



Research Article

A Comprehensive Ayurvedic Review on *Udavartani Yoni Vyapad* and Its Modern Correlation with Dysmenorrhea

Dr. Kirti ^{1*}, Dr. Digambar p Shevale ²

¹ Final year PG Scholar, P.G. Department of *Prasuti Tantra Evam Stri Roga*, Shri Dhanwantri Ayurvedic Medical College & Research Centre, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, India

² Professor, P.G. Department of *Prasuti Tantra Evam Stri Roga*, Shri Dhanwantri Ayurvedic Medical College & Research Centre, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, India

Corresponding Author: *Dr. Kirti

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21416367>

Abstract

Background: Dysmenorrhea, characterized by severe, cramping pelvic pain just before or during menstruation, is one of the most common gynecological complaints affecting women of reproductive age. In Ayurveda, this condition closely mimics *Udavartani Yoni Vyapad*, one of the twenty gynecological disorders (*Yoni Vyapads*) described by ancient seers.

Aim: This review aims to explore the classical Ayurvedic perspectives of *Udavartani Yoni Vyapad*, its correlation with primary dysmenorrhea, and the holistic management protocols emphasizing *Vata* pacification.

Review Results: The pathogenesis of *Udavartani Yoni Vyapad* revolves around the vitiation of *Apana Vata* due to the suppression of natural urges (*Vegadharana*). This leads to the reverse movement (*Urdhwagati*) of *Vata*, causing painful menstruation that is relieved immediately upon the proper discharge of menstrual blood. Modern pathophysiology of primary dysmenorrhea attributes this pain to prostaglandin-induced uterine ischemia, which parallels the *Vata-vitiated* spasmodic pain described in Ayurveda.

Conclusion: Ayurvedic interventions, including *Vatanulomana* (downward routing of *Vata*), *Snehana* (oleation), *Swedana* (sudation), and *Basti* (enema), offer promising, non-hormonal, and side-effect-free alternatives for managing dysmenorrhea compared to conventional NSAIDs or oral contraceptives.

Manuscript Information

- ISSN No: 2583-7397
- Received: 13-11-2025
- Accepted: 23-12-2025
- Published: 30-12-2025
- IJCRM:4(6); 2025: 786-788
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- Plagiarism Checked: Yes
- Peer Review Process: Yes

How to Cite this Article

Kirti, Shevale D P. A Comprehensive Ayurvedic Review on *Udavartani Yoni Vyapad* and Its Modern Correlation with Dysmenorrhea. Int J Contemp Res Multidiscip. 2025;4(6):786-788.

Access this Article Online



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KEYWORDS: Udavartani, vata, dysmenorrhea.

INTRODUCTION

Menstruation (*Rutu Chakra*) is a normal physiological process in females. However, for many women, it is accompanied by debilitating pain known as dysmenorrhea (painful menstruation). Globally, the prevalence of dysmenorrhea varies between 16% to 91% among women of reproductive age, significantly impacting their quality of life, academic performance, and work productivity [1].

Conventional medical science manages primary dysmenorrhea predominantly with Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs) and Oral Contraceptive Pills (OCPs). While effective, these are often associated with gastrointestinal and hormonal side effects [2]. Therefore, exploring alternative holistic approaches is a necessity.

In Ayurvedic classical texts, gynecological disorders are categorized under twenty *Yoni Vyapads* (diseases of the female reproductive system). Among these, *Udavartani Yoni Vyapad* is universally recognized by Acharya Charaka, Sushruta, and Vagbhata as a condition characterized by painful menstruation (*Kashtartava*), which aligns clinically with primary dysmenorrhea [3].

Ayurvedic Perspective of Udavartani Yoni Vyapad Nidana (Etiology)

According to Ayurveda, the primary cause of all *Yoni Vyapads* is the vitiation of *Vata Dosha*, as the female reproductive system is primarily governed by *Apana Vata*. The specific etiological factors for *Udavartani* include [4]:

- **Vegadharana (Suppression of natural urges):** Especially the urges of flatus, urine, and feces.
- **Mithya Ahara-Vihara (Improper diet and lifestyle):** Consumption of excessively dry, cold, light, and astringent foods that provoke *Vata*. Overexertion, staying awake at night (*Ratri Jagarana*), and psychological stress.
- **Artava Dosha (Menstrual anomalies):** Any pre-existing defects in the menstrual cycle.

Samprapti (Pathogenesis) and Classical Shloka

When a woman consistently suppresses her natural urges, the *Apana Vata*—which normally moves downwards (*Adhogati*)—becomes obstructed and is forced to move upwards (*Urdhwagati* or *Udavarta*). This reversed *Vata* fills the reproductive tract (*Yoni*) and pushes the menstrual blood (*Raja*) in an upward direction instead of allowing it to flow out smoothly.

Acharya Charaka elegantly describes this phenomenon in the *Chikitsa Sthana*:

"वेगोदावर्तनाद् योनिमुदावर्तयतेऽनिलः ।
सा स्मार्ता रजः कुच्छादुदावृत्तं विमुञ्चति ॥
आर्तवे सा विमुक्ते तु तत्क्षणं लभते सुखम् ।
रजसो गमनादूर्ध्वमुदावर्तेति सा स्मृता ॥"

(*Charaka Samhita, Chikitsa Sthana 30/25-26*) [4]

By the suppression of natural urges, the *Vata dosha* gets aggravated and moves upwards (*Udavartana*), affecting the

Yoni (uterus). The woman, afflicted with severe pain, discharges the menstrual blood with great difficulty. However, as soon as the menstrual blood is fully discharged, she finds immediate relief. Because the menstrual blood is pushed upwards initially, this condition is known as *Udavartani*.

Acharya Sushruta corroborates this by defining it as a condition where frothy menstrual blood is discharged with severe spasmodic pain (*Phenila Artava*) [5].

Lakshana (Clinical Features)

Based on classical texts, the primary clinical features include [4,6]:

1. **Rajakrichra:** Difficulty in discharging menstrual blood.
2. **Ruk / Shoola:** Severe, cramping abdominal and pelvic pain prior to and during the initial phase of menstruation.
3. **Tatkshana Sukha:** Complete relief from pain the moment normal menstrual flow is established.
4. **Phenila Artava:** Frothy menstrual blood (mentioned by Sushruta), indicating the hyperactive involvement of *Vata*.

Modern Correlation: Dysmenorrhea

Dysmenorrhea is broadly classified into Primary and Secondary types. *Udavartani Yoni Vyapad* is best correlated with **Primary Dysmenorrhea**, as both conditions occur without any underlying gross pelvic pathology [7].

Pathophysiology of Primary Dysmenorrhea

In modern gynecology, primary dysmenorrhea is primarily attributed to the hypersecretion of endometrial prostaglandins (particularly PGF2α) during the shedding of the endometrium [8].

- High levels of PGF2α cause hyper-contraction of the uterine myometrium.
- This hyper-contraction leads to uterine ischemia (lack of oxygen to the uterine muscle), causing severe cramps.
- The pain is typically worst on the first day of menses and gradually subsides as the endometrial lining is shed and prostaglandin levels drop—mirroring the Ayurvedic concept of *Tatkshana Sukha* (relief upon complete flow) [8].

Parallel Assessment

Ayurvedic Concept (Udavartani)	Modern Concept (Primary Dysmenorrhea)
Vitiation of <i>Apana Vata</i>	Hyperactivity of myometrium / Prostaglandin cascade
<i>Vata</i> causing spasms (<i>Shoola</i>)	Ischemic pain due to uterine hyper-contractions
<i>Urdhwagati</i> of <i>Raja</i>	Retrograde flow or obstructed/delayed flow due to spasms
Relief upon proper <i>Artava</i> discharge	Pain subsides as the sloughed endometrium clears

Ayurvedic Management (Chikitsa Sutra)

Since the fundamental pathology is the obstruction and reverse movement of *Vata*, the core principle of treatment is

Vatanulomana—restoring the normal downward movement of *Apana Vata* [9].

1. Shodhana (Purification Therapies)

- **Snehana and Swedana:** Internal and external oleation followed by sudation in the pelvic region. *Dashamoola Taila* or *Mahanarayana Taila* applied to the lower abdomen followed by *Nadi Sweda* helps relieve muscle spasms and pacifies *Vata* [10].
- **Basti Karma:** Regarded as the "Ardha Chikitsa" (half of all treatments) for *Vata* disorders.
- *Anuvasana Basti* (Oil enema) with *Sahacharadi Taila*.
- *Niruha Basti* (Decoction enema) with *Dashamoola Kwatha*.
- **Uttarabasti:** Administration of medicated oils/ghee directly into the intrauterine cavity. *Trivrit Snehana* is highly recommended by Charaka for this purpose [4].

2. Shamana Chikitsa (Palliative Medications)

A variety of herbs possessing *Vata-kapha shamaka*, *Ushna virya* (hot potency), and *Artava janana* (emmenagogue) properties are utilized [11]:

- **Single Herbs:** *Kumari* (Aloe vera), *Hingu* (Asafoetida), *Shatavari* (Asparagus racemosus), *Eranda* (Ricin communis), and *Tila* (Sesamum indicum).
- **Classical Formulations:**
- *Rajahpravartini Vati*: Stimulates menstruation and relieves pain.
- *Kumaryasava*: Corrects the function of *Apana Vata* and improves uterine health.
- *Dashamoolarishta*: An excellent anti-inflammatory and *Vata*-pacifying tonic.
- *Hinguvachadi Churna*: Prevents bloating and ensures downward movement of *Vata*.

3. Pathya-Apathya (Diet and Lifestyle)

- **Pathya (Favorable):** Consumption of warm water, *Ghrita* (ghee), garlic, ginger, black pepper, and unctuous, easy-to-digest foods. Regular practice of Yoga (*Bhujangasana*, *Baddhakonasana*) [12].
- **Apathya (Unfavorable):** Avoidance of spicy, astringent, dry, and junk foods. Complete avoidance of suppressing natural urges (*Vegadharana*).

DISCUSSION

The exact clinical picture of primary dysmenorrhea—spasmodic pain before or during early menses and subsequent relief as the flow establishes—was keenly observed and documented by Ayurvedic scholars thousands of years ago under *Udavartani Yoni Vyapad*.

Modern medicine treats the symptom (pain) by inhibiting prostaglandins via NSAIDs. In contrast, Ayurveda targets the root cause—the disruption of the autonomic nervous system and pelvic hemodynamics (represented by *Apana Vata*). By employing therapies like *Basti* (which acts via the enteric nervous system and pelvic plexus) and prescribing

Vatanulomana drugs, Ayurveda not only relieves the immediate spasm but also prevents recurrence by normalizing the bio-rhythm of the female reproductive tract [10][11].

CONCLUSION

Udavartani Yoni Vyapad is a classical representation of dysmenorrhea, primarily triggered by lifestyle errors that disturb *Apana Vata*. While modern medicine relies heavily on symptomatic relief through analgesics, Ayurveda offers a comprehensive, root-cause-based approach. Incorporating Ayurvedic principles of diet, lifestyle modification, and targeted therapies like *Basti* can provide sustainable, side-effect-free relief to women suffering from dysmenorrhea, thereby improving their overall reproductive health and quality of life.

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