

## MALNUTRITION: AN AYURVEDIC REVIEW.

<sup>1</sup>\*Dr. Rujuta E. Thakare and <sup>2</sup>Dr. Vijaykumar U. Gawai<sup>1</sup>PG Scholar, <sup>2</sup>Professor & HOD.

Dept. of Kaumarbhritya, Government Ayurved College, Nanded, Maharashtra, India.

\*Corresponding Author: Dr. Rujuta E. Thakare

PG Scholar, Dept. of Kaumarbhritya, Government Ayurved College, Nanded, Maharashtra, India.

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## ABSTRACT

Nutrition is also called nourishment, is the provision to cells and organisms, of the materials necessary in the form of food to support life. Our food is made up of essential, natural complex chemical substances called nutrients. There are seven major classes of nutrients carbohydrates, fats, fibres, minerals, proteins, vitamins and water. These nutrients are classified into macro and micronutrients. The Macronutrients are the building blocks of the body. The micronutrients are crucial for their role in metabolic pathways and in enhancing immunity. Balanced diet provides all the nutrients in required amounts and proper proportion. Abnormal nutrition causes over or undernutrition. Malnutrition i.e. impaired nutrition leads to growth retardation, low resistance to infections and many other health problems. *Kaumarbhritya* is one of the important branch of *Ashtanga* of *Ayurvedic* science. The main aim of *Ayurveda* is to prevent the disease rather than to cure it. *Ahara*, *Nidra* and *bramhacharya* are the three pillars of body. *Ahara* is considered as first pillar because nutrition mainly depends upon *ahara*. Malnutrition is a burning problem in children because of *apathyakara ahara* and *vihara*. A pediatrician should understand the malnutrition in terms of *Ayurveda* to give *chikitsa*. Malnourishment disorders can be correlated with *Karshya*, *phakka*, *balshosha*, *parigarbhika*. *Charakacharya* mentioned the *karshya* in 'ashtau nindita purusha'.<sup>1</sup> *Agnimandya* leads to *karshya samprapti*. According to *Acharya Kashyapa*, proper *ahara* helps to improve *kanti*, *bala*, *smruti*, *medha*, *satwassthi* (stability) and *angavridhi*. *Acharya's* described in detail about *kuposhana janya vyadhi chikitsa*. For *samprapti bhanga* in *malnutrition* many drugs and *kalpas* are useful. After *agnideepana* and *srotoshuddhi* the drugs like *bala*, *shatavari* and *rasayana kalpa's* like *chyavanaprash avaleha* can be used. This is a review article gives light on *hetu*, *samprapti*, *lakshana* and *chikitsa* of *kuposhanjanya vyadhi* w.s.r. to malnutrition.

**KEYWORDS:** Nutrition, Malnutrition, *kaumarbhritya*, *karshya*, *rasayana*, *Ashtau nindita purusha*

## INTRODUCTION

*Ayurveda* believe that many health problems can be prevented through nutritious diet. Food is important as a nutritional source and it also having much therapeutic importance. Lack of sufficient food intake leads conditions like nutritional deficiency termed as malnutrition (*kuposhanjanya vyadhi*). According to *Ayurveda* diseases included in malnutrition are *Karshya*, *Phakka*, *Balshosha* and *Parigarbhika*.

## KARSHYA

It is a condition of insufficient supply of nutrients in any stage of ages. The nutritional requirements of growing children are more since their energy requirements is high due to the fast tissue growth in early age.

*Acharya Charaka* included *Karshya vyadhi* in *Ashtau ninditiya*.

**Ashtau ninditiya includes.***Atideergha*  
*Atirhaswa**Atiloma**Aloma**Atikrishna**Atigaura**Atisthula**Atikrusha*Symptoms of *Karshya* are*Shushkasphigudargrivo dhamanijal santatah**Twagasthisheshoatikrushah Sthoolparva naro matah* |<sup>121</sup>*Kalpa's* used in *karshya* -*Vidarikandadi churna*.<sup>3]</sup>*Ashwagandha ghrita*.<sup>4]</sup>*Suvarna Yoga*.*Lehan yoga*.<sup>5]</sup>

## Phakka

*'Balahsamvatsara (pannah) padabhyam yo na gachchhati | Sa phakka iti vigeyah...'*<sup>6]</sup>

If a child does not walk on feet after attaining 1 year then this can be known as *phakka roga*. According to modern science the child can walk independently in between 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> month of their life. The word *phakka* denotes sluggish movements due to poor physical development associated with psychomotor changes.

*Phakka roga* is classified into 3 groups on the basis of their causes as follows-

1. *Ksheeraj Phakka*
2. *Garbhaj Phakka*
3. *Vyadhij Phakka*

#### ***Ksheeraj Phakka***

'*Dhatri shlaishmikdugdha tu phakkadugdheti sadnyeta | Tatksheerapo bahuvyadhihi karshyat phakktavmapnuyat* //.<sup>[7]</sup>

*Stanya* vitiated with *kapha dosha* is called *phakka dugdha*. This *phakkadugdha* causes obstruction in *rasa vaha strotasa* and cause nutritional deficiency in a child resulting in to *ksheeraj phakka roga*.

#### **Treatment can be broadly classified into two parts**

- 1) For *Dhatri*
- 2) For *Balaka*

In the etiopathogenesis of *phakka agnimandya* due to *kapha dosha* vitiated *stanya*, *stanyabhav* as well as *vyadhi* leads to improper *dhatu nirman* especially *rasa*, *mamsa*, *meda*, *asthi dhatu*, so treatment should be aimed at *prakrut ras nirman* with the augmentation of *agni* by *mrudu shodhana*, followed by *deepana*, *pachana*, *balya* and *bruhan* therapy.

#### ***Garbhaj phakka***

'*Garbhinimatrukaha kshipram stanyasya vinivartanat | Ksheeyate mriyate va-api sa phakko garbhapiditah* //<sup>[8]</sup>

When a nourishing *dhatri* conceives during breast feeding period, deficient milk secretion results. As a result *balak* gets emaciated due to malnourishment and even dies. This condition is called as a *garbhaj phakka*.

#### ***Vyadhij Phakka***

*Nijairagantubhishev.....ro jwaradhibhihi | Ityetaiha karanairvidyadyadhijam phakkatam shishoha* //<sup>[9]</sup>

*Vyadhij phakka* is a malnutrition condition resultant of chronic diseases like *prameha*, *grahani*, *graha roga* etc on the whole *vyadhij phakka* refers to severe forms of malnutrition. *Shushka sphika* (wasting of buttocks), *Shushka bahu* (wasting of upper limbs), *Shushka uru* (wasting of thighs), *Mahodara* (pot belly), *Mahoshira* (big head) due to relatively wasting in body parts. *Nishcheshta adho kay* (inability to walk) etc represents grade of marasmus.

#### **Management of *Phakka Roga***

*Ityetaiha karanairvidyadyadhijam phakkatam shishoha* //  
*Bastayah snehapanani swedaachhauwartanani cha | Vaatrogeshu balanam sansrushteshu visheshatah* //  
*Kalyanakam pibet phakkaha shatpalam vayathaamrutam* /  
*Saptaratrat param chainam trivruttaksheeren shodhayet* //  
*Shuddhakoshtastataha phakkaha.....* //  
*Na tu brahmighritam.....* //<sup>[10]</sup>

#### **A) *Shodhana karma***

*Snehapana* with *kalyanaka ghrita*, *shatpala ghrita*, *amruta ghrita* for seven days followed by *virechana* with *trivrutta ksheera* should be done.

B) *Bramhi ghritpana* is advised after *koshta shodhana*.

C) *Ksheera paka*- The milk medicated with *deepaniya dravya* and either *rasana*, *madhuka*, *punarnava*, *ekaparni*, *eranda*, *shatapushpa* or *draksha*, *pilu* and *trivrutta* should be used.

D) *Pathya- Mamsa rasa*, *yusha*, *ksheera paka* should be taken with *shaali anna*.

E) *Doshanusar chikitsa*-In *kapha pradhana -mutra mishrita ksheera* is advised orally.

F) In *vata pradhana phakka -Basti*, *snehapana*, *swedana* and *udvartana* is advised.

G) *Abhyanga* with special *raja taila*.

H) *Trickakra phakka ratha* is advised to practice gradual walking.

#### ***Balshosha***

The causes of *balashosha* are *shlaishmika annasevana* (excessive energy dense food), *shitambu* (cold liquid items) and *divaswapna* (excessive day sleep). These factors can create impairment of *agni*.

Clinical features of *balshosha* are *Arochaka* (reduced digestive capacity), *pratishyaya* (running nose), *jwara* (fever) and *kasa* (cough) and at last baby may lead to *shosha* (emaciation).<sup>[11]</sup>

#### **Treatment of *Balshosha***

Nutritional intervention to mother, *panchakarma abhyang* with oil.

Drug intervention to improve the appetite wholesome nutritive food.

#### ***Parigarbhika***

If any baby is on breast milk of pregnant woman then *parigarbhika roga* occurs and that milk have poor nutrients.

*Kasagni saad vamathu tandra karshyaaruchi bhramat*<sup>[12]</sup>

Clinical features of *parigarbhika* are cough, impaired digestive capacity, vomiting, fever and anorexia.

**Treatment of Parigarbhika**

“Rogam paribhavakhyam ch ujjyattatragndeepanam”<sup>[13]</sup>

Ideal treatment for *parigarbhika* is *agnideepana*. So medicated *ghrita* with *deepaniya dravyas* like *vidari, yava, godhuma, pippali, pippalimula, katuka, deodaru* should be given. *Anupana* milk mixed with honey and sugar.

**DISCUSSION**

*Ayurveda* not only deals with the malnutrition in child, in fact it provides a description of healthy daily regimen of child bearing mother, which can be very effective in preventing malnutrition in child in the womb as well as after birth. *Kuposhana* is one of the disease related to *annavaha srotasa*.

**CONCLUSION**

Most of the developmental delays are observed due to nutritional factors such as failure to thrive or birth injuries, peri-natal factors post-natal infections, post natal jaundice and convulsion commonly in pediatric population. Early diagnosis can help to reduce family stress and earlier access to available treatment can improve outcomes for children. In such cases of *kuposhana janya vyadhi*, *Ayurveda* tells different treatment plans. With the help of *Ayurvedic sidhanta*, a paediatrician can improve child's health and can give better quality of life.

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