Conceptual Analysis of PCOS in Ayurveda

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Abstract

PCOS (Poly Cystic Ovarian Syndrome) is the most common endocrine disorders in women of reproductive age; recent study revealed that about 18% of women in India suffer from this condition which is one of the causes for infertility [1]. The estrogen and progesterone imbalance accompanied with increase in Luteinizing hormone (LH) is the main disharmony in the endocrine system seen in patients of PCOS. The increase in LH results in increase output of testosterone causing hirsutism. As the name only say it’s a syndrome, hence no single condition in Ayurveda can be co-related to this, it can be understood under the broad term of artava dusti. The main symptom is “Prajotpadane na samartho bavanti” [2] (incapable of producing progeny). Irregular menstrual cycles, excessive body or facial hair are its main symptoms, secondary complications would be diabetes, uterine cancer, sleep apnoea. Hence it becomes very important to understand this condition, which is mainly managed with birth control pills to regulate menstruation, ovulation induction to treat infertility and other symptomatic treatments in contemporary science. Mainly kapha, meda, mamsa dushti is seen in this condition where the presentation can be in form of Arthava kshaya (menstrual irregularity) Prameha poorvaroopa or Sthoulya (obesity). Treatment of sthoulaya to some extent alleviates other symptoms of PCOS and in certain cases can restore menstrual rhythm. The management of PCOS can be planned in terms of shodana, shaman & Nidana parivarjana.

Keywords: PCOS, Artava dusti, Sthoulya, Infertility.

Introduction

PCOS (Poly Cystic Ovarian Syndrome) is the most common endocrine disorders in women of reproductive age; recent study revealed that about 18% of women in India suffer from this condition which is one of the causes for infertility.

ASRM (American society for reproductive medicines) defines, the presences of 2 out of 3 criteria's to be considered as PCOS.

- Oligomenorrhea and/or anovulation.
- Hyperandrogenism (clinical and/or biochemical).
- Polycystic ovaries, with the exclusion of other aetiologies.

The estrogen and progesterone imbalance accompanied with increase in Luteinizing hormone(LH) is the main disharmony in the endocrine system seen in patients of PCOS.

The increase in LH results in increase output of testosterone causing hirsutism.

No single condition can be co-related to PCOS in Ayurveda. It can be understood under the broad term artava dusti and few types of yoni vyapat, caused due to rasa dushti. On analysis the clinical features of PCOS, we can understand it to be primarily a dushti of kapha, meda, mamsa and later on vata. At the same time the manifestation of the said symptoms due to other causes should be ruled out.

Analysis of PCOS in Ayurveda

PCOS is a disorder that is characterized principally by oligomenorrhea or amenorrhea with clinical or laboratory evidence of hyperandrogenemia.
Furthermore, it is now recognized that a significant proportion of overweight women with PCOS have hyperinsulinemia.

Classically, the disorder may be life long, characterized by abnormal menses from puberty with acne and hirsutism arising in the teens. It may arise in adulthood, concomitant with emergence of obesity, presumably because obesity is accompanied by increasing hyperinsulinemia [3].

These lakshanas can be co-related with kshina artava, nashtartava or artava kshaya. Hyper insulinaemia & obesity can be considered under kapha, meda, mamsa dusti janya vyadhi’s.

**Nidana**

According to Ayurveda the main 2 cause for artava dusti are -

- **Mityachara** (improper dietary habits and life style)
- **Beeja dosha** (genetic inheritance) [4].

Other nidanas

- **Divaswapna** (day sleep)
- **Navanna** (new rice)
- **Snigdha, guru ahara** [5] (food articles heavy to digest)
- **Aavyayama** (lack of regular exercise)

Deducing probable samprapti based on the clinical presentation in Ayurveda.

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**Clinical Features**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clinical Features Seen in PCOS</th>
<th>Probable Co-Relation with Lakshanas Mentioned in Artava Dusti and Yoni Vyapad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Menstrual irregularities</td>
<td>Mentioned in context of Anartava, Artavakshaya and Arajska. In all these conditions, menses is delayed or produced in less quantity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anovulation</td>
<td>Can be compared to vandya yoni vyapat. “Vandyaa nashtartavam vidyat”[6]. Here, we can interpret artava as ovum and consider vandhya as anovulatory menstrual cycle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obesity</td>
<td>Sthoulya caused due to kapha-medo dusti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyperandrogenism (hirsutism, acne and male pattern balding)</td>
<td>Hirsutism or excessive body hair especially in female is given as a symptom of pushpaghni jataharini described by Kashyapa [7]. (loma being mala of asthi, asthi dushana will lead to asthi mala dushti)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Treatment

Chikitsa to be planned based on Nidana, lakshana & vyadhi avastha as analyzed in Samprapti.

As kapha, meda, mamsa dushti is seen in this condition where the presentation can be in form of Arthava dusti, Prameha poorvaroop or Sthoulya (obesity). Treatment of sthoulya to some extent alleviates other symptoms of PCOS and in certain cases can restore menstrual rhythm.

Treatment in Ayurveda mainly divided into
- Shodhana would be the main line of treatment in case of avarana or santarpana pathology [8].
- In case of menstrual abnormalities (kapha dusti) one can use vamana as main line of treatment.
  “vamanena tusoumyadhatou nirhruthe agneyadhatou vrudde arthavamapyayate” [9].
- Shamana line of treatment would include
  Bahirparimarjana chikitsa udvartana would serve the purpose to some extent [10].
  - Deepana, pachana & santarpana will be beneficial in dhatu kshaya conditions.
  - Arthava janaka and Arthava pravartaka drugs helps in correcting menstrual abnormalities. Such as tila, rasona, shatavari..
  - Kashyapacharya quotes the use of Rasona (Allium cepa), Shatapushpa (Anethum graveolens) and Shatavari (Asparagus racemosus) to be beneficial in all disorders of Artava [11].

Sukumaram kashayam, Kana satahwadi kashayam, Saptasaram kashayam, Kaisora guggulu, Chandraprabha gutika, Rajapravarthini vati, Kanchanara guggulu, Asokarishtam, Varunadi kashayam.

After shodana and shamana line of treatment one should adopt rasyana chikitsa.

For this one can use phala sarpi, kalyanaka ghrita etc

Pathya-Apathya

Pathya: Matsya, Kulatha, Tila, Takra, Lashuna, Yava, Amalaki, Mudga, can be considered as pathya [12,13].

Apathya: masha, navanna,dadhi, guda and guda vaikruta [14].

Pathya-apathy to be planned by assessing the lakshanas and dosha involved.

Discussion

The treatment is planned based on samprapti if kapha is predominant then vamana is preferred as it helps in eliminating the saumya dhatu, thus increasing the agneya dhatu and therefore helping to set normal menstrual cycles.

Virechana would be more helpful in conditions of hyperandrogenism thus helping to treat mukhadushika (acne) and khalitya (male type of balding) symptomatically. Virechanika nasya will act on prana and apana there by regulating menstrual cycle to some extent, it will also be helpful in case of mukhadushika (acne) and khalitya. Vata- kaphahara basti can be used which helps in regulating the menstrual cycle and treats sthoulya even.

Acharya Kashyapa mentions alpa pushpa (decreased menstruation) as anuvasana [15]. Shamana aushadis should mainly aim at correcting the agni at dhatu level.

The artava janaka drugs like shatavari will help in the adequate formation of rasa there by producing adequate amount of artava. Artava pravartaka drugs such as lashuna will helps in easy and regular flow.
Conclusion

PCOS cannot be co-related to a single condition in Ayurveda. A symptom complex has to be analyzed based on the clinical presentation. Treatment should be planned considering the *nidana*, *doshas* involved, *samprapti* and the *vyadhi avastha*. After *shodana* and *shamana* one can undergo *rasayana* therapy.

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