

# Understanding Asthisara in Ayurveda: Evaluation Method and Clinical Applications

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## ABSTRACT

Examination is a pivotal aspect of clinical practice, assisting physicians in accurate diagnosis and selection of appropriate treatments. *Ayurveda Samhitas* detail various types of *Pareekshas*, one of which is *Sara Pareeksha*, described in the context of *Dasavidha Pareeksha*. The *Lakshanas* of eight types of *Sara* have been outlined. *Sara* represents the *Vishuddha Tara* of *Dhatu*, meaning the purest form of a *Dhatu*. Examining *Sara* allows us to analyse the qualitative aspect of the *Dhatu*. Based on the *Lakshanas*, individuals can be categorized as *Pravara*, *Madhyama* and *Avara Sara*, aiding physicians in assessing the strength of *Dhatu*s and predicting the clinical course of a disease. This article reviews the concept of *Sara*, specifically *Asthisara*, and its importance in clinical practice.

**KEYWORDS:** *Ayurveda, Rogi Pareeksha, Sara, Asthisara*

## INTRODUCTION

Examination has long been considered the first step in diagnosing a disease. Despite advances in laboratory and radiological investigations, initial examination remains essential. *Ayurveda* considers *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala* as the *Moola* (fundamental components) of the body<sup>1</sup>, whose normal state is crucial for maintaining *Swasthya*. In disease, the normalcy of *Dosha*, *Dhatu* or *Mala* is disturbed. Physicians can understand and assess these disturbances through various *Pareekshas* explained in *Ayurveda*, facilitating the assessment of *Roga* and *Rogi Bala* for planning appropriate treatment. *Sara Pareeksha*, primarily explained in the context of *Dasha Vidha Pareeksha*<sup>2</sup>, is used for the assessment of *Dhatu*. *Asthi Dhatu*, attributed with the function of *Dharana* (support) of the body, provides a structural framework. Assessing *Asthi Sara Lakshana* of an individual helps in evaluating the strength of *Asthi Dhatu* in an individual.

## Sara Pareeksha:

The term *Sara* is derived from the root word "*Sre Sthire*," meaning essential part or best, considered the purest form of *Dhatu*<sup>3</sup>. The physical and psychological characteristics of different *Dhatu Sara* described in texts reflect the structural and functional aspects of *Dhatu*s. *Sara Pareeksha* involves a detailed examination of *Dhatu* and *Manas*. *Dhatu Pareeksha* assesses its quantity, while *Sara* assessment focuses on the functional properties of *Dhatu*s. The concept of *Sara* is explained in the *Brihat Trayees*. *Acharya Charaka* discusses it in the context of *Dashavidha Pareeksha*, *Acharya Sushruta* in the context of *Dwadasha Pareeksha*<sup>4</sup>, while *Ashtanga Hridaya*<sup>5</sup>, *Kashyapa Samhitha*<sup>6</sup>, and *Bruhat Samhita* have enlisted types of *Sara* without explanations of individual *Sara Lakshana*.

Overall, the *Lakshana* of *Sara* is described by *Acharya Charaka* as *Sarvasara Purusha Lakshana*, based on which an individual can be categorised as *Pravara*, *Madhyama*, and *Avara Sara*.

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**Sara According to Various Acharyas:**

NO	Charaka Samhita	Susruta Samhita	Ashtanga Samgraha	Ashtanga Hridaya	Kashyapa Samhita	Bruhat Samhita
1	Twak Sara	Satwa Sara	Twak Sara	Twak Sara	Twak Sara	Meda Sara
2	Rakta Sara	Shukra Sara	Rakta Sara	Rakta Sara	Rakta Sara	Majja Sara
3	Mamsa Sara	Majja Sara	Mamsa Sara	Mamsa Sara	Mamsa Sara	Twak Sara
4	Meda Sara	Asthi Sara	Meda Sara	Meda Sara	Meda Sara	Asthi Sara
5	Asthi Sara	Meda Sara	Asthi Sara	Asthi Sara	Asthi Sara	Shukra Sara
6	Majja Sara	Mamsa Sara	Majja Sara	Majja Sara	Majja Sara	Rudhira Sara
7	Shukra Sara	Rakta Sara	Shukra Sara	Shukra Sara	Shukra Sara	Mamsa Sara
8	Satwa Sara	Twak Sara	Satwa Sara	Satwa Sara	Ojas Sara	
9					Satwa sara	

**Table-1 List of Sara according to various Samhitha****Asthi Dhatu:**

The word *Asthi* is derived from "as" and "kthin," collectively meaning "stability." *Asthi Dhatu* is defined as the body's component that remains for a longer time (*Asyate*) and participates in movements (*Kshipyate*) with muscles, placed inside *Mamsa*<sup>7</sup>. It is considered the *Sara* (essence) of the body, as it remains even after the destruction of all other body components.

**Formation of Asthi<sup>8</sup>:**

Unlike other *Dhatus*, *Asthi Dhatu* is formed from its precursor *Medo Dhatu*. The nourishing portion of *Medo Dhatu* and constituents of *Ahara Rasa* are transformed into *Asthi Dhatu* through the action of *Asthi Dhatvagni*. *Prithvi* and *Vayu Mahabhuta* play significant roles in the solidification and roughness of *Asthi*, whereas *Vayu* and *Akasha Mahabhuta* brings porosity in *Asthi*.

**Asthi Dhatu Karma:**

*Asthi Dhatu* is primarily associated with *Dharana karma*<sup>9</sup>. Additionally, *Majja Pusti*, supporting *Mamsa*, *Sira*, and *Snayu* are considered *Asthi karma*.

*Panchabhoutikatva: Prithvi* and *Vayu Mahabhuta*

*Asthivaha Srotas:*

*Medo* and *Jaghana* are considered the *Asthivaha Srotomula*<sup>10</sup>. *Asthivaha Sroto Dusti* occurs due to excessive exercise, stretching, trauma, or excessive *Vata Dosha Pradhan Aahar* and *Vihara*<sup>11</sup>.

**Asthi Pradoshaja Vikara:**

*Adhyasthi*, *Abhidanta*, *Dantabheda*, *Dantashoola*, *Asthibheda*, *Asthishoola*, *Asthi Vivaranta*, *Danta Vivaranta*, diseases of hair, nails, and beard<sup>12</sup>.

**Asthisara Lakshana:**

According to *Acharya Charaka*, the *Lakshana* of an *Asthisara* individual includes<sup>13</sup>:

- *Sthula* (broad): *Prashni* (heels), *Gulpha* (ankle joint), *Janu* (knee joint), *Aratni* (forearm), *Jatru* (sternoclavicular joint), *Chibuka* (chin), *Shira*

(head), *Parva* (joints), *Asthi* (bones), *Nakha* (nails), *Danta* (teeth)

- *Mahotsaha* (high enthusiasm)
- *Kriyavanta* (active)
- *Kleshasaha* (enduring)

According to *Acharya Sushruta*<sup>14</sup>:

- *Asthisara* individuals possess *Mahashareera* (large body), *Skanda* (shoulders), *Brihat Danta* (large teeth), *Hanu* (jaw), *Asthi* (bones), and *Nakha* (nails).

➤ Objective characters	<i>Sthulata</i> of <i>Parshni</i> , <i>Gulpha</i> , <i>Janu</i> , <i>Aratni</i> , <i>Jatru</i> , <i>Chibuka</i> , <i>Shira</i> , <i>Parva</i> , <i>Nakha</i> and <i>Danta</i> , <i>Sthira Shareera</i> , <i>Maha Shareera Maha Skanda</i>
➤ Subjective characters	<i>Mahotsaha</i> , <i>Kriyavantha</i> , <i>Kleshasaha</i>

**Table-2 shows objective and subjective Lakshana of asthisara****Factors Affecting Asthisara:**

Various factors such as *Ahara* (diet), *Vihara* (lifestyle), *Vaya* (age), etc., impact the status of *Asthi* in the body. Consumption of *Atiruksha Ahara* (dry food), *Laghu Ahara* (light food), *Avyayama* (lack of exercise) or *Athivyaya* (excessive exercise), *Ati Chankramana* (excessive walking), and *Vridha* (elder age), *Pitrujabhava* influence on the quality of *Asthi dhatu*.

**Discussion:****Assessment of Asthisara:**

The *Lakshanas* of *Asthisara* can be assessed in three categories: measurement of bony structures, observation (for structures where measurement is not feasible), and interrogation (to assess subjective parameters).

**Measurement of Bony Structures:**

*Lakshana* of *Asthisara* includes *Sthulata* of bony structures like *Parshni*, *Gulpha*, *Janu*, *Aratni*, *Jatru*, etc. Structures such as *Gulpha*, *Janu*, *Aratni*,

*Chibuka*, and *Shira* can be measured and correlated with *Pramana* mentioned in the context of *Pramana Pareeksha*, and can categorize individual as *Pravara*, *Madhyama*, and *Avara*.

#### Observation:

Structures like *Jatru*, *Nakha*, *Danta*, and *Parva*, which are difficult to measure, can be graded as *Pravara*, *Madhyama*, or *Avara* based on observation of proportion and structural integrity.

#### Interrogation:

Lakshana like *Mahotsaha*, *Kriyavantha*, and *Kleshasaha* can be assessed through effective interaction with the patient regarding their daily activities and physical task performance.

Based on the obtained information, the qualitative assessment of *Asthi Dhatu* can be done. By evaluating the *Lakshanas* of *Asthisara*, practitioners can categorize individuals into *Pravara* (superior), *Madhyama* (moderate), and *Avara* (inferior) groups, thereby tailoring treatment strategies to the specific needs and conditions of the patient. Hence, assessing *Asthisara* provides physicians with insights into the qualitative status of *Asthi* without extensive investigations, aiding in planning appropriate treatments.

#### Conclusion:

Prevalence of musculoskeletal disorders in *Ayurvedic* clinical practice is high and these disorders causes a significant impairment in quality of life. Hence in clinical practice, understanding the state of *Asthi Dhatu* through *Asthisara* facilitate *Ayurveda* physician to have a better prediction on disease progression, potential complications, and the overall resilience of the skeletal system. This enables a more proactive and individualized approach to treatment and enhancing therapeutic outcomes.

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