



**A REVIEW ARTICLE ON SWARNA PRASHANA SAMSKARA W.S.R.
IMMUNIZATION**

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ABSTRACT :

Swarna Prashana Samskara is an ancient technique to modulate the immunity and improve quality of life. It is mentioned under *Jatakarma Samskara* (neonatal care), one of the 16 essential *Samskara* described in *Ayurveda*. The body's capacity to check the spread of the disease as well as lowering down the intensity is known as *Vyadhikshamatva* (immunity). Administration of a small amount of gold (in *Bhasma* form), *Ghrita* and honey to an infant fulfills the first motive of *Ayurveda* as preventive measure ('*Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanm*') by modulating the immunity and enhancing intellectual performance. Prevention of disease by boosting the immunity has always been the most important point of discussion in medical fraternity. And now days, *Swarna Prashana* is being recognized as an Oral Immunity Enhancer and being discussed as Oral Vaccine. It is a unique method of immunization which is practiced from ancient time, valued as child health care program which was for the healthy nation. It improves the intellect and enhances the non-specific immunity of the body. It acts as broad spectrum and without any adverse effect, the contemporary medical science is paying a lot of attention to it to understand the mechanism of its action on immunity modulation and intellectual function. Many studies available regarding this, which are mentioned under heading **Study regarding Swarna Prashan Samskara**. I added immunity boosting with memory enhancer properties.

Key words: *Swarna Prashana Samskara*, *Vyadhikshamatva*, immunity, immunization, intellectual performance.

INTRODUCTION: *Samskara* mean those religious rites and ceremonies which sanctify the body, mind and intellect, so that person may become fit for the society. In other words, *Samskara* means *Gunantaradhan*¹ which is used for transforming the qualities. Physician can also assess the growth and development of child during performing the *Samskara*. In the present world where children suffering from harmful side effect of medicine, irregular life style, unhealthy drinks, genetically modified food, electronic distraction and gradually changing environment, it is a most challenging question for parents and to the Government, too how to preserve and enhance the physical and mental

health of children. *Swarna Prashana Samskara* is in practice for more than of 1000 years in the *Ayurveda*. It enhances the physical and mental health of children without any side effects. Now a days, it is popularly known as an *Ayurvedic* immunization program or "Ayurvedic way of vaccination" promoted by many *Ayurvedic* professional and by Government of few states like Gujarat. It is sometimes known by other name like *Swarna Amrita Prashana*, *Swarna Bindu Prashana*.²

AYURVEDIC REVIEW: *Acharya Kashyapa* was the pediatric specialist in *Ayurveda* science. He describes *Swarna Prashana* in *Jatkarma Samskara* for the neonatal care *Lehan Adhaya* of

Sutrasthana in his Samhita which was written before 600BC. This regard he explains the method of Swarna Prashana should sit facing the Poorva Disha (east direction), take Swarna (gold) and rub it against the hard surface like stone with water and then mix with Madhu (honey) and Ghrita (cow butter) and given for licking. This is called as Swarna Prashana, and benefits of this are Medha Vardhanam (improvement of intellect), Agni Vardhanam (improvement in digestion), Bala Vardhanam (improvement in strength and immunity), Ayushya Vardhanam (improvement in life span), Mangalya, Punya (auspicious), Grahapaham (relieves bad evil). By administering Swarna to child for one month, he becomes Param Medhavi (super intelligent) and by administering for up to six months, person becomes Shruta Dhara (can remember whatever she / he hears).³ The suitable day for Swarna Prashana is Pushya Nakshatra. Acharya Sushruta describes administration of Swarna along with Ghrita and Madhu as one of the procedures of Jatakarma Samskara, which is given as a single dose at birth as a part of new born care.⁴ He provided the rationale behind this practice that as there will be no

adequate secretion of breast milk for the first 4 days after delivery and so as to support the baby with respect to preventive and nutritive aspects such practices are indispensable.⁵

Acharya Sushruta has described four recipes (containing gold), which provide humoral immunity, body resistance, helpful in growth and development as well as enhancing the intelligence. These are ⁶–

- i. Swarana Bhasma with Kustha Vacha, Brahmi, honey and Ghrita
- ii. Swarana Bhasma with paste of Bhrami and Sankhapushpi should be given with honey and Ghrita.
- iii. Swarana Bhasma with Arkapushpa, Vacha with Ghrita and honey.
- iv. Swarana Bhasma, Kaidarya and Sveta Durva with Ghrita.

Though, Swarna Prashana Samskara requires administration as early as possible, age up to 16 years is eligible for taking Swarna Prashana.⁷ The clear information about does of Swaran Bhasma is not mentioned by Acharya. According to some text book as explanation for dose – the pediatric dose is – from infancy to 5 year old is 5 mg per day, from 5-10 years 10 mg per day, from 10 -16 year old 15 mg per day.⁸

Table no. 1, showing co-relation between Ayurveda practiced immunization and modern medicine immunization

| <i>Ayurveda</i> | Modern medicine |
|--|--|
| <i>Swarna Prashana Samskara</i> | Vaccination |
| <i>Swarna Prashana</i> produces non-specific immunity. | Limited effect of vaccine, produce immunity against particular disease |
| Significant intellectual function | Vaccination prevents against disease, indirectly support mental health |
| Natural technique practiced since ancient time | Artificial modern technique |

Action of Swarna Prashana Samskara regarding immunomodulation effect:

a. By enhancing Vyadhikshamta and Ojus: When etiological factors come

in contact with the body they try to produce disease. At the same time the body opposes the etiological factor to protect the body or show resistance against disease.

This power of the body, which prevents the development of diseases or resists a developed disease, is called *Vyadhikshamatva* (immunity) in *Ayurveda*.⁹ We can increase body resistance by increasing *Ojus*. As we know that *Doshas* maintain the body in the state of homeostasis only with support of *Ojus*. According to *Acharya Charaka*¹⁰ *Bala* (Strength) is synonyms of *Ojus* and of three types- *Sahaja*, *Kalaja* and *Yuktikrita*. In *Yuktikrita bala*, one can improve the *Ojus* by *Yukti*. Thus *Swarna Prashana* is method of increasing the *Kshamatava* of the body by *Yukti* which will tone up the body immune cells and lowering down the decaying process by decreasing the oxidative injury.

b. Exposure with natural allergen to develop resistance: *Madhu* is manufactured from pollen grains by bees. Because of this is the main reason for adding *Madhu* in *Swarna Prashana* is that when *Madhu* is administered in low doses to newborn, when this child grows gradually itself develops resistance for allergens and it remains unaffected by allergens.

c. Concept of *Virudha Satmya* : According to *Ayurveda* concept *Ghrita* and *Madhu* mixed in equal quantity is an example of *Matra Virudha*¹¹ and act as *Visha* (poisonous effect) in body. The same substance by its continuous administration in small doses after growth and development makes the body adoptable, is called *Satmya*¹². The *Swarna Prashana Samskara* is an example of *Virudha Satmya*. Any incompatible (*Virudha*) substance which may be antigenic on continuous exposure child becomes *Virudha Satmya* (suitable to body and not show any harmful effect) suggests that sero-negative state is converted into sero-positive state and formation of antibody is complete. Regular

contact of such elements makes the body desensitized and in future there will be less effect due to formation of antibodies. Adaptiveness and modification subsequently develops as it acts as antigenic substances to the body and child will be priorly sensitized have healthy future. The same theory is used in vaccination. In *Swarna Prashana Samskara*, *Madhu* and *Ghrita* in equal doses along with gold is given at regular intervals, this develops resistance in the body for any type of *Visha*. In other words this mixture produces non specific immunity.¹³

d. Role of *Swarna* : When the *Swarna Bhasma* is administered in very low doses for a particular time it is known to potentiate the memory power along with immunity. *Swarna* is the compound state while the *Swarna Bhasma* is oxide form which is easily absorbable. There are such confusions regarding the mixing and absorption of *Swarna Bhasma* although it is the simplest form. Then how come the simple *Ashudha Swarna* in the crude form get absorbed is a matter of discussion. So here *Swarna* may remain unabsorbed in the body and act as incompatible substance or binding material by playing significant role in the stimulation of immune system. Gold is already proved for its immunomodulatory effects because of its antibacterial action against different organisms but when it is mixed with *Madhu* and *Ghrita* it widens its spectrum of action to stimulate body immune cells.¹⁴

e. Role of *Ghrita*:

Ghrita have played significant role in increasing mental ability and it enhances the function of drug added with it. It also provides nutrition to newborn until lactation properly starts.

Study Regarding *Swarna Prashana Samskara*: *Swarna Prashana* has benefi-

cial effects on nervous and immune system. It is very helpful in improving memory, retention power, intelligence, cognitive function. It is also effective in improving immunity and preventing diseases. It improves skin glow and helps in preventing skin diseases. The properties of *Swarna Prashana* which increases its medicinal value for preventive as well as therapeutic purpose are: immune-stimulant, adaptogenic, memory booster, anti-inflammatory, anti-arthritis, anti-cancer, anti-bacterial, anti-viral, anti-mutagenic, and anti-oxidant properties.¹⁵

It promotes overall growth in a natural way. Due to its broader effects, along with normal children it is also beneficial for children with special needs such as autism, learning difficulties, attention deficient disorder, hyper activity and delayed milestones etc.¹⁶

In a pharmaco-clinical study, *Madhu-Ghrita-Swarna-Vacha* combination given to neonates showed a significant effect of humoral antibody formation and it acted on immunological system, which was evident by triggering the response of immunological system arise in the total protein and serum IgG level.¹⁷

For enhancing intellectual functions, *Swarna Prashana* can be given from birth and specifically for a period of 1 or 6 months continuously. In a study colloidal gold was found to improve cognitive functioning, which was measured by IQ scores.¹⁸

Animal studies on *Swarna Bhasma* revealed its immune-stimulant, analgesic, antidepressant actions. It, being *Apasmahara*, can be given to children of cerebral palsy and autism and many other diseases related to development of CNS.¹⁹

CONCLUSION: Children are the future of any nation, and it is a challenge for

every nation to keep up physical, mental and social health of them without any adverse effect. *Swarna Prashana* helps the child to grow up with better immune system and intellectual performance. Immunization is a broad term and it includes all the methods by which the body's immune system is activated against a disease. This may be by the means of introducing certain substances, food materials, body activities, vaccines etc to the body. *Ayurveda* explains about "*Vyadhikshamatvam*" that is understood as the individual's resistance to disease which includes both the capacity of attenuation of the manifested disease, as well as the prevention of the un-manifested one. The benefits of *Swarna Prashana* in children as told by *Acharya's* need to be studied and reestablished with the help of various experimental models and also at clinical levels. It is an approach toward positive health care program for children by increasing the *Vyadhikshamatv* (immunomodulation). It is the ancient immunization technique with no adverse effect and provides a good life with physical, mental & social health. So *Swarna Prashana Samskara* should be accepted for immunization program with positive attitude throughout world.

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Declared