

AYURVEDIC MANAGEMENT OF INFERTILITY: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Infertility is defined as a failure to achieve a clinical pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse. In Ayurvedic literature, infertility has been described under *Vandhyatva*. Infertility can be due to different reasons with respect to male and female. The four factors as mentioned in Ayurveda viz. *Ritu*, *Kshetra*, *Ambu*, *Beeja* should be in proper state in order to achieve conception and complete the pregnancy successfully. Reasons are such as weight, diet, smoking, medical conditions, other substance abuse, environmental pollutants, medications and family medical history, infections might have an effect on conception in couples. Infertility can arise from either of the partners. Infertility is usually because of low numbers or poor quality of sperm in men whereas in woman, it occurs when she is not able to produce eggs regularly or because her fallopian tubes are damaged or blocked and the sperm cannot reach her eggs. Both the *Shodhana* and *Shamana Chikitsa* including *Panchakarma* is mentioned for *Vandhyatva* in ayurvedic texts. This article presents *Vandhyatva* from the lens of Ayurveda, discussing the ayurvedic concepts and management that are followed in case of infertility in females.

Keywords: *Ayurveda*, Infertility, *Shodhana*, *Shaman Chikitsa*, *Vandhyatva*

▪ INTRODUCTION

According to WHO, positive reproductive health of a woman is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely absence of disease related to reproductive system and functions. 50% of normal couple achieve conception within three months of regular unprotected intercourse, 75% in six months and 80-85% conceive within a year. Infertility is defined as a failure to conceive within one or more years of regular unprotected coitus. [1] [2] Primary Infertility is defined as if conception has never occurred and if the patient fails to

conceive after having achieved a previous conception is defined as Secondary Infertility. The incidence of infertility in any community varies between 5 and 15%. [3]

Aacharya Kashyapa says that the couple having number of children with proper growth and development due to effect of nature or their own deeds are fortunate, otherwise it should be treated. Under the description of *Jatharinis*, *Kashyapa* has mentioned one *Pushpaghni* having useless *Pushpa* or menstruation and certain others characterized with repeated expulsions of fetuses of different gestational periods. Since in these conditions also the woman fails to get a child, thus can be included under *Vandhyatva*. [4] In *Sushruta samhita* one disease named *Vandhyatva* is included among twenty gynaecological disorders.

Harita has defined *Vandhyatva* as failure to achieve a child rather than pregnancy, because he has included *Garbhastravi* (having repeated abortions) and *mritvatsa* (having repeated stillbirths) also under the classification. This definition is not considered in present era [5]

Aacharya Charaka also says that abnormality of any one of the *Shadbhavas* will cause the failure to get a pregnancy. [6] Coitus with a woman who is very young, old, chronically ill, hungry, unhappy and afflicted with other psychological abnormalities, lateral posture during conception [7]; semen falling over *Samirana nadi*[8] or in outer part of *Yoni*[9] also fails to impregnate the woman. Due to acceptance of *Bija* (sperm) or *Garbha* (embryo) by vitiated *Yoni* in various *Yonivyapad* and destruction of *Bija* in *Artavadushti* the conception does not take place. According to *Aacharya Bhela*, there are two causes of failure to become pregnant i.e affliction with various disease of *Vata* and abnormalities of *Yoni*. [10] Aggravated *Vayu* expels the *Shukra* from the uterus, destroy the *Raja*, thus the woman become infertile.

▪ ETIOLOGY

Failure of any of the following factor leads to *Vandhyatva*,

1. *Ritu* means season or fertile period
2. *Kshetra* means healthy *Yoni*, uterus and passage (reproductive organs)
3. *Ambu* means proper nutrient fluid
4. *Beeja* means *Shuddha Shukra* and *Shonita*.

▪ **TYPES**

Classification of *Vandhyatva* has not been given in any classics except *Harita Samhita*. *Charaka* mentioned the word *Sapraja* and *Apraja*.

Considering all these references together *Vandhyatva* can be classified in three types according to *Aacharya Charaka* –

- ***Vandhya***: refers to absolute inability to conceive due to serious, innate problems like *beejopaghata*.
- ***Apraja***: refers to infertility in which woman conceives after treatment or a woman with unsuccessful pregnancies even after obtaining conception.
- ***Sapraja***: refers to a condition in which a woman in her active reproductive age, does not conceive with previous history of bearing successful pregnancies.

➤ ***Maharshi Harita*** classified *Vandhyatva* in six types, [11]

- *Kakvandhya* (one child sterility)
- *Anapatya* (no child or primary infertility)
- *Garbhasravi* (repeated abortion)
- *Mritvatsa* (repeated stillbirths)
- *Balakshaya* (loss of strength)
- *Vandhya* due to

Balyavastha immaturity of female genital organs or delayed puberty with its pathology thus impending to infertility.

Garbhakosha-bhanga indicates pathology of uterus including prolapse, retro-version.

Dhatu-kshaya due to *vyadhi* or *pancha-karma-vaishamya*

- **MANAGEMENT**

1. Treating the underlying pathological conditions of infertility (*Nidanaparivarjana*).
2. Basic treatment methods of *vandhyatua*.
3. Following the regimen indicated in *garbhadhana*. [12]

Ayurveda considers two types of Chikitsa i.e *Shamana* (medicinal treatment) and *Shodhana Chikitsa* (purification)

- **Shodhana Chikitsa**

- **Uttar Basti**

Uttarbasti is a potent *chikitsa* for *Vandhyatva* .

Uttarbasti act as line of treatment for *Garbhashyagat Rogas* since this approach facilitates absorption of drugs and helps to achieve target delivery of drugs to the affected organs.

Uttarbasti Karma in cervical region stimulates cervical secretion and helps in easy facilitation of sperms after receiving *Bhrimhana drugs*. Oil in combination with *Lekhaniya* drugs helps in conception. When *Lekhaniya* drugs are given in intra-uterine region through *Uttarbasti* then they remove the obstruction of tube and helps in development of tubal cilia in fallopian tubes.

It helps in rejuvenating the endometrium lining and balances the processes of reproductive system like ovulation and also helps in Garbhasthapana

Ritu kala (after end of menstrual bleeding) is considered as the correct time for the administration of the *Uttarbasti* because uterus and vagina are ready to receive *Sneha* easily at this time.

Taila is preferred when we want to treat the vitiated *Vata Dosha* associated with *Kapha*. *Ghrita* is preferred when *Vata* is associated with *Pitta Dosha*.

To treat the problems related to cervix *Shatavatri Ghrita* and *Phala Ghrita* is used.

To treat problems of ovary *Narayana Taila*, *Shatpuspa Taila* is used

For treating tubal blockage *Apamarga Kshara Taila & Kumari Taila*, is used

- Use of *Basti* (enema) in infertility due to disease of *Vata* is highly beneficial. [13] The woman having amenorrhoea, scanty menstruation, anovulatory cycle or absence of fertilization causing infertility, *Anuvasana Basti* of oil or *ghrita* is found beneficial. By the use of *Basti* the *Yoni* becomes healthy and woman can conceive easily.
- *Niruha basti* of medicinal *Kashaya* is acts like a nector to an infertile woman.

- *Virechana* is an ideal treatment for anovulation.
- *Yapana Basti* perform both the actions of *niruha (shodhana)* and *anuvasana (snehan)* and hence is very ideal in the treatment of infertility.

Basti Prayoga:

1. *Shatavaryadi anuvasana basti*
 2. *Guducyadi Rasyana Vasti*
 3. *Mustadi Yapana Basti*
 4. *Bala Taila Basti*
 5. *Shatavaryadi Rasayana Basti (Putra-dayaka)*
- **Shamana Chikitsa**

S.N	FORMULATION NAME	REFERENCE
1	<i>Narayana Tail</i>	<i>Sharangdhara Samhita Madhyama Khand 9/101-109</i>
2	<i>Shatpushpa Tail</i>	<i>Kashyapa Samhita 5/23-25</i>
3	<i>Shatavari Tail</i>	<i>Sharangdhara Samhita Madhyama Khand 9/133-135</i>
4	<i>Yograj Gugglu</i>	<i>Sharangdhara Samhita Madhyama Khand 7/56-62,66</i>
5	<i>Drakshadhya Churan</i>	<i>Harita Samhita 48/95</i>
6	<i>Phala Ghrita</i>	<i>Sharangdhara Samhita Madhyama Khand 9/80-87</i>
7	<i>Pippalyadi Churan mixed with Ghrita</i>	<i>Chakradatta yonivyapada Chikitsa 27</i>
8	<i>Sheetakalyanaka Ghrita</i>	<i>Yoga Ratnakar Pradara -roga chikitsa</i>
9	<i>Laghu Phala Ghrita</i>	<i>Sharangdhara Samhita Madhyama Khand</i>
10	<i>Pugapaka</i>	<i>Yoga Ratnakar Prameha Chikitsa sthana</i>
11	<i>Dashmoolarishta</i>	<i>Sharangdhara Samhita Madhyama</i>

		<i>Khand 10/77-92</i>
12	<i>Shatavari Ghrita</i>	<i>Charak Chikitsa Sthana 30/64-66</i>
13	<i>Maharasnadi Kwatha</i>	<i>Sharangdhara Samhita Madhyama Khand 2/90-94,96</i>
14	<i>Kasmaryadi Ghrita</i>	<i>Charak Chikitsa Sthana 30/52-54</i>
15	<i>Lasuna Ghrita</i>	<i>Kashyap Samhita Kalpa Sthana2/93-97</i>
16	<i>Khandakadyavaleha</i>	<i>Kashyap Samhita 2/22</i>

Ayurvedic herbs used in the treatment for infertility:

Ovulation disorder - *Ashoka, Dashmoola, Shatavari, kumari, Guggulu*

Premature ovarian failure (POF) - *Ashoka, Dashmoola, Shatavari, Guduchi, Jeevanti*

Blocked fallopian tubes, adhesions (scar tissue) - *Guduchi, Punarnava.*

▪ **CONCLUSION**

According to *Ayurveda*, Infertility primarily refers to the biological inability of a woman of reproductive age to contribute to conception and also the state of the woman who is unable to carry pregnancy to full term.

The problem of infertility is fairly common now a days and it has become need to find out the solution.

The treatment in infertility includes *Agni Deepana* and *Ama Pachana* because its imbalance leads to many diseases. *Panchakarma* treatment helps to eliminate *ama* and thus corrects the *Agni* and healthy *Agni* will also contributes to healthy *Ojas*. Also, the detoxification by *Panchakarma* helps in the expulsion of toxins from the body *Vata* is the main *Dosha* involved in infertility, and the treatment helps in *Vatanulomana*. The right combination of treatment helps in regulating menstrual cycle, revitalizing sperm, reduces mental stress, enhances general health, wellness, balancing the endocrine system and improving blood flow in pelvic cavity, thereby promoting fertility.

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