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Suvarnaprashana Samskar: A Literary Review

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ABSTRACT:

Suvarnaprashana described by *Acharya Kashyapa*, the main pioneer of *Kaumarbhritya* (pediatrics). *Suvarnaprashana* is intended to boost memory, intelligence and immunity in infants. It is one of the oldest applications of gold nano medicine. *Suvarnaprashana* means to administer *Suvarna Bhasma* with the help of honey, *Ghrita* and some herbal medicines. *Suvarnaprashana* has been extensively described in main reference books i.e. *Brihatrayi Granthas*, *Sushruta*, *Vagbhata*, *Kashyapa* has mentioned its uses in detail. *Suvarnaprashana* has been traditionally practiced across India for child growth and memory enhancement and also to promote longevity. *Suvarnaprashana* is such *Rasayana* mentioned in Ayurveda to promote immunity and memory of children. Despite their efficacy, these age old therapies were discouraged, sidelined and almost forgotten during the colonial era and even after freedom. Through this article we make an effort to enlighten and reestablish the forgotten science.

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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, an ancient science with rich heritage and antiquity. Later on, this got systemized to professionalism for the prevention, promotion and care of disease. In present era human beings suffering from stress inducing lifestyle and poor food habits, these factors affecting the strength of individuals both physically and mentally, it was leading the world towards the unhealthy conditions. Modern medicines fail to treat these conditions satisfactorily in spite of many researches & latest technologies because of their hazardous side effects. So its need of the hour that find the best of health and intelligence in spite of modern medicines. *Ayurveda* has explained such health promoting agents under the heading of *Rasayana*. *Suvarnaprashana* is one of kind and it was described in under the heading of the sixteen *Samskaras* in *Ayurveda*. It promotes immunity and boosting memory

in children. *Ayurveda* is known for its own specialties and its time tested. It mainly helps to maintain the healthy state of mind & body. *Ayurveda* explains *Suvarnaprashana* while modern medicines explains about vaccines. Vaccines produce immunity against specific diseases whereas *Suvarnaprashana* providing non-specific immunity along with many beneficial effects. *Acharya Kashyapa* described *Suvarnaprashana vidhi* in detail with its benefits.

AIM & OBJECTIVE

Review the relevant literature of *Suvarnaprashana* described in various *Ayurvedic* texts.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Concepts Of *Suvarnaprashana*:

Ayurvedic texts have copious references describing the use of gold metallic powder (probably fine gold dust) or *Suvarnabhasma* in various rejuvenative therapies. Gold in the form of fine gold dust, red colloidal solution, *Suvarna Patra*, *Suvarna Bhasma*, *Suvarna Parpati*, *Kharaliya* (trituated) formulations and *Sindoorkalpa*, often combined with *Ghrita*, Honey, *Medhya* & *Rasayana* herbs were popularly used in the *Ayurveda* therapies.

According to *Sushruta*, in his *Garbhini Vyakaran Adhyaya* in *SharirSthana*, he mentioned 4 combinations of *Suvarna* administration to child¹ e.g.

1. *Kushtham* + (Honey + *Ghrita* + *Svarna*)
2. *Bramhi* + *Shankhapushpi* + (Honey + *Ghrita* + *Svarna*)
3. *Arkapushpi* (*Payasya*) + (Honey + *Ghrita* + *Svarna*)
4. *Kaidarya* + *Shwetaaparajita* + *Doorva* + (Honey + *Ghrita* + *Svarna*)

Above mentioned *Suvarna* combinations if given to child, his body, intellect, power, sharpness, presence of mind becomes very mature.²

According to *Vagbhata* (*Astang Hridaya*), he mentioned three *Suvarna* combinations³ i.e.

1. *Aindri* + *Brahmi* + *Vacha* + *Shankhapushpi* + (Honey + *Ghrita* + *Svarna*)
2. *Vacha* + *Bramhi* + *Svarnamaksikam* + *Haritaki* + (Honey + *Ghrita* + *Svarna*)
3. *Amalaki* + (Honey + *Ghrita* + *Svarna*)

It should be used in children for enhancement of intellect, life, power and equilibrium of body.⁴

Also, *Vagbhata* (*Astang Hridaya*) has given another four *Suvarna* combinations⁵, i.e.

1. *Shweta Vacha* + *Kushtha* + (Honey + *Ghrita* + *Svarna*)
2. *Arkapushpi* (*Ajgandha/Shweta Doorva*) + (Honey + *Ghrita* + *Svarna*)
3. *Matsyaksha* + *Shankhapushpi* + (Honey + *Ghrita* + *Svarna*)
4. *Kaidarya* + *Vacha* + (Honey + *Ghrita* + *Svarna*)

If any one or all of the above combinations are administered continuously for one year to children, then they will have good growth and development of intellect, power and complexion of skin.⁶

Kashyapa Samhita written by *Vridha Jeevaka*, one of the oldest textbooks of *Kaumarbhritya*, gives the first reference about giving *Suvarnaprashana* as a therapy for infants. This has been advised in infants and children from birth till 16 year of age⁷. *Suvarnaprashana* is a *Rasayana Chikitsa*, should be administered continuously to get the optimum effects for the physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual wellbeing of the children.

The classical descriptions of *Suvarnaprashana* therapy uses metallic gold, rubbed on a clean rubbing stone with water, till fine gold particles are released⁸. The rubbed gold or gold powder mixed with fine powder of *Medhya*, *Rasayana* herbs, *Ghrita* and honey is given to the newborn.⁹

Preparation Of Suvarnaprashana Bindu (Gold Drops):

Keeping face towards east, pure gold should be rubbed on a washed Stoned with little quantity of water then emulsified with *Madhu* and *Ghrita* to achieve a fine colloidal suspension.^{10,11}

Feeding of gold increases intellects digestive and metabolic power, strength, gives long life; is auspicious, virtuous,

aphrodisiac, increases complexion and eliminates the evil effects of *Grahas*. By feeding the gold for one month child becomes extremely intelligent and is not attacked by the disease, and by using for six months increases his hearing and retaining capabilities. *Ghrita* alleviates *Pitta* and *Vata*, is beneficial for *Rasa*, *Shukra* and *Ojas*, cooling, softening and improves voice and complexion.¹²

Ghrita fortified with *Medhya & Rasayana* herbs like *Brahmi* (*Bacopa monnieri*), *Mandookaparni* (*Centella asiatica*), *Yashtimadhu* (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), *Shankhpushpi* (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*), *Vacha* (*Acorus calamus*) and *Guduchi* (*Tinospora cordifolia*) are commonly used in *Suvarnabindu* preparation by clinicians expecting enhanced immunomodulatory and nootropic effects of *Suvarnaprashana* in children.

Duration Of Suvarna Prashana Therapy

As per mentioned in ayurvedic classics *Suvarnaprashana* should be given from birth to sixteen years of age. It can be given everyday morning or on the day *Pushya Nakshtra* has great importance in *Ayurvedic* medical science. It is considered to be very effective in terms of action, probably the body on this day is in

a better position to absorb the drugs for its optimum benefits and the drugs used are more potent than the usual.¹³

Sushruta has advised its use after *Vamana Karma*, but before massage and bath. While *Vagbhatas* have indicated it after massage and bath before *Vamana Karma* in *Jatkarma Samsakar* to ensure sucking and swallowing reflexes.¹⁴

Contraindications Of Suvarnaprashana:

Children with organ transplants and those on immunosuppressive therapy should not be given *Suvarnaprashana* therapy due to the fear of organ rejection. Also, with liver and kidney disorders should be contraindicated for this therapy.

Benefits Of Suvarnaprashana:

Following are the benefits of *Suvarnaprashana* mentioned by various *Ayurvedic* texts.

- Grabbing or grasping power, intelligence, recalling of previous memory becomes enhanced.
- Improves digestion power
- Auspicious
- Virtuous

- Increases complexion or skin texture.
- Eliminates the evil effects of *Grahas*
- Growth of mind and body becomes faster than usual

DISCUSSION

It is unique and one of the best examples of Nano medicine applied for preventive healthcare in *Ayurveda*. The efficacy and safety of *Suvarnaprashana* therapy entirely depends upon the quality of *Suvarna Bhasma*, *Ghrita* and honey. Hence, standardized *suvarna bhasma* along with superior quality herbs, ghee and honey should be used for the preparation of *Suvarnabindu*. In children up to 2 years brain development is continued and which is accelerated by *Suvarnaprashana Samsakar*. As per literature review and practical application of the concept *Suvarnaprashana* has a vast scope in achieving immunomodulatory, adaptogenic and nootropic effects in children, thus improving overall community health and vitality of children at all ages. In delayed milestones babies it is found that due to *Suvarnaprashana Samsakar* milestones have started to develop efficiently in terms of motor, social and adaptive milestone properly. In

Kashyap Samhita while describing the benefits of *Suvarna Lehan*, *Acharya Kashyap* opines that after feeding gold for one month the child is not attacked by the disease, and also eliminates evil effect of *Grahas*; this implicates that ingestion of *Swarna* modulates the immune system so that the morbidity is reduced. It needs to be popularized and promoted as a proactive and preventive therapy in society.

CONCLUSION:

Suvarnaprashana is described in various *Ayurvedic* texts but mostly elaborated by *Kashyapa* in *Lehanadhyaya*. *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. *Suvarnaprashana* can be helpful for physical growth and development in terms of weight, height and memory. It may be helpful in preventive aspect of decreasing illness i.e. *Suvarnaprashana* has immunomodulator and immune stimulant effect in children.

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