Navjata Shishu Paricharya (Neonatal Care) In Ayurveda: A Review

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ABSTRACT

Kaumarbhritya is one of the branches in Ashtang Ayurveda which deals with care of infant, children; their disease and management. Navjata Shishu Paricharya (Care of the newborn) is described by both Ayurvedic and modern texts in detail. Ayurveda and modern text give detail description about Navajata. In Ayurveda texts Acharyas stated full description to care of new born from birth to full stability of new born. Different Acharyas advised various procedures for the stability of new born with a few difference in opinion regarding the sequence of those procedure. This article presents a critical study of the procedures included in Navjata Shishu Paricharya revealing their scientific relevance and utility in adequate care of new born. The materials were collected from the classical Ayurvedic text’s, pediatric textbooks, magazines and research journals. The measures care of new born described in our ancient texts indicate their wisdom regarding resuscitation, prevention of hypothermia, aspiration and infections and promotion of rooming in and early initiation of breast feeding.

Keywords: Navjata Shishu Paricharya, resuscitation, hypothermia.

INTRODUCTION

Before the creation of living beings, lord brahma stated that ayurveda is a branch of atharvaveda. He composed it in one thousand chapters having one lakh shloka (verses) and divided it into eight branches. Kaumarbhritya is one of the eight branches of Ayurveda, formed by two word’s kaumar and bhritiya, branch which deals with the care of children, their diseases and respective treatment is called kaumarbhritya. Acharya charak placed kaumarbhritya at 6th position in ashtang ayurveda. Acharya shushruta placed kaumarbhritya at 5th position in asthang ayurveda. Acharya vagbhatta placed kaumarbhritya at 2nd position. The subject matter of this branch is available primarily in Sharir Sthana and Uttar Tantra of treatise comprising Brihat Traya. It also includes neonatology, amongst which care of newborn (Navjata Shishu Paricharya) is described in detail. In Ayurveda texts Acharyas stated full description to care of new born from birth to full stability of new born. Different Acharyas advised various procedures for the stability of new born with a few difference in opinion regarding the sequence of those procedure.

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MATERIAL AND METHOD

The materials were collected from Ayurvedic text’s, magazines and Research articles. Acharyas advised various procedures for the stability of new born with a few difference in opinion regarding the sequence of those procedure.
1) Prana pratyagaman (neonatal resuscitation)

Acharya Charaka opines that immediately after birth of baby, while taking steps to bring out placenta, the following measures should be taken for the resuscitation of the fetus: striking of stones near the base of ears of baby, sprinkling cold water in summer and hot water in winter on the face of baby. By these measures, baby will regain consciousness if baby does not stabilize, waving a *krishankapalika shupa* (a blackened surface broken earthen pot) near it until the baby is fully revived[1]. Astanga Hridaya stated this process after Ulvaparimarjan. Acharya Vagbhata gave the sign & symptoms of an asphyxiated newborn. Acharya Vagbhata stated that For proper revival (resuscitation) of newborn, first the child should be *Parisheka* with Bala oil along with striking of two stones near the base of the ears of the newborn. If these steps do not regain the stability of the child, then provide oxygen to the child by *krishankapalika shupa* and chanting of Mantras in the right ear of newborn[2].

Clinical Importance

*Acharya Charaka* has laid emphasis on initiation of *Prana Pratyagamana* measures immediately after birth along with efforts for placenta extraction without losing any time. It seems that sensory, tactile and auditory stimulation are produced by striking of two stones, sprinkling water over face. Striking of two stones near mastoid or base of ear produces intense sound stimulating vestibule cochlear nerve. It is a sensory nerve whose afferent branch carries sensation to its nuclei situated on the floor of the fourth ventricle, near respiratory centre, which is also stimulated and respiration begins. Sprinkling hot or cold water may stimulate the sensory fibres of facial nerve which stimulates the respiratory centre in brain. Rubbing of *Bala taila* on baby’s body serves the purpose of tactile stimulation, temperature maintenance and providing strength to baby. Enchanting of *Mantras* close to baby’s ear may serve as a psychological support to mother and an auditory stimulus to baby.

2) Snana

According to Acharya Charaka, when respiration is established in the neonate and he is in a stable condition, his oropharynx passage should be cleaned with water then he should be given bath[3]. Sushruta prescribes bathing of neonate after *Jata karma*. He says that baby should be bathed with decoction of laticiferous trees, water of aromatic medicated water, water in *sneha pichhu* recommend by Acharya vagbhata[10].

Clinical Importance

It seems that sensory, tactile and auditory stimulation are produced by striking of two stones, sprinkling water over face. Striking of two stones near mastoid or base of ear produces intense sound stimulating vestibule cochlear nerve. It is a sensory nerve whose afferent branch carries sensation to its nuclei situated on the floor of the fourth ventricle, near respiratory centre, which is also stimulated and respiration begins. Sprinkling hot or cold water may stimulate the sensory fibres of facial nerve which stimulates the respiratory centre in brain. Rubbing of *Bala taila* on baby’s body serves the purpose of tactile stimulation, temperature maintenance and providing strength to baby. Enchanting of *Mantras* close to baby’s ear may serve as a psychological support to mother and an auditory stimulus to baby.

3) Mukhishodhan (Cleaning Of Oral Cavity)

Acharya Charaka stated that neonate *taalu, osth, jivaha, kantha* should be wiped with properly clipped off, well cleaned and covered with cotton swabs attendant’s finger then *shiras talu* of baby should be covered with unctuous substances cotton swab[7]. Similar description is given by *vagbhata*[8]. Use of ghee and rock salt for oral cleaning prescribed by *acharya susruta*[9]. Covering fontanel by ghee soaked cotton has been advocated by both *Sushruta* and *Vagbhata*.

Clinical Importance

This technique involves first cleaning the oro-parangalve cavity and thereafter the nasal cavity to avoid aspiration of secretion into respiratory tract when baby starts breathing. Thus, this measure rules out risk of aspiration pneumonia (Ulva). Placing a ghee soaked cotton piece on anterior fontanel prevents heat loss from the large surface area of neonate’s head and also protects it from injury.

4) PICHUDHARNA (Tampon application)

*Acharya susruta* has also advised after *mukhavishodhan* the use of tampon soaked in *ghrita* on *murdha*[9]. Cover the *talupadesh* with *sneha pichhu* recommend by *Acharya vagbhata*[10].

Clinical Importance

*Murdha/ brhamarandra* which are also called anterior fontanelle are soft intracranial structures of the new born, and unprotected at the time of birth due to unfused cranial sutures. Covering of anterior fontanelle with a *sneha-pichhu* advised by acharyas as a protective mechanism.

5) GARBHODAKA VAMANA (Stomach wash)

*Acharya Charaka* hold the view that the child should be given *vamana* (emesis) as *saindhava* and *ghrita* to wash out the gastric contents right after carrying out the *pichudhara*[11]. Acharya Vagbhata has advised use of *saindhava,ghrita* with specific drug i.e. *vacha*[12].

Clinical Importance

Garbhadaka vamana prevents chances of regurgitation and aspiration of regurgitated contents. It also prevents vomiting after feeds which may occur due to irritant effect of meconium, blood or amniotic fluid present in stomach. According to Acharyas *Saindhava Lavana & vacha* have *swadu, dipanum, pachanum, sheet, tridoshhara, vamankarka,, malamutra shodhaka*, and cures *vibanda* (constipation), *adhyama*[13]. Thus, these medicines are advised for *Garbhodakavamana* (stomach wash).

6) NALA CHERANA (Cutting & Care Of Umbilical Cord)

*Acharya Charaka* prescribes *Naalchedan* after Garbhodak vamana while *Acharya Sushruta* recommends it after *Mukha vishodhana* and *Pichu dhara*. Acharya Vagbhata has described cutting of umbilical cord after *Ulva parimarjan*. Charaka stated that the Umbilical cord should be cut at eight *Angula* distance from baby’s umbilicus with help of an *Ardhadhara* type of instrument, made of from *swarna, rajat, ayasa* and
followed by tying cut end with a clean thread. The free end of the clamped cord should be hung onto the neck of the baby. If there is production of pus formation over umbilical cord, oil pre pared with paste of lodhra, madhuka, priyangu, suradaru and haridra should be applied. Powder of the medicines prescribed for oil preparation should be sprinkled over suppurated Umbilical cord [14]. Sushruta has also mentioned same process for nala-chedana in navajat shishu-paricharya [15]. Similar technique of nalachadana stated by Acharya Vagbhata regarding the procedure he is advised that the umbilical cord cut at a distance of four angulas from umbilicus and kustha medicated oil used to prevent it from paka (inflammation) [16].

Clinical Importance

Acharyas advised Cutting of umbilical cord after completion of resuscitative measures and stabilization of baby because it provide nutrition and blood supply to the baby. It is advised to clamp the cord by thread to prevent bleeding which may cause hypovolemic shock. Umbilical cord should be hung on to the neck after cutting of the cord to prevents bleeding and also to prevent cord infections by urine and stool etc. lodhra, madhuka, priyangu, suradaru, haridra. Kushtha have jantughan, vedana shtapana and shotha hara (anti-inflammatory) properties [17]. So these drugs are used for prevention from infections.

7) JATAKARMA

Jatakarma is first sacrament done after birth. acharya Charaka stated that on the first day neonate feed with mantra sanctified madhu (honey) and ghrita thereafter the mother should give her right breast for feeding to the baby after placing on the side of baby’s head. An earthen jar filled with water should be impregnated with mantras and kept near the head of the child [18]. Acharya Sushruta advised to lick madhu, ghrita and ananta with index finger. On second and third day Lakshmana with ghrita, while on fourth day shavapanitalasamitta (or amount which fills the neonate palm) madhu and ghrita is to be offered to the newborn after this, the baby can be exclusively breast-fed [19]. Acharya Vagbhata follows Sushruta’s with a slight variation where on the fourth day, he has advocated offering ghrita (sarpil) and navnita (butter) to the newborn and thereafter initiating breast feeding. Acharya Vagbhata also stated that Jata karma should be performed by prajapatya method described in religious text [20].

Clinical Importance

Jatakarma is the birth rite which helps the baby transcend to extraterrene life. Honey and ghee act as nutrition for the baby because they have a high caloric value, giving energy and nutrition to baby. Gold powder gives protection and enhances brain development of the baby. It provide protection and enhances brain development of the baby. It is advised to clamp the cord by thread to prevent bleeding which may cause hypovolemic shock. Umbilical cord should be hung on to the neck after cutting of the cord to prevents bleeding and also to prevent cord infections by urine and stool etc. lodhra, madhuka, priyangu, suradaru, haridra. Kushtha have jantughan, vedana shtapana and shotha hara (anti-inflammatory) properties [17]. So these drugs are used for prevention from infections.

8) RAKSHAKARMA (PROTECTIVE MEASURES)

Rakshakarma means protection of newborn, which described by Acharya Charaka in detail. All around the labour room (sutikagara), the twigs of adani, khadira, karakndu, pilu, parushaka should be hung, and sarshapa, atasi, tandula, kan-kaniko should be scattered on its floor. A packet of vacha, kushta, kshomka, hinga, sarspa, atasi, lasuna, guggulu etc. raksoghana dravaya should be hung on the door and same dravaya should be tied around the neck of mother and the child. Inside the sutikagara, fire lit from tinduka should be constantly kept burning. Female attendants who are friends to mother should keep constant vigil by remaining awake for ten to twelve days. The whole house should be full of affectionate people and celebrations should be made. To best auspiciousness upon the mother and child, Brahmins well versed with the Atharva Veda should offer prayers twice a day [21]. Acharya Sushruta stated the newborn wrapped in kshauma cloth and sleep on a bed covered with soft linen. The baby with Twigs of pilu-badar-nimbab-parushaka. Application of oil soaked tampon (tailalipchu) should be applied over the baby’s forehead daily. rakshoghana dravaya fumigation should be done in the sutikagara Dailey [22]. Acharya Vagbhata follows charaka with a slight addition, Vagbhatta has also advised use of herbs as brahmi, indryana, jivaka and rishbhaka to be tied around hands or neck of the newborn [23].

Clinical Importance

Rakshakarma, aim to protect the newborn baby from various infections as in use of clean clothes, beddings etc. The various drugs mentioned in dhupana karma have antiseptic and antimicrobial properties, fumigation of the sutikagara by various dhupana drugs is mentioned to protect the baby as various opportunist infections/diseases.

CONCLUSION

Our acharyas have given a brief knowledge of neononatalogy. After review of our samhita’s, it was found that the considered text has mentioned all the important aspects of kaumarbhrita like care of new born, breastfeeding, protection of child, neonatal nursery, etc. which are enough for the basic knowledge and necessary to understood by mother, students, scholars and physicians. Various propounders of Ayurveda have described the care of newborn in their own measure yet its essence is the same and moreover in its intent heralds the modern day Neonatology. Though with the advent of newer scientific knowledge and technologies, this practice has become obsolete these days, yet an understanding of Navajata Shishu Paricharya proves it to be the foundation stone and base of neonatal care.

REFERENCES


HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE