

EFFECT OF SWARNAPRASAHAN ON MENTAL AND PHYSICAL GROWTH

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ABSTRACT

Growth is an increase in physical size of whole or any of its part and can be measured in inches/centimeter and in pounds/kilograms. There are many factors influencing the rate of growth like inadequate nutrition, physical hyperactivity, lack of adequate rest, physical illness and emotional illness which cause increase in nutritional need but at the same time result in poor appetite and poor absorption. Such situations during rapid growth period and critical period of development have a temporary or permanent delaying effect on the achievement of normal growth and development. In the present paper we are discussing regarding the effect caused by using Swarna Prasahan on Mental and physical growth of children.

Keywords: Growth, Swarna Prasahan, nutrition, appetite.

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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is system of medicine with historical roots in the Indian subcontinent.¹ Globalized and modernized practices derived from Ayurveda traditions are a type of complementary or alternative medicine.² In countries beyond India, Ayurveda therapies and practices have been integrated in general wellness applications and in some cases in medical use.³

The usage of metals and minerals was well-known to mankind since thousands of years. Gold has been given the status of the most precious metal, which was used to prepare sculptures of Gods, ornaments, coins, and so on all over the world. It is one of the most ancient metals even used for preventive and curative purposes. With regards to its early knowledge to Indians, an earliest reference is found during prehistoric period, mentioned as Hiranya (synonym with Swarna) in Vedic works.⁴ Swarna Bindu is one such sanskaar, which was mentioned to be started in infancy. This was strictly directed towards enhancing natural immunity and for development of healthy body and mind with smoothly functioning systems of the body. These days even in advertisements fun is being made of these old traditions, but slowly & steadily these traditions which have held their ground despite all the apathy and harshness are regaining their lost pride. Yes gold can be harmful to body as has been trolled by western intellectuals, but only when it has not been properly processed, for that matter the medicine made by snake venom can also

be as much dangerous if not more. But then we are thankful to our westernized counter parts for having developed certain body functioning monitoring techniques in pathology which can keep a tap on our systems

Ayurvedic texts have copious references describing the use of gold metallic powder (probably fine gold dust) or Suvarna bhasma 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 herbo-mineral 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. 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 age⁷. 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.

Properly made swarna bhasma is sheet (cold) in virya, madhura (sweet) in vipak and madhur (sweet), tikta (bitter), kashaya (astringent) in rasa. It provides bala (strength) to the body. It shows brumhana karma (bulk promoting action), which is expected here, with the help of madhur rasa and madhur vipaka increase in the rasadi dhatu is possible and occurs gradually, thus increase in rasa leads to increase in rakta, mansadi next dhatu may lead to increase in weight of male and female children of the trial group. Modern research shows that gold particles having anti-oxidant property and T – lymphocyte activation and thus involve in regulation of antigen specific immune response.⁵ This effect of swarna may decrease the frequency of illness in children and helps to grow healthily. It also shows cognitive effect of increase in dhi (intellect), dhriti (restrain) and smriti

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. 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 bhasmikaarana (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^[8].

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 (Svarna 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. There is urgent need of standardizing the preparation, dose, duration and method of administration of Suvarnaprashana. With the potential role of Suvarnaprashana in boosting non-specific immunity and overall growth and development;

initiative needs to be taken to promote and incorporate Suvarnaprashana as a Public Health Initiative by the central government. The dept. of AYUSH should include Suvarnaprashana under mother and child health care scheme. Before doing this, the dept. of AYUSH should frame guidelines for preparation, distribution, marketing and practice of Suvarnaprashana. The scope of Suvarnaprashana needs to be evaluated in Geriatric medicine as a preventive and palliative therapy for degenerative neurological disorders like Alzheimer's, dementia etc. Given the role of gold in glycemic control, Suvarnaprashana needs to be evaluated as therapy for juvenile (Type-I) diabetes and early onset Type II diabetes. It is unique and one of the best examples of nanomedicine applied for preventive health care in Ayurveda. The efficacy and safety of Suvarnaprashana therapy entirely depends upon the quality of Suvarna bhasma, ghee and honey. Hence, standardized suvarna bhasma along with superior quality herbs, ghee and honey should be used for the preparation.

Suvarnabindu. Standardization of Suvarnabindu preparation is needed to prevent toxicity and malpractice. Suvarnaprashana has a vast scope in achieving immunomodulatory, adaptogenic and nootropic effects in children, thus improving overall health and vitality of children at all ages. Also, the utility of Suvarnaprashana in geriatric medicine for prevention and control of neurodegenerative, senile disorders as

well as for rejuvenation needs to be explored. Suvarnaprashana has an excellent scope as in boosting community health by ensuring healthy childhood. It needs to be popularized and promoted as a proactive and preventive therapy in society.

CONCLUSION:

Suvarnaprashana is a comprehensive Rasayana Chikitsa, administered for the physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual wellbeing of the children. It can be safely administered in infants and children up to 16 years of age. There is urgent need of standardizing the preparation, dose, duration and method of administrations. SP was proven more effective in gaining weight rather than height. Weight and height of child depends upon various factors like maternal, paternal, environmental, genetic constitution and diet. So this study involves the control group as well to show the specific effect of swarna bhasma.

Infant or childhood is the growing state of life. Good health in this state gives strong foundation to the future building of life. Proper growth is observed by their physical characters like anthropometry and physiosocial development. Growth is an increase in physical size of whole or any of its part and can be measured in inches/centimeter and in pounds/kilograms. There are many factors influencing the rate of growth like inadequate nutrition, physical hyperactivity, lack of adequate rest, physical illness and emotional illness which cause increase in nutritional need but at

the same time result in poor appetite and poor absorption. Such situations during rapid growth period and critical period of development have a temporary or permanent delaying effect on the achievement of normal growth and development, Besides all these, general health of the children is also an important factor. The study result showed that SP maintained general health by increasing immunity level of the body. SP also improves digestion and metabolism of the body which keep the Tridoshas in balance state. Thus the child is free from seasonal variances and shows effective growth in their physical parameters. This study has some lacuna like sample size should be more, frequency of SP doses should be more either it is weekly or biweekly instead of per 27th day, study should be conducted in different geographical areas like jangal, anoop and sadharan desha and study should start with different bala kala (seasons) like avar, madhyam, uttam. Approach of this study was limited to local area hence it is possible to vary result according to region, age and many more. Also more research is needed in this direction to evaluate the netrya, hrudya effects of the swarna bhasma. It is also needed to highlight the bhruhanadi karma in scientific way with special reference to effects on needed rasa, raktadi dhatu.

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