

Short Communication

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Gynaecology and Obstetrics in Charaka Samhita

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ABSTRACT

It is accepted that, Ayurveda is the ancient system of medicine which is rich enough to guide the society in different aspects of health. The system is rich with the measures for prevention of the diseases and also with the description of medicines, diets and behaviours for treatment of different ailments.

Charaka Samhita written by Charaka is the basic classic of the Ayurvedic system of medicine. Charaka Samhita, though deals with Kayachikitsa (Medicine), then also not left the other branches. Charaka has includes Obstetrics and Gynaecology also in his Samhita elaborately. Knowledge of Gynaecology and Obstetrics (Prasuti Tantra and Stree Roga) is available in Charaka Samhita in different references. The descriptions are containing some salient features which are seemed to be important and informative even in present time.

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After a thorough Search of Charaka Samhita some Salient Features of the Description of Obstetrics and Gynaecology are identified –

1. Semen (Sukra) is described with special reference to its composition and quality [1].
2. The foetus (Garbha) is said to form with 3 components inside the uterus (Garbhashaya) [2].
3. The signs and symptoms of pregnancy are said as – frequent spitting (nisthivika), heaviness of the body (gaurava), feeling of looseness of the body (angasada), drowsiness (tandra), laziness (glani) etc.,[3].
4. For implantation and proper growth of the foetus a healthy woman (uterus) and healthy environment, appropriate diet and behaviour are important [4].
5. For appropriate development and growth 6 factors are considered to be important. Any one of these factors, if will be weak then the child will be weak [5].
6. An interesting description of monthly development of the foetus is very interesting [6].
7. The time of formation of the heart in a foetus and its effect on the pregnant lady is described interestingly. It is also advised that, the desires of the pregnant lady during this time should not be neglected to avoid future defects in the child [7].
8. The diagnostic signs and symptoms of pregnancy are described nicely as – (1)amenorrhoea (artavadarshana), (2) excessive salivation (asyasangsraavana), (3)loss /reduced appetite (anannabhilasa), (4)vomiting (cchardi), (5)anorexia (arochaka), (6)desire to take sour substances (amlakamata), (7)feeling of heaviness of the body (gurugatratwa), (8)feeling of tiredness of the eyes (chakshurglani), (9)Production of milk in the breasts (stanya utpatti), (10)blackish discolouration of the lips and areola(ostha -stanamandala krishnata), (11) mild swelling of the feet (padashotha) etc., [8].
9. With the desire to have healthy child the couple are advised some rules to follow during the period before coitus. Even some rules are said to follow to have male and female child [9].
10. A detail description of preservation of the foetus inside the mother's womb is attractive [10].
11. A list of the beneficial drugs for a lady to get pregnancy is also given [11].
12. Also described the factors (diets and behaviours etc.) that can cause harm to the foetus in the womb [12].
13. The guidelines for treatment of the pregnant lady is also mentioned nicely [13].
14. Treatment of different diseases during pregnancy, extraction of dead foetus from the womb, medicines to be used for support and appropriate growth of the foetus are some interesting facts [14].
15. The characters, necessary instruments, attendants, diagnosis of labour, delivery, newborn care, examination of newborn child, examination of breast milk, choice and preparation of playing objects for the child are also very interesting descriptions [15].
16. Different types of diseases related with the female genital tract with their treatment is an important [16].
17. A detail of the different defects (diseases) of semen is also done by Charaka which has ampoule of scope for study and research [17]. A description of pure and effective semen is also available in this context.
18. Impotency is an important problem with the males where the individual loses his capacity to take part in sexual act. A nice discussion on the aetiologies, classification, diagnostic criteria, treatment are also discussed [18].
19. Unusual (more quantity, smelling) vaginal discharge is getting concern in gynaecology. Charaka mentions this condition

under the nomenclature “PRADARA”. The discussion is interesting as all the aspects of this condition is discussed by the author [19].

20. Breast milk is the most important product produced by the nature which is made for the children. A child grows on it at the early life. Any deficiency or defect in breast milk can cause a number of defects in the growth and development of a baby. Considering the fact Charaka has given a vivid discussion on this topic also [20].

The Discussion Made till now from the Observation and Study of Charaka Samhita with Special Reference to the Gynaecological Diseases Prominently Reveals the Following Points

1. Charaka, though was an expert and teacher of Medicine (Kayachikitsa), also had markable exposure, observation and study on the different aspects of the diseases of the females.
2. He gave equal importance on the study and research on the diseases of the female with that of the male.
3. Though impotency (Napungsakata) is primarily considered as a disease prevalent in males then also since it has relation with pregnancy (the phenomena of giving birth to a progeny) is also discussed with priority covering almost all aspects.
4. Pregnancy, delivery and growing up of child are inter related. Hence different aspects of the female genital organs (responsible for pregnancy and delivery), care of the child (newborn) are nicely discussed.

Exploring the Concepts of Charaka Samhita in the Field of Gynaecology and Obstetrics the Medical Science May get a New Way to Assist the Females.

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