SWARNAPRASHAN: AN AYURVEDIC IMMUNIZATION

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ABSTRACT

Gold is a pure metal which is used for both preventive and curative treatment from ancient times. This is used as combination of many drugs. Acharya Kashyap has mentioned Swarnaprashan in which Swarna is given to the baby for its immunomodulation as well as physical, mental and intellectual growth. Nowadays, Swarnaprashan is given in Pushya Nakshatra because it is an auspicious star provides better nourishment effect. However, it can be given in any time. Many diseases can be prevented by Swarnaprashan because it improves immunity. The specific vaccine prevents specific disease. Therefore, different vaccines are required for prevention of different diseases. Vaccines can not be developed for all diseases. Therefore, Swarnaprashan may be better option for prevention of many diseases in the society. We should propagate it in the society. Government should include Swarnaprashan in health programmes like vaccination. Private sectors should be involved in these programmes. Thus, we can make a healthy society and a healthy nation by adopting it on large scale.

Keywords: Swarna, Immunity, Kashyap, Vaccine

INTRODUCTION

Gold is considered as one among the Sapta Lauh (seven metals) and it is also categorized as Siddha Lauh¹ (pure metal). Gold has both preventive and curative medicinal properties. It is used as Rasayan (rejuvenator) and Vajikaraka (aphrodisiac) for conception of a healthy baby². After conception, it is used in Punsavan Karma (procedure to get the desired sex of baby and for proper intrauterine growth). After the birth, it is indicated in Lehan Karma³ (supplementary feeding to improve the immunity) and Jatkaraka (new born care). As the child grows, gold is indicated to get Agni (digestive powers), Bala (physical strength and immunity), Medha (intellectual power), Varna (complexion) and Ayu (life span)⁴. Even on the death bed, when Arishta Lakshana (fatal signs) is observed, gold is administered for therapeutic action⁵. Thus, gold is such a noble metal which is used starting before conception until death. It has been mentioned in Ayurvedic texts that properly purified gold may destroy the strength, create diseases and death also⁶. Acharya Kashyap has coined the term “Swarnaprashan” for administration of gold which has been mentioned in Kashyap Samhita. The benefits of Swarnaprashan are as follows⁷-

1. Medha Agni Bala Vardhanam- improvement of intellect, digestion, metabolism, immunity and physical strength.
2. Ayushyam- promoting life span
3. Mangalam- auspicious
4. Punyam- righteous
5. Vrishyam- aphrodisiac
6. Varnyam- enhancement of complexion
7. Grahapaham- protection from evil spirits and microorganisms.

The special benefits of Swarnaprashan, according to the duration of administration have been also mentioned. If it
is used for one month, the baby will be highly intelligent and will not be affected by any disease and if it is used for six months, the baby will be able to remember the things which are just heard$^9$.

**REVIEW**

According to modern medicine, types of immunity are as follows$^{10}$-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immunity</th>
<th>Innate Immunity (Inborn Immunity)</th>
<th>Acquired Immunity (Adaptive Immunity)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naturally Acquired</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Passive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artificially Acquired</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Passive</td>
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- Antigens enter into the body naturally then body produces antibodies
- Antibodies pass from mother to fetus via placenta or milk
- Antigens are introduced by vaccines then body produces antibodies
- Preformed antibodies in immune serum are introduced by injection

Immunizing agents are vaccines, immunoglobulins, antisera. In 1789, Edward Jenner, for the first time produced vaccine for smallpox therefore, he is known as founder of vaccine. Nowadays approximately 35 vaccines are available and maximum vaccines are administered under national health programmes. Now the question is why is Swarnaprashan relevant in the era of vaccines? The answer is disadvantages of vaccination which are as follows-

1. Different vaccines for different diseases.
2. Vaccines are available only for 35 diseases and not for many diseases.
3. Fever, nausea, diarrhea, seizures and anaphylactic reactions may occur after vaccination.
4. Painful procedure
5. Preservatives which are used in vaccines are fatal for infants.
6. Various adverse effects of vaccines have been recorded in many countries.

Our great Acharyas knew immunity as Bala, Oja and Vyadhikshamatva. Acharya Charak has mentioned that body of all persons is not capable of Vyadhikshamatva$^{11}$. Acharya Chakrapani has commented on the word Vyadhikshamatva that Vyadhikshamatva opposes the strength of diseases and prevents the origin of diseases$^{12}$. It is clear that immunity has been mentioned by Acharya Charak as Vyadhikshamatva. Again, Acharya Charak has explained that there are three types of Bala (immunity) –

1. Sahaj (natural/congenital)
2. Kalaj (by time/season/age)
3. Yuktij (acquired)$^{13}$.

This categorization of immunity is very much similar to modern categorization. Acharya Sushrut has mentioned that optimum part of all Dhatu, from rasa to Shukra is called oja and this is also known as Bala. This Bala or Vyadhikshamatva (immunity) is increased by Swarnaprashan.

Swarnaprashan is administration of gold alone or along with other herbs in a leha or prash form. Acharya Kashyap has described Swarnaprashan as Leha form. Swarnaprashan is indicated in healthy children having compromised breast feeding and minor metabolic problems. It is contraindicated in seriously ill patients. Although lehana is contraindicated on a daily basis but Swarnaprashan is continued for a period of one or six months to get its specific benefits in children. In a study on neonates, Madhu-Ghrit-Swarna-Vacha combination
showed a significant effect of humoral antibody formation which was proved by triggering the response of immunological systems by a rise in the total protein and serum IgG level. Swarnabhasma has a stimulatory effect on peritoneal macrophages which may be helpful to fight against infections. In a study of chronic toxicity of swarnabindu prashan no cytotoxicity was observed. According to Charak, Balyavastha comes under 16 to 30 years of age in which growth and development occurs. Actually Swarnaprashan can be done in any age group providing different benefits. As an immunomodulator it can be given in early ages because it is stage of developing immune system. It can be used in immunodeficiency diseases provided that there is no serious illness associated with. As an intelligence enhancer it can be given from birth to six months daily. As a fertility enhancer it can be given in adolescence because this is the stage of developing reproductive system.

In Jatakarma Sanskar, Acharya Sushrut has mentioned to take Swarnabhasma along with honey and ghee as a single dose after birth. Acharya Vagbhata has indicated to take Swarnabhasma along with other herbs in Jatakarma Sanskar. Acharya Kashyap has not mentioned the specific doses of Swarnabhasma. He has mentioned the general doses of Swarnabhasma for children. According to different Acharyas doses of Swarnabhasma are as follows:

1. 1/8 - 1/4 Ratti (15-30 mg)- Rasa Tarangini
2. 2 Gunja (250 mg)- Rasa RatnaSamuchhya
3. 1 Gunja (125 mg)- SushrutaSharirsthha

DISCUSSION

Swarnaprashan is the best method for immunity enhancement which has been mentioned in Ayurvedic texts thousands years ago. Three forms of gold have been mentioned in text books for medicinal use- foil, powder and Bhasma (ash). Bhasma is said to have nanoparticles of gold having more bioavailability without any cytotoxic effects. Therefore, Swarnabhasma is used in Swarnaprashan and as a composition of many ayurvedic drugs. It is used in the dose from 15mg to 250 mg according to various conditions. Acharya Kashyap has not mentioned any specific day or time for administration of Swarnabhasma. Acharya Kashyap has mentioned that Swarnaprashan should be prepared facing east direction. Acharya Charak has explained that Swarna should be used in Pushya nakshatra for Punsavankarma. Acharya Sushruta has explained that Swarna should be used in Pushya Nakshatra for Rasayan karma. Nowadays, Swarnaprashan is given in Pushya Nakshatra due to the belief that this is an auspicious star to use any medicine for its nourishment effect.

CONCLUSION

Swarnaprashan is a very effective ancient method for immunity enhancement. Immunity power caused by Swarnaprashan provides physical, mental and intellectual growth and prevention of all diseases. Thus Swarnaprashan creates competent and healthy children which make a healthy society then healthy nation and a healthy world can be made ultimately. There is need of research in Swarnaprashan on modern parameters to globalize it. After an analytical research, it can be proved better than vaccination and can replace vaccination. Swarnaprashan is being propagated by many organizations like Arogya Bharti in many states. By collaboration of KGMU, Lucknow and Arogya Bharti, swarnaprashan created better results in the patients of encephalitis in Gorakhpur of Uttarpradesh, India.

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