RESEARCH ARTICLE

CRITICAL EVALUATION OF SROTAS AND ITS CLINICAL SIGNIFICANCE

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ABSTRACT

The concept of srotas has been described vividly and scientifically in Ayurvedic literature. It is stated that no corporeal entities could arise or decay without srotas. Srotas are channels of nourishment having particular functional entity in human body. These channels are structurally related to various organs with due consideration on the basis of physiological needs of our body. It is pre-requisite for the maintenance of good health because without healthy srotas body cannot grow normally. Any slight disturbances at the level of srotas; either structurally or functionally, leads to dosha dushya samarchana and as a result disease manifest inside the body. The special kinds of pain exhibited in cases of srotodushti (pathological involvement of srotas) which are important to gain knowledge of prognosis of disease as well as to treat the root cause of the disease.

Key words: Srotas, Dosha, Dushya, Srotodushti.

INTRODUCTION

The term Srotas is derived from the root Su sravano means which exude, ooze, filter or permeate (Agnivesha et al., 2000). These channels function as the medium through which the biological materials, nutrients and excretory material flow. It refers both to the gross channels like respiratory tract, gastrointestinal tract, genitourinary tract etc. and micro channels like vessels, capillaries, lymphatic channels etc. and also to molecular channels like the permeability of membranous pores of cell membrane etc (Dwarakanath, 1996). Srotas which is the transport system of the body has many synonyms: Srotamsi - channels, Siras - veins, Dhamanis - arteries, Rasayannis - lymphatics, Rasavahini - capillaries, Nadis – tubular conduits, Panthanas - passages, Margas - pathways, Sharir chidras - body orifices, Samvrut samvrutani - open, closed, Sthanans - sites, loci, Ashayas - repertoires, Niketas - resorts. The Srotas recognized by surgeons as - having traumatic injuries may be inflicted on them or due to piercing them during surgical manipulations with sharp instruments (Kaviraj et al., 2010). Movement of tridosha i.e. vata, pitta and kapha in entire body is through different srotas. Even manusika guna satrva and manusika dosha raja and tama, which are imperceptible by sense organs mostly, use the entire body as a vehicle. Ayurveda has emphasised the role of Srotas both in the physiological and pathological state, therefore study of Srotovigyan is essential for understanding the basic systemic & functional anatomy of the body (Agnivesha, 2000).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Present work has been done based on critical review of classical information, published research works, modern literature and research works conducted at various institutes. The possible correlation has been made between collected information and has been presented in systematic way.

CONCEPTUAL PART

Structure of Srotas: Srotas generally takes the color of respective dhatu which transport through it. It is in certain extent looks like round, flat and minute according to required structure and functions of body. Looks like various fine and minute channels of the body. Various glandular secretions and transportation takes place through these channels. Apart from sira and dhani srotamsi arise from a hollow organ as its mula and then spread throughout the body. Srotamsi are present everywhere in the body and so man is considered as a conglomerate of srotas (Pandit Kashinatha Shastri, 2007).

Classification of Srotas: According to Acharya Charaka srotas are aparinsankhyeya in the body, but in that he has described 13 srotas only. Acharya Vagbhatta has also described 13 abhyantara srotas. But Sushruta has stated 11 pairs of srotas. He has not described asthivaha, majjavaha, svedavaha

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srotas described by Charaka, in addition to that mentioned srotas (Pandit Kashinatha Shastri, 2001; Srikantha Murphy, 2001).

*Three Srotas* that connect the individual to the external world

- **Pranavaha srotas** - The channels carrying Prana(Vaayu) i.e. the breath
- **Annavaha srotas** - The channels transporting food
- **Udakavaha srotas** - The channels transporting water and electrolytes

*Seven Srotas* representing channels to and from the tissues (dhatus)

- **Rasavaha srotas** - The channels carrying plasma and lymph
- **Raktavaha srotas** - The channels carrying blood cells
- **Mamsavaha srotas** - The channels carrying muscles nutrients and wastes
- **Medavaha srotas** - The channels carrying various adipose tissues of the body
- **Asthivaha srotas** - The channels carrying nutrients to bones
- **Majjavaha srotas** - The channels associated with bone marrows
- **Shukravaha srotas** - The channels carrying sperm and ova

*Three Srotas* regulate the elimination of metabolic waste products

- **Prurishavaha srotas** - The channels which carry the faeces
- **Mitravaha srotas** - The channels which carry the urine
- **Svedavaha srotas** - The channels which carry perspiration

*Two Srotas* are specific for women

- **Artavavaha srotas** - The channels which carry the menstrual blood
- **Stanyavaha srotas** - The channels carrying breast milk during lactation

*Ono Srotas* associated with the mind

- **Manovaha srotas** - The channels which carry various thought processes, emotions, ideas etc (Agnivesha et al., 2000).

**Etiological factors for vitiation of Srotas**

Diets and regimens which are similar to the properties of Doshas and opposite to the properties of different Dhatus are responsible for the vitiation of different Srotas of respective Dhatus. Improper dietary habits, which aggravates Vatadi doshas and person who is not following the rules and regulations of eight folds of dietary principles. Diet and activities which are contrary to Dhatus. For example, day time sleep and fatty foods which aggravates meda dhatu and causes vitiation in them in spite of having identical properties. Thus dhatabhvirvigna refers to the factors which are unwholesome and non conductive to dhatu (Byadgi, 2016).

**Characteristics of Srotodushti**

The characteristics of the morbidity of the body channels are the increased or decreased flow of their contents, the passages or flow of their contents in abnormal channels.

**Atipravrtti**

The word atipravrtti means excessive flow. When the srotas gets vitiated due to dosha, it leads to pathological changes that cause atipravrtti. E.g. Artav vridhi(excessive production of artan), prameh (excessive production of urine), rapid emptying of stomach.

**Sanga**

The term sanga means obstruction/retention or holding up. Due to vitiation of dosha, srotas gets affected. It cannot perform its routine function of sravanam i.e. transport. The flow through respected srotas gets obstructed and causes various diseased conditions in our body. E.g. In jwar srotorodh due to Ama and Rudhahpatha Kamala due to Kapha.

**Sira-Granthi**

It means formation of glandular structure or nodular structure which is not physiological. E.g. Arsha, udara roga and atherothrombotic plaque

**Vimarga Gamana**

It means flow of fluid in channels other than its own pathway. E.g.In shotha vimargagaman of udaka and rakta dhatu. In bahupitta kamala, vimargagaman of pitta, raktapitta and udara rog.

**CLINICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF SROTAS**

Inner transport system in our body provide platform for activities of bio factors i.e. tridosh, saptadhatus, ojas, agni, emotions etc. Srotas serve as path from which both Prasad and Mala dhatu transport and form Sthayi dhatu (Dwarikanath, 1996). At each level of manifestations it entraps space from where production and distribution of its attribute i.e. Doshas, Dhatu, udhatu, mala takes place. These are structures where moortimana bhavas take place. These are structures where moortimana bhavas produce new bhavas or destroy the bhavas i.e. Anabolism and catabolism. The transport of biological fluid, physiological regulatory factors, nourishment of tissues and their bioavailability all depends upon the integrity of Srotas. Each Srotas provides nutrition to their respective dhatu only with requisite quantity (Swarnakar et al., 2014). The theory of semi-permeability may be well correlated with the Srotas because of the property of being permeable to some substances and impermeable to others. All pathological lesions either acute or chronic have their origin in the Srotas. Agnidushiti or Agnimandya of the cells that compose the Srotas lead to Srotovaigunya or functional disturbance of the Srotas, which may be followed by structural change in them, may in turn lead to Srotorodha and brings about an interaction between Doshas and Dushyas at the site of defect or arrest. Manifestation of disease occurs in the body as a result of manifestation of these Srotas as a site for disease. Srotas is a processing unit in which function of biotransformation of previous dhatu into next dhatu takes place. Manifestation of a disease in the body as a result of the defective srotas favours
the dosha-dushya sammurchhana and leads to formation of various disorders.

CONCLUSION

The role of Srotas in the manifestation of disease has been well discussed in almost all Ayurvedic texts; so also its importance in the maintenance of normal physiological functions i.e. the basis of good health. These pathways are spread throughout the human body nourishing all the Dhatus at cellular level. A complete knowledge of Srotas is a must for an Ayurvedic physician to approach in a holistic way. Manifestation of a disease occurs in the body as a result of defective Srotas of the body. So, any defect of Srotas must be corrected as soon as possible, for the restoration of normal health. Understanding the concept of Srotas and Srotovaigunya facilitates the physician to take accurate decision with respect to prognosis and treatment.

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