

## REVIEW ARTICLE

# Role of *Pranavaha Srota Dushti* in *Tamaka Shwasa*

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### ABSTRACT

In Ayurveda, “*Srotas*” refers to the channels or pathways within the human body through which substances flow. These channels are responsible for the movement of various elements such as nutrients, waste products, *Dosha*, and other vital substances. The concept of *Srotas* is fundamental in Ayurvedic medicine, as the proper functioning of these channels is essential for maintaining health and preventing disease. *Pranavaha Srotas* essentially means channels carrying the vital life force known as *Prana*. *Dushti*, referring to vitiation or dysfunction, thereby describes conditions where these channels are obstructed or malfunctioning, preventing *Prana* from adequately reaching all areas of the body. The resultant energy blockages can lead to numerous disorders, notably respiratory conditions. *Dushti* occurs from several factors like environmental toxins, inappropriate diet, or lifestyle habits, manifesting symptoms like breathlessness, diminished body energy levels, coughs, or colds. *Tamaka Shwasa*, an Ayurvedic correlate for Bronchial Asthma, is characterized by *Kapha* and *Vata* imbalance. Ayurvedic texts describe it as a very chronic, recurrent condition marked by symptoms such as wheezing, chest tightness, coughing, and difficulty breathing, with the condition generally worsen during dawn and dusk. The treatment approach typically involves pacifying aggravated *Dosha* i.e *Vata* and *Kapha*, strengthening the patient’s immunity, and adopting dietary and lifestyle modifications. These two conditions, *Pranavaha Srotas Dushti* and *Tamaka Shwasa*, are often seen as interconnected in Ayurveda’s understanding of respiratory health. Both signify an imbalance in the body’s energy (*Prana*) flow due to physical or environmental factors, leading to respiratory conditions. Further exploration and consolidation of Ayurvedic knowledge with modern medicine’s advancements may pave the way for more integrative health-care strategies, providing a comprehensive approach to managing respiratory health.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Acharya Charak and Acharya Sushrut both give priority to *Pranavaha Srotas*. *Pranavaha Srotas* is the most important system in the body as it is maintaining life and longevity. *Prana* means flows. In Ayurveda, the functions of *Prana Vayu* are similar to the process of respiration in human body. It is associated with Anahata chakra which is the heart chakra since it is located in the chest region it governs the responsible for sustaining life since birth to death. *Pranavaha Srotas. Dushti* refers to the impurities or imbalances in the respiratory channels or “*Srotas*” that carry vital life energy, “*Prana*”. In essence, it describes situations where these channels become obstructed or dysfunctional,

hindering the distribution of *Prana* and potentially leading to various health issues. Notably, among these are respiratory conditions like *Tamaka Shwasa*, equivalent to Bronchial Asthma in modern medicine. The term “*Tamaka*” signifies darkness or obscurity, and “*Shwasa*” means breath, highlighting a condition that significantly impairs normal breathing. This ailment is characterized by episodes of severe breathlessness, wheezing, and coughing, particularly troubling at night or in the early morning.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In Ayurveda classics, the human body is comprised of innumerable *Srotas* which are responsible for performing all the physiological and functional activities. The word *Srotas* is derived from the Sanskrit root-”*Sru- gatau* (*Sru+tasi- Srotas*) which means exude, ooze, filter, permeate etc. It means these are channels which circulate the *Dosha*, *Dhatus*, *Mala* to their destination.

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### 2.1. According to Charaka<sup>[1]</sup>

- Bahirmukha Srotas*-9 in male, 11 in females
- Antarmukha Srotas*-13

### 2.2. According to Sushruta<sup>[2]</sup>

He stated 11 pairs that is 22 *Srotas*.

He had not considered *Asthivaha*, *Majjavaha* and *Swedvaha Srotas* and he had mentioned *Aartava Vaha Srotas*.

### 2.3. Moolasthan (Root) of Pranavaha Srotasa

According to Acharya Charaka the *Moolasthan* (Root) of *Pranavaha Srotas* are *Hridaya* and *Maha Srotas*.<sup>[3]</sup>

According to Acharya Sushruta the *Moolasthan* (Root) of *Pranavaha Srotas* are *Hridaya* and *Rasavahini Dhamanis*. *Dosa*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala* are in excellent shape if *Srotas* are in a healthy state, but when *Srotas* are vitiated, *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala* also get vitiated and the body becomes ill.<sup>[4]</sup>

### 2.4. Srotodushti

When there is *Sanchaya* of the *Dosha* takes place in the *Ashayas* simultaneously *Dosha Sanchaya* also occurs in *Srotas*. For example; when the food having greater quantity of *Drava Guna* and *Ushna Guna* is consumed, it increases *Pitta Dosha* and with the *Sanchaya* of *Pitta Dosha*, it causes *Dravatwa* and *Ushnatwa* in the whole body. In this way, the *Drava* and *Ushna* forms the coating in the *Srotas* and vitiation of their structure. When the vitiated *Dosha* reach, they cause genesis of *Vyadhi*.

*Atipravritti* (Excessive), *Sanga* (Obstruction), *Siragranthi*, and *Vimargagamana* (opposite direction) are the four different manifestations of *Sroto Dushti*.<sup>[5]</sup>

### 2.5. Symptoms of Pranavaha Srotasa Dushti (by Acharya Charak)<sup>[6]</sup>

- Ati Srushta Shwasam* - Too long breathing.
- Ati Baddham* - Too short breathing.
- Kupitam Shwasam* - Difficult breathing.
- Alpam Alpam Shwasam* - Frequent and interrupted breathing.
- Abheekshnam Shwasam* - Highly disturbed breathing.
- Sashabda Shwasam* - Abnormal sound during breathing.
- Sashula Shwasam* - Painful breathing.

By acharya Sushruta<sup>[4]</sup>

- Aakroshana* - Screaming
- Vinamana* - Bending of body
- Mohana* - Perplexing
- Bhramana* - Giddiness
- Vepana* - Tremors
- Maranam* - Death

Both Acharya Charaka and Sushruta have included *Hridaya* as the site of *Pranavaha Srotas*. This also includes the lung and the whole respiratory system entangled with heart. Thus, the heart and lung diseases manifest with *Shwasa* as one of the symptoms.

In this modern era, there have seen significant changes in lifestyle that have disturbed people's physical health and emotional state. Ayurvedic classics state that unhealthy lifestyle (*Apathya Aahara* and *Vihara*) is the root cause of all the *Vyadhis*.

### 2.6. Causes of Pranavaha Srotas Dushti (Vitiatio)

The causative factor for vitiation of channels is described here, *Dosha* when increased in quantity can vitiate and when these *Srotas* are vitiated then *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala* also become vitiated and body becomes diseased. *Srotas* also vitiated due to *Kshaya* (depletion of tissue), *Sandharanat* (forcibly with holding the natural body reflexes or urges), *Vyayamata Kshudhitasya* (excessive exercise in presence of hunger), *Roukshyat* (food having dry property), *Anya Daruna Karya* (doing many such activity which are beyond ones physical capacity), etc.<sup>[7]</sup>

### 2.7. Tamakashwasa

The word *Tamaka Shwasa* comprises of two words 'Tamaka' and 'Shwasa'. There are five classes of *Shwasa*: *Kshudra*, *Tamak*, *Chhinna*, *Maha*, and *Urdhava Shwasa*. *Tamak Shwasa* is *Kaph-Vata* dominant. It is of two types – *Santamak* and *Pratamaka Shwasa*.<sup>[8]</sup> Acharya Charaka described that *Tamaka Shwasa* is *Yappya* type of disease.<sup>[9]</sup> The etiological factors of *Tamaka Shwasa* are mentioned with variable multiplicity of diet, lifestyle, and consequences of diseases.

As per Ayurveda, the causes of *Tamaka Shwasa* are as follows:<sup>[10]</sup>

- Intake of dry, cold potency food, heavy, incompatible food, and irregular intake of food
- Excessive intake of black gram, beans, sesame, and meat of aquatic animals.
- Intake of cold water and exposure to cold climate
- Exposure to dust, smoke, and wind
- Excessive exercise, over indulge in sexual activity
- Injury to throat, chest, and vital organs.
- Suppression of natural urges.

Due to excessive intake of *Kaphaja ahara vihara*, the *Kapha* along with *Vata* gets into *Pittasthan* and causes *Shwasa roga*.

### 2.8. Signs and Symptoms<sup>[11]</sup>

- Kasa* (Cough)
- Ghurghuraka* (Wheezing)
- Pramoha* (Delusion)
- Shlesma purna Urah* (Chest fullness with Kapha)
- Nidra Viparyaya* (Disturbed Sleep)
- Pinasa* (Nasal congestion)
- Gribam sirascha Sangruhya* (Tightness in neck and head region)
- Aggravation of above symptoms during night and early morning
- Asino Labhate sukham* (Gets comfort in sitting posture)
- Vimokshanate Muhurta Labhate Sukham* (Feels relief after spitting out the sputum)
- Lalatena swidyata* (Sweating on the forehead)
- Aggravation of above symptoms during night and early morning

### 2.9. Pratamaka Shwasa<sup>[12]</sup>

- When patients suffering from *Tamaka Shwasa* get the symptoms of fever and fainting, the condition is called as *Pratamaka Shwasa*. It is suggestive of involvement of *PittaDosha* in *Pratamaka Shwasa*. It is aggravated by *Udavarta*, Dust, Indigestion, Humidity (*Kleda*), suppression of natural urges, *Tamo Guna*, Darkness and gets pacified instantaneously by cooling regimens.
- Although, cooling regimen is one of the causative factors of *Tamaka Shwasa* but in *Pratamaka Shwasa*, the patient gets relief by administering cooling agents due to *Pitta Dosha* involvement.

### 2.10. *Samtamaka Shwasa*<sup>[13]</sup>

- When the patients of *Pratamaka Shwasa* feel submerged in darkness, the condition is called as *Samtamaka Shwasa*.

### 2.11. *Samprapti (Pathology of Tamaka Shwasa)*<sup>[14]</sup>

Vitiated *Kapha* which lodge in the *Pranavaha Srotas* produce the obstruction to the normal functioning of *Vayu* is considered as one of the factors to initiate the *Shwasa*. Acharya Charak described *Samprapti* of *Shwasa* in *Chikitsa Sthana*. According to him due to *Nidana sevana*, the vitiated *Vata* enters in the *Pranavaha Srotas* (Respiratory Channels) and provokes the *Urastha Kapha* (*Kapha* staging in chest). This provoked *Kapha* obstructs the *Pranavaha Srotas* (Respiratory Channels) and gives rise to five types of *Hikka* and *Shwasa*. According to Vagbhat vitiated *Kapha* is responsible for obstruction, which leads to vitiation of *Vayu*. Vitiated *Vata Dosha* which is *Ruksha*, *Shuska* and *Laghu* produces *Ruksatha*, *kathinnyata* and *sankocha* in *Pranavaha Srotas*. *Udakavaha Srotas* and *Annavaha Srotas* also dearranged in this process.

### 2.12. *Samprapti Chakra of Tamaka Swasa*

1. *Sanchaya* (Accumulation):
  - Accumulation of *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha* due to *Nidana* (causative factors). *Kapha* accumulates in the respiratory tract, causing mucus production, while *Vata* accumulates, leading to dry and spasmodic conditions.
2. *Prakopa* (Aggravation):
  - The accumulated *Dosha* become aggravated due to continued exposure to causative factors. Aggravated *Kapha* increases mucus and blocks the airways, while aggravated *Vata* leads to spasms and constriction of Bronchial tubes.
3. *Prasara* (Spread):
  - The aggravated *Dosha* spread from their primary sites (stomach and chest) to other parts of the body, particularly the respiratory system. This spreading mainly manifests as breathing difficulties and chest tightness.
4. *Sthanasamsraya* (Localization):
  - The aggravated *Dosha* localize in the respiratory tract. *Kapha* predominantly accumulates in the Bronchial passages, causing obstruction, while *Vata* creates spasmodic constriction, both contributing to difficulty in breathing and wheezing.
5. *Vyakta* (Manifestation):
  - Distinct symptoms of *Tamaka Shwasa* appear:
    - Difficulty breathing, especially during exhalation.
    - Wheezing and whistling sounds during breathing the flow chart are given below Fig 1.

### 3. DISCUSSION

“*Tamaka Shwasa*” is a condition characterized by recurrent episodes of breathlessness or asthma-like symptoms.

When there is “*Dushti*” (disturbance or impairment) in the *Pranavaha Srotas* in the context of *Tamaka Shwasa*, it indicates that there is dysfunction or imbalance in these respiratory channels. This disturbance could be due to various reasons according to Ayurvedic principles, such as:

1. *Ama*: Accumulation of *ama* in the body, particularly in the respiratory system, which disrupts the normal flow and function

of *Pranavaha Srotas*.

2. *Imbalanced Dosha*: Specifically, an aggravation of *Vata Dosha*, which governs movement and can affect the airways. This imbalance can lead to constriction, inflammation, and increased sensitivity of the respiratory passages.
3. *Weak Agni*: Poor digestion can lead to the formation of undigested food particles (*Ama*), which in turn can clog the channels and disrupt their normal function.
4. *Psychosomatic Factors*: Emotional stress, anxiety, or other mental factors can also play a role in aggravating *Tamaka Shwasa* by influencing *Vata Dosha* and the *Pranavaha Srotas*.

The role of *Pranavaha Srotas Dushti* in *Tamaka Shwasa* underscores the complex interplay between *Dosha* (*Kapha* and *Vata*), toxins (*Ama*), and external factors leading to the clinical presentation of Asthma-like symptoms. Understanding this holistic framework enables a more comprehensive approach to managing and potentially preventing *Tamaka Shwasa* through targeted Ayurvedic interventions. Effective management requires addressing the root cause, fostering balance among *Dosha*, and adopting a lifestyle that supports respiratory health.

### 4. CONCLUSION

The role of *Pranavaha Srota Dushti* in *Tamaka Swasa* demonstrates Ayurveda’s intricate understanding of respiratory disorders, offering a holistic perspective to potential treatment plans. *Pranavaha Srota Dushti*, by depicting disruption in the channels carrying respiratory life energy, constitutes a direct link to *Tamaka swasa*, an Ayurvedic counterpart for Bronchial Asthma. The causative imbalances in the *Dosha* – chiefly *Kapha* and *Vata* – resulting in *Pranavaha Srota Dushti*, lay the groundwork for *Tamaka swasa*. Rectifying these channel imbalances is crucial in the management of disorders like *Tamaka swasa*, suggesting lifestyle modifications, dietary control, and targeted therapies. Thus, understanding the interconnection between *Pranavaha Srota Dushti* and *Tamaka Swasa* through the Ayurvedic lens can lead to comprehensive, multi-modal strategies for managing respiratory health, reinforcing Ayurveda’s ability to contribute effectively to contemporary healthcare solutions.

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### 10. DATA AVAILABILITY

This is an original manuscript and all data are available for only review purposes from principal investigators.

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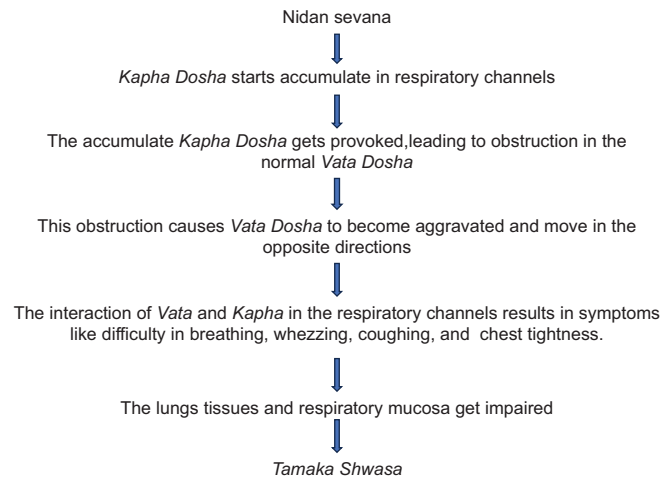
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**Figure 1:** Samprapti Chakra of Tamaka Swasa