

Ayurvedic Concept of Medo Dhatu

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Abstract: In the concept of dhatus acharyas has explained “Dhatwo deha dharnaat” which means Dhatus are those which will nourish and sustain the living bodies. Also “Sharira dharnaat dhatwah” means that body constituents that supports the body are called dhatus. These are structural units of the body e.g. Mamsa, Meda and Asthi dhatus give specific shape to the body. Without dhatus, doshas are unable to exhibit their functions like growth of the body is function of kapha dosha which is assessed by nutrition of meda, mamsa and asthi dhatu by measuring weight, height and body mass index. There are seven dhatus mentioned by acharayas i.e. rasa, rakta, mamsa, meda, asthi, majja, shukra. Among these meda dhatu is the fourth dhatu which lubricates the body and makes the body flexible. It also acts as a shock absorber and protects the body from trauma.

Keywords: Meda dhatu, Sharira, Acharayas, Kapha dosha, Rakta dhatu

Vyutpatti of Meda: ⁽¹⁾

“ Medyati medah ”

The word Meda or medas is originated from root “Mid” with Asun and Ach pratyaya which means the Meda dhatu. (Monier-Williams dictionary)

मेदयति सिद्ध्यति इति मेद ॥ ⁽²⁾

(Shabdakalpadruma vol-3 page-779s)

The word meda is derived from root word “क्षिमिद स्नेहन” ⁽³⁾. Meda is the substance, which is having Snigdhatva guna. The examples of meda are vasa, sneha, fat, oil etc.

Definition of Meda Dhatu:

It is mentioned that Meda is the fourth Dhatu in different Classical texts, which performs the Snehana Karma of sharira as described by Vagbhata acharya “preerana jivana lepah sneho dharanapurane garbhotpadhashcha karmani shrshtam karmam kramat smrutam” ⁽⁴⁾ means rasa does the preerana of body, rakta does the jivana, mamsa does the lepa, meda does

the snehana, asthi does the dharana, majja does the purana, shukra does garbhotpadana of the sharira. In Shabdakalpadruma it is mentioned that Meda performs the Dharana karma and Snehana karma both.

Synonyms of Meda: ⁽⁵⁾

- Asthikrita: Meda is responsible for formation of Asthi Dhatu so it is known as Asthikrita.
- Mamsaja or Mamsateja: Medodhatu is formed from Mamsa Dhatu by Mamsa Agnipaka. So it is known as Mamsaja or Mamsateja.
- Majja: Sthula asthi Meda Gata Sneha is known as Majja.
- Goda: “Mastishka gata Sneha” is known as Goda or Mastulunga.
- Vasa and Vapa: The fatty substance which is located in Mamsa is called as Vasa and the one which is in abdomen, it is termed as Vapa.

Sthana and Swarupa of Meda dhatu:

Meda based on sthana (location): ⁽⁶⁾

स्थूलास्थिषु विशेषण मज्जा त्वभ्यन्तराश्रितः।

अथेतरेषु सर्वेषु सरक्तं मेद उच्यते॥

शुद्ध मांसस्य यः स्नेह सा वसा परिकीर्तिता॥

(Su.Sha.4/13)

The third kala is known as Medodhara kala. Medodhara kala is the avarana or covering that supports the meda . In all living beings, Meda is present in the abdomen (Udara) and small bones and in large bones it becomes Majja. Especially in large bones, it is present inside and called as majja (bone marrow) and in all other types of bones (small, flat and curved bones) meda is called as Sarkta meda which is also called as rakta Majja (red marrow). The pure fat present in the muscles is known as Vasa (muscle fat).

Types of Medadhatu based on karya:

There are 2 types of Medadhatu .⁽⁷⁾

- Poshaka Medadhatu
- Poshya Medadhatu

In these two, Poshaka Meda Dhatu is gatiyukta. It circulates throughout the body along with the Rasa, Rakta dhatu and gives the nourishment to the Poshya Meda Dhatu.

Second, Poshya Meda Dhatu is agatiyukta/ gativarjita which is present in Udara and Anvathi⁽⁸⁾ (ref Su. Sha.4/12). It is stored in Medodhara kala.

Medodhatu is a Drava dhatu which is Sneha dominant, Guru, Snigdha guna yukta and has dominance of Pruthvi, Apa and Teja Mahabhuta. (According to Chakrapani)

Pramana of Meda dhatu :⁽⁹⁾

द्वौ मेदसः। (Ch.Sha.7/15)

The pramana (total quantity) of Meda is 2 Anjali and the pramana of Vasa is 3 Anjali. So the total Meda content of body can be calculated as 5 Anjali. In Medoroga, the variation occurs in this pramana .

Medadhatu Karma:

मेदः स्नेहस्वेदौ द्रुढत्वं पुष्टिमस्थनां च ..⁽¹⁰⁾ (Su.Su. 15/7)\

According to Sushruta acharya meda dhatu karma are snehana (oleation), swedana (sudation), dridhatva (sturdiness) and asthipushti (nourishment of asthi).

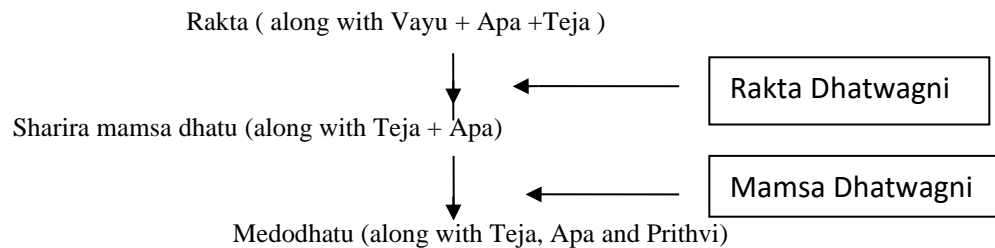
According to Ashtanga Hridaya 11/4 the karma of meda dhatu is Snehana. According to Vagbhata, Netra snigdhatva and Gatra snigdhatva (moistness of eyes and body) are the additional functions of meda. It helps to maintain the Dardhya (stability) and nourishment to Asthi (bone).⁽¹¹⁾

Meda dhatu Utpatti:

Utpatti according to Mahabhuta theory:⁽¹²⁾

According to Charaka acharya the Rakta Dhatu is combined with the Ushma of Vayu, Teja, Apa and becomes pakva by Rakta Dhatwagni becomes solidified and gets converted into Mamsa. This Mamsa is again becomes pakva by Mamsa Dhatwagni, gets combined with the quality of Apa becomes Medodhatu.

Figure No.1: Medodhatu utpatti through their respective Mahabhuta in Schematic Representation



Utpatti according to Trividha Nyaya:⁽¹³⁾

The concept of formation of Medo dhatu can be explained by various Nyaya given by Acharya.

1. Ksheera Dadhi Nyaya (The law of Transformation): As per ksheera dadhi nyaya meda is formed by mamsa dhatu as per the result of mamsa dhatwagni. This nyaya is also called as “Kramaparinama paka” or “Sarvatmaparinama paka”
2. Kedara Kulya Nyaya (The law of Transmission):

As per kedara kulya nyaya meda dhatu is formed by taking the nourishment

from the preceeding dhatu i.e mamsa dhatu.

3. Khale Kapot Nyaya (The law of Selectivity):

As per khale kapot nyaya that all dhatus meda are formed by taking specific poshana from Ahara rasa going through different marga .

Medodhatu Utpatti from other Dhatus:⁽¹⁴⁾

When Mamsa dhatu takes its origin in Mamsavaha srotas, Mamsadhatwagni acts on its nutrients coming from ahara rasa and from Raktavaha srotas. Part of mamsa dhatu reaches next srotas that is Medovaha srotas, it takes part in production of Medodhatu. Nutrients coming from Ahararasa and from Mamsavaha srotas are acted upon, by Medodhatwagni and give rise to Medodhatu. From this Medodhatu upadhatu Snayu and mala Sveda is produced. If there is any type of disturbance found during the formation

of Medo dhatu, there will be vridhhi or Kshaya of medo dhatu which leads to different types of disorders especially Sthaulya, Karshya respectively etc.

Meda Mala:

स्वेदस्तु मेदसः।⁽¹⁵⁾ (Ch.Chi.15/18)
The Mala of Meda Dhatu is Sveda.

Meda upadhatu:

मेदसः स्नायु सम्भवः।⁽¹⁶⁾ (Ch.Chi.15/17)
The Upadhatu of Meda is Snayu.

Medovaha Srotas:

Moola of Medovaha srotas :

मेदोवहानां स्तोतसां वृकौ मूलं वपावहनं च।⁽¹⁷⁾
(Ch.Vi.5/12)
मेदवहे द्वे तयोर्मूलं कटि वृकौ च।⁽¹⁸⁾ (Su.Sha.9/12)
मेदोवहिनि वृकौ मांस च।⁽¹⁹⁾ (As.Sa.Sha.6/18)

According to all the three acharyas there are different srotomoola's for Medovaha srotas.

- Charaka – Vrikka and Vapavahana
- Sushruta – Vrikka and Kati
- Vagbhata – Vrikka and Mamsa

The Medovahasrotomoola means organs and channels or vessels, which are related with medo dhatu and carry nutrition to the Medo dhatu. All acharyas have mentioned vrikka as one of the srotomoola of Medovaha srotas.

Ashrayashrayeebhava of Meda:

Meda is Ashraya and Kapha is Ashrayee⁽²⁰⁾. There is relation between doshas and dhatus which is called "Ashrayashrayeebhava" in which both dosha and dhatu

having similar gunas remains together e.g. asthi (dhatu) and vata (dosha) have similar gunas. In the similar manner - Meda can be considered as ashraya for Kapha and both have common gunas i.e. snigdha, drava and guru .

Medodhara Kala:

Medodhara kala is the third Kala, which is present in Udara and Anvasthi. Meda, Vasa and Majja all three comes under Medodhara kala.⁽²¹⁾

Meda Sara purusha Lakshana:⁽²²⁾

वर्णस्वरनेत्रकेशलोमनखदन्तौष्ट्रमूत्रपुरीषेषु
विशेषतः स्नेहो मेदासाराणाम्।

सा सारता वितैश्चर्यसुखोपभोग प्रदानान्यार्जवं
सुकुमारोपचतां चाचष्टे ॥
(Ch.Vi.8/106)

The Medasara purusha have particular unctuousness in varna(complexion), swara(voice), netra(eyes), keshha(hairs), nakha(nails), danta(teeth), oshtha(lips), mutra(urine) and purisha(faeces). This sara indicates wealth, power, happiness, enjoyment, charity, simplicity and delicacy.

स्निग्ध मूत्र नेत्र स्वरम् वृहच्छरिरम्
आयासासहिष्णु मेदसा।⁽²³⁾ (Su.Su.35/18)

The person whose mutra(urine), netra(eyes) and swara(voice) are unctuous, has large size of the body(brihatsharira) and is unable to tolerate exertion (ayasa asahishnu).

Medovaha srotas Dushti Karana:⁽²⁴⁾

अव्यायामादिवास्वप्नान्मेदानां चातिभक्षणात्।
मेदोवहीनि दुष्यन्ति वारुण्याश्चाति सेवनात्॥
(Ch.Vi.5/16)

Avyayama (Lack of exercise), Divaswapna (day sleep), Atibhakhshana (excessive intake of fatty substance), Varunasyatisevana (excessive consumption of varuni type of madya) are the causes which leads dushti of medovaha srotas.

Meda Dhatu Vridhi Lakshana:

मेदः स्निग्धताङ्गतामुदरपाश्चावृद्धिं कासश्चसादीन्
दौर्गन्ध्यं च॥⁽²⁵⁾ (Su.Su.15/19)
अल्पेऽपि चेष्टिते श्वासस्फिक्स्तनोदरलम्बनम्॥⁽²⁶⁾
(As.Hr.11/10)

According to Sushruta Meda dhatu vridhhi causes Snigdghata anga (unctuousness of the body), Udaraparshva vridhhi (increase of the abdomen and flanks), Kasa (cough), Shwasa (dyspnoea), Daurgandhya (bad smell).

According to Vagbhata Alpacheshta (Fatigue), Shwasa (dyspnoea), Sphika stana udara lambanama (pendulous, growth of buttocks, breast and abdomen) occurs due to deposition of excess meda dhatu.

Meda Dhatu Kshaya Lakshana:⁽²⁷⁾

सन्धीनां स्फुटनं ग्लानिरक्षणोरायास एव च।
लक्षणं मेदसि क्षीणे तनुत्वं चोदरस्य च ॥
(Ch.Su.17/66)

According to Charaka in Medadhatu kshaya, there is Sandhinama sphutana (cracking of joints), glani,

rukshyata (dryness) and Tanu udara (thin abdomen).

मेदक्षये प्लीहाभिवृद्धि सन्धिश्ून्यता रौक्ष्यं
मेदुरमांसप्रार्थनां च ॥⁽²⁸⁾ (Su.Su.15/13)

According to Sushruta Medadhatu kshaya leads to Pleehavridhi (enlargement of spleen), Sandhishunyata (feeling emptiness of the joints), Raukshya (dryness) and Medurmamsa prarthana (charming of fatty meat).

मेदसि स्वप्नं कट्या प्लीहानौ वृद्धि कृशाङ्गता ।⁽²⁹⁾
(As.Hr.Su.11/18)

According to Vagbhata Medadhatu kshaya causes Medasi svapanam katya (loss of sensation in the waist), Pleeha vridhi (enlargement of spleen) and Krishaangata (emaciation of the body).

Viddha lakshana's:

तत्र विद्धस्य स्वेदागमनं स्निग्धाङ्गता तालुशोषः स्थूल
शोफता पिपासा च ॥⁽³⁰⁾ (Su.Sha.9)

Medovaha sroto viddha lakshanas are sweda (Excessive Sweating), snigdhangata in anga (Unctousness in the body), talu shosha (Dryness of palate), sthula (Obesity), sophia (Oedema) and pipasa (Thirst).

CONCLUSION

Medo dhatu refers to the fatty tissues of the body. It plays an important role as it helps in the lubrication, insulation and metabolic processes. It collects the energies and stores this energies to provide strength to the body. Due to ashraya-ashrayi bhava medo dhatu is supported by Kapha Dosha. Ushna, laghu, ruksha substances and heavy exercises reduces Meda Dhatu while substances similar to Meda dhatu which are guru, snigdha, madhura food substances along with proper rest and oil massage (Abhyanga) are advised in Meda Kshaya. Meda Dhatu is essentially required for the existence of Ashti and Majja dhatu. Meda dhatu is correlated to Adipose tissue due to fat storage for body lubrication and supporting body structures.

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