

Concept of Srotas according to ayurveda– A Review

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Abstract:-

Srotas plays a major role, in body according to Ayurveda. Acharyas explained purusha assumed to be made of innumerable Srotas. To maintain continuity in the life cycle, these bodily elements have to be continuously regulated, nourished and replenished. Srotas are the channels or inner transport system of the body which is the site for the activities of other bodily elements like dosha, dhathu, mala, agni, etc. Among these some Srotas are micro and some are macro in structure and they adopt the same colour of particular dhathus of the body to which they belong. In Ayurvedic classics, it has been described that the entire range of life process in health and disease depends on the integrity of Srotas. Therefore the present article is an attempt to study the fundamental facts of Srotas.

KEYWORDS: Srotas, channels, srotodushti, Ayurveda, annavahasrotas

I. INTRODUCTION :-

In Ayurveda, Srotas (also spelled Srotas) are the channels or pathways within the body that facilitate the movement and circulation of substances like nutrients, waste, and bodily energies (like Prana). They are considered the body's internal transportation system, responsible for carrying out various bodily functions and maintaining overall health. Ayurveda has accepted the human body to be made up of innumerable Srotas (channels) which are responsible for performing all the physiological and functional activities. All dosha, dhathu and mala perform their functional activities with the help of these Srotas. Ayurveda is the first medical system to announce and describe the existence of innumerable Srotas, within the human body. The term Srotas is derived from the root “Susravana” meaning to exude, to ooze, to flow, to filter. Those from which sravana or flow of the body substances takes place or those through which the materials flow in the body are called Srotas. Thus, they are the channels or pathways of the body through which the materials needed for tissue building, nutrition and other nutrients flow from one corner of the body to the other. In other words, materials are transported through these Srotas from the place of production to the place of need. Srotas are the complex pathways or channels of the nervous system governed by Vayu for carrying out the functional and physiological activities of the human body.

According to Sushruta, [1]those which carry or transport materials like Prana (Life element), Anna (Food), Vari (Water), Mamsa, Meda Dhathu are called Srotas. Charaka opines that there will be „Parinaman-apadyamananam“ [2]meaning undergoing transformation indicates that the channel carry such of the tissue elements as are undergoing transformation from their previous states. The channels of circulation do not carry the sthira (Stable) dhathus but only such of the mobile dhathus are carried by them.

Synonyms of srotas:-[3]

Table no 1

	synonym	resembals		synonym	resembals		synonym	resembals
1	Sira	Vein	2	Dhamani	Artery	3	Rasayani	Lymphatic ducts
4	Rasavahini	Capillary	5	Nadi	Tubular condunits	6	Panth	Passage
7	Marga	Tract, pathways	8	Aashay	Repertories	9	Niket	Resorts
10	Stan	Site	11	Sharir chidra	Body orifices	12	Samvrutsamvrutani	Open/closed passages

Structure of srotas:-[4]

According to Acharya charak the Srotas may resembles in structure and colour like the dhatu which it carry. Also it may be vritta i.e. circular, sthula (gross/macroscopic), anu(microscopic). It may be deergh (long) or may be like network (pratan sadrush). Acharya Shushrut defines srotas as a channel or passage, which starts from some space

in the body and which secretes or carries fluids, solids, gases, nerve impulse, nutrients, waste products, so these are hollow (passages).

Types of srotas:-

A) Bahya / drushya srotas :-[5]

Bahya means these are having external visible systemic openings or orifices. Also called bahirmukh srotas. These are 9 in male and 12 in female. These are nose (nasika)2, Ear (karna)2, Eyes (netra) 2, Anus (payu)1, aasya (mouth)1, Urethral opening (mehana)1, breast (stana)2, vagina (apathyapath)1.

B) Abhyantar srotas :-[6]

The internal passages are called abhyantar srotas. These are 13 which include 7 systems of dhatus, 3 of malas, and rest 3 are anna, jal and pran (respiration) related.

After going through these different Srotas, we can classify them into three groups :

- 1) First three which are associated with the intake of environmental elements are Pranavaha Srotas (Carrier of life or air), Annavaha (Carrier of food), Udakavaha (Carrier of water)
- 2) Middle seven are the purveyors of Rasa (Plasma), Rakta (Blood), Mamsa (Muscle tissue), Meda (Fat), Asthi (osseous tissue), Majja (Bone marrow or brain tissue) and Shukra (Semen)
- 3) Last three channels are namely Swedavaha (Carrier of sweat), Mutravaha (Carrier of urine) and Purishavaha (Carrier of faeces). No separate Srotas has been described for the shareerika dosha.

In addition to these gross material channels, some other important channels described are –

- a. Manovaha Srotas - which carries impulses of thoughts and emotions.
- b. Stanyavaha Srotas: Channels which carry stanya (Breast Milk) are called Stanyavaha Srotas.
- c. Shabdavaha Srotas: When aggravated Vata enters shabdavaha Srotas either alone or in association with Kapha, it produces Bhadriya. / Swaravaha Srotas: Channels which carry shabda is called Swaravaha Srotas.
- d. Samjnavaha Srotas: Channels which carry buddhi is called Samjnavaha Srotas.

Srotomool :-[7]

Archarya Chakradatta, in his commentary mentioned srotomool is the site from which particular srotas arise or end, so we can say it as orifice of srotas. All pathological or physiological changes occur from these ends. It is also called Prabhavastan that is main anatomical site of respective srotas.

Table no . moolsthan of srotas [8] according to Charak Acharya

Srotas	moolsthan	srotas	moolsthan
Pranavaha	Hruday, mahasrotas	Asthivaha	Meda, jaghan
Udakavaha	Talu kloma	Majjavaha	Asthi, sandhi
Annavh	Aamshay, vaam parshva	Shukravaha	Vrushan, shepha
Rasavaha	Hruday, dash dhamani	Mutravaha	Basti, vankshan
Raktvaha	Yakrut, Pleeha	Purishvaha	Pakwashay, gud
Maansavah	Snayu, twak	Swedvaha	Meda, Romkup
Medovaha	Vrukka, vapavahan	Aartavaha	Garbhashay, aartav

Functions of srotas :-

- All constituents of body get nourishment from srotas. So for normal functioning of srotas is important for the nourishment of various body structures.[8]
- Abnormality in srotas may cause srotomool dushti which can lead to malnourishment of particular organ.
- Srotas are responsible for aggravation and alleviation of doshas (dosh prakop prashaman)
- Srotas carry flow of nutrients, gases, solids etc and move them all in whole body. (sarve sartwat)[9]
- Srotas transform the dhatu, food, etc into another state by carrying it to different organ. (parinaman apadyamananam). [10]
- The vitiation of srotas leads to the vitiation of the dhatus in the organs and flowing in the channels. [11]

Samanya Dushti hetu of srotas :-[12,13]

The causes of vitiation of doshas are improper food habits and their activities. The expression of such vitiation is through the manifestation of diseases. The same causes which lead to doshadushti and dhathudushti are responsible for the vitiation of Srotas i.e. srotodushti.

Samanya Dushti lakshanas of srotas:- [14]

The main lakshanas of the vitiation of the srotas are

1. Atipravrutti: Increased flow or excess production of contents of srotas.
e.g. raktavah srotas – raktapitta, asrukdar (menorrhagia)
2. Sanga: Obstruction or stagnation of the flow of content of the channel.
e.g. annavaha srotas – bhojan sang (stasis of food) seen in duodenal stricture

3. Siragranthi: Appearance of nodules in the channel
e.g raktaj granthi, medoj granthi
4. Vimargagamana: Diversion of the flow of the contents to an improper channel or flow in the path other than its own.
e.g. purishvah srotas – fecal matter vomiting , baddhagudoadar (intestinal obstruction).

Causes of srotovaigunya :-

The unhealthy food and lifestyle leads to vitiation of doshas which in turn causes srotodushti and sroto dushti leads to srotovaigunya. There are numerous causes of srotovaigunya but some are least'd below-

- Mithya ahar vihar – e.g- pitta prakop diet by amplpitta patient
- sahaj hetu (hereditary) -e.g – leukoderma
- garbhaj hrtu (conjanital)- e.g- Vamantva (dwarfism)
- agantu hetu (trauma)- e.g.- fall (accident)
- kalaj hetu(seasonal)- e.g- cold, heat ,wind, etc affecting health of individuals
- swabhawaj hetu (natural)- e.g- geriatric diseases – graying of hairs, osteoporosis,
- krumija hetu .e.g- various bacteria, fungus etc diseases.

II. DISCUSSION

Ayurveda has given importance to Srotas for every Murthimant bhavas. Srotas are the channels different from sira and dhamani, which carries nutrients to the body organs and widely spreads all over the body. It also carries waste materials for the excretion from the body. Without Srotas, the physiological functions of the human body will not be possible. Every Srotas has two moolasthanas (start and end) and function of these moolasthanas is to produce the elements which flow through the srotas. If moolasthana is defective, the srotas will be defective. But if srotas is defective, does not mean that moolasthana will also be defective. Pathological changes in the body are due to Sroto dushti, Srotosanga. Any imbalance in the srotas causes disease, so for the proper development of the human body, a proper functioning of Srotas is a must.

III. CONCLUSION

Srotas is merely a hollow channels or space. According to Charaka Acharya “Srotomayamayampurusha,, i.e they have seen the body in the form of Srotas. Human body consists of Multiple and innumerable Srotas. Srotas indicate all Macro and micro level descriptions pertaining to the exchange, transportation and excretion taking place in the human body. Srotas along with their moolasthana have been described for the purpose of the study of pathology and clinical medicine. Understanding the concept of Srotas and Srotovaigunya facilitates for treating the diseases. As long as Srotas perform their normal function, body would be free from diseases.

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