ABSTRACT

In Ayurveda, the concept of Srotas has been mentioned very specifically. Body is composed of numerous Srotas, which have a significant role in the maintenance of the equilibrium of body elements. Their continuous and proper functioning is the factual cause for healthy state of the body; therefore, any obstruction in this process leads to disease. Right from birth to death Swasochhvasa kriya is the sign of life. The environmental pollutions and food habits disturbs the Swasochhvasa kriya, that may lead to various diseases like Swasa, Kasa etc. The act of respiration is the physiological function of Prana vata. The word Pranavaha srotas means a channel or path through which the external air enters into the body to sustain life. As it has been earlier mentioned that, all the activities in which Pranavayu is directly or indirectly involved to denote either life or the sustenance of life. Therefore, Pranavaha srotas is the most important factor for the longevity.

As the Moolasthana is, the important area for the functioning of any srotas, by treating the Moolasthana the disease related to this specific Srotas will be cured. In case of Pranavaha srotas there is differences of opinion regarding Moolasthanas. So here, the study was conducted to highlight the importance of Moolasthana”s of Pranavaha srotas.

Key words- Srotas, Pranavaha srotas, governing points, Moolasthana

INTRODUCTION

“Life starts with breath ends with breathlessness; this breath is maintained throughout the life by Pranavaha srotas along with its Moola sthanas.

Pranavaha srotas: Pranavaha srotas is one of the most important systems in the body. Prana is said as pavana or anila. Life sustenance relays on Oxygen Ambara peeyusha and water in the body. The word Prana is derived from the Sanskrit root “An” with a prefix “Pra”. “An” means to breath, to live. One of the meanings of the root „Pra‟ is to fulfill, where as one of the meaning of „Na‟ is the nasal². Thus, the whole word Prana means the fulfillment through the nasal part, which is necessary for the prolongation of life. Acharya Chakrapani³ has opined Pranavaha srotas are the channels through which the Pranavayu flows.
Moola sthana’s of Pranavaha srotas-

Moola refers to the developmental or generative place\(^4\) Almost all the Ancient authorities opines that the head or moordha being the main seat of prana. Whereas there are differences of opinion regarding the roots of Pranavaha srotas\(^5\). Some opines that Hridaya and Mahasrotas is the root of Pranavaha srotas\(^6\), while some others believe Hridaya and Rasavahani dhamani\(^7\) to be the roots of Pranavaha srotas. In a human body, nasa or nose is said to be the gateway of head and as such, it can be assumed that Pranavaha srotas is a structure made up by various organs right from the tip of nasa up to the maha srotas.

Moordha-

In Charaka Samhita it was mentioned that „siras”(head) is the seat of all indriyas and the Pranavaha srotas concern with these indriyas shoot out or diverge from this center controlling the life just similar to the raise of the sun. Pranavata initiates impulses from Srotas and travels through nose, tongue, pharynx, neck till uras understood as reticular formation from medulla oblongata with higher center connected especially “respiratory center” which promotes intake of air, food and expulsion of phlegm, gas (respiration).Prana pavana means, the Pranavayu or Pranaanila. The function of Prana is “Hridayendriya chittadruk”.; Pran Vayu controls heart, senses and mind. It suggests the brain centre in medulla oblongata does the control of respiration.So, here by it is crystal clear that Moordha is the seat of Prana.

Hridaya

The internal or tissue respiration consisting of the gaseous exchange between the cells and their fluid medium is equally important for the jeevanakriya. Sushruta seems to have indicated this aspect by stating that the Hridaya (in this context, the thoracic heart) and Rasavahani dhamanies are the moolas of the Pranavaha Srotas.

From Acharya Sharangadhara explanation about the total physiology of Respiration, it is understood that Hridaya is the Moola Sthana of Pranavaha srotas\(^9\). According to him, “Prana Pavana” situated at Nabhi (Heart), after leaving Hritkamala (Lungs) comes out through Kantha mixed with Vishnupadamruta. After having Ambara Peeyusha (oxygen), it comes back quickly into the body to nourish the whole body and to enliven the digestive fire in the stomach.

The commentator Adhamalla, in his commentary “Gudharth Sandipani” over the above verse describes that Nabhishta pranapavana means Nabhishta iti Hridayayasth… Heart with vessels is called Nabhi in Ayurveda, not only lungs concern with the respiration but lungs along with heart are responsible for respiration.

It is also known that heart has its own autonomous conduction system, which regulates cardiac cycle. The conduction system of heart and the respiratory centre of brain ultimately govern the process of respiration, which is done by lungs.

In many of the cardiac diseases it is observed that Swasa and Kasa as common cardinal feature. Which can be regarded as Paratantra Swasa or Kasa, there are many of cardiac disorders resulting from Pranavaha sroto vyadhis which are placed under Swasa particularly Maha, Urdwa and Chhinna swasa\(^10\).
In the context of Vega dharana also Acharya Charaka mentioned about Hridroga in Sramaswasma dharanā and Kasa Dharana, which are having direct relation with Pranavaha srotas. Lungs looks active during the process of respiration, but it is vitalized by heart, so there is a proportion with Heart rate and respiratory rate in the ratio of 4:1. Thus by considering all these views of our great saints, it can be concluded that

- There is deep relation of respiratory system with cardiovascular system.
- The process of respiration is governed by the conduction system of heart and by brain. Therefore, Hridaya comes as the Moola Sthana of Prana vahasrotas.

**Mahasrotas**

The word „Prana“ has been used to denote various meanings like the strength, the food, the Prana Vayu, life etc. All these words in one way or other indicate towards the life or the sustenance of life. According to Acharya Sushruta, the functioning area of Prana Vayu is Vakthra and it upholds the whole body along with the Prana. So on critically evaluating this description, it can be opined that the Pranavayu is an utterly essential component of the Pranavaha Srotas.

Based on the above explanation, the term Maha srotas means Puppusa in lakshana vritti, because it is the main site where the Prana vayu vyapara takes place (gaseous exchange). The word Mahasrotas according to Acharya Charaka is one of the two moolas of Pranavahsrotas, which indicates that it is a large tube and large in diameter. Since the “Pranavayu” is a corporeal substance, the Mahasrotas should be a patent structure. Therefore, the Mahasrotas is associated with Puppusa (lung) the trachea, its two branches, bronchi and their further branching into bronchioles to the alveoli; all these structures can included under Mahasrotas.

According to Acharya Charaka, Mahasrotas is a synonym of Kosta. Acharya Sushruta has mentioned Kosta includes Amashaya, Agnyasaya, Hridaya, Unduka, Puppusa etc. Therefore, it can be concluded that, Mahasrotas is an organ of respiration.

While explaining the organogenesis of the body- Acharya Susruta opines, Puppusa as “sonita phena prabhava”. Here the phena dathu resembles the lightest part of blood which is rich in Vayu and Akasya Mahabhutas, by that the lungs resembles a cluster of bubbles or multiple air filled sacs for providing a large surface area for gaseous exchange as in alveoli. So it is clear that shonitha phena prabhava indicates the functional anatomy of lungs

Acarya Charaka while explaining Pranavaha Srotdushti lakshanas, all lakshanas clearly shows the functions of lung hence indirect reference to involvement of Lung in the Pranavaha srotas is there.

- Further, he told that Pranavaha Srotvyadhish should be treated similar to Swasa roga, which establishes Lungs and function of breathing are integral to Pranavaha srotas.
- In Sharangadhara samhita, it is mentioned that Puppusa is the adhara for Udanavayu. Moreover, Udanavayu is the one, which helps in ucchwasa kriya. This also supports Puppusa as Mahasrotas.
Rasavahi dhamani-

"Rasavahi dhamani is the name given to the arteries which helps in taking pure and nutritionally rich blood from Puppusa to Hridaya and then to all body tissues. Hridaya is the seat of Ojus, Prana and root of the Rasavaha srotas also. Hence, it is clear that these siras carry the Ojus or the Prana from Heart to the smallest unit of the body as they further divide into numerous branches and attain the name Mahaphala. Prana reaches to every corner of the body through Rasavahi dhamani and then performs the categorical functions. So there by Rasavahi dhamani is considered as Moolasthana as mode of transportation.

CONCLUSION

"Srotasus are the channels, which are widely spread all over the body, where circulation of the fluid occurs irresistibly and continuously. Most of the lakhanas explained in the dusthi of Pranavaha srotas are related to the respiratory system, so it has been related to respiratory system. Moolasthana - Master of that Organ system. In case of Pranavaha Srotasa, Moolasthana is the place from where it is being distributed and regulated. The Heart and the Respiratory centre of the Brain ultimately govern the process of respiration, which takes place in the Lungs. Rasavahi dhamani is considered as Moolasthana as mode of transportation. Therefore, it can be concluded that Mahasrotas, Hridaya, Rasavahi dhamani and Mooradha works together in the functioning of Pranavaha srotas.

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Source of support: Nil
Conflict of interest: None
Declared