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## Navigating the Frontiers of Balaroga: A Review of Ayurvedic Pediatrics

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### **Abstract:**

*The discipline of Balaroga (or Kaumarabhritya) represents a specialized branch of Ayurveda dedicated to the physiological and psychological development of children. This review examines the traditional frameworks of pediatric classification, the diagnostic significance of maternal health in neonatal outcomes, and the management of childhood ailments through natural interventions. By bridging the gap between ancient Dosha theory and modern clinical pathology, this article highlights the efficacy of Ayurvedic protocols in enhancing pediatric immunity and treating metabolic disorders.*

**Keywords:** Kaumarabhritya, Dosha theory, pediatric immunity

### **Introduction:**

#### **The Developmental Blueprint: Classifying the Life Stages:**

In Ayurvedic pediatrics, the child is not merely a "small adult" but a distinct physiological entity. The growth trajectory is divided based on the primary source of nutrition, which dictates both the metabolic capacity (*Agni*) and the vulnerability to specific diseases:

- **Ksheerada (The Milk-Dependent Phase):** Spanning from birth to one year, this stage emphasizes the mother's health, as the child's constitution is directly influenced by the quality of breast milk (*Stanya*).
- **Ksheerannada (The Transitional Phase):** Between one and two years, the introduction of semi-solids marks a shift in digestive fire, requiring a balance of liquid and solid nutrients.
- **Annada (The Solid Food Phase):** From two to sixteen years, the focus shifts toward tissue building (*Dhatu Vardhana*) and cognitive development.

### Diagnostic Nuance in Non-Verbal Patients:

One of the most sophisticated aspects of *Balaroga* is its diagnostic methodology for infants who cannot communicate their distress. The *Vedana Adhyaya* of *Kashyap Samhita* (Study of Pain Signs) serves as a primitive yet highly accurate clinical observation tool:

1. **Physical Cues:** Acharyas noted that specific gestures correspond to internal pathologies. For instance, frequent touching of the abdomen and curled legs are indicative of *Shoola* (colic/abdominal pain).
2. **Maternal Assessment:** Because the infant's health is often a reflection of the mother's diet, the *Stanya Parikshana* (Milk Examination) is a critical diagnostic step. Vitiating of milk by *Vata*, *Pitta*, or *Kapha* is identified through physical properties like viscosity and frothiness, which then informs the treatment of the child.

### Clinical Spectrum: From Malnutrition to Microbial Theory:

#### Metabolic and Nutritional Deficiencies:

Conditions like *Phakka Roga* demonstrate an early understanding of developmental delays. While often compared to modern-day Rickets, the Ayurvedic perspective views it as a failure of *Rasa Dhatu* (plasma) to nourish the bones, often caused by poor maternal nutrition or chronic digestive impairment.

#### The Concept of Balagraha:

The *Balagraha* section of *Balaroga* is often misunderstood as mythology, but modern interpretations suggest these represent infectious and neuropsychiatric syndromes. The sudden onset of symptoms like high fever, tremors, and seizures (attributed to entities like *Skanda*) aligns closely with modern descriptions of acute viral encephalitis or pediatric epilepsy.

Condition	Ayurvedic Pathophysiology	Modern Clinical Correlation
<i>Balashosha</i>	Drying of tissues due to <i>Vata</i>	Marasmus / Wasting Syndrome
<i>Shakuni Graha</i>	Skin eruptions and mucosal ulcers	Staphylococcal Scalded Skin Syndrome
<i>Ajasatki</i>	Chronic diarrhea and weakness	Celiac Disease / Malabsorption

### Preventive Immunology: The Science of *Lehana*:

Ayurveda places a heavy premium on **proactive health** rather than reactive treatment. The practice of *Lehana* (therapeutic licking) involves herbal pastes designed to modulate the immune system (*Vyadhikshamatva*).

- **Swarna Prashana:** The administration of purified gold particles processed with *Brahmi* and *Sankhpushpi*. Modern research suggests this acts as a potent immunomodulator and nootropic, improving both physical resistance and IQ.

- **Raksha Karma:** The use of herbal fumigation (*Dhupana*) to sterilize the child's environment acts as a traditional form of "antiseptic" care, reducing the microbial load in the nursery.

### **Integrated Management and Dosage Principles:**

In *Balaroga*, *Kapha Dosha* is naturally dominant during childhood to support growth and structural development (*Anabolic phase*). However, when this dominance becomes pathological, it leads to *Kaphaj Roga*—primarily affecting the respiratory and digestive systems.

### **Common Kaphaj Conditions in Pediatrics:**

#### **1. Kaphaja Kasa (Productive Cough):**

This is characterized by a thick, white, and mucoid expectorant. The child may experience heaviness in the chest, loss of appetite, and a "full" sensation in the throat.

- **Pathophysiology:** Vitiating Kapha obstructs the *Pranavaha Srotas* (respiratory channels).
- **Treatment:**
  - *Sitopaladi Churna:* Mixed with honey to act as an expectorant.
  - *Kantakari Avaleha:* A herbal jam that helps in bronchodilation.
  - *Talisadi Churna:* Effective if there is associated weak digestion.

#### **2. Tamaka Shwasa (Childhood Asthma):**

While involving *Vata*, the primary obstruction is caused by *Kapha* in the lungs. It manifests as wheezing, gasping, and aggravated symptoms at night or during cloudy weather.

- **Treatment:**
  - *Agastya Haritaki:* A premier *Rasayana* for lung health. *Bharangi Guda:* Specifically targets the inflammatory response in the airways.
  - *Mridu Vamana:* In older children, mild therapeutic emesis is used to "expel the root" of *Kapha* from the stomach.

#### **3. Kaphaja Grahani (Digestive Malabsorption):**

Common in the *Ksheerannada* stage, this involves the secretion of excess mucus in the stools, lethargy, and a sweet taste in the mouth.

- **Treatment:**
  - *Mustarishtha:* To kindle the *Agni* (digestive fire) and dry up excess moisture.
  - *Bilvadi Leha:* To bind the stool and improve absorption.
  - *Panchakola Churna:* A potent mix of five spices to stimulate metabolism.

#### **4. Mukharoga (Oral Thrush/Stomatitis):**

*Kapha*-type mouth ulcers often appear as white, painless patches with excessive salivation.

- **Treatment:**
  - *Kavala (Gargling):* Using *Triphala Kwatha* or *Irimejadi Taila*.
  - *Tankana Bhasma:* Applied locally with honey to clear the white coating.

**Ayurvedic Treatment Protocols for Kaphaj Yoga:**

The management of *Kapha* in children focuses on *Ushna* (warm), *Teekshna* (penetrating), and *Ruksha* (drying) properties to counteract the cold, heavy nature of *Kapha*.

Treatment Category	Specific Intervention	Action/Benefit
<b>Deepana-Pachana</b>	<i>Trikatu</i> (Ginger, Black Pepper, <i>Pippali</i> )	Enhances metabolic rate and burns <i>Ama</i> (toxins).
<b>External Therapy</b>	<i>Udvarthana</i> (Dry Powder Massage)	Using <i>Kolitha</i> or <i>Triphala</i> powder to reduce subcutaneous congestion.
<b>Respiratory Care</b>	<i>Nasya</i> (Nasal Drops)	Using <i>Anu Taila</i> (for older children) to clear the sinuses.
<b>Lifestyle</b>	<i>Ahara Vidhi</i>	Avoiding heavy, cold milk products and sweets; favoring warm water and honey.

The "*Kaphaja Yoga*" Formula: *Balacaturbhadrika*

The most famous "*Yoga*" (formulation) for pediatric *Kapha* disorders is *Balacaturbhadrika Churna*. It consists of four ingredients that balance the child's physiology:

1. *Musta*: For digestion and fever.
2. *Pippali*: For respiratory clearing and immunity.
3. *Ativisha*: To treat diarrhea and infections.
4. *Karkatashringi*: Specifically for cough and phlegm.

**Summary of Management Strategy**

1. *Nidana Parivarjana*: Remove the cause
2. *Kledahara*: Reducing excess fluid/mucus in the body.
3. *Prana-Agni Balya*: Strengthening both the respiratory system and the digestive fire simultaneously.

Treating children requires a "soft" approach (*Sukumara Chikitsa*). Ayurveda dictates that dosages must be adjusted based on the child's age, often using the mother as a medium for medicine (through the milk) in the *Ksheerada* stage.

Popular formulations like *Aravindasava* (a fermented liquid) and *Balacaturbhadrika* (a blend of four potent herbs) are prized for their multi-systemic benefits, addressing respiratory, digestive, and febrile issues simultaneously without the side effects often associated with synthetic drugs.

**Conclusion and Future Outlook:**

*Balaroga* offers a comprehensive, preventative-centric model of pediatric care that remains highly relevant. Its emphasis on the "gut-brain axis" (linking *Agni* to mental health) pre-dates modern

findings by centuries. Integrating these time-honored practices with modern diagnostic tools could lead to a more holistic, less invasive era of pediatric medicine.

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