



Review Article

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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. *Navajata 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 option 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 *bhritya*, 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 sushruta* placed *kaumarbhritya* at 5th position in *asthang ayurveda*. *Acharya vagbhata* placed *kaumarbhritya* at 2nd position. The subject matter of this branch is available primarily in *Sharir Sthana* and *Uttar Tantra* of treatise comprising *Brihat Trayi*. 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 option regarding the sequence of those procedure.

Acharya charaka	Acharya shushruta	Acharya vagbhata
Pranapartayagamana	Ulva parimarjana	Ulva parimarjana
Snana	Mukha vishodana	Pranapartayagamana
Mukha vishodhna	Pichudharna	Nala chedana
Pichudharna	Nala chedana	Snana
Garbhodaka vamaana	Jatakarma	Pichudharna
Nala chedana	Snana	Suvaranaprashana
Jatakarma		Garbhodaka vamaana
Raksha karma.		Jatakarma

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 option regarding the sequence of those procedure.

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1) Prana pratyagamana (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 shoopa* (a blackened surface broken earthen pot) near it until the baby is fully revived [1]. *Astanga Hridaya* stated this process after *Ulvaparimarjana*. 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 *Mantrasa* 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 drugs or water heated with silver or gold or warm decoction of *kapittha* leaves in accordance with season, *dosha* and means [4]. Acharya Vagbhata advised *snana* to be done on the basis of the *doshas*, *kala* and *Bala* of baby. Vagbhata also mentions different *dravyas* like lukewarm, *ksheerivriksha kwatha*, *sarvagandha dravyas*, medicated water, water in which heated *rajat* or *swarna* have been quenched or in *kapith patra kwatha* for *Snana* [5].

Clinical Importance

Bathing of baby maintains hygiene and Medicated bathing water promote healing of umbilical stump and have pacifying properties. Most of the drugs which are prescribed by acharyas have antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory and analgesic activity [6].

3) Mukhvisodhan (Cleaning Of Oral Cavity)

Acharya Charaka stated that neonate *taalu*, *ostha*, *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 sushruta* [9]. Covering fontanel by ghee soaked cotton has been advocated by both *Sushruta* and *Vagbhata*.

Clinical Importance

This technique involves first cleaning the oro-pharyngeal 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 (Ulvaka). 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 sushruta has also advised after *mukhavishodhan* the use of tampon soaked in *ghrita* on *murdha* [9]. Cover the *talupradesh* 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 *pichhudharana* [11]. Acharya Vagbhata has advised use of *saindhava,ghrita* with specific drug i.e. *vacha* [12].

Clinical Importance

Garbhodaka 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*, *dip anum*, *pach anum*, *sheet*, *tridoshhara*, *vamankarka*, *malamutra shodhaka*, and cures *vibanda* (constipation), *adhymana* [13]. Thus, these medications are advised for *Garbhodakavamana* (stomach wash).

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

Acharya Charaka prescribes *Naalchedan* after *Garbhodak vamana* while Acharya Sushruta recommends it after *Mukha visodhana* and *Pichu dharana*. 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 prepared 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 *nalachedana* 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. Kustha have jantughan, vedana sthapana 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 by 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 (sarpī)* 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 extrauterine 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. first feed initiates movements and activates the gut and gastrointestinal. During *Jatakarma* we can assess the rooting and sucking reflex of neonates. *Jatakarma* with *mantra* psychological support to mother. *Charaka* has advised breast feeding start as soon as possible after birth right from the first day of life for protective immunoglobulin present in colostrums as well as for nutrition.

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-kanika* should be scattered on its floor. A

packet of *vacha, kustha, kshomka, hingu, sarspa, atasi, lasuna, guggulu* etc. *raksoghana dravyas* should be hung on the door and same *dravyas* 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. fan the baby with Twigs of *pilu-badar-nimba-parushaka*. Application of oil soaked tampon (*tailapichu*) should be applied over the baby's forehead daily. *rakhoghana dravyas* fumigation should be done in the *sutikagara* Dailey [22]. *Acharya Vagbhata* follows *charaka* with a slight addition, *Vagbhata* 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 from various opportunistic infections/diseases.

CONCLUSION

Our *acharyas* have given a brief knowledge of neonatology. After review of our *samhita's*, it was found that the considered text has mentioned all the important aspects of *kaumarbhritya* 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 *Navjata Shishu Paricharya* proves it to be the foundation stone and base of neonatal care.

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