

# An Ayurvedic Appraisal Of Krichhartava In The Context Of Primary Dysmenorrhoea

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** According to Ayurveda, vitiated Apana Vata is the main cause of Krichhartava, a disease marked by painful and challenging menstruation. In contemporary gynaecology, Primary Dysmenorrhoea, one of the most prevalent menstrual diseases in young women and adolescents, has a tight relationship with this condition. Daily activities, academic achievement, and general quality of life are all greatly impacted.

**Methods:** In addition to information gathered from published research articles, clinical investigations, and review papers accessible through various sources, this review draws on traditional Ayurvedic texts, commentaries, and contemporary literature. To show parallels in disease and treatment strategies, the Ayurvedic viewpoint of Krichhartava was contrasted with contemporary knowledge of primary dysmenorrhoea.

**Results:** Modern medicine explains primary dysmenorrhoea as a result of excessive prostaglandin production, which causes uterine hypercontractility and ischemia. In contrast, Ayurveda links Krichhartava to Vata dosha vitiation, Udavarta, and Artavavaha srotas dushti. Hormonal treatment and NSAIDs, which relieve symptoms but have side effects, are part of conventional care. Snehana, Swedana, Vatahara chikitsa, and formulations like Dashmoola kwatha, Ashokarishta, Hinguvachadi churna, and Eranda taila are all part of Ayurvedic treatment.

**Discussion:** With fewer adverse effects than contemporary pharmaceutical therapies, the Ayurvedic method offers a comprehensive management plan that addresses the underlying cause, lifestyle, and dietary habits. Through the integration of modern research and ancient knowledge, Ayurveda can significantly contribute to the efficient and long-term management of primary Dysmenorrhoea.

**Keywords:** Ayurveda, Krichhartava, Primary Dysmenorrhoea, Apana Vata, Women's Health

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## INTRODUCTION

A physiological phenomenon that indicates cyclical activity of down *Artava*. *Nidana* (etiology) of this condition, *Samprapti* the female genitalia, menstruation is a significant index of (pathogenesis) of this, and management methods of it, such as reproductive health. Typically, it is associated with distressing *Ahara* (dietetics), *Vihara* (lifestyle pattern), and *Aushadhi* symptoms that impair the quality of life of women of (medications), are extensively delineated in the old scriptures.

childbearing age, though it is a normal phenomenon. They include dysmenorrhoea, which is a very prevalent gynaecological disorder worldwide and means painful menstruation. The former can be further divided into two types: primary dysmenorrhoea, without pelvic pathology, and secondary dysmenorrhoea, with associated pelvic pathology. The causative factors of primary dysmenorrhoea are ischemia, the release of prostaglandins, and uterine contractions that are too strong. In adolescents, a few years after menarche, it usually begins. Painful menstruation, or *Krichhartava* in

It is mainly associated with *Apana Vayu* vitiation, which brings

Limitations, including side effects, contraindications, and recurrence, have spurred interest in holistic and integrative techniques despite contemporary pharmaceutical medications

### Epidemiology:

- Prevalence: Found in 50–90% of women who menstruate globally. [1]
- Adolescents and young women under 25 have the highest incidence. [2]
- Risk factors: Prolonged menstrual flow, Smoking, psychological stress, heavy bleeding, early menarche, and a positive family history.

Ayurveda, is a condition wherein the discharge of menstruation, or *Artava*, is expelled painfully and with force.

like NSAIDs and hormonal therapy. Based on the principles of *Vata Shamana*, *Srotoshodhana*, and *Artavavaha Srotas Chikitsa*, Ayurveda offers safe and effective management techniques.

In light of Ayurvedic classics, this review aims to objectively examine *Krichhartava* and compare it to primary dysmenorrhoea as defined by contemporary science. It seeks to explore the potential of Ayurveda in treating this prevalent yet underappreciated women's health condition by highlighting the conceptual understanding, pathophysiology, and treatment techniques from both Ayurvedic and Modern viewpoints.

**Krichhartava (Primary Dysmenorrhoea):**

Primary Dysmenorrhoea denotes painful menstruation in women without any discernible pelvic illness at the outset of menstruation and with normal pelvic anatomy. Although menstruation is a normal physiological process, dysmenorrhoea, a crippling pain, is experienced by many women at this time. In contrast to secondary dysmenorrhoea, which is linked to conditions like endometriosis, adenomyosis, or pelvic inflammatory disease, primary dysmenorrhea is defined as painful menstruation without underlying pelvic pathology. Once ovulatory cycles are established, the beginning usually happens 6–12 months following menarche.

*Krichhartava* is not listed as a disease (*Vyadhi*) in the classical texts of Ayurveda. *Krichhartava* is seen as a symptom of many different illnesses, though. *Shilochhavritti Nyaya* should thus be used to treat *Krichhartava* and determine its etiopathology. The collection of material based on its etiology, effect, etiopathology, and therapy, in various contexts, suggests *Krichhartava* as a disease, according to this *Nyaya*.

The terms "*Krichha*" and "*Artava*" combine to form the name "*Krichhartava*."

"*Artava*"[3] means "ovum." One kind of *beeja* that is necessary for conception is called *Artava*. Thus, after conception, the *beeja* is referred to as a fertilized ovum. Out of all the synonyms for *Artava* mentioned above, *Amarkosha* claims that *Raja* is the one that is most frequently used. The term "*raja* [4]," which has no other meaning than "*Artava*," is highly unusual for menstrual blood.

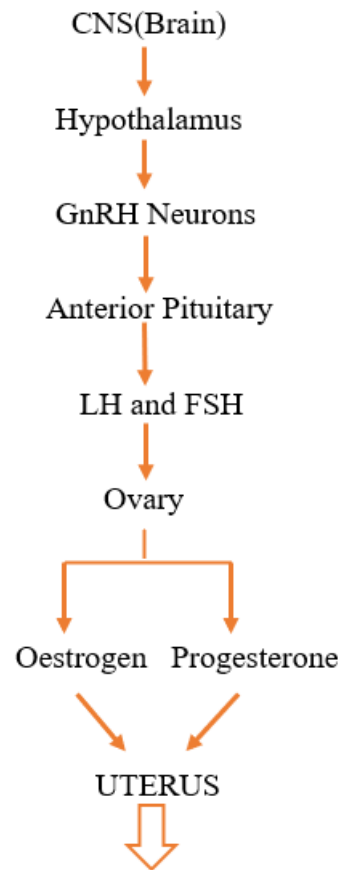
Since the material that stains the *Yoni* or *vagina* also stains the fabric, it is called *Raja*.

In *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Acharya Vagbhatta* mentioned *Artava* is formed from *Rasa dhatu* [5], which runs in the female for three days every month. At age 12, the menstrual cycle begins, and it concludes at age 50. Menstrual discharge (*Artava*), according to *Acharya Charaka*, is considered normal or *dosha*-free if it happens after a month and lasts for five days without being unduly or inadequately heavy and without stickiness (sliminess), burning, or pain. Menstrual blood, or *Artava*, is considered normal when it is red, like the colour of *Indragopa*[6] insects, red lotus blossoms, or gunja fruit.

Menstruation is a visible sign of cyclic uterine bleeding caused by endometrial shedding after hormones interact in an unseen way, mostly through the hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian-endometrial axis.

**HYPOTHALAMIC-PITUITARY-OVARIAN-ENDOMETRIAL AXIS:**

Neuroendocrinology and hormonal interactions regulate a woman's menstrual cycle and reproductive processes, with cyclical ovarian steroid secretions regulated by the pituitary, hypothalamus, thyroid, and adrenal glands. To effectively treat infertility, family planning, and other gynaecological problems, it is crucial to comprehend the hypothalamus-pituitary-ovarian axis in normal women (H-P-O)



**MENSES or MENSTRUAL FLOW**

**RITUCHAKRA (MENSTRUAL CYCLE):**

*Rituchakra*[7] is what in Ayurveda refers to a monthly cycle of a woman, i.e., a natural, cyclical process governed by cyclical fluctuations of *Dosha* and by *Artava* (menstrual) physiology.

In the regular menstrual cycle, regular cyclical hormone secretion and concurrent uterine lining proliferation pave the way for the embedding of the embryo.

A normal menstrual cycle consists of two cycles: The Ovarian and the Uterine cycles.

The ovarian cycle may be further divided into: 1) Follicular Phases, 2) Luteal Phases.

To comprehend women's fertility, Reproductive Health, and treating gynaecological conditions, it is extremely crucial to comprehend *Rituchakra*.

"*Ritu*" (season) + "*Chakra*" (wheel, cycle) = "*Rituchakra*."

It describes a woman's typical monthly duration of menstruation, determined by the intermingling of *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha doshas*, that typically lasts 28-30 days.

*Rituchakra* is divided into three further parts, and each of them is controlled by a dosha:

**Rajasrava Kala [8] (three to five days of menstruation):**

- *Vata* (mostly *Apana Vata*) is the do.
- The shedding of the uterine lining, blood, and discharge results in loss and is known as menstruation.
- Features: 3–5 days flow, natural uterine cleaning, and removal of *Artava* (menstrual blood).
- Relevance: taken as a natural purifying, or *Shodhana*.

**Ritukala[9] (Fertile/Proliferative Phase, approximately 12–16 days [10] postmenstrual):**

- *Kapha Dosha* Dominance.
- Features include the development and maintenance of the endometrium, the strength of the *Ojas* and *Bala*, and the cervix and reproductive tract being favourable for conception.
- Considered the best time of conception, or *Garbhadhana*.
- The proliferative phase is marked by a gradual mitotic increase of the *Decidua functionalis* in preparation of the uterine wall to receive the embryo in response to increasing circulating concentrations of oestrogens.
- These days vary from 5th day, i.e., when menstruation stops, to 14th day when ovulation occurs.

**Rituvyayita Kala [11] (pre-menstrual/luteal phase-until the next cycle):**

- Dosha supremacy: *Pitta*
- Characteristics include endometrial secretory changes and readiness for implantation.
- Subsequent menstruation is initiated by the build-up of *Pitta* and *Vata* due to non-fertilization.
- These symptoms correlate with premenstrual symptoms (PMS) of mood swing, breast tenderness, and irritability.
- Luteal phase spans from the 15th to the 28th day of the menstrual cycle. In this phase, the corpus luteum is formed, and therefore, this phase is termed the luteal phase. The period that occurs after ovulation up to the onset of menses has 14 days an average duration.

**Nidana (Causes):**

*Nidana* is of two kinds: *Samanya Nidana* and *Vishesha Nidana*.

1. *Samanya Nidana*, within the context of *Yonivyapada*, denotes general etiological factors related to *Vata Prakopaka* (*Vata* imbalance), such as *Artava dushti*, *Vata Prakopaka Ahara-Vihara*, *Beeja dosha*, and *Mithya Ahara Vihar* (abnormal diet-habit) [12].
  2. *Vishesha Nidana*, conversely, refers to etiological factors specific to particular illnesses, exemplified by conditions like *Vatala Yonivyapada*, *Udavartani Yonivyapada*, and *Sannipataja Yonivyapada*, where *Krichhartava* [13] is a symptom.
- ✓ Habits and diets of *Vata-prakopaka* are dry, light, and cold in nature, including irregular eating habits, starvation, and over-caffeination
  - ✓ Sedentary lifestyle, excluding exercise during menstruation, suppression of natural urges, exposure to

cold, and stress/anxiety are lifestyle factors leading to *Vata* imbalance.

- ✓ Predictors of *Vata* imbalance, as per current risk associates, are early age at menarche, reduced BMI, being nulliparous, and irregular cycles.

**PURVARUPA**

Since *Vata* is the fundamental symptom, there was no reference to *Krichhartava's Purvarupa*. Therefore, *Avyakta* [14], being a fundamental symptom of *Vata Vyadhi*, is also taken as a fundamental symptom of *Krichhartava*.

**RUPA (Clinical features)**

Pain is the prominent symptom (*Praktyatma lakshana*) of *Krichhartava*.

**Characteristics Of Pain**

- Onset: About a few hours before the menstrual onset.
- Length of time: The severe pain will continue for hours and up to 48 to 72 hours.
- Nature: The spasms of colic and spasmodic pain due to contraction.
- Site: The hypogastrium spreads over the inner and front of the thigh and does not extend below the knee or to the posterior parts of the legs.

**Connected Signs:**

- *Yonivedana*: Pain in the vagina and uterus.
- *Udara Shoola*: spasms of cramps in the.
- *Kashtena Pravṛiti*: Menstrual blood flow problems.
- *Badha Yukta Pravṛiti*: Menstrual obstruction.
- Period pains: Pains that are especially experienced at the onset and at menstruation.
- Similar symptoms are *Mutrakrichha* (obstruction of urine discharge) and *Vibandha* (constipation).

**SAMPRAPTI GHATAK:**

- **DOSHA:** *Vata Pradhana Tridosha, Apana Vayu, Kapha dosha* as *anubandhita* form.
- **DUSHYA:** *Dhatu - Rasa, Rakta; Upadhatu – Artava.*
- **AGNI:** *Jatharagni, Rasagni, Raktagni*
- **SROTASA:** *Rasa, Rakta, and Artavavaha Srotasa*
- **SROTODUSHTI:** *Sanga and Vimargagamana*
- **UDBHAVASTHANA:** *Pakvashaya*
- **ROGA MARGA:** *Abhyantara*
- **STHANA SAMSHRAYA:** *Garbhashaya*

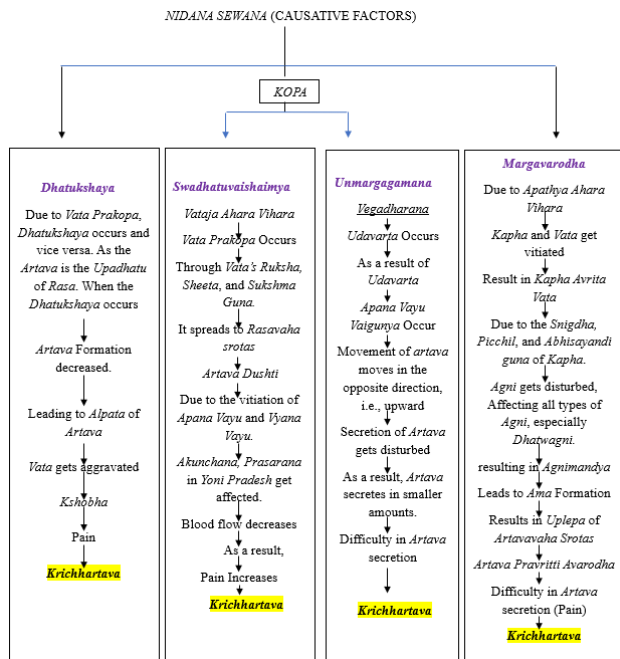
**PATHOPHYSIOLOGY:**

The fundamental mechanism is the overproduction of endometrial prostaglandins during menstruation, primarily *PGF2α* and *PGE2*, which results in:

- Hypercontractility of the uterus
- Ischemia due to decreased uterine blood flow.

Increased pain fibre sensitivity

The increased release of prostaglandins and leukotrienes during menstruation  
 ↓  
 causes primary dysmenorrhoea,  
 ↓  
 which in turn causes ischemia, vasoconstriction, and uterine hypercontractility.  
 ↓  
 In addition to systemic symptoms, including headache, nausea, and vomiting, this causes cramping discomfort|  
**SAMPRAPTI:**



**Diagnosis:**

History and the elimination of secondary causes are the primary clinical criteria used for diagnosis.

- History: No pelvic pathology, menstrual discomfort that comes and goes.
- Physical examination: In cases of primary dysmenorrhea [17,18,19], this is often normal.

**Management of Krichhartava (Primary Dysmenorrhoea): According to Ayurveda:**

Samprapti (pathogenesis), Rupa (clinical presentation), and Nidana (etiologies) must also be kept in consideration while treating a case. The Samhitas do not offer anything regarding Chikitsa of Krichhartava. Krichhartava must be treated as a type of Artava Dushti, as it is a symptom of numerous Yonivyapadas being described here. The treatment is also outlined in three stages in Ayurveda:

1. Aharaja
2. Viharaja
3. Aushadhi

**1. Aharaja**

- ✓ Food products into categorial classes (Vargas): Shali Varga includes varying grains and pulses like rice, wheat, barley, millet, sorghum, and flax seeds.
- ✓ Dugdha Varga includes milk products like paneer and cow milk.
- ✓ Phala Varga includes fruits and nuts, like oranges, amla, and pomegranates.

- ✓ Harita Varga includes spices and aromatics like ginger, fenugreek seeds, and black pepper.
- ✓ Shaka Varga: Sweet potato, beetroot, radish, Pumpkin, Bottle gourd, Patola, spinach, Moringa Leaves.

**Menstrual Dietary Guidelines (What to Eat)**

- ✓ Mix them both to create a decoction, and consume 1/2 to 1/2 cup in the evening and morning.
- ✓ Take a mixture of split gram and jaggery (increases blood or adjusts the flow of menstruation)
- ✓ Every day in the mornings, with an empty stomach, consume garlic juice, four cloves of garlic, or garlic chutney.

**2. Viharaja:**

- ✓ Wake up early and go to bed early
- ✓ Take a bath in warm water.
- ✓ Daily oil massage (Snehana) [15].
- ✓ Every day, take steam (Swedana).

**3. Ausadhi**

- ✓ Treatment of Krichhartava (dysmenorrhoea) by Ayurveda includes dietary (Ahara) and lifestyle (Vihara) modifications followed by medicinal treatment (Ausadha chikitsa).
- ✓ Krichhartava is primarily caused by vitiated Vata dosha [16], i.e., Apana Vayu.
- ✓ Therapies such as Unctuous (Snigdha) therapy, Ushna (warm) therapy, and Vatahara treatments are used to alleviate pain, improve circulation, and soothe Apana Vata.
- ✓ Deepana-Pachana is the primary treatment for Ama Nirharana in Ayurvedic treatments, aiming to eliminate metabolic impurities, strengthen the digestive system, and prepare the body for cleaning.
- ✓ Purification of reproductive tracts (Artavavaha Srotoshodhana) is also a central part.

**Management as per modern Science:**

Management According to Contemporary Science:

**1. Therapeutic [20]**

- ✓ Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug, abbreviated as NSAID, is first-line therapy; it inhibits prostaglandin production.
- ✓ Hormonal contraceptives: suppress ovulation and decrease the production of endometrial prostaglandins (COCs, progestin).
- ✓ Other: experimental vasopressin antagonists and antispasmodics.

**2. Non-therapeutic:**

- ✓ Exercises and Yoga.
- ✓ Heat treatment (heating pads, hot water bottles).
- ✓ Transcutaneous electric nerve stimulation.
- ✓ Acupuncture.
- ✓ Life changes, such as sleeping adequately, reducing consumption of coffee, and smoking cessation.

**3. The Alternative or Complementary Methods**

Dietary supplementation (Omega-3 fatty acids, Vitamin E, Magnesium, Zinc); Ayurvedic treatment (*Abhyanga, Basti*, medicinal plants such as *Ashoka, Dashmoola*); and mind-body.

### Impact & Challenges

- ✓ Non-life-threatening, though, as key causes of dysmenorrhoea are:
- ✓ Slowed-down school and work performance.
- ✓ Mental distress, concern, and depression.
- ✓ Absenteeism in work or school.
- ✓ A low standard of living.

### DISCUSSION

In Ayurveda, the condition characterized by Severe menstruation is known as *Krichhartava*. This condition in modern science is well known as Primary Dysmenorrhoea, which is one of the most commonly occurring gynaecological disorders, having painful menstruation without any pelvic pathology affecting the earlier phase of life.

According to Ayurveda, Menstruation is controlled by *Apana Vata*; its disturbance vitiates *Ruksha, Sheeta*, and *Khara guna*, leading to spasm, painful menstruation, and blockage (*Sanga*).

Conditions like *Udavartini Yonivyapada* are directly related to Primary dysmenorrhoea, with *Krichhartava* being the major symptom, and it is mainly caused by *Vega dharana*, which vitiates *Apana Vata*, leading to painful menstruation.

Due to increased uterine prostaglandins, i.e., PGF<sub>2</sub> Primary dysmenorrhoea leads to Vasoconstriction, Ischemia, and Painful menstruation. This pathology is correlated with obstruction of the *Artavavaha Srotas* caused by the Vitiations of *Vata dosha*. Management also runs parallel, as in Contemporary science, NSAIDs, Antispasmodics, and hormonal contraceptives are used with some limitation, whereas in Ayurveda, *Vata Shamana* (Balancing Vata), *Srotasodhana* (Clearing obstructed channels), and *Deepana Pachana* (improving digestive fire) *Chikitsa* are used. Ayurvedic treatment uses herbs such as *Vata Hara Dravyas* like *Hingu, Shatpushpa, Ajmoda*, and *Aloe vera*, along with herbal formulations such as *Kumaryasava, Rajapravartini Vati*, which help in the regulation of menstruation and relieve pain. Ancient science also focuses on *Sodhana Chikitsa*, such as *Snehana, Swedana, Basti Chikitsa*, along with *Shamana Chikitsa*. It also focuses primarily on Dietary Lifestyle modification, which helps in *Vata anulomana* (Balancing Vata), hence it is the best and safest treatment.

Therefore, by analysing Ayurvedic as well as Contemporary Science, it is clear that the *Krichhartava* (Primary Dysmenorrhoea) is a *Vata Pradhana Vyadhi*. Hence, Ayurvedic treatment provides more relevant therapy, which not only provides symptomatic relief but also balances doshas and clears *Srotodushti*, providing a holistic approach.

### CONCLUSION

According to Ayurveda, *Krichhartava* is related to primary dysmenorrhea in Modern science. According to both science and Ayurveda, the main characteristic feature is painful menstruation; Ayurveda mainly attributes this to *Vata* vitiation, whereas modern science attributes it to excessive production of prostaglandin. In this paper, I tried

to elaborate on the etiology, Pathophysiology, and treatment of *Krichhartava* in relation to Primary dysmenorrhoea as per both sciences. Therefore, through this paper, we understand *Krichhartava* in relation to Primary Dysmenorrhoea, which will be further helpful for the management of the disease in an integrative form.

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