



## Research Article

## A Comprehensive Review on Raktapradara with Special Reference to Dysfunctional Uterine Bleeding (Dub)

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## Abstract

Dysfunctional Uterine Bleeding (DUB) is a prevalent gynecological disorder characterized by abnormal bleeding from the uterus in the absence of organic, systemic, or iatrogenic causes. It significantly impacts a woman's physical and psychological well-being. In Ayurveda, this condition closely correlates with *Raktapradara* or *Asrigdara*, a disease of the *Artavavaha Srotas* (female reproductive channels) characterized by excessive, prolonged, or irregular menstrual bleeding. This article explores the etiology, pathogenesis, and management of DUB through the integrated lens of modern gynecology and classical Ayurvedic principles, emphasizing a holistic approach to restore hormonal and physiological equilibrium.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Menstruation is a natural physiological process, but when the bleeding becomes excessive in duration, amount, or frequency, it transitions into a pathological state. Modern medicine categorizes abnormal bleeding without pelvic pathology as Dysfunctional Uterine Bleeding (DUB), a condition now often encompassed under the broader clinical term Abnormal Uterine Bleeding (AUB-O, specifically denoting ovulatory dysfunction) [1].

In classical Ayurvedic texts, excessive blood loss during or between menstrual cycles is termed *Raktapradara* (literally meaning "excessive flow of blood") or *Asrigdara*.

Acharya Charaka clearly defines the nomenclature of the disease in the *Yonivyapat Chikitsa* chapter:

"रजः प्रदीर्यते यस्मात् प्रदस्तेन स स्मृतः।"

(*Charaka Samhita, Chikitsa Sthana 30/208*)

Because there is an excessive excretion or over-secretion of *Raja* (menstrual blood), this condition is recognized as *Pradara*.

Due to the aggravation of *Pitta* and *Vata* doshas, the normal rhythmic flow is disrupted, leading to severe blood loss and subsequent systemic debility [2].

## 2. Aetiology (Nidana)

Understanding the root cause is the first step in Ayurvedic management. The etiologies of DUB and *Raktapradara* share conceptual similarities regarding lifestyle, stress, and dietary triggers.

### Ayurvedic Perspective (Nidana)

The classical texts attribute *Raktapradara* to the excessive consumption of factors that primarily aggravate *Pitta* Dosha and *Vata* Dosha. Acharya Charaka outlines the dietary and lifestyle causes:

"लवणाम्लगुरूणानि विदाहीनि स्निग्धानि च।

पिषितानि च मेघ्यानि पीतवानि सुरास्तथा॥"

(*Charaka Samhita, Chikitsa Sthana 30/204*)

Excessive consumption of salty, sour, heavy, hot, and corrosive (*Vidahi*) foods, unctuous items, domestic meat, and alcoholic beverages leads to this condition.

- **Dietary (Aharaja):** Incompatible food combinations (*Viruddha Ahara*) and excessive consumption of heat-producing (*Ushna*) and *Pitta*-provoking foods [2].
- **Lifestyle (Viharaja):** Overexertion, excessive sexual intercourse, trauma, daytime sleeping, and riding on uneven vehicles (which directly vitiates *Apana Vata*).
- **Psychological (Manasika):** Grief, anger, and excessive stress.

### Modern Perspective (Causes of DUB)

- **Hormonal Imbalance:** Disruption in the Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Ovarian (HPO) axis [3].

- **Anovulation:** The most common cause, leading to continuous estrogen production without progesterone antagonism. This results in a hyperplastic, unstable endometrium that sheds irregularly [1].
- **Stress and Lifestyle:** Weight fluctuations, chronic psychological stress, and strenuous exercise.

## 3. Pathophysiology (Samprapti)

The pathogenesis of *Raktapradara* involves a complex interaction between the doshas (biological energies) and the *Dhatus* (tissues).

Acharya Charaka describes the pathogenesis beautifully:

"स वायुर्विगुणो रक्ते प्रमाणोदवृत्तमादात्।

रजश्च गर्भाशयं रसधातुप्रवर्धितम्॥"

(*Charaka Samhita, Chikitsa Sthana 30/207*)

The vitiated *Vata* (specifically *Apana Vata*), taking the accumulated *Rakta* (blood) that has increased in volume due to *Pitta*, reaches the uterus and expels the menstrual blood derived from the *Rasa Dhātu* in excessive amounts.

| Ayurvedic Pathogenesis (Samprapti)                                                                                                                                                                           | Modern Pathophysiology                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Dosha:</b> Aggravated <i>Pitta</i> and <i>Apana Vata</i> [2].                                                                                                                                             | <b>Hormonal:</b> Estrogen breakthrough or withdrawal bleeding [3].                                                                                                      |
| <b>Dushya:</b> <i>Rasa</i> (plasma) and <i>Rakta</i> (blood).                                                                                                                                                | <b>Tissue:</b> Endometrial hyperplasia or an unstable vascular bed.                                                                                                     |
| <b>Mechanism:</b> Vitiating <i>Pitta</i> mixes with <i>Rakta</i> , increasing its volume ( <i>Rakta-dusti</i> ). <i>Apana Vata</i> forces this increased blood out through the <i>Artavavaha Srotas</i> [4]. | <b>Mechanism:</b> Lack of ovulation prevents corpus luteum formation; absent progesterone fails to stabilize the uterine lining, leading to unpredictable shedding [1]. |

## 4. Clinical Features (Lakshana)

The classical signs and symptoms of *Raktapradara* directly mirror the modern clinical presentation of DUB [1, 2].

- **Primary Symptoms:**
  - *Atipravrutti:* Excessive bleeding (Menorrhagia).
  - *Deerghakala Anubandhi:* Prolonged bleeding lasting longer than the normal duration.
  - *Akalina:* Irregular bleeding (Metrorrhagia or frequent cycles).
- **Secondary/Associated Symptoms (Systemic impact):**
  - *Angamarda* (Body ache) and *Vedana* (Lower abdominal/pelvic pain).
  - *Daurbalya* (Generalized weakness) and *Bhrama* (Dizziness) secondary to anemia.
  - *Panduta* (Pallor) due to continuous blood loss.

## 5. Management Strategy (Chikitsa Sutra)

Modern treatment of DUB often relies on hormone therapy (oral contraceptives, progestins) or surgical interventions (D&C, endometrial ablation, hysterectomy) in severe cases [3]. However, Ayurveda offers a conservative, organ-preserving approach focusing on hemostasis and addressing the root hormonal and doshic imbalance [4].

### A. Preventive & Primary Care (Nidana Parivarjana)

The fundamental principle of treatment is the removal of the causative factors. Patients are strictly advised to avoid spicy, sour, and heat-generating foods, manage psychological stress, and ensure adequate rest.

### B. Pharmacological Management (Shamana Chikitsa)

The treatment for *Raktapradara* relies on *Raktastambhana* (hemostatic), *Garbhashaya balya* (uterine tonics) and *Pitta-shamaka* (cooling) therapies [5].

#### 1. Stambhana (Hemostatic) Herbs:

- *Ashoka* (*Saraca asoca*): The drug of choice for gynecological bleeding. It has astringent properties that induce uterine muscle contraction and hemostasis [5].
- *Lodhra* (*Symplocos racemosa*): Highly effective in reducing pelvic inflammation and arresting excessive bleeding.

#### 2. Raktashodhaka and Pitta-Shamak Herbs:

- *Durva* (*Cynodon dactylon*), *Amalaki* (*Emblica officinalis*), and *Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*) nourish the reproductive system and cool the body [4].

#### 3. Classical Formulations:

- *Pushyanuga Churna*: A renowned classical powder formulation specifically indicated for all types of *Pradara*, traditionally administered with rice water (*Tandulodaka*) and honey [2].
- *Ashokarishta* and *Lodhrasava* (liquid ferments).
- *Bolbaddha Ras* and *Pradarantak Lauha* (herbomineral combinations for severe, refractory cases) [6].

### C. Purificatory Therapies (Shodhana Chikitsa)

If the patient's strength allows and the doshic vitiation is profound, mild *Virechana* (purgation) is indicated to eliminate vitiated *Pitta*. Furthermore, *Basti* (medicated enema), specifically *Piccha Basti*, is highly effective in directly controlling excessive bleeding and regulating the localized *Apana Vata* [5].

## 6. DISCUSSION

The integration of Ayurvedic principles in understanding and managing Dysfunctional Uterine Bleeding presents a significant advantage over purely modern pharmacological interventions. Modern medicine often views DUB as a localized endocrine failure, primarily relying on exogenous hormones to artificially regulate the cycle. While effective in the short term, these interventions do not always address the systemic lifestyle triggers and can be associated with side effects such as nausea, weight gain, and thromboembolic risks.

Conversely, Ayurveda views *Raktapradara* as a systemic metabolic disorder where inappropriate diet and stress (*Nidana*) derange the *Pitta* and *Apana Vata*, which subsequently corrupts the *Rakta Dhatu* (blood). By utilizing a multi-pronged approach that includes dietary modifications (*Ahara*), lifestyle corrections (*Vihara*), and the administration of phytoestrogenic and hemostatic herbs (like *Ashoka* and *Lodhra*), Ayurveda targets the Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Ovarian axis organically.

Herbs such as *Ashoka* (*Saraca asoca*) not only arrest bleeding via their astringent (*Kashaya*) properties but also exhibit uterine tonic activities that strengthen the endometrial bed [5]. The use of *Pushyanuga Churna* with rice water acts locally to soothe the irritated endometrium while systemically pacifying *Pitta*. This conservative, restorative approach is particularly valuable for young women seeking to preserve their fertility and avoid surgical procedures like hysterectomy.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Dysfunctional Uterine Bleeding (DUB) is a complex neuro-endocrine challenge that profoundly disrupts a woman's quality of life. The Ayurvedic concept of *Raktapradara* provides a thorough framework for this condition, identifying it as a systemic imbalance of *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Rakta*. By integrating classical Ayurvedic treatments—focusing on *Nidana Parivarjana*, dosha pacification, and targeted botanical hemostatics—clinicians can offer a highly effective, conservative, and holistic management strategy. This approach not only provides symptomatic relief from bleeding but also restores long-term reproductive and systemic health.

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