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यन्कल्पिहारकोसमकल्पयन् ॥१॥ विश्वकर्मोणमाहूयपुरीहाडकानि
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SWARNAPRASHAN IS THE UNIQUE TRADITIONAL WAY OF IMMUNIZATION IN CHILDREN: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT:

In the present era where we are facing a new threat every day in the form of fresh emerging diseases, contaminated food and adverse environmental conditions etc, our children are suffering more in such unfavourable conditions. Because of their less developed immune system, they are more vulnerable to vicious cycles of disease and infections. Immunization in modern practice confers only disease specific immunity and has several adverse effects. To improve bala (immunity and strength), medha (intelligence), agni (digestion), ayu (life span) and to prevent child from various diseases and disorders, Acharya Kashyapa has mentioned important role of swarnaprashan. It is a lehan karm which is a unique traditional method of immunization. In this pure gold is given to the child orally along with honey, ghrit (ghee) and other herbs. It helps in boosting up the intellectual power, physical strength and produces generalized immunity in the body without causing any adverse effect. It is the need of the hour to conduct more and more researches on alternatives as swarnaprashana and main stream them. As they will not only help in creating a strong and healthy generation in future but will also serve as an important contribution of Ayurveda to the world.

Keywords: Bala, Medha, Agni, Ayu, Lehan karm, Swarnaprashan

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INTRODUCTION :

Now in the present era, we have interrupted nature and our lifestyles to such way that we are facing a new problem every day in the form of emerging deadly diseases, epidemics, contaminated food and adverse environmental conditions etc. Our children are suffering more in such an environment. Because of their immature immune system, they are more vulnerable to vicious cycles of disease and infections. Recurrent respiratory infections, diarrhoea etc. are the most common causes of illness in immune-compromised children. Also, Immunization in modern practice confers only disease-specific immunity and has several side effects like injection site reactions, fever, drowsiness, vomiting, tiredness etc. So as per the need of present time if we find out something promising from the treasures of traditional system of medicine, which could enhance immunity in children without causing any kind of serious adverse effects, it would be a fortunate thing in the field of preventive paediatrics. Swarnaprashan in this context can serve the purpose. Swarnaprashan as mentioned by acharya Kashyapa is a lehan karma (giving something to lick), which is a unique traditional method

of immunization, that helps in improving the bala (immunity and strength) of child, medha (intelligence), agni (digestion), ayu (life span) and helps in preventing child from various disorders. Swarnaprashan can be given to all healthy children. Benefits of Swarnaprashan has been described according to the duration of administration of swarnaprashan. On administering swarnaprashan for one-month child become tremendously intelligent and stays free from diseases and by giving swarna for 6 months child become shrutadhara i.e he can retain anything he listens^[1]. The present article is a brief review of literature and classical references of swarnaprashan, therapeutic properties and relevance of swarnaprashan. Pubmed, medline database have been used for the search of relevant literature and research paper.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Acharya Kashyapa has coined the term Swarnaprashan. The term Swarnaprashana means administration of gold alone or along with other herbs in a Leha or Prasha form. Acharya Kashyap has described Swarnaprashan in the context of Lehana. Lehana literally means giving something to lick. According to

acharya kashyap healthy or diseased state of a child depends on lehana^[2]. Lehana has been indicated for those children who are healthy but have compromised breastfeeding and are having minor functional problems of metabolism. Acharya Kashyap has explained that, the babies born to the Dushprajata mothers should be administered with Lehana. Dushprajata means a woman who had history of difficult labor. All abnormal conditions in obstetrics case like prolonged labor, delivered prematurely or post term, abnormal presentation and associated complications like preeclampsia etc. Other indications of lehan karma are alpakshira, ashira Janani, and dusta Kshira Janani. Akshira janani can be correlated to those mothers who had complete failure of lactation or are unable to breast feed their babies. Lehana is also indicated in a child who stays unsatisfied after breast feed or constantly cry even after getting proper breastfeed or the child of a seriously ill mother. Child with dominating vata and pitta dosh but diminished kapha dosh, who cannot sleep at night, eats too much, have deeptagni (good digestion and metabolism), passes less feces and urine or doesn't pass stool for 3 days or a child who is not

diseased but still is weak or not gaining weight are considered suitable for lehan karma.^[3]

Lehan karma is contraindicated in certain conditions like poor digestion, excessive sleepiness, increased frequency of stool and urine, indigestion, underweight, child born to a mother who takes complete diet, fever, jaundice, edema, anemia, cardiac anomalies, cough, dyspnea, anorectal disease, GIT disorders, constipation, skin diseases, vomiting, anorexia etc^[4]. Swarnaprashana as a leha can be administered to all the healthy children to improve their growth and development, immunity and digestion. The procedure of Swarnaprashan is described in Kashyap samhita as-. "Keeping the face towards east, swarna (gold) should be rubbed on washed stone with little quantity of water. It should be then churned with honey and ghrita and given to a child for licking (lehana). Swarna increases intellect, digestive and metabolic power, strength, gives long life, is auspicious, virtuous, aphrodisiac, increases complexion and eliminates evil effect of grahas"¹ Acharya Sushrut and Vagbhata have prescribed swarna along with various drugs to the new born soon after the birth. This ritual of giving swarna

along with madhu ghrith and other herbs to the new born baby soon after the birth is called jaatkarma sanskar. According to Acharya Sushrut on the first day of life honey and ghritha mixed with small quantity of ananta powder (gold) should be given to the baby three times a day. On second and third day lakshmana siddha ghrith (ghritha medicated with lakshmana) should be given and on the fourth day honey and ghritha should be given twice. Amount of honey and ghritha should be svapanitalsamita i.e.the amount which fills the palm of baby^[5]. The reason behind such recommendation is that there is inadequate secretion of breast milk for the first few days after delivery so to fulfill the nutritional requirement of baby such practices were considered essential. Acharya Sushruta has also mentioned different lehan yoga for different age groups (ksheerad, ksheerannad, annad). Also, he has mentioned different combination of herbs and gold to improve growth and development, intelligence and immunity in child. Acharya Sushruta - has described four preparations containing gold which provides general immunity , promote growth & development & enhance the intelligence These are: Swarna bhasma with kustha (*Saussurea lappa*), vacha

(*Acorus calamus*), madhu (honey) & ghritha; Swarna bhasma with paste of brahmi (*Bacopa monnieri*), sankhpuspi (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*), with honey & ghritha; Swarna bhasma, arkpushpi, vacha, honey & ghritha, Swarna bhasma, kaidarya, shweta durva (*Cynodon dactylon*), ghritha^[6].

THERAPEUTIC EVALUATION OF IMPORTANT INGREDIENTS OF SWARNAPRASHANA

Swarna bhasma

Gold is a transition metal and group 11 element of periodic table. It is the least reactive chemical element known after noble gases. So swarna bhasmikaran is done to make it little reactive so that it can show its pharmacological properties Bhasmikaran (incineration) of Swarna is an ancient concept of reducing the size of particle of gold. Researches on bhasma has proved that bhasma are biologically produced nanoparticles. It was revealed in atomic absorption spectroscopy that Swarna Bhasma contains about 92 % of gold. Absence of mercury demonstrated in Cold vapor method of atomic absorption spectroscopy is considered as a marker for proper incineration. Through the infrared spectrum of Swarna Bhasma no organic compounds were seen. Same study showed that Swarna Bhasma

principally constitute of globular gold particle of size 56-57 nm.^[7] Swarna bhasma has following therapeutic properties:

1. Immunomodulatory activity^[8]
2. Free radical scavenging activity^[9]
3. Analgesic activity^[10]
4. Anti-stress effect of Swarna^[11]

Madhu (honey)

Honey is carbohydrate rich syrup prepared by honey bees from the nectar and pollen grains of different plants. Fructose and Glucose are the major components of honey. According to Acharya Charak honey is best potentiating agent because of its derivation from various agents. Madhu proves to be curative in various disease in conjunction with many other drugs and medicinal remedies as it partakes the properties of drugs or substances with which it is so used (Yoga-Vahika). Hence it is an excellent synergist^[12]

According to various research works honey possesses following therapeutic properties.

1. Anti-microbial properties^[13]
2. Antioxidant property^[14]
3. Anti-inflammatory action^[15]
4. Anti-diarrheal activity^[16]

Ghrit (ghee)

It is the important constituent of Indian cuisine from centuries. In Ayurveda ghrita comes under maha sneha which includes ghrita (ghee), taila (oil), vasa (fat) and majja (marrow)^[17]. Among these, ghrita is considered superior. Ghrita by its unctuous property subdues vata, by its cooling property it subdues pitta, in spite of being possessed of qualities similar to those of kapha, subdues it when prepared with proper drugs. There is no other unctuous article which imbibes the quality of drugs to the extent that ghee does. Hence ghee is regarded as the best of all unctuous articles^[18]

DISCUSSION :

Swarna is used in the form of bhasma in swarnaprashan. Nano sized particles of bhasma are easily absorbed and assimilated in the body. Besides having many medicinal benefits, Honey, which is the collection of pollen grains acts as allergen. Mixture of ghrita and honey in equal proportion is considered as poison. When this combination is given in smaller amount for longer duration, it helps in triggering immune response in the body. Honey being yogvahi, along with ghrit, which can imbibe the quality of

drugs mixed with it, enhances the therapeutic properties of gold like immunomodulatory action, anti-oxidative & anti stress activity etc. Swarnaprashan is safe for the children as no toxicity of this combination has been reported so far. Acharya Kashyap has indicated lehan for the babies who are deprived of breast milk. Human milk has potent antioxidative properties. Babies who are not being breastfed are prone to free radical induced damage. Swarna Bhasma has been found to possess anti-oxidative properties and its administration can reduce free radical induced damage in neonates who are not being breastfed^[19].

CONCLUSION :

Swarnaprashan is safe and easy to administer. Looking into the benefits it confers, this unique traditional way of immunization should not be overlooked. Further researches and clinical trials are required to be conducted to establish its efficacy and safety and mainstream this distinctive method of immunization.

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