



THE CONCEPT OF FOETAL ANOMALIES IN AYURVEDA

Priyanka Kumari¹, Rabindra nath Mishra², Sanjiv Kumar³, Shyam Sundar Gupta⁴

1 Post graduate Scholar of dept. of RACHNA SHARIR. Govt. Ayurvedic College Patna.

2 Post graduate Scholar of dept. of RACHNA SHARIR. Govt. Ayurvedic college Patna,

3 Post graduate Scholar of dept. of Samhita and Siddhant. Govt. Ayurvedic college Patna,

4 H.O.D., dept. of RACHNA SHARIR. Govt. Ayurvedic college Patna,

Corresponding Author: priyagamch@gmail.com

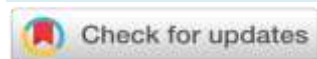
<https://doi.org/10.46607/iamj3411062023>

(Published Online: June 2023)

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Article Received: 25/05/2023 - Peer Reviewed: 03/06/2023 - Accepted for Publication: 14/06/2023.



ABSTRACT

Abnormalities of structure, function, or body metabolism of the foetus often result in neonates with a physical or mental handicap, a shorter life span, or mortality. The birth defects manifest irrespective of gender, race, or socio-economic status. These days birth defects have become a big challenge for the entire medical world. The rate of abnormalities in foetus in all regions of the world is high and lack of understanding has a tremendous impact on individuals, their families, and communities. Although the exact causes are unknown there are some risk factors which, if overcome, the possibilities of inborn birth defects can be minimized. Ayurveda elucidates the lifestyle, dietary habits, and Manovritti of parents, having great impacts on foetal anomalies.

Keywords: Vikriti, malformation, foetus, garbh vikriti, anomaly

INTRODUCTION

Breeding is necessary to have a continuation of the cycle of living creation. Human being strives at every level to prosper his off springs; be they educational, socio-economic, or at any parameter of development.

It is a possible desire of human beings to get a climax of all qualities in their child. Children are companions of their parents and are a source of affection. The bond between husband and wife may be cement-

ed by children and children satisfy a variety of psychological motives. Parents may expect to receive support from their children in their old age. This thinking of humans was also in ancient times. It becomes very disappointing to the parent when they get any structural or functional congenital abnormalities in their child. Acharyas have given thorough consideration to this matter. The quality of offspring depends not only on the parent who gives birth but also on the progeny's soul (atma), mind (man), and deeds of prebirth (poorva Janma ke karm). these are the concepts of acharyas. Ayurveda the indigenous system of Indian medicine defines life in a very meticulous manner from the formation of garbha (embryo) till death. vikriti as mentioned in ayurveda can be understood as a condition that is not normal. Garbh vikriti is an unusual or unexpected development of the foetus during pregnancy. In ayurvedic texts, scholars have described many possibilities which may result in foetal anomalies. Some anomalies and their causes have been mentioned apparently. In addition to this, the definition of garbha, garbhini, and sutika paricharya have been clearly mentioned for the objective of healthy progeny. Shadgarbhkarabhavas are related as the cause of congenital and hereditary disorders i.e Vikrit garbh.^[1] A no. of Garbhopaghatakara bhavas has also been described in charak which may cause garbh vikriti. These all show the awakened conscience of our ancient scholars about healthy progeny.

Aim and Objectives: To elucidate the concept of garbh vikriti in ayurvedic literature.

Methods: It is purely a literary study wherein the explored literature was analysed and interpreted. As per the classical literature of ayurveda, the factors responsible for the malformation of the foetus are listed below:-

1. Shukra and shonita dushti – Ayurveda defines garbha as the union of the shukra (sperm or male gamete), shonita (ovum or female gamete), and Jeeva (soul) which gets implanted in garbhāsaya^[2]. Due to vitiation in shukra and shonita, a defect can occur in offspring. Sushrut has talked about 11 abnormalities and Charak has talked

about 8 abnormalities of shukra. Similar doshik abnormalities have also been told about shonita. These abnormalities may result in unproductive gestation or malformed offspring.

2. Garbhasaya dushti ^[3] – garbhasaya (uterus) is the place where the foetus is implanted and grows in it till birth. Uterine abnormalities were found to be high in women suffering from recurrent miscarriage or preterm delivery.
3. Ambu – As for the germination of seed (origin of the plant) ritu, kshetra, ambu, and beej these four factors are required similarly foetal growth is dependent on. Here ritu resembles the period after ovulation called the menstrual phase, kshetra resembles garbhasaya, beej resembles male and female gametes and ambu resembles mātrija ahar rasa^[4]. Foetal growth is dependent on mātrija ahar rasa so pregnant women should follow a healthy diet plan and avoid fasting.
4. Marriage in similar clans ^[5] – In Atulyagotriya adhyay for the procreation of a healthy progeny it is necessary that the male and female should be mutual of different clans. Scientifically it has been proved. The gene of many diseases are present but are in the recessive stage, but marriage in close relatives can result in the appearance of such genetic diseases. The most common examples are cystic fibrosis and sickle cell anaemia.
5. Vitiation of vata dosha ^[6] – vitiated vata dosha doing different action over sperm, ovum, uterus, and foetus may cause Dvireta (hermaphroditism), Pavnendriya (aspermia), Samskar vahi (anaphrodisia), male sterility, female sterility, vakri (hypospadias), irsjabhirati, vatika sandak (eviration) in offspring.
6. Karma dosh ^[7] – ayurveda believes in the concept of rebirth. Hence there is the concept of deeds of the previous birth of both parent and child are the basis of the birth of an individual. Unrighteous acts result in the impairment of the shape, colour, and sensory as well as motor organs of the offspring. Sushrut has told in shukra Sonita sudhi adhyay of sharir sthan that Papakarma (sins)

cause the shape of the foetus like sarpa, vrischika, Kushmand, etc.

7. Kaal dosh– This word/ phenomenon can be understood in three ways. Kaal as the reproductive age of parents, beeja kaal (ovulation period), garbhavastha kaal (gestation period) ^[8]. Sushruta has told in sharir sthan that a female before the age of sixteen and a male before the age of twenty-five can be associated with congenital abnormalities in a child. He has also told that both males and females having advanced age or suffering from chronic illness or other disorders should avoid pregnancy^[9].
8. Matruja ahar- vihar dosha ^[10] – matruja ahar vihar factors responsible for impairment of the pregnancy are described as follows: -

VIHAR

- Sitting in an uncomfortable position.
- Inhibition of urges of flatus, micturition, and defecation.
- Over exertion or exercise.
- Injury or pressure frequently.
- Watching frequently deep well or places of waterfalls.
- Travelling jerk
- Hearing unpleasant words frequently.
- Constantly sleeping on her back.
- Sleeping in the open air and moving at night alone.
- Resorting to vocal abuse and physical assaults.
- Habitually restoring to sexual intercourse.
- Stealing habits
- Some habits like constantly feeling grief, anger, or sleep.

AHAAR

- Addiction to alcohol
- Intake of excess or less quantity of food.
- Addiction to the intake of lizard-like reptiles' flesh.
- Addiction to intake of pork and fish.
- Addiction to intake of any one of diet in excess like sweet things, sour things, salt, pungent things, bitter things or astringent things.

9. Beej, bejabhaga, Beejbhagavyava dusti ^[11]– ayurveda identifies three genetic units in the form of beej (germinal cell), beej-bhag (chromosome), and beej bhag – Aavyava (gene). The part of the seed (sperm or ovum) which is responsible for the formation of a particular organ is vitiated will result in vitiation of the organogenesis of the respective organ. A person associated with Beejabhaga dusti has entitled by Bandhya, with Beejabhagavyav dusti called Putipraja, and with dusti of all three beejes, bejabhaga and Beejabhagavyav person called warta (female) or trinputrik(male).
10. Dauhridya awamanana^[12] – the heart of the foetus is connected to the mother and the foetus desires are reflected in the heart of a pregnant mother. Ignorance of pregnant women after bi cardiac state can destroy or deform the foetus.

CONCLUSION

- Ayurvedic classics encompass various information related to foetal anomalies.
- All the Congenital defects do not have known causative factors rather some are associated with increased or high risk.
- To reduce the foetal defect, garbhini paricharya has been described which emphasizes a nutritious and optimal diet for pregnant women.
- Antenatal care, right from preconception to full-term delivery will certainly play a key role in the prevention of such congenital and genetic disorders.
- Avoid smoking, drinking alcohol, or taking drugs during pregnancy.
- Avoid substances and conditions that are known to be harmful.

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Source of Support: Nil

Conflict of Interest: None Declared

How to cite this URL: Priyanka Kumari et al: The Concept of Foetal Anomalies in Ayurveda. International Ayurvedic Medical Journal {online} 2023 {cited June 2023} Available from:

http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/1420_1423.pdf