

ROLE OF COMMON HERBAL DRUGS IN MENSTRUAL DISORDERS: A REVIEW

Dr. Ashwini Narayan Karandikar

Assistant Professor, Department: Streerog Prasutitantra College: Tilak Ayurveda Mahavidyalay Pune.

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*Corresponding Author

**Dr. Ashwini Narayan
Karandikar**

Assistant Professor,
Department: Streerog
Prasutitantra College: Tilak
Ayurveda Mahavidyalay
Pune.

ABSTRACT

A menstrual disorder incorporates irregular menses, painful menstruation. excessive bleeding or less bleeding and also disorders of ovulation. These conditions can affect woman's quality of life, day today activities and fertility as well. The conventional treatment is expensive and also have side effects. To compensate these factors Ayurvediya herbal drugs are used as an alternative therapy .Some common herbs like Shatapushpa, Chandrashoor, Kumari and many more are included in this manuscript. Most of the herbs are of ushna veerya, kapha vata shamak, deepana, and pachana properties and have action on rasa dhatu, and Agni. They are useful in dysmenorrhea, unovulatory cycles with less side effects and are also cost effective.

KEYWORDS: Menstrual disorders, Herbal drugs, Shatapushpa, dysmenorrhea, vata shamak.

INTRODUCTION

Menstruation is an important physiological manifestation in woman's life. For normal menstruation to occur the the hypothalamus- pituitary – ovarian axis must be actively coordinated endometrium must be responsive to ovarian hormones and the outflow tract must be patent. Any break in any of these factors leads to disorders.^[1]

According to Ayurveda normal menstruation depends on normal well –functioning^[2] Agni (jatharagni & dhatwagni), rasa and rakta dhatu and most important prakrut Apana vayu (one type of Vata dosha) and normal pitta and kapha.

Menstrual disorder is an abnormal condition in a menstrual cycle.^[3]

It includes –

1. Disorders of length /amount of blood loss – menorrhagia, oligomenorrhoea, intermenstrual bleeding
2. Irregular menses
3. Dysmenorrhea -painful menstruation
4. Disorders of ovulation- in PCOS (polycystic ovarian syndrome)

Menstrual disorders frequently affect quality of life or health of the woman and also many a times they can be the indicators of some underlying serious problems.^[4] Apparently most women in Indian scenario especially in rural areas hesitate to seek medical advice for their problems and remain untreated.

Commonest disorders that gynecologist come across are dysmenorrhea, irregular cycles, PCOS and unovulatory cycles and scanty menses. The conventional treatment for these complaints include – oral contraceptives, non- steroidal anti- inflammatory drugs and for PCOS which is also an endocrinological disorder, ovulation induction and hypoglycemic agents are used.

Many women who suffer from menstrual disorders opt to use Ayurvediya herbal drugs as an alternative therapy to avoid side effects. Some common herbal drugs used in dysmenorrhea scanty menses and anovulatory cycles and PCOS are enlisted in this manuscript.

Common herbal drugs

Sr.no	Name	Botanical name	Rasa (taste)	Vipaka	Veerya	Guna	Active principles
1	Shatapushpa	Anethum Graceolens	Katu, tikta	katu	ushna	ruksha, ushna laghu	Eugenol, essential oil phytoestrogen.
2	Chandrashoora	Lepidium sativum	Katu, Tikta	Katu	Ushna	ruksha, ushna tikshna	Cress oil
3	Methika	Trigonella foenum	Katu, Tikta	Katu	Ushna	Laghu, Snigdha	Steroidal saponins
4	Jeerak, kal ajaji	Cuminum cyminum & Nigella sativa	Katu	katu	ushna	Laghu, ruksha	Essential oils, saponins, alkaloids
5	Yavani	Trachyspermum ammi	Katu, Tikta	Katu	Ushna	Laghu, ruksha, tikshna	glycosides, saponins, phenolic compounds,

							volatile oil
6	Kumari	Aloe vera	Tikta	Katu	Sheeta	Guru, snighdhapicchila	prostaglandin precursors saponins, aloin,
7	Aardraka	Zingiber officinale rosc	Katu	katu	ushna	Guru, ruksha, tikshna	Oleo resins, Gingerol, volatile oils
8	Twak	Cinnamon zeylanicum	Katu, tikta, madhura	katu	ushna	Laghu, ruksha, tikshna	Essential oils

Properties and line of action

1. Shatapushpa: (Dil)^[5,11]

Family: Umbelliferae

According to Ayurveda it is kapha vata shamak, Vedanasthapaka, Shothahara, Deepaka, Pachaka, Krimihgnahara, Vata-anulomaka. Shatapushpa means with hundred flowers. In Kashyapa Samhita a separate chapter has been mentioned. It is said to be ritu pravartini – initiates menstrual cycle, putrada –helps in conception, yoni shukra vishodhani-purifies female reproductive organs and semen in males.

Chemical composition –Shatapushpa mainly contains phytoestrogens. Phytoestrogens have mixed estrogenic and antiestrogenic action, depending on target tissue.

Therapeutic uses

1. Aartavakshaya, (oligo menorrhoea)
2. Anartava (amenorrhoea)
3. menstrual irregularities, hormonal imbalance
4. dysmenorrhoea
5. PCOS and unovulatory cycles and Infertility
6. In postnatal care as galactagogue and garbhashaya shodhana - uterine involution
7. useful in reducing the menopausal sign and symptoms

2. Chandrashoor^[6,11]

Family: Cruciferae

Kapha vata shamak, Raktashodhaka, shula prasaman, bala vardhan, pushti vardhana Vata anuloman used in Hiccough, Gout.

Therapeutic uses

1. Pacifies vata and kapha
2. Oestrogenic activity – in menstrual problems
3. Regularizes menstrual cycle, in anovulatory cycles, in PCOS and infertility
4. In Dysmenorrhea
5. In post -partum period for strength, lactation, immunity
6. Iron deficiency anaemia
7. Increases bone density –in post -menopausal period
8. General tonic, antioxidant and highly nutritious.

3. Methika^[7,11]

Family: Leguminosae

Vata kaphahar, Deepana.

Therapeutic uses

1. Alleviates dysmenorrhea
2. Helps in reducing insulin sensitivity, helps in lowering blood sugars so can be used in PCOS
3. Improves lactation and reduces lower back ache
4. Has action on uterus
5. Analgesic and anti inflammatory.

4. Jeeraka^[8, 11]

Family: Umbelliferae

Pacifies kapha vata, pittakar, deepana, pachana, Medhya, sangrahi Vrushya, garbhashaya shodhana, aartava pravatak.

Therapeutic uses

1. Used in dysmenorrhea, scanty menses
2. Initiates menstruation
3. Post partum for involutiom of uterus- garbhasaya shodhana and to combat infection
4. Anti inflammatory, analgesic
5. Aphrodisiac
6. Kala ajaji in obesity to fight insulin resistance.

5. Yavani^[9, 11]

Family: Umbiliferae

Vata kapha shamak, Deepana, pachana

Therapeutic uses

1. It is used as antiseptic and antispasmodic
2. aphrodisiac bitter,
3. cardio-depressant, carminative,
4. diaphoretic, diuretic,
5. emmenagogue –in dysmenorrhea, scanty menses, irregular menses
6. expectorant, fungicide, gastro relaxant,
7. lactagogue and increases uterine contractions -Garbhashaya shodhana in post natal period.

6. Chaturbeeja^[10] – Chandrashoor, Methika, Jeeraka and Yavani together are called as chaturbeeja.

Formulation: powder, capsule.

Uses

1. In vata imbalance disorders, indigestion, abdominal pain
2. Dysmenorrhea, scanty menses
3. Abdominal pain
4. Low back ache
5. Post- partum period, Pre- menstrual syndrome.

7. Twak^[12]

Family: Lauraceae

Pacifies kapha vata, agni vardhak, deepana shukrala, varnya, rajastravi

Formulation: powder, capsule, decoction.

Therapeutic uses

1. Improves appetite
2. Aids digestion, carminative
3. Anti oxidant.

4. It reduces insulin resistance, improves glucose levels so can be used in PCOS, infertility and unovulatory cycles.

8. Kumari^[13]

Family –Liliaceae

Kapha shamak, general tonic, provides strength, useful in liver and spleen disorders also

Formulation: powder, capsule, decoction, gel, fresh juice.

Therapeutic uses

1. Irregular menses and prolonged menses by promoting menstruation
2. Scanty menses and anovulatory cycles in hormonal imbalance.
3. In menorrhagia, dysmenorrhea and irregular cycles.
4. Cut wounds, burn wounds, healing and as a hair tonic.

9. Aadraka^[14]

Family: Zingiberaceae

Kapha vata shamak, deepana rochana, increases appetite,

Formulation: powder in form of shunthi, capsule, decoction, fresh juice, tea

Therapeutic uses

1. Anti spasmodic –dysmenorrhea
2. Anti oxidant
3. Appetizer (deepen, apachana)
4. Anti diabetic, -in PCOS
5. Hypolipidemic

CONCLUSION

At present the conventional drugs used for menstrual disorders are not cost effective as well as they have their own side effects if used for a longer duration. So novel drugs with low costs and less side effects, highly effective, easily available should be taken into consideration for general menstrual disorders. All the above drugs are of ushna veerya and pacify the vata dosha, And vata (Apana vayu) is mainly responsible for menstruation. Additionally these herbs improve digestion(deepana, pachana) and also act on rasa dhatu and raja(upa dhatu). Thus they help in treating menstrual disorders.

All the above herbs can be used in different formulations such as juice, powdered form, capsules, oils etc. But they should be consumed only after proper expert medical advice and not as a self- medication.

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