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Preconception Shodhana through Panchakarma: An Ayurvedic Approach to Purification and Enhancement of Reproductive Potential

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Abstract

Modern lifestyle disruptions, poor dietary habits, and mental stress (*Mansik Abhitap*) have significantly compromised reproductive health. These factors lead to the accumulation of metabolic toxins (*Ama*) and the vitiation of *Doshas*, resulting in endocrine imbalances, defective fertility, and deterioration of gamete (*Beeja*) quality. In Ayurveda, a successful pregnancy requires the normalcy of four core factors: *Ritu* (ovulation), *Kshetra* (uterus), *Ambu* (nourishment), and *Beeja* (gametes).

This review evaluates the clinical significance and physiological mechanisms of Preconceptional *Shodhana Chikitsa* (*Panchakarma*) as a holistic approach to body purification and the enhancement of reproductive potential.

Preconceptional *Shodhana* serves as an essential, preventive cornerstone in reproductive medicine. By achieving gamete purification (*Beeja Shuddhi*) and uterine cleansing (*Garbhashaya Shodhana*), it minimizes antenatal complications, prevents birth defects, and establishes the ideal physiological environment to ensure a

healthy mother (*Swastha Garbhini*) and optimal progeny (*Supraja Jananam*).

Keywords: *Swastha Garbhini, Pragyaparadh, Beej Sudhi, Supraja Jananam, Shadbhava for Garbha, Garbhashay Shodhan, Detoxification.*

Introduction

In the current era, achieving a healthy pregnancy and offspring has become increasingly challenging due to factors such as advanced maternal age, pre-existing health conditions, sedentary lifestyles, poor dietary habits, disturbed sleep cycles, and exposure to environmental pollution. These modern lifestyle disruptions—rooted in the neglect of *Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya*, and the rise of *Pragyaparādha* (intellectual errors)—which in turn contribute to hormonal imbalance, vitiation of *Doshas*, accumulation of *Ama* a synonym with the buildup of oxidative stress, inflammatory mediators, and metabolic toxins, all of which are linked to defective fertility, and deterioration of *Beeja* (gamete) quality, ultimately affecting conception and fetal development.

Shodhana Chikitsa, the “*Panchakarma*” has exhibited a remarkable beneficial effect in

the condition of male infertility by improving the sperm count and motility, and by increasing the semen quality and general semen parameters through combined detox and behavioral therapies and in cases of female infertility, such as PCOS, adenomyosis, endometriosis and tubal blocks. These ayurvedic purification and detoxification therapies offer a holistic preconceptional approach to overcome these barriers. It works by expelling accumulated Āma (metabolic toxins) and vitiated Doshas (Vāta, Pitta, Kapha) through the systematic procedures of Panchakarma. This internal cleansing eliminates

- Srotorodha (obstruction of bodily channels)
- Enhances the function of Agni (digestive and metabolic fire)
- Promotes the formation of pure and stable Dhatus (tissues)
- Enhance fertility and functioning of reproductive organs.
- Supports emotional well being and vitality..

Consequently, it restores physiological balance and prepares the body for conception, ensuring optimal nourishment and receptivity of the reproductive tissues. In the context of conception Ayurveda, considers that a healthy pregnancy and healthy progeny occurs when Ritu (Ovulation time), Kshetra (Female body specifically Uterus), Ambu (Nutritive secretions of genitals and diet of mother) and Beeja (Sperm and Ovum) the four factors unite in normalcy. Any disturbance in these elements can compromise the quality of conception. The most important interfering factor in today's time besides the factors discussed above is **Mansik Abhitap** the mental stress, which in turn creates a negative impact on functioning of the above four factors.

The preparatory care to improve fertility and purification of the reproductive system and complete body of the couple not only improves conception rates but also ensures a stable pregnancy and uncomplicated delivery. The concept aligns with preventive and promotive health principles, emphasizing disease eradication at its root rather than symptomatic management. Thus, Shodhana Chikitsa represents an essential cornerstone of Ayurvedic preconceptional care, harmonising internal physiology to create an ideal environment for conception and fetal nourishment. By eliminating toxins, restoring Dosha balance, clearing Srotas, and improving Agni, it lays the foundation for Swastha Garbhini (a healthy mother) and Supraja Jananam (healthy progeny).

Materials and Methods

This review is based on a narrative analysis of classical Ayurvedic literature (Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Kashyap Samhita Ashtanga Hridaya) and pre-reviewed studies clinical studies, case reports, reviews, and classical Ayurvedic texts published focusing on Shodhana in preconception care. Emphasis was placed on correlating these traditional approaches with modern medical concepts and evaluating their clinical efficacy in improving fertility outcomes.

Review :

Current studies reflect the increasing importance of Panchakarma in promoting reproductive health through its cleansing, rejuvenative, and modulatory activities. Shodhana Chikitsa represents an essential cornerstone of Ayurvedic preconceptional care, harmonising internal physiology to create an ideal environment for conception and fetal nourishment. By eliminating

toxins, restoring Dosha balance, clearing Srotas, and improving Agni, it lays the foundation for Swastha Garbhini (a healthy mother) and Supraja Jananam (healthy progeny).

This comprehensive approach underscores Ayurveda's timeless vision that purification precedes rejuvenation, and only a cleansed, balanced body can nurture life in its healthiest form. Benefits Of Preconceptional Shodhan are:

- **To Combat with Modern Era's Lifestyle Diseases:**

High stress, poor diet, and lack of exercise which contribute to accumulation of toxins (ama) and imbalance of doshas (Pitta/Kapha), which can lead to infertility, PCOD, and menstrual irregularities.

- **Improving Gamete Quality (Beeja Shuddhi):** Shodhan purifies the reproductive cells (sperm and ovum) of both partners, which is essential for reducing the risk of birth defects and ensuring the conception of healthy offspring.

- **Uterine Cleansing (Garbhashaya Shodhana):** It cleanses the uterus and prepares it for proper implantation of the embryo, reducing risks of miscarriage and improving the chances of a successful pregnancy.

- **Managing High-Risk Factors:** It helps address issues such as obesity, diabetes, and thyroid disorders before pregnancy, which are common obstacles to conception.

- **Preventing Future Complications:** By balancing the body's energies beforehand, Shodhan helps the mother remain stable throughout pregnancy and ensures minimal complications during delivery.

- **Mental and Spiritual Preparation:** Shodhan reduces stress, anxiety, and depression, which are known to adversely affect fertility, supporting the Ayurvedic principle of "Suamanasya Garbhadharnanam" (a happy mind is crucial for conception)

Hormonal control in Ayurveda is directly linked with Pitta dosha, which governs metabolic and endocrine functions. Disturbance in Pitta leads to hormonal imbalance in the major reproductive hormones, FSH, LH, oestrogen, progesterone, and testosterone. The purificatory therapies of Panchakarma correct the hypothalamic-pituitary-gonadal axis to facilitate regular ovulation and spermatogenesis.

The therapy's capacity to suppress cortisol and regulate the stress response also ensures endocrine balance, which is critical in the management of stress-related infertility. Shodhana comprises five integrated phases

- Purva Karma (preparation with Snehana, Swedana)
- Pradhana Karma (main therapy): Vaman, Virechana, Basti, Uttara Basti
- Samsarjana Karma (dietary normalization)

Novel contribution of Panchkarma are:

1. Gut-Liver axis by **Vaman** and **Virechana**
2. Colon-Apana axis by Basti,
3. Uterine-Endometrial niche by **Uttara Basti**,
4. Neuro-Psychic axis by **Nasya** and **Shirodhara**.

RESULT:

- **Vaman Mode of Action Neurohormonal Activation:** Induces controlled vomiting by stimulating the medulla oblongata, which triggers toxin expulsion. Cleansing of Stomach & Upper Digestive Tract: Eliminates Ama (toxins) that hinder absorption and metabolism of reproductive

nutrients. Effect on Reproductive System: Removes excessive Kapha, which contributes to anovulation, PCOS, and poor sperm motility.

- Virechana Mode of Action: • Hepatic Detoxification: Stimulates the liver to clear toxins that disrupt oestrogen metabolism. • Improved Gut Health: Clears toxins from the intestines, improving nutrient absorption for sperm and egg development. • Regulation of Reproductive Hormones: Normalise FSH (Follicle Stimulating Hormone) and LH (Luteinizing Hormone), essential for ovulation and sperm formation.

- Basti Mode of Action Colon-Brain Connection: Medicated enemas absorb through the intestinal mucosa, influencing the nervous and endocrine systems. Direct Nourishment to Reproductive Tissues: Oils and decoctions used in Basti enhance Shukra Dhatu (sperm) and Aartava Dhatu (ovum).

- Uttara Basti (Intrauterine Basti) –Directly cleanses and nourishes the uterus and fallopian tubes

- Nasya and Shirodhara Mode of Action • Direct Absorption Through Nasal Mucosa: Herbal oils enter the brain via the olfactory nerves, stimulating the pituitary and pineal glands. • Balancing Neurotransmitters: Reduces stress-related cortisol levels, preventing stress-induced infertility.

CONCLUSION:

Preconceptional Shodhana Chikitsa represents an essential cornerstone of Ayurvedic preconceptional care, harmonising internal physiology to create an ideal environment for conception and fetal nourishment. By eliminating toxins,

restoring Dosha balance, clearing Srotas, and improving Agni, it lays the foundation for Swastha Garbhini (a healthy mother) and Supraja Jananam (healthy progeny). It's been observed that by doing so higher quality offspring improved physical, intellectual, and emotional health of the future child, reduced antenatal complications, preterm birth, and congenital defects are achieved. Panchakarma is an incredible therapy that supports and promotes fertility and creating an optimal environment for conception. Thus Preconceptional Shodhana is a necessity now. This holistic approach is directed towards treatment, of course, but also prevention, health promotion, and longevity of both mother and child.

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