

AYURVEDIC REVIEW OF ABHYANGA

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ABSTRACT

Neonatology as we know today is relatively new clinical science. Interestingly however Ayurveda, the authentic Indian medicine had already described in detail the principle of newborn care 5,500 years ago (Crica 3500BC) in *Kaumarbhritya* the science of Paediatrics. Ayurveda is a science of life which provides not only curative but also preventative principles for healthy & long life. Neonatal period is very important phase of life. Ayurveda mentioned very scientific approach towards newborn care as *Jatmatra Paricharya*; means protocol. *Abhyanga* is one of these care protocols. Neonatal massage with the help of lubricant is in practice & resembles with Ayurveda *Abhyanga* process. It improves the circulation & tone of muscle, gives comfort to the baby, strengthens infant maternal bonding, increased weight gain, enhance immunological functions of baby. During *Abhyanga* prevent harmful & painful practices and social taboos like pulling of limbs. Oil is used as a lubricant to avoid friction between the hands and body parts being massaged. It prevents dryness and chaffing of skin. *Bala tail* is one of the best oil in among the all oil preparation in Ayurveda. Hence although *Abhyanga* is considered as ancient traditional practise, it is very effective & useful to newborn.

KEYWORDS: *Abhyanga*, *Jatamatra Paricharya*, Neonatal massage.**INTRODUCTION**

Ayurveda's aims are curative as well as preventive. To achieve the preventive and curative purpose of Ayurveda, the role and utility of *Abhyanga* as a therapy has been clearly mentioned in text. Applied aspects of *Abhyanga* is widely accepted. *Abhyanga* which is one among the *Dincharya*, is also a part of pre therapeutic procedures of *Panchkarma*. *Abhyanga* is to be considered in *Snehana* therapy, as it nourishes the sense of mind and gives the strength.

Abhyanga means application of oil or unctuous substance on entire body with optimum pressure and in particular directions and applying the strokes. Ayurveda explained very delicate and sophisticated protocol for newborn baby under *Jatamatra Paricharya*. *Abhyanga* is procedure that should be performing for the good health of newborn, important for their better growth & development. Ayurveda emphasized on *Abhyanga* for prevention of aging process and healthy life. According to different geographical conditions and variation in climate condition one has to make difference in procedure, for example in the cold climatic conditions oil used for *Abhyanga* should be taken as warm and vice versa. Sesame oil processed with multiple herbs is considered as best oil for newborn *Abhyanga*. *Bala Tail*, *Ashwagandhadi Tail* are different kinds of oil used for *Abhyanga*.

Abhyanga in newborn is reported to improve weight gain by better thermo regulation. It gives the feeling of security and soothing experience both to the mother & the baby.

When to start

- From neonatal point of view *Abhyanga* can be immediately done after birth once the baby gets vitally stable.
- Then daily once either in morning or evening.
- *Abhyanga* can be done in vitally stable healthy newborn.

Time of Procedure

Abhyanga can be done at any time in the day, preferably done in morning time, while one should take care that, room temperature not be less than 25°C, in order to maintain hypothermia.

Procedure

- Use comfortable warm oil, dip fingertips into the warm oil and apply lightly on the entire body.
- *Abhyanga* should be done by using gentle pressure and smooth rhythmical movements by the mother.
- Place the baby in supine position and start from head, face, chest, abdomen, upper limbs-palms & lower limbs- soles from above downward.

- Provide gentle but firm rhythmic strokes from above downward.
- The procedure is repeated after placing the baby in prone position.
- The *Abhyanga* is followed by kinaesthetic stimulation by performing alternate flexion & extension movements of major joints of upper & lower limbs.

Indications

In every newborn baby who is vitally stable.

Contraindications

- Vitally unstable baby.
- Immediately after feeding
- Sick newborn-lethargic, refuse to feed and neonates having signs of sepsis, convulsion.
- Newborn with congenital heart disease like CHD, VSD.

DISCUSSION

Neonatal health is one of the important health challenges faced by developing countries. Newborn care is one of the most important care. *Abhyanga*, which is part of it practiced in past & present, it is very effective & economically cheaper method. Prevention of neonatal morbidity is also factor keep in mind. Discussing the classical texts of Ayurveda, the care of newborn includes *Abhyanga*, *Snan*, *Jaatkarma* etc. as a part routine care of newborn. *Snehana* in the form of *Abhyanga* is one of the most important procedure practiced till today from the ancient days. Due to *Abhyanga* skin becomes soft & increases strength & reduces stress.

The *guru, snigdha properties of taila* may take care of *dhatupushati*. *Abhyanga* increases in vagal activity, which may lead to increased gastric motility & there by weight gain.

Abhyanga restores the natural immunity (*Vyadhikshamatva*), relaxes the muscle & useful in eliminating fatigue (*Shramhar*) improves physical strength (*Balwan*), promotes excellence of body tissue (*Dhatu Pushati*) induce sound sleep (*Swapankar*), by nourishing the body tissues *Abhanga* promotes life span (*Ayushaykara*).

CONCLUSION

Abhyanga is one of the important part of *jaatmatra paricharya* and very effective to gain weight, reduces pain, enhances immunity and accelerates the healthy growth and development of baby. With proper selection of oil and with certain precaution under medical supervision and advice one can practised *Abhyanga* from birth to life long without any harm is the massage to modern health world.

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