



CONTRIBUTION OF ASHTANGA SANGREHA IN THE FIELD OF KAUMARBHRITYA

Karam Singh

Lecturer, P.G.Department of Kaumarbhritya/Balroga Rajiv Gandhi Government Post Graduate Ayurvedic College Paprola, Kangra, Himachal Pradesh.

ABSTRACT Ashtang Sangreha is one of the principal texts of Ayurveda. Its theoretical and clinical knowledge has very important place in the field of Ayurvedic Chikitsa. Vagbhata, the author of Astanga Sangrha, gives detail description of Ashtanga Ayurveda and placed Bala (Kaumarbhritya) at 2nd position in it. He mentioned it as a branch which describes the methods of navjata paricharya, purification of breast milk of mother, diseases arising from taking the vitiated breast milk and their treatment. He has given description of Kaumarbhritya in first six chapters of Uttartasthana, Sharirasthana and some related topics are scattered in other Sthana of the Sangrha. He has mentioned all the important concepts of Kaumarbhritya like Navjata Paricharya (care of new born), suddha Stanyaguna, Stanyapanavidhi (breast feeding), Shishu Poshana and Rakshakarma. The list of contributions of Acharya Vagbhata in this field is no way ending and an attempt will be made to highlight the contributions and knowledge of Kaumarbhritya available in Astanga Sangreha in this paper.

KEYWORDS : Astanga sangreha, Vagbhata, Kaumarbhritya, Balsamskara.

Introduction

Astanga Sangreha is one of the principal texts of Ayurveda. Its theoretical and clinical knowledge has very important place in the field of Ayurvedic Chikitsa. Vagbhata, the author of Astanga Sangrha, gives detail description of Ashtanga Ayurveda and placed Bala (Kaumarbhritya) at 2nd position in it. He mentioned it as a branch which describes the methods of navjata paricharya, purification of breast milk of mother, diseases arising from taking the vitiated breast milk and their treatment. He has given description of Kaumarbhritya in first 6 chapters of Uttartasthana, Sharirasthana, and some related topics are scattered in other Sthana of the Sangrha. He has mentioned all the important concepts of Kaumarbhritya like *Navjata Paricharya* (care of new born), *suddha Stanyaguna*, *Stanyapanavidhi* (breast feeding), *Shishu Poshana* and *Rakshakarma* and common disorders.

Vayovihajan (Classification of Age)

Acharya Vagbhata gave second place to Baala (Kaumarbhritya) after Kayachikitsa among 8 parts of Ayurveda.^[1] Acharya Vagbhata has classified Vaya (age) into three types- Bala, Madhya, Vridha. The period up to sixteen years of age is Balam (childhood). During Balaawstha, there will be increase in size of the body and increase of kapha. Because of this, balaa will be having smoothness (sneha), softness (mardhav), shokaumarya (tenderness), less anger and good grace (shoubhagaya) Sh.8/24.^[2] Baala is again divided into stages of Kshirpa (child feeding on only breast milk), Ubhayavarita (children which consume both milk and solid food) and Annada (which consume solid food).^[3]

Navjat Shishu Paricharya (Care and Examination of Neonate)

Ashtanga Sangreha describes in detail the care of a baby after birth including *Ulva Parimarjana* (cleaning of the vernix caseosa), *Pranapratyagaman* (resuscitative measures), *Nalchedan* (cutting of umbilical cord), *Snana* (bathing), *Pichudharan* (external oleation), *Garbhodaka Vamana* (cleaning of stomach by emesis) and *Jata Karma* (initiation of feeding of newborn) and *rakshakarma* (protective measures).

Just after birth, *ulba* (vernix caseosa) of baby should be removed by using Saindhava (salt) and Ghee. This dries the baby, gives sufficient tactile stimulation for breathing.^[4]

If the baby being unable to cry adequately, then the child should be given Bala tail Parishen, two stones should be beaten to make noise near the base of baby's ear (karammulla). This gives stimulation through auditory nerve and helps in initiation of breathing. Above two processes sufficient to initiate respiratory efforts in the baby, but still baby not responds adequately then use krishankapalika surpa procedure, chanting the Mantras in right ear.^[5]

When the baby regained his prana (a proper breathing and cry) and become normal (prakritibhuta), his umbilical cord (*nabhinala*) should be cut at a distance of four Angula (finger's breadth) from umbilicus, tied with a thread, suspended by neck and 'Kustha Taila' be applied to it to prevent sepsis.^[6]

In the *Mukhavisodhan*, Acharya advised to cleaning of tongue, lips and throat with clean index finger with already cut nails of the right hand by encircle with karpas pichu followed by pichudharan on talu (anterior fontanel) with the help of a swab of cotton soaked in ghee.^[7]

Then the *Garbhodaka vaman* procedure should be done by making him vomit with help of Saindhav, Ghee mixture. This results in clearing of chest and throat and baby develops laghava (lightness) and abhilash (desire of feed).^[8] As the said process (vaman or emesis) not practicing nowadays, but in certain conditions stomach wash is advised. This clears the ingested amniotic fluid and blood and prevents vomiting after feeds.

For *Snana* (bathing of baby), decoction of herbs (e.g. kshirivriksha or Sarvagandhodaka or kapithpatra) and use of the water in which heated sheets of rajat or gold immersed, should be used.^[9] These have antiseptic properties and favorable odour.

After Garbhodaka, *Jatakarma* (first feeding ceremony) should be performed following the Prajyapatya method. According to Vagbhata, adequate breast milk formation starts during 3rd or 4th day after delivery, so on the first day the child should be feed three times with the mixture of ananta, honey and ghee. On second and third days, ghee processed with lakshmana should be given. After that, give ghee which is swapanitalsamitam two times and then allowed to breast feeding as much as baby desires.^[10]

Acharya Vagbhata also described *Raksha Karma* to ensure disinfection (where various herbs were used) and prevent sepsis through contact with clothes, bed or ward room of baby. Fumigation should be done with Guggulu and other drugs. Powder of sarsapa, atasikana should be dusted both inside and outside the room. Small bundles of hingu, vacha, tarushka and rakshoghana should be tied to the neck of mother, the child and head end of bed.^[11]

According to Acharya Vagbhata, *Kumaragar* (Mother-Baby's room) should be beautifully built, equipped with all necessary materials, clean, not too much of breeze, soft wind blowing from the east, attended by elder women and doctor, free from bedbugs, mice, mosquitoes etc. and not dark; cletly washed baby bed, bed sheets and cobering and fumigated with rakshoghana drugs.^[12]

Kridabhumi – Kridnaka (playground and toys)

The playground (kridabhumi) should be even, devoid of sharp weapons, stones and pebbles, sprinkled with the decoction of vidanga, marich or of nimbi. The toys should be made of lac, making sounds, of many colours, not frightened, pleasants, bib in size, not having sharp points, having shapes of cow, horse, fruits or other auspicious things.^[13]

Samanya Chikitsa Sidhant (General Principle of Management)

Diseases of children should be treated with mild drugs (saumaya) and non troublesome therapies; except in emergency conditions, purgatives (vireka) should be particularly avoided.^[14] The treatment of diseases of children should be planned carefully determining the aggravated doshas, the diseases, strength of doshas,, disease and

patients, the nature of region, time etc Us.2/26. The dosage of drugs should be kept less as compared to adults, since the children are tender, possess small body and not consuming all kinds of foods Us.2/27. In children diseases which needs virechana (purgative therapy) should be treated by vasti, those needs marsha should be treated by pratimarsha; virechan therapy etc should be administered to the mother only, as found appropriate.^[15]

Balasamskaras (Childhood Sacraments)

Samskaras are rites performed with an objective of imparting qualities in a person. The childhood Samskaras aim at preparing the baby for extra uterine life successfully, ensure adequate nutrition, develop proper feeding habits, prevent infections, adaptation to external environment, give individual identity and educate the child.

Acharya Vagbhata prescribes *Jatakarma Samskara* after performing Prajapatya Vidhi.^[16] Vagbhata has also described *Namakarana Samskara* to be done on 10th or 12th day or on completion of 100th day or one year.^[17] During fourth month, *Niskaraman samskara* advised in which child should be brought out of peurpural apartment Us.1/40.^[18] During sixth month, solid food should be given to the child (*Annaprashan samskara*) gradually, as much as it desires and it goes on discontinuing breast milk.^[19] *Karnavedhana* (puncturing of ear lobes) *samskara* (described in detail) performed during sixth or eighth month.^[20] In the context of *Upveshana Samskara* or sitting ceremony, Vagbhata has enumerated fifth month as the appropriate time.^[21]

Stanayaapnayankala

With the eruption of the teeth, the child should be gradually weaned from the breast. Milk of other kinds like cow or goat's as well as foods which are easily digestible and nourishing should be given.^[22]

Navjaat Shishu Parikshan (Examination of Newborn)

Vagbhata advised that wise physician should examine the baby commencing with head for signs of long life as was described in Prakritibhedhiya chapter Sh.8. In this chapter, Acharya has described features of various body parts like abdomen, forehead, face, head, tongue, lips, mouth, eyes, chest, etc.^[23]

Shishu Roga Vinishchaya (Shishu rujasthan interpretation)

Acharya Vagbhata describes various clinical features which help in deciding the place of origin of pain. Pain in the head should be understood by the closing of eyelids; pain in the chest by biting of tongue and lips, dyspnea, clenched fist and upward gaze. Pain in abdomen is judged by elimination of faeces and urine, vomiting, flatulence, biting the breast, intestinal gurgling sound, bending of the body and back, and bulging of abdomen. Pain in urinary bladder and genitals is interpreted by stoppage of urination, thirst, fainting, staring look, pain and rigidity of arms and legs etc. Pain all over body by unusual crying and abnormal facial expression.^[24]

Concept of Lehana (Electuary)

Acharya Vagbhata describes various drug combinations which were taken in the form of medicated ghrita, mixing with honey and ghrita, enhance the strength, memory, intelligence, longlife, speech, protects from evils etc. Sarswat ghrita, powder of vacha and hema (gold), various seasonal drug formulation are described in detail.^[25]

Stanya and Stanya Dosha (Concept of Breast Milk and related Impurities) Vagbhata described in detail regarding pure stanya, wet nurse (dhatri), effect of vitiated doshas on stanya, treatment of impure stanya etc. The expressed breast milk which becomes homogenous and mixes evenly with water and does not have clinical features any Dosha, is the pure and unvitiated breast milk. This pure breast milk is promoter of health and strength.^[26] Vagbhata also advised not to give breast milk from more than two women. The child sucking breast milk which is overflowing or very full, is likely to develop kasa (cough), swasa (dyspnoea), jawar (fever), chardi (vomiting) due to milk getting into the respiratory passage.^[27] Acharya Vagbhata also mentioned the substitute of breast milk. In the non availability of breast milk, milk of either a goat or a cow having similar properties can be given, milk medicated with bhrityadi (laghupanchmool) or two sthira (shalparni and prishanparni).^[28]

The food and activities of the mother which aggravates or increase the dosas in her body makes for occurrence of diseases caused by those doshas in the child also.^[29] Vagbhata also described vitiated breast milk features. The milk which is vitiated by Vata floats on water, is tikta (bitter) and astringent, frothy, has less fat content and causes

obstruction to the feces and urine. The milk which is vitiated by Pitta is hot, sour and pungent, produces yellow colored lines in water and gives rise to burning sensation during digestion of the child and the milk which is vitiated by Kapha is sweet in taste, salty, thick, sinks in water and is slimy. Features of two and three Doshas are found together when it is vitiated by two and three Doshas simultaneously. Milk possessing the features of the Doshas, when consumed gives rise to diseases arising from the corresponding Doshas.^[30]

Prasvakaleenjanya Abhighat (Birth Injuries)

Vagbhata describes a condition named "Upshirshaka" which is similar to birth injury, caput succedaneum. It is described as the condition caused by vitiated Vata entering the scalp of fetus during delivery resulting in a swelling which is painless and of the same color of the skin.^[31] If the swelling is of recent origin then Medicated oil which are vatanashaka as described in vatavyadhi chapter, upnaha application advised.^[32]

Bala Grahas (Specific disorders of childhood)

Acharya Vagbhata given twelve Balgraha i.e. Skanda, vishakha (skandapasmar), mesha(naigmesha), Shavagraha, Pitra, Shakuni, Pootana, Sheetpootana, Adrishitpootana, Mukhmandika, Revati, Shushakrevat Graha. Among these, first five are Purasha Graha (male) and last seven are Stri Graha (female). Acharya Vagbhata describes the general features of these Bal Grahas, the clinical features of individual Grahas, Gandha, etiology and treatment in detail.^[33]

Common diseases of infancy and childhood

Acharya Vagbhata discussed number of diseases among children. Some of them are -

Kshiralasaka

Breast milk vitiated by three Doshas taken by the child develops number of clinical features. The child eliminates hard or thin frothy feces of varied colors along with discomfort in abdomen. Urine is yellow, white and thick. Fever, loss of appetite, thirst, vomiting, belching, yawning, twisting of body, moaning, shivering, giddiness and ulceration of nose, eyes and mouth develop.^[34]

Balshosha

Balashosha is a malnutrition disorder described by Vagbhata. According to him sleeping too much during daytime, drinking cold water, drinking breast milk vitiated by Kapha causes blockage of Rasavaha srotas. The child develops loss of appetite, nasal catarrh, fever and cough. The child becomes emaciated with his face and eyes being greasy and white Us.2/46.^[35]

Parighrbhika

The child whose mother becomes pregnant again, even though not drink her milk only or due to less milk, develops cough, dyspepsia, vomiting, drowsiness, emaciation, loss of appetite, distension or enlargement of abdomen. This disease is treated by herbs which increase Agni and give nourishment.^[36]

Matrikadoshha

Due to coating of the feces or sweat on anal region, ulcers arising from Rakta and Kapha develop in the anal region of child which are coppery in color with itching, accompanied with many complication. Some authors called this as 'Matrika Dosha' or 'putana', yet others call it Prishtaru, Gudakutta or Anamaka.^[37]

Dantudbhedjanya Vyadhiyan (Dentition related diseases)

Eruption of teeth is considered to be a cause of all the diseases. Jwara (Fever), siroabhitapa (headache), thirst, bharama, Abhishyanda (conjunctivitis), Kukunaka, Pothaki, vamathu, kasa, shawasa, Atisara (Diarrhea) and Visarpa (Skin disease) are specially produced during teeth eruption. Teeth eruption during the eighth month of age or afterwards results into long life whereas before eighth month eruption results into various disorders. Asthi and majja are the cause for teeth eruption.^[38] In the treatment, dantpali should be massaged with the powder of pippali or dhatkipupaor dhatriphala mixed with honey. Similarly vachadi medicated ghee is advised with very effective in teeth eruption diseases.^[39]

CONCLUSION

Ashtanga Sangreha is the third major comprehensive texts of Ayurveda and most legitimate and extensive summary of Ayurvedic principles. Ashtanga Sangreha deals with eight angas and Bala Chikitsa is one of

them. It describes all the important concepts of Kaumarbhritya, diseases of children and their practical treatment. Apart from various research work done till date, there are many more unknown facts to be explored further.

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