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RAJASWALA PARICHARYA (MENSTRUAL CARE):A NEED IN TODAY'S TIME.**Zade D.¹Daulatkar K.²**

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ABSTRACT

Menstrual cycle of a woman is considered as the Mirror of her Reproductive Health. Menstrual period (Rajaswala kala) is the largest and the most important phase in a woman's life. However in today's changing lifestyle the care to be taken during menstrual period is somewhere being neglected. Working women and their hectic schedules, unhealthy eating habits, lack of rest during these days overall leads to various gynecological problems. The period where utmost health care and hygiene should be taken is now the most ignored part of our lives. Ayurveda very precisely explains the Rajaswala Paricharya i.e lifestyle to be followed during menstruation period. It is very well explained in Ayurvedic texts about the care and codes of conduct to be followed by a woman during menstruation. It helps women to cope up with the physical and psychological changes which they go through during this period. Many modern day women are unaware of this Paricharya. There is a need in today's time to bring awareness about Rajaswala Paricharya for healthy Menstruation and to achieve women health and ultimately healthy progeny.

Keywords: Rajaswala paricharya, Menstrual care, Ayurveda, Women health, Menstruation, Reproductive health, Progeny, Lifestyle.

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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the life science which shows way of living. *Ayurveda* specially mentions *Paricharyas* for women for different phases of her life like *Rutumati paricharya* [1]. One of the most important phase for a women is the menstrual phase. The female who is menstruating is called as “*Rajaswala*”. Acharyas like Charaka, Sushruta, Vagbhata, Kashyap have explained the concept of menstrual care under the heading “*Rajaswala Paricharya*” [2].

The entire period of one month is divided into three i.e. [3]

1. *Rajahsrava* (menstruation) – 3 to 5 days
2. *Ritukala* (proliferative phase including ovulation) – 12 to 16 days.
3. *Rituvyatitkala* (post ovulatory phase or secretory phase) - 9 or 13 days.

The duration of menstruation according to *Acharyas* as follows :

1. *Charaka* - 5 days
2. *Vagbhata* and *Bhawamisra* - 3 days
3. *Harita* and *Bhela* - 7 days .

Commonly it is considered 3 to 5 days [4]. In this particular period a women goes through lot of physical and psychological changes within her body .

So there is a need to take special care within these days which is explained under *Rajaswala Paricharya* in *Ayurveda* . Back in the days Women used to follow them strictly , however with the time some of the rituals given in the *paricharya* got converted into taboo and the science behind them got vanished.

AIM :

To study the role of *Rajaswala paricharya* in today's time.

OBJECTIVES :

1. To know the do's and don'ts during menstruation period.
2. To know better menstrual care for woman health.

MATERIAL AND METHODS :

Review of *Ayurvedic* Literature
Review of Modern literature
Review of Journal and website.

LITERATURE REVIEW :

The blood collected for whole month by the uterine vessels and their endometrial capillaries; assuming slight black colour and specific odour is brought downwards to vaginal orifice by *vayu* for excretion. *Acharya Viswamitra* has clarified that hair thin vessels fill the uterus for whole month to receive *Bija* (both *stri* and *pumbija* or zygote).

Above description clearly indicates that menstruation is a result of changes

going on in vascular apparatus of uterus for whole month or in other words this refers to cyclic changes of endometrium^[5].

Do's and Don'ts according to *Rajaswala paricharya* :^{[6],[7]}

DO'S :

1. Should concentrate on good thoughts or Auspicious things
2. To observe chastity (purity).
3. Should sleep on bed made of *darbha* (specific sacred leafy plant) spread over ground.
4. Diet : Should eat *havisya* (meal made of *ghee* , *Sali* rice and milk) *yawaka* (meal made of barley and milk)
5. Should take less quantity of meals.
6. Food should be directly taken on palm or in utensil made of clay or leaves or unbroken utensil .

DON'TS :

1. Sleeping during daytime .
2. Application of collyrium, shedding of tears , bathing , massaging , laughing , talking too much .
3. Excessive exercise , physical exertion.
4. *Nasya* (inhalations), *swedana* (sudation), *vamana* (emesis) are contraindicated.
5. Diet : Should avoid pungent (*tiksna*) , hot (*katu*) and salty (*lavana*) .

On 4th day the female should take bath washing her head as well, wear white or new garments and worship God.

After the religious enchantation she should first of all see her husband.

Adverse effects on the progeny if the women does not follow the *Rajaswalaparicharya* .^[8]

Restricted acts of women	Abnormalities in the child
Day sleeing	Over sleepy.
Use of collyrium	Blindness.
Bathing	Saddish .
Oil massage	Skin disorder.
Paring of nails	Deformity in nails.
Laughing	Discoloration of teeth ,lips,and tongue.
Talking too much	Over talkative.
Combing	Baldness .

Use of *nasya*

Menstrual abnormalities.

DISCUSSION:

The utility of these restrictions reflects the social customs of that period, in which for earning livelihood hard work was needed, these restrictions might help in avoiding this hard labour at least for those three days.^[9]In today's competitive world where most of the women are working and changed lifestyle patterns; women need rest from daily chores in these days. Meanwhile these practices got abolished in the name of myths and lack of knowledge; there is science behind them.

Scientific approach to *Rajaswala Paricharya*: Need in today's time^[10]

1. Good and auspicious thoughts – A menstruating woman needs to stay away from anxiety and stress as this will eventually affect hormonal levels.
2. Diet – Foods like *Havisya* and *yawaka* are easy to digest and give good nourishment to the body.
3. Less quantity of meals – Digestive system gets purified.
4. Use of utensils made up of clay – Clay has alkaline properties which counter hyperacidity and

enhances digestion. It also has nutritive value.

5. Sleeping on *Darbha* grass mattress – It is considered as the sacred grass and researches have found that it protects the body from toxic radiations. In today's times it will help *rajaswala* to protect from mobile phone's radiations.
6. Avoid sleeping in daytime – It will cause excessive production of *Kapha dosha* which eventually leads to formation of *Aama* in the body.
7. Avoid physical exertion and excessive exercise – It will increase Vata Dosha which is already prominent in the menstrual period. Therefore rest is advised.
8. Not having bath – It means not having head bath but body bath is necessary for maintaining hygiene and cleanliness of private parts.
9. Observe chastity (purity) – Women's condition may worsen due to physical exertion during intercourse. Also it will increase the *vata dosha*. Therefore it is necessary that the body gets rest during this period.

10. Avoid applying collyrium ,laughing loud , talking too much
– As the body needs rest to restore its energy ; these unnecessary activities should be avoided.

CONCLUSION :

The reproductive health is the result of a healthy menstrual cycle. In todays world where the couples are finding difficult to conceive and women facing various gynecological problems we need to opt to our ancient values. For the Career oriented women it is difficult to follow this routine but even in this fast life everyone desires better health and healthy progeny. Therefore, following the menstrual care regime has become very important. It is a therapeutic prescription. We all need to change our perception towards *Rajaswala paricharya* as a “BLESSING” for women health and not merely restrictions imposed on them.

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