PREVENTION OF POLIO MYELITIS

In olden days our Ayurvedic Acharyas have not paid much attention to the prevention of Polio myelitis. Why they have not given much importance to this hazardous disease by which the child will get permanent disability and depend on others in his future life? Whether incidence of this disease was low? What it might be, at that time very few children might have suffered from this disease. Probably, they might have got good immunity power against this disease. Let us see the scientific background as well as presently available textual references regarding this disease.

Baliga, A.V. an Indian delegate who attended the second International Conference on Polio myelitis in 1951 at Philadelphia, has claimed that, Indian people are fortunate enough in having a comparatively low incidence of Polio myelitis. From this, we are able to say that, prevalence of Polio was very negligible before 1951. It is well known fact that, the medical experts pay much attention to those diseases which affect the masses and causing economic and social problems to the country. Probably, the Polio might not have been prevalent in olden days; this might be one of the factors for its being neglected.
At present, we are seeing many new diseases which were not attended to in Ayurveda. Habits, diets, environmental changes, advancement in civilization, economic and social problems play an important role to prevent as well as to produce many new diseases. Polio is one of the diseases which is affected due to the above mentioned factors. Payne (1955) has already mentioned numerous non-specific factors that precipitate into paralysis. They include age, genetic factors, physique, endocrinological disturbances, pregnancy, nutrition, other infections, over exertion, exposure, injections, trauma, tonsillectomy, dental extraction and exhaustion from various causes.

Our Acharyas have laid down certain precautions in the care of new born children not only to maintain the health but also to prevent many hazardous diseases like Polio myelitis. They have paid much attention to prevent neo-natal and early childhood diseases. They are, - (1) Honey, Ghee and paste of the gold mixed together should be given 3 times to the child on 1st day after delivery. (2) Every day oil should be poured into both the ears and apply oil on Shrungataka region. (3) Keep oil swab on head and apply oil on Samharandhra continuously for children. (4) Oil massage should be done every day with Vatashamaka and Brimhana oils before bath. (5) Fumigation should be given to the child
(6) All clothes should be fumigated with guggulu, sarshapa etc. after washing properly.

(7) In between 6th and 8th month the child's ear should be knitted with needle specially in winter season.

(9) The child should be protected from all sorts of injuries.

(9) Prolonged breast feeding to the child.

Let us see the scientific background for above precautions which were mentioned in olden days to prevent many neonatal as well as pediatric diseases.

According to Ayurveda, Madhu and Ghee can not be mixed together in equal quantity for the reason that they become poison. The Ayurvedacharyas might have known the fact that after giving this poisonous substance to the baby on the very first day it might develop antibodies in the body, so that the child will get immunity power against all the infectious diseases. Modern scientists have also stressed the early immunization method in respect of the child. Sabin (1955) has described that the placenta-transmitted antibodies are known to diminish at a regular rate and the persistence is influenced by the original titre. The majority of infants between five and six months are devoid of placenta-transmitted antibodies.

Clarifying further he says that as soon as the maternally transmitted antibodies disappear from the
circulation, the breast feeding plays further role. If the milk contains anti-polio myelitis substance, it affects the elementary canal where the virus establish.

Sabin has further pointed out that the lower income group mothers' serum as well as milk collected between 2 and 5 days after delivery had shown antibodies whereas higher income group mothers' serum had no antibodies and milk after 5th day of the delivery was completely devoid of activity.

It is well known fact that in rural areas, after delivery, Indian ladies get vigorous antivatik treatments such as oil massage to whole body, fumigation, hot water bath, complete rest, brimhana diets for a period of one to one and half months. These treatments may produce antibodies against all the diseases in the body of mother which may transfer through breast milk to the child.

Geffen, D.H. et al. (1953) have further thrown light on this topic and pointed out that the mothers' in highly developed countries have no antibodies to transmit to their children and the fact that generally in these countries a smaller proportion of infants are breast fed and for a shorter period. This might be one of the causes leading to higher incidence of this disease in highly developed countries.
Even in lower income group mothers' milk neutralized the polio myelitis virus collected between 38 and 340 days after delivery has been stated by Sabin (1955).

From above references, we can observe that, maternally transmitted antibodies will diminish at a regular rate from the circulation, so the child needs antibodies in early months from the mother's milk. But it has been observed that, higher income group mothers' milk may contain antibodies only for few days i.e. upto 5 days. Even in lower income group, the antibodies may gradually disappear from the milk after 38 days.

Therefore, keeping all the drawbacks in mind, we should develop antibodies in the child's own body by suitable method. Honey, Ghee mixed with gold paste, should be given to the child on first day after delivery. The child will get immunity not only against Polio but also against many infectious diseases due to Dhatu pushti. Simultaneously the child will get anti-vatik substances from mother's milk because mother is receiving anti-vatik treatment and brimhana diet.

Moreover, it is easily available every-where and can be implemented very easily even in rural areas without any medical supervision. If we work further on these lines by educating the people we may get good method
of prophylactic treatment not only for polio myelitis but also for all the viral infections.

One should pour oil every day in both the ears of the child and apply oil on Shrugataka region. Ears are the seat of vata dosha and oil keeps not to provoke it. Shrugataka is one of the Sadhya pranahara marmas. Application of oil and gently pressing on this vital area may give current stimulation as well as nutrition to the brain every day.

Keeping continuously oil swab on the head and Bramharandhra of children suggests that the brain will get nourishment and soothing effect to the central nervous system. Susrata has mentioned Pichu Dharana treatment for Pakshaghata patients. From this we can say that all the sense organs will get some nourishment from this Pichu.

Moreover, occupressure therapy suggests that the pressure which is exerted on that point may stimulate the organs by passing electric impulses. In the same way, pichu and oil application on Shrugataka and Bramharandhra regions may pass impulses to the central nervous system.

Oil massage with Vatashamaka and Brimhana tail every day gives the following benefits.

It enhances age, strengthens the body, induces sleep, gives good colour and smoothness to the skin,
enhances eye sight, the body is not susceptible to the
diseases due to vata, resists the body against exhaustions
and exertions, it tones up the tissues of the body. So
oil massage is helpful in all sorts of skin and vatavyadhis
and if we practice every day we can control the above said
diseases.

After bath every day fumigation with sharshapa,
guggulu, vacha etc. should be given. Acharya Susruta
says that Raksha karma should be given to the children.
By doing this fumigation we can kill all the germs in
that area. All virus and bacteria will be destroyed
with this treatments.

Knitting of the ears in 6th to 8th month of age,
may give us the idea that the child will get injury as
test dose. Because injuries may cause the polio myelitis.
Normally, the child should be protected by all sorts of
injuries. Some times, injection prick may cause polio.
It has been scientifically found out by Anderson et al.
(1950) and Aycok et al. (1942). They have observed that,
the appendectomy operation also leads to polio myelitis
within one month of Tonsilectomy and adenoidectomy.

Anderson and Skaar (1951) have both further
worked out on this problem to see the muscular trauma by
giving injection intra-muscularly and they have observed
that injection of intramuscular, paralysed in the injected
limb within one month duration.
Russell (1753) clearly says that, there is a lack of precise knowledge, how trauma causes polio, even though there is a clear evidence that various forms of peripheral trauma interfere with the resistance of the central nervous system.

Above mentioned precautions are very important to maintain the health as well as to prevent many viral and bacterial infections which are very dangerous to the child. Nowadays, no body is following these precautions because of mechanical life and advancement of civilization. Previously they might have followed these precautions systematically to their children, due to this polio was found very low incidence before 1951 (Biliga).

If we re-introduce these methods and precautions, to prevent polio and other viral diseases, it would be very useful to the masses and we can prevent completely this disease. Moreover, these methods are still practiced in rural areas, only thing is to educate the people scientifically through P.V., radio and Press media.

Keeping all these ideas in mind, I have prepared few instructions to the parents as precautionary measures to prevent polio myelitis to their children. They are -
1) Child should not be exposed to cold in rainy season.
2) Wear woolen or warm clothes to the child especially in rainy season.
3) Apply til oil to whole body and do light massage every day before bathing.
4) Keep til oil swab on bramharandhra (Anterior frantendale) for 24 hours upto 2 years age.
5) Pour til oil every day in both the ears.
6) Before bath apply termeric and beson instead of soap.
7) Give fumigation with guggulu or sharshapa or Hingu or vacha every day after bath up to one year.
8) If child gets fever avoid injections particularly during June to September and prefer oral medications and complete rest.
9) Try to give boiled water to avoid digestive troubles.
10) Proper care should be taken to avoid constipation.
11) Fever, diarrhoea, indigestion, common cold, cough can be treated with simple medicines.
12) Avoid fear psycosis.
13) Diets - Breast milk should be given priority and should be continued at least upto six months.

Hypothesis have been made on prevention of polio myelitis and these ideas should be taken as a guide lines for future work and a lot of clinical work is necessary to draw final conclusions on this matter.

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