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Role of *Pathyapathya Kalpana* in Polycystic Ovary Syndrome: A Critical Review

Wankhede P.¹

1. Final Year P. G. Scholar, Dept of Kriya Sharir, Dr. G. D. Pol Foundation's Y. M. T. Ayurved Medical College, Kharghar, Navi Mumbai.

Abstract:

Background : Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is one of the most prevalent endocrine disorders among females. It includes oligo/amenorrhoea, hirsutism, obesity and enlarged ovaries with multiple small cysts and thickened tunica. It is caused mainly due to *Apathya Aahara* (unwholesome diet) and *Apathya Vihara* (unwholesome lifestyle). Ayurveda states that even the best medicines will not be useful if *Pathya Aahara* (wholesome diet) is not consumed. **Objective:** The objective of the present study was to explore the role of *Pathya Aahara* in the management of PCOS. **Methodology:** It was a literary study. The available literature has been reviewed from ayurvedic texts, modern medicine, and research journals regarding *Pathya Aahara* with special reference to PCOS. The references were critically analysed to reach to conclusion. **Results:** Acharya Charaka mentioned *Pathya* as that which does not adversely affect the *Patha* (channels) related to body and mind; while *Apathya* is opposite of that. PCOS involves aggravation of *Kapha* and *Vata Dosha* along with *Pitta Dosha*. Being one of the *Santarpanotha Vyadhi*, *Rasavaha*, *Medovaha* and *Artavavaha Srotas* are involved in it. *Laghu*, *Ruksha*, *Ushana Gunatmaka*, *Katu – Tikta - Kashaya Rasatmaka Aahara* according to dietetic principles mentioned in Ayurveda should be advised along with *Shodhana* and *Shamana Chikitsa* in PCOS. **Conclusion:** Use of *Pathya Aahara* according to Ayurvedic principles plays significant role in PCOS management.

Keywords: *Pathya Aahara*, PCOS, *Pathya*, *Rasavaha*, *Medovaha*

Corresponding Author:

Vd. Pratima Wankhede,

Final Year P. G. Scholar, Dept of Kriya Sharir,

Dr. G. D. Pol Foundation's Y. M. T. Ayurved Medical College, Kharghar,

Navi Mumbai.



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Introduction:

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome or PCOS was previously known as the Polycystic Ovarian Disease (PCOD) and Stein-Leventhal Syndrome. Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) is a systemic endocrine dysfunction specifically, androgen production disturbed metabolism, affecting approximately 10% of women of reproductive age with onset manifesting as early as puberty, includes oligo/amenorrhoea, hirsutism, obesity and enlarged ovaries with multiple small cysts and thickened tunica.^[1,2] One out of three symptoms are consistent with the diagnosis of PCOS such as infertility, menstrual irregularity, or hirsutism.^[3] Although, the aetiology of PCOS is uncertain according to the modern science, it can be explained as per Ayurvedic principles as one of the *Anukta Vyadhi*. Due to *Mithya Ahara-Vihara* (improper dietary habits and lifestyle), *Vata Dosha* and *Kapha Dosha* get aggravated which mainly vitiate *Rasa Dhatu* and *Meda Dhatu*, leading to *Rajodushti* and *Artavavaha Srotodushti*, subsequently resulting in manifestation of group of symptoms (syndrome). *Agneya Guna* of *Artava* indicates the involvement of *Pitta Dosha*.^[4] *Artavanasha* (absence of menstrual flow) occurs because of *Avarana* (obstruction) in *Srotas* (body

channels). Women with PCOS may present with features of diabetes mellitus because there is insulin resistance leading to excessive androgen production. It has already been mentioned in Ayurveda classics that *Prameha* is a *Medogata Vikara* wherein there is *Avarana* of *Medo-Dhatu*. As PCOS is a syndrome related to lifestyle & metabolic disorders, diet and lifestyle management have a special importance. Ayurveda system of medicine prescribes diet and lifestyle modifications for management of various diseases which can prove useful in management of PCOS too. Along with medical treatment, diet and lifestyle management are equally important in alleviation of diseases. Ayurveda gives precedence to prevention of diseases over cure of diseases in human beings. Acharya Charaka has mentioned dietetic rules under '*Ashta Ahara Vidhivisheshayatana*' as well as *Vihara* explained under *Dinacharya* (daily regimen) which can be instrumental in the management of PCOS. This article is aimed to draw role of *Pathyapthya* in PCOS and list out the *Pathya Ahara* and *Vihara* for PCOS as well as *Apathya Ahara* and *Vihara* for PCOS.

Materials and Methods: The available literature has been reviewed from ayurvedic texts, modern medicine, and research journals regarding *Pathya Ahara* (diet) &

Vihara (lifestyle) with special reference to PCOS. In this critical review, PCOS in the context of *Anukta Vyadhi* have also been compiled from *Charaka Samhita*.

Results:

According to *Charaka Samhita*, there are innumerable diseases because the same vitiated *Dosha* causes various disorders according to variations in etiology and location. Hence one should initiate any treatment after acquiring complete knowledge of following: inherent nature of the disease, its pathogenesis, origin or site of lesion and location of presentation and etiological factors.^[5] PCOS is one of the *Santarpanottha Vyadhi*. The inflammatory changes in patients with PCOS can also be linked to excessive weight gain which can be correlated with *Samavastha* (metabolic toxins) in Ayurveda. *Apathya Aahara Vihara* (unwholesome diet and lifestyle) causes the formation of *Aama* in *Rasadhathu* which in turn causes *Artava Upadathu Dushti*. The *Aama* thus produced, vitiates the remaining *Dhatu* which manifests as excessive weight gain and hair loss. *Kapha Dosha* and *Medo Dushti* occur due to excessive intake of fatty diet along with *Avyayama* (lack of exercise) and *Divaswapna* (daytime sleep). By taking all these facts into

consideration, line of treatment should be decided by the physician. Appropriate *Shodhana* (elimination therapy), *Shamana* (alleviation therapy) and *Nidana – Parivarjana* (avoidance of etiological factors) along with *Pathya Ahara Vihara* can play significant role in the management of PCOS.^[6] Ayurveda is a science which has given importance to diet and regimen as a part of *Chikitsa*. *Pathya – Apathya* has a major supportive role in the management of PCOS. It also states that even the best medicines will not be useful if a wholesome diet is not followed.

Concept of Pathyapathya: Acharya Charaka mentioned *Pathya* as “that which does not adversely affect the *Patha* (channels) related to body and mind; while *Apathya* is opposite of that.”^[7] Both *Pathya* and *Apathya* as dos and don'ts have been mentioned in the context of treatment of various diseases. The physician desirous of success in treatment should take both (*Pathya* and *Apathya*) into consideration. Owing to this, *Pathya* is also mentioned as one of the synonyms of *Chikitsa* (treatment), being integral part of medicine. The importance of *Pathya* (wholesome) and *Apathya* (unwholesome) in Ayurveda are often deduced from the very

fact that Acharya Charaka had detailed *Pathya* (wholesome) as a synonym for treatment. He stated that when channels of circulation become hard by aggravated and vitiated *Dosha*, *Pathya* (wholesome) helps to soften the *Srotas* (channels of circulation) and *Dosha* alleviation. He also elaborately described the concept of *Pathya* (wholesome) and *Apathya* (unwholesome) giving a general list of *Pathya* (wholesome) and *Apathya Dravya* (unwholesome) along with specific *Pathya* (wholesome) and *Apathya Dravya* (unwholesome) for patients and Sansarjana Karma (specific food regime) for patients who have undergone Panchakarma Therapy.^[8] Acharya Susruta had specifically written a chapter named *Hita-Ahitiya Aadhyay* in *Sutrasthana*.

Concept of Ahara Vidhi Vishesha Ayatana:

Ahara Vidhi Vishesha Ayatana means, the factors responsible for the wholesomeness or unwholesomeness of the diet. These factors explore each and every aspect of *Aahara*.^[9] *Ahara Vidhi Vishesha Ayatana* comprises of *Prakriti* (Qualities/nature/properties/inherent attributes of the food substances/items), *Karana* (Processing of food), *Samyoga* (Combination of items), *Rashi* (Quantity of food), *Desha* (Habitat), *Kala* (Time & seasonal

variation), *Upayokta* (Person consuming the food) and *Upayoga Samstha* (rules while taking food). These are essential for proper digestion. If these dietetic rules are not observed, then the food will not be properly digested. This may lead to *Ama* (undigested incompatible food toxins) formation further resulting into diseases.

Concept of Dinacharya: The Sanskrit word *Dinacharya* means "the daily routine". According to Ayurveda, one should follow *Dinacharya* in order to lead a healthy and disease free life. Ayurveda gives more stress on prevention of diseases than treatment of a disease. Ayurveda in its literature has given detailed practices (*Charya*) that one should follow every day to establish the balance of *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala* in our body, which helps to maintain the healthy status of the person. *Dinacharya* helps to establish balance in one's constitution. It also regularizes a person's biological clock, aids digestion, absorption and assimilation and generates self esteem, discipline, peace, happiness and longevity.^[10]

The *Charakokta Ahara Vidhi Vishesha Ayatana* and *Dinacharya* have to be taken into consideration in deciding the *Pathya Ahara – Vihara* as well as *Pathya Ahara – Vihara* for PCOS patients.

- Pathya Ahara: Chapatti prepared with Yava (barley), millet like Jowara, Ragi; regular use of Laja (puffed rice/ grains), Moong Daal (green gram) with or without husk or sprouted or Tuvar Daal in food. Use of fruits like papaya, orange, sweet lemon, coconut water, salads prepared with cucumber, carrot, radish, spinach etc. Vegetables soups prepared of Patola (*Trichosanthes dioica*), gourd etc., luke warm water and seasoned honey.
- Pathya Vihara: Waking up early morning, regular exercises, brisk walking, swimming, playing outdoor games, Yoga, Aachara Rasayana, Sadvritta (following code of conduct).
- Apathya Ahara: Heavy fried food, black gram, refined foods, sugar, Amla Dravya, Teekshna Dravys, Adhyashana/Anashana, Viruddhahara, Abhishyandi Bhojana, Ruksha, Paryushita Ahara, food with high soy supplements, French fries, mashed potatoes, corn flacks, canned food.
- Apathya Vihara: Vegadharana, Prajagarana, Atishrama, Ativyayam and Akalbhojana

Discussion:

PCOS is one of the lifestyle disorders prevalent in females. Its Samprapti has to be well understood on the basis of Ayurvedic

concepts to decide the line of treatment according to Ayurvedic principles. PCOS involves aggravation of *Kapha* and *Vata Dosha* along with *Pitta Dosha*. *Rasvaha*, *Medovaha* and *Artavavaha Srotas* are involved in it. Being one of the *Santarpanottha Vyadhi*, *Apatarpana Upakrama* would be helpful in the management of PCOS. Along with *Shodhana*, *Shamana* and *Nidana Parivarjana*, *Pathya Ahara – Vihara* plays significant role in treatment. The *Charakokta Ahara Vidhi Vishesha Ayatana* and *Dinacharya* are helpful in deciding *Pathya Ahara – Vihara* in PCOS patients. *Laghu*, *Ruksha*, *Ushana Gunatmaka*, *Katu – Tikta - Kashaya Rasatmaka Ahara* and *Vyayama* (exercise) should be advised in PCOS patients. These types of diet and regime would help in alleviation of *Kapha* and *Vata Dosha* along with *Pitta Dosha*, removing the obstruction of *Srotas* as well as formation of excellent quality of *Rasa*, *Meda* and *Artava* thus leading proper menstrual cycle and healthy reproductive life in females.

Conclusion:

Pathya Ahara-Vihara based on the *Charakokta Ahara Vidhi Vishesha Ayatana* and *Dinacharya* can play significant role in the management of PCOS.

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