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Clinical Importance of *Kapha Dosha* in *Kaumarabhritya* w.s.r. Growth and Development, *Bala*, Diseases and Child Psychology: A Critical Review

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda the ancient wisdom of medical science says, *Tridoshas* are uniformly distributed and not present in their absolute or individual form in the human body but their individual spectrum is variable in nature according to age, diurnal and geographical variations, physiological changes and, may dominant over others. Ayurveda consider *Balyavastha* as an age of growth and development and physiological predominance of *Kapha Dosha*, which plays a critical role in clinical presentation and further management of the Paediatric disease. *Kapha Dosha* provide *Asharay* i.e. base for physiological activities of *Vata* and *Pitta*, it is major structural and nutritional composition of various tissues of human body, representative of developing immune system in the children and responsible for psychological characteristics like delayed ability to take initiations for any work, good mental stability and strength, capability of determination, prestige. Thus, any vitiation of *Kapha Dosha* caused in an iatrogenic manner may cause physical, immunological as well as mental disturbances, so there should be a balanced approach with special consideration of *Kapha Dosha*, during planning the treatment in *Kaumarabhritya*

Key Words *Kaumarabhritya, Kapha Dosha, Bala, Child psychology*

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INTRODUCTION

Ayurvedic science is based on *Dosh, Dhātu and Mala* and deals with comfort and discomfort of physiological and pathological aspects of life in many different ways¹. *Dosha* i.e. *Vata, Pitta, Kapha* are main physiological entity and in homeostasis they perform movement, energy

yielding, chemical changes, growth and maintenance of structures. Although *Tridoshas* are uniformly distributed and not present in their absolute or individual form in the human body² Hence, their individual spectrum is variable in nature according to age, diurnal and geographical

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variations, physiological changes and may dominant over others³.

The exact understanding of drug and disease, associated aspects like *Dosha*, *Dushya* etc. is essential for a physician. Disease those affect adults may also cause illness in children⁴ additionally children are commonly affected by dietary, infectious and genetic disorders. According to Ayurveda, *Balyavastha* is an age of growth and development, with *Kapha dosha* physiologically predominating throughout this time,⁵ which seems quite similar to concepts of modern Paediatrics such as preventive aspects, nutrition, growth and development. Thus, *Kapha Dosha* plays a critical role in clinical presentation and management of the Paediatric disease in Ayurveda.

Acharya Kashyap has mentioned physician, child and wet nurse has to perform difficult work in this world,⁶ remembering this fact treatment plan of the pediatrician should always consider the pre, post and antenatal, factors and factors affecting the growth and development, causing abnormalities in the child.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A vigorous literary review of *Charak Samhita*, *Asthang Hridaya*, *Kashyap Samhita*, textbooks on *Kaumarabhritya* and modern medical textbooks was done in a parallel way to understand this topic in depth.

Kapha Dosha:

According to *Acharya Sharangadhar* the *Dosha* (*Kapha* and *Pitta*), *mala*, *dhatu*s are unable to perform their functions without involvement of *Vata Dosha*⁷. But the close physiological observation suggests that *Kapha Dosha* provides structural base to *Vata* and *Pitta* for functions like movement, thermoregulatory actions. Etimonies of *Kapha Dosha* suggests *Kapha* is closely associated with –

- Fluid or water in the body.
- Binding together to body substances.
- *Bala* i.e. Strength to perform functions.

Thus, *Kapha Dosha* provide *Ashraya* for *Vata*, *Pitta* and disturbance in the *Ashraya* (i.e., *Kapha*) may cause vitiation of *Ashrayi Dosha* (i.e. *Vata*, *Pitta*) which may lead to related complications in the body. *Kapha Dosha* is further classified into five subtypes *Avlambaka*, *Kledaka*, *Bodhaka*, *Tarpaka*, *Shleska Kapha*⁸.

Analysis of physico-chemical properties of *Kapha Dosha* suggests its similarity with protoplasm of the cell, it can be understood by various functions of *Kapha* e.g. *Bramhan* (Growth), *Purana*, *Gauravam* (i.e. Growth, nutrition and weight gain) these are basic cellular functions of protein. Thus, like protoplasm *Kapha* is the basic matter for all the *Dhatu*s or tissues in the body responsible for its growth, development and maintenance.

Growth and development in children and *Kapha Dosha* –

According to Ayurveda up to the age of 16 years' human body tissues mainly contain *Kapha Dosha* and remain in the state of immaturity i.e. in the

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stage of growth and development. Due to this fact treatment in *Kaumarbhritya* need additional precaution as patient body constitution is less tolerant to drugs and immune system in the stage of development. Growth of infant occurs with an average rate of 800 g/month or at an incremental rate of 25% of total body weight per month. At 1

year, the infant reaches almost three times its birth weight. After the first year, growth proceeds at about 200 g/month. A peak gain is reached at adolescence: 500 to 600 g/ month for boys and somewhat less for girls. Role of *Kapha Dosha* with growth and development is shown in Table No. 1⁹.

Table 1 *Kapha Dosha* and growth in body⁹

<i>Kapha Dosha</i> subtype	Part of the Body	Role in the growth and development of various systems
<i>Avlambaka Kapha</i>	<i>Urah, Hridaya</i>	Helps in the maturation of Lungs and Heart and other systems because it – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as supporting agent for <i>Trika</i> (place of union of both lungs and heart) by aiding in the fluid and gaseous exchange mechanism. • Involved in the process of <i>Tarpana</i> (providing nutrition and growth) of other <i>Kapha Sthan</i> in body such as Brain, Sense organs, Musculo-skeletal, and Hepatobiliary system.
<i>Kledaka Kapha</i>	<i>Amashaya</i>	Maintain digestive health in children by following mechanism- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does proper liquefaction of four type of diet. • Protect the layer of stomach from the corrosive effect of <i>Pitta</i> secreted from the gastric glands thus in turn aid in the <i>Dhatu Pusthi</i>.
<i>Bodhaka Kapha</i>	<i>Jihwamool, Kantha, Rasana, Greeva, Kloma, Ghrana</i>	Helps in the maintenance of oral cavity including throat – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help to develop taste sense and maintain taste bud health. • Responsible for salivary secretions by nourishing parotid, sub-maxillary and sub-lingual glands.
<i>Tarpaka Kapha</i>	<i>Shira</i>	Maturation, nourishment and growth of nervous system and senses – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nourishment to the brain tissue i.e. myelination of neurons, and sensory and motor pathways. • All the functions of the CSF are performed under the influence of <i>Tarpaka Kapha</i>.
<i>Shleska Kapha</i>	<i>Sandhi, Parva, Bahu</i>	Maturation and maintenance of bone and Joint health – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being present at joints and having capacity to bind this <i>Shleska Kapha</i> is main source of the nutrition for bone and joints.

***Kapha Dosha* and body tissue** -Water and its derivatives form major fluid composition of the body, *Kapha Dosha* etymology suggests it is a derivative of the water moreover the protoplasm of modern science is also outcome of water. Thus, suggesting *Kapha Dosha* as a major structural and nutritional composition of various

tissues of human body (Table No. 2)¹⁰. Thus, during the age of growth and development *Kapha Dosha* plays a major role in the human body as *Acharya Charaka* considered predominance of *Kapha Dosha* during *Balyavastha*.

As measurement of growth and nutritional status should be the first clinical assessment in the

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Table 2 Estimated water content of tissues¹⁰

Tissue	Water content%	Tissue	Water content%
Brain (Grey matter)	84	Liver	74
Kidney	81	Pancreas	73
Adrenals	80	Brain (White matter)	70
Cardiac tissue	79	Skin	70
Lungs	78	Skeleton (entire)	46
Spleen	77	Adipose – tissue	30
Brain (entire)	76	Bone (free from marrow)	22.5
Skeletal muscle	75	Dentine	10
Stomach & intestine	75		

clinical Paediatrics and anthropometry are the gold standard for the same. The major anthropometric measurements for age up to 2 years are weight, length, weight for length, and head circumference. The major measurements used for children above two years are weight, height, body mass index (BMI), and head circumference for the 2-3 years' age group. All above parameters may help the physician for the assessment of *Kapa Dosha* in a patient and this in turn will form the base for better treatment plan.

Kapha Dosha and Bala (Immunity)- *Acharya Charaka* in many different chapters has given detailed description of *Bala* with different meanings such as strength, cause of health, and most importantly he considers when *Kapha Dosha* remain in natural and homeostatic condition it called as *Bala* or strength of body. The *Bala* is of three types *Sehaja* (Congenital), *Kalaja* (depends upon age and weather etc.) and

Yuktikrita (Acquired with the help of healthy diet and lifestyle). According to *Acharya Charaka*, *Bala* is responsible for maintenance of health, further the natural and homeostatic stage of *Kapha Dosha* is known as *Ojas*, which provides specific *Vyadhikshamatva* i.e. immune response, which is responsible for protecting from various disease and maintaining the state of health. The immune response of the individuals is not equally capable to counter the disease; this fact is accepted by modern science as well. *Acharya Chakrapani* further described mode of action of the Immune system as *Vyadhikshamatva* (Innate immunity), *Vyadhibalavarodhatvam* (disease specific immunity) and *vyadhiutpadaka pratibandhakatva* (developing an environment unfavorable for growth and multiplication of pathogen it can be correlated with cell mediated immunity)¹¹. The *Kapha Dosha* and *Ojas* both have similar properties as shown in Fig. 1^{12,13}.

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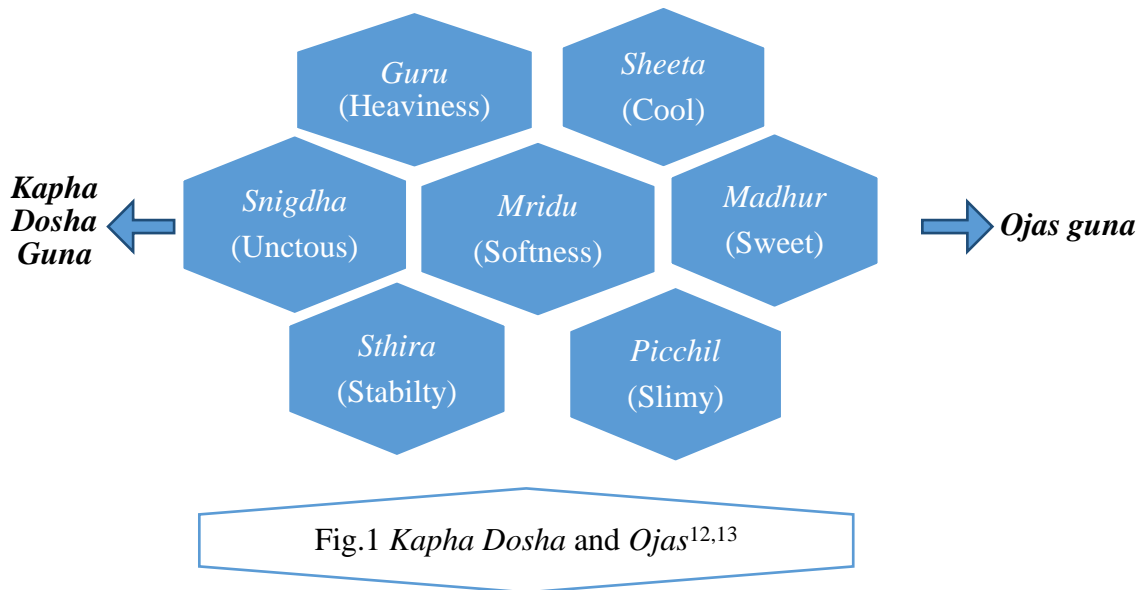


Figure1 Kapha Dosha and Ojas^{12,13}

Thus, *Kapha Dosha* is also a responsible for development of immune system in the children. So, assessment of *Kapha Dosha* during planning of treatment is essential, especially when physician has to choose between *Kapha Sahamak* drug or drugs that may affect functions or concentration of *Ojas* and further *Vyadhikshamatva*.

Kapha Dosha and Psychological factors – *Kapha Dosha* is responsible for many psychological characteristics like delayed ability to take initiations for any work, good mental stability and strength, capability of determination, prestige¹⁴. According to Acharya Marichi *Kapha* is responsible for the some of higher mental functions like intellectual capability, memory, level of consciousness¹⁵. This description suggests the importance of *Kapha Dosha* in the maintenance of mental health, so physician should consider these factors during treatment of *Sharirik* as well as *Mansika Vyadhi*. Any

violation in the *Kapha Dosha* caused in iatrogenic manner may cause physical as well as mental disturbances.

Kapha Dosha* and Disease in *Kaumarabhritya – Disease described in the field of *Kaumarabhritya* are also having predominance of *Kapha* or *Kapha* and *Vata Dosha*. Some common diseases are described here (Table -3)¹⁶⁻²¹.

Table 3 *Kapha Dosha* and Disease in *Kaumarabhritya*

Disease	Dosha Predominance
<i>Ulbaka (Aspiration pneumonia)</i>	<i>Kapha</i> ¹⁶
<i>Ksheeraja Phakk (Nutritional disorders)</i>	<i>Kapha</i> ¹⁷
<i>Ksheeralsaka</i>	<i>Vata, Pitta, Kapha</i> ¹⁸
<i>Bala sosha</i>	<i>Kapha</i> ¹⁸
<i>Talukantaka</i>	<i>Kapha</i> ¹⁸
<i>Ahiputana (Napkin Rashes)</i>	<i>Kapha, Rakta</i> ¹⁸
<i>Kukoona (Ophthalmia neonatorum)</i>	<i>Vata, Pitta, Kapha, Rakta</i> ¹⁹
<i>Romantika (Measels)</i>	<i>Pitta, Kapha</i> ²⁰
<i>Masurika (Chicken pox)</i>	<i>Pitta, Kapha</i> ²⁰
<i>Pravahika (Dysentry)</i>	<i>Vata, Kapha</i> ²¹

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Apart from that *Kapha Dosha* predominance can be considered in disease caused due to *Stanya Dushti*, due to liquid consistency of the *Stanya*. As *Acharya Charaka* has described symptoms due to *Kapha Dusta Stanya* are vomiting, tenesmus, salivation, sleep disturbances, exhaustion, dyspnoea and cough.²² Disease of *Pranvaha Shrotasa* like *Hikka* and *Swasa* are caused due to *Kapha* and *Vata* arising from *Pitta sthan* and major symptoms caused due to *Kapha*²³.

DISCUSSION

The facts attained from review indicate that treatment principles in *Kaumarahritya* and *Kapha Dosha* has a deep interrelation. According to *Acharya Kasyap* the cause of pain in the body is illness and use of exact medicine is the cause of happiness. Decorous use of the drug is similar to nectar and improper doses shows toxic effect on the body²⁴. Keeping in mind this concept a physician should prepare his treatment plan. Factor responsible for causing disease like *Dosha*, *Dushya*, *Mala* is same but, less in quantity as compare to adults. Generally, children are delicate, dependent on others, unable to speak and express their symptoms, so as per the nature and stage of disease they should be treated with mild *Sanshodhana* or with precautious dosing i.e. low dose of *Sanahaman* drugs²⁵.

Acharya Sushruta has focused on the accurate dosing of the *Chedaniya* drug and advised to use drug of *Mridu* quality for this purpose. This

indicates the importance of *Kapha Dosha* assessment, as *Tikshna Chedana* drug used in improper doses may cause complications in children. The *Sodhana chikitsa* procedures are also advised in a manner to not vitiate the *Kapha Dosha* e.g. *Vaman Karma* is selectively indicated even after being the main treatment for *Kaphaj Vyadhi*, as it may cause over excretion of *Kapha* and in turn related complications in children. Taking another example of *Swedana*, effective in *Vata Kapha* predominant diseases should be done in a precautionary manner (i.e. covering body parts, less duration) as it may cause over secretion of *Kapha* and related consequences. As compared to other procedures *Basti Chikitsa* is freely indicated by many texts because it does not cause any disturbances to *Kapha Dosha*.

Acharya Charaka stated a balancing approach for *Shaman* drugs, the basic fundamental is *Madhur*, *Kasaya*, *Mridu*, and effective drug in low doses should be prescribed. This can be explained as *Kapha Dosha* is predominant in children, still they indicated drug with *Madhur*, *Mridu* qualities which can increase *Kapha*. Similarly, unctuous, rough, hot, sour, heavy and pungent in *Vipaka* are contraindicated in children. This balanced approach shows the importance of *Kapha Dosha* in *Kaumarahritya* during planning the treatment. Further prospect – Although the homeostasis in the body is attained by a balance of three *Dosha* itself, so, further research can provide the specific details and explanations needed to understand the specific importance of *Kapha Dosha* during treatment planning in *Kaumarahritya*.

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CONCLUSION

The word *Kapha* is have different meanings and functions in Ayurveda like *Bala* i.e. providing strength, governance over immune system. Another meaning is state of health, which is maintained via control of various physiological functions at cellular, tissue, organ level and control over higher mental functions like intellectual coordination, memory etc. Any disturbance caused in *Kapha Dosha* due to pathological conditions may cause aggregation in the symptoms additionally, physician should be precious to not vitiate *Kapha Dosha* estrogenically while planning the treatment.

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