



Physiological Concept Of *Stanya* And Breastfeeding

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Abstract

Food is one of the most basic needs for human existence. Age-related dietary needs differ from those of childhood. Because children in developing nations like India do not receive enough nutrition, infant mortality rates are higher there. For this reason, it is essential to feed children enough food. For children, milk is the most important food because it provides them with energy and supports healthy growth and development during this critical period. Breast milk was considered a great food for newborns even in the *Vedic Period*. After delivery, the *Rigveda* advises nursing while reciting mantras.

A number of *ayurvedic* publications highlight the benefits of breastfeeding under the heading of *jatakarma*. According to *Ayurvedic* literature, *Stanya* or breast milk, is one of the *updhatu* of *rasa*. Breastfeeding offers numerous health advantages to both the mother and the child. As soon as the baby is born, breastfeeding should start. The best method of providing care for a newborn is breastfeeding. Besides the overwhelming attachment it creates, breast milk is the perfect diet for them. This review concentrated on the idea of *Stanya*, or breast milk, as it was mentioned in *Ayurvedic* literatures and how important it is in the modern world.

Keywords: *Stanya*, breastfeed, *updhatu*, *Ayurveda*.

INTRODUCTION

For babies, breast milk is a fantastic source of nutrition. After the first six months of life, exclusive breastfeeding is advised. After that, "infants should receive nutritionally appropriate and safe supplemental meals while nursing continues for up to two years of age or beyond," according to the World Health Organization.¹ For the first six months of life, the American Academy of Pediatrics(AAP) recommends breastfeeding exclusively. Furthermore, "breastfeeding should be continued for as long as the mother and child both wish after the first year of life."²

The National Health Service recommends exclusive breastfeeding for your baby for the first six months (26 weeks) of life. Breast milk can then be added to your baby's diet to support their continued growth and development. Breastfeeding benefits people in any quantity. The benefits and duration of the protection increase with the length of time you breastfeed. Roughly 40% of patients in our clinical practice typically have decreased breast milk production.

As a result of their integration into Western society, women experience stress and strain. A person's psychological state and lifestyle are associated with a physiological process called lactation. *Sushruta* states that the mother's psychological status (*Krodha, shoka, Bhaya, Irsha, and Avatsalyatwa*), her diet, and her physiological state are the causes of *stanyaksaya* (decreased breast milk).³

The most common explanation for early breastfeeding termination is the belief that there is not enough milk available. Stress, daily activities, today's hectic lifestyle, and poor and unhealthy eating habits all contribute to lactation failure. In such cases, the concepts of *aahara* (diet), *vihara* (activities), and *aushada* (Medicine) from *Ayurveda* offer natural, comprehensive assistance (medications). Thus, the current review concentrated on the significance of the *Ayurvedic* concept of *Stanya* in the modern era.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Several classic *Ayurvedic* literatures are used to study this subject. To gain a thorough understanding of the concept of *Stanya* in relation to breastfeeding, materials on *Stanya*, its significance, and other pertinent topics were gathered, reviewed, and discussed.

Stanya

The best food for newborns is breast milk, or *Stanya*. *Charaka* describes it as wholesome (*satmya*), unctuous, anabolic (*Brahmana*), and energizing (*Snigdha*). Additionally, it can be applied as a treatment for eye conditions, *pitta*, and *rakta*.⁴

Sushruta has talked about the physiological characteristics of breast milk as well as its physical attributes. In addition to being cool, breast milk has an astringent *anurasa* (secondary taste), energetic, *laghu* (light), and serving size He also states that cooking breast milk is never appropriate.

According to *Vagbhata* and other academicians, breastfeeding allows children to grow healthily.

Paryaya: *Dugdha, Kshira, Payas, Stanya, Balajivana*⁵

Stanya pramana (Quantity of Stanya or breast milk): Amount of *Stanya* is two *anjali*.⁶

Formation of *Stanya*:

As per *sushruta*, the *rasa* is created after food has been digested. The sweet essence of this *rasa*, which is circulating throughout the body due to the action of *vyana vata*, reaches the breast and is known as *Stanya*. *Rasa* and *Stanya* are both derived from *rasadhatu's* essence.^{7,8,9}

According to the notion of *garbhaposhana*^{10,11}, The *Aahara* ingested by *garbini* fulfills three roles.

They are as follows:

- ❖ *Matru pusti*
- ❖ *Garbha pusti* and
- ❖ *Stana Pusti*.

Rasadhatu nurtures *Stanya* as per *Ayurvedic* literatures.^{12,13} *Stanya* is considered an *updhatu* of *rasa dhatu* by *Acharya Sarangadhar*.¹⁴ According to *Harita*¹⁵, whatever the women consume, it travels via the *kshiravahi sira* and gets combined with *pitta* before reaching *Jathara*. It is digested by the *agni*, reaches the *siras* of the breast, and then is expelled. Milk is a secretion that contains the *agni* and *soma* together. The blood becomes suppurated and white as a result of *pitta's* activity. Milk does not form in young girls due to a lack of *dhatu* strength, and in *vandhya*(Infertile) women due to *vayu* filling up a milk carrying channel.

Acharya Vriddha Vagbhata asserted that *Stanya* originates from the *Aahara rasa* itself when speaking of *garbhaposhana*. The essence of *rasa* forms both *raja* and *Stanya*, where *Stanya* is the *upadhatu* of *rasadhatu*.¹⁶

Among the ten *pranayatanas*(seat of life). *Bhela* has included *Stanya*.¹⁷

Causes of *Stanya Pravriti*:

Sushruta explained the lactation process by using *Sukra* as an example. In a normal state, *Sukra* stays dispersed throughout the body; however, when she remembers something, touches a part of her body, or has sex, *Sukrasaya* forms and he ejaculates from the penis. When the mother is stimulated by the following elements, milk secretes similarly to how *Sukra* does.¹⁸,

The child's caressing of her body.

1. Observing the child
2. The child's remembrance
3. Keeping the child in her lap at all times.
4. The child's touching of her breast.
5. The most important component is the mother's love for her child.

Breast milk production and ejaculation are significantly influenced by the mother's affection for her child. Numerous psychogenic factors can prevent the release of milk by preventing the production of oxytocin. The Oxytocin "Milk ejection" reflex is inhibited by worry, tension, pain, and doubt; on the other hand, it is enhanced by loving thoughts of the baby, hearing the baby, seeing the baby, and the mother appearing at ease and confident.

Breastfeeding

It is now well understood that breast milk is the ideal milk for both rich and poor babies, that colostrum is essential for the newborn, that complimentary food must be added after 6 months of age. Breastfeeding should be continued for 2 years or beyond and the proper nutrition of lactating mothers should be ensured. Anxiety associated with the unfounded fear of lactation failure (the inability to produce milk) and of milk insufficiency (the inadequacy of breast milk for meeting the nutritional needs of the normal infant) is the most common reason for mothers failing to breastfeed within 1 hour of birth, maintenance of exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months, interrupting breastfeeding prematurely, or beginning complementary feeding before it is nutritionally required.¹⁹

The mother wrongly perceives that she is not getting enough milk and it is the most common reason for nonexclusive breastfeeding.

Ideal infant feeding comprises exclusive breastfeeding for six months followed by sequential addition of semi-solid and solid food.²⁰

Appropriate feeding is critical for an infant's healthy growth and development.

DISCUSSION

Giving breast milk to a baby or young child straight from a woman's breasts (through lactation) as opposed to using a bottle or other container is known as breastfeeding. Babies have a sucking reflex, which allows them to swallow and suckle milk. Most mothers can breastfeed for six months or longer without the use of infant formula or solid food. Human breast milk is the healthiest type of milk for newborn humans. There are a few exclusions, such as when the mother is on certain drugs, has active untreated tuberculosis, or is HIV positive. Breastfeeding lowers medical expenses and feeding expenses while promoting health and preventing disease.²¹

Artificial feeding has been associated with a rise in infant diarrhea deaths in both developing and developed nations. While most experts agree that breastfeeding has health benefits, they may differ on the risks associated with using artificial formulas and the optimal duration of breastfeeding.²² Choosing to breastfeed is a very personal choice. Regarding whether or not they want to, many women have their own opinions and sentiments.²³ "The American Dietetic Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics advocate breastfeeding as the BEST source of nutrition for infants"²⁴

Breastfeeding is important for both mothers and infants, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Both recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life and then supplemented breastfeeding for at least one year and up to two years or more.^{25,26}

While acknowledging the benefits of breastfeeding, regulatory agencies are also working to reduce the hazards of artificial feeding.

Advantages of breastfeeding:

The infant should be fed as far as possible on mother's milk because it is closer in its substance to the nutriment which the infant receives while in the womb, i.e. the menstrual blood that is transformed into milk. The infant readily accepts this milk and is quite used to it.²⁷

Importance of *Stanya*:

feeding an infant: one of a person's basic needs is food. Childhood nutritional issues are not the same as adult ones. In addition to energy and tissue replacement, all nutrients must support growth, which entails an increase in the size of every tissue in the body. Infancy is when growth increases at its fastest rate. Thus, this is the time when nutritional issues are most likely to arise. For a child's nutrition, it is imperative that they receive the right care.

Ancient literature of *Ayurveda* has classified the childhood period based on their food requirement i.e. *ksirapa* (milk is the main diet) upto one year, *ksirannada* (milk and cereals both) from 1~2 year, and *Annada* (cereal as the main diet) two years onwards.²⁸

Milk is the primary diet of children. Breastfeeding was considered a very excellent food for infants, even in *vedic* period. *Rigveda* has advocated breastfeeding after birth with the recitation of *mantras*.

Skanda, mentioned in *dharma granthas* became popular as “*Kartikeya*” only because of being breastfed by six “*krittikas*”. This reference reflects the importance of breast milk.

1. *Charaka* considered milk a wholesome diet, as it provides full nutrition, increases strength, and keep one healthy.²⁹

2. *Sushruta* said that milk is the very first natural diet of all animals including human beings.

In the general state of the body, milk provides strength. It is aphrodisiac and also increases immunity, while in the disease stage it is congenial and also helpful in keeping *dosas* in a balanced state.³⁰

Kashyapa has expressed a similar view like *Charaka & Sushruta*.³¹

Harita has explained the role of milk in keeping a person free from various ailments and mentioned that milk purifies *srotas*, keeps *dosas* in a balanced state increases appetite, and improves digestion.

CONCLUSION

Ayurvedic medicine provided a thorough and accurate explanation of *Stanya* and its significance, which can be used in the current era to lower infant mortality. Many medications, dietary plans, and behavioral regimens that are said to promote breast milk (*Stanyajanana*) are described in *Ayurveda*.

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