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Postnatal care with Diet in Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT

All the living beings in the universe require *Aahaar* which sustains the life. That is why it is said to be *Praaninam Praana*, *Mahabhaishajya* or *Brahma* in *Ayurveda*. Obviously, Lawful dietary intake results in *Pran- Anuvartan*. There is no life without *Aahaar*. *Aahaar* and existence of *Agni* is responsible for *Praana*. It maintains the equilibrium of *Dhatus* and helps in prevention of disorders and promotion of health. Nowadays in developing countries, the incidence and prevalence of postnatal morbidity are poorly known. After proper expulsion of placenta, a woman is said to be *Sootika* in which *Vata-Dosha* is in *Prakopavastha*. Improper knowledge of *Sootika Kala* diet followed by women, mother as well as child may suffer serious complications. There is definite need to study the preventive aspects described in classics. So, the mentioned diet given for puerperium is a medicated diet not a simple diet. Hence, this study will suggest some guidelines for the care of *Sootika* with diet.

Key words: *Sootika*, *Pranauvartan*, *Postnatal*, *Diet*, *Prakopavastha*, *Aahar*, *Praan*.

INTRODUCTION

The good health of a new mother is ensured by an accurately prescribed postnatal diet. A postnatal diet is one that a woman's body needs to recover from the exhaustion of pregnancy and childbirth. The first step towards recovery is to ensure that the lady is hydrated. At the postpartum stage, the body is weak and the digestive system is unable to function at its best. Hence, drinking water aids digestion and is also necessary for the production of adequate breast milk. Foods abundant in nutrients and vitamins are an

integral part of such a diet. Vegetable such as gourds, carrots and spinach should be ingested.

To maintain energy levels, food products high in carbohydrates or fats are critical. Junk food should be avoided at all costs. Dry fruits such as cashews and raisins should be eaten instead. An Indian diet provides ample opportunities to fulfil the needs of a new mother. Dal or lentils provide the body proteins that ward off infection. Laddoos made with a balanced amount of clarified butter provides fats while gond or tree gum increases lactation. Any sort of grains, be it wheat or rice, are also good for health. Apart from these, fenugreek seeds and chia seeds aid in smooth lactation as well.

All living beings in the universe require *Aahaar* which sustains the life. That is why it's said to be *Maha-Bhaishajya*, *Praaninam-Praana* in *Ayurveda*. A lawful dietary intake result in *Pranauvartan* healthy life.

Aacharya Chakrapani mentioned that the quality of *Agni* in the body is depends upon *Aahaar* which *Aahaar* provides energy to the whole body. It maintains the equilibrium of *Dhatus* and helps in prevention of disorders and promotion of health. *Ayurveda* has

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always given importance to care of women at every phase of her life in respect of *Rajaswala-Paricharya*, *Garbhini-Paricharya* and *Sutika-Paricharya*. In term of *Sutika* a woman becomes weak and has empty body due to unsteadiness or indolence of *Dhatu*s, labour pain, excretion of *Kleda* and blood. According to WHO, the postnatal period defined as the first six months after birth is critical to health and survival of a mother and her newborn child, the most vulnerable time for both. *Mithya Ahaar Vihaar* in this period results in diseases which are difficult to cure. After following proper care of women, regain all the lost things and reaches pre-pregnancy stage. In this study, special type of diet i.e., medicated diet suggested by *Acharyas* is discussed in detail to maintain the health of delivered women. Nowadays, in developing countries, it is said that the incidence and prevalence of postnatal complaints are poorly known, and improper diet may result in disability in affecting women, newborn and child as well as missed opportunities to promote healthy life after delivery. Its need to promote awareness about health through diet in postnatal care.

Sutika Paricharya (Postnatal Period)

Dhatukshaya and vitiated *Vata* results in depletion of *Agni* in the body. If one such starts *Apathy Aahaara* after delivery, *Jatharagini* gets vitiated results in *Ama*. Hence, it is needed to use those *Aahaar* which enhance *Agni* in the body and works as *Deepana*, *Pachana*. It remembers that the *Aahara's* qualities opposite of *Vata* that means to also add small amount of *Ghrita* in diet. All the classics have advised oral administration of medicated *Sneha* and decoction of certain drugs for 3 to 7 days after delivery followed by Medicated *Yavagu* in diet from 7th or 12th day. Medicated *Mansrasa* is also advised. But there is little bit difference in opinions of *Acharyas*.

Acharya Charaka when *Sutika* feels hungry prescribed powdered *Panchakola* with any one out of *Ghrita*, *oil*, *Vasa* or *Majja* that is suitable and easily digestible. *Yavagu* medicated with *Ghrita* should be given during morning and evening after digestion of *Sneha* for 5 or 7 days.

According to *Acharya Sushruta*, if some *Doshas* (blood clots) are still left inside the body. It is advised to use *Pippali*, *Pippalimula*, *Chitrak*, *Nagar* and *Gajpippali* with jaggery water should be given for 2 or 3 days till abnormal blood clots are properly excreted. Afterwards, *Yavagu* prepared with drugs of *Vidari-Gandhadi* group should be given for 3 days, and then *Shaali* rice cooked with *Jaangal-Mansa-Rasa* prepared along with *Yava Kola*, *Kulattha* should be given considering her strength and digestive power. According to *Acharya Vagbhat*, after feeling of hunger, she should be given oleaginous substance mixed with *Panchkola Churna* or combination of *Yawani*, *Upkunchika*, *Chavya*, *Chitrak*, *Vyosha*, *Saindhav-Lavana* in the quantity which she can digest in the whole day. A woman is not capable to take *Sneha* should be given decoction of either *Laghu-Panchamula* or drugs capable of suppressing *Vata*. After digestion of oleaginous substance, *Yavagu* properly prepared with above mentioned drugs or *Vidari-Gandhadigana* or milk should be given. This regimen uses for 3, 5 or 7 nights should be followed by use of light diet with soup of *Yava*, *Kola*, *Kulattha*. After 12th day, meat soup should be used.

According to *Acharya Kashyap*, 3 or 5 days use of *Manda*; then *Snehapana* whose taken *Hittkar-Aahaar*. After *Sneha* digestion, rectify *Yavagu* with *Pippali*, *Nagar*, *Sneha* without *Lavan* for 3days. Then *Siddhakulattha* with *Sneha*, *Lavana*, *Amlarasa* and *Jangal Mansa Rasa* then use of *Ghrita-Bhristakushmanda*, *Moolak*, *Kheera*. All these herbs are worked synergistically to heal and build while nourishing *Agni*. Postnatal care related matter is scattered in various ayurvedic classics were critically examined and evaluated that can be included in traditional practice which have benefits in today's lifestyle without altering the principles of care of *Sutika*. This purpose can be achieved by rectifying food preparations according to imbalance of *Doshas*. Advised food preparations are aimed at supporting digestion, restoration, and lactation. After childbirth, a woman's *Jatharagini* becomes weak and need to be restored. *Sutika* diet focusses on that type of food;

those are *Ushna*, *Snigdha*, *Madhur*, *Katu*, *Lavana Rasas*.

DISCUSSION

Snigdha-Guna (specially of *Ghrita*) of *Sneha* incorporated with above mentioned drugs which are having *Ushna-Guna* acts as *Vata-Shamana* and by the virtue of their *Katutikta Rasas* enhance the *Agni*.

Panchakola, which is having *Katu Rasa*, *Katuvipaka*, *Tikshna* and *Ushna-Guna* is considered as best in digestion and promotion of *Jathragini*" It alleviates *Kapha-Vata*, absorbs *Dushta-Kapha*, *Kleda* and overcome *Dhatu-Shaithilya*. Jaggery is a well-cooked sugarcane juice which is aphrodisiac, hard for digestion, unctuous, remove vitiated *Vata-Dosha*, purifies the urine, not mitigating *Pitta* greatly, produce fat, *Kapha*, worms and gives strength but old jaggery is easily digestible, good for health not causing increase of moisture inside, strengthens the *Jathragini*, mitigates *Pitta* and *Vata*, aphrodisiac, purifies the blood. Hence, in case of *Dushta-Shonita*, when *Panchakola* is given with warmed jaggery water causes uterine contraction, hence it helps in proper expulsion of lochial discharge from uterus. *Panchakola* play a role in *Deepana*, *Pachana* and increases *Dhatvagini*. Due to these, release of proteolytic enzymes which are responsible for uterine contraction and proper involution of uterus as well as maintenance of proper gut flora (biological bacteria). It also prevents PPH, urine infection and increases *Dhatvagini* which enhances blood circulation Therefore, early recovery takes place. Despite *Katu Rasa*, *Pippali*, *Shunthi* work as *Vrishya* due to *Madhura-Vipaka* helps to regain reproductive power. *Pippali*, *Pippalimula*, *Chavya*, *Chitrak*, *Nagar*, *Twak*, *Patra*, *Yawani*, *Dadima* having *Katu* and *Tikta Rasas* properties are *Kriminashak* i.e., anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial activity. Hence these help in prevention of infections. *Nagkeshar* causes dryness; digests undigested food; cures fever, itching. Thirst excess perspiration, vomiting, nausea, bad smell, diseases of *Kapha*, *Pitta* and prevent poisoning.

Meat is a very good source of iron, vitamins, essential amino acids and trace elements. *Madhura* and *Brihaniya Dravvas* are anabolic and helpful to recover

maternal system from stress and strain of labour and help in galactogenesis and enhance the quality of mother's milk.

Yava advices due to high nutritional values and good source of carbohydrate, Protein, fibres and minerals in diet; also act as diuretic. *Kulattha* is antihepatotoxic, diuretic, antispasmodic, abortifacient, hypoglycaemic and anti-infectious etc.

Moolaka, *Ervaruka* is also having action on urinary system. Hence all these helos to prevent urinary tract infections, improvement in blood pressure and abdominal pain, PPH, abnormal.

CONCLUSION

In this study, *Dravyas* of diet works as *Deepan*, *Pachana*, *Brimhana* and *Vatahar*. The key to postnatal care of the mother is to *Shamana* of *Vata* which has *Chal*, *Ruksha*, *Laghu*, *Sheeta Gunas* because of *Vata-Prakopa* in this stage after the loss of vital nutrients, energy, blood, fluids i.e., *Dhatu Kshaya* and a huge space in the abdomen (previously occupied by the baby). The post delivery period is very crucial phase in a mother's life. She experiences weakness with low digestive power. In this case, all *Acharyas* has suggested using of medicated diet like as *Manda*, *Peya*, *Yavagu* (rice gruels), various *Sneha* like *Ghrita*, *Tail*, *Vasa*, *Majja* with herbs or decoction for 1st - 3 to 7 days followed by medicated *Mansa Rasa* and *Laghu Aahaar*. *Manda*, *Peya*, *Yavagu* are known for their *Karma* like - *Balya*, *Tarpana*, *Dhatuposhan*, *Vatanashan* which are helpful in regaining lost nutrients. *Achaarya Kashyap* suggests *Sansarjan Krama* in respect of *Agni*. By calming *Vata* and nourishing the mother's body, enable to relax her mind and body. By diet management, *Sutika* gets benefits like Restoration of the health status by physically and mentally, *Shaman* of *Vata*, Prevention of infections and other complications like PPH.

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