

ANTENATAL CARE IN AYURVEDA: A REVIEW**Kalpajyoti Bora^{1*} and Dipak Kumar Goswami²**¹Post Graduate Trainee, Government Ayurvedic College, Guwahati, Assam India.²Assistant Professor, Government Ayurvedic College, Guwahati, Assam, India.Article Received on
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India.**ABSTRACT**

Safety Motherhood is essential in procreation of healthy progeny. Ayurveda the ancient science, in regards to safety motherhood proposes detailed description regarding Ahar (dietary regimen), Vihar (lifestyle), Vichara (psychological aspects) in monthly sequence known as garbhini paricharya. This antenatal regimen helps in proper growth of a foetus, pregnancy without complications, sukha prasav (proper delivery without complications). Different pathyas (normal dietetics), apathyas (dietetics to be avoided) has been describe in order to provide immense care throughout the journey of pregnancy. Hence an attempt has been made to review the Ayurvedic concept of antenatal care.

KEYWORDS: antenatal care, antenatal care and ayurveda, garbhini paricharya, ayurveda pregnancy care.

INTRODUCTION

Pregnancy is that event in woman's life where a lady experiences a newborn life within herself. To thrive this achievement, as per Acharya Charaka a pregnant woman desirous of a healthy child should use congenial diet, practice good conduct and mode of life. The fetus undergoes development with each passing months. The ahara rasa (food) obtained by mother supplies nourishment to fetus for its growth. Acharya Dalhana has mentioned a simile that, as a tree situated on the bank of a pond receives its nourishment, similarly fetus inside womb of mother receives its nourishment.

In today's life majority of intrauterine fetal demise is due to intrapartum complications, hypertension, congenital abnormality, preterm labour, preterm premature rupture of membrane, placental conditions etc. Hence survival of both mother and baby is of utmost

importance. That is possible only through proper care of mother and baby, hence an attempt has been made to understand the concept of garbhini paricharya through Ayurveda.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To collect and analyse Garbhini paricharya (antenatal care in ayurveda).
2. To understand the importance of masanumasik garbhini paricharya as described in ayurvedic text books and its effective utility in present era in relation to antenatal care.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The literature is taken from brihatrayee (Charak Samhita, Susruta Samhita, Astanga Sangraha), all available ayurvedic classics, modern textbooks, research papers, journals. The type of study conducted is conceptual study.

DISCUSSION

Garbhini paricharya can be divided into three subcategories. 1. Monthly dietary regimen (Masanumasik garbhini paricharya) 2. Things harmful for fetus (Garbhopaghatakarabhavas) 3. Herbs for maintenance of pregnancy (Garbhasthapaka dravyas).

1. Monthly dietary regimen: During the antenatal period, the pregnant lady should be taken care. In ayurvedic samhitas, it has been mentioned that if the garbhini (pregnant lady) does not receive proper care in her antenatal period the child born to her will have fetal abnormalities either psychological or physical. Proper care of garbhini is given due importance in ayurvedic samhitas.^[1-4] Acharya Charak, Acharya Sushrut, Acharya Bhagbhata, Acharya Harita has describe various monthly dietary regimen which has been innumarated below.

Table 1: Masanumasik Garbhini paricharya.

Acharyas And Months-	Charak	Sushruta	Bhagbhata 1	Harita
First month	Milk and congenial diet	Sweet, cold and liquid diet	Sweet, cold, liquid, congenial diet. First twelve days intake ghee medicated with palasha and shalaparni	Sweetened milk by adding Madhuyasti, parusaka, madhukapuspa mixing with butter and honey.
Second month	Milk medicated with madura rasa drugs	Sweet, cold and liquid diet	Milk medicated with Madhura drugs	Sweetened milk with Kakoli
Third month	Honey and ghee with milk	Sweet, cold and liquid diet. Sasti rice	Milk with honey and ghrita	Olio prepared with rice and pulse

		cooked with milk		
Fourth month	Milk with butter	Cooked Sasti rice with curd, pleasant food with milk and butter. Meat of wild animals with tasty food.	Milk with butter	Medicated cooked rice
Fifth month	Ghee prepared with butter extracted from milk	Cooked rice with milk .meat of wild animals pleasant food mixed with milk and ghrita	Ghrita prepared with butter extracted from milk	Cooked rice with milk and sweetened (Payasa)
Sixth month	Ghee prepared from milk medicated with madhura drugs	Rice gruel medicated with gokshura	Ghrita medicated with Madhura group of drugs	sweetened curd
Seventh month	Ghee prepared from milk medicated with madhura drugs	ghrita prepared with vidarigandadi drug /prithakparniyadi drug	Ghrita medicated with Madhura group of drugs	Ghrita Khanda
Eighth month	Rice gruel prepared with milk and ghee (Kshira yavagu)	Asthapan Basti followed by anuvasana Basti followed by unctous gruel with meat soup of wild animals continue upto delivery	Asthapan basti	Ghrita purak (sweet preparation)
Ninth month	Anuvasana basti with oil of madhura drugs and vaginal tampon with the same oil		Anuvasana basti with oil of madhura drugs and vaginal tampon with the same oil	Use of cereals.

Importance of monthly dietary regimen

1) First trimester: It is a crucial period for both mother and the growing fetus because fetal developmental changes occur during first three months. Use of sweet, cold substances are easily palatable for the mother. Olio prepared with rice and cereals, sasti rice cooked with milk will help to relieve fatigue.^[5] Kakoli acts as galactagogue.^[6] Madhuka also helps in breast milk production. Sweetened milk with kakoli will strengthen the pregnant lady from subjective symptoms of pregnancy. By the end of embryonic period completion of primary and secondary neuralization occurs. Almost all the acharyas have mentioned about intake of milk. As folic acid consumption is essential during these months. Milk when daily consumed helps to increase blood folate and keeps homocysteine concentration low.^[7] Milk also

contain other nutrients like vitamin B12, protein, riboflavin, calcium, phosphorus, iodine, potassium and omega-3 fatty acids which will help in growth and development of the growing fetus.

2) Second trimester: During this phase the fetus undergoes various maturation. Bone marrow of fetus also starts haemopoiesis. Mother also undergoes changes like darkening of areola, changes in size of uterus. Ghee helps in dhatuposhan. Ghee is mentioned by almost all four acharyas to be taken in second trimester. Ghee contains vitamin A, tocoferols, carotene, free fatty acids, glycerid which will help in maturation of midbrain, promote lusture of skin, growth of lanugo, eyeball movement, nocireceptors formation.^[8] Ghee although contains cholesterol oxides, it has no affect on liver microsomes HMG CoA reductase activity. It indicates that ghee has no affect on cholesterol biosynthesis. Hence pregnant women can intake ghee without the fear of cholesterol deposition in body. Acharya Sushruta has mentioned intake of meat in fourth and fifth month as meat is a good source of proteins, iron. Goksura mentioned by acharyas has diuretic and nephroprotective action reduces water retention. Curd contains probiotics, it prevents anxiety, pigmentation in pregnant lady.

3) Third trimester: In the last trimester, the fetal lungs continue to grow along with other developments. Fetal brain controls the thermoregulatory mechanism. Acharya Sushruta has mentioned use of Ghrita with vidarigandadi herbs. It helps in alleviation of vata dosha and provides strength to the mother.^[9] Brihati (*Solanum indicum*) an ingredient present in vidarigandadi gana herbs has steriodial properties which may have positive effect on fetal lung maturity.^[10] Acharyas has mentioned use of basti in later months of pregnancy as it helps in proper delivery of fetus (sukha prasav) and helps to relieve false labour pain. Use of vaginal tampons with medicated herbs will help to prevent any ascending infection from lower genital tract.

2. Contraindications during pregnancy/Things harmful to fetus (Garbhaopaghatakarabhavas) :

a) Acharya Charak- Avoid excessive strenuous exercise, harsh and violent activities, hot and pungent substances, avoid use of intoxicated substances, riding in vehicle as it may initiate abortion.

b) Acharya Sushruta- Avoid excessive exercise, excessive coitus, sleeping in day and night awakening, grief, riding on vehicle, avoid blood letting, supression of natural urges, excessive massage with oil repeatedly, avoidance of visit to cremation ground as it may cause increase of cortisol leading to stroke.

c) Acharya Vagbhata 1- Avoid exercise, trauma, anger, grief, fear, terror, fasting, suppression of natural urges, first to fifth months avoid massage of oil, avoid riding vehicles in jerky places as it may initiate abortion in early months.

d) Acharya Harita- Avoid intake of edibles which causes burning sensation in abdomen, avoid use of excessive sour substances, garlic, onion, alcoholic substances, avoid anger, grief as they may cause gastrointestinal upset.

e) Acharya Yogarajakarna- Avoid use of sudation, emesis as it may precipitate abortion due to reflex stimulation of myometrium, kshara (alkalies), along with polluted and incompatible foods.

3) Herbs for maintaining pregnancy (Garbhasthapaka dravyas).

Acharya Charak, Kashyap, Vagbhata has mentioned certain drugs which are to be used during pregnancy. Acharya Chakrapani has mentioned that these garbhasthapana drugs or garbhasthapaka dravyas help in counteracting the harmful factors that may affect the fetus and help in its proper maintenance. These drugs are.

1. Aindri (*Centella asiatica*)

It has anxiolytic, neuroprotective, uterorelaxant, antioxidant properties.^[11] It effectively causes inhibition of gastric ulcers. It inhibits the inflammatory process, increases tensile strength of newly formed skin, improves the capillary permeability and triterpenes found in *Centella asiatica* work on the hypothalamo-pituitary-adrenal axis and release monoamine neurotransmitters which act as antidepressants. All these will help new mothers to recover from pregnancy woes.

2. Brahmi (*Bacopa monieri*)

According to Ayurveda, it has properties like medhya (intellect), provides longevity, sopha hara (relieve from edema), nidra janaan (cures sleep disorder), meha (diabetes), kasa (cough) etc. It acts as anti-nociceptive activity^[12] causes analgesic effect by blocking numerous pain receptors. It is cardioprotective, antidepressants, anxiolytic.^[13]

3. Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*)

It inhibits the uterine contraction produced by spasmogens. It is effective as nerve tonic, galactagogue, acts as diuretic, antiseptic.

4. Sahastravirya (*Cynodon dactylon*) It has anti-inflammatory, antipyretic and analgesic effect. It has shown cardioprotective activity in a study on mice.^[14]

5. Amogha (*Steriospermum suaveolens*)-

The ethanolic extract of *Steriospermum suaveolens* exhibit antihyperglycemic effect along with antioxidant effect. It has in reduction of elevated liver enzymes.^[15]

6. Avyatha/Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*)^[16]

It is rich in antioxidant property. It is effective against diabetes induced oxidative stress that may hamper both mother and fetus. Its aqueous extract produce smooth muscle relaxation of uterus.

7. Shiva/Haritaki (*Terminalia chebula*)^[16]

It has antioxidant, antidiabetic, antifungal, wound healing properties. It is effective as laxative, exhibit antispasmodic action on smooth muscles. It is effective in reducing the levels of total lipids, LDL, Serum cholesterol.

8. Arista (*Picrorrhiza kurroa*)^[16]

It is hepatoprotective, immunomodulator, free radical scavenging, anti spasmodic, anti inflammatory.

9. Vatyapuspi/Bala (*Sida cordifolia*)

It has antispasmodic, anti-inflammatory, hypoglycemic and hepatoprotective properties.^[17]

10. Viswaksenkanta (*Callicarpa macrophylla*)

It has analgesic actions. The diterpenoid compounds in *Callicarpa macrophylla* has anti-inflammatory activities.^[18]

CONCLUSION

Antenatal care (garbhini paricharya) is described in ayurvedic classics by many acharyas. As garbhini is that period of a women's life where she is creating a new life within her. Proper care should be given to her since the start of her pregnancy. Acharyas has mention nutritious diet and regimen which has a strong scientific relevance. Things that should be avoided during pregnancy as a matter of caution has been added because over anxiety, stress can increase body's cortisol level and cause hamper to the mother and the fetus. Herbs for maintenance of pregnancy prove to have beneficiary effect on the mother and relieve her from ailments that are likely to occur during pregnancy like edema, diabetes, increase in hepatic enzymes, oxidative stress. The entire antenatal regimen will help in growth and development of fetus, provide healthy and proper delivery of fetus.

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