GARBHADHANA VIDHI - A CONCEPTUAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT
Fertility is the natural capability to produce offspring. Women's fertility peaks in the early 20s and drops considerably after age 35. Women's fertility concerns are also on the rise, and the worldwide general fertility rate is lower than ever before. With everything from toxins in the environment to high levels of stress being suspected as possible causes, solutions are needed to strengthen the reproductive capacity of women who wish to conceive. Yet just raising the rate of conception is not enough. As per WHO, an estimated 2,76,000 babies die within 4 weeks of birth every year, worldwide, from congenital anomalies. Pregnancy should be by choice, not by chance- this statement holds true for having a healthy progeny and safe pregnancy.

The lens of Ayurveda broadens our vision to see that fertility is more than the physical act of becoming pregnant. In this way, it is understood that fertility is equally spiritual and emotional as it is physical. The regimen followed during pre pregnancy period to achieve conception is called “Garbhadhaana Vidhi”. Specific guidelines have been laid in Ayurveda for Pre conception care. Conception or fertilization means the fusion of gametes to produce a new organism. Preconception care is an opportunity for couple to improve their health before they start trying for a baby. The aim of preconception care is to prepare body for pregnancy, birth and beyond. Preconception care improves chances of falling pregnant more easily, having a healthy pregnancy and healthy baby and aiding recovery after the birth.

KEYWORDS: Preconception Care, Garbhodhana vidhi, Ayurveda.
INTRODUCTION
The main aim of Ayurveda is to maintain health of healthy person & cure the disease of diseased.\cite{1} Ayurvedic principles are guided by the faith that what is within our body is that which is in the universe. Our body has all the five basic elements (Pancha mahabhutas) found in the Universe like the Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether. When all these elements are in balance and working together, the mind and the body achieve the highest state of existence. Ayurveda gives immense significance to the preparation of both partners prior to conception. Making the decision to have a child is momentous. It is to decide forever to have your heart to going to walk around. Reproduction is one of the primary character of the living organism. As per Taittareeya Upanishad having good progeny in society is pride thing in the world. A healthy, intellectual, beautiful offspring with long life is desired by all.\cite{2} When a couple is seen and counselled about pregnancy, its course and outcome well before the time of actual conception is called preconceptional counselling. Objective is to ensure that a woman enters pregnancy with an optimal state of health which would be safe both to herself and the foetus.\cite{3} India is one of the 6th countries that account for 50% of the maternal deaths worldwide. Maternal Mortality Rate is 230 per 100, 00 live births in developing countries.\cite{4} The aims and objectives of preconceptional care is to identify the high risk factors, stabilising the previous disease, to discontinue the teratogenic medications, improve the base level health, to prevent the repetitive reproductive disease & to ensure that woman enters pregnancy with optimal state of health which would be safe for both herself & foetus.\cite{5}

FACTORS INVOLVED IN CREATING A HEALTHY CHILD
Atulyagotravivaha-Ayurveda says marriages shouldn’t be consanguineous.\cite{6} If marriages are consanguineous, then there may be chances of Prameha (Diabetes), Kusthta (skin disorder), Arshas(piles), Khandaustha (cleft palate/lip) etc.

First Conception-The suitable age for man for conception is 25 years and the age of woman is 16 years. Since both the partners are full of valour and vigour at this age, the born child also possesses these qualities.\cite{7}

Garbhadhana Vidhi-The regimen followed during pre pregnancy period to achieve conception is called Garbhadhana vidhi. Ayurveda gives immense significance to the preparation of both partners prior to conception. According to Ayurveda preparing for conception can be compared to the process of farming. Just like the health of a crop depends on the quality of soil, seed, proper timing of sowing and water(containing nutrient matter) it
gets, the health of a baby depends on the health of its parents. For a pregnancy to be healthy and successful, a couple needs to take care of the following four essential factors. Sperm/ovum(seeds), Uterus(soil), Nourishment(water) and Time for conception(time of sowing).[9] Acharya Vagbhata says 5th as Vata. Vata is the main factor for division of cells.[8] After the onset of menstruation, for three days and nights, the woman should abandon intercourse. Classics says to follow celibacy, sleep on grass bed, avoid day sleep, excessive talking, massage & bathing etc.[10] Critically when we observe these it probably indicated during menstrual period so as to provide adequate rest to the lady & certain time for herself. When primordial follicles developing into graffian follicles & hence may be advised certain rules & regulations. These will keep her away from the environmental xeno-estrogens & mutagens which can cause mutation leading to foetal anomalies.[11] On the fourth day after having taken purificatory bath and decorating herself with new clothes and having invoked blessings she should meet her husband. In our classics it is said that whomsoever person the woman sees first just after the bath at the end of her menses the offspring would also resemble him. Hence it is advised that she should see only her husband at that time. Intercourse on the first day of menstruation diminishes the life of the man. If conception occurs by this the foetus would die during delivery; by conception on the second day the child would die in the immediate post natal period; by conception on the third day the child would have incompletely formed body parts or a short life; and by conception on the fourth day, the child would have fully developed body parts and long life. Just as a floating substance thrown into the river against the current flows back and does not go up the stream, in the same way, it should be understood that the entrance of sperms is not productive while the blood is still flowing out. Therefore intercourse should be avoided for the first three nights. First of all both man and woman should undergo Snehana (unction) and Swedana (fomentation) and thereafter purify themselves by Vamana (emesis) and Virechana (purgation) so that they come gradually to normalcy. Thereafter they should take Asthapanan and Anuvasana basti (enema). By these procedures the deranged Dosha and mala are eliminated from the body. Then the man should be managed with ghee and milk cooked with sweet drugs and the woman with oil and Masha (black gram).[12]

□ Method and position for conjugation (Intercourse) The man should go to the bed by keeping his right leg (Dakshina pada) first while the woman should left leg.[13] During the time of intercourse both of them must be with Prasanna chittata. The woman should be in supine position during intercourse so she can receive the seed (semen) and in this condition
Doshas remain in normal position\[14\] Afterwards for lady strenuous work is avoided and advised to maintain the celibacy till the signs of pregnancy arrive.

**Diet for couples**

Diet is a critical key to successful conception for both partners. In Ayurveda there are descriptions of many herbs and general tonics which can be useful for both the partners. Diet-for male milk & ghee prepared from sweet drugs, for female *taila* (oil) & *masha* (black gram) is advised for the period of one month. *Asthanga Hrudaya* advocates ghee especially *Phalaghrita* & *Mahakalyanaka Ghrita*.\[15\] *Acharya Kashyapa* explains *Lashuna kshira* (milk prepared by garlic) & ghee\[16\] Grossly diet should consist of *Rasayana* (rejuvenator) & *Garbhasthapaka* (helps in implantation & stabilization of pregnancy) properties. As per modern folic acid supplemented.\[17\] *Acharya Harita* mentioned indirectly in *Vandhya chikitsa* (treatment of infertility) while giving description of pathyapathya (congenial & non congenial diet) like *Kacchura* (*Curcuma zedoaria* Rosc), *soorana* (*Amorphophallus comanulatus*), *amla* (sour substances), *kanjikam* (type of fermentative preparation), vidahi drugs (causes burning sensation) are contraindicated. These indicated drugs probably contains some amount of Phyto-estrogens which maintains the regulation of menstrual cycle.\[18\] A good diet and lifestyle is critical for at least six months before trying to conceive for both partners. Ghee is one more component explained in preconceptional & in ANC. Ghee is rich in Vitamins A & E. It is rich in conjugated linoleic acid, has an antioxidant with Antiviral properties. It is rich in medium chain fatty acids which are absorbed directly into liver & burnt as energy. Butyric acid in it supports production of killer T cells in the gut thus helps in healthy immune system.\[19\] Other Herbs such as *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somniferum*), *Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*), *Gokshura* (*Tribulus terrestris*), *Musali* (*Curculigo orchioides*), *Kapikacchu* (*Mucuna pruriens*), *Vidarikanda* (*Pueraria tuberosa*), *Yashtimadhu* (*Glycerrhiza glabra*), *Bala* (*Abutilon indicum*), *Amalaki* (*Phyllanthus emblica*), drugs of Prajasthapana can be taken. Women planning for pregnancy should maintain good nutritional status prior to the conception. This will help to minimise health risks of both mother and infant.

**DISCUSSION**

Late marriages & late pregnancies are the one of the major contributory cause for the congenital anomalies. During early embryo genetic periods most important & vital organs will be produced & any insult during this time may end up in the anomalies i.e. again burden to nation as well as for the parents too. Diet explained like black gram- is the rich source of
folic acid, which is required to prevent the neural tube defects, it acts as potent anti-oxidant so helps to reduce the oxidative stress and it also contains protein & fibres. Ghee contains Omega-3 fatty acids which is required for the brain development.[20] Modern lifestyle leading to increase in the stress which is major cause for infertility. Along with the lifestyle habits like alcohol consumption & the environmental toxicity affecting the sperm count, quality, motility, it also depletes the zinc level in body, whereas in females it affects the ovulation & menstruation leading to the hypothalamic pituitary ovarian dysfunction.[21,22] Nowadays infertility is troubling like epidemic. In such situation Ayurvedic therapy may act on hormonal level & maintain normalcy of the hormones required for the maintenance as well as production of garbha. These would also help in the removal of the accumulated toxins. Diet explained will provide the essential micro & macro nutrients to would be mother & future child. Along with the classically told methods few additions like folic acid, iron, calcium supplementation & taking care of BMI, avoiding habits like alcohol, tobacco, & avoiding use of narcotics would yield much more better & desired results.

CONCLUSION
Pregnancy should always be planned, not by chance. The Ayurvedic preconception care (Garbhadhana Vidhi) begins with the selection of the right partner, both constitutional and age wise. It then explains about the right mode of conception and the importance of diet, lifestyle, taking advantages of our body’s natural ability to cleanse and renew and many more factors in establishing a concrete foundation from the very beginning of marriage, conception and pregnancy to welcome a new life and to contribute towards healthy society.

REFERENCES


