

A REVIEW ARTICLE ON SWARNA PRASHANA SAMSKARA AS A PREVENTIVE MEASURE

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the science of life which emphasizes on two main objectives of maintenance and promotion of positive health and cure of the diseases. For prevention purpose, many regimes are mentioned and *Swarna Prashana* is one of them. *Swarna Prashana* has been traditionally practiced across India as a recipe for child growth, memory enhancement and to promote longevity. It is administered once a month on the day of *Pushyanakshatra*. *Swarna Prashana Samskara* is an ancient technique to modulate the immunity and to improve quality of life. It is mentioned under *Jatakarma Samskara* (neonatal care), one of the 16 essential *Samskara* described in *Ayurveda*. Prevention of disease by boosting the immunity has been an important point of discussion. And now-a-days, *Swarna Prashana* is being recognized as an oral immunity. It is a unique method of immunization which is practiced from ancient time and valued as child health care Programme. It improves the intellect and enhances the non-specific immunity of the body.

Keywords: *Swarna Prashana Samskara*, Immunity, Intellect, Immunization

INTRODUCTION

Samskara means those religious rites and ceremonies which sanctify the body, mind and intellect, so that person may become healthy for the society. In other words, *Samskara* means *Gunantaradhana*¹ which is used for transforming the qualities. *Swarna Prashana Samskara* is an immuno-modulatory technique and is one of the ancient Indian rituals used for children.² Now-a-days *Swarna Prashana* popularly known as an 'Ayurvedic' way of vaccination promoted by many Ayurvedic Professionals.

AYURVEDIC REVIEW

Acharya Kashyapa described *Swarna Prashana* is *Jatkarma Samskara* for the neonatal care in *Lehan*

Adhaya of *Sutra Sthana* in his *Samhita* which was written before 600 B.C. He explains the preparation of *Swarna Prashana*, one should sit facing towards the *Poorva Disha* (east direction), take *Swarna* (gold) and rub it against the hard surface like stone with water and then mix with *Madhu* (honey) and *Ghrita* (cow butter) and given for licking. This is called as *Swarna Prashana* and benefits of this are *Medha Vardhanam* (improvement of intellect), *Agni Vardhanam* (improvement in digestion), *Bala Vardhanam* (improvement in strength and immunity), *Ayu Vardhanam* (improvement in life span), *Mangalya, Punya* (auspicious), *Grahapaham* (relieves

bad evil). By administering *Swarna* to child for one month, he becomes *Param Medhavi* (super intelligent) and by administering for upto six months, person becomes *Shrutadhara* (can remember whatever he/she hears).³ the appropriate day for *Swarna Prashana* is *Pushya Nakshatra*.

Acharya Sushruta describes administration of *Swarna* along with *Ghrita* and *Madhu* as one of the procedures of *Jatakarma Samskara*, which is given as a single dose at birth as a part of neonatal care.⁴ *Acharya Sushruta* had described four *Swarna Kalpa*, which enhance humoral immunity, body resistance, helpful in proper growth, development and enhancing the intellectual activity.⁵

MODERN REVIEW OF GOLD AS IMMUNOMODULATOR

Gold is one of the noble metals being used in continuity to increase the vitality and immunity.⁶ *Swarna Bhasma* promotes immunity through phagocytosis and found to be effective in small doses,⁷ several studies on gold nano-particles (GNP) reported that it conjugates with antigen to influence activation of t-cells.⁸ In medicine, most interesting part is the use of nano-particles to enhance drug delivery system.⁹

ROLE OF CONTENTS OF SWARNA PRASHANA AS IMMUNOMODULATORY EFFECTS

1. Action of *Swarna*: *Swarna* has the properties like that of *Medhavardhanam*, *Agnivardhanam*, *Balavardhanam*, *Ayushyakara*, *Grahapaham* etc. These properties of *Swarna* can be made use to strengthen an individual.¹⁰ Gold enhances memory power and immunity too. Oxide form of *Swarna* i.e. *Swarna Bhasma* is easily absorbable. *Swarna* may remain unabsorbed in the body and act as incompatible substance or binding material by playing significant role in the stimulation of immune system. Gold is already proved for its immunomodulatory effects because of its anti-bacterial action against different organisms but when it is mixed with *Madhu* and *Ghrita*, it enhances its action to stimulate body immune system.¹¹

2. Action of *Madhu*: *Madhu* is manufactured from pollen grains by bees. The reason behind adding *Madhu* in *Swarna Prashana* is that when *Madhu* is administered in low doses to newborn, the child gradually develop resistance for allergens and it remains unaffected by allergic disorders.¹²
3. Action of *Ghrita*: *Ghrita* has important medicinal value in *Ayurvedic* texts. It increases mental ability and it enhances the function of drug added with it. It helps in growth and development of child. It also provides nutrition to newborn until lactation starts properly.

ACTION OF SWARNA PRASHANA SAMSKARA REGARDING IMMUNO-MODULATION EFFECT BY ENHANCING VYADHIKSHAMTVA AND OJUS

When etiological factors come in contact with the body they try to produce disease. At the same time the body opposes the etiological factor to protect the body or show resistance against disease. This power of the body, which prevents the development of diseases or resist a developed disease, is called *Vyadhikshamatva* (immunity) in *Ayurveda*.¹³ We can increase body resistance by increasing *Ojus*. As we know that *Doshas* maintain the body in the state of homeostasis only with the support of *Ojus*. According to *Acharya Charaka*, *Bala* (strength) is synonym of *Ojus* and of three types- *Sahaja*, *Kalaja* and *Yuktikrita*.¹⁴ In *Yuktikrita*, one can improve the *Ojus* by *Yukti*. Thus, *Swarna Prashana* is the method of increasing the *Kshamatva* of the body immune cells and lowering down the decaying process.

According to *Ayurvedic* concept, *Ghrita* and *Madhu* mixed in equal quantity is an example of *Matra Virudha*¹⁵ and acts as *Visha* in body. The same substance by its continuous administration in small doses makes the body adaptable, is called *Satmya*.¹⁶ The *Swarna Prashana Samskara* is an example of *Virudha Satmya*. Any incompatible (*Virudha*) substance which may be antigenic, on continuous exposure child becomes *Virudha Satmya* suggests that sero- negative state is converted into sero- positive state and formation of antibody is complete. Regular contact of such elements makes the body desensitized and in future there will be less effect due to formation

of antibodies. Adaptiveness and modification subsequently develops as it acts as antigenic substances to the body and child will be priorly sensitized have healthy future. The same theory is used in vaccination.¹⁷ In *Swarna Prashana Samskara*, *Madhu* and *Ghrta* in equal dose along with gold is given at regular intervals, this develops resistance in the body for any type of *Visha*. In other words, this mixture produces non-specific immunity.

CONCLUSION

Children are the future of any nation and it is a challenge for every nation to keep up physical, mental and social health of them without any adverse effect. *Swarna Prashana* is an ancient immunization technique with no adverse effects and provides a better life with fulfilling WHO's definition of 'health' (i.e. physical, mental, social and spiritual well being). So, *Swarna Prashana Samskara* should be accepted for immunization programme with positive attitude throughout the world.

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