



Principles of Treatment in Children

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ABSTRACT

The treatment of children is very strenuous job for physician due to their delicate nature & incapability to express their problem. That is why the physician has to handle them with a special knowledge, experience and care, in children drugs should be prescribed by keeping in mind about the nature of disease & child itself. According to *ayurveda* every child has soft nature so all drugs and therapy used in children should be *mridu*. By these fundamental principles a physician can successfully treat a child with a very familial way.

INTRODUCTION

About this topic, there is detailed description is available in *Āyurveda*. Concept of *Caraka* & others scholars are very much similar. They considered that the children & adults both have similar *doḌa*, *dūḌya*, *mala*, diseases and their treatment but all of these are less in children. So that dose of drug should be decided according to the age of the children¹.

Caraka has advocated that if possible, the physician should start the treatment of child at the early stage of the disease by keeping in mind about the quality of patient, drug, place, time and seat of the disease. Before starting treatment, examination of child should be necessary for the physician, which can be done by *panchvidha pariksha* or by *deshvidha*. For the examination of sick child, *Kaśyapa* has considered that the ill child should be examined very keenly, to draw inference by their activities, related to the disease and the examination must be thorough and should be performed daily².

After reaching to final diagnosis treatment should be start by the article which are sweet, soft, light, not so hot, aromatic and pleasant. For treatment all procedures should also like that, because only these are wholesome for child. By this a child can be recover easily³.

With other authors *Kaśyapa*⁴ also considered that by pacification of *doḌa*, clarity of *dhatus* and uninterrupted action of all the excretory organs develops. By involvement of *doḌa*, *dhatus* & *mala* in their own normal action, the healthy state of the human beings develop; in contrariety to this is unhealthy state.

When by appropriate diet & other actions, desired normalcy is obtained; a physician should protect this equilibrium of *doḌa*, pacify the aggravated *doḌa*, increase the decreased *doḌa* and expel the increased *doḌa*⁵. This is the main base of treatment.

MODE OF TREATMENT:

According to disease, the mode of therapy can be change. *Caraka*⁶, the pioneer physician of ancient period, has described three types of treatments, viz., *DaivavyapāḌraya*, *YuktivyapāḌraya* and *Satvāvajaya*.

*Kaśyapa*⁷ has given almost similar description; however, has accepted *KalavyapāḌraya* instead of *Satvāvajaya*.

1. *DaivavyapāḌraya Chikitsā* (divine therapy) – This therapy is done by the use of

Mantras (incantations), *AuḌadha* (sacred herbs), *MaÉidhārÉa* (precious gems), *Mangala karma* (propitiatory rites) including *bali* (sacrifice) & *homa* (offerings), *niyama* (vows), *prāyaścita* (ceremonial penitence), *upvāsa* (fasts) etc. it should be advised in the condition where actual relation of *doḌas* and *dūḌyas* are not established.

*Kaśyapa*⁸ has described this type of therapy as “*BheḌaja*”.

2. *YuktivyapāḌraya* (Rational therapy) – It includes the use of various preparations of drugs, *āhāra* (wholesome diet) and *vihāra* (mode of life). *Kaśyapa*⁹ has described this type of therapy as “*AuḌadha chikitsā*”.
3. *Satvāvajaya*¹⁰ (psychological therapy) – This is for psychological disturbances. This is secured best, by restraining the mind from desire for unwholesome object and the cultivation of *jñāna* (knowledge), *vijñāna* (scientific knowledge), courage, memory, *Dhṛti* (retention power) and *samaridhi*.

*VāgbhaḌa*¹¹ has divided all the processes of treatment under *ApatarpaÉa* and *SantarpaÉa*. The *ApatarpaÉa* may be again subdivided into *SaÉsodhana*&*SaÉsamana* therapy.

1. *SaÉsamana* therapy (Drug therapy) –

Aim of this therapy is to keep the *doḌas* in their balanced state. It includes *dipana*, *pācana*, *kḌudhā*, *tāsā*, *vyāyāma*, *ātapa* and *māruta*. For this type of the therapy, proper selection of the drugs and calculation of their doses is most important.

That drug should be selected which does not destroy the strength of the diseased but destroys the potency of disease and the same should be applied till the total eradication of disease is seen. After subsidence of disease, the medicine having produced that subsidence should be given in low doses for further one, two or three days according to strength¹².

The drugs used in children should be according to the nature & age of the child and ancient *āyurvedic* texts have ample of references for this.

*Caraka*¹³ has considered that the children are dependent to their mother & others for everything and are tender in nature, unable to express their problems. Due to it a physician should leave all harsh or hard procedures like *pañcakarma* in children and use *samana* therapy with drugs, but these drugs should also take in small quantity.

He further described the quality of drugs, used for children. The drugs must be sweet (*madhura*), astringent (*kaḌāya*), easily soluble in milk & easy in digestion and assimilation; the drugs& food which are very fatty, dry, hot, sour & heavy should be avoided.

*VāgbhaḌa*¹⁴ also support the opinion of *Caraka* and said that treat the diseases in children with unctuous & pleasant drugs and procedures.

*Kaśyapa*¹⁵ also have same thought and described that for children neither desiccation nor excessive cleansing measures & blood-letting is beneficial. They should be treated only by oral medications, ointments & irrigation with those drugs which are unctuous, cold, and sweet & do not produce burning sensation.

Administration of Drug:-

*Suśruta*¹⁶ has described the mode of administration. He considered that the child receiving only milk in diet should be given mild drugs along with *ghāta*& milk which subsides *kapha*&*meda*. For the treatment of child, when drug is prescribed to mother (wet nurse), it should be given alone, not with *ghāta* or milk.

In children, receiving milk & cereals in diet, the drugs should be administered to both child and mother; but in case where child receive mostly cereals in diet, the drug should be administered only to the child.

*Yogarātnakara*¹⁷ have thought which strongly support to *Suśruta*.

*Suśruta*¹⁸ has advocated another method of drug administration. The selected drug is pasted on the breast of mother or wet nurse and child is allowed to suck. By this method the child ingest drug along with breast milk.

*VāgbhaŌa*¹⁹ also described the same like *Suśruta* but he added that drug should be washed with water after one “*muhuḤta*” of application on breast. After washing, milk should be allowed to the baby.

2. *SaĒśodhana* therapy :-

Various acts & drugs used for elimination of doṣas come under this therapy. The process of this is known as *pañcakarma* which include *Vamana*, *Virecana*, *Āsthāpana*, *Anuvāsana* and *Śirovirecana* or *RaktamokŌaĒa*.

Due to soft nature and immaturity of the various systems and organs of the body this therapy is contraindicated in children. Almost all scholars of ancient *āyurvedic* science have described about this. *VāgbhaŌa* and *Suśruta* said that *SaĒśodhana* therapy by purgation should not applied in children without any emergency.

Kaśyapa also mentioned that excessive *SaĒśodhana* and *RaktamokŌaĒa* are harmful for children. Another description of *VāgbhaŌa* found about application of this therapy is also similar.

Children have soft nature & small body. They cannot eat all types of food except *gh^ata* & milk. So if *Saśodhana* therapy is needed give only milk with soft drug for emesis. In children who take only milk or milk & cereals both as diet procedure for emesis should be done only after feeding of milk.

If purgation is needed then *basti* (vasti) should be given and in case *Marśa* is needed *pratimarśa* should be given. In case the disease is only can be treated with purgation then *virecana* should be given to the mother or wet nurse.

So that with limited uses, these therapies may be apply in children, but their selection should be very careful. And in comparison to *SaĒśodhana* therapy, *SaĒśamana* therapy is easy to give as well as beneficial in children.

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