



Review Article

www.ijrap.net



A GLIMPSE OF KAUMARBHRITYA IN ASTANGA HRIDAYA

Deepshikha^{1*}, Rai Amit Kumar²

¹Lecturer, Department of Kaumarbhritya, BKAMCH, Daudhar, Moga, Punjab, India

²Medical Officer, Ch. Brahm Prakash Ayurved Charak Sansthan, Delhi, India

Received on: 17/08/14 Revised on: 15/09/14 Accepted on: 01/10/14

*Corresponding author

Dr. Deepshikha, Lecturer, Department of Kaumarbhritya, BKAMCH, Daudhar, Moga, Punjab, India

E-mail: deepbhu10@gmail.com

DOI: 10.7897/2277-4343.056132

ABSTRACT

Astanga Hridaya is one of the authoritative treatises of ancient Indian medicine. It has attracted the attention of medical experts not only within India but also of neighboring countries such as Arabia, Persia, Tibet and Germany. Its popularity is substantiated by large number of commentaries by scholars of Ayurveda and translation into other languages. Kaumarbhritya is one of the eight branches of Ayurveda which presently deals with care of infants and children, their diseases and treatment. Though main text of this branch is considered to be Kashyap Samhita which is incompletely available, thus scholars have to look upon other authoritative texts for knowledge of the subject. Astanga Hridaya being a comprehensive text and a part of Brihat trayi is apt for quenching thirst of knowledge. This article aims at reviewing the knowledge about Kaumarbhritya available in Astanga Hridaya. After thorough review it was found that the considered text describes all important concepts of Kaumarbhritya, diseases of children and their practical treatment which caters to the needs of students, scholars and practitioners alike.

Keywords: Kaumarbhritya in Astanga Hridaya, Kaumarbhritya by Vagbhata, Classical references of Kaumarbhritya/Bal Roga.

INTRODUCTION

Acharya Vagbhata is among the three classic writers of Ayurveda who have composed 'Brihat trayi'. His work 'Astanga Hridaya' embraces the best parts of earlier treatise of Acharya Charak and Sushruta along with his original contributions. His time period in history dates back to 600 A.D.

Astanga Hridaya has always attracted the attention of scholars as it is comprehensive and easier to understand. As the name suggests this samhita possesses a treasure of knowledge of Astanga Ayurveda including that related to Kaumarbhritya. Many of the important topics of this branch are dealt with in Uttar Tantra, but the rest is scattered in the whole samhita. A complete view of the samhita reveals the concept and important contributions of this samhita in field of Kaumarbhritya.

The following is a short review of Kaumarbhritya in Astanga Hridaya.

Garbha Vyapada

Vagbhata mentions concept of upavishtaka, nagodara and lina garbha along with their treatment. These are the complications of pregnancy in which the fetus is post dated and intra uterine growth retarded. Upavishtaka is the condition in which there is copious vaginal discharge, fetus does not grow in size, but remains inside the womb producing throbbing i.e., fetus is alive but growth retarded. Another condition in which the fetus is dry and emaciated is Nagodara in which the mother undergoes severe mental and physical stress, has vaginal leaking which causes aggravation of Vata dosha with post term fetus. Lina garbha is the one in which there is no throbbing.¹

Concept of Neonatal Care (Navjata Shishu Paricharya)

Astanga Hridaya describes in detail the care of a baby after birth including ulva parimarjana (cleaning of the vernix caseosa), pranapratyagaman (resuscitative measures), naal chhedan (cutting of umbilical cord), snana (bathing), pichu dharan (external oleation), swarnaprashan (ingestion of gold bhasma with medhya herbs), garbhodaka vama (cleaning of stomach by emesis) and jata karma (initiation of feeding of newborn). Just after birth, vernix of baby should be removed by using saindhava (rock salt) and ghee. This dries the baby, gives sufficient tactile stimulus for breathing and prevents hypothermia.

Use of bala taila is also advocated. Two stones should be rubbed to make noise near the base of baby's ear or mastoid process.² This stimulates auditory nerve and helps in initiation of breathing. Chanting the holy mantras is also prescribed. When the baby attains a proper breathing and cry, his umbilical cord should be cut at a distance of four angula (fingers) from umbilicus, tied with a thread, suspended by neck and 'Kustha taila' be applied to it to prevent sepsis.³ After this, oil soaked cotton should be placed on anterior fontanel of scalp.⁴ This prevents hypothermia and any chances of injury. For bathing of baby, decoction of herbs should be used.⁵ These have antiseptic properties and a favorable odor. The stomach of baby should be cleared by making him vomit with help of saindhav, ghee and vacha (*Acorus calamus*).⁶ This clears the ingested amniotic fluid and blood and prevents vomiting after feeds. After stomach wash, feeding is initiated by ghee and honey. This gives energy and triggers passive immunity.

On second and third day, lakshmana treated ghee is advised and exclusive breast feeding is to be started thereafter.⁷ Raksha Karma is also described which uses

herbs to ensure disinfection and prevent sepsis via clothes, cot or ward room of baby.⁸

Examination of Baby

Acharya Vagbhata describes that pain in children should be understood by sudden and repeated crying. The part of body which the child touches often and does not allow to be touched by others (tenderness) is to be understood as having pain. Pain in the head should be understood by the closing of eyelids; pain in chest by biting of tongue and lips, dyspnea and clenching of the fist. Pain in abdomen is judged by constipation, vomiting, biting of breast, intestinal gurgling sound, flatulence, bending the back and elevating abdomen. Pain in urinary bladder and genitals is interpreted by obstruction to elimination of the feces and urine and frightened look.⁹

Vagbhata has also opined that wise physician should examine the baby commencing with head for deciding his life span based on features described in 'Prakriti bhediya' chapter.¹⁰ In this chapter, Acharya has described features of various body parts like forehead, veins, face, head, tongue, mouth, eyes, chest, etc. and the corresponding life span of person having these features.¹¹

Classification of Age

Vagbhata has classified age into three stages. The period up to sixteen years of age is 'baal' (childhood) in which there occurs an increase in dhatu (tissues), indriya (senses) and ojas (essence of dhatus responsible for strength); the period up to seventy years is Madhya (youth and middle age) in which there is no increase of tissues, then after seventy years there is khsaya or depletion of tissues in old age.¹² Baala is again divided into stages of kshiravartan, ubhaya vartan and anna vartan i.e. child feeding primarily upon milk, milk and solid and solid food respectively.¹³

Childhood Sacraments (Sanskaras)

Sanskaras are rites performed with an objective of imparting positive qualities in a person. They improve a person while removing his undesirable attributes. The childhood Sanskara aim at preparing the baby for extra uterine life successfully, develop proper feeding habits, ensure adequate nutrition, prevent diseases, adapt to environment for further survival, give individual identity and educate the child. Acharya Vagbhata prescribes 'Prajapatya vidhi' in Jata Karma Sanskara described in texts of Dharmashastra.¹⁴

Vagbhata has also described Namakarana sanskara to be done on 10th or 12th day¹⁵ while he opines sixth month as appropriate time for Annaprashan.¹⁶ Karnavedhana or piercing of ear lobes serves ornamental purpose as well as protects baby from diseases. Astanga Hridaya recommends an age of six, seven or eight months for this rite. It is to be done preferably in cold climate.¹⁷ In the context of Upvishatana sanskara or sitting ceremony, Vagbhata has enumerated fifth month as the appropriate time.

Dentition and Related Diseases

Eruption of teeth is considered to be a cause for diseases such as fever, diarrhea, cough, vomiting, headache,

abhishyanda (conjunctivitis), pothaki (stye) and visarpa (skin disease). There is no dosha which is not vitiated during eruption of teeth i.e., no part of body is without pain.¹⁸ Predominance of vata dosha is considered the cause for late dentition and grinding of teeth during sleep.¹⁹ Vagbhata has also described krimidanta (dental caries) and dantaharsha (hyper sensitivity of teeth).²⁰ An eye disease named 'kukunaka' which occurs exclusively in children having eruption of teeth. The child has swelling of eyes, coppery-red color and difficulty of vision, pain and stickiness in eyelids. The child often rubs his ears, nose and eyes.²¹

Concept of Lehan

Acharya Vagbhata describes drug combinations comprising of gold as one of the contents namely hema (gold), sweta vacha (*Acorus calamus*), kushta (*Saussuria lappa*) or arkapushpi, kanchan (gold) or hema (gold), matsyaksha, sankha or kaidarya, kanaka (gold) and vacha. These four groups of drugs when consumed mixed with honey and ghee, for a period of one year bestow good body growth, intelligence, strength, toned skin color and beneficial as a whole.²² Formulations used in lehan karma are astanga ghrita, saraswat ghrita and vachadi ghrita.

Concept of Breast Milk and Its Related Diseases

Vagbhata has aptly described properties of unvitiated and vitiated breast milk. The milk which becomes homogenous and mixes evenly with water and does not have clinical features like presence of any dosha, is the pure and unvitiated breast milk. The milk which is vitiated by vata floats on water, is astringent, frothy, has less fat content and causes obstruction to the feces and urine. The milk which is vitiated by pitta is hot, sour and pungent, produces yellow colored lines in water and gives rise to burning sensation in the alimentary tract of the child and the milk which is vitiated by kapha is slightly salty, thick, sinks in water and is slimy. Features of two and three doshas are found together when it is vitiated by two and three doshas simultaneously. Milk possessing the features of the doshas, when consumed gives rise to diseases arising from the corresponding doshas.²³

Birth Injuries

Astanga Hridaya describes a condition named "Upshirshak" which is similar to birth injury, caput succedaneum. It is described as the condition caused by vitiated vata entering the scalp of fetus during delivery resulting in a swelling which is devoid of pain and of the same color as skin.²⁴

Congenital Anomalies

Hare lip or cleft lip is described as 'khandoustha' which is splitting of the lips into two parts by vata. Vagbhata has also described the surgical procedure for correction of this anomaly.²⁵

Common Diseases of Infancy and Childhood

'Rajika' is skin eruption which is painful, hard, resembling mustard seeds in shape, size and color, arising on whole body due to sweat and heat.²⁶ The breast milk vitiated by three doshas has bad smell and resembles

water; by drinking it the child eliminates hard or thin frothy feces of varied colors along with discomfort in abdomen. Urine is yellow, white and thick. Fever, loss of appetite, thirst, vomiting, belching, yawning, twisting of body, moaning, shivering, giddiness and ulceration of nose, eyes and mouth develop. This disease is called 'Kshiralasaka'.²⁷ Due to sticking of the feces or sweat on anal region, ulcers arising from rakta and kapha develop in the anal region of child which are coppery in color with itching, accompanied with many secondary diseases. Some authors called this as 'Matrika dosha' or 'Ahiputana', yet others call it prishtarū, gudakutta or anamaka.²⁸ Apana vata aggravated by suppression of urges of mala (feces) and vata (flatus), makes the anal canal constricted with difficult and painful defecation. This disease is known as 'Ruddhaguda'.²⁹ Acharya has enumerated herbs for treatment of mridbhakshan janya vyadhi (diseases due to pica).³⁰

Malnutrition in Children

Balashosha is a malnutrition disorder described by Vagbhata. According to him sleeping too much during daytime, drinking cold water, drinking breast milk vitiated by kapha causes blockage of rasavaha srotas. The child develops loss of appetite, nasal catarrh, fever and cough. The child becomes emaciated with his face and eyes being greasy and white. This disease is treated by herbs which increase agni and give nourishment.³¹

Bala Grahas

Bala grahas are described to be created long back by lord Shiva for the protection of Kartikeya, five of masculine form and seven of feminine form. Skanda, Vishakha, Meshakhya, Svagraha, Pittragraha, Shakuni, Putana, Sheetaputana, Adrishtaputana, Mukhamandika, Revati and Sushkarevati are the names of grahas. The first five are males and remaining are females. Acharya Vagbhata describes the general features of these bal grahas, the clinical features of individual grahas, etiology and treatment in detail.³²

CONCLUSION

Astanga Hridaya is a beautiful composition of Acharya Vagbhata with sequential arrangement of topics in form of verses. Thus, it rightfully enjoys a place in 'Brihat trayi', the three great treatise of Ayurveda. It describes all the important concepts of Kaumarbhritya, diseases of children and their practical treatment. It is an epitome of Ayurveda catering to the needs of students, scholars and practitioners alike.

REFERENCES

1. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. II. Shareer Sthana. Chapter 2/14-18. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 382-383.
2. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 1/1-2. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 3.
3. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 1/5-6. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 4.
4. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 1/7. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 4.

5. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 1/6-7. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 4.
6. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 1/10. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 4.
7. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 1/12-14. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 5.
8. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 1/25-28. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 7-8.
9. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 2/5-8. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 14.
10. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 1/24. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 7.
11. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. II. Shareer Sthana. Chapter 5/14-20. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 436-437.
12. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. II. Shareer Sthana. Chapter 3/105. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 417.
13. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 2/1. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 13.
14. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 1/11. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 5.
15. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 1/22-23. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 7.
16. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 1/27. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 8.
17. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 1/28-32. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 8.
18. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 2/26-29. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 17.
19. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 2/61-62. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 23.
20. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 21/12, 18-20. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 186, 187-188.
21. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 8/19-20. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 78.
22. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 1/47-48. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 21.
23. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 2/2-4. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 13.
24. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 23/21. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 221.
25. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 21/3. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 184.
26. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 31/12. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 293.
27. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 2/20-22. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 16.
28. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 2/69. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 25.
29. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 31/22-23. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 294.
30. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 2/76-77. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 26.

31. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 2/44-46. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 20-21.
32. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam by Murthy Srikantha. Vol. III. Uttar Tantra. Chapter 3. Varanasi. Krishnadas Academy. Edition; 1995. p. 27.

Cite this article as:

Deepshikha, Rai Amit Kumar. A glimpse of Kaumarbhritya in Astanga hridaya. *Int. J. Res. Ayurveda Pharm.* 2014;5(6):648-651 <http://dx.doi.org/10.7897/2277-4343.056132>

Source of support: Nil, Conflict of interest: None Declared