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PUBLISHED PAPER'S TITLE : ANTENATAL CARE
(an Ayurvedic Approach)



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Research Paper

ANTENATAL CARE (an Ayurvedic Approach)

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Declaration

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ABSTRACT- Motherhood is the basis of family life which, in turn, is the backbone of all the orders of society. Hence, family life remains protected if the woman is safe and protected. To get a healthy baby from a healthy mother is a big challenge in present scenario because of various factors; Age of marriage, physiological factor, psychological factor, food habits, diseases, environmental factor, and social factors.

Criteria of safe motherhood cannot be attained by a single pathy approach in present era. We are using modern tools and technology to detect any abnormality in mother and fetus, or drug to treat them along with our *Ayurvedic* concepts which are very useful and having equal relevance to attain the goal of safe motherhood. Even three thousand years ago, *Ayurveda* had stressed on the importance of safe motherhood. It aims at excellence in the formation of the fetus, its development without anomalies, a comfortable full term delivery, and maintenance of the health of the mother.

Introduction-Women's health concerns are many; not getting the right treatment on right time can be detrimental to one's health. A women's life is marked by unique changes that occurs with time, from attaining menarche, conception,

pregnancy, child birth and menopause. These changes may bring about problems, directly or indirectly associated with reproductive system and hence requires a separate branch of medicine that focus on these area. These are the causes which



nessitates the requirement of stri and prasuti tantra as the separate branch. In context of antenatal care to fulfill this objective, preconceptional preparation along with preconceptional screening has been described in our *samhitas* in the form of *Punsavan Karma* and *Putreeya Vidhi*-[1]

Literature review-In our *samhitas* proper age of *garbha dharan* has been described, basic concept behind this idea is to attain proper physical and psychological development of male and female[2]. There is contraindication of *Atibala*, *Ativridha stri* because both of these conditions are not suitable for fetal growth as well as health of child bearing lady. This is another beauty of *Ayurvedic* concept that along with pathological condition, effect of psychological condition and their effect on fetus has been described, because psychological changes affects the hormonal balance of body which is very important for preparation of reproductive organ for conceiving the conceptus and its proper development. Concept of *punsavan karma* and *putreey vidhi* is very important concept to prepare both the partners. These processes are effective at psychological level, physical level and social level. *Mantras* and *kriyavidhan* used in these processes have their psychological effect. To understand basic concept behind this, we have to understand some physiological changes, which are essential for proper implantation and growth of fetus balance between estrogen and progesterone is essential for - hypertrophy of uterine muscle, for decidualization of endometrium, growth of placental vessel, maintenance of feto-maternal blood flow, rapid fall of Progesterone level leads to abortion. keeping the fact in mind that shudha shukra dhatu in both partners is responsible for formation of beeja having good quality.

बीजात्मकैर्गर्हाभूतैः शूक्ष्मैः सत्वानगैश्वरः
मातुनाहारखसैः। क्रमात्मणविवषते (स०ह०शा०)

Shudha shukra dhatu forms only after proper nutrition and digestion of food so emphasis has been given on life style and diet of person planning for pregnancy. A healthy couple, desirous of offspring should initially cleans themselves by evacuating measurer (i.e. oleation, sudation, emetics, purgative and brought to normal condition should be given asthapana (evacuating enema) and anuvasan (nutritive enema) basti after there purifying measures, the man should use ghrita and milk medicated with the drug of madhura virya (sweet as an anabolic) and the woman, should consume oil and masa (a sort of kidney bean) [3].

Drug and diet used during these processes are rich in carbohydrate, protein and fat and drug having the effect on- nutrition of dhatus, increasing the immunity of body, decreasing oxidative stress on body, increasing blood circulation to reproductive organs, preparation of hormonal balance which is favorable for conception , implantation and growth of fetus.

Ayurveda gives importance to the quality of the seed and hence, to the development during adolescence, of both the male and the female. The mother also provides the 'soil, nutrition and the right season' for the seed to grow[4]. Hence, *Ayurveda* advises special attention to be paid to the nutrition and protection of the woman to keep her (the soil) rich and clean. If a couple desires to have a good progeny, both the partners should be careful about their diet, activities, behavior and emotional status before as well as after conception.

During the first trimester, stress is laid on stabilizing the pregnancy and nurturing the uterine bed through *rasa* and *rakta dhatus*. The embryo gets nourishment



directly by percolation (*upsnehan*). Hence more *jaleeya* (liquid) substances such as juicy fruits, coconut water, milk, and so on are advocated. In the first month[5], sipping cold milk and maintaining a light diet *madhu* and *ghrita* are also advised. The use of fat rich frequent diet is very advance concept of *Ayurveda*, because it is proved by the researches that maternal plasma cholesterol is principal precursor (90%) of progesterone biosynthesis. Dr William H Goodson in the San Antonio breast cancer symposium in 2007 stated that dairy products like milk, butter etc contains high level progesterone, he stated that after consumption of 3 high fat rich diet increases spike in salivary progesterone to 30 %-100%.

Drug used for the purpose of *prajasthan* has following effect according to modern research. ***Asparagus racemosus***-increases cellular vitality and resistance, improves microcirculation, Inhibitory to oxytocin, and improves digestion by increasing the level of amylase.

Euryale ferox - high level radical scavenging activity, lipid per oxidation inhibitory activity.

Astracantha longifolia-immunomodulation, haemopoietic activity, tone up the uterine muscle

Glycyrrhiza glabra- increases progesterone level

Concept of use of *jaangal mamsa ras* and *krishna*[6] (contains cereals) is a scientific concept, as both of these (organ meat and cereals) are good source of vitamin B6 thus helping to prevent nausea, vomiting, edema, GDM, pre-eclampsia etc. From the seventh month onwards, there should be less fat, less salt and less water in the diet rice with a little *ghrita* is advocated. After the completion of the seventh month, herbs, which are mild diuretics and urinary antiseptics such as *Gokshur* is advocated[7]. *Gokshur* as soon as the pregnant woman enters the ninth month; she is supposed to move to the *Sootikagar* (delivery area) which is specially prepared for delivery. After an *Asthapan basti*

(simple enema), she should undergo *Anuvasan basti* (retention enema of oil boiled with some herbs) which may be repeated[8]. Tampons soaked in the same oil are kept in the vagina to make the pelvis soft and elastic, and enhance the excretory functions of *Apan vayu* (urination, defecation) and expulsion of the fetus. The skin and nails become soft and her strength and complexion are rejuvenated[9].

Pregnant lady should avoid anxiety, anger, sorrow, depression, strenuous exercise[10] because it increases maternal adrenocorticotrophic hormone resulting in increase in fetal cortisol level thus stimulating placental 17-alfa hydroxylase activity and resulting in decrease in progesterone and increase in Estrogen level causing Abortion and Preterm labour[11]. She should also avoid coitus and excessive exercise because they may cause uterine contraction and increase in maternal cortisol level respectively. Lady should avoid excessive eating, fasting, improper sleep during night, traveling and, suppression of natural urges to maintain normalcy of physiology of pregnancy[12].

Lady should maintain proper hygiene because unhygienic condition may predispose to UTI, lower genital tract infection, Bacterial Vaginosis, they may cause Abortion, Preterm Rupture of Membrane, Preterm Labour, Chorioamnionitis, Amniotic Fluid Infection[13].

Conclusion- Concept of antenatal care in Ayurveda is very basic and important concept to improve reproductive health of lady . One should give proper consideration to these factors and their effect while planning for pregnancy along with modern medical concept about preconceptional care, to get good reproductive health, safe motherhood and healthy baby. It can be concluded that Ayurvedic concept for safe motherhood may be evolved by using these



suggestions which fulfills quotation of *Maharishi Kashyap*, which means:

"Out of sheer love, affection and compassion, the would-be mother bears all the agony to protect the child with grace and dignity. That is really the greatness of MOTHERHOOD."

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