

Review Article

Immunity in children- Ayurvedic point of view

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ABSTRACT:

Innate immunity is natural immunity present at the time of birth, with the time immune system develops gradually but due to the developing stage children are more prone to diseases occurrence than adult therefore it is essential to take specific care during childhood age. Bala is the strength of the body which imparts natural healing process and fastens recovery from disease.

Key words: Ayurveda, Bala, Innate immunity

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INTRODUCTION

Kaumarbhritya is a branch of Ayurveda which deals with the antenatal, postnatal care, various diseases of infants, their treatment and healthy upbringing of children. Balyavastha (Childhood) is a very crucial period of the development as it is the phase of physical, mental and emotional development of the child.¹ It is the period of the growth spurts and thus named it as Vivardhamana Dhatu Awastha. Development of immune system is a continuous process which starts from Balyavastha only. With increasing pollution, improper lifestyle, Viruddh Ahara, unhygienic conditions; rate of occurrence of infectious diseases is also increasing. Children being the vulnerable group; are easily exposed to various pathogens and thus get affected badly.² This exposure to diseases in the early age; can affect the whole life and sometimes result in the chronic disorders. Thus, development of a strong immune system is the need of the hour as we are seeing in the corona pandemic phase also. All the medical associations, governments are suggesting to makes the immune system strong so that the person can be protected from viral infection.³ Innate immunity is natural immunity present at the time of birth, with the time immune system develops gradually but due to the developing stage children are more prone to diseases occurrence than adult therefore

it is essential to take specific care during childhood age. The inherent immunity or artificial process of immunization can help in this regards therefore it is required to be aware about the process of immunization.⁴

AYURVEDA & VYADHIKSHAMATWA

Vyadhikshamatwa means immunity determined by the Kapha in children, immunity also depend on the process of digestion & metabolism.⁵ The metabolic and digestive process associated with Agni and Jatharagni, it is believed that good state of Agni and Jatharagni helps in the formation of nutrients which contributed towards the quality of Dhatus, Mamsa, Rakta, Rasa, Shukra and Majja, etc. The good quality of these all biological elements resembles balanced state of Vyadhikshamatwa. This type of immunity helps to balances Tridoshas constitution, provides immunity & strength thus resist disease pathogenesis. Oja and Bala another terminology associated with disease resistance.⁶ Oja is considered as initial defense mechanism of body resides in Hridaya and circulated throughout. It balances Dhatus and Doshas thus maintain normal health status. Bala is considered strength of body which provides ability to heal naturally. It provides physical as well as mental strength and contributed towards the healthy status of

children. Therefore, it can be stated that good state of Oja and Bala required restoring normal health.⁷

Bala is the strength of the body which imparts natural healing process and fastens recovery from disease. There exist a close relation between Bala and Oja. It is of three types.

SAHAJA BALA (INNATE)

It is the constitutional Bala which is present since birth. It depends on the quality of Shukra (sperm) and Artava (ovum) received from the parents. Hence, it deals with the congenital abnormalities also. Different physical, chemical and biological barriers provide the innate immunity.⁸

KALAJA BALA

It is the dynamic Bala which changes with seasons, time and age of the person. It is attained at different stages of life. It is based on working of body's own immune system. In Adana Kala (spring, summer, evening), Balyavastha and in old age, Bala decreases but in Visarga Kala (winter and rainy season) and in young age it increases. With the increase in age, immunity also increases. In the young age Bala is maximum.

YUKTIKRITA

It is the Bala which is acquired during lifetime. It is obtained through Aahara, Yoga, physical activities and through various Ausadhi.⁹

METHODS TO IMPROVE IMMUNITY/ IMMUNIZATION

Ayurveda described associated factors of disease in children such as; Sharir, Nij, Kalaj, Sankramaka, Vishaj and Pragma apradha, etc. Ayurveda mentioned that immunization and utilization of prophylaxis principles such as; Nidan parivarjan, Virrudha ahar, Ritucharya, Dincharya, Shodhan kriya and Rasyana therapy, etc. can help to remain away from diseases. Ayurveda essentially described concept of Suvarnprashana which can be considered as immunization technique of Ayurveda.¹⁰ The procedure of Suvarnprashana involves rubbing of metallic Gold on clean stone with water and it is mixed with herbs (Medhya Rasayana), Ghrita and honey then administered to the newborn through oral route. Suvarnprashana improves intellect, metabolism, digestion, physical strength, immunity and enhances complexion, etc. Prevents common infections, improves attention, learning ability, reduces psychosomatic problems and promotes overall development of body.¹¹ As per Acharya Kashyapa licking of gold can increase Agni, Bala and Medha. It is advised that Suvarnprashana should be done for new born in Pushya Nakshatra to acquire all benefits of classical vaccine. Similarly, Ayurveda also mentioned concept of Panchagavya prashan which possess ritual fundamental, can be practiced during July and August. It utilizes attenuation of microbes

through cow urine and other materials, copper vessel used in technique served for isolation attenuation.¹²

Rasayana therapy is one of the major specialties of Ayurveda which plays important role in immunomodulation. They act at various levels such as, at the Agni level (stimulates digestive system) at the Poshaka Rasa level (increases availability of nutrients) and at the Sortas level (stimulates absorption of nutrients from the food). At the time of administration of Rasayanas, one should keep focus on the age, Kala, Roga, Dhatu and Prakruti. This therapy helps in stimulation of Oja and Bala thus ultimately increases immunity. Some Rasayanas possess immunomodulatory activity i.e. Pippali, Yashtimadhu, Brahmi, Guduchi, Ashwagandha, Amalkii and Tulsi etc. Combination of certain Rasayana drugs like Guduchi, Tulsi, Amalki and Ahwagandha stimulates Vyadhibalavirodhitvam (cellular) as well as Vyadhiutpadaka pratibandhaka (humoral immunity).¹³

Ayurveda has paid special attention towards child immunity thus a special formulation named as Lehana was made for the Ksheerapa (infant), Ksheerannada (2 years old) and Annada-awastha (till 16 years of age). They have semisolid consistency and are mixed along with honey. During the Ksheerannada stage, development of brain occurs at very fast rate so Medhya Rasayana is used to strengthen the central nervous system of the child. This therapy helps in promoting health and strength of the child. It enhances the growth and development as it helps in absorption of nutrition and also provides protection from various diseases. Similarly, Swarnaprashan, Swarna (gold) is used as a Bhasma alongwith Ghrit (ghee) and honey. Combination of Ghrit and honey becomes poison and when introduced in very small quantity for longer duration can trigger the immune response of the child.¹⁴

AYURVEDA APPROACHES OF IMMUNIZATION

Ghee with Musta & Vidanga can be advised for child age one month. Vyosha & Sariva Siddha Ghrita can be advised for child age three month. Musali Kandaja Raja & Vyosha powder along with honey can be advised for child age six month.

After one year Dhātri & Musta in sugar along with warm water for children 1.3 years of age. Dhātri & Musta with Jeeraka and Pippali powder along with honey for children 1.6 years of age. Dhātri & Musta with Vidanga & Pippali along with honey for children 1.9 years of age. Dhātri & Musta with sugar & Jeeraka along with cow milk for children 02 years of age.¹⁵

After two years (from 3rd year of age) Vidanga, Vacha, Ela, Shunthi, Pippali & Musta for children 3.3 years of age. Punarnava, Vacha, Tvacha & Bhūnimba for children 3.6 years of age. Brahmi, Vacha, Kutaja, Musta & Pippali for children 3.9 years of age. Musta, Vidanga, Chitraka, Ajagandha, Trikaṣṭu, Vacha &

Abhaya for children 04 years of age. After completion of four year of age from 5th year same drug can be used as mentioned above, however it is advised to substitute Vacha with Pushkaramula.¹⁶

CONCLUSION

Children are very susceptible towards the diseases due to the low state of immunity. Ayurveda advised specific Ahara, herbs and Rasayanas to stimulate immune system in growing age. Garbhini Ahara during Garbhawastha also play vital role towards the quality of immune system of the baby. Mother should take care of herself during pregnancy and after pregnancy.

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