

# A Comprehensive Ayurvedic Perspective of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)

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**ABSTRACT:** Ayurveda, the science of life, emphasizes maintaining health and restoring well-being. To balance the body's three doshas (Vata, Pitta and Kapha) and ensure proper digestion and metabolism, Ayurveda recommends a daily regimen called Dinacharya.

Modern lifestyles, characterized by their fast-paced nature and lack of balance, have contributed to a rise in lifestyle disorders. Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is one such condition affecting a significant portion of young women in India. Ayurvedic texts correlate PCOS with Artava Kshaya, a disorder primarily associated with Vata and Kapha.

PCOS often referred to as the "mother of all lifestyle disorders," is characterized by irregular menstruation, excessive hair growth and obesity, often linked to enlarged ovaries. While the exact cause remains elusive, hormonal imbalances, insulin resistance and genetic factors have been implicated. Sedentary lifestyles, poor diet and stress can also contribute.

By adopting lifestyle modifications that address Vata and Kapha imbalances while promoting Pitta, Ayurvedic principles can offer a holistic approach to managing PCOS without the potential side effects of conventional treatments.

**KEYWORDS:** Ayurveda, Dinacharya, Artava kshaya, PCOS, Dhatu, Upadhatu.

## INTRODUCTION

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is a prevalent endocrine disorder affecting women of reproductive age. It often stems from insulin resistance and the body's compensatory response of producing excess insulin. While Ayurveda doesn't explicitly mention PCOS, its clinical manifestations align closely with those described in Artava Kshaya. This condition is categorized as a rasapradoshaja vyadhi, involving an imbalance of doshas, dhatus and upadhatu. Artava, is a upadhatu derived from rasa. Pitta, is predominant in blood, contributing to its transformative properties. Among menstrual disorders, Artava Kshaya, characterized by scanty menstrual flow, pain and irregular cycles, is primarily associated with imbalances of Vata and Kapha. These doshas can

obstruct (avarana) Artava, leading to the condition. Given the similarities between PCOS and Artava Kshaya, including Kapha and Meda imbalances, it's reasonable to consider PCOS as a manifestation of Artava Kshaya.

PCOS is a condition where hormonal imbalances disrupt the growth of follicles during the ovarian cycle, causing them to remain trapped within the ovary. These follicles can develop into cysts and new cysts may form with each menstrual cycle, leading to multiple ovarian cysts.

Lifestyle modifications are often recommended as a first-line approach to managing PCOS. Ayurvedic principles emphasize the importance of Dinacharya (daily routine), Ritucharya (seasonal regimen) and Ritumatcharya (menstrual cycle regimen). By following these guidelines, it may be possible to address Artava Kshaya and alleviate the symptoms of PCOS. PCOS with scanty menses and anovulatory cycles is the main focus of the present study.

## HETU

- Mithyachara - A harmful lifestyle that includes

- Mithya Ahara

Improper diet, such as: Excessive consumption of sweet, sour, salty, greasy, heavy, indigestible, cold, and oily foods. Irregular eating habits, including eating before digesting previous meals, consuming inconsistent amounts or at inconsistent times, overeating without considering digestion and combining healthy and unhealthy foods. Insufficient food intake, regardless of need.

- Mithya Vihara

Unhealthy lifestyle characterized by irregular daily routines, poor sleep habits, suppression of natural urges, lack of physical activity, and negative emotional states like grief, worry, and fear. These

factors can have a detrimental impact on physical and mental health.

- **Rasavaha Strotas Dushti Hetu**

गुरु शीतम् अति स्निग्धम् अति मात्रं समश्रताम्  
रस वाहीनि दुष्यन्ति चिन्त्यानां च अति चिन्तनात् ॥

Consuming heavy foods such as cheese, fast food, Chinese cuisine, and baked goods, cold foods and beverages including ice cream, cold drinks, and chilled foods, oily and greasy foods like fried foods and fatty meats, mixed diets i.e. combining healthy and unhealthy foods, stress and worry

- **Medovaha Strotas Dushti Hetu**

अव्यायामाद् दिवास्वप्नात् मेघानां च अतिभक्षणात् मेदोवाहीनि दुष्यन्ति वारुण्याः च अतिसेवनात्॥

A sedentary lifestyle combined with napping during the day, consuming foods high in fat, excessive alcohol consumption.

#### POORVARUPA AND RUPA -

In Artava Kshaya, a predominance of Kapha can manifest as increased weight, infertility, excessive hair growth, diabetic tendencies and a feeling of coldness. A predominance of Pitta may lead to hair loss, acne, excessive bleeding. A predominance of Vata can present with painful menstruation, scanty or reduced menstrual flow and severe menstrual irregularities.

- **Obesity:** Primarily abdominal fat.
- **Menstrual irregularities:** Including infrequent or absent periods (oligomenorrhea, amenorrhea) and excessive bleeding (dysfunctional uterine bleeding).
- **Infertility:** Difficulty conceiving.
- **Anovulation:** Lack of ovulation, often leading to heavy bleeding.
- **Hirsutism and acne:** Excessive hair growth and acne.
- **Acanthosis nigricans:** Dark, thickened skin, typically found on the neck, thighs, groin, and armpits, indicative of insulin resistance.
- **HAIR-AN Syndrome:** A combination of hirsutism, androgen excess, insulin resistance, and acanthosis nigricans.
- **Ferriman-Gallwey Score:** A score of 8 or higher indicates significant hirsutism.

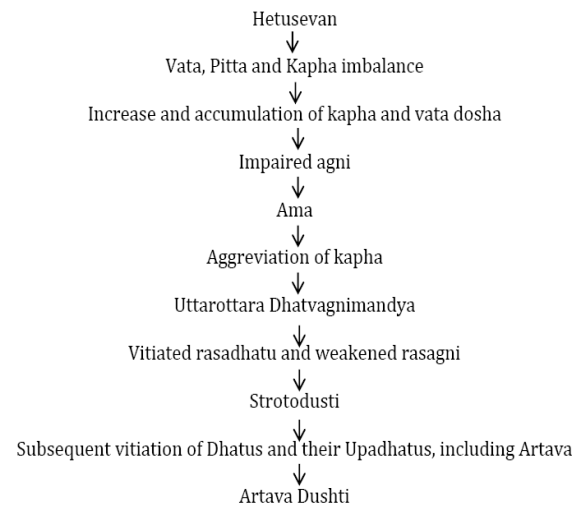
While Ayurveda does not explicitly mention polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), its clinical

features closely resemble those described in Artava Kshaya.

आर्तवक्षये यथोचितकालादर्शनमल्पता वा योनिवेदना च ॥ (सु.सं.सू. १५/१२)

"Yathochitakala Artava adarshana" means menstrual flow may not appear at the expected time or may be significantly delayed, The duration of menstrual cycles can vary from the normal range of 21 to 35 days, Menstrual cycles may be irregular, with some occurring at regular intervals and others being delayed or absent."Alpa" means a small quantity. In Artava Kshaya, both the quantity (pramana) and duration (avadhi) of menstrual flow deviate from the normal range of 3-5 days and 4 Anjali Pramana (approximately 35 ml in modern measurement). "Yoni Vedana" (pain in the vagina) is caused by the vitiation of Apana Vata. This vitiation of Apana Vata results from inadequate nourishment (abhipoorana) of the Garbhashaya (uterus) due to depleted Artava (menstrual blood).

#### SAMPRAPTI



The vitiated Rasa, along with increased Kapha and Vata doshas, leads to Dosha Dushya Sammurchna. In this state, symptoms related to Meda such as Granthi, symptoms related to vata such as Angamarda, Agnimandya, Apravriddhi or Asamyaka Pravrittis of artava, symptoms related to kapha such as Manda Pravrittis (delayed or scanty menstruation), Apravriddhi (irregular or absent menstruation) and Sthoulya (obesity), may be observed.

Organopathological changes can manifest in various systems of the body, leading to symptoms such as oligomenorrhea (scanty menstrual flow), hypomenorrhea (reduced menstrual flow), polycystic ovaries, hirsutism (excessive hair growth), acne and hair loss. If Dosha Dushya Sammurchna is not

addressed, it can lead to the manifestation of Artava Kshaya (menstrual disorder). The progression of the disease, if left untreated, can result in long-term complications, such as infertility.

#### SAMPRAPTI GHATAK

- Dosha- Vata, Pitta, Kapha
- Dushya- Rasa, Rakta, Meda.
- Upadhatu- Artava
- Agni- Jatharagni, Dhatvagni
- Strotas- Rasavaha, Raktavaha, Mamsawaha, Medowaha, Swedawaha, Artavawaha.
- Srotodushti: Sanga, Atipravarti, Granthi
- Sanga - Amenorrhoea, oligomenorrhoea, Kaphaavaranam to Vata & Pitta Kashaya
- Atipravarthi - Abnormal uterine bleeding - Pitta Vridhi
- Granthi - PCOD

#### CHIKITSA

नहि वातादृते योनिर्नारीणां संप्रदुष्यति | ३०/११५

Vata dosha is considered the primary etiological factor in menstrual disorders. Its vitiation can trigger imbalances in other doshas and dhatus, exacerbating menstrual symptoms.

- Nidanaparivarjanam, the removal of causative factors, is considered the cornerstone of treatment in all types of diseases according to Ayurvedic principles. Eliminating the underlying causes is crucial for both treating and preventing diseases, particularly Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS).

- Ayurvedic texts recommend Samshodhana (purification therapies) and Samshamana (palliative therapies) as part of the treatment approach for various conditions. Lifestyle modifications are often considered the first line of treatment for PCOS. By adhering to a proper daily routine (Dinacharya), it is possible to effectively manage and improve PCOS symptoms.

➤ Vamana Karma

Primarily used to expel excess Kapha. It cleanses the body of internal toxins, balances the hormonal system, stimulates the pancreas to produce insulin at normal levels, boosts metabolism, aiding in weight loss, targets liver metabolism, which is crucial for hormone production.

Recommended herbs for Vamana - Madhanphala, Ikshwaku, and Jimutak.

➤ Virechana

It removes impurities and obstructions, promotes the proper functioning of vata, enhances the absorption of drugs by opening channels and improving assimilation.

Recommended herbs for Virechana – Trivrutta avaleha.

➤ Basti

Basti is considered a highly effective treatment (ardha chikitsa) for Vata imbalances. It works by clearing blockages in the channels through which vata dosha flows, regulating apana vayu which specifically governs reproductive functions. Basti helps to regulate its activity. By regulating Apana Vayu, basti can address menstrual irregularities like oligomenorrhea and amenorrhea.

According to Kashyapa, Anuvasana Basti is the preferred treatment for oligomenorrhea, Amenorrhea.

Recommended herbs for Basti –

Matrabasti by shatapushpa taila or sahacharadi taila

Niruha basti by Dashamoola kwatha.

- Ayurvedic texts recommend certain foods, known as Pathyas, for individuals with PCOS.. Pitta- vardhaka foods are also advised, such as garlic, cumin, sesame seeds and asafoetida. Garlic is considered a potent remedy for women's health conditions.

- Ayurveda emphasizes the importance of choosing low-glycemic index (GI) foods, including cauliflower, tomatoes, onions, peaches, apples, and grapefruit, to help regulate blood sugar levels. The diet plan should be tailored to individual needs and the severity of insulin resistance. Eating at regular intervals is strongly recommended, and avoiding junk food is crucial.

- Combining medication with yoga and diet can have a significant positive impact on women with PCOS. Relaxation and stress management are key factors in addressing this condition. Pranayama (breathing exercises) can help calm the mind, while yoga can aid in weight loss, stress relief, and improved blood circulation to the ovaries, contributing to a natural healing process.

By consistently practicing these Ayurvedic principles, women can navigate the journey of womanhood with greater ease and well-being. Managing PCOS should begin promptly upon diagnosis, as women with this condition are at an increased risk of developing various chronic conditions, including non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus.

#### DISCUSSION

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is a condition characterized by ovarian dysfunction, metabolic abnormalities and hormonal imbalances. Modern lifestyle factors and genetic predisposition contribute significantly to its development, particularly in women with obesity. PCOS is now considered a metabolic syndrome and can be effectively managed by adopting healthy lifestyle practices. By following a balanced diet and engaging in appropriate physical activity, individuals with PCOS can restore the equilibrium of three doshas. This, in turn, improves Agni, leading to the proper formation of Rasadhathu and Artava, which are crucial for preventing the progress.

#### SUMMARY

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is a multifaceted endocrine disorder. It is a primary cause of infertility, menstrual irregularities and is associated with obesity, excessive hair growth (hirsutism) and chronic anovulation. While PCOS cannot be directly linked to a single entity in Ayurveda, it shares certain similarities with Artavakshaya. Obesity is a primary cause and symptom of PCOS, which can be prevented by adhering to proper dinacharya and ritucharya. It can be reduced through pathya aahar and vihar, herbal remedies and avoiding apathya aahar vihar.

#### CONCLUSION

Artava Kshaya is a significant menstrual disorder characterized by delayed, scanty menstruation accompanied by reproductive tract pain. It can be correlated with PCOS. In this era of modernization and urbanization, menstrual disorders have become prevalent due to unhealthy dietary habits, sedentary lifestyles, stress, and other factors. Modern medicine primarily treats PCOS with hormonal therapy. Ayurvedic literature advocates Shodhana chikitsa, the use of Agneya dravya, and adhering to proper Dinacharya and Ritucharya. Through the application of foundational Ayurvedic principles, in PCOS presentations with these symptoms, Shaman and Shodhana therapies effectively supported the maintenance of proper ovarian function, resulting in a balanced hormonal state and regular menstrual cycles. The significance of Ayurvedic management for PCOS lies in its cost-effectiveness and complete lack of side effects. Weight reduction in obese women and lifestyle modifications are fundamental aspects of treating PCOS.

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