



MATRUSTANYA (BREAST MILK) - A REVIEW

Dr. Shubhangi K. Thakur*

Assistant Professor, Kaumarabhritya Department, R.A. Podar Medical College (Ayu) Worli, Mumbai.

***Corresponding Author: Dr. Shubhangi K. Thakur**

Assistant Professor, Kaumarabhritya Department, R.A. Podar Medical College (Ayu) Worli, Mumbai.

Article Received on 22/02/2020

Article Revised on 12/03/2020

Article Accepted on 02/04/2020

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the science of life, bestows upon prevention of disease and maintenance of healthy life. Breast feeding is a pivotal part of child care which needs enormous importance. It is widely recognized that breastfeeding is the best nutrition for human infants. Breast milk is the optimal food for almost all infants in the first year of life. The breast milk provides numerous health benefits to both mother and baby. Breastfeeding should begin soon after birth. *Ayurvedic* texts, formation of *stanya* (breast milk), causes of *stanya pravriti* (or milk ejection), *dhatri* (wetnurse), *dhatri-pariksha* (examination of wet-nurse), *stanapan-vidhi* (breast feeding), *stanyasampat* (merits of breasts), *stanyanasha* hetu (causes of cessation of milk formation), *stanyaviridhi dravyas* (drugs increasing quantity of milk), *stanya apanayakala* (weaning period), abnormalities of breast-milk and its treatment etc. are discussed in detail. This paper helps to explain the importance of breastfeeding with *ayurvedic* aspects.

KEYWORDS: *Stanya*, *stanya pravriti*, breastfeeding, *stanapan-vidhi*.

INTRODUCTION

Breast milk has been mentioned as the one and only effective food for infants. *Ayurveda acharyas* have quoted the importance of breastfeeding in many instances. Breastfeeding is the nature's wonderful creation to protect the newborns all around soon after the birth in terms of love, affection, nutrition etc. Breastfeeding also known as nursing, is the feeding of babies and young children with milk from a woman's breast. Health professionals recommend that breastfeeding begin within the first hour of a baby's life and continue as often and as much as the baby wants. Deaths of an estimated 820,000 children under the age of five could be prevented globally every year with increased breastfeeding.^[1] Breastfeeding decreases the risk of respiratory tract infections and diarrhea, both in developing and developed countries.^[2,3]

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Material related to this topics have been collected from different journals, *Ayurvedic* and Modern text books, authentic websites.

Definition of *stanya*

Stanya is formed from *rasa* or Prasad part of *aahar rasa* and is said to be the *updhatu* of *rasadhatu*. As per *Acharya Sushruta*, when food gets digested, the *aahar rasa* is formed. That *madhur* and Prasad part of *aahar rasa* flows into whole body and this flowing part is called as *Stanya*. According to *Acharya Charaka* as well as *Kashyapa*, when the pregnant lady eats the

shadarasyuktaaahar, it is then divided into 3 parts.^[4,5] The 1st part is utilized for nourishment of her own body, 2nd part is used for formation of breast milk and 3rd part is for development and nourishment of foetus. Normal *Stanya pramana* is 2 anjali.^[6,7]

Formation of *stanya*

After digestion of food the *rasa* is formed. Sweet essence, a part of this *rasa*, circulating through entire body by the action of *vyana vata* reaches breasts and is termed as *stanya*. *Rasa* and *stanya* both are derived from essence of *rasadhatu*. This is the opinion of *Acharya Sushruta*.^[8]

According to *Charaka* and *Kashyapa*, the *ahara* taken by the mother during her pregnancy gets divided into three parts; one for fulfilling the nutritional needs of her own body, second for nourishment of the growing foetus and the third one is used up for the formation of '*Stanya*'. According to *Sushruta*, *Stanya* is the essence (*Rasa* or *Prasada bhaga*) of *Ahara Rasa* and is said to be the *Upadhatu* of *Rasa dhatu* as stated by some *Acharayas*. *Acharya Kashyapa* also stated that *Stanya* is produced from the *Rakta dhatu* during gestational period.^[4]

Causes of *stanya pravrutti*

Stanya flows out by the sight, thought or touch of the child (sucking reflex). Even the remembrance of child, *pravrutti* of *stanya* takes place. After delivery on 3rd or 4th day, the *dhamanis* or *siras* situated in *hridaya* region get dilated and initiate milk ejection (ejection reflex).

Harita explains that due to the force used during bearing down efforts by the delivering (parturient) women, her *srotases* get clears, leading to sudden milk ejection. However, this milk is thick due to dominance of *kapha*, hence should be discarded. *Bhavaprakasha* and *Madhavanidana* and *Susruta* have same opinions about the *stanya pravrutti*.

According to modern science, By the second trimester of pregnancy colostrum, a thick yellowish fluid, begins to be produced in the alveoli and continues to be produced for the first few days after birth until the milk "comes in", around 30 to 40 hours after delivery. Oxytocin contracts the smooth muscle of the uterus during birth and following delivery, called the postpartum period, while breastfeeding. Oxytocin also contracts the smooth muscle layer of band-like cells surrounding the alveoli to squeeze the newly produced milk into the duct system. Oxytocin is necessary for the *milk ejection reflex*, or *let-down*, in response to suckling, to occur.^[9]

Stanpan vidhi

According to *Acharya Charaka*, mother after taking bath and wearing clean garments and tie *prajasthapan* drugs (like *aindri*, *brahmi*, *satavari*, *amogha* etc.) on head, start breast feeding specially offer her right breast first to the child.^[5] *Acharya Sushruta* described as after proper bathing of child and washing of breasts as well as expressing out small quantity of milk and chanting the given mantra, breast feeding starts.^[10] Similar description is given by *Vagbhata*.^[6]

According to modern science, Correct positioning and technique for latching on are necessary to prevent nipple soreness and allow the baby to obtain enough milk.^[11] Babies can successfully latch on to the breast from multiple positions. Each baby may prefer a particular position. The "football" hold places the baby's legs next to the mother's side with the baby facing the mother. Using the "cradle" or "cross-body" hold, the mother supports the baby's head in the crook of her arm. The "cross-over" hold is similar to the cradle hold, except that the mother supports the baby's head with the opposite hand. The mother may choose a reclining position on her back or side with the baby lying next to her.^[12]

Stanya sampat

a. According to Charak - The excellent milk has normal colour, smell, taste and touch. Dissolves completely in water if milked in a water pot because of its (watery) nature. Such milk is nourishing and health giving. Thus is the excellence of breast milk. The woman's milk promotes longevity and nourishment. It is wholesome and unctuous.

b. According to Sushrut -The breast-milk, which put in water becomes one with it, is pale, sweet and free from abnormal color, and should be known as normal. *Sushruta* says that the pure milk is cold, clean or free from impurities, whitish yellow or white just like the

color of conch-shell, sweet in taste and free from discoloration, when put in water it mixes evenly, neither produces froth nor streaks, neither floats nor settles down. This type of milk produces good health, growth, and development of body as well as gives strength to the child.^[10]

c. According to Astanga Sangraha and Astanga Hridaya

Both the *Vagbhatas* agreeing with above say that it should not be vitiated by *doshas*.

d. According to Kashyapa

Kashyapa without mentioning any physical characters says that the pure milk is that which provides unobstructed, easy and good growth of strength, different body. Parts, longevity as well as good health too the child and does not cause any pain or trouble to the child and wet-nurse.

e. According to Bhavaprakash

That milk is considered pure which mixes evenly with water, which is not discolored, not having threads inside, white in color, thin and cold.

f. According to Madhava nidana

That which mixes evenly with water, not vitiated, which has yellow color, free from discoloration, pleasant sweet in taste is said to be pure.

g. According to Harita

Harita defining *mruduksira* as pure milk adds *satwa* and beauty also in the list which are achieved by using pure milk. *Harita* has explained properties of *stanya* according to the complexion of the mother.

Benefits

Acharya Charaka describe breast milk as *jivanam*, *brihanam* (anabolic), *satmya* (favourable/wholesome), *snehanam* (unctuous).^[5] *Acharya Sushruta* said breast milk is *madhura rasa* (sweet), *jivanam*, *pathyam*, *dipanam* (digestive) etc.^[10] The above account illustrates the importance attached to breast feeding by *Ayurvedic Acharyas*. As a diet for a newborn, they have praised it for its exceptional properties as *satmyam*, *jivanam*, *brihanam*, *pathyam* etc. so much so that *Acharya Charaka* has advised breast feeding right after birth. *Ayurvedic* texts have description about benefits of breast feeding. *Acharya Kashyapa* described that good breast feeding results in good growth, strength, longevity and good health of child as well as not causing any troubles or diseases to child. *Acharya Charaka* and *Vagbhata* give similar description.

Deaths of an estimated 820,000 children under the age of five could be prevented globally every year with increased breastfeeding. Breastfeeding decreases the risk of respiratory tract infections and diarrhea, both in developing and developed countries. Other benefits include lower risks of asthma and food allergies,

and type 1 diabetes. Breastfeeding may also improve cognitive development and decrease the risk of obesity in adulthood. Mothers may feel pressure to breastfeed, but in the developed world children generally grow up normally when bottle fed.

Benefits for the mother include less blood loss following delivery, better uterus shrinkage, and decreased postpartum depression. Breastfeeding delays the return of menstruation and fertility, a phenomenon known as lactation amenorrhea. Long term benefits for the mother include decreased risk of breast cancer, cardiovascular disease, and rheumatoid arthritis. Breastfeeding is less expensive than infant formula.

DISCUSSION

The appropriate amounts of carbohydrate, protein and fat, breast milk provides vitamins minerals, digestive enzymes and hormones. Breast milk also contains antibodies and lymphocytes from the mother that help the baby resist infections. The immune function of breast milk is individualized, as the mother, through her touching and taking care of the baby, comes into contact with pathogens that colonize the baby, and, as a consequence, her body makes the appropriate antibodies and immune cells. Health organizations, including the world health organization (WHO), recommend breastfeeding exclusively for six months. This means that no other foods or drinks other than possibly vitamin D are typically given. After the introduction of foods at six months of age, recommendations include continued breastfeeding until one to two years of age or more.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, significant and long-term health benefits are associated with breastfeeding for the individual mother, baby and society. Breastfeeding is the ideal way to feed babies; Breast milk Serves both as a source of nutrition and immunological support for the developing infant. *Ayurvedic* texts describe in detail about normal/ abnormal breasts and their effect upon the child, wet nurse, importance and formation of breast milk, method of breast feeding.

REFERENCES

1. Victora CG, Bahl R, Barros AJ, França GV, Horton S, Krasevec J, Murch S, Sankar MJ, Walker N, Rollins NC (January 2016). "Breastfeeding in the 21st century: epidemiology, mechanisms, and lifelong effect". *Lancet*, 387(10017): 475–90.
2. Breastfeeding and breast milk: condition information 19 December 2013.
3. Infant and young child feeding fact sheet N 342 WHO february 2014.
4. P. V. Tiwari, Kashyap Samhita, Chaukhamba Bharati Academy, Varanasi, Edition Reprinted, 2008.
5. Dr Tripathi B., edited with Charak Chandrikahindi commentary of Charak Samhita of Agnivesha,

- Sharirstha, Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi, reprint, 2009; b914915.
6. Kaviraja Atrideva Gupta, on edited with Vidyotini commentary of Ashtanghriday of Vagbhata, Sharirsthan 3, Chaukhamba Prakashan, Varanasi, reprint, 2017; 260.
7. Indu commentator on Ashtang Sangraha of Vagbhata, Sharirsthan 5, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi, 2006.
8. A conceptual study on Medha, Buddhi, Dhee, Dhruti Smruti and Manas Dr. Sujit Kumar, Deepika Mehra, Dr. Vaidehi V Raole and Dr. Sunil P Nikhate The Pharma Innovation Journal, 2019; 8(8): 63-68.
9. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/breastfeeding>.
10. Shastri KA (2006) *Susruta Samhita* edited with 'Ayurveda Tattva Sandipika' Hindi commentary, Part-I, II, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi.
11. Healthwise Staff. Breast feeding: learning *how to* nurse. archived *from the original on 21 March 2012*. Retrieved 17 June 2009.
12. "Positions and tips for making breastfeeding work"*BabyCenter.com*. archived from the original on 27 October 2014. Retrieved 27 October 2014.