

REVIEW ARTICLE

Understanding of *Kuposhan* in *Ayurveda*: A Review

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received on: 18-07-2023

Accepted on: 13-09-2023

Available online: 30-09-2023

Key words:

Apatarpanjanya Vyadhi,
Balashosha,
Karshya,
Parigarbhika,
Phakka

ABSTRACT

Introduction: The term malnutrition covers two broad groups of conditions. One is under-nutrition; other is over-nutrition. Malnutrition affects people in every country. Undernutrition is widely recognized as a major health problem in developing countries of the world. It has been estimated that in India, 47% of children suffer from varying degrees of malnutrition.

Aims and Objective: The aim of the study was to collect and compile the data regarding *kuposhan* (undernutrition) in different *ayurvedic* and contemporary texts.

Materials and Methods: Different Classical textbooks, modern books, different journals, and websites were referred to in the above context.

Discussion: *Aahara* (food) is one of the *Trayopstambha* (Tripods of life) of life as per *Ayurvedic* classics. *Ayurveda* describes malnutrition under *Apatarpanjanya Vyadhis*. (undernutrition diseases). Based on severity and etiology, these disorders may be considered as *Karshya* (Undernutrition), *Phakka*, *Parigarbhika* (*Kwashiorkor*), and *Balashosha* (*Marasmus*). The exact correlation of *Kuposhana* with any specific disease of modern medicine is not possible but various clinical signs and symptoms are exactly same as that of Protein-energy malnutrition. Proper diet and lifestyle modification, *Nidan parivarjan* (removal of cause), and *Brimhana chikitsa* describe in *ayurveda*, one can control or reverse this type of condition.

Conclusion: *Kuposhan* can be correlated with malnutrition there are detailed description and its management available in classical text in *Ayurveda*. This management is equally helpful in the present context.

1. INTRODUCTION

Malnutrition refers to deficiencies, excesses, or imbalances in a person's intake of energy or nutrients. The term malnutrition covers two broad groups of conditions. One is undernutrition; other is overnutrition but Protein-energy malnutrition (PEM) is restricted to under-nutrition.^[1] Nutritional status is an indicator of the nutritional profile of the whole community. Malnutrition affects people in every country. Undernutrition is widely recognized as a major health problem in developing countries of the world. It has been estimated that in India, 47% of children suffer from varying

degrees of malnutrition. Sometimes, malnutrition and PEM are used conversely with undernutrition. The term PEM applies to a group of related disorders that include *marasmus* and *kwashiorkor*.^[2] *Ayurveda* describes malnutrition under *Apatarpanjanya Vyadhis*. Based on severity and etiology, these disorders may be considered as *Karshya*, *Phakka*, *Parigarbhika*, and *Balashosha*.^[3] *Aahara* (food) is one of the *Trayopstambha* of life as per *Ayurvedic* classics.^[4] *Acharya Charaka* has described 18 types of *kshaya*, in which seven types of *dhatu kshaya*^[5] have also been described *Kupashana* causes "Emaciation of child" which originates from a nutritional deficiency in children, which is the same as PEM in modern science. The exact correlation of *Kuposhana* with any specific disease of modern medicine is not possible but various clinical signs and symptoms are exactly same as that of PEM.

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2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Different classical textbooks, modern books, different journals, and websites were referred to in the above context.

2.1. Nidana

There are many causes of malnutrition in terms of classical texts mentioned such as *Aaharaja- Katu and Tikta Rasa*, *Ruksh Annapan*, *Alpa Bhojana*, *Viharaja- Kriya Atiyoga* (excess exercise), *Ratri Jagrana* (night awakening), *Vata and Atapa Sevana* (Sunbath), *Malmutradi Nigraha*, *Manasik- Chita* (stress), *Bhaya* (fear), *Udvega* (depression), and *Ati krodha* (anger).^[5] Many factors involve in pathogenesis of Nutritional Deficiency Disorders.

2.2. Samprapti Ghatak

The component in *kuposhana* (malnutrition) involves on the basis of predisposing factors that decide the vitiation. Normally, *Dosha*, *Dushya*, *Srotas*, *Srotodushti*, *Adhishthana*, and *Vyaktisthana* are *Vata Rasavaha*, *Sanga*, *Pakvashaya*, and *Sampurna Sharir* (whole body), respectively.

2.3. Probable Comparisons of Some Karshya-Related Diseases in Children

Ayurveda has mentioned *Karshya* in numerous contexts where it has been explained as a clinical feature of a disease or as a complication of certain conditions. Most of the diseases which are of acute nature cause *Karshyata* in children due to their less intolerance to diseases. As we look into the presentation of the said conditions, it is evident that these are symptoms of severe malnutrition and its consequences of it.

2.3.1. Karshya (Underweight)

Karshya as underweight according to *Ayurveda Karshya* is a condition where a child having a stable *Agni*, good appetite, and taking feeds properly but has weakness of the body and does not gain weight appropriately. *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned both *sthula* (corpulent person) and *krisa* (emaciated person); both are causing problems, but corpulence is causing more serious complications in comparison with emaciation.^[6] The lean person has emaciated buttocks, abdomen, neck, and body having prominent network of vessels, joints being prominent and appearance as if only the skin and bones.^[7]

Treatment: Instruct to patients for *Nidan parivarjan* (removal of cause) and use *Vidarikandadi powder*, *Ashwagandhaghrat*, *Suvarna yoga*, *Lakshadi oil*, and *Ubatnadi as Brimhana chikitsa* taking nourishing therapies and light and nourishing diet.^[8]

2.3.2. Phakka as PEM

Phakka: The word “Phak” means slow movements or creeping like a snail. It means if the child remains in incapacitated of walking independently even after attaining of 1-year age, he is said to be suffering from *Phakka Roga*.^[9]

The symptoms of *Phakka Roga* are *Jwara*, loss of *Sphik*, *Bahu*, and *Uru*, excess growth of abdomen, *Peetakshi*, *Angaharsha*, weakness, excess of *Mutra* and *Pureesha*, *Manda cheshta*, irritability, dullness, and excessive nasal discharges.^[10]

Acharya Kashyapa has described three types of *Phakka*.^[11]

1. *Ksheeraj*
2. *Garbhaj*
3. *Vyadhij Phakka*.

- *Ksheeraj Phakka* is similar to *Bal Shosha* and is caused by breast milk vitiated by *Kapha dosha*.^[12]
- *Garbhaj phakka* is caused when a mother conceives again which results in deficiencies of her breast milk. The child becomes very weak if fed with such milk.^[13]
- *Vyadhij Phakka* is caused by when a child is not taken care of properly (*Anatha Shishu*) and may suffer from various chronic diseases and unhygienic conditions.^[14]
 - It manifests as a severe form of malnutrition and represents grades of Marasmus with clinical features such as loss of strength, wasting of buttocks, thighs, and upper limbs, pot belly, big head appearance, slow and feeble movement, and irritable excess production of *Dhatu mala* (nasal secretions).
 - Treatment depends on the cause of disease, that is, if there is milk impurity, the mother should be treated and in case of chronic diseases, treatment of such diseases should be given.
 - The treatment of *Phakka* includes *Snehana chikitsa* then *Shodhana chikitsa*.
 - Administration of drugs such as *Rasna* and *Punarnava* having the property of activating the neuromuscular response along with *Samvardhana ghrta* is done.
 - A nutritious diet also should be prescribed such as *ghee*, soups, and *Mamsa rasa*. *Raj Taila Abhyanga* is advised to improve muscle tone of body.
 - For regaining locomotive ability, rehabilitative measures like *Tripad chakra Ratha* (tricycle) are advised.^[15]

2.3.3. Parigarbhika

If a baby is on breast milk of pregnant women, then *Parigarbhika Roga* can occur and if milk has less in quantity and quality.

- Signs and symptoms of *Parigarbhika Roga* are cough, Anorexia, delirium impaired digestive capacity, vomiting, and fever.
- Treatment – *Agnideepan* (correction of digestion and appetite) is the main treatment in *Parigarbhik* disease.
- It is achieved by small doses of *Ghrta* made of *Pippali*, *Pippalimula*, *chitak*, *Katuki*, etc. Various *Lehya* preparations, *Jeevaniya gana* drugs, and milk are also prescribed with *guru* and *singhada* food.

2.3.4. Balshosha

The causes of *Balshosha* are *Arochaka* (reduced digestive capacity), *Pratishyaya* (running nose), *Jwara* (fever) and *Kasa* (cough), and excessive sleeping, talking cold water; at last, baby may lead to *Shosha* (emaciation).^[16]

- **Treatment** – In anorexia, *trikatu*, *pata*, and *saindhav* used with honey *Ber*, *dhataki*, *amla churn* used with honey using *shishushoshanashak shodhan ghrat* and *shoshnashak* oil in child.^[17]

2.3.5. Shuska Revati

Shuska Revati one *Graha* (demon) affecting the child represents infections spectrum of disease resulting *Sarvangakshya* (emaciation).^[17] The child becomes emaciated even though consuming food of many kinds suffers from severe thirst and shriveled eyes. Symptoms of *shuska revati* are falling of the hair, *Annadweshya* (anorexia to food), feeble voice, *Vivarnata* (loss of lusters), *Nanavidhashakrita* (variegated color stool), and *Udara granthi* (abdominal nodular swelling). The child shows progressive emaciation at the outset of the clinical condition which can be with marasmus.^[17]

3. DISCUSSION

We can say that *Kuposhana Janya Vikara* (under nutritional diseases) is growth and developmental deficiency. It can be correlated with PEM,

marasmus, rickets, or chronic malabsorption conditions. Most of the characters are correlating with marasmic child. *Kshiraja and Garbhaja Phakka* can be compared with acute malnutrition and *Vyadhija Phakka* with chronic malnutrition. In *Phakka, Roga Agnimandya* (low digestive fire) leads to *Stanya-Abhava* as well as to improper formation of Dhatus so treatment should be aimed at *Prakrita Dhatu Poshana*. Hence, the way of treatment should be *Deepan and Pachana* to improve the digestion and metabolism to strengthen the Rasa Dhatu and other Dhatu. In *Kshiraja Phakka, Shodhana Upakrama* administered to the *dhatu having kaphaj stanya dushti, few tikshna Shodhanvama Dravya* we use *Vacha, Sarshapa, and Pippalidravya*. After *Vamana Sansarjanakarma* should be followed and for Shaman internally; in addition, *Nasya, Dhum, Gandush, Pradeha, and Parisheka* are also indicated. In *Vyadhij Phakka*, a main cause is *Doshdushyasamprapti due to the Nija Roga and Agantuj Roga*. For *Vyadhija Phakka*, the treatment should be *swalp-aahara* (proper quantity of nutritious food). Hence, we can conclude that *kuposhanajanya vikaras* and malnutrition disorder are same group of diseases explained in different eras as they possess mostly same causes, pathology signs and symptoms, and treatment.

4. CONCLUSION

Malnutrition state in children can be diagnosed as *Karshya* (under nutrition) in Ayurveda. The treatment protocol of *Karshya like Mridu langhana* followed by *Brimhana* was adopted in the present case. *Bahya and Abhyantara sneha prayogas* were adopted so as to achieve *Brimhana*. The treatments were mainly focused on improving the Agni at the level of *Koshta, Rasa, Rakta, and Mamsa dhatu* level. There were significant changes in various parameters including body weight, bowel status, and generalized weakness after 10 days of treatment. *Kuposhana* is related to inappropriate diet. It occurs specially in childhood. Up to age of 16 years and *Dhatu* are going to nourishes and maturation. Diet and *brinhana aushadhi* (nutritional drugs) need to *dhatu pushti* and *dosh* homeostasis.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Nil.

6. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All the authors contributed equally in design and execution of the article.

7. FUNDING

Nil.

8. ETHICAL APPROVALS

This study not required ethical clearance as it is a review study.

9. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

10. DATA AVAILABILITY

This is an original manuscript and all data are available for only review purposes from principal investigators.

11. PUBLISHERS NOTE

This journal remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published institutional affiliation.

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How to cite this article:

Paridwal K, Chudasama H, Prasad M, Singh BP. Understanding of *Kuposhan in Ayurveda: A Review*. IRJAY. [online] 2023;6(9):34-36.

Available from: <https://irjay.com>

DOI link- <https://doi.org/10.47223/IRJAY.2023.6906>