

# The Integral Role of Strotas in Therapeutics

**Dr. Shikha Liladhar Makde<sup>1</sup>, Dr. S.N Tiwari<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Vivek Shrivastava<sup>3</sup>,  
Dr. O.P Shukla<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>M.D. Scholar, Department of Samhita Siddhanta, Govt. Ayurved College Rewa (M.P).

<sup>2</sup>M.D. Ph.D. Associate Professor, Department of Samhita Siddhanta, Govt. Ayurved College Rewa (M.P).

<sup>3</sup>M.D. Associate Professor, Department of Samhita Siddhanta, Govt. Ayurved College Rewa (M.P).

<sup>4</sup>M.D. Assistant Professor, Department of Samhita Siddhanta, Govt. Ayurved College Rewa (M.P).

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Saptadhatus are the seven basic supportive tissues of the body. In addition, body comprises few updhatus (secondary tissues) also. Each dhatu is composed of innumerable minute paramanus (cells) and each paramanu contains a number of sukshma strotas (pores or channels) through which it receives nutrient materials and expels waste products. Dhatus are thus replete with such pores and in this respect the entire human body is strotomaya (full of strotas).<sup>1</sup>The strotas means pores or channel and mainly they are classified into two kinds as bahya and abhyantar strotas. According to Acharya Charaka, chikitsa is classified mainly into 3 types: Daivavyapashraya, yuktivyapashraya and satvavajaya.<sup>2</sup> In yuktivyapashraya chikitsa some shamana dravyas are there which directly act on strotas similarly in shodhana we aim at strotas shodhana means clearing channels or pores or detoxification. In satvavajaya chikitsa manovaha strotas plays an important role.

**Purpose:** This conceptual study mainly focuses on therapeutic perspective of strotas.

**Materials and Methods:** Ayurvedic samhitas and their commentaries and modern literature.

**Result and Conclusion:** For treatment of diseases we should know the proper diagnosis of that particular disease and for diagnosis we have to know their lakshans which can be accurately understood only through knowledge about strotas. Also strotas play important role in panchakarma therapy, kriya kalpa etc. In present era most of the diseases are strotorodha janya so clinical significance of strotas is must to know for all the vaidyas.

**KEYWORDS:** Dhatu, Strotas, Trividha Chikitsa, Panchakarma, Kriya Kalpa.

## INTRODUCTION

Strotas are millions of channels or pathways forming the sophisticated transport system within the body. They vary in size and shape and connect different areas, organs, and tissues of the body. They carry the tissues, raw materials needed for tissue building, food, air, water and many essential things in the body needed for life activities. Some strotas also excrete the metabolic wastes and toxins, keeping the body healthy. The list of strotas also comprises of Manovaha Strotas<sup>3</sup>, which co-ordinates mind functions and carry sensory and motor signals along with various emotions. According to Ayurveda, the whole body is made up of strotas. The number of strotas is as many as the number of cells, tissues and organs put together. This explains that every human cell is possibly a Strotas.

### Classification of Srotas

Though there are millions of Srotas in the body, for the convenience of understanding, Ayurvedic classics have broadly classified the Srotas into -

Bahirmukha Srotas -

They are the external openings or apertures. They are 9 in number.

- 2 nostrils (openings of nose)
- 2 orbital openings (sockets of eyes)
- 2 external ears (ear openings)
- 1 mouth
- 1 anal opening (opening of anus)
- 1 urethral opening (outer opening of muscular tube which starts at the lower end of the urinary bladder and helps in excreting urine)

In women, there are 3 more external apertures:

- 2 in Stana or breasts (mammary glands)
- 1 in Garbhavartma (uterine orifice or cervical opening, opening of birth canal)<sup>4</sup>

Antarmukha Srotas -

These Srotas do not open on the outside of the body. They open at some point (point of origin) inside the body and also ends elsewhere within the body. They are also called Yogavahi Srotas.

According to Charaka, the Antarmukha Srotas is of 13 types.

They are as mentioned below.

- Pranavaha Srotas - Srotas or channels carrying (transporting) Air
- Annavaha Srotas - Srotas or channels carrying (transporting) food
- Udakavaha Srotas - Srotas or channels carrying (transporting) water and liquids
- Rasavaha Srotas - Srotas or channels carrying (transporting) Lymph or chyle
- Raktavaha Srotas - Srotas or channels carrying (transporting) blood
- Mamsavaha Srotas - Srotas or channels carrying (transporting) muscles or flesh
- Medovaha Srotas - Srotas or channels carrying (transporting) fat tissue
- Asthivaha Srotas - Srotas or channels carrying (transporting) bone tissue
- Majjavaha Srotas - Srotas or channels carrying (transporting) bone marrow tissue
- Shukravaha Srotas - Srotas or channels carrying (transporting) semen or reproductive tissue
- Mutravaha Srotas - Srotas or channels carrying (transporting) urine
- Pureeshavaha Srotas - Srotas or channels carrying (transporting) Stools, faeces or excreta.
- Swedavaha Srotas - Srotas or channels carrying (transporting) sweat.<sup>5</sup>

Sushruta has mentioned the number of Antarmukha Srotas as 11 pairs with some changes from Charaka's explanation. He did not mention Asthivaha Srotas and Majjavaha Srotas rather mentioned Artavavaha Srotas - Srotas or channels carrying (transporting) menstrual blood in women.<sup>6</sup>

### CLINICAL IMPORTANCE OF BAHIRAMUKHA STROTAS

#### Bhaishjya marga ( Channels of administration)

Drug is administered through the channels of skin, mouth, eye, ear, nose, anus, urethra and vagina. The channel is selected according to the location of doshas.

**1. Mouth- This route is selected for:**

- Local action- Gandusha(gargles),Pratisarana(Paints).
- Action on gastrointestinal tract- Dipana,Pachana,Vamana,Virechana, etc.
- Action on Respiratory system- Dhumapana.
- General action- Generally the drugs are given by oral route.Thus they are digested,absorbed and circulated all over the body and exert desirable action.

**2. Nose- By this route drugs are given for the following purposes:**

1. Local action- Nasya
2. Action on Respiratory system- Fumigations
3. Action on Head- Shirovirechana.
3. **Eye- Seka, Ashchyotana, Pinda, Bidala, Tarpana, Varti, Putapaka and Anjana ( Drops,Paste and Collyrium)** are used by this way for eye diseases.
4. Ear- Washing,fumigation and drops are used by this route in diseases of ear.
5. Anus- Asthapana and Anuvasana basti are administered by this route. Phala varti (suppository) is used in cases of constipation.
6. Urethra- Uttar basti is administered by this way in cases of urinary disorder.
7. Vagina-In vaginal and uterine disorders fumigations,suppositories,swabbing,plugging,washing etc, are administered by this route.
8. Skin- External applications in cases of skin diseses, oedema, arthritis, nervous system diseases,ulcers, etc are used in form of Abhyanga, Parisheka, Lepa, etc.<sup>7</sup>

**IMPORTANCE OF STROTAS IN PANCHAKARMA THERAPY**

"Koshta suddhi' or Stroto Shodana is the core-sutra of Ayurveda for disease free healthy life, since centuries and for that purpose the Panchakarma/sodhana therapies have been evolved, and practiced by the Ayurveda physicians successfully. Modern researchers, even though very late, realized the fact that death process is initiated firstly in the intestines and not in the heart, kidney, liver or brain, and named the process as alimentary intestinal toxemia at a conference of the Royal college of medicine, London, attended by the world famous doctors. surgeons and medical scientists following is the interesting piece of their deliberations.

"Then why do we die?"

Because we fail to keep our system clean. Our arteries harden because of deposits left in them. Our cells dry up because their pores become so clogged with waste that they can no longer absorb the life giving substances around them. Learn how to clean the cells and there is no reason why you can not prolong life".

The following are the five karmas (procedures), which are termed as pancha karma in Ayurveda. These procedures-are administered to push-out the vitiated doshas, toxins and metabolic wastes from the human system, through the nearest out-lets-

1. Vamana karma (Therapeutic emesis)
2. Virechana (Therapeutic purgation)
3. Basti (Rectal administration)
4. Nasya (Nasal administration)
5. Rakta mokshana (Blood-letting).

With the Doshas are forced to come back to their respective locations, and from there, those are flushed-out from the body through Vamana, Virechana etc. eliminative therapies to cause 'Samsodhana' (Purification) of the body. In nut shell all this happens because of Srotosodhana.<sup>8</sup>

### MISCELLANEOUS

According to pharmacological action acharya Charaka and Sushruta has described some drugs like Mutravirechaniya, Truna panchamula, Virtarwadi, etc group of drugs which comes under Diuretics. Ubhayatobhagahara drugs e.g, Madanaphala etc. This are nothing but strotosodhana dravyas. Katu, Tikta and Lavana are srotahśodhana (Channel- cleaning), Katu Rasa due to Vayu and Agni absorbs the fluid and expels the obstructive material. This quality has been termed as Pramathi (eliminating obstruction by churning) as opposed to Abhishyandi (channel-obstructing). Tikta Rasa acts in the similar way by absorbing the fluid and slimy material due to Vata and thus vacating space on account of Akasha Mahabhuta. Due to Sukshma guna it permeates even to the minutest channels. Lavana has no absorbing property but liquifies the solid mass and expels it due to Tikṣṇa guna. The other three Rasas (Madhura, Amla, Kaṣaya) have no such effect, rather they may precipitate srotorodha. Akasha is related with śrotas (various channels) and as such in cases of strotorodha particularly by Amadosha, the Akashiya dravyas are applied.

### DISCUSSION

We know that all the cells of the body are supplied with information and nutrients through certain channels. The key nutrient channels are the capillaries. Thus leading investigators today are convinced that 'you are as old as your capillaries'. The use of the capillary microscope displays the drying of the capillaries with age. Age and death go hand with withering of pathways feeding to the cell. If we can keep these pathways open and elastic, we can keep on living. The same has been stressed by Charaka<sup>9</sup>.

"जरांकृच्छ्रेण लभते चिरंजीवत्यनामम् "

### CONCLUSION

For proper treatment of diseases we should know the proper diagnosis of that particular disease and for diagnosis we have to know their lakshans which can be accurately understood only through knowledge about strotas. Also strotas play important role in panchakarma therapy, kriya kalpa etc. Whole body is strotomaya that means for drug administration or for treatment purpose the strotas becomes important therapeutically. In present era most of the diseases are strotorodha janya so clinical significance of strotas is must to know for all the vaidyas.

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