AYURVEDIC MANAGEMENT OF INFERTILITY: A REVIEW

DR NIDHI SHARMA¹, DR RITA MAKIM²

¹P.G SCHOLAR, Dept of Prasuti Tantra Evum Stri Roga, Parul Institute of Ayurveda, Parul University, Vadodara, India
²M.S (Ayu), Professor, Department of PG Studies in Prasuti Tantra Evum Stree Roga, Parul Institute of Ayurved, Parul University, Vadodara, India

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, Shamana 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 foetuses 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 samhitā 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] Aggrevated 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.


• 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
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**

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### 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.
REFERENCES