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Importance of *Swarnaprashan* in Present Era

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ABSTRACT

Swarna Bhasma has been used for physical and mental growth and for prevention of diseases for ancient times. It works as immunomodulator and by increasing the immunity it prevents many diseases. Nowadays, vaccines are used for prevention of diseases. Specific vaccine is used to prevent specific disease and there is no vaccine for many diseases till now. There are many adverse effects of vaccination. Therefore, vaccination is not perfect method for prevention. *Swarnaprashan* improves the immunity which prevents many diseases and there is no any adverse effect of *swarnaprashan*. Therefore, *swarnaprashan* is better option for prevention.

KEYWORDS

Swarna, Immunity, Prevention, Vaccine



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INTRODUCTION

Gold has been mentioned as *suddha lauh*¹ (pure metal) in *Ayurveda*. Gold is used as both preventive and curative purposes. It is used as *vajikarak* (aphrodisiac) for conception of a healthy baby². After conception, it is used in *punsavan karma* (procedure to get the desired sex of baby and for proper intrauterine growth). After the birth, it is indicated in *lehan karma*³ (supplementary feeding to improve the immunity) and *jatkarma*⁴ (new born care). As the child grows, gold is indicated to get *agni* (digestive powers), *bala* (physical strength and immunity), *medha* (intellectual power), *varna* (complexion) and *ayu* (life span)⁵. Even in the severe condition, when *arishtha lakshan* (fatal signs) are observed, gold is administered for therapeutic action⁶. Thus, gold is a very useful metal which is used starting before conception until death. Acharyas have mentioned in ayurvedic texts that gold should be used after proper purification because improperly purified gold may destroy the strength, create diseases and death also⁷.

Acharya Kashyap has coined the term “*swarnaprashan*” for administration of gold which has been mentioned in *Kashyap Samhita*. The benefits of *swarnaprashan* are as follows⁸-

1. *Medha agni bala vardhanam*- improvement of intellect, digestion, metabolism, immunity and physical strength.
2. *Ayushyam*- promoting life span
3. *Mangalam*- auspicious
4. *Punyam*- righteous
5. *Vrishyam*- aphrodisiac
6. *Varnyam*- enhancement of complexion
7. *Grahapaham*- protection from evil spirits and micro-organisms.

It has been mentioned in *Kashyap Samhita* that if *swarnaprashan* is used for one month, the baby will be highly intelligent and will not be affected by any disease and if it is used for six months, the baby will be able to remember the things which are just heard⁹.

REVIEW

Edward Jenner, for the first time in 1789 produced vaccine for small pox therefore; he is known as founder of vaccine¹⁰. Nowadays approximately 35 vaccines are available and maximum vaccines are administered under national health programmes. Now the question is why is *swarnaprashan* relevant in the era of vaccines? The answer is disadvantages of vaccination which are as follows-

1. Specific vaccines for specific diseases.
2. Vaccines are not available for many diseases.



3. Fever, nausea, diarrhea, seizures and anaphylactic reactions may occur after vaccination.

4. Painful procedure

5. Preservatives which are used in vaccines are fatal for infants.

6. Various adverse effects of vaccines have been recorded in many countries.

Our great *acharyas* have knowledge of immunity as *bala*, *oja* and *vyadhikshamatva*. *Acharya Charak* has mentioned that body of all persons is not capable of *vyadhikshamatva*¹¹. *Acharya Chakrapani* has commented on the word *vyadhikshamatva* that *vyadhikshamatva* opposes the strength of diseases and prevents the origin of diseases. It is clear that immunity has been mentioned by *acharya Charak* as *vyadhikshamatva*. Again, *Acharya Charak* has explained that there are three types of *bala* (immunity) - 1. *Sahaj* (natural/congenital) 2. *Kalaj* (by time/season/age) 3. *Yuktij* (acquired)¹². This categorization of immunity is very much similar to modern categorization. *Acharya Sushrut* has mentioned that optimum part of all *dhatuj*, from *rasa* to *shukra* is called *oja* and this is also known as *bala*. This *bala* or *vyadhikshamatva* (immunity) is increased by *swarnaprashan*. *Swarnaprashan* is administration of gold alone or along with other herbs in a *leha* or *prash* form. *Acharya Kashyap* has

described *swarnaprashan* as *leha* form. *Swarnaprashan* is indicated in healthy children having compromised breast feeding and minor metabolic problems. It is contraindicated in seriously ill patients. Although *lehana* is contraindicated on a daily basis but *swarnaprashan* is continued for a period of one or six months to get its specific benefits in children. In a study on neonates, *madhu-ghrit-swarna-vacha* combination showed a significant effect of humoral antibody formation which was proved by triggering the response of immunological systems by a rise in the total protein and serum IgG level¹³.

Administration of *swarnaprashan* is indicated from new born (as *jatakarma sanskar*) to *kumaravastha*. According to *Charak*, *balyavastha* comes under 16 to 30 years of age in which growth and development occurs. Actually *swarnaprashan* can be done in any age group providing different benefits. As an immunomodulator it can be given in early ages because it is stage of developing immune system. It can be used in immunodeficiency diseases provided that there is no serious illness associated with. As an intelligence enhancer it can be given from birth to six months daily. As a fertility enhancer it can be given in adolescence because this is the stage of developing reproductive system.



In *jatakarma sansakar*, *Acharya Sushrut* has mentioned to take *swarnabhasma* along with honey and ghee as a single dose after birth. *Acharya Vagbhat* has indicated to take *swarnabhasma* along with other herbs in *jatakarma sanskar*. *Acharya Kashyap* has not mentioned the specific doses of *swarnabhasma*. He has mentioned the general doses of *swarna bhasma* for children. According to different *acharyas* doses of *swarnabhasma* are as follows-

1. $1/8 - 1/4$ *Ratti* (15-30 mg)- *Rasa Tarangini*
2. 2 *Gunja* (250 mg)- *Rasa Ratna Samuchya*
3. 1 *Gunja* (125 mg)- *Sushruta Sharirasthan*

DISCUSSION

Swarnaprashan is very useful method for immunity enhancement which has been mentioned in ayurvedic texts. Three forms of gold have been mentioned in text books for medicinal use- foil, powder and *bhasma* (ash). *Bhasma* is said to have nanoparticles of gold having more bioavailability without any cytotoxic effects. Therefore, *swarnabhasma* is used in *swarnaprashan* and as a composition of many ayurvedic drugs. It is used in the dose from 15mg to 250 mg according to various conditions. *Acharya Kashyap* has not mentioned any specific day or time for administration of

swarnabhasma. *Acharya Kashyap* has mentioned that *swarnaprashan* should be prepared facing east direction. *Acharya Charak* has explained that *swarna* should be used in *Pushya nakshatra* for *punsavankarma*. *Acharaya Sushruta* has explained that *swarna* should be used in *Pushya nakshatra* for *rasayan karma*. Nowadays *swarnaprashan* is given in *Pushya nakshatra* due to the belief that this is an auspicious star to use any medicine for its nourishment effect.

CONCLUSION

Swarnaprashan is an effective method for immunity enhancement. Immunity power caused by *swarnaprashan* provides physical, mental and intellectual growth and prevention of all diseases. Thus *swarnaprashan* creates competent and healthy children which make a healthy society then healthy nation and a healthy world can be made ultimately. There is need of research in *swarnaprashan* on modern parameters to globalize it. After the experimental research, it can be proved better than vaccination.



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