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An Appraisal on *Raktavaha Srotas* with reference to Circulatory system of Human Body

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Abstract: Ayurveda is an ancient Indian practice of holistic medical care. The body contains numerous channels through which the dhatus, doshas and malas circulate, known as srotas. According Ayurvedic classic '*Srotamayam hi shariram*' means living body is channel or comprised of channels or system. Srotas are so called because they have 'srava' (oozing) – allow materials to pass through them very slowly. Srotas, in broad term refers to the channels of circulation present in the human body. Anatomically and physiologically, channels of circulation have great importance. Acharya Sushruta says that, the channels of circulation are present in intra-cellular, inter-cellular and extra-cellular spaces of the human body. Raktavahastrotas originate from the Yakrita (liver) and Pliha (spleen). The chief function of Raktavahastrotas is transportation of Rakta (blood) to the Rakta dhatu. Anatomically, the channels of circulation are distinct from blood vessels including arteries, veins and capillaries and are omnipresent in the human body. From physiological point of view, channels of circulation are primarily responsible for the circulation of three biological humors, tissues and waste-products to organs and organelles. Blood channels originate in the liver and spleen and transport blood to the Rakta dhatu (all over the body). This group of channels is often referred to as the circulatory system.

Keywords: Yakrita, Rakta Dhatu, Dhatus, Doshas, Malas

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INTRODUCTION:

Ayurveda is an ancient Indian practice of holistic medical care that centres on the equilibrium of body, mind and soul. Dosha (vitiating factors or physical humours), dhatu (tissue elements) and mala (waste products) are the basic building elements of the body.^[1] Their continuous and proper flow in the body, to maintain health, requires hollow spaces or channels. The different places where these processes take place are known as 'Srotas'.^[2] Acharya Sushruta and Vagbhat both have related srotas to the extremely fine passages and pores present in the lotus stem, through Rasadi poshya dhatu circulate all over the body and provide nutrition to Body.^[3,4] According Ayurveda literature '*Srotamayam hi shariram*' means living body is channel or comprised of channels or system. Srotas are so called because they have 'sravana' (oozing) – allow materials to pass through them very slowly.^[5] Srotas, in broad term refers to the channels of circulation present in the human body.

Concept of Srotas in Ayurveda:

The word 'Srotas' is derived from Sanskrit root- "*Srugatau*" (*Sru + tasi = srotas*) which literal means moving, filtering, flowing, leaking, secreting. To maintain continuity in the life cycle, these bodily elements have to

be continuously regenerated, nourished and replenished. The different places where these processes take place are known as 'Srotas'.^[6] Srotas are so called because they have 'sravana' (oozing) – allow materials to pass through them very slowly. According to Charaka, the term 'Srotas' carries various meaning like Sira (vein), Dhamani (artery), Rasayani (lymphatic channel), Rasavahini (capillary), Panthaan (passage), Nadi (duct), Marga (track), Sthaan (balanced position), Ashaya (location/reservoir) etc. are the names of visible and invisible spaces within the body.^[7] Acharya Charaka, defines Srotas as conveying channels of dhatus (tissue elements) undergoing transformation (intermediary metabolite).⁸ Acharya Sushruta, describes Srotas as structures which originate from vacant spaces (hollow organs), spread throughout the body and purvey materials or elements. Anatomically and physiologically, channels of circulation have great importance.^[9,10] Acharya Sushruta, says that the channels of circulation are present in intra-cellular, inter-cellular and extra-cellular spaces) of the human body. Acharya Charaka has described 13 main Srotas in the fifth chapter of Vimansthana, in this types, its detailed given about mulasthan depending upon their origin and abnormality

produced or hetu and symptoms of srotas dushti in them on vitiation.

Raktavaha strotas :

Raktavaha strotas originate from the Yakrita (liver) and Pliha (spleen).^[11] The main function of Raktavahastrotas is the transportation of Rakta (blood) to the Rakta dhatu. Anatomically, the channels of circulation are distinct from blood vessels including arteries, veins and capillaries and are omnipresent in the human body.^[12] From physiological point of view, channels of circulation are primarily responsible for the circulation of three biological humors', tissues and waste-products to organs and organelles. Blood channels originate in the liver and spleen transport blood to the Rakta dhatu (all over the body). Raktavahi dhamani conducts the blood after attaining red color in yakrit- pliha.^[13] In this regard, Raktavahi dhamani is justified as a Mulasthan as transmission point of view. This group of channels is often referred to as the circulatory system.^[14]

The main signs of the vitiation of the channels are:¹⁵ –

1. Atipravrutti – increased flow of contents of the channel;
2. Sanga – obstruction of the flow of contents of the channel;

3. Siragranthi – appearance of nodules in the channel;
4. Vimargagamana – diversion of the flow of contents to improper channel.

Various skin diseases, bleeding disorders, jaundice and so on are the disorders produced due to vitiated Raktavaha channel.

DISCUSSION:

Human body appears to be accumulation of Srotas (channels) and proper functioning of these channels is the cause of good health. Srotamsi are not only the passage or channels for flow of various substances but also Srotamsi are specific in their functions. Each Srotas provides nutrition to their respective dhatu only with requisite quantities not others.^[16] The food and regimen that promote morbidity and go contrary to the well-being of dhatus (tissue elements) vitiate channels. Affliction of these channels leads to the vitiation of tissue elements residing there or passing through them, as vitiation of one leads to the vitiation of another. The vitiated channels and tissue elements vitiate other channels and tissue elements respectively.^[17]

CONCLUSION:

'Srotamayam hi shariram' means living body is channel or comprised of

channels or system. 'Srotamsi' represent the inner transport system of the body in addition to circulatory System. Raktavaha strotas originate from (moolsthan) the Yakrita (liver) and Pliha (spleen). Acharya Sushruta, says that the channels of circulation are present in intra-cellular, inter-cellular and extra-cellular spaces of the human body. The vital function of Raktavahastrotas is transportation of Rakta (blood) to the Rakta dhatu. The srotas system plays a key role in Physiological functions and including pathophysiology in various diseases. A sit is main channel for drug delivery and circulation of various body fluids in the body. Overall circulatory system or Raktavaha strotas is essential system for living human being.

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