



Preventive Medicine In Children: An Ayurvedic Approach Highlighting Native Vaccinations

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Abstract:

Preventive medicine is the specialty of medical practice that focuses on the health of individuals, communities, and defined populations. The proper healthy public should be built right from the childhood itself. For the same purpose, the ancient science of life, Ayurveda advocates several tonics / immune boosters that build up the child's strength to fight diseases. The various such preparations are randomly explained by different Ayurveda Acharyas in different Ayurvedic classics. Here, an effort is made to bring all those Ayurvedic preparations dealt by Acharyas under one heading which can serve the purpose as native vaccination.

Keywords: preventive medicine, immune boosters, native vaccination

1.Introduction

Prevention was a prominent feature of the health care reforms that took place in the late 1960s through the early 1970s. During that time, strategies such as universal vaccination, promotion of lifestyle changes, population screenings, and safety regulations were introduced and became widely accepted as means to improve public health while reducing health care expenditures.¹ Preventive medicine is the specialty of medical practice that focuses on the health of individuals, communities, and defined populations. Its goal is to protect, promote, and maintain health and well-being and to prevent disease, disability, and death.²

Ayurveda is a natural health care system that originated in India more than 5000 years ago. Its main objective is to achieve optimal health and well-being through a comprehensive approach that addresses mind, body, behaviour and environment. Ayurveda emphasizes prevention and health promotion, and provides treatment for disease.³ In Ayurvedic Samhitas there are descriptions of various tonics / immune boosters that build up the child's strength to fight diseases. These tonics also provide supplementary nutrition. They enhance the child's intelligence and are useful in improving the learning of new skills such as speech. Some tonics mentioned in ancient Ayurvedic texts are:

1.1.Swarnamruta Prashana⁴

In Kashyapa Samhita, Swarnamruta prashana has been mentioned as it is an important recipe for child growth and memory enhancement and also to promote longevity in children.

- Ingredients: Swarna bhasma (calcined gold), Ghrita (ghee), Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*), Brahmi (*Centella asiatica*), Vacha (*Acorus calamus*), Jatamamsi (*Nordostachys jatamasi*), Shankhapuspi (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*), Yasthimadhu (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), Pippali (*Piper longum*), Maricha (*Piper nigrum*), Murchita Ghrita (medicated ghee) and Madhu (honey).
- Method of preparation: In 200ml of Guduchi Kashaya, 50 ml of ghee was added along with Brahmi, Vacha, Jatamamsi, Ashwagandha, Shankhapuspi, Yasthimadhu, Pippali and Maricha – 2 gm powder each & 50 ml of Murchita Ghrita & heated on low temperature acc to Ghrita paka. At the time of administration 1.2 gm of Swarna Bhasma & 50 ml of Madhu is added to this

Ghrita & triturated. Swarnamrita Prashana is administered in a dose of 4 drop to children using dropper. Each dose consists of 2 mg of Swarna Bhasma (24 drops=1 ml).

- Time: Every day morning or at least on the day of Pushya Nakshatra.
- Age: Starting from new born till the age of 16 years.
- Benefits of this procedure are: Medha (mental ability), Agni (digestive power), Bala (improves Stamina), Ayu Vardhana (increases life span), Mangalakara (gives happiness), Punya (auspicious), Vrushya (improves virility), Varnya (improves complexion), Grhuhabadhanashaka (prevents from recurrent infections), if swarna prashana is done continuously for a month then child will be Parama Medhavi (extremely intelligent), remains unaffected by Vyadhi (disease) and if done for 6 months then child will be Shrutadhara (remembers what he hears)
- Forthcoming Swarnamruta Prashana dates in 2013 are: January 27th, February 23rd, March 23rd, April 19th, May 16th, June 12th, July 10th, August 6th, September 2nd and 30th, October 27th, November 23rd and December 21st.

1.2. Uramarunnu / Suttumaddu⁵

In the southern part of India, especially in the states of Kerala, Karnataka, Goa and Tamil Nadu, there is a practice of preparing paste of herbal drugs and administering to the children.

- **Ingredients:** Haritaki (*Terminalia chebula*), Vacha (*Acorus calamus*), Jatiphala (*Myristica fragrans*), Hingu (*Ferula foetida*), Lasuna (*Allium sativum*), Mayaphala (*Quercus infectoria*), Haridra (*Curcuma longa*), Chandana (*Santalum album*), Yastimadhu (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), Rudraksha (*Elaeocarpus Ganitrus*), Avartaki (*Cassia auriculata*), Pippali (*Piper longum*) and Gokshura (*Tribulus terrestris*)
- **Method of preparation:** The above mentioned drugs are triturated with Breast milk / Honey / Cow's milk / Butter in a mortar and administered to children.
- **Time:** Once in a week.
- **Age:** Starting from new born till the age of 2 years.
- **Benefits of this procedure are:** Balyam (increases strength), Deepanam (appetizer), Pachanam (kindles the digestive fire), Grahi (absorbs the excess

moisture), Vyadhikshamatvakaraka (increases immunity), Roghaghna (destroys diseases), Medhyam (increases intellect), Bhootagnam (destroys evil spirits), Nidrakaraka (induces sleep) and Soolaghnam (removes pain).

3. Karnavedhana Samskara

The important cultural events in an individual's life from birth to death are grouped under the term "Samskaras" (cultural ceremonies). The number of Samskaras varies in different communities. The customary Samskaras are 16 in number which were put forward by Maharshi Dayananda.

Karnavedhana Samskara is the process of puncturing the ear lobe. It is one of the important Samskaras with medical and socio-cultural relevance and is one among the sixteen samskaras mentioned in Ayurvedic literature. In addition to the cosmetic value (Karnabhushana), it was believed that Karnavedhana protects the baby from untoward health complications like grahas. However, this is not medically proven. Medical effect (both preventive and curative) if any, may be solely attributed to the metals or gems used as Karnabhushana. It is performed on 3rd - 5th month / 6th / 7th / 8th month. ⁶

- Pre-operative measures: After poojadikarmas and enchantment of mantras, the baby is seated on the mother's lap, made happy with sweet words, desired toys etc, and the ear is punctured.
- Procedure: The right ear should be punctured first in case of a male child and left ear in a female child, the physician holding the puncturing needle with his right hand and the ear lobe with the other. The site of puncture should be in the middle of the ear lobe, slightly towards the cheek, where there is maximum translucency from the light source. This spot is marked by the colour of Laksha rasa. The puncturing should be done with a single and straight stroke; it should be neither up, sideward nor downward. If the earlobe is thicker, Aara sastra should be used instead of needle. ⁷
- Inference: By puncturing the correct site, there will not be severe pain, bleeding and immediate inflammatory reaction, local rise of temperature, swelling and redness.
- Post operative measures: a cotton thread soaked in oil should be drawn through the puncture and the site bathed with unprocessed oil. On each third day, the thread should be replaced with thicker ones for widening of the puncture. Daily

fomentation, massage, bathing with oil and nourishing foods should be adopted repeatedly.⁸

- Precaution: the puncture should be at the correct site, be neither high up, sideward nor downward, since Siras (veins) known by the name Lalika, Marmari and Rakta are situated there.
- Discussion: Injury caused by way of puncturing activates immune mechanism so as to bring a secondary immunity against several infections.

1.4.Kumarabharana Rasa

Kumarabharana Rasa is an Ayurvedic compound drug comprising of Bhasmas (calx) of Swarna (Gold), Rajata (Silver), Pravala (coral) and Choorna of Yastimadhu (Glycyrrhiza glabra), Amalaki (Emblica officinalis), Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera), Shunti (Zingiber officinale), Pippali (Piper longum), Haritaki (Terminalia chebula), Vacha (Acorus calamus) and all these drugs given one Bhavana with Swarasa (extract juice) of Guduchi (Tinospora cordifolia), Brahmi (Bacopa monnieri) and Tulsi (Ocimum tenuiflorum) separately.

- Method of Preparation: Ingredients with Sanskrit and botanical name, form and proportion are detailed in Table 1. Fine powder of Vacha, Pippali, Shunthi, Ashwagandha, Amalaki, Haritaki and Yastimadhu along with bhasmas of Swarna, Rajata and Pravala were taken and one bhavana (impregnation) with each of Guduchi swarasa, Brahmi swarasa and Tulsi swarasa was given. Tablets of 500 mg each are usually prepared and one tablet is administered once daily morning in empty stomach.⁹

1.5.Vayampu Gutika

Vacha is made into paste and prepared as gutikas and later administered to the new born after rubbing on rubbing stone mixed with honey. This medicine is said to boost up memory power and mental health. This medicine is having good effect on Buddhimandhya, Apasmara etc.¹⁰

1.6.Swarna + Vacha + Honey

This is the practice of rubbing swarna with Vacha (Acorus calamus) in a rubbing stone mixed with honey and later on administering to the newborn. This formulation is usually

given to the child upto a maximum age of 2 years. This medicine is said to increase memory power and immunity.

1.7.Swarna Bhasma

Swarna bhasma with paste of Brahmi (*Centella asiatica*) and Sankhapushpi (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*), given with ghee and honey. This is good for general immunity and intelligence and given mainly to newly born children.

- The powder of Vaca (*Acorus calamus*), Jatamansi (*Nordostachys jatamasi*), Apamarga (*Achyranthus aspera*), Satavari (*Asparagus racemosa*), Sariva (*Hemidesmus indicus*), Brahmi (*Centella asiatica*), Pippali (*Piper longum*), Haridra (*Curcuma longa*), Kushta (*Saussera lappa*) and Saindhava (Rock salt) with honey. This is good for general infections of chest, cold, cough, and asthma.
- Ghee medicated with the paste of Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) and milk. This is very nutritious and strengthening.

2.Conclusion

Likewise, similar formulations are available in Lehanadhyaya of Kahyapa samhita, Prakara yoga adhyaya of Arogya kalpadruma and in Ashtanga Hridaya Uttara sthana. These procedures and medicines can be looked as a kind of preventive care of various childhood diseases. Preventive medicine is an exciting step forward on our journey to live without disease. As the journey continues to unfold, we will find that it parallels our journey to enlightenment or the perfecting of our nature.

Sl.No.	Sanskrit Name	Botanical Name	Form	Proportion
1.	Swarna	-	Bhasma	1 part
2.	Rajata	-	Bhasma	2.5 parts
3.	Pravala	-	Bhasma	5 parts
4.	Ashwagandha	Withania somnifera	Churna	40 parts
5.	Amalaki	Emblica officinalis	Churna	50 parts
6.	Shunthi	Zingiber officinalis	Churna	20 parts
7.	Pippali	Piper longum	Churna	10 parts
8.	Haritaki	Terminalia chebula	Churna	10 parts
9.	Vacha	Acorus calamus	Churna	10 parts
10.	Yashtimadhu	Glycyrrhiza glabra	Churna	50 parts

Table 1: INGREDIENTS OF KUMARABHARANA RASA

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