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FROM TRADITION TO EVIDENCE: A SCIENTIFIC REVIEW OF *PUTRESHTI YAGYA* FOR HEALTHY PROGENY

Shreya Mukati[1]*, Anjali Verma[2]

[1]PG Scholar, P.G. Department of Prasuti Tantra & Stri Roga, Uttarakhand Ayurveda University, Rishikul Campus, Haridwar.

[2]Assistant Professor, P.G. Department of Prasuti Tantra & Stri Roga, Uttarakhand Ayurveda University, Rishikul Campus, Haridwar.

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***Corresponding Author**
Shreya Mukati

PG Scholar, P.G. Department of Prasuti Tantra & Stri Roga, Uttarakhand Ayurveda University, Rishikul Campus, Haridwar.

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ABSTRACT

Background: Infertility is a growing public health concern, and preconceptional care is increasingly recognised as important for healthy progeny. *Ayurveda* describes *Putreshti (Putrakameshti) Yagya* as a ritual performed to obtain *Shreyasi Praja,* yet its rationale and scientific relevance remain poorly explored. **Aim:** To understand the importance of *Putreshti Yagya* for healthy progeny and to review its scientific evaluation from a clinical perspective. **Materials and Methods:** Ayurvedic and Vedic texts, including *Charaka Samhita* and *Kashyapa Samhita*, were reviewed. PubMed, Google Scholar and Scopus were searched for literature on *Putrakameshti Yagya*, Ayurvedic preconception care and their scientific correlation. **Results:** Classical texts describe *Garbha* as a composite of physical, mental and spiritual factors and emphasise the role of *Manas* in conception. *Putreshti Yagya* has three phases. *Purvakarma* includes *Shodhana,* dietary measures, *Ritusnana* and hygiene practices. *Pradhana Karma* is performed on the 8th day from LMP with medicinal woods, *Ghrita*-enriched *Charu* and *Vedic Mantras. Paschata Karma* includes consuming the remaining *Ghrita,* using *Mantra*-purified water, and coitus during the fertile window. Modern evidence on stress and the hypothalamic-pituitary-gonadal axis, gamete quality and epigenetic programming offers plausible correlates. **Conclusion:** *Putreshti Yagya* appears to be a structured preconceptional approach that prepares the couple physically, mentally and

environmentally for conception. Most proposed mechanisms remain hypothetical, and well-designed clinical studies are needed to establish its role in reproductive outcomes.

KEYWORDS: *Putreshti Yagya*, preconceptional care, *Garbhadhana, Shreyasi Praja*, Epigenetics.

INTRODUCTION

Infertility has emerged as a significant public health concern in the modern era, affecting millions of couples worldwide. According to the World Health Organisation, approximately one in six individuals experience infertility during their reproductive years, indicating a substantial and growing challenge for reproductive healthcare.[1] The rapid pace of urbanisation, changing lifestyle patterns, delayed childbearing, sedentary habits, dietary changes, environmental exposures, occupational stress, and psychological disturbances may collectively influence reproductive health.[2] Furthermore, the inability to conceive may itself become a source of anxiety and emotional distress, creating a reciprocal relationship between psychological well-being and reproductive health.[3] These multidimensional determinants highlight the need for holistic approaches to preconceptional and reproductive care, among which the researches highlighted *putrakamesthi yagya* as an important karma but none of researches are proves its scientific importance or mode of action.

In order to get good progeny, *Acharya Charaka* in *Sharira Sthana* describes some *karmas* to get *Shreyasi Praja*, under which *Putrakameshti yagya* is described; *Putreshti* or *Putrakameshti Yagya* is described as a specialised ritual performed to obtain progeny.[4] The term *Putrakameshti* is derived from *Putra*, meaning progeny, and *Ishti*, referring to a sacrificial offering or ritual performed with a specific objective. Its traditional significance is particularly reflected in the well-known account of its performance for King Dasharatha for the attainment of progeny.[5] Thus, *Putrakameshti Yagya* represents a traditional conception of a purposeful ritual directed toward the attainment of offspring.

On deep review of the literature, it is not merely seen as a ritual, but it seems to be a holistic approach for preconceptional care. The concept of epigenetics is defined under *Ayurveda* under preconceptional care as the process of *Putrakameshti Yagya*. Despite the traditional association of *Putrakameshti Yagya*, there remains a considerable gap between its traditional claims and scientifically established evidence. Therefore, there is a need to bridge the gap between traditional knowledge and evidence-based scientific evaluation.

AIM AND OBJECTIVE

To understand the importance of *Putresthi Yagya* for healthy progeny and review its scientific evaluation from a clinical perspective.

MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY

A systematic literature review was conducted of Ayurvedic and Vedic texts, including Charaka Samhita, Kashyapa Samhita, and relevant Vedic literature. Scientific databases including PubMed, Google Scholar, and Scopus were thoroughly searched using terms related to *Putrakameshti Yagya*, Ayurvedic preconception care, *Yagya* effects, and its scientific correlation.

RESULTS

Healthy conception leads to a healthy progeny; in *Ayurveda*, the definition of *Garbha* (Product of conception) explains different components of *Garbha*.

Table 1: Relation of mental health and healthy conception.

Reference	Classical concept	Key component
Shushruta Sharira 5/3	शुक्रशोणितं गर्भाशयस्थमात्मप्रकृतिविकारसंमूर्च्छितं गर्भ इत्युच्यते ।	*Garbha* is union of *Shukra*(sperm), *Artvava*(Ovum), *Atma, 8 Prakruti* and *16 Vikaras* inside *Garbhashaya*(Uterus)[6]
Charaka Sharira 3/3	समुदयादेषां भावानां- मातृजश्चायं गर्भः पितृजश्चात्मजश्च सात्यजश्च रसजश्च, अस्ति च खलु सत्त्वमौपपादुकमिति होवाच भगवानात्रेयः	Garbha is regarded as a composite entity constituted by *Matrja, Pitrja, Atmaja, Satmyaja, Sattvaja, Rasaja Bhavas*[7]
Charaka Sharira 3/3, Ashtanga Sangraha 2/3	शुक्रशोणितसंसर्गमन्तर्गर्भाशयगतं जीवोऽवक्रामति सत्त्वसंप्रयोगात्तदा गर्भोऽभिनिर्वर्तते मनोजवेन जीवेनाभिसंसृष्टं गर्भाशयमुपयाति	*Charaka* describes the entry of the *Jivatma* into the *Garbha* in association with a functionally active *Manas*, suggesting the importance of *Manas* in this process.[8] Likewise, *Aṣṭanga Sangraha* attributes the entry of the *Jivatmana* into the *Garbhashaya* to the '*vega*' or impetus of *Manas."*[9]
Charaka Sutra 25/40	संकल्पोवृष्णाम	Determination is best aphrodisiac[10]
	दौर्मनस्यमवृष्याणाम्	Unhappiness or disgust is best in loss of virility.[10]

For healthy conception and the attainment of healthy progeny, Ayurveda describes a comprehensive preconceptional approach in *Sharira Sthana.* It emphasises the importance of *Sodhana* of the couple before conception, followed by appropriate dietary measures to prepare the body for conception. In addition to physical preparation, due importance is given

to mental stability and a positive psychological state, highlighting the need for both physical and mental preparedness of the couple for healthy conception.

Table 2: Preconceptional care mentioned in Ayurveda.

Domain	Ayurvedic concept	Classical description	References	Purpose
Sharira	*Sharira Shodhana*	अथाप्येतौ स्त्रीपुंसौ स्नेहस्वेदाभ्यामुपपाद्य, वमनविरेचनाभ्यां संशोध्य क्रमेण प्रकृतिमापादयेत् ॥[11]	Charaka Sharira8/4	Optimising physical health and reproductive preparedness
		विधिनोपसंस्कृतशरीरयोः स्त्रीपुरुषयोर्मिश्रीभावमापन्नयोः ॥[12]	Charaka Sharira 8/17	
		स्नेहस्वेदवमनविरेचनास्थापनानुवासनैः॥[13]	Kashyapa Samhita Sharira 5/3	
	Yoni (reproductive tract) *Garbhashaya* and *Shukra Shuddhi*	पुरुषस्यानुपहतरेतसः स्त्रियमव्यापन्नयोनिशोणितगर्भाशया ॥[14]	Charaka Sharira 3/3	To improve the quality and functional integrity of *Shukra* and establish a healthy uterine environment for implantation and fetal development
Manas	Healthy *Manasa* Quality	सौमनस्यं गर्भधारणानां ।[15]	Charaka Sutra 25/40	Optimizing mental health and psychological preparedness
	Role of *Manas* in appearance of *Garbha*	गर्थोपपत्तौ तु मनः स्त्रिया यं जन्तुं व्रजेत्तत्सदृशं प्रसूते ।[16]	Charaka Sharira 2/25	
	Manas as an important factor for fetal positioning	योनिप्रदोषान्मनसोऽभितापाच्छुक्रासृगाहारविहारदोषात् ॥[17]	Charaka Sharira 3/7	

Putreshti Yagya

Putreshti or Putrakameshti Yagya is a specialised ritual described in classical texts for the attainment of desirable progeny. It is performed by a couple seeking *Shreyasi Praja* and is divided into three parts*: Purvakarma* (prerequisities), *Pradhana Karma and Paschata Karma. Purvakarma* includes the procedures to be carried out before the *Yagya* to prepare the couple for conception, followed by the *Yagya* itself *(Pradhana Karma)* and the post-ritual regimen *(Paschata Karma).*

Purvakarma

The *Purvakarma* includes.

Table 3: Prerequisites of *Putresthi Yagya.*[18]

S.no	*Purvakarma* modalities	Explain
1.	*Shodhana -Snehana, Swedana, Vamana, Virechana*	This is the time for identifying risk factors for diagnosis and their management for optimisation.
2.	Dietary changes (for women -Intake of *Taila Masha* for men- *Madhura Aushadhi Siddha Ghrita* and milk)	Window periods to get healthy sperm and ova
3.	*Ritusnana* (3rd day of menses)	This phase is the resting phase; it is advised that women do not do work
4.	After *Ritusnana,* 4th day onwards, use of *Ubtana, Sweta Vastra Dharna, Mala Dharna*	Maintain hygiene, odour, for air purification

PRADHANA KARMA

Table 4: *Pradhana Karma* of *Putreshti Yagya.*[19,20]

Time of *Yagya*	8th day of LMP
Purpose	Desired Progeny
Who will perform	Couple who wants to conceive
Who will conduct	*Ritwika*
Selection of site	East or north direction of house is selected.
Direction of *Vaidhya* and couple	Right side of the fire Seat for *Brahma,* and the couple should be seated to the west of *Ritwika.*
Mantra component	Recitation of *Vishnu Yoni* Vedic mantras during the ritual for prayer to *Prajapati* (God) to be seated in the woman's yoni
Woods used for fire	*Palasa, Ingudi, Udumbara,* and *Madhuka- these* are medicinal plants and have volatile components which have a positive effect on the environment and person
Offerings used for yagya	*Charu enriched with Ghrita.*
Water purification	Water is an important component of the body, and it's through the different *Sanskaras that* it is purified.
Kusha Grass and Flower Decorations	Help create a calm and purified environment.

Paschata Karma

Table 5: *Paschata Karma* of *Putreshti Yagya.*[21]

S no	Components	Explaination
1.	Left *Ghrita* from the yagya should be advised to the couple to consume it all.	*Ghrita* is *Madhura Rasa* and *Balya,Vrishya*
2.	Use of water purified with *Mantras*	Purifywater with *Sanskara*
3.	Coital activity for 8 days at desired place	This phase is the fertile window, from the 8th day of LMP to the 16th day of LMP)
4.	*Mantra Chikitsa* just before coital for conception	For mental calmness

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda regards conception as a holistic process in which *Garbha* results from the union of *Shukra* and *Shonita* in the *Garbhashaya,* influenced by *Atma*, *Prakriti* and *Vikara* (Su. Sha. 5/3). *Charaka* describes it as a composite of *Matruja, Pitruja, Atmaja, Satmyaja, Rasaja And Sattvaja Bhavas* (Ch. Sha. 3/3), and links the entry of *Jivatma* to a functionally active manas (Ch. Sha. 3/3; A.S. Sha. 2/3). Thus, the classical texts place the mental factor alongside the physical ones in healthy conception.

This view is supported by modern physiology. The hypothalamus regulates reproductive function through pulsatile GnRH secretion, which controls pituitary LH and FSH release and, in turn, folliculogenesis and ovulation. Because the hypothalamus is sensitive to limbic and cortical input, psychological stress can raise CRH and cortisol, which suppress GnRH pulsatility and may result in menstrual irregularities and anovulation.[22] Hence, a disturbed manas may influence reproductive outcomes through neuroendocrine pathways.

The classical preconceptional approach ensures both physical and mental well-being. Physical well-being is achieved through *Snehana, Swedana, Vamana* and *Virechana,* administered as indicated (Ch. Sha. 8/4; Kashyapa Sha. 5/3). These procedures help diagnose and treat any systemic disease that may affect conception, and also achieve *Shukra, Shonita* and *Garbhashaya Shuddhi*. Equally, a healthy mental state is considered important for *Garbha* (Ch. Su. 26/40), and the state of the woman's manas at the time of conception is said to influence the progeny (Ch. Sha. 2/25).

Modern literature also suggests that parental psychological state, especially the mother's, can affect the fetus. Maternal stress has been associated with altered DNA methylation and adverse fetal outcomes.[23] Such effects may be reduced by promoting *Saumanasya* (mental well-being), which is listed among the factors favourable for conception. Thus, *Ayurveda* prepares both the body and the mind of the couple, which is comparable to the physical and psychological optimisation sought in modern preconception care.

Putrakameshti Yagya, described in the classical texts, is a specialised ritual performed by the couple to obtain desirable progeny. Certain prerequisites are to be fulfilled before the *Yagya*, and these are covered under *Purvakarma*, a preparatory window in which risk factors are identified and corrected. *Shodhana* includes *Sharira Shodhana* (general body purification) along with *Garbhashaya Shuddhi, Artava Shuddhi* and *Shukra Shuddhi*. These aim to

improve the quality of the gametes (ova and sperm). Gamete quality is an important determinant of fertilisation, embryo development and pregnancy outcome, and it may also influence epigenetic programming of the offspring.[24] Optimising the gametes before conception is therefore a rational preconceptional strategy. *Shodhana* is followed by dietary measures. *Taila-Masha* is recommended for the woman, and *Madhura Aushadha-Siddha Ghrita* with milk for the man. Since *Artava* is *Agneya* in *Guna*, the woman's diet is directed at nourishing it, while foods with *Madhura, Snigdha* and *Vrishya* properties are traditionally considered to nourish *Shukra*. Another prerequisite is that the woman should be *Ritusnata,* that is, she has bathed after completing menstruation. From the fourth day onwards, practices such as *Ubtana,* wearing white clothes and *Mala Dharana* promote personal hygiene and a clean environment. This regimen, advised for 7 days, also helps improve the woman's psychological state. Overall, the prerequisites of *Putrakameshti Yagya* reflect comprehensive preparation of the couple, physical and mental, for conception and the best possible progeny.

Pradhana karma is the main part of the *Yagya* and is performed on the 8th day from LMP; this time is again the start of the fertile window. It is performed by the couple desiring conception, with the purpose of obtaining desirable progeny, and is conducted by a *Ritwik*. A purified site in the east or north direction of the house is selected, which may provide adequate sunlight and ventilation. The couple is seated to the west of the sacred fire, with the *Brahmana* or *Vaidya* seated to its south, so that the ritual is carried out in an orderly manner under proper guidance. The fire is kindled with medicinal woods such as *Palasha, Ingudi, Udumbara* and *Madhuka,* which contain volatile components and may have a positive effect on the environment and on the couple. *Charu* enriched with *Ghrita* is offered into the fire along with the recitation of *Vishnu Yoni* Vedic mantras, directed to *Prajapati* for the success of conception. Water purified with *Mantras* and an altar decorated with *kusha* grass and flowers further help create a calm and purified environment. Thus, *Pradhanakarma* combines environmental, pharmacological and psychological elements, and its probable benefits through calmness and reduced stress remain hypothetical and need clinical validation.

Paschata karma includes the measures advised to the couple after the completion of the *Yagya*. The couple is advised to consume the remaining *Ghrita* from the *Yagya,* which is *Madhura Rasa* and *Balya* and *Vrishya* in action, and may therefore support reproductive health. Water purified with *Mantras* is also used, which may add to the sense of purity and mental calmness. The couple is then advised to have coital activity for eight days at a desired

place, that is, a place pleasant to the mind. This period corresponds to the fertile window (8th to 16th day of LMP), so the timing of intercourse coincides with the likely time of ovulation. *Mantra chikitsa* just before coitus is advised for mental calmness, which is in line with the importance given to manas and *Saumanasya* for conception in the earlier paragraphs. Thus, *Paschata Karma* links the ritual with the fertile window and brings together the physical and psychological preparation of the couple, although its effects on conception need to be evaluated through clinical studies.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the findings suggest that *Putrakameshti Yagya* is not merely a ritual but a structured preconceptional approach in which the couple is prepared physically, mentally and environmentally for conception. *Purvakarma* optimises the body through *Shodhana* and diet, *Pradhana Karma* creates a calm and purified setting with shared intention, and *Paschata Karma* aligns coital activity with the fertile window while supporting mental well-being. This is consistent with the classical emphasis on both *Sharira Shuddhi* and *Mana Shuddhi* for healthy *Garbha*. However, most of the proposed mechanisms remain hypothetical, and well-designed clinical studies are needed to establish the role of *Putrakameshti Yagya* in preconceptional care and reproductive outcomes.

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