

## 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 *Suddha Lauh*<sup>1</sup> (pure metal). Gold has both preventive and curative medicinal properties. It is used as *Rasayan* (rejuvenator) and *Vajikarak* (aphrodisiac) for conception of a healthy baby<sup>2</sup>. 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 Karma*<sup>3</sup> (supplementary feeding to improve the immunity) and *Jatkarma*<sup>4</sup> (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)<sup>5</sup>. Even on the death bed, when *Arishta Lakshan* (fatal signs) is observed, gold is administered for therapeutic action<sup>6</sup>. Thus, gold is such a noble metal which is used starting before conception until death. It has been mentioned in Ayurvedic texts that gold should be used after proper purification because im-

properly purified gold may destroy the strength, create diseases and death also<sup>7</sup>.

*Acharya Kashyap* has coined the term “*Swarnaprashan*” for administration of gold which has been mentioned in *Kashyap Samhita*. The benefits of *Swarnaprashan* are as follows<sup>8</sup>-

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.

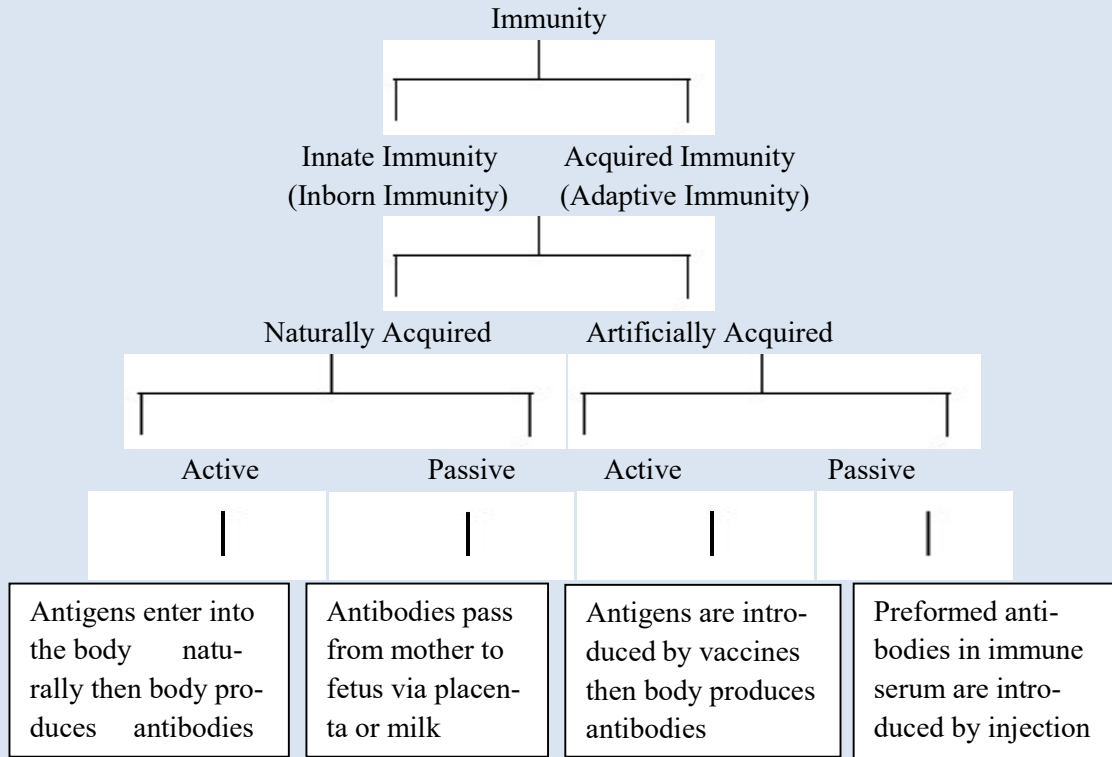
The special benefits of *Swarnaprashan*, according to the duration of administration have been also mentioned. If it

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<sup>9</sup>.

REVIEW

According to modern medicine, types of immunity are as follows<sup>10</sup>-



Immunizing agents are vaccines, immunoglobulins, antisera. In 1789, Edward Jenner, for the first time produced vaccine for small pox 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*<sup>11</sup>. *Acharya Chakrapani* has commented on the word *Vyadhikshamatva* that *Vyadhikshamatva* opposes the

strength of diseases and prevents the origin of diseases<sup>12</sup>. 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)<sup>13</sup>.

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*.

*Swarnaparashan* 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<sup>14</sup>. *Swarnabhasma* has a stimulatory effect on peritoneal macrophages which may be helpful to fight against infections<sup>15</sup>. In a study of chronic toxicity of *swarnabindu prashan* no cytotoxicity was observed<sup>16</sup>. 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 Sansakar*, *Acharya Sushrut* has mentioned to take *Swarnabhasma* along with honey and ghee as a single dose after birth. *Acharya Vagbhat* 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*<sup>17</sup>
2. 2 Gunja (250 mg)- *Rasa RatnaSamuchya*<sup>18</sup>
3. 1 Gunja (125 mg)- *SushrutaSharirstha*<sup>19</sup>

## 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*. *Acharaya 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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