

Purishvaha Srotas Dushti – Few important Herbs

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Abstract

The word Srotas is derived from the root “sru” gataudhatu, which means movement. Srotas are channels that transport anna (food), dhatus (body tissues), tridoshas (the three humors), and pranas (vital life energy). When the flow of appropriate nutrients through the srotas is proper and unobstructed, health is maintained. However, when there is a blockage, excess, or deficiency in these channels, disease occurs. Herbs act in various ways: some stop atipravritti (excess flow), while others remove sang (obstruction). This article aims to analyze the action of dravyas (herbs) in different pathologies, specifically at the srotas level, to highlight their medico-clinical importance in the human body.

Keywords: Srotas, Herbs, Channels, Ayurveda, Purisha, Mala

Introduction

According to Acharya Charaka, “Sravanata Srotamsi” refers to structures through which Sravanam (flow) occurs ¹. It states that the living body is a channel system or is made up of countless channels designed to serve as an internal transport system for various functions, including biological and energy-related processes. Srotas are the canals or channels through which nutrients, Dhatus (tissues), and waste products are transported within the body ². They are also responsible for the transportation of Doshas.

The Srotas that carry Purisha (feces) are called Purishavaha Srotas.

मूलं पक्ववाशयः स्थूलगुदं च ततः स्रोतसः **Charaka Samhita, Vimanasthana 5/8**

Entity nourished by Kitta through the action of Agni. Purisha Mala is formed in the Purishavaha Srotas from this Kitta. In Ayurveda, there is a strong emphasis on stools as a means of understanding internal bodily functions.

Purishavaha Srotas:

Mula Sthana:

According to Acharya Charaka, the Mula Sthana of Purishavaha Srotas are Pakvashaya and Sthula Guda ³. However, according to Acharya Sushruta, the Mula Sthana are Pakvashaya and Guda ⁴.

दुर्वचस्त्वमतिप्रवृत्तिर्विबन्धश्चापि पुरीषवहस्रोतसां विकारः। Charaka Samhita, Vimanasthana 5/12.

Dusti Karana (Causes of Vitiation):

Purishavaha Srotas are vitiated due to the following factors:

1. Suppression of the natural urge for defecation.
2. Consuming food in large quantities.

3. Eating before the digestion of the previous meal.
4. Especially in individuals who are emaciated and have weak digestive power (Agni).

Dusti Lakshana (Signs of Vitiation):

The characteristic manifestations of Purishavaha Srotas vitiation include⁵:

1. Voiding small quantities of feces with difficulty.
2. Passing large quantities of watery or very scybalous stool.
3. Stool passage associated with sound and pain.

Viddha Lakshana (Signs of Injury):

Injury to Purishavaha Srotas causes the following signs and symptoms:

1. Anaha (flatulence).
2. Durgandha (foul-smelling stool).
3. Gratitantra (nodules in the intestines).

Symptoms Due to Vitiation in Purishavaha Srotas:

1. Krushra Malapravrutti: Difficulty in passing stool.
2. Alpalpa Mala Pravrutti: Passing small quantities of stool.
3. Sashabda, Sashula Mala Pravrutti: Stool passage associated with pain and sound.
4. Ati-drava Mala Pravrutti: Passing excessive watery stool.
5. Sakapha Mala Pravrutti: Stool mixed with mucus threads.
6. Ati-grathita Mala Pravrutti: Passage of hard stool.
7. Grahani: Indigestion.
8. Malavasthambha: Difficulty in passing stool.

Diseases Associated with Purishavaha Srotas Dushti:

1. Atisara (diarrhea)
2. Arsa (piles)
3. Pravahika (dysentery)
4. Krimi (intestinal worms)
5. Ajirna (indigestion)
6. Bhagandara (fistula)
7. Grahani (malabsorption syndrome)
8. Udavarta (abdominal distension)
9. Alasaka (intestinal obstruction)
10. Vidradhi (abscess)
11. Visuchika (cholera)
12. Gudabhramsa (prolapse of the rectum)
13. Adhoga Amlapitta (acid reflux)
14. Baddha Gudodara (intestinal obstruction).

Irritable bowel syndrome is the main disease due to purisha dushti in today's era.

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) and Grahani:

Ati-drava Mala Pravrutti (excessive watery stool) is the primary symptom of Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), a clinically challenging disorder. IBS has a significant impact on health, cost, and quality of life. It is a functional gastrointestinal disorder (FGID) with high prevalence, characterized by:

1. Abdominal pain.
2. Changes in stool frequency and form.

Grahani Roga shares similarities with IBS. In Grahani Roga, due to vitiated Jatharagni, food digestion does not occur properly. Undigested food forms a vitiated material called Ama, responsible for various disorders. It disrupts the normal flora of the gastrointestinal tract, weakens the muscles, and alters the acid-fluid configuration of the GI tract. Consequently, the Prasad Bhaga (nutritive portion) of food is not properly formed, leading to poor nourishment of the body.

Factors That Derange Agni (Digestive Fire):

1. Fasting.
2. Eating during indigestion or overeating.
3. Irregular eating habits.
4. Consumption of unsuitable, heavy, cold, rough, or contaminated food.
5. Emaciation due to disease.
6. Faulty adaptation to place, time, and season.
7. Improper administration of emesis, purgation, or unction.
8. Suppression of natural urges.

When Agni is deranged, even light, food becomes indigestible, leading to the formation of acidic and toxic substances (Ama). This impairs the function of other dhatus, weakens the body, and causes various disorders.

Psychological Factors in IBS:

The etiology of IBS is uncertain, but it is often associated with psychological disturbances, especially anxiety. Stress can significantly affect bowel function. Emotional reactions may cause the bowel to flush or pale, while acute stress can result in diarrhea.

Herbs Beneficial for Purishavaha Srotas:

1. **Kutaj** (*Holarrhena antidysenterica*):
 - Known as Sakra, it offers therapeutic benefits.
 - All parts of the plant (bark, leaves, seeds, flowers) are used.
 - Kutaj is highly effective in managing diarrhea and dysentery due to its antimicrobial activity⁶.
 - Ayurveda recommends taking Kutaj powder with water after light meals to manage diarrhea and dysentery.
 - Washing wounds with Kutaj water promotes faster healing due to its Ropan (healing) and Sita (cooling) properties.

Diarrhea

Diarrhea is known as Atisara in Ayurveda. Improper food, impure water, toxins, mental stress, and Agnimandya (weak digestive fire) cause it. These factors aggravate Vata. The aggravated Vata pulls fluid

into the intestines from various tissues in the body, mixing it with the stool. This results in loose, watery motions or diarrhea.

Kutaj helps control diarrhea by improving the digestive fire due to its Deepan (appetizer) and Pachan (digestive) properties. It also thickens the stool and controls water loss due to its Grahi (absorbent) and Kashaya (astringent) properties.

Tips to use Kutaj for diarrhea:

- a. Take 1/4–1/2 teaspoon of Kutaj powder.-
- b. Mix it with water.
- c. Consume it after a light meal to control diarrhea.

Dysentery

Kutaj is also useful for digestive problems like dysentery. Dysentery, known as Pravahika in Ayurveda, is caused by vitiated Kapha and Vata doshas. Severe dysentery can lead to inflammation of the intestines, causing mucus and blood to appear in the stool.

Taking Kutaj helps control mucus by improving the digestive fire due to its Deepan (appetizer) and Pachan (digestive) properties. It also reduces blood and inflammation in the intestines because of its Sita (cooling) and Kashaya (astringent) properties.

Tips to use Kutaj for dysentery:

- a. Take 1/4–1/2 teaspoon of Kutaj powder.
- b. Mix it with water.
- c. Consume it after a light meal to control dysentery.

Formulations of Kutaj:

1. Kutaj Powder.
2. Kutaj Capsules.
3. Kutajarishta (15–20 ml).
4. Kutaj Ghanvati.

2. Dhataki / Dhawai (Woodfordia fruticosa)

Dhataki, also known as Bahupushpika in Ayurveda, holds significant importance in traditional Indian medicine. The flower of Dhataki is particularly valued for its therapeutic properties.

According to Ayurveda, Dhataki is beneficial in managing Atisara (diarrhea) due to its Kashaya (astringent) property⁷.

Usage for diarrhea:

- Take 1/4–1/2 teaspoon of Dhataki powder.
- Mix it with honey.
- Consume this mixture twice a day to help manage diarrhea.

Dhataki powder also balances Kapha dosha and may be beneficial in managing mucus-stained Purisha (stool).

Diarrhea – Grahni

Diarrhea can result from improper food, impure water, toxins, mental stress, and Agnimandya (weak digestive fire). All these factors are responsible for aggravating Vata. This aggravated Vata brings fluid in the intestine from various tissues from the body and mixes with the stool. This leads to loose, watery motions or diarrhea. Dhataki helps to control diarrhea. This is because of its Kashaya (astringent). It helps to thicken loose stool and control the frequency of loose motion or diarrhea. Take 1/4-1/2 teaspoon of Dhataki powder. Mix with honey or water. Have it twice a day after taking light food to control diarrhea.

Formulations

1. Dhatki churna
2. Dhatkyrisht
3. **Musta** (Cyperus rotundus)

– It is considered one of the best herb to promote digestion, eliminates natural toxins, and supports proper functioning of the liver.

Rasa: Tikta, Katu, Kashaya, Guna: Laghu, Ruksha

Veerya: Sheeta Vipaka: Katu

Balances vitiated Kapha and Pitta dosha.

Useful in indigestion and improves digestive strength, treats diarrhea ⁸.

According to Acharya Sushruta:

- A decoction of Musta mixed with honey should be taken in case of diarrhea.
- The rhizome of Musta boiled with milk is also beneficial in treating diarrhea.

Formulations of Musta:

1. Musta Churna
2. Mustakarishtha
3. Musta Phanta
4. Mustakadilehya

4) Dadim (Pomegranate):

Dadim is the Sanskrit name for pomegranate, a fruit renowned for its numerous health benefits and its use in traditional medicine systems like Ayurveda and folk medicine.

- Dadim is an essential fruit for maintaining the intestinal flora and fauna⁹.
- The dried Dadim powder supports a probiotic effect to improve digestive power.
- It acts on vitiated Vata and Kapha doshas and helps remove Ama (toxins).
- In Ayurveda, the Dadim Chaal (fruit rind) powder, due to its Kashaya-Tikta (astringent-bitter) taste and tannin content, has been used since ancient times for intestinal ailments like diarrhea, dysentery, and bleeding from the anal region.

Formulations of Dadim:

1. Dadimashtaka
2. Dadimadichurna
3. Dadimadighrita

4. Dadimadyataila
5. Dadimavaleha

Cumin (Cuminum cyminum):

Cumin is a small annual herb that grows up to 30–50 cm in height. Its leaves are alternate, compound, filiform segments with sheathing bases.

Cumin is one of the best gut-friendly herbs, supporting digestive health¹⁰ and preventing gas formation.

Property	Details
Rasa	Katu (Pungent)
Guna	Laghu, Rooksha (Light, Dry)
Virya	Ushna (Hot Potency)
Vipaka	Katu (Pungent after digestion)

Benefits of Cumin:

1. Enhances appetite and improves digestion.
2. Effective in managing vomiting and nausea.
3. Strengthens immunological health.
4. Stimulates taste buds and promotes salivary secretion.
5. Acts as a potent natural antioxidant.
6. Useful in managing diarrhea, bloating, and flatulence.
7. Cumin powder is beneficial for symptoms associated with Purishavaha Srotas Dushti (disorders of the fecal passage).

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