

SROTAS SHARIR IN AYURVEDA: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

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Abstract:

The concept of Srotas (channels or pathways) is fundamental in Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine. Srotas are responsible for the transportation of various substances, including nutrients, waste products, and vital energies, throughout the body. This review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of Srotas Sharir (the study of channels in the human body) in Ayurveda, detailing their types, functions, pathological conditions, and significance in maintaining health.

Key words: Srotas, Channels, Prana vaha, Udaka vaha, Anna vaha etc

Introduction:

Ayurveda, one of the oldest healthcare systems, emphasizes the importance of balance within the body's various systems and channels. The term 'Srotas' refers to the intricate network of pathways that facilitate the movement of substances essential for physiological processes. This review explores the classification, anatomy, physiology, and pathological aspects of Srotas, as well as their relevance in Ayurvedic diagnosis and treatment.

Classification of Srotas:

According to Ayurvedic texts, Srotas are classified into three major categories:

Antar Srotas (Internal Channels):

Pranavaha Srotas: Responsible for the transportation of Prana (life force, primarily oxygen).

Annavaha Srotas: Carry nutrients derived from food.

Udakavaha Srotas: Transport water and fluids.

Raktavaha Srotas: Channels for blood.

Mamsavaha Srotas: Channels for muscle tissue.

Medovaha Srotas: Channels for adipose tissue.

Asthivaha Srotas: Channels for bone tissue.

Majjavaha Srotas: Channels for bone marrow and nervous tissue.

Shukravaha Srotas: Channels for reproductive fluids.

Bahya Srotas (External Channels):

Includes structures like hair follicles and sweat glands.

Mala Srotas (Excretory Channels):

Purishavaha Srotas: Channels for fecal matter.

Mutravaha Srotas: Channels for urine.

Swedavaha Srotas: Channels for sweat.

Functions of Srotas:

Srotas play a critical role in maintaining homeostasis and supporting various physiological functions:

Transport and Communication: They ensure the distribution of nutrients, hormones, and waste products.

Regulation: Srotas help regulate metabolic processes and maintain fluid balance.

Protection: They play a role in the immune response by transporting immune cells.

Pathology of Srotas:

Pathological conditions affecting the Srotas can lead to various diseases. The three primary types of Srotodushti (vitiation of channels) include:

Atipravriti (Excessive Flow): E.g., diarrhea in the Purishavaha Srotas.

Sanga (Obstruction): E.g., atherosclerosis in the Raktavaha Srotas.

Vimarga Gamana (Diversion of Flow): E.g., endometriosis where tissue appears outside the uterus.

Diagnostic and Therapeutic Approaches:

Diagnosis of Srotodushti involves examining symptoms, conducting physical examinations, and utilizing traditional diagnostic techniques like Nadi Pariksha (pulse diagnosis). Treatment focuses on restoring the normal function of the Srotas through dietary modifications, herbal medicines, Panchakarma (detoxification procedures), and lifestyle changes.

Conclusion:

Srotas Sharir is a vital concept in Ayurveda, emphasizing the intricate network of channels that sustain life. Understanding the structure, function, and pathology of Srotas can enhance the diagnosis and treatment of various conditions, promoting overall health and well-being. Further research into the correlation between Ayurvedic concepts and modern scientific findings could provide deeper insights into the holistic management of health.

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