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ஆயுர்வேத சமீக்ஷா  
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தேவன வெலிம்  
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லிமோலோசிலிவ கலி  
மலர் பதினொன்று  
PART XI

ஈயூர்வேத டேபார்ட்மென்டில் விசைப் ப்ரகாசன சலிடீவன் லிமர்சன லாசீலிச சங்ரஹச  
ஆயுர்வேதத் திணைக்களத்தின் றுண் - மதிப்பாய்வு இதழ் வெளியீடு  
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# Ayurveda treatment approach to uterine fibroid based on Arbuda Chikitsa

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## Abstract

This study is aimed to conduct pedagogical review for develop Ayurveda treatment methods to manage uterine fibroids based on Arbuda Chikitsa. A comprehensive review was conducted on literature in books of Ayurveda Brihatraya, Laghutraya and Google scholar up to May 2019 for articles in English, Sanskrit and Sinhalese. Treatment line for Arbuda was identified and summarized. The same treatment process of Arbuda, which comprised of Shodana Karma followed by Shamana Chikitsa can be adapted for uterine fibroids as it was identified as an abnormal growth of Mansa Dhatu of the uterus; Garbhasagata Arbuda. Avastanochita Chikitsa recommended for specific treatment to control clinical features or complications. Oral drugs and treatment procedures were the key components of the management as 35.71 percent of reviewed studies were conducted in combination of both methods. Modified treatment protocols were developed based on clinical importance of different fibroids cases, with subfertility, fibroids in pregnancy or main complain of fibroids. When

analyzed these facts, it can be concluded that treatment approach developed for uterine fibroids shows close relationship with Arbuda Chikitsa. It is to be treated with Shodhana, Shaman and Shalyaja treatments as mentioned in Arbuda Chikitsa. Both oral drugs and treatment procedures are equally essential in this context. Along with that few modifications are needed according to the clinical importance.

**Keywords:** Arbuda Chikitsa, Uterine fibroids, Ayurveda

## Introduction

Uterine fibroids are the most common noncancerous growth in women of reproductive age. They are treated mainly by surgical interventions, either myomectomy or hysterectomy. While a hysterectomy relieves all uterine fibroid related symptoms by removing the uterus, many women are opposed to having a hysterectomy due, in large part, to the undesirable comorbidities such as inpatient hospitalization, prolonged fever, transfusion, scarring, relatively long recovery time to pre-surgical levels of activities.<sup>[1]</sup> and elimination of future

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pregnancies. Therefore, it would be highly desirable for the condition to be treated as conservatively as possible. In current scenario new class of medicines are being introduced to treat this condition. Many researches have been studied on Selective Progesterone Receptor Modulators (SPRM). Studies carried out in United States, mainly series of PEARL and VENUS studies have shown significant results on reducing the fibroid size and controlling fibroid related symptoms. PEARL I & II studies work with ulipristal acetate (UPA) and it is a SPRM on potential relationship on fibroid volume reduction verses control of bleeding. PEARL I was double blind, placebo control, phase III is a study.<sup>[2,3,4,5]</sup> Yet current medical treatment approaches are still far from optimal. SPRMs and Gonadotrophin releasing hormones (GnRH) antagonists shows effective, safe and durable treatment for fibroids and importantly, have the potential of being fertility friendly. In this context, various complementary and alternative medicine treatments have been administered for uterine fibroid, including Sri Lankan Ayurveda, the most popular complementary medicine in Sri Lanka. According to Ayurveda, these benign neoplasms can be compared with the clinical condition 'Arbuda'. The word Arbuda is derived from 'Arba' or the condition which develops for 'Himsa' means harm, injury or killing. Based on above derivation, it can be said that 'Arbuda' is a disease which grows fast and cause either destruction of local

tissues or body part or even death. Fibroid can be considered as abnormal Mamsa Dhatu growth of uterus. Susruta Samhita,<sup>[6]</sup> has explained etiopathogenesis to vitiate Vata etc. Dosas, vitiating Mamsa (muscles), Rakta (blood) and Meda admixed with Kapha produce rounded, protuberant, knotty and hard swelling. Since it is knotty or glandular, which is closely similar to uterine fibroids.

Therefore, it is an important need to collect facts related to uterine fibroids treatment approach on Ayurveda perspective. This study is aimed to develop pedagogical review on Ayurveda treatment approach to uterine fibroids based on Arbuda Chikitsa.

## Methodology

A comprehensive review was conducted based on literature in Brihatraya and Laghutraya. Google scholar search was conducted up to May 2019 for articles in English, Sanskrit and Sinhalese. Searched keywords were Arbuda, uterine fibroids, leiomyomas. Currently available published research works were analyzed. Review articles and abstracts were excluded from the study. To obtain authentic data about Arbuda, books in Brihatraya and Laghutraya were searched, which are identified as major authentic texts of Ayurveda medicine.<sup>[7]</sup> Findings were critically analyzed and discussed to develop management protocol for uterine fibroid treatment.

## Results

Table 1 explains the mode of intervention of previous studies. Eight studies (57.14%) used oral administration as the

intervention, but it can be seen that recent studies have used both oral and external treatments in their protocol.

Table 1: Studies on Ayurveda clinical interventions on Uterine fibroid

Mode of drug intervention					
Oral		Other routes and external		Combined	
03	Case study <sup>[8,9,10]</sup>	01	Case study <sup>[16]</sup>	03	Case study <sup>[17,18,19]</sup>
03	Case series <sup>[11,12,13]</sup>			01	Case series <sup>[20]</sup>
02	Randomized comparative clinical study <sup>[14,15]</sup>			01	Randomized clinical study <sup>[21]</sup>
08 studies (57.14%)		01 study (7.14%)		05 studies (35.71%)	

Samprapthi Ghataka or component of manifestation of uterine fibroids are listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Samprapthi Ghataka of uterine fibroids pathogenesis

1.	Dosha	Vata Kapha predominant Tridoshika Vyadhi
2.	Dushya	Mamsa is the principle Dushya.
3.	Agni	Dhatvagni Mandata specially Mansa Dhatvagni
4.	Srotasa	Rasavaha, Raktavaha, Mansavaha, Medovaha Srotasa and Artavavaha along with the involvement of other Srotasa
5.	Sroto dushti	Atipravriti is initial defect in Srotasa followed by Sroto Sanga
6.	Udbhavasthana	Garbhashaya, Pakvashayottha Vyadhi
7.	Roga marga	Abhyantara Roga Marga
8.	Svabhava	Chirikari
9.	Sadhyasadata	Asadhya (Yapya) Vyadhi



Table 3 described the studied oral drugs; decoctions, Arishta, Asava, pills, Choorna

in uterine fibroids management by previous researches.

Table 3: Drugs prescribed for oral use in fibroids management

Decoction	Arishta/ Asava	Pills	Choorna	Other
Punarnavashtaka Kwata Lekhanya Mahakashaya. <sup>[22]</sup> Varunadi Kwata. <sup>[23]</sup> Thiphala Gugul Kwata	Ashokarishta. <sup>[25]</sup> Dashamoola Arishta Lodrasava	Panchatikta Grita Gugulu Shigru Gugul. <sup>[25]</sup> Kanchanara Gugulu Trayodashanga Gugulu. <sup>[26]</sup>	Satapushpa Choorna Krishnajeeraka Choorna Jalakumbhi. Churna ( <i>Pistia Stratitotus</i> ). <sup>[27]</sup> Gomutra Haritaki. <sup>[28]</sup>	Phalakshara 30 mg with Grita. <sup>[29]</sup> Phalaksharodaka 30 ml Haridra Khanda. <sup>[30]</sup>

Various Ayurveda treatment procedures studied by previous researches were included in Table 4

Table 4: Ayurveda treatment procedures used in the studies

Yoga Vasti	Palasha Basti <sup>[31]</sup> for Asthapana Basti and Tila Taila for Anuvasana Basti. Lekhana Basti – Lekhaniya Mahakashaya. <sup>[28]</sup>
Uttara Vasti	Apamargakshara oil 5ml- 3day in 3 consecutive cycles. <sup>[27]</sup> Phalakshara Taila 5ml /per day for 6 days after menstruation. <sup>[28]</sup>
Virechana	Trivrut Avaleha with Triphala Kwata. <sup>[29]</sup>

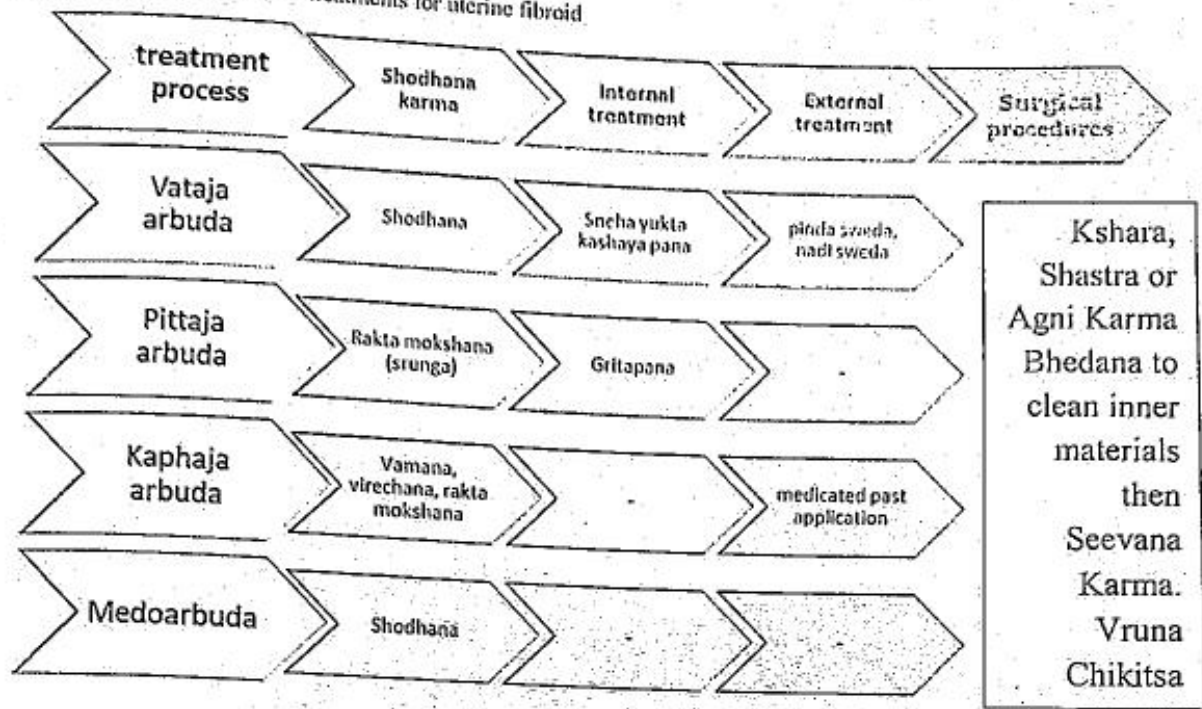


Figure 1: Summary of the Arbuda treatment [32,39,40]

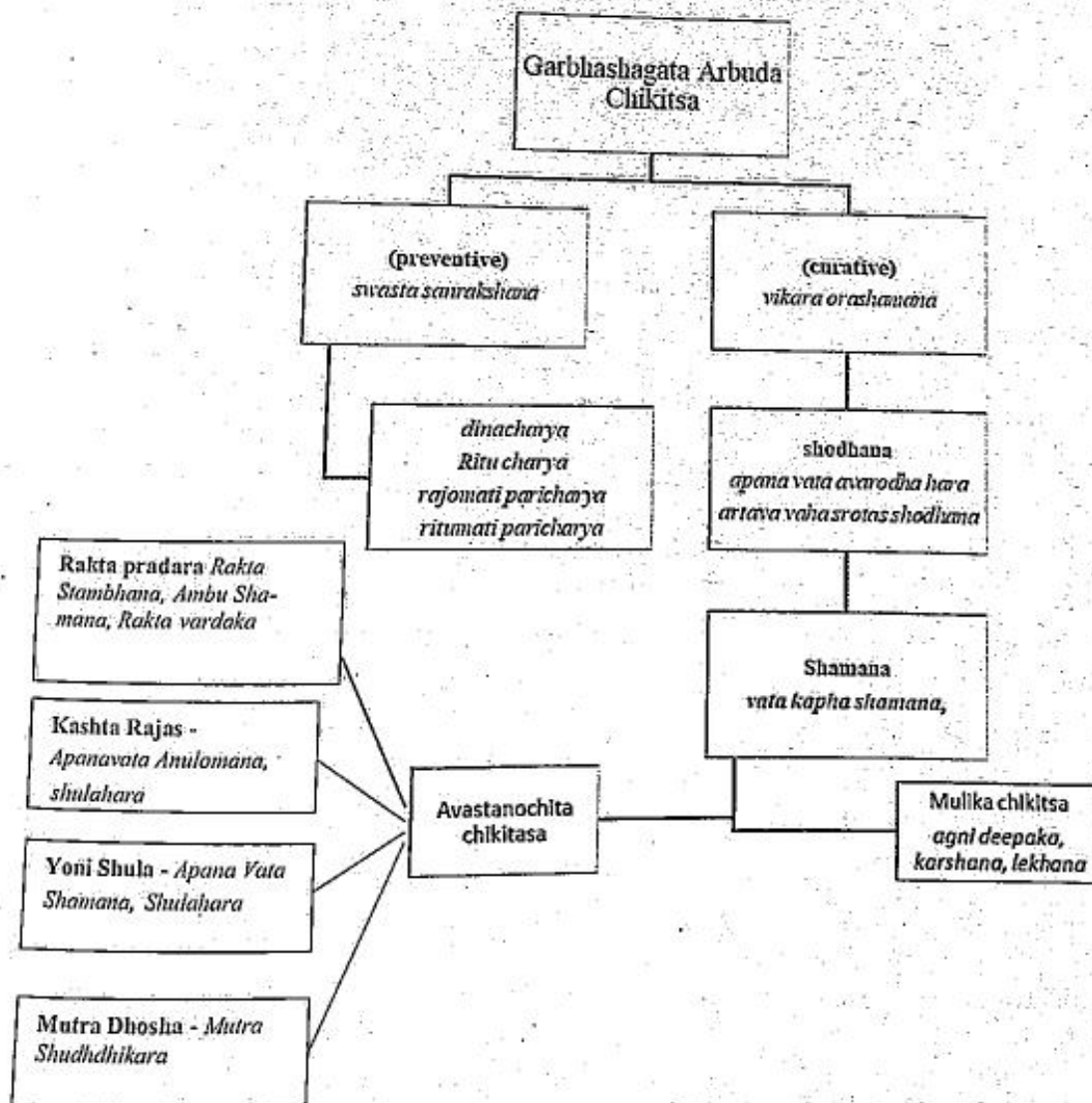


Figure 2: Ayurveda treatment approach to uterine fibroids

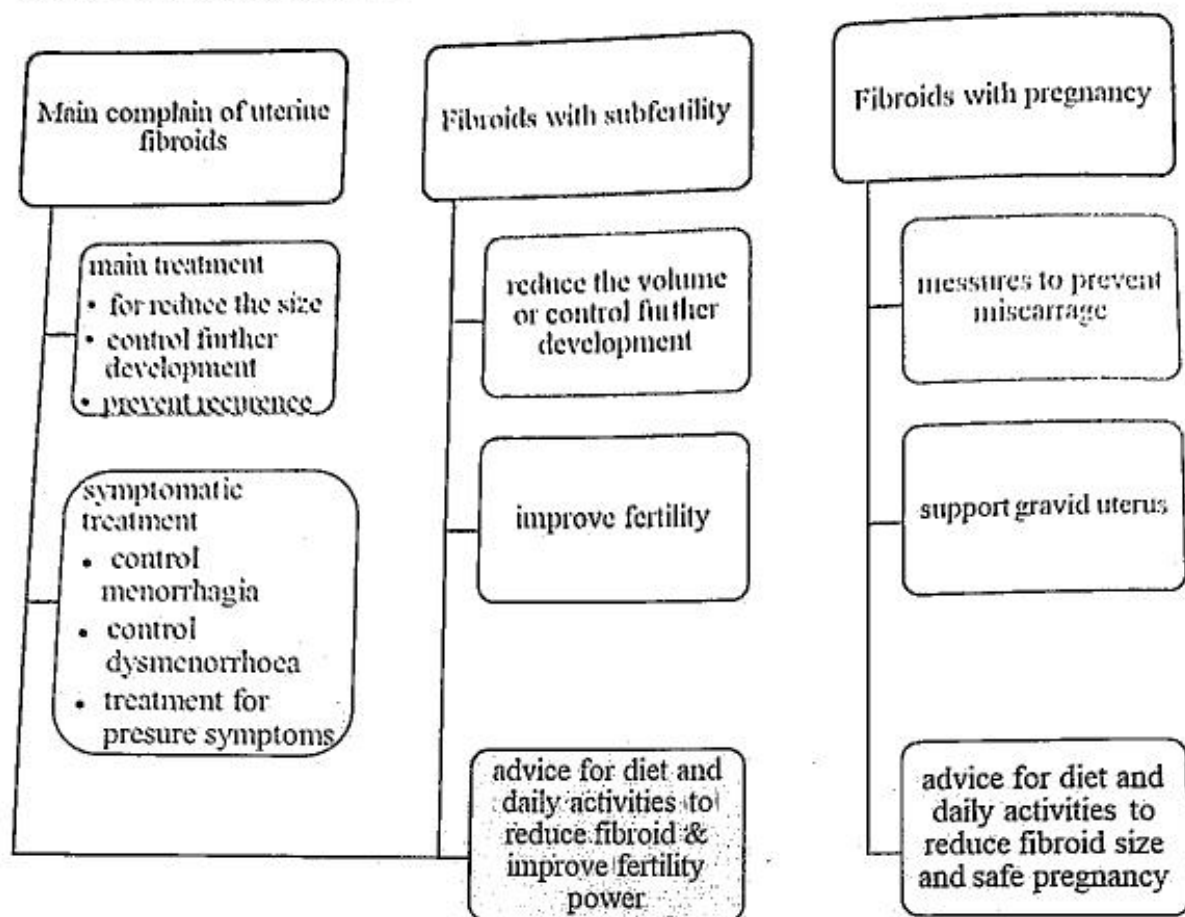


Figure 3: Treatment options for fibroid management according to the clinical presentations

## Discussion

For the authentic data in Ayurveda literature, English translations of ancient Ayurveda texts were searched. Six books in the category were selected. All these six books were contained literature on Arbuda. In Brihattraya, Charaka Samhita two chapters, Susruta Samhita three chapters, and two, in Ashtanga Samgraha two chapters described facts on Arbuda. Other three books; Sharangadhara Samhita,<sup>[33]</sup> Madava Nidana<sup>[34]</sup>, Bhavaprakasha<sup>[35]</sup> mentioned Arbuda under single chapter each. Fourteen web based publications were identified on Ayurveda clinical interventions on treatment of uterine fibroids (Table 1).

It was identified that most of the studies were carried out with single or combination of oral drugs. The fibroid management only with external treatment was studied by one study. Rest of the studies were conducted with drug regimens were contained both oral and external treatment procedures.

## Importance of Samprapti Ghataka for the treatment of the disease

Components of manifestation of disease are named as Samprapti Ghataka.<sup>[36]</sup> To develop effective treatment line, identifying these components are essential. Main Samprapti Ghataka



involving the pathogenesis of uterine fibroids was identified based on available literature and tabled (Table 2). Arbuda is a Vata Kapha<sup>[37]</sup> predominant disease which involves Tridosha. Similarly, uterine fibroids Dosha combination should be understood. Hence, uterine myometrium is the tissue, where the fibroid occur. Dushya would be Mamsa and the Mamsa Dhatvagni Mandya (decreased) which is prominent (Table 2). Associated Srotas could be mainly Rasavaha, Raktavaha, Mansavaha, Medovaha Srotasa and Artavavaha due to disease location and the associated clinical presentations including menstrual irregularities, weight gain etc. An accumulation of fibroid tissues in particular location of the myometrium, Atipravriti can be considered as initial Sroto Dushti followed by collection of fibroid tissues or Sroto Sanga. Udbhava Stana or location of the disease, Garbhashaya is a Pakvasha Samutta visceral organ. Hence, it is a need to consider Abhyanthara Roga Marga or internal route. When considering the prognosis, Ayurveda described several patterns. Uterine fibroid can be categorized under Chirakari or a condition persist for longer duration and Asadhya type of Yapy Vyadhi as it classified in Mansaya Arbuda which documented as Asadhya.<sup>[38]</sup>

#### Summary of Chikitsa Muldharmas for Arbuda

Charaka acharya has been mentioned Arbuda as Shopha Vishesha (one of the forms of Shotha). The etiology and Chikitsa described in Shotha can also be considered as etiology and Chikitsa of Arbuda.

Susruta and Vagbhata have been given specific treatment lines for each type of

Arbuda.<sup>[19,39]</sup> Vataja Arbuda treat with Sneha Yukta Kashaya Pana, Pinda Sweda, Nadi Sweda and Rakta Mokshana by Sroonga Grita Pana are indicated for Pittaja Arbuda along with Mrudu Upanaha Sweda, Virechana, application of medicated past over the tumor. Kaphaja arbuda is treated first by Vamana, Virechana, Rakta Mokshana then medicated past has been applied over the tumor. Medo Arbuda is indicated to treat mainly with surgical procedures; Swedana, Bhedana to clean inner materials then Seevana karma (Sutured) after bleeding stops, then apply medicated past and oil over the wound. Book Ashtanga Sangraha says Arbuda should be removed without leaving any remnant by using Kshara, Shashtra or Agni karma to prevent reappearance. When considering the above treatments, it is clear that line of the treatment develops on the basis of Shodhana and Shaman Chikitsa. One's disease cannot be controlled by these measures. Therefore, surgical procedures are introduced.

#### Develop a treatment protocol for fibroid based on Ayurveda Chikitsa Muladharma

Line of Ayurveda treatment on uterine fibroids could be developed based on above process. In fibroids treatment, it should be started with Shodhana Chikitsa. Vata, Kapha. Dominating Tridosha are involved in the Pathogenesis of the Arbuda (Table 3). Hence, Vata Kaphahara medications are required. Dushya is known as Mansa and Meda. Hence, the medications should be possessed Lekhana properties. Along with that Amapachana, Agni Deepana drugs are needed for breaking the Sanga, Atipravritta type of Srotodushti. In features of Yapy Vyadhi

Charaka says 'Patya Sevaye Alpa Sukham' can be survived by Patya (wholesome) regimen. Therefore, correct dilatory and lifestyle advisers are also essential in the treatment regimen.

### General line of treatment (Mulika Chikitsa)

As a practice uterine fibroids are treated with general line of treatments (Mulika Chikitsa) along with specific treatment to control clinical features or complications. Mulika Chikitsa totally focus to eradicate tumor by attacking the pathogenesis. The management initiated by Shodhana Chikitsa followed by Shamana Chikitsa according to Ayurveda basic concepts and line of management has been given for Arbuda. Vata Kapaha Shodhana should be planned as they were the main two Dhatu vitiation on this condition. Further, Srothas purification is essential for Rasavaha, Raktavaha, Mansavaha, Medovaha Srotasa and Artavavaha Srotas as there are obstructions (Sanga) or Atipravrutthi (excessive action) occurs in pathogenesis.<sup>[41]</sup> Mansa Dhatu Shodhana Kriya is also essential at this level. Once the Shodhana process is successfully completed, Shodhana treatments are initiated. As uterine fibroids are Pakvashagata diseases, Apanavatha Shamana is essential. By that correct regulation of reproductive hormones, control abnormal tissue metabolism of myometrium, correct menstrual abnormalities can be achieved. Same time, Agni Deepana treatments are essential to prevent Ama formation. Lekhana drugs act by scraping, scratching or by removal of excess Dosha. Therefore, Lekhana said to be effective on obesity and abnormal growths (benign and malignant) of body.<sup>[42]</sup> Hence, shaman treatment needs to be adapted with Lekhana drugs.

### Symptomatic treatments (Avastanochita Chikitsa)

Along with this Mulika Chikitsa or general measures, Avastanochita Chikitsa or symptomatic treatments also can be continued for the purpose of controlling signs and symptoms. These treatments can be decided according to the clinical presentations. Though Ayurveda is not clearly described on uterine fibroids, its various clinical presentations are almost have being addressed. Clinically, they present with a variety of symptoms: menstrual disturbances including menorrhagia, dysmenorrhea and inter menstrual bleeding. Pelvic pain unrelated to menstruation; and pressure symptoms such as a sensation of bloated ness, increased urinary frequency and bowel disturbance. Dyspareunia and non-cyclic pelvic pain resulted from uterine fibroids has been discussed by other studies too.<sup>[43]</sup> Menorrhagia and inter menstrual bleeding should be treated by following Raktapradara Chikitsa.<sup>[44]</sup> Rakta Stambhana drugs for Hemostats. For that astringent herbs that stopped bleeding are being used. Balance hormones by using Ambu Shamaka measures are also important in menorrhagia. Further, Rakta Vardaka treatment is needed to correct depletion of hemoglobin level. Apanavata Anulomana, Vedana Nashana (Analgesic) treatments are needed for the cases with Kashta Rajas (Dysmenorrhoea). Same Apana Vata Anulomana treatments can be adapted for Maithuna Asahishnuthva (dyspareunia) and Kati Shula (noncyclic pelvic pain). Muthra Dosha (increased urinary frequency) associated with fibroids can be managed with the help of Muthra Shodhaka (urine purification), Muthra Vaha Srothas Avarodha Hara measures.

### Identify key components of the management

Every Ayurveda management protocols contains few key components; internal treatments, external treatments along with Pathyapathya (advice on Do's and Don'ts). Based on those protocols medicine and formulas could be incorporated for fibroids management is given in table 3. They were compiled with Decoctions, Arishta, Asava, pills, powders and other dosage forms including Kshara and Khanda.

### Modify protocol based on clinical importance

Treatment options for fibroid management is vary with the clinical presentations. As this is a disease of reproductive period fibroids with subfertility, fibroids in pregnancy or main complain of fibroids are to be considered in different angles. If patient required only the alleviation of the fibroid, normal fibroid treatment approach can be adapted. But in case of subfertility associated conditions, there should be a modified treatment line. In such conditions, treatment for reduce the fibroids volume or to focus on control the growth should be decided on the size of the fibroids and associated features. With the clinical experience, if the fibroid size is 3 cm diameter or less than it, controlling further development is sufficient while improving the fertility power. Dietary advisors suitable for controlling the growth of fibroid and improving fertility power should also be incorporated. In the cases of larger volumes, total focus should be paid on

size reduction. Once it is achieved, fertility treatments can be started. Pregnancy with fibroids is another common clinical presentation to Ayurveda as surgical interventions are restricted. At this point, Garbhastapana and Prajastapana drugs should be prescribed to prevent miscarriage and support the gravid uterus. Masanumasika Garbhini Paricharya should be modified by suitable measures which can prevent further development of uterine fibroid in pregnancy.

### Conclusion

Process of treatment advised for Arbuda is starting from Shodana Karma followed by Shaman Chikita. If the condition cannot control, surgical procedures are being advised. Treatment approach of uterine fibroids shows close relationship with Arbuda Chikitsa. It should be treated with Shodhana, Shamana and Shalyaja treatments as mentioned in Arbuda Chikitsa. Few modifications are needed according to the clinical importance. Rakta Pradara Chikitsa for menorrhagia, Kashtartava Chikitsa for dysmenorrhea, Apanavata Anulomana for pelvic pain, Mutrashodaka Kriya for urinary complications can be designed along with the main line of management. As this is a disease of reproductive period fibroids with subfertility, fibroids in pregnancy or main complain of fibroids which are to be considered in different angles.

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