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Swarnaprashan : An ancient method of immunization for children**Patil Minakshi**

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ABSTRACT

Introduction : Ayurveda is called as life science which describes dincharya raatracharya, ritucharya and 16 sanskar which are the basis of life . Swarnaprashan is One of the 16 fundamental Samskara portrayed in Ayurveda . In Kashyapa Samhita, helping memory, insight and invulnerability in infants is described. It is explained under Jatakarma in Charak samhita. Presently Swarna prashana prominently known as an "Ayurvedic method of Vaccination" advanced by numerous Ayurvedic proficient and by legislature of few states. Swarna prashan is additionally called as Swarna Amrita Prashana, Swarna Bindu Prashana. **Material & Method :**The data collected from different articles, Textbooks, Manuscripts, Authentic websites. **Result & Discussion :**Swarnaprashan is a very effective ancient method for immunity enhancement. Among the advantages its impacts on Medha (IQ), Agni (absorption and digestion) and Bala (actual strength and resistance) of a baby is noteworthy when compared with modern vaccination which is specific for certain diseases. **Conclusion :** Immunity power caused by Swarnaprashan provides physical, mental and intellectual growth and prevention of all diseases. Thus, Swarnaprashan can be used to creates competent and healthy children, healthy society and a healthy world at large.

KEYWORDS: Swarnaprashan, sanskar, Jatakarma, Bala, kasa.

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Introduction:

“Children of today are the citizens of tomorrow” aptly describes a child who is an asset & hope not only for Parents and family but also for the whole nation. Many infectious diseases and developmental disorders are prevalent among the children. Ayurvedic medicines are of greater value in combating and preventing many diseases of modern era.[1] Ayurveda is called as life science which describes dincharya raatricharya, ritucharya and 16 sanskar which are the basis of life.[2] Gold is one of the most ancient metals even used for preventive and curative purposes Gold is explained as one among the Sapta Loha[3] (seven metals). It is categorized under-Shuddha Loha[4] (pure metal), which is said to be having both preventive and protective qualities. Gold is indicated for internal use even before conception due to its Rasayana[5] (rejuvenator) and Vajikarana[5] (aphrodisiac) properties so as to beget a healthy baby. After conception, it is used in Pumsavana Karma[6] (procedure done to get the desired sex of the baby and for the proper intra-uterine growth and development of the fetus). After birth in Lehana[7] (supplementary feeds) and Jatakarma Samskara[8-10] gold has been said to have a major role to play.

As the child grows, gold is also being recommended to be given alone or along with various herbal drugs for procuring better Agni (digestive power and metabolism), Bala (physical strength and immunity), Medha (intellect), Varna (color and complexion), Ayu (lifespan),[7-9] etc.

Material & Method : The data collected from different articles, Textbooks, Manuscripts, Authentic websites. collection of data from classical texts of Ayurveda as well as related pharmaco-clinical research articles and dissertation works published have been collected using PubMed and manual search of bibliographies as the sources.

Swarna –Prashana:

Swarna –Prashana has been formulated based on the original reference of Kashyapa *SamhitaSutra stana, Lehan Adhyaya*, where he mention it as accrued method by rubbing the Ashudda Swarna against a hard surface and mixed with Madhu and Ghrita and given for licking. In India it is practiced with different names like *SwarnaVacha, SwarnaBindu, Rathakalpas* (in Srilanka), *Vacha* and *Madhu* etc.[10]

According to Acharya Kashyap “aamathyaa madhu sarpibhyam lehayet kanakam shishuhu suwarnaprashanam

hyetanmedagni
balavardhanamayushyam mangalam
punyam vrushyam varnyam
grahapaham maasat parama medhavi
vyadhibhir na cha ghrushyate shadbhir
maasaihi shrutadharah
suvarnaprashanad bhavet". ka. su. 18/
4-5

Kashyapa explains the same in *Lehana Adhyaya*. *Swarna* is mixed with *madhu* and *Ghrita* along with other drugs which are predominantly *Medhya* (Brain tonics) *Balya* (Strength promoting) and *Rasayana* (Rejuvenating) by action. This also gives us lot of scope for modification by adding different drugs to enhance the quality. Further selection of drugs is aimed to both physical and mental wellbeing of the child.[11]

Dosage:

Acharya *Kashyapa* has not mentioned the dosage for *Swarnaprashana* in specific. However, he has given general dosage of children according to age in the same context from birth. The same can be followed to fix the dosage of *Swarnaprashana*. A few other available references regarding per day dose of *Swarna Bhasma* from various texts are as listed below:

- 1/4th–1/8th Ratti (15–30 mg) *Swarna Bhasma*

- 2 Gunja (250 mg)
- 1 Gunja (125 mg)/As per age
- 1 Harenu
- 1/32 Ratti (3.9 mg)
- 15.5–62.5 mg of *Swarna Bhasma*.

By taking these adult dosages as reference standards, dosage in children can be calculated.[12]

Benefits:

Acharya *Kashyap* has coined the term “*Swarnaprashan*” for administration of gold which has been mentioned in *Kashyap Samhita*. The benefits of *Swarna Prashan* are as follows -

1. *Medha Agni Bala Vardhanam* lect, digestion, metabolism, immunity and physical strength.
2. *Ayushyam*- promoting life span
3. *Mangalam*- auspicious
4. *Punyam*- righteous
5. *Vrishyam*- aphrodisiac
6. *Varnyam*- enhancement of complexion
7. *Grahapaham*- protection from evil spirits and microorganisms.[13]

Discussion:

In 1789, Edward Jenner, for the first time produced vaccine for small pox therefore, he is known as founder of vaccine. Immunizing agents are vaccines, immunoglobulins, antisera.

Nowadays approximately 35 vaccines are available and maximum vaccines

are administered under national health programmes. but with this there are some disadvantages of vaccination which are as follows-

1. Different vaccines for different diseases.
2. Vaccines are available only for 35 diseases and not for many diseases.
3. Fever, nausea, diarrhea, seizures and anaphylactic reactions may occur after vaccination.
4. It is a Painful procedure
5. Preservatives which are used in vaccines are fatal for infants.
6. Various adverse effects of vaccines have been recorded in many countries.

Acharya Charak has explained that there are three types of Bala (immunity)

1. Sahaj (natural/congenital)
2. Kalaj (by time/season/age)
3. Yuktij (acquired).

This categorization of immunity is very much similar to modern categorization. Acharya Sushrut has mentioned that optimum part of all Dhatu, from rasa to Shukra is called oja and this is also known as Bala. This Bala or Vyadhikshamatva (immunity) is increased by Swarnaprashan.

Swarnaprashan is administration of gold alone or along with other herbs in a leha or prash form. Acharya Kashyap has described Swarnaprashan as Leha form. Swarnaprashan is indicated in

healthy children having compromised breast feeding and minor metabolic problems.

It is contraindicated in seriously ill patients. Although lehana is contraindicated on a daily basis but Swarnaprashan is continued for a period of one or six months to get its specific benefits in children. In a study on neonates, Madhu-Ghrit-Swarna-Vacha combination showed a significant effect of humoral antibody formation which was proved by triggering the response of immunological systems by a rise in the total protein and serum IgG level.

Swarnaprashan is given in Pushya Nakshatra due to the belief that this is an auspicious star to use any medicine for its nourishment effect.[14]

Conclusion:

Swarnaprashan is a very effective ancient method for immunity enhancement. Immunity power caused by Swarnaprashan provides physical, mental and intellectual growth and prevention of all diseases. The benefits of Swarnaprashana in children are multidimensional. In a nut shell, Swarnaprashana can be named as a positive health care program for children. Thus Swarnaprashan can be used to create competent and healthy

children, healthy society and a healthy world at large.

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