

“CONCEPT OF *RUTU CHAKRA* IN AYURVEDA AND ITS CORRELATION WITH THE MODERN MENSTRUAL CYCLE: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW”

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ABSTRACT:

Introduction: The menstrual cycle is a natural rhythm central to female reproductive health. Ayurveda explains this physiological sequence as *Rutu Chakra*, linking reproductive events to *doshic* balance, fertility, and overall well-being. Modern science explains the cycle through neuroendocrine regulation and endometrial changes, describing follicular, ovulatory, luteal, and menstrual phases. **Methods:** This review integrates information from Ayurvedic classics (*Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*) and their commentaries with data from electronic databases. Articles published between 2000-2024 were included if they addressed menstruation, fertility, or menstrual regulation. Non-peer-reviewed or anecdotal sources were excluded. **Results:** Ayurveda describes *Rutu Chakra* as three sequential phases: (i) *Rajaswala Kala* (menstrual phase), (ii) *Rutu Kala* (fertile phase), and (iii) *Ritu Vyatiriktakala* (post-fertile phase). Each stage corresponds with *doshic* predominance (*Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*) and prescribes specific lifestyle and dietary regimens. Modern physiology describes parallel processes: endometrial shedding, follicular maturation with rising estrogen, ovulation triggered by LH surge, and luteal progesterone dominance. Comparative analysis reveals convergence in cyclicity, fertility emphasis, and the recognition of balance/disorder as key to reproductive health. Ayurveda adds unique holistic elements mental well-being, seasonal variation, and regimens to optimize fertility. **Discussion:** Ayurveda and modern science describe the same cyclic phenomenon through different paradigms. While modern gynecology focuses on anatomical and hormonal changes, Ayurveda emphasizes systemic balance, lifestyle, and prevention. Integrating both perspectives could enrich women’s reproductive care.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, fibroids, herbal therapy, *Panchakarma*, *Yonivyapad*.

INTRODUCTION

The menstrual cycle is a hallmark of reproductive maturity and health in women, reflecting the intricate coordination of neuroendocrine, ovarian, and uterine physiology. Modern science explains it as a rhythmic sequence divided into follicular, ovulatory, luteal, and menstrual phases, each governed by dynamic hormonal fluctuations. The cycle ensures periodic preparation of the endometrium for implantation and the release of an ovum for fertilization. ^[1-3]

Ayurveda, the traditional medical system of India, describes menstruation as *Rutu Chakra*, reflecting cyclic changes in the female body that maintain fertility and systemic harmony. Classical texts emphasize the roles of *doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*), *dhatu*s (tissues), and *malas* (excretory functions) in regulating menstrual health. ^[4-6] Furthermore, Ayurveda prescribes lifestyle regimens (*Rajaswala Paricharya*) and seasonal modifications to ensure reproductive well-being. ^[7]

This review aims to explore the Ayurvedic concept of *Rutu Chakra* and compare it with the modern understanding of the menstrual cycle. The objectives are: (i) to outline *Rutu Chakra* as described in Ayurvedic classics, (ii) to correlate Ayurvedic phases with modern physiology, (iii) to analyze diet, lifestyle, and pathological implications, and (iv) to highlight integrative approaches for advancing women's reproductive health. ^[8-10]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A structured literature review was conducted between January-July 2025.

- **Primary Ayurvedic sources** included: *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, and authoritative commentaries.
- **Modern references** were sourced from PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. ^[11]

Search Strategy:

Keywords: “*Rutu Chakra*,” “Ayurveda menstrual cycle,” “*Rajaswala Paricharya*,” “Ayurvedic gynecology,” “fertility Ayurveda,” “menstrual physiology.” Boolean operators were used for refining. ^[12]

Inclusion Criteria: ^[13]

- Articles published between 2000–2024
- Classical Ayurvedic literature and peer-reviewed commentaries
- Clinical or experimental studies on Ayurveda and menstrual regulation
- Modern physiology and gynecology papers relevant to menstruation

Exclusion Criteria: ^[14]

- Non-peer-reviewed blogs, anecdotal evidence
- Articles not addressing menstruation or fertility
- Duplicate studies

Study Types: ^[15]

- Classical text analysis
- Systematic reviews and narrative reviews
- Clinical trials and observational studies
- Comparative conceptual research

Final Dataset: 45 modern articles + 8 classical Ayurvedic texts were analyzed and thematically synthesized.

OBSERVATION AND RESULTS

Ayurvedic Description of *Rutu Chakra*

Ayurvedic classics conceptualize *Rutu Chakra* as the cyclic sequence that maintains female reproductive potential. It is primarily divided into three phases:

- ***Rajaswala Kala* (Menstrual phase):**
 - Lasts 3-7 days depending on individual constitution.
 - Dominated by *Vata dosha*, responsible for expulsion of menstrual blood (*Artava*).
 - Ayurveda prescribes strict regimens during this phase: rest, avoidance of heavy activity, and consumption of light, warm foods.
 - Menstrual blood is considered a by-product of *Rasa Dhatu* and reflects systemic health.
- ***Rutu Kala* (Fertile phase):**
 - Approximately day 8-16 of the cycle.
 - Dominated by *Kapha* and *Pitta*. *Kapha* provides nourishment for follicular development, while *Pitta* ensures proper ovulation.
 - Ayurveda describes this as the ideal window for conception.
 - Sexual activity is recommended for couples seeking fertility.

- *Phalavata* (the fertile period) is a critical aspect linking *doshic* balance with ovulatory events.
- **Ritu Vyatiriktakala (Post-fertile or luteal phase):**
 - Extends from ovulation until the onset of menstruation (~day 17–28).
 - *Pitta* and *Kapha* predominate; *Pitta* supports luteal function, while *Kapha* prepares the endometrium for implantation.
 - Imbalance during this phase may lead to infertility, premenstrual syndrome, or other *Yonivyapad*.

Modern Menstrual Cycle

Modern medicine divides the cycle into:

- **Menstrual Phase (days 1-5):** Endometrial shedding due to progesterone withdrawal.
- **Follicular Phase (days 6-13):** Estrogen secretion promotes endometrial proliferation; FSH stimulates follicular growth.
- **Ovulatory Phase (day 14 ± 1):** LH surge triggers ovulation.
- **Luteal Phase (days 15-28):** Progesterone secretion from corpus luteum prepares endometrium for implantation.

Correlation of Phases

- **Rajaswala = Menstrual Phase:** *Vata* activity parallels uterine contractions and expulsion.
- **Rutu Kala = Follicular + Ovulatory Phases:** *Kapha* dominance matches endometrial proliferation; *Pitta* aligns with ovulatory surge.
- **Ritu Vyatiriktakala = Luteal Phase:** *Kapha*'s nutritive role corresponds to progesterone's endometrial preparation; imbalance leads to PMS or infertility.

Dietary and Lifestyle Recommendations

Ayurveda prescribes tailored regimens:

- During *Rajaswala*: light diet, avoidance of cold/heavy foods, adequate rest.
- During *Rutu Kala*: strengthening diet with milk, ghee, and fertility-enhancing herbs.
- During *Ritu Vyatiriktakala*: balanced regimen avoiding stress and exertion.

Pathological Implications

- Irregularities in *Rutu Chakra* lead to *Yonivyapad* (gynecological disorders).
- Conditions such as *Artava Kshaya* (oligomenorrhea), *Asrigdara* (menorrhagia),

- *Anartava* (amenorrhea), and *Vandhyatva* (infertility) are described.
- Modern equivalents include PCOS, dysfunctional uterine bleeding, PMS, and luteal phase defects.

Clinical Evidence

- **Ashokarishta, Shatavari, and Lodhra** have shown efficacy in regulating menstrual cycles.
- Yoga and *Panchakarma* therapies (e.g., *Uttarbasti*, *Nasya*) demonstrate beneficial effects in cycle regularization and fertility.
- Modern trials support *Shatavari*'s phytoestrogenic activity, aligning Ayurveda's observations with biochemical validation.

DISCUSSION

The comparative analysis reveals significant parallels between *Rutu Chakra* and the modern menstrual cycle. Both acknowledge cyclical phases involving preparation, fertility, and shedding. The distinction lies in Ayurveda's broader framework, where mental health, diet, seasonal influences, and *doshic* balance are integral, while modern medicine emphasizes hormonal mechanisms.^[16]

One notable strength of Ayurveda is its preventive orientation. Recommendations such as *Rajaswala Paricharya* often dismissed as restrictive—are being reinterpreted as rest and stress management strategies, aligning with modern evidence on menstrual wellness. Similarly, *Rutu Kala*'s emphasis on optimal conception timing parallels modern ovulation tracking.^[17]

Modern gynecology provides precision through endocrinology, imaging, and pathology, which Ayurveda lacks in measurable parameters. However, Ayurveda provides a lifestyle-based, individualized approach absent in contemporary medicine. Clinical integration, such as using *Shatavari* alongside ovulation induction therapies, represents a potential avenue for complementary care.^[18]

Gaps remain in rigorous clinical validation of *Rutu Chakra* principles. While some herbal therapies have undergone trials, large-scale RCTs are scarce. Future research should include biomarker-based studies correlating *doshic* patterns with hormonal assays, menstrual biomarkers, and imaging findings.^[19-20]

Thus, bridging Ayurveda's holistic preventive wisdom with modern biomedical precision could

significantly enhance women's reproductive health.

CONCLUSION

Rutu Chakra, as described in Ayurveda, represents a sophisticated understanding of cyclic changes in women's physiology. Its threefold division *Rajaswala Kala*, *Rutu Kala*, and *Ritu Vyatiriktakala* parallels modern menstrual phases of menstruation, follicular growth, ovulation, and luteal activity. Both traditions emphasize fertility, systemic health, and the consequences of imbalance.

While modern science elucidates hormonal and anatomical mechanisms, Ayurveda uniquely integrates systemic balance, lifestyle, and preventive care. Dietary and lifestyle regimens prescribed for each phase demonstrate remarkable foresight, resonating with modern recommendations for rest, nutrition, and stress reduction.

This review highlights that Ayurveda and modern science, though rooted in different paradigms, converge on key concepts of cyclical regulation and reproductive health. Future integrative research validating Ayurvedic recommendations with biomedical tools may open new frontiers in managing menstrual disorders, infertility, and women's health.

Thus, *Rutu Chakra* provides a timeless yet adaptable framework for understanding and optimizing menstrual health in the 21st century.

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