

A REVIEW ON NAVAJATA SHISHU PARICHARYA (NEONATAL CARE)

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ABSTRACT

Navajata shishu is termed as a new-born and paricharya indicates the care and necessary management of new-born. In Ayurveda, our Acharyas gave prime importance to care of new- born (Navajata Shishu Paricharya) which starts from birth to full stability of new-born. Various procedures were mentioned in the management of new-born with a few difference regarding the sequence of those procedures. This article presents a study of the methods described in Navajata Shishu Paricharya revealing their scientific relevance and utility in adequate care of new born.

KEYWORD:- Navjata Shishu Paricharya, Pranapartayagamana, Raksha karma, Resuscitation.

INTRODUCTION

Koumarbhritya is one of the eight branches of the Ashtanga Ayurveda which deals with care of infant, children; their diseases and management. Acharya Charaka and Acharya Sushruta has placed koumarbhritya at 6th and 5th position in Ashtanga Ayurveda respectively. Acharya Vagbhata has placed koumarbhritya at 2nd position. But Acharya Kashyapa placed Koumarbhritya at 1st position in Ashtanga Ayurveda. The subject matter of this branch is available primarily in Sharir Sthana and Uttar Tantra of treatise comprising Brihat Trayi. The term Navajata Shishu refers to a newborn baby, while Paricharya denotes the care and essential management necessary for the well-being of a new-born. Together, the concept of Navajata Shishu Paricharya in Ayurveda encompasses the holistic approach to new-born care.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To study about the concept of Navajata Shishu

Paricharya (New born care) and its importance mentioned in the classical texts of Ayurveda.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The data and information were collected from the classical Ayurvedic texts, pediatrics textbooks, modern literature, thesis and research journals. All these references were compiled, analysed and described in a systematic manner.

Navajata Shishu Paricharya refers to the systematic care and management of a new-born as described in Ayurveda. The practices aim to stabilize the new-born's physiological functions, promote growth and immunity, and prevent neonatal disorders.

Acharyas advised various procedures for the stability of new born with a few difference in opinion regarding the sequence of those procedures.

Table no. 1: Procedures according to different acharyas.

S. no.	Acharya charaka ^[1]	Acharya sushruta ^[2]	Acharya vagbhata ^[3]
1.	Pranapartayagamana	Ulba parimarjana	Ulba parimarjana
2.	Snana	Mukha vishodhana	Pranapartayagamana
3.	Mukha vishodhana	Pichudharna	Nabhi Nala chedana
4.	Pichudharana	Nabhi Nala Chedana	Snana
5.	Garbhodaka vamaana	Jatakarma	Pichudharana
6.	Nabhi Nala chedana	Snana	Suvaranaprashana
7.	Jatakarma		Garbhodaka vamaana
8.	Raksha karma		Jatakarma

1. Ulba-Parimarjana (Cleaning of vernix caseosa)

At birth, new born skin is covered by a white coloured paste called vernix caseosa. It is formed by secretions from sebaceous glands and degenerated epidermal cells and hairs. It protects the skin from macerating action of amniotic fluid. The procedure of removal of ulba from the body of new born is known as Ulbashodhan or Ulba Parimarjana. Acharya Sushruta has advised first to clear the ulba (vernix caseosa) from the body of newborn. Acharya Vagbhata mentioned using a combination of saindhava (rock salt) and ghrita (ghee) for cleansing. Further he advised to massage the baby with bala oil which provide relief from stress undertaken by the baby during the birth process.^[4]

Clinical importance

Our Acharyas had mentioned ghrita and saindhava for removal of ulba. Ghrita, being a poor conductor of heat, helps to protect the new-born from hypothermia.^[5] Saindhava, due to its ability to disintegrate matter and cleansing properties, effectively removes the sticky and slimy ulba.^[6] The drug Bala (*Sida cordifolia*) has the following properties: balakaraka (provide strength), grahi and cures vata, rakatapitta (bleeding disorders) and vrana (Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 25/40 p.468 and Bhavprakash Nighantu, Guduchiyadivarga p.366).

Research also corroborates these facts as *Sida cordifolia* (bala) showed properties like antioxidant activity, anti-inflammatory effect.^[7] Bala oil massage helps in promotion of strength, supports neurological development and provide warmth to the new-born.

2. Mukha Vishodhana (Oropharyngeal cleaning)

As per Acharya Charaka, the oral cavity (palate, lips, pharynx, tongue) of the newborn is first of all to be cleaned with nail trimmed finger wrapped with cotton pad.^[8] Similar description is given by Acharya Vagbhata.^[9] Acharya Sushruta had promoted the use of ghrita and saindhava to clear the secretions of the oral cavity.^[10]

Clinical importance

This process also stimulates the central nervous system, aiding in the initiation of respiration through the activation of gag reflexes.

3. Pichu Dharana (Tampon application)

Acharya Sushruta described placing a tampon soaked in ghrita over the newborn's forehead or anterior fontanel (murdha).^[10] Acharya Vagbhata also mentioned applying sneha pichu on the palate (Talu pradesha).^[11]

Clinical Importance

Murdha/ brhamarandra is a soft intracranial structure of the new born and remains unprotected at the time of birth due to unfused cranial sutures. This practice is beneficial in reducing prasuti kalesha (Birth-related trauma). Placing a ghee soaked cotton piece on anterior fontanel prevents heat loss from the large surface area of

neonate's head and also protects it from injury.

4. Nabhi nala chedana vidhi (Umbilical cord cutting procedure)

The cutting and care of the umbilical cord is known as nabhinala chedana vidhi. As per Acharya Charaka, umbilical cord should be cut at eight angula distance from baby's umbilicus with help of an ardhadhara type of instrument, made from swarna, rajat, ayasa.

This is followed by tying cut end with a clean thread. The free end of the clamped cord should be hung onto the neck of the baby. Acharya Charaka also described various complications owing to faulty technique of nala-chedana. Acharya Vagbhata has mentioned similar technique for nabhinala chhedana. Difference is that he advised to cut umbilical cord at a distance of four angulas from umbilicus. After this kusta medicated oil is used to prevent it from paka (inflammation).^[12]

Clinical importance

It is advised to clamp the cord by thread to prevent bleeding and cord infections by urine and stool. Kushtha has jantughana, vedana sthapana and shoth-hara (Anti-inflammatory) properties. So, kushta medicated oil is advised to prevent infections.

5. Pranapartayagamana (Resuscitation process)

Acharya Charaka advised striking of two stones just near the ears of baby and sprinkling warm or cold water on baby's face. These two steps may prove helpful for the baby to initiate act of breathing. If the baby remains unresponsive, techniques like fanning with a Krishna kapalika soorp (fan) is advised so as to revive the newborn.^[13] Astanga Hridaya described this process after Ulba parimarjana. Vagbhata first gave the signs and symptoms of an asphyxiated newborn. He also described striking of two stones near baby's ear lobule and chanting certain Mantras near his right ear for stabilizing the newborn.^[14]

Clinical importance

From the above description, it is clear that Acharyas were aware of birth asphyxia and other related complications of the birth process at that time. Sensory, tactile and auditory stimulation are produced by measures as striking of two stones, sprinkling water over face. Striking of two stones near mastoid or base of ear produces intense sound which stimulates vestibule cochlear nerve. Sprinkling hot or cold water may stimulate the sensory fibres of facial nerve which stimulates the respiratory centre in brain. Rubbing of bala taila on baby's body serves the purpose of tactile stimulation. Chanting of mantras close to baby's ear may serve as a auditory stimulation for baby.

6. Garbhodaka vamaana (Stomach wash)

Acharya Charaka described using saindhava lavana (rock salt) and ghrita for this purpose.^[15] Acharya Vagbhata has described use of saindhava, ghrita with specific drug

ie. vacha (*Acorus calamus*), which has properties like stimulating digestion, inducing emesis, and eliminating impurities.^[16]

Clinical importance

Garbhodaka vamana prevents chances of regurgitation and aspiration of regurgitated contents. It also prevents vomiting after feeds which may occur due to irritant effect of meconium, blood or amniotic fluid present in stomach.

7. Snana (Bathing)

As per Acharya Charaka, after proper stabilisation of newborn, snana of navajata shishu is to be undertaken (Charaka Samhita Sharirasthana 8/42 p.947). Acharya Sushruta described bathing of neonate after Jata karma. Acharya Vagbhata advised snana to be done on the basis of the doshas, kala and bala of newborn. Vagbhata also mentioned different dravyas like ksheerivriksha kwatha, sarvagandha dravyas, medicated water, water in which heated rajat or swarna have been quenched or in kapith patra kwatha for Snana.^[17]

Clinical importance

Bathing maintains hygiene and medicated bathing water promote healing of umbilical stump and have pacifying properties. Most of the drugs which are prescribed by Acharya's have antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory and analgesic activity.

8. Jatakarma (Feeding schedule of neonate)

Acharya Charaka has mentioned to feed the neonate with madhu and ghrita which has been sanctified with Mantras on the first day. An earthen jar filled with water should be impregnated with mantras and kept near the head of the child.^[18] As per Acharya Sushruta, a mixture of madhu, ghrita and ananta concentrated with mantras should be administered three times a day on the first day of childbirth. On second and third day lakshmana medicated ghrita, while on fourth day madhu and ghrita should be given to the newborn in amount which is svapanitalasamitta (amount which fills the neonate palm).^[19] Acharya Vagbhata follows Sushruta's feeding regimen with a slight variation. On the fourth day, he mentioned offering ghrita and navnita (butter) to the newborn.

Clinical importance

Honey and ghee act as nutrition for the baby because they have a high caloric value. Thus, it gives energy and nutrition to baby. During jatakarma, one can assess the rooting and sucking reflex of neonates. Jatakarma with mantra provide psychological support to mother. Gold powder (swarna) gives protection and enhances brain development of the baby.

9. Rakshakarma (Protective measures)

Rakshakarma includes various measures to protect the newborn from environmental pathogens and negativity. Herbs like vacha, kushta, hingu, sarshapa and guggulu

are burned to fumigate the delivery room (Sutikagara). Rakshoghana dravyas should be hung on the door and same dravyas should be tied around the neck of mother and the child. To best auspiciousness upon the mother and child, Brahmins well versed with the Atharva Veda should offer prayers twice a day.^[20] Acharya Vagbhata mentioned use of herbs such as brahmi, indryana, jivaka and rishbhaka to be tied around hands or neck of the newborn.^[21] Vagbhata also described use of balvacha for this. It promotes medha, smriti, health and longevity of the baby. Sushruta advised the newborn to be wrapped in kshauma (Linen) cloth and made to sleep on a bed covered with soft linen.

Clinical importance

From the above description, it is clear that Acharyas had advocated measures which aim to protect the newborn baby from various infections. The various drugs mentioned in dhupana karma have antiseptic and antimicrobial properties. Thus, hygiene is advised throughout the newborn care to decrease infection episodes during infancy.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that our Acharyas were well aware of the neonatology. All the important aspects of koumarbhritya like care of new born, breastfeeding etc were mentioned by them in detail. Though there is a difference in the sequence of those procedures given by different Acharyas, yet the essence is same. The techniques which are explained by our Acharyas are proven to be relevant in today's scenario. Hence the Navajata Shishu Paricharya aims to protect the newborn and help him to adapt to the worldly environment.

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