



Review Article

MANAGEMENT OF STANYAKSHAYA THROUGH AYURVEDIC STANYAJANANA AND STANYAVARDHAKA MEASURES

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ABSTRACT

Breastfeeding is essential for optimal neonatal nutrition, immunity, and overall growth and development. However, insufficient breast milk production, known as *Stanyakshaya* in Ayurveda, is a significant concern frequently observed in primiparous mothers. This condition may lead to inadequate nourishment of the new-born and may adversely affect infant health. Various physiological and psychological factors such as emotional stress, anxiety, maternal illness, poor nutrition, and changing lifestyle patterns contribute to the development of *Stanyakshaya*. According to Ayurvedic principles, *Agnimandya* (impaired digestive fire) and *Dhatukshaya* (depletion of body tissues) are considered the major etiological factors responsible for reduced breast milk production. Classical Ayurvedic texts describe several therapeutic measures for managing this condition, including the use of *Stanyajanana* and *Stanyavardhana* drugs, along with *Stanyavardhaka Ahara* (dietary measures) and appropriate *Vihara* (lifestyle practices). These interventions aim to improve maternal health, enhance nourishment of *Dhatu*s, and promote adequate lactation. The present review article highlights the significance of breastfeeding and discusses the Ayurvedic perspective of *Stanyakshaya*, including its causes and management strategies described in classical texts. Additionally, the article emphasizes the importance of traditional dietary and lifestyle practices in improving lactation and addresses the growing prevalence of *Stanyakshaya* associated with modern lifestyle patterns.


INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda, *Stanya* (breast milk) is considered an essential source of nutrition for the newborn and plays a vital role in the growth and development of the infant. The importance of *Stanya* is explained through its primary functions, *Pushti* (nourishment) and *Jivana* (sustenance of life). Breast milk provides numerous health benefits to both the mother and the baby and is regarded as the most natural and effective method of caring for a newborn. It contains an optimal balance of essential nutrients required for healthy growth, including

proteins, carbohydrates, lipids, immunoglobulin A (IgA), minerals, digestive enzymes, lymphocytes, antibodies, and adequate water content.

The World Health Organization recommends initiating breastfeeding within the first hour after birth and continuing exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, as it significantly contributes to the infant's immunity, growth, and overall well-being. The benefits and importance of breast milk are also extensively described in Ayurvedic literature.

However, with the increasing influence of modern lifestyle patterns, stress, and improper dietary habits, many new mothers experience insufficient breast milk production. In Ayurveda, this condition is described as *Stanyakshaya*. Classical Ayurvedic texts provide detailed descriptions of the qualities of *Stanya*, the characteristics of a nursing mother (*Stanyadayini*), and the benefits of

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breastfeeding for both the mother and the child. Therefore, understanding the concept of *Stanyakshaya* and its management is important for promoting optimal breastfeeding practices and ensuring the healthy development of the infant.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The available literature on *Stanyakshaya* comes from both Ayurvedic and modern sources.

OBSERVATION AND RESULTS

Formation of *Stanya*

Rasa is generated after food has been digested. Through the action of *Vyana- vata*, the sweet essence, a component of this *Rasa*, circulates throughout the body and reaches the breasts, where it is known as *Stanya*^[1]. The view of Acharya *Sushrut* is as follows^[2]. *Rasa* and *Stanya* are both derived from the essence of *Rasa dhatu*. Acharya *Bhavamishra*^[3] and *Yogratnakar*^[4] have same opinion. Acharya *Charak* and Acharya *Bhela*^[6] explained the concept of *Garbhaposhana* by stating that the *Aahara* consumed by *Garbhini* has three purpose: *Matrupishti*, *Garbhaposhana* and *Stanapushti*. Acharya *Sushrut* agrees with it as well^[7].

Properties of normal breast milk

The milk which is normal in colour, smell, taste and touch, when milked in a pot filled with water mixes evenly is known as pure milk. This milk nourishment and good health to the child. Acharya *Sushrut* says that the pure milk is cold, clean or free from impurities, whitish yellow just like the colour of conch-shell, sweet in taste and free from discolouration when put in water, it mixes evenly, neither produces froth nor streaks, neither floats nor settles down. This type of milk provides good health, growth and development of body as well as strength to the child.

Madhava nidan, *Yogratnakara* and *Bhawaparakash* have followed *Sushrut*.

Haritha defining *Mrudukshira* as pure milk adds *Satwa* and beauty also in the list which are achieved by using pure milk.

Acharya *Kashyapa* mentioned that a baby that is breastfed has unhindered strength, lifespan and enough growth and development. Additionally, it can guarantee the comfort of a child and its mother as well as the development of a disease-free condition.

Ayurvedic *Pramanasharira* states that two *Anjali* is the recommended amount of *Stanya*. It has *Sheet veerya*, *Madhura vipaka*, *Vatapitta Samana*, *Laghu* in nature which suggest its ease of digestion

and *Madhura rasa* and *Kashaya anurasa* which smell like *Madhu* (*Madhugandhi*)

Causes of *Stanya Pravritti*

According to Acharya *Sushrut*, as semen is ejaculated by thought, touch of women or colitis with her similarly milk is also ejected by thoughts, sight or touch of the child and also with his physical contact (suckling). After delivery on 3rd or 4th day the *Dhamanis* or *Sita's* situated in *Hridaya* region get dilated and initiate milk ejection.

According to Acharya *Harita*, a parturient woman's *Srotases* become evident as a result of the force she uses to bear down, which causes an abrupt expulsion of milk. But because of *Kapha* dominance, it is thick and should be thrown out.

Stanyakshaya Hetu

According to Acharyas, anger, grief, absence of affection for the child, fear, fasting, excessive exercise, consumption of dry edibles and drinks, emaciation, excessive use of purifying measures and re-pregnancy are the causes of cessation of milk. Also, some previous breast surgeries affect milk production, premature birth, maternal diabetes, obesity, PIH, conceiving next child while lactating, Intake if *Sheet*, *Ruksha ahara* during the period of lactation.

Stanyakshaya Samprapti (Pathogenesis)^[8]

In *Sutika*, there is overall *Dhatukshaya awastha* due to *Pravahanvedana* (labor pains) and loss of *Rakta* and *Kleda* during *Prasava*. As a result, she suffers from deficiencies in *Mamsa*, *Bala* and *Agni*. *Apathya sevana* further complicates things. As a result *Vatapradhan tridosha prakopa* occurs, resulting in *Rasa dhatukshaya* and as a result *Updhatukshaya stanyakshaya* occurs.

Stanyakshaya Lakshana

Acharya *Sushrut* says, laxity of breast (*Stanyomlanata*) along with decrease in quantity or absence of milk secretion (*Stanyaambhav* or *Alpata*) are the clinical features^[9].

Management

Rasakshaya is caused by the same etiological reasons as *Stanyakshaya*; the goal of treatment should be to normalize *Rasa kshaya*. Use of *Sleshma vardhak dravya* cure *Stanyakshaya*. Wine, *Sali* cereals, meat, cow's milk, sugar, *Asava*, curd and use of desired things cure *Stanyakshaya*.

According to Acharya *Kashyapa*

Sweet cereals, drinks, liquids, and salty substances are beneficial. Among wines, all except *Sidhu* are considered beneficial. Among vegetables,

all except *Siddharthaka* are recommended. Meat soup of animals, except hog and buffalo, is also beneficial. The use of *Lasuna* (garlic) and *Palandu* (onion), along with adequate sleep and pleasurable activities, helps in increasing breast milk. Avoidance of anger, excessive travel, fear, grief, and strenuous exercise also promotes the production of breast milk.^[10]

Nadika prepared with jaggery and properly treated with *Hingu* and *Jati* is beneficial for increasing breast milk. Milk, meat juice, and wine are also considered useful for enhancing lactation. Additionally, milk processed with aphrodisiac (*Vrishya*) drugs helps in increasing the production of breast milk.^[11]

According to Acharya Charaka^[12]

Use of following increases quantity of milk

- Except *Sidhu* all other wines.
- Vegetables growing wildly land or water.
- Drugs which possess apparent latex such as *Dugdhika* and *Kalambika* etc
- Use of *Ghrut*, oil, *Lasuna* and *Palandu*.
- Use of *Asthapana basti* (evaluative enema)
- Milk treated with *Maricha* and *Pippalimula*.
- Powdered of *Magadhi*, *Nagara* and *Pathya* along with *Ghruta* mixed with milk.
- Juice or powder of *Vidarikanda* mixed with milk or expressed juice of *Vidarikanda* pestled with milk and mixed with sugar or mixed with wine.

Ayurvedic Drugs^[21]

S.No	Name	Latin Name	Reported Pharmacological Activity ^[14,15,16,18]	Research Relevance
1.	<i>Veerana^[13]</i>	<i>Vetivera Zizanoides</i>	Antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, wound healing.	Helps reduce oxidative stress and inflammation; supports tissue nourishment and cooling effect described in Ayurveda.
2, 3	<i>Shashtika Shali</i>	<i>Oryzasativa</i>	Nutritional, antioxidant, anti-diabetic	Rich in nutrients that support postpartum recovery and <i>Dhatu-poshana</i> .
4.	<i>Ekshuv colour alika</i>	<i>Astercantha longifolia</i>	Hepatoprotective, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, diuretic	Supports metabolism and improves nutritional status which may help lactation.
5.	<i>Darbha^[17]</i>	<i>Imperata Cylindrica</i>	Antioxidant, antibacterial, anti-inflammatory	Cooling herb used in pitta disorders and helps maintain physiological balance.
6.	<i>Kusha^[19]</i>	<i>Desmostachya bipinnata</i>	Antioxidant, immunomodulatory	Protects tissues and supports immune function.
7.	<i>Kaasha^[20]</i>	<i>Sacharum Spontaneum</i>	Diuretic, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory	Detoxifying and cooling effect beneficial in postpartum physiology.
8.	<i>Gundra</i>	<i>Typha angustata</i>	Antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, wound healing	Supports tissue repair and recovery.
9.	<i>Itkata</i>	<i>Typha elephantina</i>	Antimicrobial, antioxidant	Helps prevent infections and oxidative damage.
10.	<i>Katrana</i>	<i>Cymbopogan schoenanthus</i>	Antimicrobial, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory	Improves digestion and metabolism which supports lactation physiology.

Types of Measures (Treatment aspect)

Aushadhi Chikitsa (Medicinal herbs/drugs)

- Use of lactation-promoting herbs such as:
Shatavari– One of the best herbs for promoting breastfeeding.
- *Vidari*– Used to improve milk production and nourish *Rasa Dhatu*.
- *Jeeraka*– Improves digestion and supports increased milk secretion.
- *Bhumikushmanda Ksheerpaka*– Mentioned in Yogaratanakara for *Stanya Vriddhi*.

Aahara (Dietary measures)

Intake of foods that promote lactation, such as milk, ghee, sweet cereals, meat soup, and other *Stanyavardhaka Ahara*.

Vihara (Lifestyle measures)

Adequate rest, proper sleep, avoidance of stress, anger, excessive travel, and strenuous exercise.

Manasika Chikitsa (Psychological support)

Maintaining a calm and positive mental state, as emotional stress and anxiety can reduce lactation.

DISCUSSION

In recent years, it has been observed that many women experience reduced breast milk production compared to the past. Mothers are often concerned about whether their breast milk is sufficient to support the growth and development of their infants. Normally, most women are capable of producing more breast milk than their infants require; however, certain conditions can lead to insufficient milk secretion during the lactation period. Delayed initiation of breastfeeding and prolonged intervals between feeds are important factors that may reduce adequate milk flow. Additionally, modern lifestyle patterns, stress, and improper dietary habits may lead to nutritional deficiencies in mothers, further contributing to breast milk insufficiency. As a result, many mothers rely on formula feeding due to their busy and demanding lifestyles.

According to Ayurvedic principles, several *Stanyavardhaka* drugs possess *Madhura Rasa*, *Madhura Vipaka*, and *Sheeta Virya*, which promote nourishment of *Rasa Dhatu*. The proper nourishment and increase of *Rasa Dhatu* in the mother ultimately lead to *Stanya Vriddhi* (enhancement of breast milk production). Some medicines with *Katu Rasa*, *Katu Vipaka*, and *Ushna Virya* act through *Agnidipana*, *Amapachana*, and *Dhatvagni Dipana*, resulting in *Strotoshodhana*,

improved *Dhatu Poshana*, and proper formation of *Dhatu* and *Upadhatu*, thereby supporting adequate production of *Stanya*.

CONCLUSION

Breast milk is the most valuable and natural source of nutrition for a newborn, providing essential nutrients and immunological protection necessary for healthy growth and development. In Ayurveda, *Stanya* is considered an *Upadhatu* of *Rasa Dhatu*, and its proper formation depends on adequate nourishment and balanced physiological functions of the mother. Various physical and psychological factors may lead to *Stanyakshaya*, resulting in inadequate lactation. Ayurvedic literature describes several effective measures, including *Stanyajanana* and *Stanyavardhaka* drugs, dietary modifications, and lifestyle practices that help enhance breast milk production. These measures not only improve lactation but also support the overall health and recovery of the mother, particularly during *Sutika Avastha*. Therefore, the Ayurvedic approach plays a significant role in the prevention and management of *Stanyakshaya* and in promoting successful breastfeeding.

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