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# CONTRIBUTIONS OF CHARAKA SAMHITA IN KAUMARBHRITYA: AN INSIGHT VIEW

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The "Charaka Samhita" is a key part of the "Brihat Trayi," the three main compositions of ancient Indian medicine, Ayurveda. It is well-known among Ayurvedic practitioners for its excellence in "Chikitsa," or treatment. Charaka Acharya, often referred to as the "father of medicine," is primarily recognized for his contributions to this field. However, his contributions to other branches of Ayurveda are less well-known. One such branch is Kaumarbhritya, which focuses on the care of infants and children, addressing their diseases and management. Although the "Kashyapa Samhita" is considered the primary text for Kaumarbhritya, it is not entirely available. Therefore, students and physicians must consult other texts to acquire knowledge and resolve their queries. The contributions of Acharya Charaka are extensive and this review attempts to highlight the knowledge and insights on Kaumarbhritya available in the "Charaka Samhita."

**KEYWORDS**: Kaumarbhritya, Charaka, Ayurveda Ancient, Children.

#### INTRODUCTION

Lord Brahma, the creator, is said to have originated Ayurveda, a branch of Atharvaveda, even before the creation of living beings. He compiled it into a comprehensive text of 1,000 chapters and 100,000 verses, dividing it into eight branches. According to Acharya Charaka, Kaumarbhritya, the branch dealing with pediatric care, is the sixth branch of Ashtanga Ayurveda. Although Charaka Samhita does not provide a direct definition of Kaumarbhritya, the commentator Chakrapani explains that it refers to the branch concerned with child nurturing. Acharya Charaka discusses Kaumarbhritya in various chapters of the Samhita, including Sharirsthana (chapters 4 and 8), Chikitsasthana (chapter 30) and Vimana Sthana (chapter 8).

Additionally, related topics are scattered throughout other sections of the text. This review aims to provide an overview of *Kaumarbhritya* as described in *Charaka Samhita*.

- Embryology-The union of sperm, ovum and the life principle in the womb forms the embryo, known as *Garbha.*<sup>[1]</sup>
- Garbha(embryo) which is formed with the help of six Garbha Sambhava Bhava Matrutaha(mother), Pitrutaha(father), Aatmataha(self), Satmyataha(suitability), Rasataha(nutrition) and

Satvataha (psyche).[2]

Acharya Charaka has explained the month-by-month growth (Masanumasik Vrudhi) of the Garbha.

- During the 1st month, the embryo is completely mixed and appears turbid, resembling phlegm (*Khetbhuto*).
- In the 2nd month, it solidifies into forms such as *Pinda* (small bolus), *Peshi* (elongated mass), and *Arbuda* (tumor).
- By the 3rd month, all body parts are formed simultaneously.
- The 4th month marks the attainment of *Sthiratva* (stability) in the fetus.
- During the 5th month, the development of flesh and blood is more pronounced.
- In the 6th month, the fetus develops *Bala-Varna* (complexion and strength).
- By the 7th month, the fetus is fully developed in all aspects.
- In the 8th month, there is a mutual exchange of *Ojas* between the fetus and the mother.
- The period from the 9th month to the 10th month is considered the time of parturition, with even a single day after the 8th month being crucial. [3]

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The fetus develops in the womb due to the excellence of procreative factors such as the mother and others, the mother's excellent conduct, the proper mechanisms of *Upsnehana* (nourishment) and *Upswedana* (heating) from the mother, the passage of time and natural phenomena. [4]

Vaya (Age) –Childhood is determined upto sixteen years when the *Dhatus* are immature, sexual characters are not manifested, the body is delicate, unenduring, with incomplete strength and predominant in *Kapha Dhatu*. This again with *Dhatus* in developing stage and unstable mind remains upto thirty years. <sup>[5]</sup> Care of newborn at birth *Acharya Charaka* explains *Sadyojata Paricharya* in a very fine manner.

(A) *Prana Pratyagamana* (Neonatal Resuscitation) *Acharya Charaka* advises that immediately after the birth of baby, while taking steps to deliver the placenta, the following measures should be taken for the resuscitation of the newborn: striking stones near the base of the baby's ears, sprinkling cold water in summer and hot water in winter on the baby's face. These measures help the baby regain consciousness. If the baby does not stabilize, waving a *Krishankapalika Shoopa* (a blackened surface broken earthen pot) near the baby should be done until full revival is achieved. [6]

#### **Clinical Importance**

Acharya Charaka emphasizes the initiation of Prana Pratyagamana measures immediately after birth, alongside efforts for placenta extraction without delay. Sensory, tactile and auditory stimulation are produced by striking two stones and sprinkling water over the baby's face. Striking stones near the mastoid or base of the ear produces an intense sound that stimulates the vestibulocochlear nerve, a sensory nerve whose afferent branch carries sensations to its nuclei situated on the floor of the fourth ventricle near the respiratory centre, thereby stimulating respiration. Sprinkling hot or cold water may stimulate the sensory fibres of the facial nerve, which in turn stimulates the respiratory centres in the brain. Rubbing Bala Taila on the baby's body provides tactile stimulation, helps maintain temperature and strengthens the baby. Chanting Mantras close to the baby's ear may offer psychological support to the mother and serve as an auditory stimulus for the baby.

## (B) Snana

According to *Acharya Charaka*, once respiration is established in the neonate and the baby is in a stable condition, the oropharyngeal passage should be cleaned with water, followed by a bath. *Sushruta* prescribes bathing the neonate after the *Jata Karma* ritual, recommending the use of decoctions from lacticiferous trees, water infused with aromatic drugs, or water heated with silver or gold, or warm decoctions of *Kapittha* leaves, tailored to the season, dosha and available resources.<sup>[7]</sup>

#### Clinical Importance

Bathing the baby maintains hygiene and using medicated bathing water promotes healing of the umbilical stump and has pacifying properties. Most of the substances prescribed by the *Acharyas* possess antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory and analgesic activities.

(C) *Mukhvishodhana* (Cleaning of the Oral Cavity) *Acharya Charaka* advises that the neonate's palate (*Taalu*), lips (*Ostha*), tongue (*Jivha*) and throat (*Kantha*) should be wiped with the attendant's finger, which should be properly clipped, well cleaned and covered with cotton swabs. Following this, the baby's palate should be covered with an unctuous substance using a cotton swab. [8]

## **Clinical Importance**

This technique involves first cleaning the oropharyngeal cavity and then the nasal cavity to prevent the aspiration of secretions into the respiratory tract when the baby begins breathing. This measure helps to eliminate the risk of aspiration pneumonia (*Ulvaka*). Placing a *Ghee*-soaked cotton piece on the *anterior* fontanel prevents heat loss from the large surface area of the neonate's head and also protects it from injury.

#### (D) Garbhodaka Vamana (Stomach Wash)

Acharya Charaka advises that the child should be given Vamana (emesis) using Saindhava (rock salt) and Ghrita (clarified butter) to wash out the gastric contents immediately after performing Pichhudharana. [9]

### **Clinical Importance**

Garbhodaka Vamana helps prevent regurgitation and the aspiration of regurgitated contents. It also prevents vomiting after feeds, which may occur due to the irritant effects of meconium, blood, or amniotic fluid present in the stomach. According to the Acharyas, Saindhava Lavana and Vacha have properties such as being Swadu (sweet), Dipana (digestive), Pachana (carminative), Sheeta (cooling), Tridoshhara (balancing the three doshas), Vamankaraka (inducing emesis), Malamutra Shodhaka (cleansing the excretory system) and they help cure Vibandha (constipation) and Adhymana (bloating). Therefore, these medications are recommended for Garbhodaka Vamana (stomach wash).

## (E) Nala Chedana (Cutting & Care of the Umbilical Cord)

Acharya Charaka prescribes Nala Chedana after Garbhodaka Vamana, while Acharya Sushruta recommends it after Mukha Vishodhana and Pichu Dharana. Acharya Vagbhata describes cutting the umbilical cord after Ulva Parimarjana. Charaka states that the umbilical cord should be cut at a distance of eight Angulas from the baby's umbilicus using an Ardhadharatype instrument made from Swarna (gold), Rajata (silver) or Ayasa (iron), followed by tying the cut end with a clean thread. The free end of the clamped cord should be hung around the baby's neck. If pus forms over

the umbilical cord, oil prepared with a paste of *Lodhra*, *Madhuka*, *Priyangu*, *Suradaru* and *Haridra* should be applied. The powder of these medicines should be sprinkled over the suppurated umbilical cord. [10]

Complications Due to Improper Cord cutting

## 1. Types of Complications

- O Ayamotundita (vertical swelling)
- o Vyayamotundita (horizontal swelling)
- o *Pindalika* (circular hardness)
- o Vinamika (marginal swelling)
- o Vijrumbhika (umbilical hernia)

**Management** -These should be managed after carefully observing seriousness of involved Desha or mildness of condition treated with massaging, anointing and irrigating Ghrita processed with the drugs which do not cause burning sensation and pacify Vata and Pitta. [11]

#### **Clinical Importance**

Acharyas advise cutting the umbilical cord after completing resuscitative measures and stabilizing the baby, as the cord provides nutrition and blood supply to the baby. Clamping the cord with a thread is recommended to prevent bleeding, which could cause hypovolemic shock. Hanging the umbilical cord around the neck after cutting prevents bleeding and infections from urine and stool. Lodhra, Madhuka, Priyangu, Suradaru and Haridra have Jantughana (antimicrobial), Vedana Sthapana (pain-relieving), and Shotha Hara (anti-inflammatory) properties. Therefore, these drugs are used to prevent infections.

#### (F) Jaatakarma

Jaatakarma is the first sacrament performed after birth. According to Acharya Charaka, on the first day, the neonate should be fed mantra-sanctified Madhu (honey) and Ghrita (Ghee). Afterward, the mother should give her right breast for feeding the baby, placing an earthen jar filled with water impregnated with mantras near the baby's head. [12]

## **Clinical Importance**

Jaatakarma is a vital birth rite that facilitates the baby's transition to life outside the womb. Honey and Ghee provide high-caloric nutrition, supplying energy and sustenance to the baby. Gold powder is believed to enhance provide protective benefits and development. The first feed during Jaatakarma stimulates gut movements and activates gastrointestinal system. This ritual also allows for the assessment of the neonate's rooting and sucking reflexes. Additionally, the use of *Mantras* during *Jaatakarma* provides psychological support to the mother. Acharya Charaka emphasizes the importance of initiating breastfeeding as soon as possible after birth, starting from the first day, to benefit from the protective immunoglobulins present in colostrum and to ensure the baby receives essential nutrition.

#### (G) Rakshakarma (Protective Measures)

Rakshakarma, meaning the protection of the newborn, is described in detail by Acharya Charaka. Around the labour room (Sutikagara), twigs of Adani, Khadira, Karakndu, Pilu and Parushaka should be hung, while Sarshapa (mustard seeds), Atasi (flax seeds), Tandula (rice) and Kan- Kanika (fragrant herbs) should be scattered on the floor. A packet containing Vacha, Kustha, Kshomka, Hingu, Sarshapa, Atasi, Lasuna, Guggulu and other Rakshoghana (protective) substances should be hung on the door and the same substances should be tied around the necks of both the mother and the child. Inside the *Sutikagara*, a fire lit from *Tinduka* should be kept constantly burning. Female attendants who are friends of the mother should maintain a constant vigil by remaining awake for ten to twelve days. The entire household should be filled with affectionate people and celebrations should be conducted. To invoke auspiciousness upon the mother and child, Brahmins well-versed in the Atharva Veda should offer prayers twice a day.[13]

## Clinical Importance

Rakshakarma, aim to protect the newborn baby from various infections as in use of clean clothes, beddings etc. The various drugs mentioned in *Dhupana Karma* have antiseptic and antimicrobial properties, fumigation of the *Sutikagara* by various *Dhupana* drugs is mentioned to protect the baby from various opportunistic infections/diseases.

#### (H) Namkarana (Naming Ceremony)

On the 10th day, the mother, along with the baby, after bathing with water containing all aromatic drugs, white mustard and Lodhra, should wear light, undamaged and clean clothes. They should adorn themselves with auspicious, desirable, light and splendid ornaments, touch auspicious objects and worship the appropriate deity. Brahmanas, distinguished by their hair tied up, wearing white attire and free from deformity, should then offer blessings and invocations. The baby, placed on a pack of undamaged cloth, should be positioned with its head towards the east or north. Subsequently, the baby's father announces that the child is offering salutations to the deity and the Brahmanas. Following this, the child should be given two names: one based on the constellation at the time of birth and the other for everyday use. The everyday name should start with Ghosa (sonant) alphabets and end with Anasth (semivowel) or *Ushma* ones. It should not include a letter with Vridhi (diphthong), should align with naming traditions from previous generations and should not be newly established. The name based on the constellation should resemble the deity associated with that constellation and consist of two or more letters.<sup>[14]</sup>

## Examination of the Baby<sup>[15]</sup>

After the naming ceremony, the baby should be examined to assess the span of their life. According to *Acharya Charaka*, the following features indicate a child blessed

with a long life.

- 1. Hair: Discrete, soft, sparse, oily, deep-rooted and black
- 2. Skin: Firm and thick.
- **3. Head:** Naturally well-endowed, slightly larger in size, proportionate and umbrella-like.
- **4. Forehead:** Broad, firm, even, well-united with the temporal region, marked with upper signs (three transverse lines), corpulent, wrinkled and half-moon shaped.
- **5. Ears:** Thick, with large and even flaps, equally elongated downwards, depressed at the back, with a compact tragus and large meatus.
- **6. Eyebrows:** Slightly hanging downwards, disjoined, even, compact and large.
- **7. Eyes:** Equal in size, with concentrated vision, clear divisions and subdivisions, strong, lustrous, with beautiful fronts and corners.
- **8. Nose:** Straight with large nostrils, well-ridged and slightly depressed at the tip.
- **9. Mouth:** Big, straight, with well-set teeth.
- **10. Tongue:** Sufficient length and breadth, smooth, thin and with normal colour.
- 11. Palate: Smooth, well-developed, hot and red.
- **12. Voice:** Profound, not weak, sweet, echoing and deeply resonant.
- **13. Lips:** Neither too thick nor too thin, with proper breadth, covering the mouth and red in colour.
- 14. Jaw: Large.
- **15. Neck:** Round and not very large.
- **16. Chest:** Broad and well-developed, with a hidden xiphisternum and vertebral column.
- 17. Breast Nodules: Distant.
- **18. Sides:** Unbending and stable.
- **19. Arms, Legs, and Fingers:** Round, developed and long.
- **20.** Hands and Feet: Big and developed.
- **21. Nails:** Stable, round, unctuous, coppery, high and tortoise-shaped.
- **22.** Navel: Whirled clockwise and deep.
- **23. Waist:** One-third less than the chest in breadth, even, with well-developed muscles.
- Buttocks: Round with firm and developed muscles, not too elevated.
- Thighs: Tapering downward, round and welldeveloped.
- **26. Shanks:** Neither too corpulent nor too thin, resembling a deer's foot, with hidden blood vessels, bones and joints.
- 27. Ankles: Neither too corpulent nor too thin.

In addition to these anatomical features, normal functioning of flatus, urine, stool and sexual organs, as well as normal sleep patterns, excretion, smiling, weeping and sucking, indicate a long life span.

**Dhatri** – The wet-nurse has sweet, copious and pure milk, she should take bath, apply after-paste, put on white dress and wear one of these herbs- *Aindri*, *Brahmi*, *Satavirya*, *Vatyapuspi*, *Viswaksenakanta*. Then taking the baby with

his face towards the east, she should made him suckle the right breast first. Thus, the procedure about the wet-nurse is said. [16]

#### Kumaragara

Describe the nursery for the child. It should be well-planed by the architect. It should be spacious, beautiful, free from darkness and access of wind, well-ventilated, strong, inaccessible for various animals, rats and insects, distinct places for water, pounding, urinal, lavatory, bathroom and kitchen, comfortable in particular season, equipped with cot, chairs and beddings according to season. Moreover, protective measures, offerings, auspicious rites, oblations and expiatory rites should be performed well there and it should be full of clean and elderly persons, physician and affectionate people. Thus, the method of nursery is explained.<sup>[17]</sup>

#### Nurserv

The nursery should be meticulously planned by the architect. It should be spacious, aesthetically pleasing, well-lit and have good access to natural ventilation. It must be strong and secure, ensuring it is inaccessible to animals, rats and insects. It should have separate areas for water storage, pounding, urinals, lavatory, bathroom and kitchen, each designed for comfort according to the season. The nursery should be equipped with cots, chairs and bedding suitable for the prevailing weather conditions. Additionally, protective measures, auspicious rites, ablutions and expiatory rites should be conducted diligently. The environment should be filled with cleanliness, elderly individuals, physicians and caring individuals.

#### **Bedding for the Child**

The cot, chair, bedding and coverings for the child should be soft, light, clean and perfumed. Any items that come into contact with sweat, excrement, insects or are soiled with urine and faeces should be promptly discarded or if possible, thoroughly cleaned, dried and fumigated before reuse. This ensures a hygienic environment conducive to the child's health and comfort. [19]

#### **Fumigation**

For fumigating clothing, cots, bedding and coverings, materials such as barley, mustard, linseed, asafoetida, *Guggulu*, *Vacha*, *Vayastha*, *Golomi*, *Jatila*, *Palankasha*, *Ashokarohini* and the slough of serpent should be used. These substances are prescribed to ensure cleanliness and hygiene in the child's surroundings. [20]

#### **Ornaments**

Amulets to be worn by the child could be made from the tips of the right horns of a live rhinoceros, deer, *Gayal* or bull. Additionally, herbs like *Jeevaka*, *Aindri*, *Rushabhaka* or those recommended by *Brahmins* versed in the *Atharvaveda* should be used for making these amulets, as per their beneficial properties and traditional significance. [21]

## Toys (Kridanaka)

Toys (Kridanaka) should be

- Variegated in colour.
- Sound-producing.
- Beautiful in appearance.
- Lightweight.
- Without sharp ends or edges.
- Designed in a way that prevents them from being swallowed.
- Non-toxic.
- Non-terrifying to the child. [22]

These qualities ensure that toys are safe, engaging and suitable for the child's enjoyment and development.

Aushad matra -Doşas, Dūşyas and Malas and also the disorders which are in adults are entirely the same in

children with the only difference that their quantity is less. Emesis etc. are avoided in children looking to their delicacy, dependence on others and incapability in respect of speech and movements. Emesis etc. are avoided in children looking to their delicacy, dependence on others and incapability in respect of speech and movements. The learned physician should administer drugs to children in smaller dose according to disease and mostly sweet, astringent, with latex and soft ones cautiously. Excessively unctuous, rough, hot, sour, pungent in *Vipāka* and heavy drugs, food and drugs are contra-indicated for children. Thus, treatment of all diseases of children have been mentioned in brief which should be applied by the learned physician after due consideration. [23]

## Asthashira Dosha<sup>[24]</sup>

Dosha	Milk defect	Effect on Breastfeeding	Symptoms in baby	Treatment
Vatha	Virsta	Loss sweetness inheritance origin	loss of taste, growth with difficulty	Panartha-DrakshaadiYoga Lepanarth- – Panchkoladi
Vatha	Fensanghata	Foam production d to churning milk.	Baddha stool, urine, Apana Vata blockage, Vaatika Shiroga, Pinus	Panartha – Patha, dry ginger, Kakjangha a Murva Kalk water Kirtiktadi Kashaya bre purification For coating – Anjanadi yaw, wheat
Vatha	Rukshta	Exploition affecation	Loss of strength by rudeness	Panarth -drinking ghee Breast cleaning medicine siddha milk
Pitta	Vivarnata	Colors Like blue, yellow, black etc.	Excessive sweating from the body and thrist.	Panarth – Mulathi Munakka, Sinduvar Kalka for applying with cold water
Pitta	Durgandhta	odour	Pandu, Kamla	Panarth- karkatshargi, Ajasharangi, Trifla, Haldi, vacha,cold water Lepanarth – Sarivadi lep
Kapha	Atisnigdh	Snehutpatti	Shwas, Kasa, Tamak, Prasek	Panarth- devdaru, motha,patha,sendhav warm water
Kapha	Pichilta	Stanya pechilya	Jarhta, mukh shothyukta	Panarth-Mustadi yoga, takra arishta  Lepanarth- <i>Bilvamul</i> , <i>vidarikanda</i>

*Chayanprasha*- it stimulates growth in children. <sup>[25]</sup>

**Aragvadha** use-Fruit pulp of Aragvadha in the mixed with grape juice should be given to children of the age from four to twelve years suffering from burning sensation and udāvarta. [26]

As to the query that if man is born of a man why the offsprings of the dull etc. are not similar to their parents it is said that in the seed (sperm or ovum), the part of the body which is damaged in its genetic source gets abnormality otherwise not. Hence both types of cases are observed. The sense organs of all are self derived and their presence or absence is dependent on fate. Therefore, the offsprings of the dull etc. are not invariably similar to their parents. [24]

Garbh poshana- Acharya Charaka the Rasa of the pregnant woman serves 3 purposes Swa-shareera pushti (Nourishment of her own body), Stanyaaya (Lactation) and Garbhavridhi(Growth of fetus). Being supported by that food, the fetus is dependent upon the mother keeps living inside the uterus. [26]

Garbhodaka Vamana -Acharya advices doing the Garbhodaka Vamana procedure after the delivery of the new-born since there are chances, that the neonate would aspirate meconium. [27]

Atulya Gotriya Sharira- From clinical point of view this chapter throws light on the selection of couple for marriage to obtain the healthy offsprings. Atulya Gotra Vivaha is the non- consanguineous marriage which is proven as the one of the solution to overcome genetic diseases.

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Different conditions explained by Charaka as Trinputrika, Varta, Vandhya resembles with persons with ambiguous sex and genetic syndromes like Turner, Kleinfelter syndrome. All these facts about the formation of foetus explained in Charaka Samhita are coming into the light nowadays through the knowledge of genetics, embryology and obstetrical science. Signs of detection of pregnancy explained by Acharya Charaka resembles with today's physiological changes in pregnant women. Hinanga, Adhikanga, Vikritanga concepts of Charaka are the backbone of all today's concepts of dysgenesis, agenesis of organ and congenital defects or anomalies. [28]

#### CONCLUSION

Charaka Samhita, a part of the three great treatises of Ayurveda known as "Brihat Trayi," is a remarkable creation by Acharya Charaka. It is structured with sequential arrangements and detailed descriptions of various topics in the form of verses. Due to his profound knowledge and significant contributions to the field of medicinal treatment, Acharya Charaka is respectfully known as the "father of Indian medicine." While Charaka primarily focused on adult medicine, he also acknowledged that the same principles apply to paediatric care, albeit in smaller quantities. The Samhita provides a comprehensive overview of neonatology, covering essential aspects such as newborn care, breastfeeding, child protection, neonatal nursery practices and the importance of safe and engaging toys. These insights are foundational for students, scholars and physicians seeking to understand Kaumarbhritya (paediatrics) within the framework of Ayurveda. Despite existing research, the text holds many hidden insights that warrant further exploration and study, offering potential avenues for deeper understanding application in contemporary healthcare practices.

#### **DISCUSION**

The Charaka Samhita significantly contributes to Kaumarbhritya through holistic care guidelines. It emphasizes prenatal and postnatal care, breastfeeding, and infant nutrition, ensuring healthy growth. The text details treatments for pediatric diseases, developmental milestones, and immunity enhancement using Medhya Rasayanas (cognitive herbs). It underscores mental health, preventive care, and hygiene, alongside creating a supportive environment. Ethical education individualized treatments based on a child's constitution (Prakriti) are highlighted. Practical applications like massage therapy and dietary recommendations integrate ancient wisdom with modern pediatric practice, promoting overall well-being in children.

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