

Use of Swarna Bindu Prashan in Children

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Abstract: This paper presents an overview of use of swarna bindu prashan in children

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1. Introduction

"Swarna Bindu" it is one of the methods of suvarna prashana explained in Ayurveda as unique method of boosting immunity and intellect of children. In Kashyapa Samhita, it is intended to boost memory, intelligence and immunity in infants. It is described under Jatakarma Samskara (neonatal care). One of the 16 essential Samskara described in Ayurveda. Swarna Prashana fulfilling the first motive of Ayurveda, i.e. preventive measures (swasthasya swasthya Rakshanm). Our body's tendency to check the micro-organisms who spread the disease and deactivate or lowering down it's intensity, this is known as Vyadhikshamtva (immunity). Prevention of disease by boosting the immunity has always been the most important point of discussion in medical field and now-a-days swarna prashana works as oral immunity enhancer (oral vaccine). It is a unique method of immunization which is practiced from ancient time, valued as child health care programme which was for the healthy nation. Many studies available to understand the mechanism of it's action on immunity modulation and intellectual function. I added some more information from ancient texts.

2. Concepts of Suvarna prashana

Ayurvedic texts have copious references describing the use of gold metallic powder (probably fine gold dust) or Suvarnabhasma in various rejuvenative therapies. Gold in the form of fine gold dust, red colloidal solution, Swarna Patra, Swarna Bhasma, Swarna Parpati, Kharaliya (trituated) formulations and Sindoorkalpa, often combined with ghee, honey, Medhya and Rasayana herbs were popularly used in the Ayurveda therapies. Despite their efficacy, these age-old therapies were discouraged, sidelined and almost forgotten during the colonial era and even after freedom. The use of bhasma form Gold, silver etc. metals and most herbomineral formulations of Ayurveda suffered a huge blow when some studies tainted Ayurvedic herbo-mineral formulations as toxic and contaminated with lead, mercury, arsenic and other toxic compounds.

The impact of these studies was such that herbo-mineral Ayurvedic formulations have been almost completely banned in most Western countries. What is more alarming is that the word „heavy metals“ is becoming synonymous with most indigenously procured and manufactured Ayurvedic medicines! However, despite of these set-backs, after a long lull, Ayurvedic bhasmas and other herbo-mineral formulations are receiving a renewed focus. They are reemerging as some of the most effective drugs due to renewed drug discovery strategies.

Kashyapa Samhita written by Vriddha Jeevaka, one of the oldest textbooks of Kaumarbhritya (one of the eight branches of Ayurveda dealing with mother and child health care), gives the first reference about giving Suvarnaprashana as a therapy for infants. This has been advised in infants and children from birth till 1 year of age [3]. There is misconception among the common man that, Suvarnaprashana is vaccination method in Ayurveda, because majority of the physicians administer it monthly once on the day of Pushya Nakshatra. But it is incorrect; Suvarnaprashana is a Rasayana Chikitsa, should be administered continuously to get the optimum therapeutic effects for the physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual wellbeing of the children.

3. Practice of Suvarna Prashana

The classical descriptions of Suvarna Prashana therapy uses metallic gold- rubbed on a clean rubbing stone with water, till fine gold particles are released. The rubbed gold or gold powder mixed with fine powder of Medhya, Rasayana herbs, ghee and honey is given to the newborn [4]. Rubbed gold in metallic form carries the risk of toxicity. Hence, a safer option of Suvarna bhasma is being used for the Suvarnaprashana now a day. The ancient alchemists in India discovered the process of bhasmikanana (calcination) which involves controlled incineration of metals, non-metals, minerals and certain organic ingredients, to make them safer and biocompatible. Ancient texts like the Charaka Samhita also describe process of dipping red hot metals in herb decoctions to obtain fine powders/ dust of metals. Methodical guidelines on the preparation of non-toxic bhasma or nano particles of Gold available in the Rasashastra texts dating back almost up to 4th century AD, is a testimony to the exhaustive research, efforts and dedication of ancient Ayurveda scholars and alchemists. Their methods have

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successfully passed the litmus test of time and modern science alike.

4. Preparation of Suvarna Bindu (Gold Drops)

Traditionally Shuddha Suvarna has been advised to be rubbed on a rubbing stone with water and then emulsified with madhu and ghrita to achieve a fine colloidal suspension. We now use Suvarna bhasma along with equal proportion of ghrita and madhu. Madhu and Ghrita in equal proportions have been considered as a Viruddha Samyoga (unwholesome combination) [6]. However, it is a popular belief that giving a low dose of this otherwise toxic combination is believed to trigger immune responses which helps to strengthen a child's immunity for toxins and allergens. Ghrita fortified with Medhya and Rasayana herbs like Brahmi (*Bacopa monnieri*), Mandookaparni (*Centella asiatica*), Yashtimadhu (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), Shankhpushpi (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*), Vacha (*Acorus calamus*) and Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*) are commonly used in Suvarnabindu preparation by clinicians expecting enhanced immunomodulatory and nootropic effects of Suvarnaprashana in children. Following are some of the widely used ratios for preparation of Suvarnabindu Large Batch: 2.4 gm. of Suvarna Bhasma is added to 250 ml of honey and 250 ml processed ghee.

Individual Doses: 100mg Suvarna bhasma is added to 6 ml of processed ghee and 6ml of honey is kept separately. Honey is mixed with ghee just before the administration. Although large batches are convenient for commercial use, Suvarna bhasma may settle down in ghee after some time, thus reducing the concentration of Suvarna bhasma per dose. Hence, preparing suvarnabindu in smaller batches is desirable

5. Duration of Suvarna Prashana Therapy

Suvarnaprashana can be given from birth to sixteen years, keeping in mind the rapid growth and development during this phase of life. Some practitioners advise it only up to 12 or 14 years. Clinically, a minimum therapy of 6 months, 1 year to two years is recommended in order to get considerable results. Experienced Vaidya says that, administration of Suvarnaprashana just on the day of Pushya Nakshatra (once in a month) does not provide significant health benefits. The best method is to give the low dose Suvarnaprashana (Suvarna Bhasma less than 0.2mg per dose) for a period of 3 months. If this method is not possible, then Suvarnaprashana can be given for 10 to 12 days per month. Such 6-12 cycles should be repeated to get optimum health benefits

6. Contraindications of Suvarnaprashana

Children with organ transplants and those on immunosuppressive therapy should not be given Suvarnaprashana therapy due to the fear of organ rejection. Also, children with liver and kidney disorders should be contraindicated for this therapy. Benefits of Swarna Prashana Sanskara Enhance Vyadhikshamtva (immunity) and Ojus:- When body came in contact with etiological factors that cause disease, our body has a defensive mechanism which protect the

body from that factor and show resistance against that disease. This mechanism happened in the body, which prevents the development of disease or resists a developed disease, is called vyadhikshamtva (immunity) in Ayurveda.[13] Swarna Prashana is method of increasing the kshamatva of the body by Yukti which will enhance the body immune system and lowering down the decaying process. Ojus is related to vyadhikshamtva therefore swarna prashana indirectly enhance ojus dhatu of body.

1. In Swarna Prashana Sanskara, Madhu and ghrita in equal dose along with gold is given regularly, this develops resistance in the body for any type of visha. This same theory is used in vaccination, this mixture produce nonspecific immunity.[14]
2. Swarna Prashana has healing properties, which increase its medicinal value for preventive as well as therapeutic purposes. It has immunestimulant, adaptogenic, memory booster, anti-inflammatory, antiarthritic, anticancer, antibacterial, antiviral, antimutagenic, antioxidant properties [9].
3. Swarna Prashana is very helpful for improving memory, retention power, intelligence, intellect, cognitive functions of brain. It affects skin also. It improves skin glow and prevents skin diseases.
4. Swarna Prashana builds physical strength, body growth (height. weight) in children and enhances physical activities and also improves stamina for the same.
5. Regular doses of swarna prashana improves child's intellect, grasping power, sharpness, analysis power, memory recalling in an unique manner.
6. It kindles digestive fire, improves digestion and decreases related complaints, improves child's appetite and nurture early developmental milestones.
7. Reduces anxiety, aggressiveness, irritability and attention seeking behaviour[15], and also helps the child with autism, learning difficulties, attention deficient disorder, hyperactivity.[16]
8. Animal studies on swarna bhasma revealed its immune-stimulant, analgesic, antidepressant actions. It also used as apasmarahar drug, used in children of cerebral palsy and many other disorders related to development of CNS [17].

7. Conclusion

In today's digital world, it is challenging question to every parents to maintain physical, mental, social and spiritual health of children without any side effects. It is also the problem of every nation as "children are the future of any nation." Swarna Prashana helps little but to solve this problem, it helps to grow the child with best immunity and intellectual performance. This concepts of swarna prashana described by Acharyas in Ayurvedic text needs experimental studies at clinical level. Theory of vaccination resembles to the concepts of Vyadhikshamtva. Vaccination enhance humoral immunity and from above description of benefits of swarna prashana, it also do that. It is an approach towards positive health care

programme for children by increasing the vyadhikshamtva (immunomodulation) where Acharya described about vyadhikshamtva is “The individual’s resistance to disease which includes both the capacity of attenuation of the manifested disease as well as the prevention of the unmanifested one. It is an ancient immunization technique with no adverse effects and provides a better life with fulfilling WHO’s definition of „Health“ (i.e. physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing). So, Swarna Prashana Sanskara worldwide accepted as immunisation programme for healthy world. After all, it makes a child healthier than most other children.

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