

A REVIEW ON CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF UPADHATUS IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Dosh, Dhātu and *Mala* form the essential components of the body. *Ayurveda* has explained the physiological functions of human body under three elements viz. *Dosha, Dhātu* and *Mala*. *Updhatus* are important physiological units and are derived from *Dhatus* and resemble *Dhatus* in terms of structure, function and nature. *Updhatus* are sub tissues or secondary tissues in the body which serve as important components and have certain fixed functions to render. *Dhatus* are closely related to the *Updhatus*. *Updhatus* are derived from the first four *Dhatus*. *Updhatus* are end product of *Dhātu* metabolism. *Dhatavagni* plays an important role in metabolism of *Dhatus* and *Updhatus*. References about *Dhatus* are very less in *Ayurvedic*

literature. In this review article an effort is made to collect the information regarding the concept of *Updhātu* which is being scattered in *Ayurvedic* samhitas. The basic concept of *Updhātu* and various *Updhatus* mentioned by different *Acharayas* has been recollected in this article.

KEYWORDS: *Dhātu, Updhātu, agni, Dhatavagni, Strotas.*

INTRODUCTION

According to the ancient *Ayurvedic* literature, *Dosha, Dhātu* & *Mala* are the fundamental units of the body. *Dhatus* are the most stable constituents of the body. Apart from the above said basic elements, some other undefined elements were also discovered later by *Acharyas* and these were termed as *Updhatus*. The word *Updhātu* has been made by combination of two words i.e *Up* and *Dhātu*. "Upa" is a prefix attached to the word "Dhātu". Prefix changes the meaning of the word with which it is acting.

The literary meaning of "Upa is Towards, near to, by the side of, resemblance, nearness, with the idea of subordination and inferiority. Dhatus form the Basic architecture of the body, they are not accomplished to execute the functions of the body without the support of Upadhatus. so, Upadhatus are basically the derivatives of the Dhatus and resemble Dhatus in terms of structure, functions and nature. Upadhatus form an important bridge between the basic elements of the body. so, it is mandatory to disclose the basic concept of Upadhatu.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The whole article is based on literary review collected from classical Ayurvedic texts, modern books and journals. The text from Brihatrayee i.e. Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya and their respective commentaries in Sanskrit as well as Hindi have been referred for this literary work.

Upadhatu review

Vyutpatti^[1]

The word 'Dhatu' is derived from the root "Dha" which means to support and nourish. Everything existing is supported by this or because they bear and support, they are termed as Dhatus.

Nirukati^[2]

Which supports the growth of the body is termed as Dhatu. Dhatus are stable constituents, the basic elements of the body, which make the body exist. 'Upa' is a prefix attached to the word "Dhatu."^[3] The literary meaning of "Upa" is towards, near to, by the side of, resemblance, nearness, with the idea of subordination and inferiority. Hence the word Upadhatu,^[4] means that shows close resemblance towards Dhatu. Upadhatus are evolved from Dhatus.^[5] Upadhatus are produced along with Dhatus.^[6] Those, which are derivatives of Dhatus, produced at complementary, subsidiary level, are known as Upadhatus.^[7] Dhatus are the immediate cause of Upadhatu.

Emergence of upadhatu

Sarirasthana of classics have illustrated this subject in "Garbhavakranti Sarira" and "Garbhavyakarana Sarira." In this regard ancient seers have explained that: "Trutiye Masi Sarvendriyani Sarvanga Avayavasca Yaugapadyena Abhinirvartante"[S. Sa. 3/15]

Origin of all the body constituents takes place at embryological stage. "Raktadayo Hi Garbhat Prabhuti Eva Utpanna. [C. Ci. 15/16-Chakra]

While commenting on the verse regarding the nourishment of Dhatu, Cakrapani has clearly mentioned that all the Dhatus manifest during gestational period itself. Their "Sastame Masi Snayu Sira Twak Bala.... Utpatti |" [A. H. Sa. 1/51]

Revered seer has stated that during sixth month of gestational period emergence of Snayu, Sira and Twak takes place. The characters, which are present since birth, are termed as "Nitya Bhava." All the Dhatus and Upadhatus are termed as "Nitya Bhava" of the body. Upadhatu Raja and Stanya are exceptions for this, since they emerge few years after birth and also not continue throughout the life. Such entities are known as "Anitya Bhava".^[8]

Updhatu according to different acharyas

Names of Acharays	Name of the Upadhatus	Numbers
1.Bhoja	Stanya, Raja, Sira, Twak, Snayu	5
2.Charaka, Gayadasa, Chakrapani	Stanya, Raja, Kandara, Sira, Vasa, Twak, Snayu	7
3.Vagbhata, Dalhana	Stanya, Raja, Kandara, Sira, Vasa, Twak, Snayu, Sandhi	8
4.Sarngadhara, Bhavamisra, Trimalla Bhatta	Stanya, Raja, Vasa, Sweda, Danta, Kesa, Oja	7

Characters of updhattu

Upadhatu are derived from Dhatus. Acharya Caraka has explained their specific correlation in the following verse

"Rasat Stanyam Tato Raktam Asrjah Kandarah Sirah

Mamsat Vasa Twacah Sat Ca Medasah Snayu Sambhavah | "[C.Ci15/17]

- Dhatu Related Upadhatus
- Rasa Stanya, Raja
- Rakta Kandara, Sira
- Mamsa Vasa, Twak
- Meda Snayu, Sandhi (Dalhana)

First four Dhatus are related with Upadhatus.

"Vivista Karyantara Utpada Darsanartham |" [S.Su. 14/10 – Dalhana]^[9]

Concept of sarngadhara about upadhatu

Sarngadhara has not accepted the opinion of the former Acharyas. He had introduced a modified version of Upadhatu.^[10] Sarngadhara has described Stanya, Raja, Vasa, Sweda, Danta, Kesa, and Oja as Upadhatu. Acharya Bhavamisra has agreed with the opinion of Sarngadhara.^[11]

Sarngadhara has not mentioned Kandara, Sira, Twak, Snayu, and Sandhi. Instead of these he added Sweda, Danta, Kesa and Ojas to the list of Upadhatu. All the seven Dhatus are mentioned in relation with Upadhatus.

1) Sweda:- Charaka and Susruta have referred it under "Dhatu Mala" of the body. Sweda is originated from Mala portion of the Medo Dhatu. Acharya Sarngadhara and Bhavamisra have mentioned it under Upadhatu and Dhatu Malas also.^[12]

2) Danta:- Ancient Acharyas have not mentioned Danta under Dhatu Mala. All body elements are grouped under Prasadaja or Mala categories. Chakrapani has added that Danta receives its nutrition from Mala portion of Asthi Dhatu. Danta is included under Asthi by Charaka. Susruta has termed it as "Rucakasthi". Susruta has not explained Danta under "Dhatu Mala".

3) Kesa:- Charaka and Astanga Sangraha-kara have included Kesa under Dhatu Mala. Sarngadhara had mentioned it as an Upadhatu of Majja.

4) Oja:- It is elixir of all the Dhatus starting from Rasa to Sukra.^[13] Chakrapani has quoted few statements in this regard. Some are of the view that Oja is a specialized form of Sukra since it doesn't nourishes the mind. Some opine it as eighth number of Dhatu. In this context one statement supports the view of Sarngadhara which considers the Ojas as Upadhatu. The reason behind this is explained that like other Dhatus though it sustains the body but does not nourish it.

Ahcarya Bhavamisra in this context states this entity as essence of all the Dhatus.^[14] Chakrapani while commenting on Upadhatus narrated his opinion that Oja should not be considered as Dhatu or Upadhatu. It cannot be separated from Dhatus, as it is elixir of the dhatus.^[15] While commenting on Upadhatu, author of Gudhartha Dipika, Kasiram Vaidya has expressed his opinion. He raised a question regarding the consideration of Upadhatu of Rasa and Rakta in males.

During this discussion he opines that when improperly transformed Rasa Dhatu come out of the body it is called as Upadhatu of Rasa. Due to vitiation of Pitta, the vitiated Rakta when it goes upward is to be termed as Upadhatu of Rakta. Further he has given a meaning for Upadhatu also.^[16] According to him vitiated form of Dhatu is to be termed as Upadhatu.

Physiology of upadhatu formation

Dhatu metabolism is a nourishment mechanism of all the body constituents. Through this pool all elements including upadhatus get their nourishment. Upadhatus are sustained being fed by their nourishing factor. Food after digestion takes two forms viz. the Prasadaja part (essence) and the Kitta part. Depending upon their nourishment from Prasadaja or the Kitta, the tissue elements of the body are described of two types, the pure one "Prasadakhya" and waste product "Malakya". From Prasadaja portion all the Dhatus are formed in progressive order. Upadhatu are also nourished from this Prasadaja part.

Ahara Rasa when goes to the abode of one Dhatu after the action of that particular Srotasagni it is transformed into two parts Prasadaja and Kitta. Prasadaja portion is further divided into two parts. The main portion of it provides nourishment to that Dhatu and the subtle portion (Suksma Bhaga) is meant to provide nourishment to two elements, by its further division. The major portion of it goes to the site of next Dhatu and the subtle of it provides nourishment to the Upadhatu. Third waste portion nourishes the Mala of the respective Dhatu. In this way from the Prasadaja part of Ahara Rasa Upadhatus derive their nourishment in progressive order.

When Ahara Rasa comes to the abodes of Rasa Dhatu, by the action of Rasadhatvagni it get transformed into two parts, the Prasadaja portion and the Mala portion. The Prasadaja part again gets divided into two parts. Sthula Bhaga and Suksma Bhaga. Sthula portion of it supplies nourishment to the Rasa Dhatu and Suksma portion of it again divided into parts. The major portion of it goes to the abodes of Rakta Dhatu and subtle part provides nourishment to Stanya and Raja. In the same manner the subsequent Upadhatus are derived from their respective Dhatus.

The process of Dhatu metabolism goes on continuously like the passage of time (Kalavat Anavasthitatva). If all the Dhatvagnis, Vayu and Srotas are unimpeded they play a pivot role in continuation of Dhatu metabolism. These components are closely related with Upadhatus too.

DISCUSSION

A review of ancient literature reveals that the concept of *Updhatu* is not available in *Ayurveda* in a detailed way. *Updhatus* are the by products of the *Dhatu* metabolism but they cannot be considered as the *Malas* because *Updhatus* are nourished by the *prasadaj* part of the *Dhatu*.

***Dhatu* are different from *Updhatus* in the following context**

- a. *Updhatus* are by product of *Dhatu*s.
- b. *Updhatus* have no fate to get transformed into another component.
- c. *Updhatu* does not have any fate to nourish *Dhatu*s.
- d. Some *Updhatus* function for specific time only like *Rajas* and *Stanya*.
- e. Some of the *Updhatus* act as *Mala Bhava* for the body like *Kesha*, *Nakha*.

Dhatvagni of each *Dhatu* resides at *Srotasa*, which is responsible for *Parinamana* of *Dhatu* from one state to another. *Dhatvagni* is closely related with *Upadhatu*. Deteriorated status of *Dhatvagni* affects the normal functions of *Upadhatu*. To convey the nourishing material to the abodes of *Upadhatu* *Srotas* is necessary. Hence it is stated that *Upadhatu* are also having their own *Srotas*, through which they receive their nutrients.

CONCLUSION

Concept of *Upadhatu* is traced from ancient literature under Historical review. Though the entities of *Upadhatu* were known since many years before, Acharya Charaka first started using the terminology. *Upadhatus* are mentioned along with *Dhatu*s. They are related with *Dhatu*s in a very specific manner. Sarngadhara has introduced a modified version of *Upadhatu*. Condition of *Upadhatu* depends upon the status of *Dhatvagnis*. Their pivotal role in the physiology of formation of *Upadhatu* is also explained.

Bhutagni plays an important role to derive final *Bhautika* molecular configuration of components. Some *Upadhatus* act as a physiological entity. Others are principally involved in anatomical configuration of human body.

There are many vital structures, which are related with *Upadhatus*. *Upadhatus* are having specific relation with *Dosa*. *Upadhatu* are involved in emergence of diseases.

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