

A Critical Study of Aartavavaha Srotas W.S.R. to Uterine Fibroids (Garbhashaya Granthi)

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ABSTRACT

Background: *Aartavavaha Srotas* encompasses the channels carrying the menstrual fluid and ovum, functionally correlating to the female reproductive system. Disorders of this system are increasingly prevalent, with Uterine Fibroids (Leiomyomas) being the most common benign pelvic tumor in women.

Objective: To critically analyze the Ayurvedic understanding of *Aartavavaha Srotas* pathology in the context of Uterine Fibroids, correlating ancient concepts of *Granthi* and *Arbuda* with modern pathological findings.

Methodology: A review of classical Ayurvedic texts (*Sushruta Samhita*, *Charaka Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*) and modern gynecological literature.

Results: Fibroids can be correlated with *Garbhashaya Granthi* (uterine knots) or *Mamsaja Granthi*, resulting from the vitiation of *Kapha* and *Vata* doshas affecting the *Mamsa Dhatu* (muscle tissue) of the uterus. The pathology involves *Sanga* (obstruction) in the *Aartavavaha Srotas*, leading to *Asrigdara* (menorrhagia) and *Shoola* (pain).

Conclusion: Understanding fibroids through the lens of *Sroto Dushti* (channel vitiation) offers a holistic approach to management, moving beyond surgical excision to addressing the root metabolic and doshic imbalances.

1. Introduction

The *Aartavavaha Srotas* is the functional channel system responsible for the menstruation and reproductive functions in women. Its roots (*Moola*) are the *Garbhashaya* (Uterus) and *Aartavavahi Dhamanis* (Fallopian tubes/vascular supply) [1]. When these channels are vitiated, various pathologies arise.

One of the most significant pathologies affecting this *Srotas* in modern times is Uterine Fibroids (Leiomyomas). These are monoclonal tumors of the uterine smooth muscle tissue that affect 20-40% of women of reproductive age [2]. In Ayurveda, while there is no single direct term for "fibroid," the clinical presentation and pathogenesis closely resemble *Granthi* (encapsulated growth) or *Arbuda* (tumor) located in the *Garbhashaya*.

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2. Ayurvedic Review of Fibroids (*Garbhashaya Granthi*)

Concept of Granthi

The term *Granthi* implies a "knot" or a hardened mass. Acharya Sushruta defines *Granthi* as a glandular or nodular swelling resulting from the vitiation of *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* contaminating the *Mamsa* (flesh), *Rakta* (blood), and *Meda* (fat) [3].

Specifically, **Mamsaja Granthi** (muscular knot) in the *Garbhashaya* is the closest correlation to a uterine fibroid.

Etiology (*Nidana*)

Factors that vitiate *Kapha* and *Vata* are primary causes:

- **Aharaja (Dietary):** Excessive intake of *Abhishyandi* (channel-blocking) foods like curd, heavy meats, sweets, and cold items causes *Kapha* aggravation.
- **Viharaja (Lifestyle):** Day sleeping (*Divaswapna*) and lack of exercise leading to *Medo-vridhi* (obesity).
- **Manasika (Psychological):** Stress and suppression of natural urges (*Vega Dharana*) aggravate *Vata*.

Pathogenesis (*Samprapti*)

The formation of a fibroid in the *Aartavavaha Srotas* follows this trajectory [4]:

1. **Dosha Prakopa:** *Kapha* (responsible for mass/growth) is aggravated by etiological factors.
2. **Sthana Samshraya:** The vitiated *Kapha*, pushed by aggravated *Vata*, lodges in the *Garbhashaya* (Uterus) specifically in the *Mamsa Dhatu* (myometrium).
3. **Sroto Dushti:** This leads to *Sanga* (obstruction) in the *Aartavavaha Srotas*.
4. **Dushya Sammurchana:** The interaction between the Doshas and the *Mamsa* and *Rakta* Dhatus creates a consolidated, hard mass known as *Granthi*.

3. Modern Review of Uterine Fibroids

Definition and Pathology

Uterine fibroids, or leiomyomas, are benign tumors originating from the smooth muscle cells of the myometrium. They are estrogen-dependent, meaning they grow in the presence of high estrogen levels [5].

Classification (Anatomical)

1. **Intramural:** Within the muscular wall (most common).
2. **Subserosal:** Projecting outside the uterus.
3. **Submucosal:** Projecting into the uterine cavity (causes most bleeding).

Clinical Features

- **Menorrhagia:** Heavy or prolonged menstrual bleeding.
- **Dysmenorrhea:** Painful menstruation.

- **Pressure Symptoms:** Urinary frequency or constipation due to the mass pressing on adjacent organs.
- **Infertility:** Distortion of the uterine cavity preventing implantation.

4. Critical Correlation and Discussion

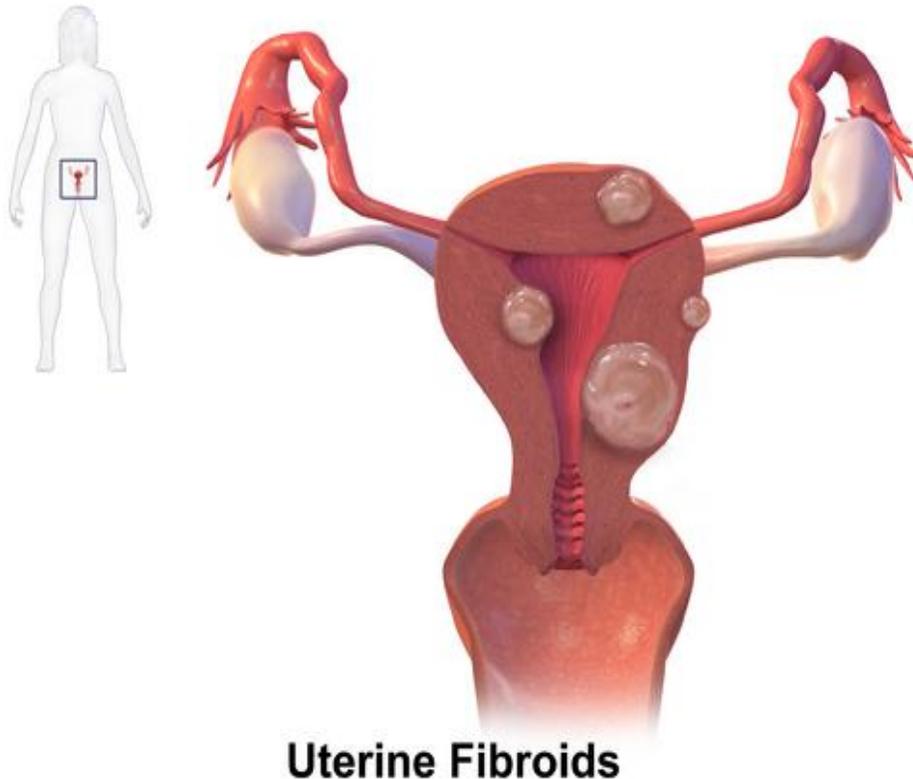
Anatomical Correlation

The *Garbhashaya* (Uterus) is the *Moola* of *Aartavavaha Srotas*. Modern science identifies the myometrium (muscle layer) as the site of fibroids. Ayurveda identifies *Mamsa Dhatu* (muscle tissue) as the site of *Mamsaja Granthi*. This is a direct anatomical parallel.

Pathological Correlation (*Sroto Dushti*)

Acharya Charaka describes four types of channel vitiation. In fibroids, we see two primary types [6]:

1. **Sanga (Obstruction):** The fibroid mass physically obstructs the flow of *Aartava* or the movement of the ovum (leading to infertility).
2. **Sira Granthi (Formation of nodules):** The physical manifestation of the *Granthi* represents a structural deformity of the channel itself.



Uterine Fibroids

Symptom Correlation

Modern Symptom	Ayurvedic Correlation	Pathophysiology
Menorrhagia (Heavy Bleeding)	Asrigdara/ Pradara [7]	Due to the blockage (<i>Sanga</i>) by the <i>Granthi</i> , <i>Vata</i> becomes obstructed and pushes the <i>Rakta</i> (blood) excessively, or <i>Pitta</i> aggravation causes excessive heat and bleeding.
Dysmenorrhea (Pain)	Kashtartava	<i>Vata</i> gets trapped (<i>Avarana</i>) by the mass (<i>Kapha/Granthi</i>), causing colicky pain during the expulsion of <i>Aartava</i> .
Pelvic Mass	Garbhashaya Granthi	The physical accumulation of vitiated <i>Mamsa</i> and <i>Kapha</i> .

Treatment Principle Correlation

- **Modern:** Hormone therapy (GnRH agonists) to shrink the tumor or Myomectomy/Hysterectomy.
- **Ayurvedic:**
 - *Lekhana* (Scraping therapies): To reduce the mass (*Kapha-medahara*).
 - *Rakta-stambhana*: To stop excess bleeding.
 - *Vata-anulomana*: To normalize the flow of menstruation.
 - Drugs like *Kanchanara Guggulu* and *Varunadi Kashaya* are used to treat *Granthi* by penetrating the channels and clearing the obstruction [8].

5. Conclusion

The study of *Aartavavaha Srotas* provides a crucial framework for understanding Uterine Fibroids. While modern science views fibroids primarily as anatomical tumors requiring excision, Ayurveda views them as a systemic disorder of *Kapha* accumulation and *Vata* blockage within the reproductive channels. The correlation of *Leiomyoma* with *Mamsaja Granthi* is scientifically sound, connecting the histological origin (muscle/*Mamsa*) with the gross pathology (knot/*Granthi*).

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