

## A CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF ANNAVAHA SROTAS IN AYURVEDA

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**ABSTRACT**

All body tissues, including ocular structures, depend on *Annavaaha Srotas* (gastrointestinal channels) for nourishment and survival. *Annavaaha Srotas* are the *Srotas*, or conduits, that transport "Anna," or food. This is connected to the digestive, gastrointestinal, or alimentary tracts. Mukha, gala, *vamaparshwa (annanalika)*, *amashaya*, *laghuantra*, and *Guda* are all included in Charak *Annavaaha Srotas*. Because they both convey food, the oesophagus (food pipe) and the majority of the small intestine should also be covered by *Aamashaya*. The channels in the body that carry food and water are called *AnnaVaha Srotas*. These porous passageways, also known as *srotamsi*, allow waste products like carbon dioxide to be released and nutrients and oxygen to be absorbed. Therefore, the body's *srotamsi*, or channels, function as roads or highways that carry blood and sensory data, absorb nutrients, and eliminate waste. Every *srotas* has a *srotomukha* (mouth or opening), a *srotomarga* (passage), and a *srotomula* (root). Indigestion, also known as *Agnimandya*, can result from malfunctioning *Annavaaha srotas* organs such as *Amashaya* (stomach), *Antra* (intestine), and *Grahani*. *Annavaaha srotas* Damage leads to digestive disorders and systemic issues.

**KEYWORDS:** *Annavaaha Srotas*, gastrointestinal channels, *agni*, *Agnimandya*.

**INTRODUCTION**

"*Srusarati*" means to permeate, filter, ooze, flow, and exude.<sup>[1]</sup> According to its etymology, *srotas* means "what, within which something flows or is carried." Since the *sharir* or *purush* is thought to be composed of countless *Srotas*, the concept of *srotas* has received a lot of attention in Ayurveda. *Srotas* is the living body's functional channel that is just concerned with one essential function. As the metabolic hub of that specific dhatu, *srotas* serve as the foundation for the processing of nutrients in biological elements and the movement of waste materials and nutrients. Acharya Charaka goes into great detail on the idea of *Srotas* later in *Srotovimanadhyaya*. *Srotas* are the body's micro or macro spaces that transport various biochemical substances throughout metabolism. According to Acharya Charaka, these *srotas* serve as the functional channels for both waste (*malakhya*) and nourishing (*prasadakhya*) molecules.<sup>[2]</sup> All biological compounds involved in metabolic processes (*parinammapadyamana dhatus*) are housed and transported within the *srotas*, according to Acharya Charaka.<sup>[3]</sup> All of the Dhatus are fed at the cellular level by these channels, which are

dispersed throughout the body. The dhatus, or cells, take up whatever is necessary. This is known as the Law of Nutrient Selection during Dhatu Nourishment. All metabolic processes, including transport, transformation, and excretion of the relevant biochemical substances, take place in the *srotas*. Acharya Charaka states that there are 13 *srotas*, but Acharya Sushrut states that there are 11. This is because, although *srotas* are conceptually infinite, a definite number are presumed based on their designated roles.<sup>[4,5]</sup> According to Chakrapani, *Mool* is referred to as *Prabhavsthana*, which denotes the anatomical location of the corresponding *srotas*, their etiopathology, or the primary site of disease manifestation.<sup>[6]</sup> The *mool sthana* of the corresponding *srotas* is initially affected by the source of sickness of *srotas* and their symptoms.

**CONCEPTUAL STUDY*****Annavaaha Srotas***

The channels in the body that carry food and water are called *AnnaVaha Srotas*. *Annavaaha Srotas* are the *Srotas* or canals that transport "Anna," or food. This is connected to the digestive, gastrointestinal, or alimentary

tracts. Food travels through the body's channels, which are known as *AnnaVaha Srotas* and connect the mouth to the intestines. (Vaha = Carry, Anna = Food, *Srotas* = Channels).

### Origin and location of *Annavaaha Srotas*

#### According to Sushruta<sup>[7]</sup>

*Annavaahini* Dhamani's (the channels that convey the food) and *Aamashaya* (the stomach) are the origins of *Annavaaha Srotas*. The following symptoms arise when the *Annavaaha Srotas* is damaged, obstructed, or blocked.

- *Aadhmaana* – Distension of abdomen
- *Shula* – Pain abdomen (Colic)
- *Anna Vidweshya* – Aversion towards food
- *Chardi* – Vomiting
- *Pipasa* – Thirst
- *Aandhya* – Blindness
- *Maranam* – Death

#### According to Charaka<sup>[8]</sup>

There are two *Annavaaha Srotas*. *Aamashaya*, or stomach, and *Vama Parshva*, or the left lateral side of the abdomen or belly, are their origins. The symptoms listed below are brought on by vitiation or injury to *Annavaaha Srotas*.

- *Anannaabhilasha* - No interest towards food or aversion towards food.
- *Arochaka* – Anorexia Causes for vitiation of *Annavaaha Srotas*<sup>[9]</sup>
- *Atimaatrasyaakaale* - untimely intake of heavy quantity of food.
- *Ahitabhojana* - unwholesome food.
- *Vaigunyatpaavakasya* - disturbance or vitiation of the belly fire.

### Digestion and *Annavaaha srotas*

The total number of cells, tissues, and organs is equal to the number of *Srotas*. One of the main *Srotas* in our bodies that nourishes every cell is *Annavaaha Srotas*. For the digestive process to function properly, the right meal and digestive fire are crucial. Things pertaining to food and drink are outlined in *Asthvidha*. These include *Prakrti* (nature), *Karana* (transmutation), *Samyoga* (combination), *Rasi* (measure), *Desha* (place of origin, etc.), *Kala* (age and season), *Upayoga-Samstha* (use conditions), and *Upayoktri*.

### *Annavaahini Dhamanis*

Dhamani really refers to blood vessels, particularly arteries, with pulsation serving as a distinguishing characteristic. Since no food travels through the arteries in this case, we cannot regard them as *annavaahini dhamani*. The oesophagus and small intestine can be seen as *Annavaahini dhamani* if *dhamani* is understood to signify tubes or channels. *Annavaahini dhamanis* can also refer to the blood vessels and nerves that nourish the upper alimentary canal and stomach.

### Management of vitiation of *Annavaaha Srotas*

The disorders resulting from the vitiation of *Annavaaha srotas* should be treated along the lines of *Amapradoshya* (i.e., treatment of disorders arising from the presence of improperly processed food and tissue toxins arising from sluggish tissue metabolism; in other words, it should be treated along the lines of treatment of metabolic errors). Therefore, *Pachana* (digestants and medications destroying ama) and *Deepana* (fire-increasing medicines, metabolism-increasing medicines and therapies, appetizers) should be given.

### CONTEMPORARY ASPECT

In contemporary medicine, *Annavaaha Srotas* is mainly associated with the upper parts of the gastrointestinal tract (GI tract), which are in charge of food transit, processing, and absorption. Modern viewpoints associate these channels with particular anatomical features and physiological functions of the digestive tract, whereas traditional Ayurveda describes them through functional roots and routes.

### Anatomical Correlations

The elements of *Annavaaha Srotas* are compared by contemporary researchers to a number of important GI tract structures.

- **Moolasthan (Roots):** The stomach and its related neuro-vascular structures are said to be the "roots" that Acharyas recognized as the *Amashaya* (stomach) and *Vamaparshwa* (left flank).
- **Srotomarga (Passage):** The physical route consists of the stomach, small intestine (the *Kshudrantra* or *Laghuantra*), and esophagus (which is frequently associated with *Annavaahini Dhamani*).
- **Extended System:** According to recent studies, the biliary tract—which includes the liver, gallbladder, and bile ducts—should also be included in this category because of their vital involvement in the digestion and processing of food.

### Physiological & Clinical Perspectives<sup>[10]</sup>

Ayurvedic functional ideas are given a biological context by contemporary science.

**Digestion & Absorption:** The Ayurvedic functions of *Annavaaha Srotas* map directly to the mechanical and chemical processes of the **Upper GI Tract**, including enzyme secretion (like HCl and Pepsin) and nutrient uptake.

**Gut-Brain Axis:** Similar to the Ayurvedic belief that poor digestion can result in mental symptoms like anxiety or cognitive deficiencies, current research connects chronic digestive disorders (*Annavaaha Srotodushti*) to neuroinflammation and altered neurotransmission.

**Etiological Factors:** The main causes of *Srotodushti* (vitiation of the channels), which results in metabolic and digestive problems such hyperacidity, peptic ulcers, and

cholelithiasis (gallstones), are found to be "modernistic lifestyle" elements like sedentary behaviour, high levels of stress, and junk food consumption.

### Diagnostic Integration

Ayurveda employs symptoms such as *Arochaka* (anorexia) and *Ajirna* (indigestion), however contemporary clinical approaches to these channels include sophisticated investigations.

- Endoscopy and colonoscopy: To check for ulcers or inflammation in the mucosal lining.
- Imaging: Barium studies, CT scans, and USG abdomens are used to evaluate the "food channels" structural integrity.

### DISCUSSION

Life requires food, and food digestion begins in the mouth. Charaka claims that *Annavaha Srotas* includes *laghuantra*, *amashaya*, *gala*, *vamaparshwa* (*annanalika*), and *mukh*.<sup>[11]</sup> The key components of each bodily digestion are *Tridosha*, *Dhatu*, *Upadhatu*, and *Mala*. According to Ayurveda, *kledak kapha in aamashaya* plays a crucial part in the mixing and churning of food as well as the secretion of gastric juices, all of which are crucial for the digestion of food. Food is broken down by *pachak pitta*, *jatharagni*, *bhootagni*, and *samaanvayu* at the distal section of *aamashaya*.<sup>[12,13]</sup> Up until this point in the body, the nutrients from meals are broken down and transformed by associated secretions, and *aahararasa* prepares to feed another Dhatu. Food is next transformed into mala, which completes *katuavasthapaaka* and forms regular *vata-dosh*. Following this, *drava* and *kitta mala* separate in *pakwashaya*. *Amashaya* is the root of *Annavaha Srotas*, according to Charaka and Sushruta. *Aamashaya* refers to the location of ama, or poorly digested food. *Aamashaya* so gestures to the stomach. Food is partially broken down in the stomach before being sent to the intestines for additional digestion. We refer to this partially digested meal as ama. (Ashaya, which typically refers to one or more organs, signifies the home or place for something to stay or shelter). Since they both convey food, the oesophagus (food pipe) and the majority of the small intestine should both be covered with *amashaya*. According to Charaka and Sushruta, the signs and symptoms of damage to the *Annavaha Srotas* indicate stomach pathology. In this case, the *Annavaha Srotas* are damaged by the vitiated doshas (internal harm or damage), rather than an outward injury (which could have a more severe effect). Sushruta listed thirst, blindness, and death as signs of *Annavaha Srotas* injury, all of which signal to more serious issues down the road. They might also imply the consequences of long-term malnutrition. These symptoms also suggest exterior traumas, such as stabbings.

### CONCLUSION

The channel that manages food intake is *Annavaha Srotas*, mostly made up of the digestive system, which takes up nutrients from the food it eats. Each of the

characteristics listed in *Asta Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatan* has a functional logic that is in charge of preserving health. The most essential human need is food. Despite eating a healthy diet in terms of both quantity and quality, our immunity and general health are at their lowest. The body must transform it into a form appropriate for bodily tissues in order to maintain vitality, health, immunity, and life processes. Indigestion results from improper digestion of meals by the stomach and intestines. The primary cause of many systemic disorders is this indigestion. Thus, we must prioritize taking care of our stomach and hunger.

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