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RESEARCH ARTICLE

STUDY OF THE CONCEPT OF UTERUS IN AYURVEDA WITH APPLIED ASPECTS

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Abstract

The Uterus is the child bearing organ in female, situated in the pelvis between the bladder and rectum. The uterus can be divided into an upper part, consisting of the fundus and the greater part of the body and a lower part consisting of the cervix. The upper narrow end is called the internal os and the narrow lower end is called the external os. The cavity of the uterus communicates with that of the vagina through the external os. The study aims to evaluate various terminologies related to the uterus and its parts in Ayurveda. Morphological considerations of various terminologies along with applied aspects with references were studied. The present study is designed to analyze the concept of the uterus from Ayurvedic classics and interpreted. Elucidated terminologies were analyzed from structural anatomy, dimensions, location, and applied aspects. Various terminologies are used to represent the Uterus and its parts which can be correlated as follows- Uterus: Yoni, Phalayoni, Garbhasaya, Garbhakosha, Kukshi, Kshetra. Cervix with External Os: Garbhamarga, Garbhachidra. Fallopian tube /Uterine tubes: Raktavahasrota, Artavahasrotamsi, Artavavahasrotas, Artavavahamarga. Blood Supply: Artavavahasrotamsi, Artavvahinyadhamani.

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Introduction:-

The Uterus is the child bearing organ in female, situated in the pelvis between the bladder and rectum.

- Size and shape: It is pyriform in shape. It is broader above and narrows down below. The uterus is about 7.5 cm (3 inches) in length. Its maximum width (near its upper end) is about 5cm (2inches). Its thickness (anteroposterior) is about 2.5 cm (1 inch).The exterior of the uterus shows a constriction at the junction of its upper two thirds with the lower one third. The part above the constriction is called the body: It is broad above and narrows below. The part below the constriction is called the cervix and it is more or less cylindrical. The part of the body of the uterus that lies above the level of the openings of the uterine tubes is called the fundus. The cavity of the cervix is roughly cylindrical. However its upper and lower ends are somewhat narrower than the central part. The upper narrow end is called the internal os and the narrow lower end is called the external os. The cavity of the uterus communicates with that of the vagina through the external os. The uterus lies in the true pelvis.

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- Normal position: Normally, the long axis of uterus forms an angle of about 90 degrees with the long axis of the vagina. The forward bending of the uterus relative to the vagina is called anteversion. The uterus is also slightly flexed on itself, this referred to as anteflexion. The angle of anteflexion is 125 degree.
- Blood supply: Uterine arteries- Mainly by the uterine arteries. The uterine arteries anastomose with those of the ovarian and vaginal arteries. The uterine veins follow the arteries and form a plexus.

Aim & Objectives:-

1. Evaluation of various terminologies about the Uterus and its parts in Ayurveda.
2. Morphological considerations of various terminologies were elucidated.
3. Applied aspects with references were studied.

Materials & Methods:-

The present study was designed to analyse the concept of Uterus from Ayurvedic classics and interpreted. Elucidated terminologies were analyzed from structural anatomy, dimensions, location, and applied aspects.

Observation and Results:-

Various terminologies and its applied anatomy with reference:

Yoni:

1. The shape of yoni is spiral which resembles shankhanabhi(hollow portion of conch shell) and have three spirals and in its third spiral (innermost) lies the garbhasaya^{1,2,3}.
2. It is mentioned in the context of injury to 'Yoni' and it refers to the entire reproductive system.^{4,5}
3. Is mentioned regarding fertilization –for garbha formation, women should have apradusthayoni (healthy yoni,) sonita (ovum) and garbhasaya.⁶

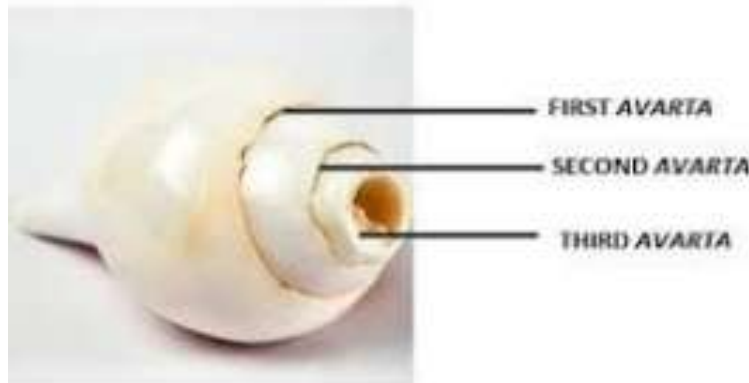


Figure 8:- Shankha.

Nadis of Yoni:⁷

1. In Monobhavagara Mukha (vaginal canal) in females there are three Nadis present which are as follows -
2. Samirana – It is mainly present in the Madanapatra (clitoris) and sukra falling over it becomes useless.
3. Chandramasi- It is mainly present in Kandarpageha (mid vaginal canal). Woman with this type of nadi is easily satisfied with coitus and gives birth to a female child.
4. Gauri- It is present in Upasthagarbha (depth of vaginal canal). Here sexual satisfaction attained with difficulty and the woman delivers a male child.
5. Acharya Kasyapa mentioned different types of Yoni which is correlated with certain physical, emotional or psychic characteristics and related to progeny.

Different types of yoni with characteristics:¹²

1. Shakattakritir patyalabhya: Cart shaped yoni, good for progeny.
2. Peena Soubhagya: Carries good fortune.
3. Lambatapatyavadhay: Elongated, death of progeny.
4. Mandala vyabhicharnay: Rounded in whoredom.
5. Utshiptaanapatyatvay: Pushed upward cervix for infertility.

6. Suchimukhidurbhagyay: Pinhole cervix for misfortune.
7. Bhrishavivritasangvrita suskalambavishamabilingakleshalayay: Excessively dilated vaginal canal, constricted, dry, elongated, uneven and vulva having absence of clitoris is for anguish.
8. Madhyanibidakanyaprajanannay: Vulva compact and dense in centre for birth of female child.
9. Unnataramaniyamamsalaputranajana: Protuberant beautiful and fleshy for birth of son.
10. Vyanjanvati cha dhanya: Covered with spots and mole is virtuous.
11. Atilomshavaidhyakari: Very hairy for widowhood.
12. Vyanjanhinatwaysashase: Absence of spots and moles for infamy.
13. Piplumadvasavtivyabhicharprabrajyaye: With corns and fat is for whoredome and wandering.

Applied aspect:

Total numbers of Yonivyapad 20 types.^{8,9,10,11} Different diseases of yoni: Yoniarsa,^{13,14} Yonikanda.^{15,16,17}

Phalayoni:

Applied aspect: In relation to contraindication of Kshar karma in female it is mentioned as, when she suffers from bhramsha (displacement) of phalayoni.^{18,19}

Garbhasaya:

1. The word 'garbhasaya' was mentioned in terms of asaya (seats or place of residence). Asayas are 7 in numbers in case of male and 8 in numbers in case of female. Garbhasaya is an extra asaya present in female. It is understood with special seat of foetus.^{20,21}
2. Kasyapa also told 8th adhisthan as garbhasaya in female.^{22,23}
3. Garbhasaya morphologically look like the shape and size of the mouth of rohita fish.^{24,25}
4. Garbhasaya is mentioned as the root of Artava –vaha srotas along with Artavavahi dhamini.²⁶
5. The shape of yoni is spirals which resembles shankhanabhi (hollow portion of conch shell) and having three spirals and in its third spiral, (innermost) lies the garbhasaya.^{27,28,29}
6. 'Garbhasaya' is situated in between pittasaya and pakvasaya.^{30,31,32}
7. The location of garbhasaya, by the side of the urinary bladder was described in relation to ashmari chikitsa and mutraghata chikitsa respectively.^{33,34}
8. Acharya Kasyapa has elucidated Garbhasaya by citing its location and described it as 'vipula srota'.³⁵
9. Applied Aspect: Injury to the artavavaha srota mula i.e. garbhasaya and artavavahinya dhamani leads to infertility, dyspareunia and amenorrhea.³⁶

Garbhakosha:

1. In context of types of female infertility where garbhakoshbhanga meant injury or prolapsed of uterus.³⁷
2. The fetus lies inside the garbhakosha facing the mother's back, keeping both its hands on the forehead, with its body contracted and localized on the right side of the uterus if it is a male; if it is a female, it lies to the left side and if hermaphrodite, it lies at the centre. So it is mentioned in context to the position of foetus in the uterus.³⁸
3. Artava (menstrual blood) flow every month in case of woman, the blood gets collected in the garbhakosha and flows out for three days every month.³⁹
4. In context of 'Aamgarbha', the terminology Garbhakostha is mentioned. It is stated in discussion of miscarriage (garbhapata).⁴⁰

Kukshi:

The union of sukra, sonita and atma in the kukshi (uterus) is known as Garbha.⁴¹

Kshetra:

In relation to garbhautpadakara samagri kshetra is mentioned which indicates uterus along with whole reproductive system.⁴²

Garbhamarga:

The term 'garbhamarga' is described in context to twenty more muscles (peshis) in women. There are three muscles in the passage of the 'garbhamarga' in which the fetus rests.⁴³

Garbhachidra:

Acharya Susruta mentioned 'garbhachidra' in relation to distribution of 20 muscles in female.⁴⁴ Dalhana explained garbhachidra to be garbhasayachidra. He commented Garbhasaya to be one muscle and said there are three layers in it.⁴⁵

Raktavahasrota:

Acharya Sushruta stated extra three srotas in females which include raktavahasrota along with two srotas of stanya.⁴⁶

Artava-Vahasrotas:

The word is described in context of the number of artava-vahasrotas, its origin and the symptoms produced by its injury. Artava-vahasrotas are two in number, having its mula in garbhasaya and artavahidhamanis, injury to these srotas produces maithunasahisnuta, vandhyatwa and artavnash.⁴⁷

Artava-Vahamarga:

1. It is mentioned in the context of etiology and treatment of Nasta-artava. If the marga (route) of artav-vahinisira gets obstructed due to vata and kaphadosha, then the person suffers from Nastartava.⁴⁸
2. It is mentioned in describing Raktagulma by Acharya Vagbhat. Here, it is described that if the menstrual blood accumulates inside, due to obstruction of passage by vata or kapha, it should be treated with measures which increases pitta, the gulma exhibits signs of pregnancy.⁴⁹

Raktavahasrota:

Acharya Sushruta stated extra three srotas in females which include raktavahasrota along with two srotas of stanya.^{50,51}

Yonimukha and Yonikarnika:

1. In context to description of four muscles (peshis) of apatyapath (external passage), there are two peshis named "Yonikarnika" which is situated outwardly and in circular presentation near the yonimukh.⁵²
2. Artava is the ritubhavam (monthly vaginal bleeding) in particular time which is ishatkrishnam (slightly blackish), vigandham (unusual smelling), and vayu expels it through the yonimukha.⁵³
3. In case of rakta gulma nidana aggravated vayu comes to the yonimukha and obstructs the artava and causes raktagulama. Here it is mentioned as "Yonimukhamitigarbhasayadwaram".⁵⁴
4. In the context of suska yoni lakshana it is mentioned that vega dharana during intercourse aggravates vayu which obstruct mala and mutra and causes constriction at yonimukha and produces suska yoni.⁵⁵

Garbhashaya Dwara⁵⁶:

In context of karnini yonivayapad, the site of lesion is specified as garbhasaya dwara .

Garbhashaya Dwarmukha:

In context of the karnini yonivayapad, the site of lesion is specified as garbhasaya dwara mukha.^{57,56}

Yonilinga:

The term yonilinga is stated while explaining the pandu upadrava, swelling in yonilinga, guda, sepha& muska.⁵⁸

Apatyamarga:

Length of apatyamarga as chaturangulam i.e. 4 angula, it is described in the context of uttarabasti, regarding the measurement of the pushpanetra.⁵⁹

Dhamanis:

Two types of dhamanis are described, utdhwagamidhamani and Adhagamidhamani. In female two urdhwagamidhamani carries stanya (milk) to the stanans (breast) and in case of male carries sukra. The two adhagamidhamani carries the artava.⁶⁰

Discussion:-

The word 'Yoni' refers to the entire reproductive system. The shape of yoni is compared to the resemblance of the spirals of Sankha (conch shell). In relation to female reproductive organ, Acharya Kasyapa gives a lucid description.

Here, shakatt, peena, lamba, mandala, utshiptatanapatyatyay, suchimukhi, bhrishavivritasangvritasuska lambavishamavilingakleshala, madhyanibida, 'unnata' are the morphological shape of vulva.

The location of the Garbha is 'Garbhasaya' and therefore uterus is the specific terminology which can be understood. The shape of rohitamatsya for garbhasaya as stressed probably is due to similarity as well as characteristics, as uterus is a hollow muscular triangular organ. The normal location of uterus is in front of rectum and behind the urinary bladder. The normal position of uterus which is anteverted and anteflexed also highlight its position as triangular as rohitamukha. The root of Artavavahasrota indicates the capillary bed present in endometrium.

The terminology 'Garbhakostha' is emphasized mainly by Acharya Vagbhat I. It is mentioned in relation to expulsion of menstrual blood, position of foetus as well as in relation to miscarriage. In all these contexts, involvement of uterus is mainly considered. It can be understood with uterus as it is mentioned in relation to location of garbha. Garbhakoshbhanga (injury to or prolapsed of uterus) is an applied aspect, which is mentioned in relation to female infertility.

The term 'garbhamarg' seems to be a description of genital passage or cervical canal. However, relation to three avarta highlights its extension up to os-uteri.

The term 'Garbhachidra' can be interpreted with cervical canal or vaginal passage. These can be understood with three muscle layer of uterus.

The terminology apatyamarga is found in relation to application of pushpanetra of uttarabasti in female and the length is considered as four angula. This clearly can be understood with vagina which connects the exterior to the cervix of the uterus. The length of vagina varies from (3-7) inch where the average length is considered as 3.77 inches i.e. 9.6 cm.

Conclusion:-

The present study summarizes various terminologies regarding uterus mentioned in classics and after analyzing the context we observe that one terminology may be specific to one organ and at the same time may indicate multiple organs. 'Yoni', the most common term is used for reproductive organ. In general, it describes whole reproductive organ, while uterus, vagina and external os are specific. The shape of Yoni, 'sankhanavyakrita' emphasize for external genitalia mainly but functionally the uterus. Acharya Kashyap's description of different shape of Yoni may highlight morphological abnormalities while its clinical aspect also has importance. Garbhasaya, Garbhakostha, kukshi, are used terms for uterus while garbhamarga, garbhachidra is used for external os. Yoni and phalayoni also indicate the uterus. In relation to vessel, artava vaha srotamsi or artavahidhamani can be mentioned. Various terminologies are used to represent the Uterus and its parts which can be correlated as follows- Uterus: Garbhasaya, Garbhakosha, Kukshi, sometimes Kshetra, Yoni, and Phalayoni, Cervix with External Os: Garbhamarg, Garbhachidra. Fallopian tube /Uterine tubes: Raktavahasrota, Artavahasrotamsi, Artavavahasrotas, Artavavahamarga. Blood Supply: Artavavahasrotamsi, Artavvahinyadhamani.

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