

**CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF BALGRAHA IN AYURVEDA SAMHITA
WITH ITS MODERN CORRELATION****Choudhary Vishnu^{1*}, Kumar Pushpendra² and Singh B. M.³**

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ABSTRACT

According to Acharya P.V. Sharma Samhita includes all the specialities of the subject i.e. Ashtang Ayurveda. Kaumarbhritya is a part of this Ashtang Ayurveda. Bala graha is a broad term which includes diseases caused by unknown vectors to children. An effort has been made by the author to correlate Bala graha on modern parameters as well as its clinical application in day to day practice. On scientific lines the unidentified vectors which cause bala graha can be considered microorganisms which require high magnifying lenses to be seen by eyes. These microorganisms can't be visualised by naked eyes. They enter the body of children and cause disorders. They specifically affect the newborns as their immunity is low and they are not adaptable to the environment present outside the mother's womb.

KEYWORDS: Samhita, Kaumarbhritya, Balagraha, micro-organisms, immunity.

INTRODUCTION

Balagraha is a combination of two words bala + graha. Bala means children while 'Graha' means to seize or grasp. Thus grahas are the evil demons or bhutas which capture or affect the children and produce various clinical features. These grahas affect the child to boost his/her immune system.

Bala graha in mythology

It is said that these grahas are created by Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati to protect Kartikeya from various enemies. Skanda graha is produced by Lord Shiva where as Skanda Apasmara by Agni, Naigamesha by Parvati, and Mukhamandika and Putana by Kartikeya.^[1]

In Veda, Purana and Samhita

Bala graha history traces back to Rigveda. There bhutas affecting foetus and neonates are mentioned.^[2]

Morphology of grahas was first explained in Mahabharata and it is mentioned there that the grahas affect the child upto 16 years of age. Kaushika sutra and skanda Bhaishajya also mentioned about Graha rogas. Agnipurana explains 38 Grahas. Markandeya purana mentioned 16 bhutas out of which 8 are male and 8 are female. Acharya Kashyapa has mentioned about Jatharini. Shatapatha Brahman depicts graha as mythical power.^[3]

Eight Grahas and eight Atigrahas are described in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. Acharya Sayana mentioned about Grahi which is harmful for the child.^[4] It resembles yakshma which creates dark eyes and sleep.^[5] Grahas are produced with good intention of protection of child from bhutas or micro- organisms.^[6]

Graharogas though constitutes the major portion of Kaumarbhritya branch and Ashtanga karas have given importance to it by giving them third place in Ashtang ayurved.^[7] but this portion is far less giving importance by modern Ayurvedic physicians as compared to other pediatric disorders. They affect a large number of children with maximum effect on newborn to 16 years of age. They rapidly multiply in the body and possess high morbidity and mortality.

In modern science disease caused by unknown factors are termed idiopathic while in Ayurveda terms such as balagraha, jataharini, aadi bala pravritta and janam bala pravritta are used for the diseases whose factors are unknown.

They are considered to occur due to deva prakopa, sins of past or previous birth and bad deeds.

In Revati kalpadhyaya, Acharya Kashyapa has described morphology, habitat and characters of grahas.^[8] Grahas are visible only to divine vision i.e microscope. They are fond of rakta,

mamsa and ojas. These are night wanderers or proliferate excellently in the dark.

These dwell at water-tanks (Shitaputana), ruined houses (Putana), cow-sheds (Mukhamandika) and bases of the trees (Pitrigraha). Jataharini, which attacks pregnant women and foetuses, is highly contagious. These vitiate the breast milk of dhatri too.

Acharya Sushruta stated that wounds should be protected from grahas and a neonate shall be taken care of like a wounded person.

Ayurveda believes in Karya karan vada which means for every consequence there will be a cause which may be visible or invisible. If the cause is invisible but the disease is chronic in presentation, they can be named as poorva karmaja, Aatma karmaja, Daivika shakti, etc. If the cause is invisible and disease is acute, they can be named as Bhoota, Preta, Pishacha, Grahabadha, Jataharini, etc. Henceforth the Graharogas are counted in acute severe presentation with invisible cause.

Grahabahda is identified by divine vision (Shastra chakshu)^[9] or vision of knowledge (Divya chakshu) as the techniques and instruments like microscopes were not available in those days.

Strongest among all these Grahas is Skanda Graha as Lord Shiva appointed him as the chief of all Grahas and also called as Baladhara.^[10]

Charaka Samhita depicts the influence of 'Deva' to cause various disorders like grahas and appear with indifferent aetiology with typical features, without proper correlation with vitiation of doshas.^[11] Acharya Sushruta has given elaborate account on this aspect, including predisposing factors, mode, manifestations and management of individual grahas. These are nine in number, and named as – Skanda, Skandapasmara, Shakuni, Revati, Putana, Andhaputana, Shitaputana, Mukhamandika and Naigamesa.^[12] Acharya Vagbhatta has added three more grahas (Swagruha, Pitrigraha and Shushka Revati) and thus the total number become twelve which have been classified as male and female grahas (Gram + ve and Gram –ve microbes) Male grahas are five – Skanda, Vishakha, Mesha, Swagraha, Pitrigraha, while female are seven – Shakuni, Putana, Shitaputana, Andha Putana, Mukhamandika, Revati and Shushka Revati.^[13] In Kashyapa samhita references of bala grahas are scattered at many places viz: First reference is in sutra sthana where vitiation of breast milk of dhatri by graha like Shakuni, Skanda, Shashthi and Putana has been mentioned. On consumption of such milk child can suffer various features of graha.^[14] Second reference of balagraha is in Indriya

sthana where acharya described symptoms of affected child with various graha like Skanda, Skandapasmara, Pitriskanda, Pundarika, Revati, Shushkarevati, Shakuni, Mukhamandika, Putana and Naigamesa.^[15] Another reference is in Chikitsa sthana about treatment of child affected by Revati, Putana, Andhaputana, Shitaputana, Kataputana and Mukharika (Mukhamandika) grahas.^[16] Revati has been mentioned with its twenty names^[17], various types of Jataharinis have been described, affecting the growing foetus and neonates. Probably the concept of Jataharini came from Vedas; Rig-Veda and Atharvaveda where in various Krimis and demons have been described which were supposed to attack the foetus and neonate. Acharya Chakradutt contains full description of 'Kumara – Tantra' of Ravana in which twelve bala grahas are mentioned.^[18] Acharya Harita has described only one Strigraha – Putana, with its eight types – Lohita, Revati, Vyasi (dvanksi), Kumari, Shakuni, Siva, Urdhvakesi and Sena.^[19] These attack the child on the day, month and year in the same order.

Pathological nature of Grahas (Micro-organisms): Ashuchi and disobeying the rules of Swasthavritta makes the grahas pathological. By not following the Swasthavritta kha vaigunya created in the body. Both these factors are responsible for the invasion of Grahas and micro-organisms also.

Acharya Sushruta described that the reason of Graharogas are, Disobeying of rules and regulation of Sadwritta and Swasthawritta of child and mothers leading to personal, social and environmental hazards e.g., not trimming the nails once in a week leads to collection of faecal and other waste products in the nail bed, which act as a shelter for the growth of microorganisms.^[20] Feeding in unclean and broken vessels with unhealthy conditions of the surrounding environment e.g. food accumulated in broken vessels may create a fermentation medium for the growth of microorganisms. As the child depends on the mother for feeding and other demands related to health and hygiene it is important to maintain the mother's personal and social hygiene. Harmful activities and non-religious conducts make the child prone to Graharogas.^[21] Acts which produce fear like tossing the child in the air, crossing or jumping over it also make them prone to graha badha.^[22] Child psychology, disobedience of gurus, saints, priests make one more prone to graha badha.

Purpose of Grahas (Micro- organisms) to enter in body

Grahas (micro-organisms) enter in body mainly for three purposes- Himsa, Rati, and Archana^[23]

1. Himsa- Here Himsa can be explained as an antigen antibody reaction initiated in the body

when microbes enter into the body. The Inflammation, tissue injury, prodromal symptoms like fever, flu can be considered under the heading himsa.

2. Rati- it can be elaborated as completion of reproductive life cycle of microbes. They enter in the body as an egg and complete their life cycle by converting into a gametocyte and then exit the body.
3. Archana- Here Archana means to get nourished, worshipped. Certain groups of microorganisms enter inside the body with the intention of getting nourishment to increase their colonies and produce disease.

Mode of action of Grahas

Grahas enters inside the body like entry of Atma inside the body, entry of light ray or image inside the mirror, Taila inside the Beeja, Shita and Ushna guna pravesha inside the body, entry of sun rays inside the Suryakanta gem.^[24] Incubation period of Graha: Incubation period is the time interval between the entries of microorganisms inside the body till it produces the first symptom. Incubation period like presentation is also seen in Grahas as the entry of Graha inside the body can't be identified and only the first symptom gives the clue.

Symptoms

Continuous crying and fever are only two prodromal symptoms mentioned in Ayurveda.^[25]

General symptoms.^[26,27]

General	Fever, irritability, excessive crying, yawning, shouting, bites lips, clenches teeth, clenches fists, injures himself or the mother with the nails or teeth, refusal to take feeds, emaciation, excessive lacrimation, rubs his eyes, ears and nose miserable look, eyes become red
Psychological	Fear, pulls his hairs, laughs alone without any reason and becomes cruel
Central nervous system	Vacant stare, unconsciousness, drowsiness, giddiness, irritability, hypotonia, rolling of eyeballs, jerky movements of head, twitching of eyelids and facial muscles, tremors, defective posture, dribbling of saliva (due to facial palsy), change in voice and speech, incontinence of urine and stool, fainting, etc.
Gastro-intestinal symptoms	Diarrhea, distension, vomiting thirst, constipation, stomatitis, distention of abdomen, etc.
Respiratory systems	Cough, hiccup, grunting respiration, change in voice, dyspnea, running nose. Etc.
Skin	Change in colour of skin, blisters urticaria, prominent veins over skin of abdomen, etc.
Smell of body	The child may emit fishy, bed bug like, fleshy or bloody, cow's fecal matter, goat's urine, etc. smell according to influence of particular Grahas.

Management of Bala grahas

1. Nidan parivarjan is the first line of treatment. The main causes of bala graha such as ashuchi and disobedience of swasthavritta and sadvritta should be discouraged. Maintain the proper hygiene of both dhatri and child. Don't put the child in fear or stress. Don't scold him or toss him in the air.
2. Always be careful to not build unnecessarily fear in a child's inner conciseness.

Besides these some herbo- mineral medications are also mentioned by acharyas.

External use**Parisheka (washing)**

It should be done with decoction prepared from Agnimantha, Varuna, Haridra, Chitraka, Putika, Rohisha, Paribhadra and Kurabaka etc.

Abhyanga (oleation)

It should be done with oil prepared from Priyangu, Lochana, Tagara, Jatamamsi, Sariva, Madhuka, Ela and Bhunimba etc.

Bali and Snanam (Oblation and bath)

Oblation and bathing is administered by Tila, Tandula, Mudga, Mamsa, Matsya etc.

Dhupana (fumigation)

Fumigation has been advocated by Sarpa-Kubusa, Gridhra-Mala, Gaja- Nakha, Ushtra-Roma etc.

Internal use**Kwatha (decoction)**

It should be prepared from Bimbi, Gambhari, Madhuka, Kulattha, Badari, Yava, LaghuPanchamula.

Churna (powder)

It should be prepared From Kharjura, Mustaka, Narikela, Kasha, Mridvika, Madhuka etc.

Ras aushadhi

Kumar Kalayana Rasa, Jayamangalarasa, Rajamriganka Rasa etc.

Oil

Mahamasha Oil, Kshirabala Oil, Prasari Oil, Jyotishmati Oil etc.

Ghrita

Balgrahanasaka ghrita, Balahitakari ghrita, Astamangala ghrita etc.^[28]

MODERN CORRELATION**Skanda-Apsmara**

संग्यानाशो मुहुः केशलुंचन कन्धरानवतः। वनम्य
जृम्भमाणस्य शकृन्मूत्रप्रवर्तनम॥
फेनोद्वमनमूध्रेक्षा हस्तपाद नतवनम।
स्तनस्ववज्रहासन्दंश संरम्भज्वरजागर॥

A.S. Symptoms resemble to Grand Mal epilepsy: The irregular convulsive movements of face and limbs; recurrent attacks of unconsciousness; tonic colonic spasm of muscles; urine and stool passes during attack; biting of tongue or nipple.^[29]

Skandagraha

तत्र एकनयनस्त्रावी शिरो विक्षिपतेमुहुः। हतैकपक्षः
स्तब्धांग सस्वेदो नतकन्धरः॥
दन्तखादी स्तनद्वेषी त्रस्यन रोदिति विस्वरम। वक्त्र
वक्रो वमन लालां भृशमूर्ध्व निरीक्षते॥
वसा असृक गन्धि उद्विग्नो बद्धमुष्टि शकृच्चिच्छुः।
चलितैकाक्षिगण्डभ्रूः संरक्तोभयलोचनः॥
स्कन्दार्तस्तेन वैकल्यं मरणं वा भवेद ध्रुवम॥
अ.सं.उ.३/१५-१७

Skanda graha resembles infection with polio virus as- Stiffness in the muscles of the body; Paralysis of the muscles of trunk and the extremities. Involvement of cranial nerves is seen in bulbar form of polio. Polio infection either kills the child or leaves with disability. Facial palsy when there is bulbar involvement or polio encephalitis.^[30]

Naigmesha

आध्मानं पाणिपादस्य स्पन्दनं फेननिर्वमः।
 तृणमुष्टिबन्धातीसारस्वरदन्यविवर्णता
 कूजनं स्तननं छर्दिः कासहिध्माप्रजागराः।
 अ.सं.उ.३/१५-१७

This graha resembles meningitis with features like fever, cough, recurrent vomiting, excitability with stiffness of the body, especially of the neck.^[31]

Shwagraha

कम्पो हृषितरोमत्वं स्वेदश्चक्षु निमीलनम्।
 बहिरायामनं जिह्वादंशो अन्तःकण्ठकूजनम्॥
 धावनं विट्सगन्धत्वं क्रोशेनं च क्ष्ववच्छुनि।
 अ.सं.उ.३/१५-१७

Shwagraha resembles rabies. Pharynx and larynx producing throaty cooing or sounds like a dog; Jaw muscles bites the tongue; Spasm of different groups of muscles can occur in tetanus. Peculiar symptoms that the child makes sounds like a dog.^[32]

Pitruagraha

रोमहर्षो मुहुः त्रासः सहसा रोदनं ज्वरः।
 कासातिसारवमथुजृम्भातृदशवगन्धताः॥
 अंगेषु आक्षेपविक्षेपशोषस्तम्भविवर्णता। मुष्टिबन्धः
 स्त्रुतिः च अक्ष्णोः बालस्य स्युः पितृग्रहे॥
 अ.सं.उ.३

The initial cough, fever, vomiting and loose motions, this type of infection is quite common in viral diarrhea, irritability, restlessness associated with dehydration and typical symptoms of electrolyte imbalance.^[33]

Pootna

पूतनायां वमिः कम्पः तन्द्रा रात्रौ प्रजागरः।
 हिध्मा आध्मानं शकृद भेदः पिपासा
 मूत्रनिग्रहः।
 स्त्रस्तहृष्टागं रोमत्वं काकत्पूतिगन्धिता॥
 अ.सं.उ.३

The symptoms are vomiting; loose motions; Irritability; restlessness. It resembles to gastro-enteritis with dehydration.^[34]

Revati

रेवत्यां श्यावनीलत्वं कर्णनासाक्षि मर्दनम्।
कासहिध्माक्षिविक्षेपवक्रवक्रत्वरक्तताः॥
बस्तगन्धो ज्वरः शोषः पुरीषं हरितं द्रवम्॥
अ.सं.उ.३

Revati resembles Diarrhea with fever and cough or Viral diarrhea.^[35]

Shakuni

स्त्रस्त अंगत्वमतीसारो जिह्वातालुगले व्रणाः। स्फोटाः
सदाहरुक्पाकाः सन्धिषु स्युः पुनः पुनः॥
निश्यद्भि प्रविलीयन्ते पाको वक्त्रे गुदे अपि वा॥ भयं
शकुनिगन्धत्वं ज्वरः च शकुनिग्रहे॥

The symptoms are redness of muco- cutaneous junctions, ulcers in throat and mouth and fever. The painful crop develops, burning blisters mostly in joints, recurring daily. The crops come out in the night and get melted away in the day. The common peculiar enterovirus infection is known as hand foot mouth disease having rashes over buttock, hand, foot, and inside mouth. Plague is also kind of sickness in which such skin lesions are seen. Crops of painful blisters recurring daily and leaving ulcerated areas with fever and loose motions are characteristics of pemphigus.^[36]

DISCUSSION

Graha badha was much elaborated by our acharyas but in modern time it is a neglected topic or can be said that much importance is not given to graha badha.

Although we all accept the theory of microorganisms but find it difficult to digest the concept of graha badha in children till date. In comparison with microorganisms, similarities are found between bhuta or graha and microbes. It is a need of hour to work in this area as healthy children make the backbone of society. Ayurveda has mentioned details about the morphology, pathology and aetiology of the grahas as well as the symptoms they produce in the body and their treatment.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the above description bala graha can be compared with various microbial infections which can be treated with a combined approach of therapeutic and psychiatric management. Maintain proper hygiene and follow dincharya and ritucharya. The abode of pregnant woman and child is to be kept clean, well fumigated by various protective measures prescribed for child and puerperal women to prevent infection. Micro-organisms serve the function of protection after infection by forming antibodies in the body.

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