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TRADITIONAL WISDOM MEETS MODERN CHALLENGES: A REVIEW OF AYURVEDIC MANAGEMENT OF INFERTILITY

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ABSTRACT:
If a clinical pregnancy cannot be achieved after 12 months or more of consistent, unprotected sexual activity, it is considered infertility. *Vandhyatva* has been used to describe infertility in Ayurvedic literature. Males and females may experience infertility for a variety of causes. For conception to occur and the pregnancy to be successfully completed, the four Ayurvedic factors *Ritu, Kshetra, Ambu,* and *Beeja* must be in their right states. A couple's ability to conceive may be impacted by factors like weight, nutrition, smoking, illnesses, substance misuse, environmental contaminants, medications, and family medical history.

Either partner may have infertility. Men typically experience infertility due to limited or low-quality sperm, while women experience it when they are unable to produce eggs on a regular basis or when their fallopian tubes are damaged or obstructed, making it impossible for sperm to reach their eggs. Ayurvedic writings describe both the *Shodhana and Shamana Chikitsa,* which include *Panchakarma,* for *Vandhyatva.* This article discusses ayurveda concepts and management for female infertility, presenting Vandhyatva via an ayurveda lens.

KEYWORDS: *Vandhyatva, Ayurveda,* Infertility, *Panchakarma, Shodhana* and *Shamana, Chikitsa.*

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization defines a woman's positive reproductive health as a condition of total physical, mental, and social well-being rather than only the absence of diseases affecting the reproductive system and its functioning. After engaging in frequent, unprotected sexual activity, 50% of normal couples become pregnant within three months, 75% within six months, and 80–85% within a year. Failure to conceive after one or more years of consistent, unprotected coitus is known as infertility. Primary infertility is the absence of conception, while secondary infertility is the inability of the patient to conceive after achieving a prior conception. Infertility rates range from 5 to 15% in any given population [1].

According to *Aacharya Kashyapa*, a couple is lucky if they have many children who are growing and developing normally as a result of nature's influence or their own actions; if not, they should receive treatment. According to *Kashyapa's* account of *Jatharinis,* one *Pushpaghni* had menstruation or worthless *Pushpa,* while some others had recurring expulsions of fetuses from various gestational periods. The woman can be classified under *Vandhyatva* since she is unable to conceive under these circumstances as well. The *Sushruta Samhita* lists twenty gynecological illnesses, including one called *Vandhyatva.*

Because he grouped *Garbhastravi* (repeated abortions) and *mritvatsa* (repeated stillbirths) under the same heading, *Harita* has defined *Vandhyatva* as failure to achieve a child rather than pregnancy. The modern age does not take this definition into account.

Additionally, according to *Aacharya Charaka*, failure to conceive will result from any aberration of one of the Shadbhavas. Having sex with a woman who is extremely young, elderly, chronically unwell, hungry, dissatisfied, and suffering from various psychiatric disorders, as well as having lateral posture during conception, as well as having semen fall over Samirana nadi or in the outer part of Yoni, does not result in pregnancy. Conception does not occur because Bija (sperm) or Garbha (embryo) are accepted by vitiated yoni in different Yonivyapad and destroyed in Artavadushti. Aacharya Bhela states that there are two reasons why people are unable to conceive: Yoni abnormalities and various Vata diseases [2,3]. Aggrevated *Vayu* destroys the *Raja* and expels the *Shukra* from the uterus, making the woman infertile.

ETIOLOGY [4]

Failure of any of the following factor leads to *Vandhyatva,*

1. Ritu refers to a season or time of fertility.
2. Healthy *Yoni*, uterus, and passage (reproductive organs) are signified by *kshetra.*
3. *Ambu* refers to the right nutritional fluid.
4. *Beeja* signifies *Shonita* and *Shuddha Shukra.*

TYPES

Modern types of infertility primarily refer to

conditions influenced by contemporary lifestyles, environmental factors, and medical advancements. These types include:

1. Lifestyle-related Infertility: Factors like obesity, stress, smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, and poor dietary habits have a significant impact on reproductive health in both men and women.

2. Environmental Infertility: Exposure to pollutants, radiation, and endocrine-disrupting chemicals (e.g., pesticides, plastics) can impair hormonal balance and fertility.

3. Age-related Infertility: With modern societal trends, many individuals delay childbearing, which can result in reduced fertility due to the natural decline in reproductive capabilities with age.

4. Technology-induced Infertility: Prolonged use of laptops on the lap, mobile phones, and other gadgets emitting radiation can affect sperm quality and ovarian health.

5. Infertility due to Medical Conditions: Modern medical interventions, such as chemotherapy or surgeries, can sometimes impair reproductive functions.

6. Unexplained Infertility: Despite advances in diagnostic techniques, some couples face infertility without identifiable causes, likely influenced by a combination of subtle genetic and environmental factors [5,6].

MANAGEMENT

Ayurvedic Management of Modern Infertility

1. Addressing the clinical disorders that underlie infertility (Nidanaparivarjana).
2. The fundamentals of vandhyatua therapy.
3. Adhering to the garbhadhana's prescribed regimen.

Two forms of Chikitsa are recognized by Ayurveda: Shodhana Chikitsa (purification) and Shamana Chikitsa (medical treatment) [4].

Panchakarma in Infertility Management:

Panchakarma, a cornerstone of Ayurvedic therapeutics, plays a significant role in managing infertility by detoxifying the body, balancing the doshas, and enhancing reproductive health. Below are single-paragraph descriptions of key Panchakarma therapies utilized in the Ayurvedic management of infertility:

Abhyanga (Oil Massage) *and Swedana* (Steam Therapy)

Abhyanga and Swedana therapies involve the application of warm medicated oils and steam to enhance blood circulation, reduce stress, and nourish the reproductive tissues. These therapies prepare the body for conception by promoting relaxation and improving the overall health of the reproductive system.

Vamana (Therapeutic Emesis)

Vamana therapy is designed to remove Kapha-related obstructions in the reproductive channels and balance hormonal levels. This therapy is particularly beneficial in cases of infertility linked to conditions such as PCOS or obesity, as it helps in detoxifying the body and improving metabolic functions essential for reproductive health.

Virechana (Therapeutic Purgation)

Virechana is a detoxification process that targets the elimination of excess Pitta dosha, which can cause inflammatory conditions affecting fertility. By cleansing the body and regulating the reproductive hormones, Virechana enhances uterine health and is often recommended for individuals suffering from endometriosis or similar conditions.

***Nasya* (Nasal Administration of Medicines)**

Nasya involves the administration of medicated oils or powders through the nasal passage, helping to clear toxins from the head and neck region. This therapy improves hormonal communication between the brain and reproductive organs, making it beneficial for hormonal imbalances and stress-related infertility.

Ayurvedic Medications and Diet in Conjunction with Panchakarma

In addition to Panchakarma, herbal formulations such as ***Ashwagandha***, ***Shatavari***, and ***Gokshura*** are commonly prescribed. A Sattvic diet rich in fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and ghee is recommended to nourish the reproductive tissues and improve overall fertility.

- **Uttar Basti**

  For *Vandhyatva*, Uttarbasti is a powerful chikitsa. Uttarbasti serves as a therapy option for *Garbhashyagat Rogas* because it makes it easier for medications to be absorbed and helps deliver them to the right organs.

  After using *Bhrimhana* medications, *Uttarbasti Karma* in the cervical region promotes cervical secretion and facilitates sperm facil~~, itation~~. Combining oil with Lekhaniya medications aids in conception. When *Lekhaniya* medications are administered intrauterinally through Uttarbasti, they clear the tube's blockage and promote the growth of tubal cillia in the fallopian tubes.

  It rejuvenates the lining of the endometrium, balances ovulation and other reproductive processes, and aids in Garbhasthapana [7].

  Because the uterus and vagina are prepared to receive Sneha readily at this time, Ritu Kala (after the end of menstrual flow) is thought to be the ideal time to administer the Uttarbasti.

  When treating the vitiated Vata Dosha linked to Kapha, Taila is the recommended treatment. When Vata is linked to *Pitta Dosha, ghrita* is favored.

  Shatavatri Ghrita and Phala Ghrita are utilized to treat cervix-related issues. Narayana Taila and Shatpuspa Taila are utilized to treat ovarian issues [8].

  Apamarga Kshara Taila & *Kumari Taila* are used to cure tubal obstruction.

  When vata sickness causes infertility, basti (enema) is a very helpful treatment.

  Anuvasana Basti of oil or *ghrita* is proven to be helpful for women who have amenorrhea, a meager menstrual period, an anovulatory cycle, or an absence of fertilization that results in infertility. The *Yoni* gets healthier and a woman might conceive more easily when Basti is used.

- ***Niruha basti*** of medicinal Kashaya is

acts like a nector to an infertile woman. The best remedy for anovulation is vitechana.

- ***Yapana Basti*** is particularly effective at treating infertility because it performs both niruha (shodhana) and anuvasana (snehan) [9].

1. *Anuvasana basti Shatavaryadi*
2. *Rasyana Vasti Guducyadi*
3. *Yapana Basti Mustadi*
4. *Basti Bala Tail*

a

5. *Putra-dayaka*, or *Shatavaryadi Rasayana Basti*

Shamana Chikitsa

Basti Prayoga:

Sr. No	FORMULATION NAME	REFERENCE
1	*Narayana Tail*	*Sharangdhara Samhita Madhyama Khand 9/101-109*
2	*Shatpushpa Tail*	*Kashyapa Samhita 5/23-25*
3	*Shatavari Tail*	*Sharangdhara Samhita Madhyama Khand 9/133-135*
4	*Yograj Gugglu*	*Sharangdhara Samhita Madhyama Khand 7/56-62,66*
5	*Drakshadhya Churan*	*Harita Samhita 48/95*
6	*Phala Ghrita*	*Sharangdhara Samhita Madhyama Khand 9/80-87*
7	*Pippalyadi Churan mixed with Ghrita*	*Chakradatta yonivyapada Chikitsa 27*
8	*Sheetakalyanaka Ghrita*	*Yoga Ratnakar Pradara -roga chikitsa*
9	*Laghu Phala Ghrita*	*Sharangdhara Samhita Madhyama Khand*
10	*Pugapaka*	*Yoga Ratnakar Prameha Chikitsa sthana*
11	*Dashmoolarishta*	*Sharangdhara Samhita Madhyama Khand 10/77-92*

12	*Shatavari Ghrita*	*Charak Chikitsa Sthana 30/64-66*
13	*Maharasnadi Kwatha*	*Sharangdhara Samhita Madhyama Khand 2/90-94,96*
14	*Kasmaryadi Ghrita*	*Charak Chikitsa Sthana 30/52-54*
15	*Lasuna Ghrita*	*Kashyap Samhita Kalpa Sthana2/93-97*
16	*Khandakadyavaleha*	*Kashyap Samhita 2/22*

Ayurvedic herbs used in the treatment for infertility:

Ashoka, Dashmoola, Shatavari, Kumari, and *Guggulu* ovulation disorders

In *Ashoka, Dashmoola, Shatavari, Guduchi,* and *Jeevanti,* premature ovarian failure (POF) Adhesions (scar tissue) and blocked fallopian tubes—*Guduchi, Punarnava.*

CONCLUSION

A woman of reproductive age's biological incapacity to aid in conception and her inability to carry a pregnancy to term are the two main definitions of infertility, according to Ayurveda. Nowadays, infertility is a fairly prevalent problem, and finding a remedy has become essential. Agni Deepana and Ama Pachana are used to cure infertility because of the imbalance that causes numerous ailments. A healthy Agni will also contribute to a healthy ojas. Panchakarma treatment helps to eradicate ama, which corrects the Agni. Additionally, Panchakarma's cleansing aids in the body's removal of impurities [10]. The primary Dosha implicated in infertility is Vata, and therapy aids in Vatanulomana. In order to promote conception, the appropriate combination of treatments helps to balance the endocrine system, improve blood flow in the pelvic cavity, revitalize sperm, lower mental stress, improve overall health and wellness, and regulate the menstrual cycle.

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