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Review Article: Scope of Ayurveda in Antenatal Care WSR Garbhini Paricharya

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ABSTRACT

The aim of reproductive and child health program of government of India is to get a healthy child from a healthy mother. The woman is considered as one of the most essential factors for the continuity of the human race.

Garbhini paricharya (Antenatal Care) means all round care of the pregnant women. According to modern science, antenatal care is a systemic supervision of the pregnant women. It should be started from confirmation of pregnancy to the delivery.

During Garbhavastha (pregnancy), she experiences lots of anatomical as well as physiological changes at the level of Dosha (body humors), Dhatu (Body tissues) and Mala (body waste products). During pregnancy women experiences features like edema, pallor, heartburn, vomiting, constipation, weakness, increase in weight and abdominal fundal height, etc such changes though physiological may turn in to pathology, so prevention of these must so she has to take a range of medicine.

These changes are nothing but maternal adaptation to the increasing demand of the growing foetus. The Growth and development of foetus requires more nutrition from mother. This causes increased workload on the maternal Dhatus (Body tissues), so she needs extra nutrition during Garbhavastha (Pregnancy).

Now a days due to change in life style i.e. sedentary and increased stress, strain due to this has increased incidence of pregnancy complications, abnormal labor that leads to surgical incidence in conducting delivery.

Aim of Garbhini paricharya (Antenatal care) is to develop all the Dhatus (Body tissues) of the pregnant women and foetus and decreases adverse outcome of pregnancy. Ancient Indian physicians were very much aware of this fact and various diet recipes and regimens have elaborately mentioned in our Samhitas (Ayurvedic Texts) under the heading of Garbhini paricharya (Antenatal care). According to all acharyas the commonly used drugs in garbhini paricharya (Antenatal care) are brumhana (nourishing), Madhura (sweet), Snigdha (unctuous) these drugs help in achieving the good health, energy, strength, complexion of the child.

Ayurveda has suggested a very good protocol Masanumasika Garbhini Paricharya (month wise antenatal care) i.e. Ahara (diet), Vihara (lifestyle), Vichara (psychological aspect) to be followed during pregnancy with respect to each month. This article describes an Ayurveda perspective of Ahara- Vihara (Diet and Regimen) W.S.R to Masanumasika Garbini Paricharya (month wise antenatal care).

Keywords: Garbhini, Antenatal care, Garbhini Paricharya, Aahara, Vihara, Vata, apitta, Kapha (three humors or Bio active principles)
INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a science of life and one fundamental principle of Ayurveda on promotion of health is “Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam Athurasya vikara Prasamanam”.¹

To maintain Swasthya (health) of pregnant woman, Garbhini Paricharya (anti-natal care) is most important. Antenatal care is a systemic supervision of the pregnant women.² Fetus is dependent on mother for its nourishment and oxygen. The care of the pregnant woman reflects on the quality and health of the offspring. Health of the pregnant women is maintained through proper Garbhini Paricharya (antenatal care) right from first day of pregnancy till delivery.³

The care of pregnancy mainly involves:
1. Month wise dietary regimen (Masanumastika Pathya)
2. Consideration of activities and substances which may cause harm to the fetus (Garbhopaghathakara bhavas)
3. Consideration of medicinal substances which are beneficial during pregnancy (Garbhashapaka Dravyas)

GARBHINI PARICHARYA (Ante natal care)

Pregnancy is one of the milestones of woman’s life. It is a delicate state in which mild derangement can cause life-threatening situation for both mother and baby. Hence, extreme care is necessary during pregnancy.

The word pari means all around i.e.; before, during and after conception

Charya – in medical science charya refers to service of nursing

Broadly, this can be classified under - GARBHINI AAHARA VIHARA (Diet and Regimen for pregnant woman)

The women from very first day of pregnancy should remain in high spirit, wear clean white garments and perform religious rites, do auspicious deeds. She should use palatable liquid, sweet substance treated with appetizing things. This mode of life should be continued till the delivery.⁴

Pregnant women should use desired congenial diet and proper mode of life avoiding factors likely to harm the foetus. Pregnant women are fit for the use of Brumhana therapy (Nourishing therapy).⁵

Pregnant woman is advised external and internal use of the Jeevaniya...
(Nutritive) group of drugs. She should always use navaneeta (butter), Ksheera (milk), Ghrita (ghee). She should use hot water, milk and meat. Milk provides nourishment and stability to the foetus. Meat helps in achievement of pregnancy and provides nourishment to foetus, suppresses the Vata in pregnant women.

Yoga Ramakarag gives a list of dravyas (materials) that can be used by garbhini (pregnant woman),

Those are-

- **SastikaShali Rice** (red rice): Due to its Madhura (sweet), Snigdha (unctuous), Sheeta (cold) properties, it helps in nourishment of foetus and also helps in body metabolism.

- **Mudga** (moong dal) and Wheat: Acts due to its Madhura (sweet), Sheeta (cold), Sandhana (binding) and Jeevana (nutritive) properties.

- **Saktu** (Flour of parched rice) – Acts as shaman (palliative) in thirst, vomiting, and diarrhoea and also as appetizer.

- **Navaneetha** (butter), Gritha (Ghee) and Ksheera (Milk) – it provides nourishment and stability to the foetus.

- **Amalaki** (Indian Gooseberry): Mild laxative & provides immunity.

- **Draksha** (Vitis Vinifera): Vrishya (aphrodisiac), Vatasamana (subsides vata), Madhura (sweet), Snigdha (unctuous) guna.

- **Ksheera** (Milk): A good wholesome diet, Improves nourishment and gives stability to the fetus.

Different Acharyas have prescribed more or less similar dietetics for Garbhini (pregnant woman). Milk & madhura (sweet) group drugs for entire pregnancy.

*Bhavaprakasha text* follows the principles of Susruta Samhita.

**IMPORTANCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECT IN ANTENATAL CARE**

Mother’s psychology is supposed to affect the psychic development of foetus. Born child possess the similar characters in the thoughts of woman during fertilization. Acharya Sushruta says that whatever diet, behavior and conduct the couple follow, child born will also possess similar characters. This implies that Parental Psychology, particularly mother’s, affect the psychological development of the foetus during fertilization. Since baby shares endorphins, which are chemicals that produce an
enormous sense of well-being, child can sense and share emotional sensations. So, it is important to be happy, peaceful.

**SPECIAL WATER FOR PREGNANT WOMEN’S BATH—**

Cold decoction prepared by pulp of *bilva* (Aegle marmelos), *karpasa* (Gossypium herbacium), *agnimantha* (Premna serratifolia), *jatamansi* (Nardostachy Jatamansi), *eranda* (Ricinus Cuminis). Cold decoction of leaves of drugs capable of suppressing the *vata* is used for bath by the pregnant women.

**AMULETS FOR PREGNANT WOMEN—**

Wear the amulets made of *trivrt* (Operculina turpethum) in her waist.

**MONTH WISE AHARA VIHARA (DIET AND REGIMEN) AS PER AYURVEDA DURING PREGNANCY**

**For 1st month:** Milk processed in *Shaliparana* (Desmodium gangeticum) and *Palasha* (Butea monosperma) twice a day. *Ghee*, sweet, cool liquid and light food stuffs.

**For 2nd month:** Medicated sweetened milk and cold liquid diet.

**For 3rd month:** Milk processed with *Madhu* (honey) and *Ghriha* (ghee), *Shastishali* (Red rice), sweet, cold and liquid diet.

**For 4th month:** Milk and butter, curd rice specially *Shastishali* (Red rice) and meat.

**For 5th month:** *Ghee*, rice with milk, *Khichadi* (Salty Porridge) and *Payasa* (sweet pudding).

**For 6th month:** Medicated *ghee*, *Khichadi* (Salty Porridge) and sweetened curd.

**For 7th month:** *Ghrita* (Ghee) medicated with *Vidarikandadi* (Pueraria tuberosa) drugs for proper development of fetus.

**For 8th month:** *Yavagu* (Gruel) prepared in milk with *ghee*, *Asthapanabasti* (cleansing enema) with *Bala* (Cidacardifolia), *Atibala* (Abutilon indicon) and *Anuvazana Basti* (Nourishing Enema) with use of *Madhura Dravas* (Sweet substances).

**For 9th month:** *Yoni Pichu* (Vaginal suppository), *Anuvazana Basti* (Nourishing enema) and *Vataghana Drava Yukta Snana* (Bath with water which is medicated with vata alleviating substances); these all help for normal delivery.

Ayurveda suggests use of nutrients and herbal medicines for nourishment and wellbeing of mother and fetus. Ayurveda
prescribes balanced and nutritional diet during pregnancy period. The Ahara (diet) for pregnant women must be Hridya (good for heart), Dravam (liquid), Madhuraprayam (mainly sweet), Snigdham (unctuous), Deepaniyam (that induces digestive power), and Samskritam (medicated). This type of balance diet during pregnancy boosts maternal health, fulfill needs of the growing fetus, improve lactation and offer normal delivery.\textsuperscript{16} 

\begin{itemize}
  \item भोजन की विशेषताओं की दोहरावररसि
  \item जीवनीय बलिक की}
\end{itemize}

All these Jeevaniya (Nutritive), Bhruhaniya (nourishing), Madhura (sweet), Vatahara (that subsides vata) drugs medicated with milk and ghee is having Garbha vridhikara (foetal nourishing) properties.\textsuperscript{17}

Pregnant woman from first day of pregnancy should use palatable, liquid, sweet & unctuous substances treated with appetizing things. It should be continued till delivery. What so-ever eatables or drinkables are consumed by the pregnant woman same become congenial to the foetus. Advised to take milk, it provides nourishment and stability to foetus.

According to different acharyas (Authors), Balya (Strengthening), Brumhaniya (nourishing), Jeevaniya (Nutritive), Garbha sthapaka (foetal protective), Prajasthapaka (Fertility), Medhya (brain boosting), Sapta dhatu vardhaka (nourishing all 7 body tissues) drug are used for proper nourishment of mother and foetus, proper development of foetus, to avoid complications of pregnancy and helps for sukha prasava (Normal labour).\textsuperscript{18}

Aims and objective-
The main aim of Ayurveda towards the care of pregnant women revolves around three main objectives:\textsuperscript{18}
1. Paripurnatva (proper growth of the fetus and mother)
2. Anupaghata (non-complicated pregnancy)
3. Sukhaprasava (normal delivery)

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Literature: Brihatrayee, all available Ayurvedic classics, Modern available texts, Magazines, Journals & Research papers.

DISCUSSION

Health of child is influenced by its proper growth and development during intra uterine life. We can say that growth of a child depends upon the health of mother.

The upachita rasa dhatu (Lightly nutritive chyle), circulating in the body of
the pregnant women simultaneously performs three functions such as

1. Shareerapushti (physical strength) of the mother.

2. The constant supply of rasadhatu (essence of food) to the garbha (foetus) thus maintains the proper growth of Garbha (foetus) inside the mother’s womb. Meanwhile rasadhatu (essence of food) from the maternal body is transferred to the garbha (foetus) through the nabhi nadi (umbilical cord).

3. Formation of Stanya (breast milk). The pregnant woman desirous of producing healthy child should give up non-congenial diet & mode of life.19

First trimester

Embryogenesis is an important moment during first trimester. Kshira (milk) and Ghrita (ghee) during first trimester provide energy for developing fetus. Medicated milk with Madhura rasa acts as rich source of energy. The classical text has explained Madhura Rasa Ahara (sweet taste foods) with milk which helps to increase liquid content and maintains hydration. Madhura Rasa Ahara (sweet taste foods) also possesses high nutritional value thus helps to maintain nutrient balance in body during pregnancy. Vata is responsible for cell division during embryogenesis. During first trimester Vata Dosha is alleviated in pregnant woman. In dietary regimen Ghrita (ghee), milk, Madhura Drayas (sweet substances) and Siddha Ghrita (medicated ghee) are suggested which offers Vata shamaka (subsides vata) properties. Milk provides nourishment, increases energy level and enhances bone formation. During this period uses of medicine need to be avoided.

Second trimester

According to Ayurveda body requires more protein during second trimester. Milk and milk products are rich source of protein and calcium hence Dugdha (milk) & Ghrita (ghee) should be given to the pregnant women. Shaali Shashtik (Red rice) is advised in Garbhini Paricharya (Anti natal care) as sources of carbohydrates to supply energy. During second trimester pedal edema is observed. So Gokshura Siddha Ghrita (ghee medicated with Tribulus terrestris) is also advised. According to Ayurveda Gokshuar (Tribulus terrestris) has qualities of Mutravirechak (Diuretics), Shothahara (Anti-inflammatory) and antibacterial thus it helps to reduces pregnancy induce edema and also other complications of water accumulation in pregnant women.
**Third trimester**

During third trimester Garbhini (Pregnant woman) is advised to take medicated Ghrita (ghee) with Puthaparnyadi (Alstonia scholaris) group. This group contains drugs which act as diuretic & anti-inflammatory agents. Steroid is important for maturity of foetal lungs, Brihati (Solanum Nigrum) has steroidal constituent, thus given in seventh month to help lung maturation. Khira (milk), Yavagu (gruel) and Ghrita (ghee) are advised in 8th month to nourish body, they provide strength and help to pacify Vata Dosha due to their Snigdha Guna (unctuous). At 9th month Mamsrasa (meat) of wild animal is advised. Mamsrasa (meat) is rich source of proteins, vitamins, iron, minerals and fat, thus helps in formation of muscular tissue. Most of the women experience constipation during last trimester due to pressure of gravid uterus over bowel; Basti is explained as important Chikitsa (treatment) for constipation since it reduces Vata Dosha. At 9th month of pregnancy Basti is advised for Vatanulomana (Downward movement of vata). Apanavayu and Vyanvaayu play an important role in contraction and relaxation of uterus.

**CONCLUSION**

The consideration of Masanumasika Paricharya (month wise diet and regimen) for woman from first month to the ninth month of pregnancy plays significant role towards the health of mother and new-born.

Following this garbhini parichaya (antenatal care) the woman remains healthy and delivers the child with good health, strength, complexion and voice, compactness and superior to other family members. The woman’s kukshi (abdomen), sacral region, flanks and back become soft. Vayu moves to its right path. Faeces, urine and placenta get expelled easily through their passages. Skin & nail becomes soft. Women gets strength and complexion and decreasing the adverse outcome of pregnancy, she delivers easily at proper time and without complications.

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