



EXAMINATION OF NEW BORN THROUGH AYURVEDIC PRACTICES: A LITERARY REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The ancient *Ayurvedic* text *Kashyapa Samhita* provides a detailed framework for paediatric examination based on anatomical, physiological and developmental features. This text highlights various clinical assessment techniques aimed at predicting health, longevity and potential ailments in children. Despite its incomplete preservation, the text offers valuable insights into early diagnostic methods grounded in *Ayurvedic* principles. The study focuses on examining body parts such as nails, feet, legs, knees, abdomen, shoulders, arms and motor functions. Healthy nails reflect robust metabolism and good organ development, while abnormal nail conditions suggest deficiencies and congenital disorders. Similarly, well-developed feet and fleshy, firm legs denote strength and longevity, whereas signs of atrophy or abnormal thickness may indicate malnutrition or neuromuscular disorders. A well-toned abdomen suggests good health, while abnormalities like visible veins or a depressed appearance point to potential systemic illnesses such as malnutrition or ascites. The assessment extends to motor functions and gait analysis. A steady, powerful gait indicates strong musculoskeletal health, while an unsteady or stumbling gait signifies possible neurological conditions linked to *Vata Dosha* imbalances. Shoulders, arms and umbilical features also offer diagnostic clues about health and future prosperity. Overall, this study underscores the relevance of traditional *Ayurvedic* diagnostic methods in modern paediatric assessment. The correlation between ancient clinical observations and current medical interpretations highlights the enduring significance of *Ayurveda* in understanding child development and health prognosis.

KEYWORDS: *Kashyapa Samhita*, Examination, Abnormality, *Ayurveda*, Health, Future Prosperity

INTRODUCTION

In our ancient texts of *Kashyapa Samhita*, chapter 28 describes the different aspects of examination of child. The *Kashyapa Samhita* emphasizes paediatric anatomy, physiology, ailments and their management. However, the complete text of *Sutra Sthana* is currently unavailable and Chapter 28 titled *Lakshanadhyaya*, is also incomplete. According to the introductory verse, the first and primary question was: "What characteristics indicate that a child will live a long life?" In response, *Acharya Kashyapa* provides a detailed explanation of various bodily features and their correlation with longevity. This includes clinical observations such as signs of maturity (assessed through the skin, hair, movements and genitals), secondary sexual characteristics (like pubic hair and genital development), anthropometric measurements (size of body parts) and systemic examinations (including per vaginal, per rectal, musculoskeletal and abdominal assessments). These diagnostic methods are also used to predict the future health and development of the child. *Acharya Kashyapa* starts its age classification from foetus onwards which states that foetal health and child health is a very important aspect for the healthy life thus proper examination of child should be done to find out any kind of anomaly timely and successful treatment can be planned for the healthy future of child.¹

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To determine the examination of child as per ancient *Ayurvedic* beliefs.
- To reaffirm the principles of *Ayurveda* with evidence-based references.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The details were collected from different *Ayurvedic* texts, reputed journals, articles, internet, literature for study and drawing inferences and justification. Other print media were also be searched for similar matter and were incorporated according to the need of the topic.

EXPLANATION OF CLINICAL EXAMINATION AS PER AYURVEDA

Indian heritage is rich with religious, philosophical, social and medical knowledge. Hidden aim of most of the Indian rituals is to keep the person in a positive attitude, by minimizing the stress factor. Probably, in olden days, a physician will perform overall general examinations of the baby and compare bodily features with different perceptive and would provide possible health advices.²

GENERAL EXAMINATIONS FOR DIFFERENT PARTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. Examination of nails and digits

- **Normal** – Nails which are *Snigdha*, having normal thickness, nonstick, vascular (Tamra Varna) and with dorsum elevated like that of a tortoise (Kurma) is considered as the best.²
- **Thick** – prediction of becoming a scholar (*Asthi* and *Mamsa Dhatu Sarata* – Indicative of healthy metabolism and proper organ development.)³
- **Dry** - Miserable persons (Indicative of Vitamin B7 (biotin) and calcium deficiency.)⁴
- **Bent like shell** – He becomes poor, which means he can't perform skilful activities with bent finger and is unfortunate. This can be a sign of congenital cardiovascular disorder with clubbing.⁵
- **Brittle nails** – suggests that he becomes a sorrowful person in the future as this presentation is seen in many congenital and nutritional anaemias.⁶
- **White and rectangular nails** – short life span. Usually seen in certain hormonal deficiencies, genetic syndromes related to genital hormones.⁷

2. Examination of feet

- Feet and hand should be fleshy. It should be well developed. There should not be any notable atrophy, hypertrophy or hyperplasia. Normal range of movement should be observed.⁸
- Fleshy, firm and up-going lines- this indicates long life, prosperous and powerful life. (Lines in the soles are called as sole creases and an important criterion for the assessment of gestational age.)⁹
- Without lines - Of servants (The creases on the palms and soles develop as part of fetal growth during gestation. Absence of creases on the soles of the feet may indicate gestational immaturity)¹⁰
- With so many lines - of ill persons (suggest the presence of disorders such as XP)¹¹
- Fixed foot- indicative of poverty (difficulty in walking, talipes equino varus this all hampers the future quality of life)¹²
- Pale white feet – indicates that one who does service to others (indicative of anaemia, hemoglobinopathy, which may be congenital or acquired)¹³

3. Examination of lower leg and leg

Lower leg

- Lower leg (*Prajangha*) which is thin, is well appreciated.¹⁴
- Thick lower leg leads to loss of son, wealth and happiness etc. (which is indicative of pseudohypertrophy in DMD)¹⁵

Leg

- Leg (upper leg) which is compact, without visible veins and hairless are praise worthy.¹⁶

- Emaciated (*Shushk*) abnormally thick (*Sthul*) with visible veins and with hairs are not good. (Mal-nutritious disorder leads to emaciated limbs, abnormally thick and enlarged limbs may suggest lymphadenitis, filariasis etc. like condition.)¹⁷

4. Examination of knee joint and thighs¹⁸

- Well covered knee joint is praise worthy. (It indicates a condition resembling *Mamsa Sarta – Gudh Sandhi*)
- Fleshy and deep-seated veins, smooth thighs are good. (It indicates a condition resembling *Mamsa Sarta – Gudh Sandhi*)

5. Examination of abdomen and umbilicus

Abdomen

- Abdomen which is well protuberant, absence of laxity with hardness and also not very big is normal. (Suggests a firm and toned abdomen. Also prune belly syndrome can be excluded)¹⁹
- Enlarged visible veins (*Kubhojana*) (Suggests ascites or Indian childhood cirrhosis)
- Dry depressed abdomen (Suggests poverty, malnourished disorders)²⁰
- Protuberant to right side – male child will be produced (This has also been described by other Acharyas)
- Protuberant to left side – female child will be produced (This has also been described by other Acharyas)²¹

Umbilicus

- Deeply seated, slightly turned towards the right side, rounded protuberant edges and free from hair – Good and normal²²
- Cave like shape, not protuberant causes pleasure and sorrow (Suggests malnutrition)²³
- Irregular shape (*Visham Akriti*) – suggests short life (Ascites), tumours, liver and splenic enlargement, intestinal obstruction²⁴
- Big, deep, protuberant in edges – administrators (suggests obesity)²⁵

6. Examination of shoulders and axilla

Shoulders

- Emaciated shoulder – becomes poor (Indicative of malnutrition)
- Corpulent shoulders – rich persons (Suggestive of well-nourished person)
- Tough shoulders – Brave (Suggestive of robustness)
- Elevated shoulders – good (normalcy is praiseworthy)²⁶
- Female with lax shoulders – good (Because of clavicular structure)²⁷

Axilla

- Elevated, big, corpulent, appreciable – appreciable and normal²⁸
- Women with strong and hairy - Inauspicious (Strong: indicative of hypertrophy)²⁹

7. Examination of arm

- Thick in order, well covered elbow – praiseworthy (Indicates proper alignment of the shoulder joints, well-covered by musculature (*Mamsa Dhatu*), reflecting a healthy nutritional status.)³⁰
- Long enough to touch the knee (Disturbed in upper segment and lower segment ratio, achondroplasias, Marfan's syndrome)³¹
- Covered with veins and long thick hair is indicative of good progeny and causes infertility respectively.³²
- Thick and thin wrist joints are good for male and female respectively.
- Infertility without visible veins - This clinical condition may be associated with obesity and swelling.
- Presence of oblique veins - Suggests a more challenging life. Typically, oblique veins are located deeper, but individuals experiencing significant physical strain may have prominently visible oblique veins.³³

8. Motor Examination

- Gait is like an intoxicated elephant, bull, lion, tiger, swan – a leader and administrator (Suggests normal motor power, tone and strength with perfect skeletal fitting).³⁴
- An unsteady gait reflects fluctuating emotions, alternating between sorrow and pleasure, indicating psychological instability linked to *Vata Dosha*. Unsteadiness arises from the *Chala Guna*, signifying a *Vata*-predominant *Prakriti*.
- Oblique stumbling is considered inauspicious and may suggest central nervous system disorders, particularly cerebellar dysfunction.³⁵
- Stumbling gait – drunken gait, waddling gait, seizure gait³⁶

CONCLUSION

The ancient *Ayurvedic* examination process focuses on multiple bodily aspects including nails, feet, lower legs, abdomen, shoulders, arms and motor functions. Each feature is correlated with specific health indicators, such as:

- Nails and Digits: Healthy nails suggest strong metabolism, while abnormalities may indicate nutritional deficiencies or congenital disorders.
- Feet and Legs: Well-developed, firm and fleshy feet signify longevity and good health, while abnormalities hint at underlying developmental issues.
- Abdomen and Umbilicus: A well-toned abdomen suggests health, while irregular shapes or visible veins may indicate malnutrition or systemic disorders like ascites.
- Shoulders and Arms: Properly developed shoulders and arms reflect good nutritional status and musculoskeletal strength, whereas emaciation or hypertrophy points to potential health challenges.
- Motor Function and Gait: Stable and balanced gait indicates strong musculoskeletal health, while unsteady or stumbling gait suggests neurological or psychological instability linked to *Vata Dosha*.

Overall, this study reaffirms the diagnostic principles from ancient *Ayurvedic* practices, demonstrating their relevance in assessing health, predicting developmental outcomes and guiding treatment plans. These assessments emphasize the early identification of anomalies, facilitating timely intervention for a healthier life.

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