Swarna Prashana– A Immuno-Booster in Ayurveda

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Abstract
The word “Swarna Prashana” is a combination of two words – “Swarna” and “Prashana”. The term Swarna is a common word and refers to the noble metal Gold. Prashana refers to the act of eating or consuming or ingesting. Health is a condition when the individual is in complete accord with the surroundings, while disease is loss of ease to the body (dis-ease), so disease is opposite of health. In this broader sense, it includes injuries, disabilities, disorders, syndromes, infections, isolated symptoms, deviant behavior. Vyadhikshamatva is the strength to protect the body against diseases; it is also called body resistance. It depends on Bala, Balavardhakabhava, Prakrita Kapha and Ojas. There is great decrease in the quality of health status of humans from generation to generation; tolerance to allergic factors, tiredness and resistance to diseases has greatly diminished. For the health promotion and longevity of life span, Samskara, Lehana and Rasayana drugs, Swarna Prashana etc. are mentioned for children in Ayurveda.

Keywords
Ayurveda, Vyadhikshamatva, Swarna Prashana, Lehana
INTRODUCTION

Balyavastha (childhood) has been described in the texts of Ayurveda as a period of minimal relative Bala (physical strength and immunity) and hence children of this period are considered to be more prone for various diseases. A considerable decrease in physical strength and immunity are said to be added factor for disease occurrence and severity. Immunity is the balanced state of having adequate biological defences to fight infection, disease, or other unwanted biological invasion, while having adequate tolerance to avoid inflammation, allergy, and autoimmune diseases. Immunization is the process whereby a person is made immune or resistant to an infectious disease, typically by the administration of a vaccine. Vyadhikshamatva is the inherent or/and an acquired capacity of the body in preventing occurrence of a disease or in modifying the course of an already manifested disease to a milder extent. Vyadhikshamatva can be explained in terms of protective (Vyadhibalavirodhita) and preventive (Vyadhyyutpadaka Pratibandhakatva) mechanism of body’s immune system. The concept of Lehana which depicts the administration of various herbal drugs, ghee preparations and gold as supplementary feeds is described in detail by Acharya Kashyapa who is considered as the pioneer of Ayurvedic paediatrics. Swarna Prashana having Medhavardhaka, Agnivardhaka, Balvardhaka, Vrishya, Ayushyakara, and Grahapaha etc. Swarna Prashana is very popular cultural practice of India and is a unique method of boosting immunity and intellectual power in children.

AIM

- To elaborate the various concepts of Vyadhikshma.
- To establish the efficacy and non-toxic profiles of Swarna Prashana.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Materials related to Swarna Prashana with action and other relevant topics have been collected, from Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Samgraha, Ashtanga Hridya, Bhavaprakasha, Sharangdhar Samhita, Ras Shastra related books and available commentaries on these. Information is also searched from various websites; articles were also thoroughly screened for this review. Along with that, work carried out by research scholars in the field of Ayurveda is also taken into consideration.
Conceptual Study:

Vyadhi

The Vyadhi is defined as the state which mainly affects the body and reflects on the mind, subjected to pain and misery. Charaka identified Vyadhi with Dukkha and Sushruta has defined it as that which proved to be a source of torment or pain to the Purusha.

Vyadhikshmatva:

The word ‘Vyadhikshamatva’ is mentioned by Acharya Charaka while explaining about relation between Hita-ahita ahara and diseases. The author says that all Doshas are neither of equal strength nor all the bodies have enough resisting power for diseases equally. Chakrapani comments that it is the competency of an individual to prevent the onset of a disease or to resist the severity of an already manifested disease. The term Vyadhi is a synonym of disease and Kshamatva indicates the resistance or tolerance of the body to fight against the diseases. Thus it is the competency of an individual to prevent the onset of a disease or to resist the severity of an already manifested disease. Concept of Bala, Balavardhakabhava, Oja, Prakriti, Prakrita Shleshma, Lehana, Samskara, Rasayana and Vajikarana are explained in Ayurvedic classics which increase the Vyadhikshmtva of human being.

Bala:

Bala is the power to exercise control over the harmful activities of Dosha, which resides in every Dhatu of the body. Bala forms in the body through three main sources; Sahaja, Kalaja and Yuktikrita. Vyadhikshmtva depends on these three types of Bala; Sahaja, Kalaja and Yuktikrita Sahaja Bala are present in body since birth with a favourable conditions, Kalaja Bala not present at birth but according to time and age increase and proper diet, life style and Rasayana are included in Yuktikrita Bala.

Balavardhakabhava:

Balavridhikara Bhava is the factor which positively affect both physical and immune strength of an individual which are explained below [19]:-

1. Balavat Deshe Birth in a country where people are naturally strong
2. Balavat Purushe Birth in a home of naturally strong person
3. Balavat Kale Janma Birth in the period of time when people naturally gain strength
4. Sukhascha Pleasant and moderate
Kalayoga - climate
5. Bijaguna - Excellence of the qualities of sperm and ovum
6. Kshetraguna - Excellence of the qualities of female reproductive system
7. Ahara - Excellence of ingested food
8. Sharira - Excellence of the physique
9. Satmya - Wholesomeness of various factors responsible for health
10. Satva - Excellence of the metal faculty
11. Swabhava - Favourable deposition of the nature
12. Yauvanam - Youth
13. Samharsha - Cheerful disposition

Ojas:
The meaning of the term Ojas can be interpreted from its roots which carry the similar meaning as that of Bala\(^{20}\). One of this means, to bestow power and vitality and the other means to keep the body tissues and organs in their optimum functional state. It implies that the Ojas is responsible for the maintenance of the homeostasis in the body and thus prevent manifestation of any disease. Chakrapanidatta described that Ojas is of two types Para Ojas: Ashta bindu [eight drops] located in the Hridaya and Apara Ojas: Ardhanjali, located in the Dhamani\(^{21}\). There are three signs of Ojakshya; Visramsa, Vyapat and Kshya. Tiredness, heaviness, physically and mentally disturbance, syncope, oedema excessive sleeping are the symptoms of Ojokshya\(^{22}\).

Prakriti
Acharyas say that Vata Prakriti persons are more prone to diseases and Sama Prakriti persons are always healthy\(^{23}\). It denotes that Vyadhikshmatva depends also on Prakriti: which is comes under Sahaja Bala.

Prakritka Shleshma:
Prakritka Kapha is Oza in body and Vikrita Kapha is disease. Its all properties are same to Kapha\(^{24}\).

Agni:
It is responsible for life, colour (luster of the skin), strength, health, enthusiasm, plumpness, complexion, Ojas (energy), Tejas (gleam of the body), other varieties of Agni and Prana(vitality). If Agni is impaired by an imbalance by Dosha then metabolism will get affected, immune response and natural resistance will also be lowered\(^{25}\).

Hiita-Ahita Ahara:
Hitā Ahara is responsible to developed healthy Dhatus and final product of Dhatus i.e. Ojas. So increases in Ojas or Bala ultimately increase Vyadhikshmatva. On the other hand, Ahita substance if taken continuously then leads to improper nourishment of Dhatus which result in decreasing Ojas and Vyadhikshmatva.

Lehana:
The word Lehana itself indicated its consistency i.e. semisolid form. The drugs for Lehana should always be mixed with Madhu and Ghrita. Kashyapa has given special emphasis on Lehana karma and a separate chapter called Lehadhyaya is in Sutra-Sthana. The children of a mother who are having no breast milk, deficient milk, or vitiated milk of parturient women (mother) or of a wet –nurse of similar condition who have predominance of Vata and Pitta but not Kapha, who do not get satisfied with the breast milk and cry in spite of repeated sucking, children who do not sleep at night, eat too much, pass scanty urine and faeces; children who have increased digestive power, though free from disease yet scraggy, have delicate body part and emaciated, do not pass urine and faeces even for three days; such type of children should be prescribed Lehana.

The purpose and object of Lehana Karma look to prevent the diseases by establishing due immunity and to promote the physical and psychic strength. Health and disease are dependent in Lehanaapraṇāya. Swarna Prashana described in this chapter along with other lehayogas.

Samskara:
Samskaras are the important cultural events in an individual’s life from birth to death. There are 16 Samskaras. Jatakarma Samskara is one of them; in which combination of Madhu and Ghrita is given to the baby.

Karnavedhana:
It also comes under the Samskaras, done for cosmetic value and protects the body from untoward health complications like Grahas.

Rasayana Chikitsa:
The word Rasayana is made up of two Sanskrit words, Rasa (nutrition) and Ayana (transportation in the body). Rasayana are claimed to improve vitality, rejuvenate body tissues, improve immunity, and prevent aging.

Vajikarana Chikitsa:
Vajikarana means the process of improving ‘Sukram’ in an individual of its depletion. Sukra is said to seat in the entire body with
the functions of *Bala*, *Varna* and *Upacaya* (strength, complexion and growth). Promotion of *Sukram* is said to be the promotion of *Ojas* which sustains immunity of the body, such *Vajikara* drugs are of *Guru, Madhura, Snigdha, Jivana, Brumhana*.

**Swarna Prashana:**
The word “*Swarna Prashana*” is a combination of two words – “*Swarna*” and “*Prashana*”. The term *Swarna* is used for Gold and *Prashana* refers to the act of licking. *Acharya Kashyapa* describes method of preparation, duration and effect of *Swarna Prashana*. It is mentioned that, keeping face towards east, gold should be rubbed on a washed stone with a little quantity of water. Then it should be mixed with *Madhu* and *Ghrita* and should be given to the child for licking. With this *Swarna Prashana* child develops *Medha* (memory), *Agni* (improves the digestive power), *Bala* (strength), *Aayushya* (life span), *Mangalakara* (auspicious), *Punya* (virtuous), *Vrushya* (aphrodisiac), *Varnya* (fair complexion), *Grahapaha* (avoids away associated evils). If *Swarna Prashana* is done for one month then child will be extremely intelligent, remains unaffected by diseases. If done for 6 months then child will be *Shrutadhara* (remembers what he hears once).

Traditionally *Swarna Prashana* is done as cultural practice in India. Mainly after delivery raw gold is rubbed on a stone with the help of little amount of water and is administered along with *Madhu* and *Ghrita*. This process of administration for certain period of time to achieve health and immunity. Properties of gold and its formulation, *Brahma Rasayana* is mentioned in *Charaka Samhita*. Some researches have been carried out on *Swarna Prashana*. Dr. Sheetal S.- reported that significant results were observed in reducing the bouts of cough (49%), duration of cough (40%), sleep disturbance (69.22%), Quality of sputum (43%), dyspneoa (65%).

Research work of Dr. Amruta Gaikwad showed that *Swarna Prashana* acts as equivalent immune-modulators as evidenced by triggering the response of immunological system by a rise in the total proteins and serum IgG levels. Dr. Aniketh- concluded that Significant improvement in immunity and intelligence of the children.

Significant increase in the phagocytic activity in albino rats was found in Dr. Ajay Chavan’s study. Study of Dr. Vinarma Sharma- titled showed
that “Toxicity Study of Suvarna Bindu Prashana in Albino Rats” Result: “No signs of toxicity in albino rats” Dr. Jyothy KB-reported that Suvarna Prashana can impact on cell mediated immunity against triple antigens, potential therapeutic effects in antiamnestic activity and immununstimulant activity in Pharmacological study. Anthropometrical measurements were found highly significant and raised IgG levels in clinical study. Research work of Dr. Anupriya- showed that Swarna Prashana is safe, non toxic, have immunomodulatory effect on prolonged regular use.

DISSCUSSION

Vyadhikshmatva is the competency of an individual to prevent the onset of a disease or to resist the severity of an already manifested disease. It depends on Bala, Balavardhaka Bhava, Oja, Prakriti, Prakrita Kapha, Agni, Hita and AhitaAhara, Lehana Karma, Jat karma Samskara Rasayana Chikitsa and Swarna Prashana. These all are provide healthy human body by protect from infections. Gold or Swarna is considered as a one of those metals which have good benefits on the body when consumed internally. It has been used to enhance strength and potency, promote longevity and combat the aging process in humans. As Swarna is a metal, so direct administration is difficult and standard dose format is difficult to maintain, now Swarna Bhasma is used. It is an ancient preparation of Ayurveda which is metalo-medicine in powder form of nano to submicron size particles, prepared from metals after many systematic processes to convert raw metal into therapeutic form through the classical process of repeated incineration and grinding with some herbal juices and other specified matters. Nano particles can absorbed through sublingual route directly into the blood stream. Therefore, it can be presumed that some Swarna Bhasma particles may get absorbed through the sublingual route directly into the blood stream, though it has not been experimentally proved. Its preparation method, dose, time of administration, administration age and properties are mentioned in detail in classical Ayurveda texts. Researches have proved on its efficacy, toxicity profile, immunomodulatory action and as a growth and developmental enhancer in children. Safety and efficacy study of Swarna Prashana showed its safe, non toxic effect. Research on immunomodulatory action
concluded that it has immunomodulatory effect on prolonged regular use.

**CONCLUSION**

_Swarna Prashana_ is a comprehensive _Rasayana Chikitsa_, administered for the physical, mental, and intellectual power of the children. It is an immunobooster for children. Researches have shown that there are no toxicity of _Swarna Prashana_. Animal studies on _Swarna Bhasma_ revealed its immunostimulant effect and established it as a preventive and curative therapy.
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