

A CONCEPT OF *LEHANA* AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN PRESENT ERA: A REVIEW STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the storehouse of knowledge for the maintenance of health benefits for healthy individual also it treats the deceased ones by giving treatments of various vyadhis. Vyadhinasha and vyadhipratibandha are the two main aspects of vyadhikshamatva. For this purpose various methods are discussed in *Ayurveda*. *Rasayana*, *vajikarana*, *ahar-vihar*, *sadvritta*, *lehana karma*, *samskar*, *jeevaniya dravya*, *balya dravyas* are mentioned in *Ayurveda* which helps enhancing the immunity powers of body. *Lehana* is also one of these enhancing tools which show tremendous effect. *Kashyapa* had given importance to *lehana karma* as he mentioned it as a whole *adhyaya* in *sutrasthana*. He stated that *sukha* and *dukha* of a child depends

on *lehana*. The term *lehana* means licking or passing the tongue over something. *Kashyapa* mentioned some drugs as *brahmi*, *vacha*, *triphal*, *suvarnaprashana*, etc. in *lehadhyaya*. *Charak* had also mentioned *ghritas* such as *panchagavya ghrit*, *brahmi ghrit*, etc. *Sushruta* has mentioned four recipes. *Vagbhata* also mentioned *Sarashwata ghrita* and *suvarna bhasma* with *vacha*, *ghrut* & *madhu*.

KEYWORDS: *Vyadhikshamatva*, *lehana*, *Kashyapa*, *suvarnaprashana*.

1. INTRODUCTION

From old times, everything in this whole world had the enormous change in every field. Then may it be the cultural field, social behaviour, lifestyle or other activities. These changes are observed in medical field also. Gradually, everything is shifted towards holistic approach from reductionist. In medical field, human health and its maintenance were realized to be complex thing. And this realization leads to reinvestigation in the traditional medicine systems such as Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, etc. Apart from siddha or unani, the ayurvedic field is more influenced. It is realized that *Ayurveda* has more holistic approach towards human health. As a result, many *ayurvedic* concepts are being correlated with modern concepts such immunology, molecular medicine, etc.

The concept of *vyadhikshamatva* can be correlated with immunity in the modern scientific medicinal system. When certain pathological factors come to invade the human body, the body shows some preventive efforts in resistance to the factors. If such factors develop a disease in the body then the body tries to destroy it. This concept is known as *vyadhikshamatva* in *Ayurveda*.^[1] This concept has two main aspects viz. first one is *vyadhinasha* i.e. destroying the developed disease in the human body. The second is *vyadhipratibandha* i.e. to prevent the etiological factors from invading the body.^[2] Thus we can say that *vyadhikshamatva* fulfills the main *prayojana* of *ayurveda* i.e. '*swasthasya swasthya rakshanam*' and '*aaturasya vikaar prashamanam*'.^[3] Since *ayurveda* is a *chikitsashastra*, *Charaka* divides the *bheshaja* in two major groups: 1. *Swasthasya urjaskar* and 2. *Aartasya roganut*.^[4] Whole *ayurvedic* medicine is described in these two main groups.

The concepts of *rasayana*, *vajikarana*, *sadvritta*, *samskar*, *lehana karma*, *ahar- vihar*, *achar* *rasayana* can be categorized under *swasthasya urjaskar bheshaja*. *Lehana karma* is one of them. Thus it is important to study the *abhipretartha*(proper meaning) each topic under *lehana* topic so that it can be implemented by the doctors and *vaidyas*. All the *Acharyas* including *Charak*, *Sushruta*, *Vagbhat* had described *lehana* under the *jatakarma paricharya* heading.

2. NEED FOR STUDY

Infancy & childhood are the most important phases of life. Each child should get sufficient nutrition for proper growth and development. Nearly half of all deaths in children below 5 years of age are attributable to undernutrition;^[5] undernutrition put children at greater risk of dying from common infections also increase the frequency and severity of such infections,

and delays the recovery. According to UNICEF India, 28.7% of deaths of children below 5 years of age occur due to preterm labor during the year 2017; and other common causes are pneumonia, congenital anomalies, and diarrhea. According to a recent report of WHO, the probability of dying under the age of 5 years is 39 per 1000 live births in India.^[6] For all these reasons it is being most necessary to give proper nutrition to children as well as infants. This deficiency can be fulfilled by *swasthasya urjaskar bhesaja* mentioned in *ayurveda*. Recently many studies have been done on pediatric health and *ayurveda*.

It shows that the drugs, formulations & mode of actions mentioned by *acharyas* in ancient times are still equally powerful and effective in this era. The only need is to review and to study thoroughly for the implementation of these methods according to today's lifestyle. This hazard can be prevented by *ayurvedic* formula such as *lehana*.

AIM

To review and study the *lehana karma* and its importance in pediatric health care.

OBJECTIVES

1. To review the available literature of *lehana karma* in classical texts.
2. To analyze its contribution to pediatric health care.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A methodical collection of data from classical texts of *Ayurveda* as well as related pharmacoclinical research articles and dissertation works published on PubMed, authentic journals and manual search of bibliographies as the sources.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Lehana karma

In *ayurvedic* texts, countless proficient *dravyas*, useful formulations, mode of conduct have been described to enhance the *vyadhikshamatva* of the adult as well as infants and children of *ksheerada* (infantile period), *ksheerannada* (from 1 -2 years of age) and *annanda awastha* (from 2-16 years of age).^[7] *Kashyapa* describes a special formulation as *Lehana karma* for infants and children.

Nirukti and meaning

'*Leha*' word formed from '*lih*' *dhatu* and '*gha~j*' *pratyaya*^[8]

The term *lehana* means licking or passing the tongue over something.

Literature review on *lehana****Kashyapa***

Kashyapa Samhita is the only *Samhita* related to pediatrics. Infants and children are susceptible to various infections. Therefore *Kashyapa* describes *lehana* to enhance immunity and boost the nourishment to delicate tissues of the infant's body. As the infancy is the base of further healthy or unhealthy life suffering which directly depends upon the actions done in childhood. Thus *Kashyapa* describes *lehana* in detail chapter.

Purposes of *lehana* are

1. To promote the growth and nourish the body &
2. To enhance immunity.

Indications of *lehana*^[9]

For the child whose mother is- aksheera or alpaksheera janani, prasuta, dushprajata, vyadhipidita.

For infants or children- vatika and paittika(dominance of vata and pitta dosha), kaphavarjita(submissive of kapha dosha), who cries continuously even after breast feeding, anidra nishi(unable to sleep at night), mahashana, alpamutrprishashcha, deeptagni (resplendence of agni), lease and thin body appearance even if healthy, who do not defecate for three days or more.

All the above conditions mentioned are indicative of *lehana* karma mentioned by *Kashyapa*.^[10]

Contraindications of *lehana*^[11]

Mandagni(despair of agni), nidralu(excessive sleepy), bahuvinmutra(frequent and bulky defecation and urination), ENT diseases, fever, diarrhoea, kamla(liver diseases), shotha(dropsy), pandu(anaemia), hridroga, shwas, kasa; guda, basti, udar vikar, chhardi, arochak, visarpa, anah, alarak, grahabadhit, amaroga, who are satmya to certain drugs or formulations.

Various formulations described by *Kashyapa*^[12]

- *Madhu* and *ghrita* in different doses should be given to the newborn baby in *vidangaphala matra* for the first time. Then the dose should be increasing monthly but it should not exceed *amalak matra*.

- *Suvarnaprashana-suvarna bhasma* along with *madhu* and *ghrit*.
- *Brahmi, mandukparni, triphala, chitrak, vacha, shatpushpa, shatavari, danti, nagabala, trivrita* separately with *madhu* and *ghrit*.
- *Kalyanaka ghritam*
- *Panchagavya ghritam*
- *Brahmi ghritam*
- *Manjishthadi ghritam*
- *Kushthadi ghritam*
- *Abhay ghritam*
- *Samvardhan ghritam*, etc.

Importance of *lehana*^[13]

Kashyapa described as a measure of *sukha* and *dukha* of infant and children.

Charak

Charaka has mentioned about the topic in *jatisutriya adhyaya*. Newborn baby should be given *mantropmantrit madhu* and *sarpi*.^[14]

Sushruta

He has described this topic in *sharirsthana 10th adhyaya Garbhinivyakaranashariram* in which he explained *jatakarma paricharya* of newborn baby. *Sushruta* also mentioned about *swarnaprashana*.^[15] *Madhu* and *sarpi* along with *ananta churna* i.e. *svarna bhasma* should be given to the newborn baby with the little finger.

Sushruta had described 4 recipes (containing *svarna bhasma*) which provide general immunity, body resistance, helpful in growth & development as well as enhancing the intelligence. These are.^[16]

- 1) *Svarna bhasma* with *kustha* (*Saussurea lappa*), *vacha* (*Acorus calamus*), *madhu* (honey) & *ghrita*.
- 2) *Svarna bhasma* with paste of *brahmi* (*Bacopa monnieri*), *shankhapushpi* (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*), with *madhu* & *ghrita*.
- 3) *Svarna bhasma*, *arkapushpi* (*Leptadenia Reticulata*), *vacha* (*Acorus calamus*), *honey* & *ghrita*.
- 4) *Svarna bhasma*, *khaidarya* (*Murraya koenigii*), *shweta durva* (*Cynodon dactylon*), *ghrita*.

Vagbhata

Vagbhata have mentioned the following formulations for infants and children for enhancement of *medha*(intelligence), *ayu*(happy and healthy life), *bala*(power).^[17]

- *Kalka* (fine paste) of *aindri*(*Bacopa monnieri*), *brahmi*(*Centella asiatica*), *vacha*(*Acorus calamus*), *shankhapushpi*(*Convolvulus pluricaulis*), along with *madhu* and *ghrita* in harenu matra.
- Fine powder of *Chamikar*(*swarna bhasma*), *vacha*(*Acorus calamus*), *brahmi*(*Centella asiatica*), *tapi*(*suvarnamakshik* or copper pyrite) and *pathya*(*Terminalia chebula*) along with *madhu* and *ghrita*
- Fine powder of *amalaki*(*Embilica officinalis*) with *swarna bhasma*.

According to Vagbhata, after labor the *hridayastha siras* are closed resulting into milk secretion is observed after some time but not immediately.^[18] Therefore, the first two days the infant should be given formulations as follows.^{[19], [20]}

- On the first day, three *kaal madhu* and *sarpi* along with *swarna bhasma* should be given
- On the second and third day, *lakshmana siddha ghrita* should be given three times a day.
- Followed by *navneet*(butter) with breast milk.
- *arshvata ghrita*,
- Combination of *vacha* and *swarna bhasma* with honey and *ghrita* etc.

Functions of *lehana*^[21]

1. To enhance growth & development by providing sufficient nutrition.
2. Promote the *swasthya*(health), *varna*(complexion) and *bala*(strength or immunity).
3. Protect from various infections along with improvement in intellectual power and speech (delayed milestone).
4. To live a healthy and happy life further.

4. RESULT AND CONCLUSION

Swasthasya swasthya rakshanam is the fundamental aim of ayurveda. This principle can be achieved by following certain ayurvedic concepts. Some of which are *rasayana*, *lehana*, *ahar-vihar* mentioned in Samhitas, *sadvritta*, *achar rasayana*, etc.

Benefits of *lehana karma*

- Usually, *Lehas* are palatable and easy for consumption. Children are reluctant in taking the medicine in the form of *vati*, *Churna* or *Kwatha*. Comparatively *Lehana* form with added *Madhura* drugs are easy to administer.
- As we know the growing children are busy playing or other activities throughout and for that they need extra calories. Thus *lehana* may be added as a routine method to compensate this extra calorific need.
- As the classical texts explained that *lehana* should be administered for a month, two months or six months, one should have patiently followed it for desirable effects
- Childhood is the period in which growth and development rates are higher. Therefore the body demands an extra amount of fats, amino acids, micronutrients, macronutrients, carbohydrates, proteins, etc. which can be supplied by *lehana* drugs.
- Growth of nervous tissues is very fast in the first five years and the *lehana* drugs are mostly *medhya* in nature. Thus it affects the intelligence part.
- Nutritional deficiencies can be corrected by *lehana*.
- As per some indications and contraindications mentioned *lehana* may be used as a substitute for breast milk.
- It may lead to vaccination type effects by boosting up the *vyadhikshamatva*(immunity).
- According to *Kashyapa*, *lehana* is responsible for the happiness and sorrow in future life. By keeping this in mind one can say that *lehana* is also an essential procedure for infants and children.

5. DISCUSSION

Children are more susceptible to infections and various diseases as their immunity is yet to develop. In this phase of life, our attempt should be towards the prevention of diseases and enhancing the physical and mental growth of children. This can be done by using *ayurvedic* concepts as *rasayana* and *lehana*. It helps in the prevention of infections and also promotes growth and development in children. If the *lehana* drugs are used in appropriate doses along with National Nutritional Programme and other National programs the better results can be implemented. We can gain better growth both physically and mentally and also social well being. Also, it helps to eradicate the various infections.

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