स्त्रीकुक्षीविव्युत्तिः॥ (भे.सां.शा. 3/13) ^[11].

According to Bhela, the onset of labour is caused by the foetus reaching full maturity [rasa bhabita] of various body parts.

Rasa dhatu dushti causing pathogenesis in the Garbha

Garbha shosha/Vatabhipanna garbha

यदा तून्मागतगो वातो गर्तस्य रसवाहिनी स्त्रोतास शोषयित तदा वातरोगी हीनो जायते। बहुनि वा वर्षाण्युरेतीष्ठति॥ (अ.सां.शा. 2/37) ^[12]

The vayu moving upward dries up the rasavaha srotas as a consequence the garbha is vata rogi, hina, and stays intrauterine for long period.

Upavishtaka garbha: (Cha.sha.8/26)

Eating hot, sharp food, or Ushna Tikshna Ahara, aggravates Vata, which withholds Pitta and Kapha because of bleeding. Because of this, the Rasavaha Nadi, which carries the fetus's Rasa Dhatu, is compressed, resulting in an improper flow of Rasa, defective foetal development, and the condition known as Upavishtaka (foetal arrest or stillbirth).

Garbhodaka kshaya

Since both the mother and the foetus contribute to garbhodaka circulation, inadequate nutrition that affects the rasavaha srotas causes garbhodaka kshaya.

Garbhodaka Vriddhi

Certain conditions during pregnancy cause the rasavaha srotas to be improperly regulated, impacting both the mother and the foetus. This affects the production of amniotic fluid and leads to polyhydramnios.

Miscarriage (Garbhasrava)

Vitiated Rasa Dhatu is one of the causes of Garbhasrava, which can lead to bodily instability and an increased risk of miscarriage or early labour.

Rasa dhatu dushti in Sutika vyadhi

मिथ्याचारात् सुट्टीकाया यो व्याधीरूपउपजायते। ^[13]

A puerperal woman's body becomes lethargic as a result of overexertion brought on by persistently intense labour pains, dosha vitiation, indriya exhaustion, and a decline in sara of dhatus, especially rasa and rakta dhatu kshaya. A slight vitiation of doshas can result in disorders and complications if appropriate care is not given during delivery and the postnatal period.

Rasa dhatu in stanya dusti

It is said that stanya is rasa dhatu's upadhatu. An imbalance in doshas (Dosha Dushti) is caused by improper diet and lifestyle (Ahitkara Ahara Vihar) followed by a new mother (Sutika). The Rasa Dhatu is impacted by this imbalance, which ultimately leads to the production of impure breast milk (Stanya Dushti).

Rasadhatu in Rajo Utpatti

रसादेव रजः स्त्रीणां मासि त्र हं स्तव्यत्। ^[14]

Since Artava is the upadhatu of rasa dhatu, raja is thought to have come from rasa, which flows for three days each month in a cyclical rhythm.

Rasa Dhatu Dushti (Vitiation Causes)

An imbalance in the Dosha and Agni Dushti, which impacts the Rasa vaha srotas, are caused by Mithya Ahara, Vihara, and Cinta (stress and anxiety). Eventually, these imbalances result in Upadhatu Artava and a variety of women's health disorders (Stree Rogas). [Vimana Sthana Cha. Sa. 5/13] ^[15]

Abnormal state of rasa dhatu and its dushti lakshanas in stree roga

Ayurveda states that any one of the three Doshas or a combination of doshas in tara tama bhava can become vitiated, resulting in Rasa Dhatu Dushti.

1. The symptoms of Vataja Rasa Dushti lakshana include coldness, emaciation, and dryness of the body. It can cause problems for women, including delayed menstruation, oligomenorrhea (scanty menstruation), and general debility.
2. Pittaja Rasa Dushti lakshana, This condition is characterised by heat in the body, burning sensations, and excessive thirst. Menorrhagia (excessive menstrual bleeding), reproductive organ inflammation, and irritability are common symptoms.
3. Kaphaja Rasa Dushti lakshana, This condition shows up as excessive secretion, heaviness, and lethargy. Obesity, leucorrhea (excess vaginal discharge), and slow reproductive function are associated with this type.

Ashta artava dushti

बीजदोषाद्यथा सस्यं न सम्यग्वि प्ररोहणी। माता पित्रोस्तु दोषेण तथा गर्भः प्रयच्छति ॥ तस्मात् सम्यग्रसाहारा हतुकालेऽथ दम्पती। रहस्ययोगमेयातां स्मरन्तौ मनसा विभुम् ॥ विकृताः स्युरगर्भा वै रसापश्यनिषेवणैः। सन्धाराणाद्धा वेगानां योनिदोषेण वा पुनः ॥ (भे.सं.शा. 3/2-4) ^[17]. Rasa dhatu vitiation is one of the main causes of blockages, depletion, or vitiation in Artavavaha srotas, which can result in conditions like amenorrhoea, dysmenorrhea, or menorrhagia. However, the normal function of Artava Vaha Srotas is to maintain the menstrual cycle.

Vandhyatva

1. बीजदोषाद्यथा सस्यं न सम्यग्वि प्ररोहणी। माता पित्रोस्तु दोषेण तथा गर्भः प्रयच्छति ॥ तस्मात् सम्यग्रसाहारा हतुकालेऽथ दम्पती। रहस्ययोगमेयातां स्मरन्तौ मनसा विभुम् ॥
2. विकृताः स्युरगर्भा वै रसापश्यनिषेवणैः। सन्धाराणाद्धा वेगानां योनिदोषेण वा पुनः ॥ (भे.सं.शा. 3/2-4) ^[17]

According to Acharya Bhela, a woman stays vandhya if her beeja (sperm and ovum) are defective or if she is malnourished, which usually happens as a result of Rasa Dhatu dushti (kshaya). Pregnancy issues may arise if the woman becomes pregnant with vitiated rasa dhatu.

Shweta Pradara

Women frequently complain of excessive and irregular vaginal discharge, which is frequently brought on by Kapha vitiation in Rasa Dhatu.

The pathophysiology of PCOS (Polycystic Ovary Syndrome): Which is typified by irregular periods, obesity, and hormonal imbalances, may be influenced by an imbalance

in Rasa Dhatu brought on by Kapha and Vata Dushti. When rasa dhatu dushti is followed by uttarotara dhatu dushti, metabolic dysfunction is also seen, which can result in irregular menstruation, obesity, hyperandrogenism, and insulin resistance.

Endometriosis

Inflammatory disorders like endometriosis, which impact the reproductive organs and can result in excruciating pain and infertility, can be brought on by Rasa Dushti, particularly when Pitta is involved.

The mangement of Rasa Dhatu Dushti

The two main methods used in Ayurvedic treatment of diseases affecting women are Shamana (pacification) and Shodhana (cleaning or detoxification) ^[18]. These methods are designed to support general health, enhance reproductive health, and balance the doshas (Pitta, Kapha, and Vata). This is a summary of the ways in which Shodhana and Shamana are used to treat common health problems in women.

Shodhana (Cleaning or Purification): By eliminating accumulated toxins, or Ama, which can upset the doshic balance and cause health issues, shodhana is the process of detoxifying the body. Shodhana treatments are usually advised for chronic illnesses or underlying imbalances.

The following are important Shodhana treatments for women's health:

Vamana (Emesis Therapy): Mostly used to treat conditions related to Kapha, such as irregular menstruation, PCOS, and infertility caused by Kapha aggravation. Vamana aids in re-establishing hormonal balance by clearing the upper digestive tract of extra Kapha. **Virechana (Purgation Therapy):** Helpful for Pitta-aggravated conditions like endometriosis, heavy or painful periods, or inflammation of the reproductive organs. Virechana helps to reduce the symptoms of these conditions by cleansing the gastrointestinal system and liver. **Enema therapy, or basti,** is useful for treating Vata disorders such as irregular menstruation, dysmenorrhea, and menopausal symptoms. Basti supports the health.

Nasya (Nasal Administration): Beneficial for disorders like anxiety, mood swings, or insomnia that are frequently observed during menopause and where hormonal imbalance impacts mental health. Nasya is the process of administering medicinal oils or herbs via the nose to enhance mental clarity and balance hormone channels.

Shamana or Pacification: Shamana entails calming the agitated doshas with supportive therapies, dietary modifications, herbal remedies, and lifestyle adjustments. Shamana is especially useful for treating acute symptoms or when Shodhana is impractical.

These are important Shamana treatments for women's health.

Herbal Concoctions: To balance the doshas, certain herbs are chosen. For instance:

- **Ashoka (Saraca asoca):** Used to control uterine function and treat irregular menstruation.
- **Shatavari (Asparagus racemosus):** renowned for its ability to support reproductive health and balance hormones. It is frequently used to treat menstrual disorders, infertility, and menopause.

- **Lodhra (*Symplocos racemosa*):** Helps control excessive bleeding and preserve hormonal equilibrium.
- **Guggulu and Triphala:** Aid in the management of PCOS and obesity-related conditions by promoting a healthy metabolism and the removal of excess Kapha.

Dietary management

Dietary management places a strong emphasis on eating a balanced diet that is appropriate for each person's condition and dosha type. For instance, women with Vata imbalances may require warming, nourishing foods like ghee, almonds, and cooked vegetables, while those with Pitta imbalances may benefit from cooling foods like cucumber, coconut, and bitter greens.

- **Lifestyle Modifications:** Incorporates seasonal (Ritucharya) and daily (Dinacharya) routines to foster mental and physical harmony. Meditation, yoga, and pranayama (breathing techniques) are frequently suggested for overall balance, stress reduction, and mental clarity.
- **Rejuvenative Therapies (Rasayana):** These therapies boost immunity and slow down ageing while revitalising and nourishing the body. For women, ashwagandha, guduchi, and shatavari are popular Rasayana herbs. In summary, Samshodhana, Shamana, and Rasayana Chikitsa were primarily recommended for the treatment of common gynaecological issues. By removing aggravated Doshas and imparting Vata Shaman effects, these therapies aid in Samprapti Vighatana of Stree Rogas and thereby aid in regressing the pathogenesis of Stree Rogas.

Discussion

According to Acharaya Sushruta, the shareera, or body, is the "pancha maha bhuta vikaara samudayatmakam", which indicates that the dosha, dhatus, and malas all play a role in the development of the body's various organs and tissues. Since they are all composed of panchabhutas, they are all referred to as "pancha maha bhuta vikara" [19]. Because jala (AP) is the primary bhuta of rasa dhatu, it has a propensity to circulate throughout the body. Rasa dhatu affects women's menstrual cycles, and as a result, a woman's reproductive health is dependent on its condition.

Ahara, vihara, and manasika factors are some of the nidanas that have an impact on a woman's health. The vitiation of tridosha according to the dosha predominance is the samprapti of these diseases. JatharAgni is another element that is impacted in the pathophysiology of these illnesses; as a result, rasa dhatu vitiation is observed. We see a strong correlation between Artava vaha srotas dushti and rasa dushti since Artava is the upadhatu of rasa. For instance, in the case of artava kshaya, the doshas that are vitiated are upadhatu artava, kapha, and dushya, which are rasa dhatu [20]. Furthermore, the Agni is crucial to the upkeep of each of these dhatus. Agni must be treated before beginning Ayurvedic treatment. We must then administer shodhana according to the doshas that are most prevalent in the female reproductive system. Following shodhana, shamana aushadhis must treat the remaining dosha dushti; the exact course of treatment will depend on the woman's ailment. Rasayana can be used to enhance rasa dhatu guna and karma, as well as the dhatus and its function [21]. The woman can be advised to use one of the many types of rasayana that are recommended in Ayurvedic classics to boost her immunity and general health. When a pregnant woman follows garbhini paricharya, it works well to maintain the pregnancy's physiology and optimal nutrition,

which in turn preserves the quality of rasa dhatu. Therefore, in every facet of the stree roga and prasuti tantra examination, rasa dhatu dushti must be identified, and the treatment chosen should work to correct it.

Conclusions

As the primary nutrient tissue, Rasa Dhatu is closely related to hormone balance, reproductive health, and the sustenance of all other dhatus. A variety of gynaecological conditions, such as irregular menstruation, excessive bleeding (Asrigdara), and reproductive problems, are caused by imbalances in Rasa Dhatu [22]. For the female reproductive system to remain healthy, Rasa Dhatu must be kept in balance. The production and operation of Artava (menstrual blood) are directly impacted by disturbances in the quality or quantity of Rasa Dhatu, which in turn affects fertility, menstrual health, and general well-being. For Prasuti Tantra and Stree Roga disorders to be managed and prevented, a balanced Rasa Dhatu is therefore essential.

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