

ROLE OF *LEHANA KARMA* AS IMMUNOMODULATOR IN CHILDREN- A NARRATIVE REVIEW

Dr. Nilsagar Pagare*

Assistant Professor, Kaumarbhritya Department, K.V.T.R. Ayurved College, Boradi, Tah. Shirpur, Dist. Dhule.

Article Received date: 10 June 2025

Article Revised date: 30 June 2025

Article Accepted date: 21 July 2025



*Corresponding Author: Dr. Nilsagar Pagare

Assistant Professor, Kaumarbhritya Department, K.V.T.R. Ayurved College, Boradi, Tah. Shirpur, Dist. Dhule.

ABSTRACT

In present scenario children are exposed to several environmental threats like viruses and bacteria. Children are more vulnerable to infection because of underdeveloped immune system. Despite of high advances in immunization, the medical science is yet to reach a full proof mechanism against the virulent organisms. Better healthy life can be achieved by developing the body's ability to adapt to new threats of environment and infirmity of the current era. This tolerance of one's body is relying on immune status (*Vyadhikshamatva*) of an individual. In *Ayurved* text, immunity has been explained by *acharya* in term of *Vyadhikshamatva*. According to *Ayurveda Ojas* is considered as *Bala* or *Prakrita Kapha* attributed to immunity. An immunomodulator can be defined as a substance, which can influence any constituent or function of the immune system in a specific or nonspecific manner including both innate and adaptive arms of the immune response. The *Ayurvedic* system of medicine details the concept of immunomodulation by the term *Lehana*. The term *Lehana* means an act of licking or lapping up with the tongue. *Kashyapa* describes special formulation *lehana* to enhance growth and development of children along with provides immunity against infections.

KEYWORDS: *Lehana*, *Vyadhikshamatva*, *Oja*, *Rasayana*.

INTRODUCTION

Modern day researches have implicated the malfunctioning of immune system in various human diseases including not just those caused by the microbes but also non-microbial diseases as cancer, allergies and auto-immune disorders. This has posed as an immense challenge to medical fraternity for not only the immune system plays an important role towards establishing an infection-free state, it can also be stimulated and suppressed by various physical, chemical, and biological agents as it has already been proved by advanced researches. *Ayurveda* explore the concept of immunity in this ancient science of life which offers a holistic approach and a potential promise regarding immunotherapy. The main purpose and objectives of *Ayurveda* is the preservation of health in healthy individual and eradication of diseases which are curable. In *Ayurveda*, the essence of all *Dhatus* is called *Ojas* and it is the seat for strength, hence called *bala*^[1] and it is responsible for the defence of human body against diseases (*vyadhikshamatva*). According to *Charaka*, (during embryogenesis) the *oja* appeared foremost in the human body.^[2] In modern medical science, vaccination

is done to produce immunity against a disease. *Acharya sushruta*, *Vagbhata* and *Kashyapa* described *Lehana* for this purpose which ultimately enhances immunity. *Lehana karma* and *Rasayana* to enhance growth and development by providing sufficient nutrition and promoting health with improving intellect and speech. *Rasayana* are rejuvenating agent which produce resistance against disease.

Infancy and childhood is very delicate and formative period of life. It is the important period of life because foundation of adult life depends on it. childhood is the period of growth spurts, which is considered to be until 16 years of age, as per *Ayurvedic* classics. *Acharya Charaka* mentions a period "Vivardhamana Dhatu Avastha" from 16 to 30 years of age in which growth and development is observed. According to him, this period comes under *Balyavastha* (childhood).^[3]

DISCUSSION

Vyadhikshamatva is the strength to protect the body against diseases. The concept of *Vyadhikshamatva* is related with *Kapha*, *Bala*, *Agni* and *Oja*. *Ayurvedic*

Rasayana therapy in light of the concept of modern immunology, particularly the immunomodulation is quite rewarding. Rasayana act at three levels such as at the level of Poshaka Rasa (increase nutrition), at the level of Agni (increase digestion and assimilation of food) and at the level of Srotas (increase absorption of food from serum to various part of the body). Many research works on various drugs, having immunomodulatory, antibacterial, antioxidant, macrophage activation property are effective in enhancing immunity and prevent the diseases. Like Rasayana therapy Lehana drugs are known to enhance growth and development by providing sufficient nutrition, promote health, complexion and strength (immunity) and protect from various infections along with improving intellect and speech.

Lehana^[4]- Lehana is a special paediatric preparation made up of medicated ghee and honey as main ingredients. Kashyapa Samhita, classical text on Ayurveda paediatrics defines different medicated Ghee or Ghrita for Lehana purpose. Though different Ghee is in use for different purpose, most of them focus on growth, development and immunity of child.

Lehana literally means giving something to lick. In Ayurvedic text, various Acharyas have described countless useful formulations and mode of conduct for children. Acharya Kashyapa describe a special formulation by name of Lehana.^[5] The concept of Lehana which depicts the administration of various herbal drugs, ghrit preparation and gold as supplementary feeds, which enhances immunity and also fulfil the nutritional requirement thus minimizes infection episodes. Acharya Kashyapa has given special emphasis on Lehana karma and a separate chapter called Lehadhyaya. In this chapter so many single drugs and also compound drugs has been given for Lehana karma.^[6]

Bramhi, Mandukparni, Triphala, Chitraka, Vacha, Satapuspa, Satavari, Danti, Nagbala, Nishoth are used separately mixed with Madhu and Ghrita for purpose of enhancing Medha (Intellect).

Manjistha, Triphala, Bramhi, Bala, Atibala, Chitraka should be used in the form of powder in an equal quantity mixed with Madhu and Ghrita for increasing intellect, longevity and strength.

Ghrita made with Kustha, Sarshapa, Pippali, Triphala, Vacha, and Saindhava is effective for renovating the intelligence.

Abhaya Ghrita benefits of Abhaya Ghrita are seen in Pishacha, Rakshasa, Yaksha, Matraka.

Samvardhan Ghrita. By the use of this Ghrita regularly the child grows rapidly and remains free from diseases.

Crawls and walks early. Lamb, dumb, deaf, idiot child shows marked improvement.

Various Lehana formulations mentioned by acharyas

1. **Acharya Charaka** - *Panchgavya ghrit*^[7] (Ghrita means clarified butter made from cow's milk), *Brahmi ghrita*^[8] etc.

2. **Acharya Sushruta** - has described 4 recipes (containing gold) which provide general immunity, body resistance, helpful in enhancing the growth & development and enhancing the intellectual power. These are: 1) *Svaranbhasm* with *Kustha* (Saussurealappa), *Vacha* (Acorus calamus), *Madhu* (honey) & *Ghrita*. 2) *Svaranbhasm* with paste of *Brahmi* (Bacopa monnieri) *Sankhpuspi* (Convolvulus pluricaulis), with, honey & ghrita. 3) *Svaranbhasm*, *Arkpushpi*, *Vacha*, honey & ghrita. 4) *Svaranbhasm*, *Khaidarya*, *SwetaDurva*, ghrita.^[9]

3. **Acharya Vagbhata** - *Sarshvata ghrita*^[10], combination of *Vacha* and *Suvarna Bhasma* with honey and ghrita, etc.

4. **Acharya Kashyapa** - *Suvarna Prashana* - Pure gold (in small quantity) is rubbed in water on a clean stone & given with honey and ghrita, to the new-born result in promote health, growth, complexion & strength (immunity), *Panchgavyaghrita*, *Brahmighrita*, *Abhayaghrita*, *Samvardhana ghrita*^[11] Effective in children with delayed milestones.

Indication of Lehana

Children receiving inadequate amount of breast milk due to pregnancy of mother, children having increased demand of food, children passing less amount of urine and stool, children: very lean & thin without any organic problems (Kashyapa Samhita Sutrasthana, Lehaadhyaya, p.4).

Contraindications of Lehana

Children having improper digestion, lethargic, passing excessive amounts of urine & stool, suffering from various disorders like eye, ENT disorders (shiroroga), fever, diarrhea, edema, jaundice, anemia, cardiac problems, rectal disorder, excessive vomiting & nausea, abdominal discomforts, amaroga (disorders due to toxic residue that is left behind as a by-product of poor digestion) (Kashyapa Samhita Sutrasthana, Lehaadhyaya, p.4).

BENEFITS OF LEHANA KARMA

1. The like ables are usually in the Leha form. Usually the Lehas are palatable and easy for consumption. The smaller kids will always have difficulties and are reluctant in taking the medicine in the tablet, Churna, or Kwatha form. Incomparable to this Lehana form with added Madura drugs easy to administer.
2. Further the Lehana may be routine procedure or the method by which the body supplements are introduced. As we know that growing child requires the extra caloric food as they are busy with playing

and other activities throughout. In the meantime the rate of growth and development is very faster in the first few years of life. To meet the demands of the body in toddler and myelination of nervous system there is need of some extra amount of the fats, amino acids and the carbohydrates which is supplied by Lehana Dravya (in the form of Ghrita, Honey, etc.)

3. In other sense Lehana will have the long standing effect. One should not expect the short term effects in Lehana. It is recommended for the daily usage. It should be given daily as micro and the macronutrients are daily utilized by the body. It will have its own effects in physical and neurological development of the child in future. Classics also explain if it is used for one month, two months or six months the better effects will be seen.
4. The Medhaya Rasayans are explained with special reference in Lehana, may be considering the fact that growth of the brain and the nervous system is very rapid in the first few years of the life which slows down afterwards as evidences by the Head circumference. So idea may be to produce the rich quality neurons in the initial period, so that child will become extra brilliant in future.
5. As we know that nutritious disorders are quite common in the child hood period due to many reasons like poorly fond of particular food, lack of the breast milk, vitiated breast milk etc. There may be vitamin, micro and macro elemental deficiencies which can be corrected by the daily usage of the Lehana.
6. Some of the indications and the contraindication of the Lehana suggest that it could be used as a substitute for the mother's milk or the Dhatri's milk in conditions like lack of breast milk or vitiated breast milk.
7. Some of the indications in certain disease conditions suggest that Lehana may be supplementary food along with main stay of treatment.
8. Most of the drugs which are mentioned in the context of the Lehana are also the Rasayana drugs. The Rasayana drugs increase all the Dhatus and maintain the somatic growth of body.
9. We don't find any references to compare Lehana with vaccination, but continuous Lehana may yield vaccination like effect by boosting the immune system and keeping it alert all the time.
10. It is told that the Lehana is responsible for the happiness and sorrow in the future of the baby. By keeping this verse in mind we can say Lehana is essential in once life time as Kashyapa devoted a chapter for this topic.

CONCLUSION

Children are more vulnerable to infection because their immune system is less or under developed. During this period our attempt should be specified to prevention of diseases and to enhance physical, mental and social well-being of children. Ayurveda provides concept of Lehana

and Rasayana which can help in prevention of recurrent infections and also provides nutritional supplements which are necessary for proper physical and mental growth of a child. If the Rasayana and Lehana drugs used in appropriate dose with suitable vehicle (Anupan/Sahapan) there is no adverse effect reported till now. If the Rasayana and Lehana concept could be jointly run with National Nutritional Programme and other national programmes for the children. By all means we can get better result by means of their better growth, development and eradication of infective diseases.

REFERENCES

1. Sushruta, Sushrutasamhita of Sushruta with Ayurveda Tattva Sandipika Hindi Commentary of Kaviraj Ambikadutta Shastri. Vol. I. Varanasi, India: Chaukhamba Subharati Prakashan, 2010; 60.
2. Charaka, Charakasamhita of Agnivesha with Vidyotini Hindi Commentary by Kashinath Shastri, Gorakhanatha Chaturvedi. Part I. Varanasi, India: Chaukhamba Subharati Prakashan, 2000; 351.
3. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 2009. Chakrapanidatta, Commentator. Charaka Samhita, Vimana Sthana, Rogabhishajitiya Adhyaya, 8/122, reprinted, 280.
4. Kashyapa, Kashyapa Samhita, Sutrasthana, Lehana adhyaya Adhyaya, Chaukhambha Surabharai Prakashana, Varanasi, Reprint 2009; 7.
5. Devendranath Mishra. Kaumarabhritya Abhinav Balaswatha Chikitsa Vigyan. 1st ed. Varanasi: Caukhambha Surbharti Prakashan, 2010; 144.
6. Kashyap Samhita by Vrddha Jivaka revised by Vatsya; Sanskrit introduction by Nepal Rajguru Pandit Hemaraja Sharma; Vidyotini Hindi commentary Chaukhambha Sanskrit sansthan Varanasi; Edition reprint 2012; Sutrasthana Lehadhyaya, 5.
7. Agnivesha, Charaka Samhita, Ed, Yadavaji Trikamji Achar ya, Chowkhambha Sanskrit Samsthan, Varanasi, 2004; Chikitisasthana chapter 10, versa no.17.
8. Agnivesha, Charaka Samhita, Ed, Yadavaji Trikamji Achar ya, Chowkhambha Sanskrit Samsthan, Varanasi, 2004; Chikitisasthana chapter 10, versa no. 23.
9. Brahmanand Tripathi. AstangaHridayam (Nirmala Hindi Commentary). New Delhi: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan; 2009. Uttaratantra chapter 1, versa no.45.
10. Brahmanand Tripathi. AstangaHridayam (Nirmala Hindi Commentary). New Delhi: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan; 2009. Uttaratantra chapter 1, versa no.47.
11. Vrddhajivaka, kashyap Samhita, sutrasthan, lehanadhya edited by pandit Hemraj Sharma published by Choukhamba Sanskrit Prakashan, Banaras, 2010; 4.