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Pre-Conceptional Care In Sharir Sthana of Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT

In society couple dreamed for momentous decision of child and they dream a procure disease free and healthy (mentally, physically) baby endowed with excellence. Pre conception care extension of antenatal care to provide optimal health to mother and baby. Ayurveda described regime and rituals before pregnancy to take care of foetus from the state of gametes to promote the multistate well being of child promising the efficacy of body (Dosha, Dhatu, mala) metabolism (agni), perception element (indriyas), psyche (Manas) intelligence (buddhi) and the inner spirit (Atma). Pre-requisites for healthy pregnancy described in ayurved Ritu (Fertile period), Kshetra (Uterus), Ambu (ahara rasa nutrient), Beeja (sperm and ovum), Marga (genital passage), Hridi (pure controlled consciousness). Pre-conceptional care comprises of treatment methods like purva karm snehan, swedan, purificatory method Vaman, virechan, and nutritive vasti associated with diet restriction, abstinence, religious rituals to ensure Beeja-shudhi, Kshetra-shudhi, and Mano Shudhi and putresti yajna. Above the pre conceptional care to bring healthy offspring and in interest of future generation for benefit of society and nation and to maintain the health in the affluent society and to improve the health in developing countries.

Keywords: Ritu, kshetra, ambu, beeja, Purv karm, Shodhan karma, Bramhacharya, Vajeekaran, Manoshudhi, Putresti yajna,

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INTRODUCTION

Garbha-Sambhava samagri and garbha bhava (essential factors for conception) is Ritu - womens period of ovulation Kshetram- Uterus(Well primed disease free secretory endometrial bed). Ambu- ambu pervading rasa dhatu formed by digested food. Beeja- ovum and sperm of women and men^{1,2,3}. other three factors like Marga Hridi and vata Marga-Disease free genital passage ., Hridi-Illustreted ,pure controlled Mind and consciousness., Vata- Participation of un Vitiated Vata is necessary in the formation and development of fetus². Garbha shat bhavas (Factors contributed by the paternal ,maternal etc) Embryo is originated by the aggregate of these entities – Matrija (mother) , Pitraja(father), Atmaja (self) ,Satmyaja (suitability), Rasaja(nutrition) and Sattvaja(psyche).The different parts being originated from these factors as maternal, paternal etc⁴. Neither mother ,nor father ,nor the different varieties of food ,or the mind transmigrated from other world can be the sole causative factor for formation of foetus .Combination of all these factor lead to the formation of foetus⁴. Promotion of qualities of above said is essential to acquire a quality child , as all of these factors participate in reproductive activity leading to pregnancy⁵.

Ritu Kala (The fertile period)-

Garbhadhan yogya kala (ayu) To get a child of possible good qualities male at age of twenty five and female at the age of sixteen years should try for pregnancy ,as both the partners are full of vigour and physical maturity³. As the seeds (purusha Beeja) deposited during this period are likely to bear the fruits (conception) hence it is termed as Ritu kala. According to different authorities , Ritu kala the period of maximum fertility extends for twelve to sixteen days after menstruation during the reproductive age ,in a healthy menstrual cycle .Dalhan clarified among sixteen days of Ritu Kala ,the first three days due to menstruation and last one day due to cervical constriction cannot be considered as suitable to conception^{1,6}. As lotus flower closes positively when the day is over ,women Garbhashaya(uterus) contract after the period of conception is over and as such does not receive the seed any more. Similar to the seeds sown after its appropriate season are unable to generate into baby plants ,the gamates after fertile period will not generate properly^{1,2}. The women whose face is corpulent and cheerful, body ,mouth and gums excessively moistened, who has longing for man, likes talks, has belly ,eyes and hairs loosened, develops twitching in arms ,breast, pelvis, umbilicus, thighs, pelvic region and buttocks and has excessive desire for sexual intercourse should be known as ‘ritumati’(that is season or period of conception). Features of ritumati -Bright and healthy appearance, Moist mouth and teeth, Laxity in flanks, eyes and hair, Twitching over arms breast arms ,breast, pelvis

,umbilicus ,thigh and hips., Exhilarated and happy moods ,Interested in hearing the love stories and to have sexual relations⁷. The women in Ritu kala looks Healthy ,bright ,happy, excited and sexually interested due to oestrogen influence Ritu and its specific importance for conception denote ovulatory time including proliferative phase under the influence of F,S,H, and oestrogen . The women in fertile period is advised to take the milk treated with Jeevaneeya group of drugs and contra indicated for application of corrosive treatment and for inhalation(Nasya)⁵.Timing of Garbhadhana -Intercourse should be in appropriate auspicious period of night.The concept of Muhurta in Vedic science is designed to give a specific information on where, when and how to act ,based on the planetary positions at the time of birth and currently in the location they resides if every action we take causes a ripple effect in life –the waves from that action flow out and influence everything in the universe (or beyond),then we should carefully consider – if possible –that each action should be positive and harmonious⁴.

Kshetra-

As a seed of paddy sown in well-prepared fields result into good yields the un-vitiated Kshetra leads into quality pregnancy⁸. Un-vitiated Shukra passing through healthy Yoni reaches healthy Garbhashaya and gets mixed with disease free Shonita resulting in pregnancy^{3,4}. Women who takes salutary and light meals and are habitually not having painful menstrual discharge and whose uterus is – unvitiated and who also have the channels (concerned) very clean and unobstructed , experts call them as fertile .they generate an offspring of desired form and brilliance as well as ,if there is alteration an there will be a corresponding distortion. (this description indicates both anatomical and functional efficacy of uterus⁸.The interior of uterus (Garbhashaya koshta) is filled by minute capillaries for whole month to receive the fertilization ovum (beeja)³. The term Garbha koshta represent the interior of uterus i.e. endometrium of uterus a special lining of the uterus cavity with maximum vascularity. Endometrium at the implantation site is in secretory phase corresponding to 20-21 days of cycle associated with increased hyperaemia and cellular oedema. Endometrium with its decidual reaction can be considered as Su kshetra⁵. The embryo after fertilization depends on the interior tissue of Garbhashaya of mother and nourished through percolation of transudates. Entire nutrients absorbed after digestion of the mother s food are divided into three one parts is supplied by filtration (Upasneha and Upashweda) to the foetus for the development⁴.The beeja as soon enters into the Garbhashaya, is surrounded by Rakta .Soon after fertilization a period of about two weeks during which the embryonic disc is depended on nutrients obtained from the fluid filled cavities of the amnion ,the coelom and the yolk sac .These fluids contain products arising

as a result of absorption by trophoblast from lysed uterine tissues and extra vasated maternal blood⁷.

AMBU

The blood and inter cellular fluid of endometrial tissues with healthy and required nutrient without any abnormality is quite helpful for the formation and development of the foetus⁶. Shukra and rajas (gamates) from father and mother provide four Maha bhutas to Garbha (each four parts)Nourishment to gamates is derived though Anna rasa (Digested food material) ,which provide four maha bhutas from exterior⁴. The growth of the foetus is the result of the effect of Ahara ras of mother and blowing of vayu¹. Entire nutrients absorbed after digestion of the mother food divided into three parts and one part is supplied by filtration (Upsneha and upshweda) to the foetus for the development⁴. Umbilical cord of the foetus is attached to the rasa carrying channel of the mother which carries power of food essence of mother to the foetus ,by this indirect nutrition the foetus develops, from conception until parts and sub parts are distinctly demarcated ,the life of foetus is maintained by nutrition supplied by rasa carrying vessels spread with ramification in all organ of the body by process of diffusion. Disease due deficiency of rasa is Due to non availability of proper diet to the fetus it suffers with Shosha (emaciation)⁴. The vayu moving upwards dries Rasacvahi channels of fetus thus it suffer from vata disorders , emanciated and remains in uterus³. The women by observing facts and indulging with stale vata aggravating and deficient food the fetus gets desiccated and its growth is retarded⁴.

Beeja (The gamates)

The type of seedings erupted depend upon the type of seeds sown⁸. For the procreation of progeny with quality (shreyasi praja) the basic needs are healthy spermatozoon and oocyte (avyapanna shukram ,shonitam)⁴, Factors responsible for the progeny , when dwell in the uterus obtain the shape and charactes of the parents like the melted metals (gold ,silver ,coppe, lead or bronze) poured in the mould take the shape of mould⁴. Beeja according to origin is of two types , Stree beeja –Artava , Pum beeja- shukra^{6,9}.Contribution of beeja to garbha (provision of pancha Mahabhutas)The embryo is composed and organized by five elements (panchmahabhuta) and few of the sources of these bhutas are Father , mother gamates (shukra and raja) from father and mother provide the matter stuff (Mahabhutas) . Digested food material (anna rasa) provide mahabhutas to gamates by nourishment^{2,4,10}. The physical characters (traits) of embryo depend upon relative predominance of maternal paternal or soul dependent physical elements. Dominant of Rajas and Tamas and the actions in the past life are responsible for the variations in the form of Bhutas to the sperm and ovum¹⁰.

Concept of beeja bhaga –

The word beeja in garbha sambhava samagri refers to male and female gametes ,Beeja and its component ingredient are the minute forms of the organs and parts of the body and the particular parts consequently develop into the specific organs and parts .The genetic material present in sex cells i.e. chromatin material responsible for transmission of characters from parents to offspring can be taken as panch mahabhutas provided by stree and purush beeja¹⁰. Thus the food effect the genetic material deciding the traits of human being hence some of the disease can be treated by changes in the diet etc⁴.The vayu along with kala (time factor) differentiates and associates the various structural units leading to formation of different organs and systems. The innumerable parts of the body ,their conjunction and disjunctions depend on the Vata and on the natural phenomenon (as a result of earlier deeds)¹¹.

Artava

By observing the different description we can summerize the following Artav is derived from rasa and rakta as a bye product .The production of Artava is result nof integrity and efficacy of the Artava vaha srotas. Pitta is involved in the information of Artava. Artava as its name indicates is cyclical (ritu kalaja) in its nature ,produced every month. It is one of the important components for formation of Garbha carrying fraction of panccha mahabhutas, It is responsible for certain traits ,organ and organ system(matrija)^{6,10}.

Shukra

The criteria of an ideal semen is like a crystal fluid,(sphatika) and has honey like smell. The other scientists are of the view that the ideal semen is having tila oil o honey like colour. Shukra is the ultimate tissue (sevanth dhatu) meant for procreation .Shukra, consisting of beeja (sperm) emanates as an essence ,carrying the representation of each organ and tissue convening the concept of beeja bhaga (genes).Atman (soul) being presiding factor enters along with the five elements^{4,7}. The developmental anomalies of foetus are also possible due to the abnormalities in the components of the Beeja, which are the genetic sources of such structures .The normal and healthy factors of Beeja subsequently give rise to a good progeny⁴.

Shadbhava

The parts ,principal and structures of the foetus are contributed by six parental sources as Matrija (maternal contribution),Pitrija (paternal contribution, Atmaja(soul), Satmyaja(wholesomeness) Rasaja (nutrients) , Sattvaja (mind) etc Matrija (maternal contribution)-blood and muscular tissue ,umbilicus ,heart, pancreas ,spleen, liver, kidney, bladder, rectum, stomach, anal canal and anus. Pitrija(paternal contribution)- hairs of scalp, body and face, nails ,teeth, bone tissue, solid

structures, ligamentous structures, blood vessels and semen. Atmaja-longevity, knowledge of self, mind, sensory organs, vital elements, apana, shape of the body ,speech ,complexion, tissue growth psycho-mataphysical principal as appearance ,inspiration, pleasure , pain ,desire, enmity memory, self ego, initiation, deviation and taking birth in different species. Satmyaja-Health , valour , happiness, perception capacity of organs ,speech articulation , glow, gamates potency , intellectuality and extreme pleasure. Rasaja- growth and decay of the body ,vitality, firmness or force of attraction among tissue and cells metabolism ,strength and spirit. Sattvaja –Welfare , anger ,delusion ,belief in god ,character, cleanliness, enmity, memory, scarifies, malice, prowess, fear ,wrath, drowsiness, spirit , sharpness, softness,profundity,unsteadiness^{4,11}.

VATA (The Architect of foetus)

Vagbhata considered properly functioning Vata as one of the important factor (Garbha-sambhava- samagri) for pregnancy. Spermatogenesis, oogenesis, fertilization , organogenesis, maturation of the embryo and complete growth and development depends upon efficacy of un – vitiated Vata². The Vayu along with kala (time factor) is responsible fo division and association of Beeja. The parts of the body are innumerable; and Vata is responsible for their conjunctions and disjunctions¹¹.

Role of vata in Fertilization -

Vayu activates teja during the friction of sexual organs in an act of copulation and the seminal fluid is ejaculated by the combined action of tejas and vayu into the vaginal canal. It unites later on with the artava (ovum),The combined sukra and artava due to agni (fiery property) and some are settle in the Garbhashaya⁷.

Role of vata in foetal nourishment

Ahara rasa of mother and inflation of vata facilitates the growth of the foetus¹. The Agni –sthana and Vata ,which are present in the umbilical region expands in all directions, contribute for the growth and development of the foetus .The growth of the foetus in the womb is affected by Rasa dhatu formed out of food ,which is circulated by the virtue of Vata through the srotas of the mother .these srotas are connected to Nabhi nadi of Garbha . By osmosis through the Nabhi nadi the potent nutrients are circulated in the foetus and thus foetus grows and Vyana vayu is responsible for overall circulation of nutrients among the body. Deprivation of nutrition leads to Garbha vyapad like Upavishtaka , Nagodara , Garbhashosha etc^{1,2}.

Role of vata in organogenesis –

The essence of Rakta and shleshma ae metabolized by the pitta and further Vata enters into that material ; thus the Srotas ,Guda and Vasti are formed .The Ushma (heat) and yan are main

factors of formation of Srotas. The same enters into the Mamsa Dhatu and divide it into Peshi (muscle). The essence part (sneha) of the Medas is transformed into Sira and snayu. Siras are produced in the light metabolic process and Snayu are produced in the heavy metabolic process¹.

Role of vata in multiple pregnancies-

When zygote is bifurcated by internal vayu two souls impelled by unrighteousness ,occupy them reaching uterus they are known as twins¹. Because of Vatika vitiation congenital abnormalities like blindness ,lame ,deafness etc will be caused . Exposure to mutagens leads to mutations and occur through errors I dna replication and repair and when occur in the coding sequences they are recognized through the deleterious consequences. Errors in DNA replication can be considered as Vatika vitiation¹. Promotion of the qualities of above said is essential to acquire a quality child as all of these factors participate in reproductive activity leading to pregnancy⁵.

METHODS FOR (PRE-CONCEPTIONAL CARE)

The pre conceptional care in Ayurveda probably can be divided into Care in physical plane(Sharir shudhi) It maintains the state of equilibrium in Doshas , Dhatus (physical entities) hence necessary in promoting the physical traits like Prakruti, sara, pramaana. Care in psychological plaine (Mano shudhi) - It maintains the static equilibrium of Mano gunas and pacific the sattva (psyche) thus promoting the psychological qualityies like intelligence (dhi, dhriti, smriti) etc. Care in the plaine of consciousness (Putresti yajna) - The soul being the salient feature of Ayurvedic embryology a series of sacrifices and oblation have been advised and advocated to invoke the soul of higher origin⁵.

Care in physical plane (Sharir shudhi) –

In this plaine we divide in purva karma, Shodhana karma associated with Bramcharya to avoid vitiation of Doshas and for improvement of quality of Gamates and Sharir¹. Purva karma includes a Snehan – Sneha refers to make the word smooth or to oleate. The process by which Snehana (unctuousness), Vishyandana (fluidity), Mridutwa (Softness), and Kledana (smoothness)is produced in the body is known as Sneha karma. Swedan- The process by which Stambha (stiffness), Gaurava (heaviness), Sheeta (coldness) is relieved and which induced Sweda (sweting) is known as Sweda karma⁴ Shodhan karma includes a Vaman karma – Expulsion of vitiated Doshas through mouth can be termed as Vamana. According to doshas vaman is conducted in Kapha is vitiated Pitta occupies the place of Kapha and vata predominant Kapha state ,Virechana karma- In general ,purgation should not be conducted without emesis except in costive bowel¹², Shali anna- Shali rice is Madhura and Kashaya in taste ,Laghu in nature, increases Bala, Ruchi, Swara, Sattwika in nature .Being Sheeta in nature, it

controls Pitta and act as diuretics, anabolic and aphrodisiac⁴. Ksheera -Milk is the best of jeevaniya ,rasayana, medhya, balya,vrishya, vayasthapana, sandhana dravyas. Its usage is indicated in yoni dosha, shukradosha, mootra dosha, pradar, garbhasrava and rakta –pitta⁴. Ghrita-It stimulates the digestion (agni) better than any other oil. Increase smriti, budhi, agni, shukra or ojas ghrita is clarified butter with its milk solids and water removed⁴. Taila-Taila is the fat derived from vegetative origin and are extracted from sarshapa, tila, priyala, vibhitaka, abhaya, eranda, madhuka etc oil yielding sources⁴. Masha- masha being constituted with madhura rasa, snigdha, ushna and guru gunas mitigates vata, aggravates pitta and sleshma. Increases bulk of stools and masculine vigour Increase the strength⁴. Usually purgation is sufficient as part of physical pre- conceptional care .If other treatment methods like vasti ,Nasya are needed should be done as per classical description⁵. Beeja (gametes) is very important in fertilization for common purification of male beeja (semen) should be proper application of urethral douche after he has undergone properly the prescribed measures of unctio (snehan), emesis(vaman), purgation (virechan), non unctuous(niruh vasti) and unctuous(anuvasan vasti)enema. for female beeja(ovum) measures ending with vaginal douch should be applied¹.

Garbhadaana

Garbhadhana is common ritual described in dharma shastra To get a male child a day among the even days of Ritu Kala should be selected ;and wishing for a female child a day among odds days of the Ritu Kala should be selected⁵.

Ahara

The husband on the particular day should anoints his body with ghee and should have meals contining of ghee, rice, milk and butter. Madhura ahara promotes the production of Shukra. Pumsavana yoga includes phalaghrita, Mahakalyana ghrita etc. which promote pregnancy. The wife should anoint her body with oil should consume the food consisting of oil and black gram. Pittala dravyas promote the production of Artava⁹.

Vajeekarana -

Vajikaran (aphrodisiac) is that which potentiates a man to trafick into women like horse and also sustenance in the same. One of the eight division of Ayurveda deals with aphrodisiac treatment in male, which includes enhancement in the quantity and quality of Shukra and i.e. to improve sexual activity. Indication- Person aspiring for children (apatya-arthi), aspiring for male babies (putra-arthi),aspiring for potency(Veerya-varadhanarth)¹².

Brahmacharya

Continence is one of restraints (Yamas).It is the restraint of the hidden power, power of

generation .When continence becomes confirmed vigour is obtained .Having attained vigour the person perfect his attainments and capable of producing noble progeny¹.

Male partner is advised to take Sneha, Sweda ,Vaman ,Virechana, Asthapana, Anuvasana,Shali anna, Ksheera, Ghrita the diet predominantly with sweet in taste (Madhura), Oily and Heavy in quality specifically being referred to milk and ghee. Female partner is advised to take Sneha, Sweda ,Vaman ,Virechana, Asthapana, Anuvasana, Uttara basti, Taila, Masha more oil and black gram⁴. The man oiled with ghrita should undergo purificatory methods vaman ,virechana , vasti and after observing celibacy for one month nourished by shali rice with ghrita and milk in the afternoon should approach women who was oiled with oil having observed chastity for one month taken food prepared mainly with oil and masha^{4,9}.

2) Care in psychological plane (Mano shudhi) –

In this plane Female should be particular having become clean and taken bath, covering herself with white or other clothes inside the bathroom , without seeing anywhere else , entering the place of god with pious feeling, worshiping the burning oblation –fire with rice and ghrita, having seen and worshiped ,god, visnu, and skanda and after coming outside should salute the sun and moon and not salute preta , pisaca and raksasa. The woman purified after taking bath looks to what-so-ever(person or objects) or thinks psychologically, usually delivers the child of similar behavior and physique, that –is-why she should always see god, cow, priest . old persons and teacher, should remain of generous mind. In twilights (morning and evening) should not have bath, coitus and should not think any other person except her husband. She should remain generous mind¹¹. The additions described are: High spirits of mind, Psychological intimacy with life partner, Spontaneous intense sexual urge. Kama, the sex motivation is essential for the fruition of self's desire that can shake the hedonic structure of sensual elements of the dynamic mind stuff leaving a sustained impression on it in a latent form. An appropriate auspicious period of night (Muhurta), Cordial atmosphere surrounded by friends. Relatives and husband with tender, courteous words and behavior. Provocative and decorative environment with fragrant flowers and comfortable bed. Desire phase disorders due to absence of sexual fantasies with marked distress and interpersonal difficulty and due to psychological problems like feeling unloved, feelings of depression, anger with partner, performance anxiety, low self esteem, guilt about sex and pleasure etc can be better dealt with friendly, cordial and decorative environment. The treatment for sexual desire disorders, sexual arousal disorders, orgasmic disorders include individual therapy and relationship counseling. The couple is instructed to perform Sensate focus exercises which are structured sensual exercises. Favorable external

environment and sound interpersonal relations described in ayurveda prove well in dealing with sexual dysfunctions^{3,4}. Born child acquires similar characters of that type of diet, behavior and conduct followed by couple at the time of intercourse. The woman desirous of having a child resembling specific person or of specific region should use specific diet, mode behavior and garments identical to the person of that region .She should practice similar behavior as she wishes to be the nature of her child in terms of truth, faith, honesty, humanity, charity, mercy, compassion and politeness etc⁴.

3) Care in the plane of consciousness- Putreshti Yajna -

In putresti yajna oblation with prepare material (caru) with prepared meat, cooked rice, drugs capable of suppressing the vata , barley- cake (purodasa) along with rice in eight bowls, by this the couple attains better expression- power and longevity, now accomplished by reciting the hymn “Abrahmanbrahmana,” over the portion of institutor of sacrifice, the left-over substances (after the oblation is performed)should be taken by the couple. White ox or horse or gold should be offered to the physician , and the same (the physician) not participating in the ceremony of preparing the pure sacred fire; performing the oblation daily in the fire kept in (alter of)the house, should eat the left- over material after oblation properly enchanting the same mantras.Now the husband, making the wife lie down on a soft comfortable bed Should be given the inhalation of laksmana (a drug), mixing(levigating) it with water, reciting hundred times the hymn”somah pavana”and “savitri” mantras, give its inhalation to her reciting “apodevirupasrja” mantras. Repeating the name of “Vamadevi” in low tone , keeping the wife on his right side, the husband should sleep going above the wife from left side and gradually perform (coitus) for (achievement of) conception. After excretion of bija(semen),the wife retaining the same should separate herself, later on wash(both of them their external genital organs)with cold water. After this (the woman) should avoid working near fire, hot sun , excessive physical labour, exercise and grief etc. Procedure of offerings for specific character of the child -If the woman is desirous to deliver the son of fair complexion, virile, pious and of good longevity, She should take daily, from the day purifying bath, the flour of parched white barley with honey and ghrita mixed with the milk of white cow having alive white calf, churned in the pot made of silver or bronze, should eat timely Sali rice, white barley, milk ,curd and ghrita in appropriate quantity; adorn herself with white flowers, ornaments and cloths; look at white horse and bull in morning and evening.(she) should listen to sober, beneficial and lovely stories, should have association of favourable family-members, with this she delivers the desired child. If she desired to have dark complexioned, red-eyed son with broad chest or black complexioned (son),she should use diet,

cloths, flowers ornaments of similar qualities, think of the persons of the similar places. The woman desirous of daughter should be given(rice)gruel. Milk and water medicated with tila are beneficial for complexion. Besides fair, dark and black complexions, others are condemnable. The described putreshti yajna can be simplified in demand of changing of aptitudes of present century to increase the will to have high quality child^{4,11}.

CONCLUSION

Review of all available scientific literature on preconceptional care it is concluded that importance of a health and enlightened progeny is very well described in the Ayurved literature. Preconceptional Care is to bring healthy offspring into society .This care to be used have an ideal progeny are part of the treasure of Ayurvedic knowledge. It is in interest of future generation for benefit of society and nation and to maintain the health in the affluent society and to improve the health in developing countries.

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