



CONTRIBUTION OF CHARAK SAMHITA IN KAUMARBHRITYA

Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT

The “Charak Samhita” is a key part of the “Brihat Trayi,” the three main compositions of ancient Indian medicine, *Ayurveda*. *Charaka Acharya*, often referred to as the “father of medicine,” is primarily recognized for his contributions to this field. However, his contributions to other branches of *Ayurveda* are less well-known. One such branch is *Kaumarbhritya*, which focuses on the care of infants and children, addressing their diseases and management. Although the *Kashyapa Samhita* is considered the primary text for *Kaumarbhritya*, it is not entirely available. *Charak Samhita*, divided into eight sections, in which *Kaumarbhritya* provides essential insights into various pediatric topics such as *Garbha Vigyaan* (Embryology), *Bala Roga* (childhood diseases), and *Shishu Paricharya* (the care of newborns), thereby establishing a foundation for child healthcare within *Ayurveda*. After thorough review it was found that the considered text describes all important concepts of *Kaumarbhritya* (children).

KEYWORDS

Kaumarbhritya, Ayurveda, Garbha Vigyaan, Bala Roga, Shishu Paricharya, Charak Samhita, Brihat Trayi

INTRODUCTION

According to *Acharya Charaka*, *Kaumarbhritya*, the branch dealing with pediatric care, is the sixth branch of *Astanga Ayurveda*. Although *Charak Samhita* does not provide a direct definition of *Kaumarbhritya*, the commentator *Chakrapani* explains that it refers to the branch concerned with child nurturing. *Acharya Charaka* discusses *Kaumarbhritya* in various chapters of the *Samhita*, including *Sharirsthana* (chapter 4 and 8), *Chikitsasthana* (chapter 30) and *Vimanasthana* (chapter 8). Additionally, related topics are scattered throughout other sections of the text. This review aims to provide an overview of *Kaumarbhritya* as described in *Charak Samhita*.

Embryology

The combination of *shukra* (sperm), *shonita* (ovum) and the life principle implanted in the *kukshi* (womb) is known as *garbha* (embryo).^[1]

Garbha (embryo) which is formed with the help of six *Garbha Sambhava Bhava* – *Matrutaha* (mother), *Pitrutaha* (father), *Aatmataha* (self), *Satmyataha* (suitability), *Rasataha* (nutrition) and *Satvataha* (psyche).^[2]

Acharya Charaka has explained the month-by-month growth (*Masanumasik Vrudhi*) of the *Garbha*.

1. Embryo during the 1st month, is completely mixed up and appears *kalushikruta* turbid with all the constituents resembling *Khetbhuta* (phlegm).
2. During 2nd month, it solidifies into forms such as *Pinda* (small bolus), *Peshi* (elongated mass) and *Arbuda* (tumor).
3. By the 3rd month, all body parts are formed simultaneously.
4. The 4th month marks the attainment of *Sthiratva* (stability) in the fetus.
5. During the 5th month, the development of flesh and blood is more pronounced as compared to other months.
6. In the 6th month, the fetus *Bala-Varna* (complexion and strength) develops more
7. By the 7th month, the fetus is fully developed in all aspects.
8. In the 8th month, there is a mutual exchange of *Ojas* between the fetus and the mother.
9. The period from the 9th month to 10th month is considered the time of parturition, with even a single day after the 8th month being crucial.^[3]

The fetus develops in the womb due to the excellence of procreative factors such as the mother and others, excellence of mother's conduct, proper mechanisms of *Upsnehana* (nourishment) and *Upswedana*

from the mother, passage of time and natural phenomena.^[4]

Vaya Vibhajan (Age Classification)

According to *Acharya Charaka*, age is broadly differentiated into 3 types: *Bala*, *Madhyaam*, *Jirana*.

1. Balayawastha (0-30 yrs) –

a.) *Bala Avastha* (0-16 yrs) – *Aparipakva dhatu*, *Ajaat vyanjan*, *Sukumar*, *Akleshaha*, *Asampurna Bala*, *Shleshma Dhatu Prayaha*.

b.) *Vivardhamaan dhatu Avastha* (16-30 yrs) – *Dhatu Vardhamaan Avastha* and *Anaavasthith Satva*.

2. *Madhyaam Avastha* (30-60 yr) – *Satva*, *Bala*, *Virya*, *Paurush*, *Parakram*, *Grahan*, *Dharan*, *Smaran*, *Vachan*, *Vidnyaan Sarva Dhatu Guna Balasthith*, *Avasthith Satva*, *Aashina Dhatu*, *Pitta Dhatu Pradhanta*.

3. *Jirana* (60-100 yrs) – *Dhatwaagni*, *Indriya*, *Bala*, *Virya*, *Paurush*, *Parakram*, *Grahan*, *Dharan*, *Smaran*, *Vachan*, *Vidnyaan Sheenata*, *Vaayu Dhatu Prayaha*.^[5]

Navjat Shishu Paricharya (care and examination of neonate)

(A) Prana Pratyagamana (Neonatal Resuscitation)

Acharya Charaka advises that immediately after the birth of baby, while taking steps to deliver the placenta, the following measures should be taken for the resuscitation of the newborn: striking stones near the base of the baby's ears, sprinkling cold water in summer and hot water in winter on the baby's face. These measures help the baby regain consciousness. If the baby does not stabilize, waving a *Krishan kapalika Shooopa* (a blackened surface broken earthen pot) near the baby should be done until full revival is achieved.^[6]

(B) Snana

According to *Acharya Charaka*, once respiration is established in the neonate and the baby is in a stable condition, the oropharyngeal passage should be cleaned with water, followed by a bath. *Sushruta* prescribes bathing the neonate after the *Jatakarma* ritual, recommending the use of decoctions from *ksheerivirksha*, water infused with aromatic drugs, or water heated with silver or gold, or warm decoctions of *Kapitha* leaves, tailored to the season, dosha and available resources.^[7]

(C) Mukhishodhana (Cleaning of the Oral Cavity)

Acharya Charaka advises that the neonate's palate (*Taalu*), lips (*Ostha*), tongue (*Jivha*) and throat (*Kantha*) should be wiped with the finger, which should be properly clipped, well cleaned and covered with cotton swabs. Following this, the baby's palate should be covered

with a cotton swab soaked in lubricant (*ghee*, oil) (*Pichhudharana*).^[8]

(D) *Garbhodaka Vamana* (Stomach Wash)

Acharya Charaka advises that the child should be given *Vamana* (emesis) using *Saindhava* (rock salt) and *Ghrita* (clarified butter) to wash out the gastric contents immediately after performing *Pichhudharana*.^[9]

(E) *Nala Chedana* (Cutting & Care of the Umbilical Cord)

Acharya Charaka prescribes *Nala Chedana* after *Garbhodaka Vamana*, while *Acharya Sushruta* recommends it after *Mukha Vishodhana* and *Pichhudharana*. *Acharya Vagbhata* describes cutting the umbilical cord after *Ulva Parimarjana*. *Charaka* states that the umbilical cord should be cut at a distance of eight *Angulas* from the baby's umbilicus using an *Ardhadhara* type instrument made from *Swarna* (gold), *Rajata* (silver) or *Ayasa* (iron), followed by tying the cut end with a clean thread. The free end of the clamped cord should be hung around the baby's neck. If pus forms over the umbilical cord, oil prepared with a paste of *Lodhra*, *Madhuka*, *Priyangu*, *Suradaru* and *Haridra* should be applied. The powder of these medicines should be sprinkled over the infected umbilical cord.^[10]

Complications Due To Improper Cord Cutting

Types of Complications -

1. *Ayam* (vertical swelling)
2. *Vyayam* (horizontal swelling)
3. *Pindalika* (circular hardness)
4. *Utundita* (thick and protruding)
5. *Vinamika* (marginal swelling)
6. *Vjrumbhika* (umbilical hernia)

Management -

These should be managed after carefully observing seriousness of involved *Dosha* or mildness of condition treated with massaging, anointing and irrigating *Ghrita* processed with the drugs which do not cause burning sensation and pacify *Vata* and *Pitta*.^[11]

(F) *Jatakarma*

Jatakarma is the first sacrament performed after birth. According to *Acharya Charaka*, on the first day, the neonate should be fed *mantra*-sanctified *Madhu* (honey) and *Ghrita* (*Ghee*). Afterward, the mother should give her right breast for feeding the baby, placing an earthen jar filled with water impregnated with *mantras* near the baby's head.^[12]

(G) *Rakshakarma* (Protective Measures)

Rakshakarma, meaning the protection of the newborn, is described in detail by *Acharya Charaka*. Around the labor room (*Sutikagara*), twigs of *Adani*, *Khadira*, *Karakandu*, *Pilu* and *Parushaka* should be hung, while *Sarshapa* (mustard seeds), *Atasi* (flax seeds), *Tandula* (rice) and *Kankanika* should be scattered on the floor. A packet containing *Vacha*, *Kustha*, *Kshomka*, *Hingu*, *Sarshapa*, *Atasi*, *Lasuna*, *Guggulu* and other *Rakshoghana* (protective) substances should be hung on the door and the same substances should be tied around the necks of both the mother and the child. Inside the *Sutikagara*, a fire lit from *Tinduka* should be kept constantly burning. Female attendants who are friends of the mother should maintain a constant vigil by remaining awake for ten to twelve days. The entire household should be filled with affectionate people and celebrations should be conducted. To invoke auspiciousness upon the mother and child, *Brahmins* well-versed in the *Atharva Veda* should offer prayers twice a day.^[13]

(H) *Namkarana* (Naming Ceremony)

On the 10th day, the mother, along with the baby, after bathing with water containing all aromatic drugs, white mustard and *Lodhra*, should wear light, undamaged and clean clothes. They should adorn themselves with auspicious, desirable, light and splendid ornaments, touch auspicious objects and worship the appropriate deity. *Brahmanas*, distinguished by their hair tied up, wearing white attire and free from deformity, should then offer blessings and invocations. The baby, placed on a pack of undamaged cloth, should be positioned with its head towards the east or north. Subsequently, the baby's father announces that the child is offering salutations to the deity and the *Brahmanas*. Following this, the child should be given two names: one based on the constellation at the time of birth and the other for everyday use. The everyday name should start with *Ghosha* (sonant) alphabets and end with *Anasth* (semivowel) or *Ushma* ones. It should not include a letter with *Vridhi* (diphthong), should align with naming traditions

from previous generations and should not be newly established. The name based on the constellation should resemble the deity associated with that constellation and consist of two or more letters.^[14]

Examination of the Baby^[15]

After the naming ceremony, the baby should be examined to assess the span of their life. According to *Acharya Charaka*, the following features indicate a child blessed with a long life.

1. Hair: Discrete, soft, sparse, oily, deep-rooted and black.
2. Skin: Firm and thick.
3. Head: Naturally well-endowed, slightly larger in size, proportionate and umbrella-like.
4. Forehead: Broad, firm, even, well-united with the temporal region, marked with upper signs (three transverse lines), corpulent, wrinkled and half-moon shaped.
5. Ears: Thick, with large and even flaps, equally elongated downwards, depressed at the back, with a compact tragus and large meatus.
6. Eyebrows: Slightly hanging downwards, disjoined, even, compact and large.
7. Eyes: Equal in size, with concentrated vision, clear divisions and subdivisions, strong, lustrous, with beautiful fronts and corners.
8. Nose: Straight with large nostrils, well-ridged and slightly depressed at the tip.
9. Mouth: Big, straight, with well-set teeth.
10. Tongue: Sufficient length and breadth, smooth, thin and with normal color.
11. Palate: Smooth, well-developed, hot and red.
12. Voice: Profound, not weak, sweet, echoing and deeply resonant.
13. Lips: Neither too thick nor too thin, with proper breadth, covering the mouth and red in color.
14. Jaw: Large.
15. Neck: Round and not very large.
16. Chest: Broad and well-developed, with a hidden xiphisternum and vertebral column.
17. Breast Nodules: Distant.
18. Sides: Unbending and stable.
19. Arms, Legs and Fingers: Round, developed and long.
20. Hands and Feet: Big and developed.
21. Nails: Stable, round, unctuous, coppery, high and tortoise-shaped.
22. Navel: Whirled clockwise and deep.
23. Waist: One-third less than the chest in breadth, even, with well-developed muscles.
24. Buttocks: Round with firm and developed muscles, not too elevated.
25. Thighs: Tapering downward, round and well developed.
26. Shanks: Neither too corpulent nor too thin, resembling a deer's foot, with hidden blood vessels, bones and joints.
27. Ankles: Neither too corpulent nor too thin.

These qualities ensure that toys are safe, engaging and suitable for the child's enjoyment and development.

Aushadmatra^[16]

Doshas, *Dushyas* and *Malas* and also the disorders which are in adults are entirely the same in children with the only difference that their quantity is less. Emesis etc., are avoided in children looking to their delicacy, dependence on others and incapability in respect of speech and movements. The learned physician should administer drugs to children in smaller dose according to disease and mostly sweet, astringent, with latex and soft ones cautiously. Excessively unctuous, rough, hot, sour, pungent in *Vipaka* and heavy drugs, food and drugs are contraindicated for children. Thus, treatment of all diseases of children have been mentioned in brief which should be applied by the learned physician after due consideration.

Chayavanprasha^[17]

It stimulates growth in children.

Aragvadha^[18]

Fruit pulp of *Aragvadha* mixed with grape juice should be given to children of the age from four to twelve years suffering from burning sensation and *udavarta*.

As to the query that if man is born of a man why the offsprings of the dull etc. are not similar to their parents, it is said that in the seed (sperm or ovum), the part of the body which is damaged is its genetic source gets deformed otherwise no deformity is seen. Hence both types of

cases are observed. The sense organs of all are self-derived and their presence or absence is dependent on fate. Therefore, the offsprings of the dull etc. are not invariably similar to their parents.

Garbh poshana^[19]

Acharya Charaka mentioned the *Rasa* of the pregnant woman serves 3 purposes: *Swashareera Pushthi* (Nourishment of her own body), *Stanyaaya* (Lactation) and *Garbhavidhi* (Growth of fetus). Being supported by that food, the fetus is dependent upon the mother keeps living inside the uterus.

Garbhodaka Vamana^[20]

Acharya advises doing the *Garbhodaka Vamana* procedure after the delivery of the new-born since there are chances, that the neonate would aspirate meconium.

Atulya Gotriya sharira^[21]

From clinical point of view this chapter throws light on the selection of couple for marriage to obtain the healthy offsprings. *Atulya Gotra Vivaha* is the non- consanguineous marriage which is proven as the one of the solution to overcome genetic diseases. Different conditions explained by Charaka as *Trinputrika*, *Varta*, *Vandhya* resembles with persons with ambiguous sex and genetic syndromes like Turner, Klinefelter syndrome. All these facts about the formation of foetus explained in *Charaka Samhita* are coming into the light nowadays through the knowledge of genetics, embryology and obstetrical science. Signs of detection of pregnancy explained by *Acharya Charaka* resembles with today's physiological changes in pregnant women. *Hinanga*, *Adhikanga*, *Vikritanga* concepts of *Charaka* are the backbone of all today's concepts of dysgenesis, agenesis of organ and congenital defects or anomalies.

Nursery

It should be well planned by the architect. It should be spacious, beautiful, free from darkness and access to wind, well ventilated and strong. Inaccessible for various animals, rats and insects. Distinct spaces of water, pounding, urinals, lavatory, bathroom and kitchen, comfortable in particular season. Equipped by cot, chairs and bedding according to the season. Moreover, protective measures, offerings auspicious rites, ablation and expiatory rights should be performed well there and it should be full of clean and elderly persons, physicians and affectionate people.^[22]

Bedding Of Child

The cot, chair, beddings and coverings for the child should be soft, light, clean and perfumed. Those having contacts with sweat, excrements and insects or soiled with urine and faeces should be discarded or used only after cleaning, drying well fumigating.^[23]

Fumigation

Materials - barley, mustard, linseed, asafoetida, *guggulu*, *vacha*, *vayastha*, *golomi*, *jatila*, *palankasha*, *ashokrohini*, slough of serpent mixed with should be used for clothing, cot, bedding and covering.^[24]

Ornaments (Dharniya maniya)

Amulets to be worn by the child could be made of the tip of the right horns of the alive rhinoceros, deer, blue bull (*nilgai*), bull. Herbs like *jeevaka*, *aindri*, *rishabhaka* or whatever the brahmana conversant in the *Atharvaveda* prescribes.^[25]

Toys (kridanaka)

Variogated, sound producing, beautiful, light weight, without sharp ends, those which cannot enter the mouth, not fetal, not terrifying.^[26]

Dhatri (wet nurse) pariksha

1. *Samavarna* (wet nurse belonging to same caste)
2. *Youvanawastha* (youthful)
3. *Nibhrutam* (submissive)
4. *Anaturam* (free from impatience)
5. *Avyangam* (free from deformity)
6. *Avyasanam* (non-addictive)
7. *Avirupam* (ugliness)
8. *Ajuguptisam* (non-loathsomeness)
9. *Deshjatiyam* (born in same place)
10. *Akshudra-akshudrakarmini* (not mean minded or indulged in mean acts)
11. *Kulejata* (born in good family)
12. *Vatsalam* (having affectionate disposition)

13. *Aroga* (disease free)

14. *Jivadvatcapuvatsa* (having living male child)

15. *Dogdhri* (having profuse lactation)

16. Along with above qualities the wet nurse should be skilled in management, not sleeping on excrements, clean, endowed with excellence of breast and breastmilk.^[27]

Properties Of Uttamstanya:

Prakrutivarnagandharasasparsham (normal color, smell, touch and taste) *Udakapatre cha duhyanamudakamvyeti prakrutibhutvat* (dissolves completely in water if milked in water pot because of its watery nature. *Pushtikamarogyakaram* (milk is nourishing and healthy).^[28]

CONCLUSION

Charak Samhita is a part of '*Bruhatrayi*' has contributed primarily in the field of *Kayachikitsa*. He has mentioned detailed study of diseases and medicinal treatment of adults. *Acharya Charak* has mentioned that adult medicines can be used in pediatric but in smaller quantity. He has given a brief knowledge of neonatology. After thorough review of *samhita*, it was found that the considered text has mentioned all the important concept/aspects of *Kaumarbhritya* like care of new born, breastfeeding, protection of child, neonatal nursery, toys etc. *Acharya Charak* has given detailed description of *Shishuparicharya*, *Sansakaras*, *Stanya Dushti*, *Stanya Dushti Chikitsa*, *Stanya Sampat*, *Kshirjanana dravyas*, *Dhirghayu Balak Lakshana*, *Samanya Chikitsa Siddhanta of Balrog*. *Charak* has mentioned Concepts of *Bala roga* in every *Sthana* like in *Sutrasthana*, disease in *Balrog* are *Kruchasaddhya*, for *Snehan* use of *Rhasva Matra*, *Mrudu Aushadi Upchaar Shreshthata*, Use of *Lajamanda* in Children. In *Nidansthana*, *Bala Dwesha* has been mentioned as a *Purvaroop* of *Jwara*. In *Chikitsasthana* has also mentioned the *lakshanas* of consuming *Dushta Kshira* like *Vata Dushit Kshira* would lead to *Krushata* in *Balak*, consuming *Kapha Dushit Kshira* leads to *Hrudayrog* in *Balak*, consuming *Pitta Dushit Kshira* leads to *Vivarnata*, has mentioned *Hikka Shwas*, *Udar*, *Baalshosha*, *Raktapitta*, *Mrudhabhakshanjanya Pandu Chikitsa*. In *Vimaansthana* has mentioned Age Classification. In *Sharirsthana*, *Shishu Paricharya*, *Stanya Dushti*, *Stanya Sampat*, *Kshirjanana Dravyas*, *Dhirghayu Balaak Lakshana*, *Kridanak*, *Shishu Aahar*, *Kumaragar* etc. In *Kalpasthana*, use of *Chaturangula* has been mentioned for *Daha* and *Udavarta* in Children. In *Siddhisthana*, *Charak* has mentioned *Niruha Basti Matra*, its uses, importance of *Niruha Basti*, *Virechana* etc. As all the concepts related to *Kaumarbhritya* are present in all *Sthanas* of *Charak Samhita*, so an attempt is made to highlight them. Despite existing research, the text holds many hidden insights that warrant further exploration and study, offering potential avenues for deeper understanding and application in contemporary healthcare practices.

DISCUSSION

The *Charaka Samhita* significantly contributes to *Kaumarbhritya* through holistic care guidelines. It emphasizes prenatal and postnatal care, breastfeeding and infant nutrition, ensuring healthy growth. The text details treatments for pediatric diseases, developmental milestones, and immunity enhancement using *Medhya Rasayanas* (cognitive herbs). It underscores mental health, preventive care, and hygiene, alongside creating a supportive environment. Ethical education and individualized treatments based on a child's constitution (*Prakriti*) are highlighted. Practical applications like massage therapy and dietary recommendations integrate ancient wisdom with modern pediatric practice, promoting overall well-being in children.

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