CLIPPINGS OF GYNAECOLOGY AND OBSTETRICS IN VEDAS AND
SAMHITA GRANTHAS
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Abstract

Females are the bearers of Progeny in the whole cosmos. So this is an effort to augment the present scientific knowledge of the healthy process of child birth as well as health of female as an individual by the aid of Vedas and Samhita Granthas, as much description is available in these texts about it.

Atharvaveda has quoted words ‘yoni’ and ‘Gavinika’ for the female reproductive system, also mentioned about infertility and quotes certain mantra specifically for the easy labour. Another veda Rigveda describes certain ‘krimis’ inflicting the yoni of female.

Samhita grabthas give vivid description of female physiology, anatomy, dietary regimen in antenatal period. Labour and its preparation, Post partum care and its management, male and female infertility, miscarriage, abortion, abortifacient and some surgical procedures related to gynecology and obstetrics.

Apart from these, there is brief description of mechanical as well as oral contraceptive methods in later ayurvedic texts.

Key words : Veda, Samhita Granthas, labour, yoni, gynaecology and obstetrics.

Introduction

Vedas and samhita granthas are enriched with detailed knowledge of all aspects of gynecology and obstetrics. The only lacunae is that the treasure is scattered and hence could not be well practiced. Hence we shall try to summarize the whole in a schematic manner for the usage of all.

ANATOMY OF FEMALE REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS

There are glimpses of female reproductive anatomy in rigveda and atharvaveda. Atharvaveda has briefly described female anatomy in the context of treatment of obstructed labour.

Samhita granthas have described female reproductive system most vividly talking of external genital organs and internal genital organs such as uterus, fallopian tubes, ovaries.

Another ancient literature brahmana literature gives the term yoni for womb, ulba for amnion and Jarayu for chorion.

Physiology of Female Reproductive System :

Our samhita granthas have given an unique physiological, social and psychological description of menarche, menopause and menstrual phases. They have elaborated the age of menarche, menopause, marriage and have given an indirect description of safe and unsafe days for conception.

GYNAECOLOGICAL DISORDERS :

Infective diseases :

Giving description of infective gynaecological disorders Vedas have mainly referred to ‘Krimi rogas’ as दुर्जामा योनिमाध्ये (R.V. 10/162/1-4)

Rigveda mentions krimis affecting reproductive system, mode of spread of infection, complications caused by them and ‘agni’ as the best treatment for them. Atharvaveda also quotes verse showing infections in post partum cases.

Samhita granthas give a very detailed description of twenty types of gynecological disorders, which mainly include infection of female
reproductive system and their treatment by herbal drugs and different processes.

Menstrual disorders:

Vedas have illustrated the use of Apamarga (Achyranthes aspera), Palaash (Butea monosperma), Udumbara (ficus plant) etc. in various menstrual disorders like menorrhagia.

Samhita granthas give a detailed picture of eight menstrual disorders like menorrhagia, amenorrhoea, hypomenorrhoea etc. in terms of etiology, signs and symptoms and specific herbomineral treatment along with similar description of dysfunction uterine bleeding.

Infertility:

Ancient literature considers failure to achieve conception as infertility and holds both male and female pathologies responsible for the same.

Atharvaveda emphasizes the external use of Palaash (Butea monosperma) and udumbara (ficus plant) in the treatment of female infertility. There is also description of Achyranthes aspera in this context.

Samhita granthas give scientific description of primary and secondary infertility along with its etiopathogenesis, prognosis and treatment.

Vrihadaranyakopnishad tells mantras to make infertile female, Fertile and vice versa. On the contrary atharvaveda and vrihattrayi of Ayurveda talks of male infertility and its treatment.

Genetics in Ancient Text:

Description of acharya charak and vagbhat clearly shows that vitiation of vayu etc. cause teratogenic abnormalities. The concept of vitiation of ‘Bija’, ‘Bijabhaga’, ‘Bijabhagavayava’ portion reflex chromo-somal or genetic abnormalities.

Mammary Diseases:

Even in that age when techniques like mammography were not available, samhita granthas have described well classified breast diseases along with their treatment.

OBSTETRICS:

Conception:

Atharvaveda regards conception as a sacred affair occurring with the blessings of various gods. Samhita granthas say that for achievement of conception proper functioning of vayu (Nervous system), Normal psychology, healthy and functional female reproductive system, healthy sperms and ovum are essential.

Antepartum phase (conception to birth):

Atharvaveda resides mantras for the well being of child bearing womb. Samhitas and garbhopnishad describe detailed monthly fetal development (Organogenesis).

Scientific daily dietary regimen and do’s and don’ts of a pregnant female for all the nine months, beautiful clinical description of a recently conceived female and features in a female with established pregnancy, shape of womb in a twin pregnancy, various ailments during the antenatal period with treatment have been given in samhitas.

Parturition (birth of a child):

Atharvaveda has described the process to achieve easy labour, management of obstructed labour and self detachment of placenta.


Puerperium (After child birth):

Ancient ayurvedic literature scientifically pictures normal and abnormal puerperium, duration of puerperium, factors for reappearance of menstruation, dietary care of parturient female, diseases of puerperal woman and their management.
Miscarriage:

Athravaveda prescribes Prishnparni (Hemionitis cordifolia) to avitate abortion and considers recitation and few mantras to be beneficial for the womb.

Ayurvedic texts have well differentiated miscarriage and abortion, describing the management of both.

Contraception:

Even in that old era ayurvedic texts has laid emphasis on contraception and has advocated both external and internal methods for it and on the same hand has described abortificients also.

In Atharvaveda there is nice description of process similar to vasectomy.
As: “ये ते नाडयौ देवकुते यमोस्तिमति वृजवयम्।
ये ते भिनस्स्तम शम्ययामुप्या अधि मुक्तोऽ॥”

CONCLUSION

Thus we hereby conclude that ancient literature harbours the whole subject of female reproductive system.

It ranges from the detailed process of child birth to the not so common problem of that old era i.e. family planning. It was scientific enough to give differential diagnosis between pregnancy and uterine fibroid in that non radiographic era. Even when investigations and invasive techniques were not present acharyas have amazingly described various gynecological infections/diseases.

The herbomineral drugs given in texts have a wide range of efficacy and potency and should be brought into practice along with implementation of lacking adequate research work.

This is a small effort to bring attention of the grey matters to hidden ancient resources.

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