

ROLE OF RAKSHAKARMA IN MANAGEMENT OF AHIPUTNA (NAPKIN RASH)

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ABSTRACT

Diaper dermatitis or napkin rashes is a ubiquitous problem in the pediatric OPD. The condition is referred to as Ahiputana, Gudakuttaka, Mathrukadosha, Prishtaru and Anamaka in Ayurvedic classics. It is caused by improper care of infants and children requiring diapering and is also said to be caused by stanyadushti (vitiated breast milk). The disease is characterised by erythema, papules, pustules, ulcer, erosions, etc in the anal region. The condition has close resemblance with diaper dermatitis which encompasses irritant contact diaper dermatitis, candidal diaper dermatitis, perianal infectious dermatitis, etc and is comorbid with atisara-grahani rogas, putana graha, ksheeralasaka, charmadala, etc. The treatment involves avoidance of causes, stanyasodhana (purification of breast milk), applications like tarkshyasaila, decoctions for cleansing, powders for dusting, etc. as per the condition of the rash and doshas involved.

KEYWORDS: Rakshoghna karma, Ahiputana, Gudakuttaka.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is an ancient medical science which deals with the swasthya or normal health of human being as well as wide description regarding various diseases and their treatment. Ayurveda has described the unique principle of tridosha, dhatus, mala for the homeostasis of the body. Kaumarbhriya is the branch that deals with the mother and child relationship and their health, it also deals with kumarabharana, dhatri, kshirdosha, dushta stanya, ghahadosha and their treatment. Diaper rash arising due to dushta stanyapana, asuchita (unhygienic condition) such as kuparicharya of child in which mother fails to keep perianal region dry, clean timely after every mala, nutra visarjana. If mother fails to keep proper care of her child then they may suffer from many diseases and Ahiputana is one of them Diaper rash is one of the most common skin disorder in infant and children. According to Acharya vaghbhata due to Malopalepa (after defecation and urination) or due to swadatwa, kaphsdosha and raktadhatu get aggravated to procedure Tamravarni vrana at gudpradesh In modern medicine, it can be correlated with Diaper rash which is included in irritant contact dermatitis, diaper rash caused due to over hydration of skin, friction, prolonged contact with diaper, prolonged contact with urine and faces retained diaper. The skin of the diaper area many become erythematous and scaly, papulovesicular or bullous lesion, fissures and erosions. Antimicrobial, antifungal are used in the treatment of diaper rash mentioned in modern medicine. In Ayurveda treatment which is described for the management of Pittaj varna can be used for the management of Ahiputana.

Etymology of ahiputana and its synonyms

An understanding of the synonyms will throw light upon the nature of the disease and its finer details.

1. Ahiputana in Sanskrit means 'sores on the hinder part of the body'. Acharya Indu has related the disease ahiputana to 'putana-graha' (diarrhoeal disease associated with sepsis in infants).
2. Gudakuttaka means 'that which cuts the anal region.' (kuttana=cut).
3. Mathrukadosha means 'a defect which has maternal cause' or 'that which comes from the; (matruka = maternal or coming from or belonging to the mother; dosha= disorder or defect). This indicates that the disease is either due to improper care from the mother or due to vitiated breast milk which are said to cause the disease.
4. Prishtaru means arisor 'sore' in prishtaor 'back'.
5. Anamakameans^[9] 'anonymous', 'nameless' or 'infamous.' The term is also used to denote piles or haemorrhoids which is also called by the name 'durnama'(meaning 'notorious' or 'having a bad name')

Pathogenesis of ahiputana^[1,2]

Due to lack of proper cleansing of anal region after passage of stools and lack of bathing of a sweating child, smearing of urine, faeces and sweat over anal region occurs and utkleda³ (wetting or moistening) by sweda and mala occurs which cause rakta and kapha vitiation of the skin. Itching develops in the anal region from vitiation of rakta (vitiated blood) and kapha dosha. Due to vitiation of dosha, primarily kandu or pruritus of perianal skin occurs. Kanduyana or scratching results in

ulceration and quick eruption of sphota/pitaka (papules and pustules) along with srava (discharge). The eruptions lead to ulceration or wounds which blend or coalesce to form a horrible and dreadful large rash which is called ahiputana. It is also said to be ghora or severe with bhuri-upadrava (numerous complications).

Gayadasa has described it as being opposite to sanniruddha-guda (anal stricture) as it is described after sanniruddha-guda by Susruta in kshudraroga-nidana. (Sanniruddha-guda vipareeto ayam, vranai: saha ekibhavana gudasya ativivrutatwat).^[4] Due to coalescing of ulcers to form a large vrana and due to frequent stooling in diarrhoea, there is gaping of guda (anal opening) due to ulceration and inflammation and therefore ahiputana is considered as being opposite to sanniruddha-guda in which there is stricture of the anus.

Management of Ahiputana^[5,6]

1. Purification of breast milk

Stanyasodhana (purification of breast milk) is mentioned as the first step of treatment of ahiputana. Drugs pacifying pitta and kapha doshas are recommended for this purpose. Susruta has stated that the ahiputana in infant becomes curable or sadhya only when the breast milk is purified. A medicated ghee prepared from patolapatra, triphala and rasanjana for pana or intake which when drunk cures even the krichrasadhyaahiputana (ahiputana which is very difficult to be cured). Dalhana explains here that the ghee mentioned is for the sodhana (purification) of dhatri (breastfeeding mother). This ghee may also be used for application on vrana when it becomes suddha (free of doshas) after kshalana (washing).

Administration of stanya-sodhana drugs not only purifies breast milk but, by this, breast milk also acts as a vehicle for carrying drug to the breastfed child. Through this, purification of rasa (first dhatu derived from digestion of food) and stanya (upadhatu of rasa) occurs in dhatri and purification of rasa occurs in the infant which leads to a healthy skin.

2. Decoctions for intake

Vagbhata has mentioned a cooling drink prepared from boiled and cooled water for the mother to be taken frequently for pacification of pitta. This may also be given to a partially breast-fed child or weaned child for pitta pacification. Commentators Indu and Chandra have opined that, the drink is to be prepared with sitaseeta^[7] (swetachandana or sandalwood) which may be used for preparing panaka for cooling. Ashtanga Sangraha mentions the use of tarkshya antarapanaka for anamaka, sthoulya, pittasra, kandu, gandagalamaya, udaraatyunnati, etc.^[8]

The drug tarkshyasaila is mentioned in navanagana (drugs for nasal instillation) where it is mentioned as sushka (dry) rasanjana (daruharidra leha) by Indu.^[9] While describing tarkshyasaila in ahiputana treatment,

Indu has mentioned it as makshika rasanjana yoga^[9] (combination of swarnamakshika-pyrites and rasanjana-Berberis aristata). While sritaseeta antarapanaka cures pitta, makshika rasanjana yoga with honey cures the aggravated kapha, as per Indu. Makshika and rasanjana can be used internally and externally.^[10]

3. External applications

Various external applications like lepa, powders for dusting and decoctions for washing are mentioned which have to be chosen according to the condition of the ulcer. Washing with decoctions are preferred when there is srava (discharge) where dusting may be counterproductive. Dusting may be suitable in suddha-vrana which is devoid of doshas. The principles of vranachikitsa especially of pitta vrana is applicable in the management of ahiputana.

Application on the ulcer by Indu.

- Susruta has mentioned badaritwaklepa with saindhava and amla (kanchika etc.). The use Susruta has mentioned badaritwaklepa with saindhava and amla (kanchika etc.). The use
- Susruta has mentioned badaritwaklepa with saindhava and amla (kanchika etc.). The use of amla or acidic medium for application of drugs helps to regain the pH balance of the skin of the diaper area. Kshalana or washing with triphala badari plakshatwak kashaya or triphala alone may be done in severely oozing or kapha pitta predominant ulcers. This decoction is used for healing the ulcers (vranaropana).
- Kaseesa, gorochana, tutha, manohwa, haritala and rasanjana powdered and mixed with amlakanchika may be used for lepa or may be used as powder for dusting. This powder has strong antiseptic and antimicrobial properties. Dalhana explains that amlakanchika can be used for mixing kaseesa, etc for external application.
- Yashtimadhu and sankhachurna or asanatkachurna may be used for application and dusting.
- Kapalathuthaja churna for avachurnana (dusting) may also be done. Kapalachurna mixed with tuthachurna or copper sulphate powder may be incinerated and used for dusting. Dalhana explains that kapala is pakwamritbandakhandana or pieces of earthen vessels. It contains red ochre or gairika which is kaphapittasamana and vranaropana. Tutha or copper sulphate is antiseptic and antimicrobial.
- In severe redness and itching, raktasrava (bloodletting) is advised. Infant being tender, jalouka avacharana (leech therapy) is advised. Jalouka does not cause pain or complications related to raktasrava in infants. This reiterates the involvement of raktadushti in infant causing ahiputana.
- All pittavranahara treatments can also be judiciously applied for treating ahiputana in infants. Panchavalkala taila, jatyadi ghrita or kera, kaseesadi taila, durvadi ghrita, sathadhouta ghrita, murivenna,

panchavalkalakashaya, triphala kashaya, etc can be applied considering dosha and avastha of the vrana. Pradeha, parisheka, sarpipana, virechana etc are mentioned by Charaka in pittavrana chikitsa.

- All pathyas of a vrana patient should be followed by the mother and infant. Light food like manda, peya, vilepi, simbidhanya, saka, ghrita, etc is pathya.^[11]

DISCUSSION

Clinical Significance of Rakshoghna karma

- This was another age-old tradition where it was ensured that the baby gets the best environment in his room. For this, the baby's room has to be fumigated with Ayurvedic resins and leaves to counter negative energies and infuse positivity in the room. Rakshakarma, aim to protect the new born baby from various infections as in use of clean clothes, beddings etc. The various drugs mentioned in dhupana karma have antiseptic and antimicrobial properties; fumigation of the sutikagara by various dhupana drugs is mentioned to protect the baby from various opportunistic infections/diseases. Medicinal Fumigation is part of ayurvedic baby care practices suggested in Ayurveda to cleanse Air and Space that surround the infant and the mother. Certain herbs are better suited to the medium of smoke, so we are able to absorb their properties better while doing Medicinal Fumigation. Brahmi, heeng, gugulu and jatamansi can be used to fumigate a baby's room and clothes. This also helps by neutralising the germs in the air.
- Although, since then a rapid progression in Neonatology owing to technological advances in biological sciences have taken place yet the Ayurvedic acharyas have to be credited for keeping in place a very rational newborn care regimen.
- It is evident that with respect to rakshakarma, Ayurvedic acharyas have advocated measures which aim to protect the newborn baby from various infections as in use of clean clothes; beddings etc. The fumigation of the sutikagara (sanatorium/labour room) by various drugs is mentioned to protect the baby from various opportunistic infections/diseases. The various drugs mentioned in dhupana karma have antiseptic and antimicrobial properties which have been proved so experimentally in various studies in recent times.

CONCLUSION

Ahiputana is comparable with Diaper Dermatitis which is caused by improper diapering practices, superinfections, and improper skin care of the infants. Understanding the causes, pathogenesis, management and differential diagnoses of ahiputana vis-à-vis diaper dermatitis definitely will help the Kaumarabhrityakas to put into practice the different treatment options like rakshakarma, dhupana available for ahiputana in various forms of diaper dermatitis.

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