



# Critical Review on *Sthanik Chikitsa* in *Garbhashaya* *Grivamukhagata Vrana* (Cervical Erosion)

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## Abstract

Cervical erosion occurs when the cells lining the inner surface of the cervix grow abnormally on the outer surface. This leads to a transformation from squamous epithelium to columnar epithelium in the cervix. Nowadays, this condition is prevalent among women of reproductive age. This condition could be linked to a concept in Ayurveda known as "*Garbhashaya Grivamukhagata Vrana*," although direct mention of this term is absent in traditional Ayurvedic texts. The *AstangaHrudaya*, however, indirectly describes it in relation to the "*Yonivranayekshana Yantra*." Ayurveda, with its comprehensive healing approach, offers a solution to the recurring and chronic nature of cervical erosion. The Ayurvedic approach to managing this condition involves a thorough examination of the patient's history, symptoms, and their constitutional type (*Prakriti*), as well as the imbalances of the *Doshas*. The chosen treatment methods and appropriate remedies are determined based on these assessments. This article explores the role of various localized treatments (*Sthanik Chikitsa*) in managing cervical erosion.

**Keyword-** Cervical erosion, *Garbhashaya Grivamukhagata Vrana*, *Sthanika Chikitsa*, *Kshara karma*

## Introduction

Cervical erosion is a prevalent yet harmless condition among women of reproductive age. It is typically identified during routine pelvic exams or pap screenings, with a global estimated prevalence ranging from 17 to 50 percent. Among adolescents, this prevalence can surge to as high as 80%. [1] Cervical erosion involves the replacement of the cervix's squamous epithelium with columnar epithelium that connects to the endocervical lining. [2] This alteration exposes the immunologically less robust cells to the vaginal pH, which is acidic. [1,3] Despite its benign nature, cervical ectropion can lead to various symptoms, including excessive vaginal discharge, bleeding between periods and after intercourse, pelvic discomfort, painful intercourse (dyspareunia), as well as more severe manifestations like recurrent cervicitis and vulnerability to sexually transmitted infections. Notably, Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), Neisseria gonorrhoea, and Chlamydia trachomatis. [1,3, 7]

Cervical erosion can be likened to "*Garbhashaya Grivamukhagata Vrana*," bearing resemblances to the characteristics of "*Vrana*" as elucidated in traditional texts. While direct depictions of "*Garbhashaya Grivamukhagata Vrana*" aren't found in Ayurvedic classics, the *Astang Hruday* references it in connection to the "*Yonivranayekshana Yantra*." [8] In view of the features of cervical erosion, it can be categorized as a "*Nija/Agantuj*," "*Khapha Pittaj*," "*Twaka Mansa*" type of "*Vrana*," occurring at the "*Griva*" of the "*Garbhashaya*." *Acharya Sushruta*

dedicates a specific chapter to the management of "vrana," outlining strategies for addressing *Doshaja Vrana* from the initial stages of "*Vrana Shotha*." [9]

## ETIOLOGY

Cervical erosion can be attributed to both congenital and developmental factors, as well as acquired causes. The acquired causes can further be categorized into hormonal influences, often associated with elevated estrogen levels, and infections.

### 1. Congenital and Developmental Factors:

Cervical erosion may arise due to congenital or developmental reasons, indicating that certain individuals might be predisposed to this condition from birth.

### 2. Acquired Causes:

#### 1. Hormonal Influences:

- Cervical erosion can be linked to hormonal changes, particularly in instances of heightened estrogen levels. This hormonal association is observed in various situations:
  - Adolescents, where the condition might be more prevalent due to hormonal fluctuations during growth.
  - Pregnancy, when increased estrogen levels are common.
  - Women using oral contraceptives, which can affect hormonal balance.
  - During the years of menstruation, particularly in the ovulatory phase, when estrogen levels are elevated.

#### Infection:

- Infections, specifically cervicitis, can contribute to the development of cervical erosion. Inflammation and infection of the cervix may lead to the erosion of the cervical lining. These diverse etiological factors contribute to the occurrence of cervical erosion, highlighting the interplay between congenital traits, hormonal influences, and infections in the development of this condition.

## Symptoms

Women experiencing cervical erosion may exhibit a range of symptoms, including:

- Vaginal discharge, which could be mucoid, mucopurulent, irritant, offensive, or even blood-stained in nature.
- Contact bleeding, which may occur during sexual intercourse (coitus) or defecation.
- Infertility, potentially due to the impact of the condition on reproductive health.
- Vulvar pruritus, manifesting as itching and discomfort in the external genital area.
- Low back pain, which could be associated with the cervical erosion condition.
- Dyspareunia, or painful intercourse, resulting from the irritation caused by the erosion.
- Dysuria, referring to pain or discomfort during urination.
- Nocturia, involving the need to urinate frequently during the night.
- Pollakiuria, characterized by increased frequency of urination.

These symptoms collectively underline the diverse ways in which cervical erosion can affect a woman's well-being and reproductive health. [10][11]

## Signs

During a per speculum examination, distinct visual characteristics of cervical erosion become evident. These include:

- A bright red area encircling and extending beyond the external os (opening) in the ectocervix.

- Clear demarcation of the outer edge of the affected area.
- Lesions that exhibit a smooth surface or display papillary folds, resembling small raised structures.
- In some instances, upon gentle rubbing with a gauze piece, multiple oozing spots may become noticeable. These distinctive features observed during the examination provide valuable insights into the presence and nature of cervical erosion. [10]

### Diagnosis

Cervical erosion is often detected through regular pelvic examinations and Pap smear tests, which are part of routine gynecological screenings. This allows for timely identification and monitoring of the condition. [12]

### Types

1. Congenital
2. Acquired

- Simple/flat type
- Papillary type
- Follicular type

### Treatment

A persistent cervical erosion accompanied by bothersome discharge often requires surgical intervention for treatment. Various methods can be employed, such as electrocautery, cryotherapy, CO2 laser vaporization, chemical cauterization, and conization. These procedures aim to address the issue effectively. Following the surgical intervention, the resultant raw area typically takes about 6 to 8 weeks to heal and become covered with squamous epithelium, the normal tissue type in that region. During this healing period, it's advisable to avoid sexual intercourse until complete recovery has occurred. This precaution helps ensure proper healing and prevents potential complications. [10]

### *Garbhashaya Grivamukhagata Vrana*

*Garbhashaya Grivamukhagata Vrana* is not described separately as a disease in *Ayurvedic* classics. *Yonivyapada* being the chapter explained by all the author of classical *Ayurvedic* texts but not mentioned about *Yonivrana* as a disease or as a symptom directly. It is not hard and fast rule that one must get reference of each clinical condition by its name.

*Vagbhata* himself declared in *Samhita*.(A.H.Su.12/64)[13]

### *Samanya Hetu:*

*Yonivyapada* can be taken into consideration for the *Hetu* of *Garbhashaya Grivamukhagata Vrana*.

- According to ***Charaka Chi. 30/5***[14]
  - *Mithyachara (Ahara, Vihara, Achara)*
  - *Pradushta Artava*
  - *Beeja Dosha*
  - *Daiva*
- According to ***Astanga Hridaya (A. H. Su. 33/28)***[15]
  - *Dushta Bhojana*
  - *Visama – Sthana*( Coitus in abnormal postures)
  - *Dusht Artava*
  - *Apadravya Prayoga*

## SAMPRAPTI

After considering the underlying causes, the formation of cervical erosion can be understood as a two-step process.

- Over time, vitiated *Doshas* undergo the stages of *Sanchaya* (accumulation) and *Prakopa-Prasara* (aggravation and spreading). These stages typically occur in a subclinical manner within the progression of the "*Vrana Samprapti*" (wound formation) process.
- Subsequently, these aggravated *Doshas* disrupt the equilibrium of *Rasa* (plasma), *Rakta* (blood), and *Mamsa* (muscle tissue), leading to an imbalance of all three *Doshas*. This is facilitated by specific qualities of each *Dosha*:
  - *Pitta's Ushna* (hot) and *Tikshna* (sharp) qualities result in softening of *Mamsa* (muscle tissue).
  - *Kapha's Drava* (liquid) and *Picchhila* (unctuous) qualities contribute to an excess of *Kleda* (moisture).
  - *Vata's Ruksha* (dry) and *Chala* (mobile) qualities lead to the displacement of *Mamsa*.

This process is further triggered by the accumulation of excessive *Kleda* due to *Kapha* imbalance. This initiates the *Samprapti* (progression) process. Ultimately, this entire sequence culminates in the disruption, exposure, and degeneration (*Vinasha*) of *Mamsa* (muscle tissue) at the site of the cervix's transition, known as *Garbhashaya Grivamukha*. This culmination results in the formation of a "*Vrana*" (wound) specifically at the location of cervical erosion.

### Samprapti Ghataka

- *Dosha: Tridoshamainly Kapha Pitta Dushya: Rasa, Rakta, Mansa*
- *Mala: Kha-mala.*
- *Srotasa: Artavavaha, Rasavaha, Raktavaha Agni: Jatharagni Dhatvagni*
- *Upadhatu: Artava, Raja*
- *Sthana: Garbhashaya Grivamukhagata (Yoni)*

### Lakshana

- *Yoni Srava* associated with *Pichilatwa* in *Kaphaja Vrana* and *Dorgandhya* in *Pithaja Vrana*.
- *Yoni Kandu*,
- *Yoni Daha*,
- *Maithuna-Asahishnuta*,
- *Vedana - Kati, Adhonabhi and Yoni*,
- *Moothrashayagatha Vikara*.

*Sadhya-Asadhyata Acharya Sushruta* has mentioned the *Prajanana Vrana* as *Sukha Sadhya Vrana*. [16]

### Chikitsa

The management of *Garbhashaya Grivamukhagata Vrana* involves several general principles. This type of *Vrana* occurs in the region of the *Garbhashaya Grivamukha*. It is primarily attributed to the vitiation of *Kapha* and *Pitta Dosha*, two fundamental elements in Ayurvedic theory. The *Sthana*, or location, of this condition is within the *Yoni*. These principles guide the approach to treating and addressing *Garbhashaya Grivamukhagata Vrana*, emphasizing the importance of balancing *Kapha* and *Pitta Dosha* and targeting the specific affected area.

### Sthanika Chikitsa

Local treatment is referred to as *Sthanika Chikitsa* in Ayurveda. It is drawn from numerous *Bruhatrayis* sources or the three primary Ayurvedic literature; specifically the *Charaka*, *Sushrut*, and *Vagbhata Samhitas*. The local treatment

is based on the signs and symptoms that the patients report and present. Depending on the patient's *Prakruti*, food, and seasonal variations, different permutations and combinations are practically used. In this concise review, we aim to highlight contemporary Ayurvedic treatments for cervical erosion, including operations, therapies, and drugs. Following are the common *Sthanika Chikitsa* used to treat cervical erosion and their descriptions:-

### ***Ksharakarma***

According to *Susrutha Samhitha* (Su.chi. 1/6), the term *Vrana* indicates a discontinuity in the healthy tissue of body. There are 14 types of *Vrana* based on *Dosha* predominance. Among them, the cervical erosion may be correlated as the *Sannipathiki Vrana*. Among all *Shastra* and *Anushastra*, *Kshara* is the supreme because it is most effective and acts immediately. (Su. su. 11/3)

*Kshara* is a caustic, alkaline in nature obtained from the ashes of medical plants. It is a milder procedure compared to surgery and thermal cautery. *Kshara* has the properties like *Ushna Virya*, *Laghu-Teekshna Guna*, *Tridoshaghana*, *Dahana*, *Pachana*, *Darana*, *Vilayana*, *Shodhana*, *Ropana*, *Shoshana*, *Stambhana*, *Krimigna*, and *Lekhana Karma*. The management of *Garbhashaya Grivamukhagata Vrana* often involves the application of external treatments, specifically using *Pratisaraneeya Kshara*. This approach, when combined with internal medicines, is instrumental in addressing the condition. The effects of *Pratisaraneeya Kshara* can be understood through a series of actions it undertakes:

**Cleansing the wound:** The application of *pratisaraneeya Kshara* serves to cleanse the wound, promoting a hygienic environment for healing.

**Antiseptic property:**-The treatment possesses antiseptic properties that help in preventing infection and maintaining the wound's sterility.

**Desquamation of sloughs:**-It aids in the natural shedding of dead tissue layers, allowing for the emergence of healthier tissue underneath.

**Draining of pus:**-The application facilitates the drainage of pus, helping to remove infection and reduce inflammation.

**New vascularization:**-*Pratisaraneeya Kshara* encourages the growth of new blood vessels, enhancing blood circulation to the affected area and promoting healing.

**Granulation tissue formation:**-It supports the development of granulation tissue, a key element in the wound-healing process.

**Inpouring of proteins and fibrocytes:**- The treatment stimulates the influx of proteins and fibrocytes, crucial components for the formation of new tissue.

**Scar formation:**- Through these actions, *Pratisaraneeya Kshara* contributes to the formation of scars, specifically fibrous tissue, which aids in filling the wound gap and achieving proper wound closure.

This comprehensive set of actions underscores the significance of *Pratisaraneeya Kshara* in the management of *Garbhashaya Grivamukhagata Vrana*, highlighting its role in various stages of wound healing and recovery. When integrated with internal medicines, this external treatment approach can lead to effective and holistic results in addressing the condition.

### ***Agnikarma***

The term "*Dahana*" in its literal sense refers to the process of burning or cauterizing. [17] In the context of Ayurveda, "*Agnikarma*" is considered an *Anushastra Karma*, which involves treating diseased tissue through controlled burns

inflicted directly on the tissue surface. This procedure employs various materials known as "*Dahana Upkarana*." Traditional substances for *Agnikarma* include *Jamboshtha*, needles, *Ghee*, *Guda* (Jaggery), honey, *Taila* (oil), and *Shalaka*, which could be made from gold, copper, iron, or silver. In modern times, electric thermal cautery machines have replaced the use of *Shalaka*. [18]

The heat transferred during *Agnikarma* serves several purposes. It helps in removing obstructions within the body's channels (*Srotas*) and enhances blood circulation to the affected area, thereby promoting increased cellular activity and metabolism. Some authors propose that the stimulation of afferent nerves by heat also generates an analgesic (pain-relieving) effect.

In essence, *Agnikarma* is a therapeutic technique rooted in Ayurveda that involves controlled burning or cauterization of diseased tissue using various materials. This process's heat-based effects contribute to improving blood circulation, cellular activity, and metabolism, while potentially providing pain relief through nerve stimulation.

### ***Yoni Pichu***

The term "*Yoni*" has its origins in Hebrew and refers to the vagina. In the context of Ayurveda, "*Pichu*" is a type of tampon made from sterile cotton and gauze, tailored to the patient's parity (number of childbirths) and the size of her vaginal opening. Depending on the specific symptoms and the involvement of the *Doshas* (fundamental energies), the *Pichu* is soaked in one of the following substances: a herbal decoction (*Kashaya*), medicinal oil (*Jatyadi Taila*), or a mixture of powdered herbs (*Gairik Churna*) blended with *Jatyadi* oil.

The application of *Pichu* serves several purposes. The medicinal properties of the soaked substance are gradually released, and the *Pichu* remains in contact with the affected area for an extended period, facilitating better absorption. This helps to hydrate and soften a dry vagina. Moreover, the treatment aids in reducing vaginal infections by restoring a balanced pH to the vaginal flora. The use of oils or *Sneha* helps to alleviate *Vata Dosha*. *Pichu* tampons come in different shapes depending on the desired insertion depth within the vagina. They can be either circular or elongated, accommodating various needs and preferences. (19)

### ***Yoni Dhavana***

The term "*Yoni*" indeed refers to the vagina, and "*Dhavana*" or "*Prakshalana*" denotes the cleansing of the vagina. This process involves douching the vaginal canal and is categorized as one of the sixty types of *Vrana Chikitsa* (wound healing therapies) in Ayurveda. *Dhavana* or *Prakshalana* is employed in various situations where vaginal discharge exhibits characteristics such as stickiness, mucoid consistency, oiliness, curd-like texture, excessive watery nature, or offensiveness. The technique of *Dhavana* or *Prakshalana* utilizes decoctions (*Kwatha*) derived from various medicinal plants. The specific decoction used may vary for different patients based on their unique signs (*Lakshana*), preliminary symptoms (*Poorvaroop*), and overt symptoms (*Roop*). For instance, decoctions like *Triphala Kwatha* and *Panchavalkala Kwath* can be employed as part of this cleansing process.

In essence, *Dhavana* or *Prakshalana* is a therapeutic method within Ayurveda for cleansing the vagina through douching. It falls within the broader category of wound healing therapies and is chosen based on the characteristics of the vaginal discharge and the patient's individual condition. Decoctions prepared from medicinal plants are employed to facilitate the cleansing process and promote cervical health. [20]

### ***Yoni Dhoopan***

Vaginal fumigation is referred to as "*Yoni Dhoopan*" in Ayurveda. Following *Yoni Dhavana* (vaginal cleansing), *Yoni Dhoopan* is performed by scattering therapeutic substances on the *Dhoopana Yantra* (fumigation apparatus) over a gentle, smokeless fire (*Nirdhuma Agni*). The process of *Dhoopan* generates healing smoke that can have a mild effect

on the mucosal lining and introitus of the vaginal passage. The smoke from *Dhoopan* triggers a process called *Swedana*, which entails opening the minuscule pores of the vaginal tissue, leading to purification. (21)

The *Yoni Dhoopan* procedure helps maintain dryness and reduces excessive sticky vaginal discharge around the vulva and introitus. Additionally, it possesses antibacterial properties known as "*Rakshoghna*." Various herbal substances are commonly used in *Dhoopan*, including *Guggulu*, *Datura Patra*, *Kushta*, *Agaru*, *Haridra* (turmeric), and *Shatapushpa* (fennel seeds). During *Dhoopan*, it is crucial to carefully monitor the patient's body temperature and distance from the *Dhoopana Patra* (fumigation container). Consideration should also be given to any potential allergies to smoke or specific herbs used in the procedure.

In summary, *Yoni Dhoopan* involves fumigating the vaginal area with therapeutic smoke after vaginal cleansing. This process aids in maintaining vaginal health by promoting dryness, reducing sticky discharge, and employing antibacterial herbs to support overall well-being. Careful monitoring of the patient's comfort and potential allergies is an important aspect of performing *Dhoopan*.

### ***Yoni Varti***

Indeed, "*Varti*" refers to a vaginal suppository in Ayurvedic medicine. It is a specialized form of medication that is inserted into the vagina and its duration of retention is determined by the severity of vaginitis, a condition involving inflammation of the vagina. [22] Vaginal suppositories serve as a drug delivery system where the medicated substance dissolves within the vaginal environment and gets absorbed into the deeper tissues. [23]

The formulation of a *Varti* typically includes "*Shodhana Dravyas*," which are purified substances renowned for their therapeutic properties. These include ingredients such as *Triphal*, *Ashoka Twak* (bark of the *Saracaasoca* tree), *Udumbar Lodhra* (bark of *Ficusracemosa*), *Jiraka* (cumin seeds), *Kanjika* (fermented gruel), *Kshara* (alkaline substance), *Saindhava* (rock salt), and *Lavana* (common salt). These components possess astringent qualities, meaning they help contract and tone tissues, hygroscopic attributes for moisture absorption, and wound-healing properties, collectively contributing to the suppository's beneficial effects.

*Varti* is employed to address various conditions, particularly vaginitis and cervicitis and their composition is specifically tailored to alleviate symptoms and promote healing. The localized application of vaginal suppositories facilitates direct drug delivery and absorption into the vaginal tissues, thereby enhancing the therapeutic impact for more effective treatment.

### ***Yoni Purana***

"*Yoni Purana*" refers to a technique in Ayurvedic medicine involving the process of introducing and retaining medicinal substances in the vaginal canal. This procedure is employed to facilitate the absorption of active principles from these substances, which may include oil, *Churna* (powder), *Kalka* (paste), *Veshvara* (medicated preparation), *Pinda* (bolus), and similar forms, compacted into a mass and inserted into the vaginal canal. The active principles from these substances are absorbed through the vaginal or cervical epithelium, resulting in the desired therapeutic effects. For instance, oils can be poured into the vagina and sealed with a tampon, allowing the active compounds to be absorbed gradually.

*Yoni Purana* can offer symptomatic relief in conditions such as dyspareunia (painful intercourse) and vaginal dryness caused by estrogen deficiency. By introducing and retaining medicated substances in the vaginal canal, this procedure aims to provide localized therapy and address specific concerns related to the vaginal health and comfort of the patient.

## CONCLUSION

The majority of women have some uncomfortable physical and psychological symptoms during cervical erosion. Here, an effort has been made to add to the existing body of information on the subject. As none of the *Samhitas* specifically explain *Garbhashaya Grivamukhagata vrana*, the study becomes challenging in order to provide the therapy. To the greatest extent possible, a thorough description of the *Hetu*, *Purvarupa*, *Rupa*, *Samprapti*, and *Upashaya* is attempted. Due to its signs and symptoms, *Pittaja* and *Kaphaja Yonivyapada* are most often acceptable when we link with *yonivyapada* in this case. However, *Vrana* is the most suitable option because it exhibits a similar character. *Adhishthana* as yoni and symptom can interpret *Twak Mamsagata vrana* as cervical cerosion. In Sthanika Chikitsa *Kshara karma and Agnikarma* is an excellent Ayurvedic treatment for cervical erosion. The steps and technique of operation are nearly identical to allopathic surgical treatment. It produces results that are equal to those of current management, cost. Cervical erosion is less likely to return thanks to an efficient, quick, and simple surgery. In addition, *Kshara Karma* and *Agnikarma* with other local treatment like *Yoni Pichu*, *Yoni Varti*, *Yoni Purana* etc. appears to be a safe, simple, quick, and cost-effective technique with little risk of complications and problem recurrence.

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