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Review Article

POLYCYSTIC OVARIAN DISEASE: AN AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The PCOD is one of the most frequent endocrine disease in women of reproductive age with a prevalence of 9.13% in Indian population. It leads to menstrual irregularities ranging from amenorrhoea to dysfunctional uterine bleeding, hirsutism, acne and anovulatory infertility. In Ayurveda this condition is not explained as a single disease entity, but given under the headings *yonivyapada* (genital disorders) and *Artava dushti* (menstrual disorders). Mainly the clinical features of PCOS can be correlated with *Nashtartava* and *Pushpaghnee jataharini*.

Keywords: PCOS, *Ayurveda*, *Nashtartava*, *Pushpaghane*

INTRODUCTION

Polycystic ovarian syndrome is a most prevalent endocrinopathy. Incidence of this disease is increasing now a day because of sedentary lifestyles, pollution, and excessive intake of junk food. It is obviously observed in women seeking medical advice for infertility as well as irregular menstrual bleeding.

PCOS manifested clinically by a combination of ovulatory dysfunction, hyper androgenic state and abnormal ovarian morphology. This disease appears to be multifactorial and polygenic in nature involving multisystem dysfunction, namely reproduction, endocrine and metabolic. Hyper androgenism and insulin resistance appear to be central cause to the pathophysiology of the disease, the above incidence of the disease with various symptoms also present various risk like endometrial hyperplasia and endometrial cancer, insulin resistance/ type 2 DM, high blood pressure, dyslipidaemia, cardio vascular disease, strokes, weight gain, miscarriages¹.

If there is no direct mentioning of a disease in *Ayurveda* which is having direct correlation with any modern diseases. *Acharya Charaka* has told that every disease could not be named. So, Vaidyas should know the diseased condition according to the involvement of *Doshas*, *Dhatu*s, and *srotas*² etc.

In *Ayurveda* this condition is not explained as a single disease entity, but given under the headings *yonivyapada* (genital disorders) and *Artava dushti* (menstrual disorders). After description of eight disorders of *Artava*, destruction of *Artava* (*Nashtartava*) has been described by *Acharya Susruta*³ and *Vagbhata*⁴ respectively. In *Nashtartava* the *Dosha* (*Vata* and *Kapha*) obstruct the passage of *Artava*, thus *Artava* is not visualize properly. *Nashtartava* is a symptom and as well as a disease caused due to vitiation of *Vata* and *Kapha dosha*'s as they do *marga-avarodha* to *Artava vaha srotas* leading to absence of flow of *Artava*. The features of PCOS may also be correlated with '*Pushpaghnee Jataharini*'⁵ that is described in Ayurvedic classics (*Kashyapa Samhita*) having the clinical features of futile

ovulation (*Vrutha Pushpa*) and corpulent hairy cheek (*Sthula Lomasha ganda*).

PCOS Ayurvedic view

Nidana: *Ayurveda* considers involvement of four basic etiological factors i.e. unhealthy lifestyle, menstrual disorders, genetic defects and cryptogenic factors in the establishment of female genital disorders (*vyapad*)⁶. And one among of them is *pradustaartava* which includes the both *bijarupa* and *rajorupaartava*. Ayurvedic interpretation of disease goes in line with *rasapradoshajavyadhi*. *Santarpa Ahara* and *vihar* causing *vatakaphadushti*,⁷ and *medodushti*⁸, will be the key factors causing the expression of the syndrome.

Lakshana and Samprapti

1) Menstrual Irregularities:-

Menstruation is intimately correlated with the normal functional state of the female and it is an index of her well-being but, when it becomes irregular or absent it becomes a curse. Menstrual irregularities are found as amenorrhoea or oligomenorrhoea in PCOS.

Description given by *acharya Sushruta* suits the menstrual irregularities seen in PCOD regarding the status of *doshas*, *dhatu*s, *srotas* and *lakshanas*. The *doshas*, here aggravated *vata* and *kapha*, obstructs the passage or orifices of channels carrying *artava*, thus *artava* is destroyed. Though *artava* is not finished completely, but it is not discharged monthly.

Here, the '*marga*' can be taken as *artavavaha srotas* which is *avrita* by vitiated *doshas*. *Artavavaha srotas* does not consist of only the genital tract of women but also includes Hypothalamo-Pituitary-Ovarian axis, too. As menstruation occurs as a result of coordinated function of HPO axis, any obstruction at any level leads to menstrual irregularities and amenorrhoea. This shows the *avaranajanya samprapti* and due to this *avarana* the symptoms like *anartava* or delayed *artava* is produced.

2) Anovulation:-

Failure to ovulate or to generate an ovum (female egg) is called 'Anovulation'. There are various scattered references available of anovulation as *Beejopaghata*, *Pushpopaghata*⁹ and *Abeejatva*¹⁰, etc. There are many conditions described for *vandhya* but infertility associated with amenorrhoea is few.

Sushruta states that in *vandhyayoni*, the *artava* is destroyed. Here, we can interpret *artava* as ovum and consider *vandhya* as anovulatory menstrual cycle. Ovum is a microscopic structure; its presence during those days was imagined due to its role in conception¹¹. Vitiating *vata dosha* is the main cause of *vandhya yoni vyapada*.¹²

Though the word *artava* refers to menstruation, ovum and ovarian hormones, *Ashtoartava dushti* indicates only menstrual disorders probably indicating interwoven disorders of ovum and hormones. The woman suffering from these eight menstrual disorders becomes infertile due to *abeejatvam* as the ultimate effect of *artava vyapada* is '*Abeejatva*'¹³.

3) Obesity:-

Obesity or *Sthoulya* is described as an independent disease (*Medoroga*) or as a complication of some diseases. It is also given under the heading of *Samtarpana janya vyadhi* where *vandhyatva* has also been given.¹⁴ *Sthoulya* is a *dushya* dominant *vyadhi* where *meda* plays a major role in pathogenesis.

Charaka said that the fat distribution in obese is on *stana*, *udara* and *sfika pradasha*¹⁵ which shows centripetal manner which is same as found in the obese patients of PCOS.

4) Hyperandrogenism:-

In ayurvedic classics, there is no any separate or particular description of hyperandrogenism (hirsutism, acne and male pattern balding); rather they are given as symptoms of other diseases. *Atilomata* is said to be one of the *Nindita purusha*¹⁶ which can be compared with hirsutism but it is not the place of describing it in context of PCOD. Hirsutism or excessive body hair especially in female is given as a symptom of one of the *Rewati* described by *Kashyapa*. Descriptions of some of the *Rewatis* are related with amenorrhoea or menstrual irregularities. Out of these the lady with '*Pushpaghni*' *rewati* is having regular cycles but it is fruitless. She has corpulent and hairy cheeks. According to *Kashyapa*, it is *sadhya rewati*.¹⁷ Picture of *Pushpaghnee* bears resemblance with hyperandrogenism condition in which anovulation and hirsutism are prominent features.

Chikitsa: In PCOD considering the doshic involvement, the treatment should be aimed at pacifying the vitiated *kapha*, making the *vata anuloma* and increasing the *agneya guna* of *pitta*.

1) Eradication of the causative factors: Avoidance of *nidan*s helps in preventing complications of any disease¹⁸. Here, they can be taken as *kaphakara* and *vata dushtikara aharas- viharas, medovridhikara ahara* i.e. *vishamasana*, etc. Here it can be taken as avoidance of junk food, bakery items, cold drinks, etc.

2) The management approach to PCOS should concentrate on treating *Agnimandya* at *jatharagni* and *dhatwagni* level and alleviating *srotovarodham* and ultimately regularizing the *apanavata*.

3) Use of *Agneya Dravyas*- *Agneya dravyas* are said to be the anti-dote for *vata* and *kapha*. They are said to be *pittakara*, too. Administration of such *dravyas* in cases of amenorrhoea is advised with caution as these drugs are *vata-kaphaghna* and due to *ushna, tikshna guna*, removes *srotorodha*, decreases *medodhatu* and improves *dhatu* metabolism by removing *ama*.

4) *Vaman Karma*- To eliminate vitiated *kapha* and *soumaya* substances from body resulting into relative increase in *agneya* constituents of the body, consequently *artava* also increases¹⁹.

DISCUSSION

Now a day, PCOS is the major problem faced by many women. They usually take Allopathy treatment for quick results. But drawback of modern medicine is that it treat with hormonal medicine or suggest surgery. While in Ayurveda it uses treatment like *Panchakarma*, Medicinal treatment, *Pranayam*, Diet control etc.

CONCLUSION

PCOS is an increasing public health problem which is very common and leading cause of infertility in women. Although, it is very difficult to simulate this disease with any particular disease mentioned in Ayurvedic texts, yet an attempt has been made here to describe this pathological condition on the basis of *dosha, dushya, agni, srotas* etc. by keeping symptomatology of disease in conscious.

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