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ANCIENT WISDOM, MODERN BELIEFS: EVALUATING PARENTAL UNDERSTANDING AND EFFECTS OF SWARNAPRASHANA IN CHILDREN AT KOPPAL REGION

DUMBRE RS^{*1}, INJAMURI R¹ AND MUDADLA S²

*Final Year PG Scholar, Postgraduate Department of Kaumarabhritya, Shree Jagadguru
Gavisiddheshwara Ayurvedic Medical College and Research Institute Koppal, Karnataka 583231, India

¹Associate Professor, Postgraduate Department of Kaumarabhritya, Shree Jagadguru Gavisiddheshwara
Ayurvedic Medical College and Research Institute Koppal, Karnataka, India

²Professor and Head, Postgraduate Department of Kaumarabhritya, Shree Jagadguru Gavisiddheshwara
Ayurvedic Medical College and Research Institute Koppal, Karnataka, India

*Corresponding Author: Dr. Rohan Sanjay Dumbre: E Mail: rohandumbre99@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Background: Swarnaprashana, an age-old Ayurvedic practice involving the administration of medicated gold preparations to children, is traditionally believed to enhance immunity, cognitive ability, and overall well-being. While deeply rooted in cultural narratives, its acceptance and practice in contemporary times are often shaped by parental beliefs, awareness, and socio-cultural contexts.

Methodology: The present study, conducted in the Koppal region, aimed to evaluate parental understanding of Swarnaprashana and examine perceived effects on children's health and development. Using a mixed-method approach, data were collected through structured questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and observational records from a stratified sample of parents across rural and semi-urban communities.

Results & Discussion: Findings reveal a duality: while a significant proportion of parents endorsed Swarnaprashana based on ancestral wisdom, others expressed skepticism due to limited scientific validation and lack of standardized clinical guidelines. Reported outcomes included perceived

improvements in immunity, attentiveness, and physical vigor, though these claims largely lacked measurable biomedical corroboration. Notably, parental decisions were strongly influenced by local health practitioners, community norms, and intergenerational transmission of knowledge. This study highlights the intersection of cultural tradition and modern health perspectives, emphasizing the need to balance evidence-based research with respect for indigenous knowledge systems. The findings call for systematic clinical evaluations of Swarnaprashana, alongside sensitization programs to bridge gaps in parental understanding. By contextualizing traditional practices within modern scientific discourse, this work contributes to informed health choices for children and opens pathways for integrative pediatric care.

Keywords: Ayurveda, parental perception, traditional practices, physical vigor, pediatric care

INTRODUCTION:

Parenting in the modern era presents a variety of challenges, particularly in setting appropriate rules and boundaries to meet the evolving needs of children. In navigating these complexities, parents often balance expert advice with their own instincts and intuition. A prominent aspect of contemporary parenting is the emphasis on preventive healthcare, where parents proactively invest in products and practices aimed at enhancing their child's overall well-being.

This protective approach frequently includes the use of supplements, vitamins, organic foods, eco-friendly products, herbal remedies, and childproofing solutions. Products perceived to be of high quality or backed by claims of efficacy such as energy enhancers or memory boosters are often preferred. Interestingly, choices are not always based on scientific validation or brand credibility; in many cases, recommendations

from peers and personal experiences influence purchasing decisions.

Among such preventive health practices, traditional Ayurvedic formulations like *Swarnaprashana* have gained attention for their claimed benefits in boosting immunity, cognitive function, and general health in children. However, despite its increasing popularity, there remain significant gaps in awareness and understanding regarding its usage, safety, and efficacy. Parents may overlook the importance of verifying product authenticity or consulting qualified healthcare practitioners before administering such traditional remedies.

Previous research has demonstrated that *Swarnaprashana*, an Ayurvedic formulation involving purified gold, plays a significant role in enhancing children's immunity, cognitive function, growth, and overall health. These studies support the survey findings, which report positive

parental perceptions regarding immunity enhancement, cognitive support, and physical development in children receiving Swarnaprashana. For instance, Khan and Ojha (2023) conducted a narrative review indicating Swarnaprashana's immunomodulatory, nootropic, and therapeutic effects, confirming its safety and benefits for children [1]. Similarly, Nelaturi et al. (2020) discuss Swarna Bindu Prashana as an immune booster well-supported by classical texts, emphasizing its use in pediatrics for long-term wellness [2]. Clinical observations also note improvements in children's physical strength, metabolism, and cognitive abilities after Swarnaprashana administration. The traditional emphasis on processed and purified gold as crucial for safe administration is echoed in both classical and contemporary studies [3].

This survey-based study aims to explore parental perspectives, awareness levels, and effects related to Swarnaprashana administration, thereby providing insights into current practices and potential areas for public education and scientific validation.

Swarnaprashana is a classical Ayurvedic immunomodulatory and neuro-enhancing intervention first described in the *Kashyapa Samhita*, one of the earliest authoritative texts on Ayurvedic pediatrics.

This formulation involves the oral administration of processed gold (SwarnaBhasma) along with honey (*madhu*), clarified butter (*ghrita*), and specific herbal preparations. It is traditionally indicated for infants and children as part of *Lehana Karma*—a category of therapeutic interventions aimed at promoting growth, immunity, intellect, and vitality.

The original reference from *Kashyapa Samhita, Lehana Adhyaya* states, "Gold, used as a rejuvenative agent (*rasayana*), enhances intellect (*medha*), digestive fire (*agni*), strength (*bala*), and immunity. It promotes longevity, auspiciousness, fertility, and protects against harmful influences. Its administration leads to superior cognitive development [4].

It is also mentioned in the classics that if Swarnaprashana is administered continuously for 1 month, the child will have better cognitive abilities and less affected by any diseases and if administered continuously for 6 months the child will be able to understand and recall the things which are even just heard by him/her. As per classical references, the use of Swarna Bhasma (Ash of gold) for a long time is said to increase the life span of a person [5, 6].

The ingredients used in the preparation are:

- **Madhu** (Honey)

- **Ghrita** (Ghee)
- **Suvarna Patra** (Pure Gold)
- **MedhyaChurna*** (a nootropic herbal powder)

The final Swarnaprashana formulation was prepared to a semisolid consistency to facilitate ease of administration and promote optimal absorption. To assess parental perspectives on its efficacy and safety, a structured survey was distributed to the parents of participating children. A randomly selected sample of parents was included to ensure unbiased representation across the study population.

The feedback obtained through these survey forms was systematically compiled and analyzed. The results indicated that a majority of parents reported positive outcomes, noting improvements in their children's overall health and development following regular administration of Swarnaprashana. Notably, no adverse effects or side effects were reported by any respondents.

Medhya churna is prepared with few herbal drugs which are also suggested to be given along with gold in children are as follows:

Table 1: Medhya churna ingredients

Sl. No.	Name of the herbal drugs	Botanical name
1.	Vacha	Acorus calamus Linn
2.	Brahmi	Bacopa monnieri
3.	Shankhapushpi	Convolvulus pluricaulis Choisy
4.	Guduchi	Tinospra Cordifolia
5.	Yastimadhu	Glycyrrhiza glabra

METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire Design and Development:

In the initial phase of the study, a structured and specialized questionnaire was developed to collect relevant data from parents regarding the administration and perceived effects of Swarnaprashana (SP) in children. The questionnaire was prepared to ensure clarity and accessibility for a diverse group of respondents.

The content validation of the questionnaire was carried out by subject matter experts in

the fields of Ayurveda and pediatric healthcare. Following their review and approval, the validated questionnaire was finalized and subsequently utilized for data collection in the Swarnaprashana administration survey.

A total of **230** respondents were included in the survey. Eligible participants were parents of children aged between **6 months and 16 years**, who had been administering **Swarnaprashana (SP)** regularly on each **Pushya Nakshatra**. Priority

was given to those who had continued SP administration for **at least 6 months**, in alignment with classical Ayurvedic recommendations. Parents whose children had not received SP consistently were excluded from the study.

The survey was conducted on 31st May 2025, during which individual interviews were conducted with the selected parents. Participants were recruited from the **Outpatient Department (OPD)** and **Inpatient Department (IPD)** of the **Shree Jagadguru Gavisiddeshwara Ayurvedic Medical College and Research Institute Koppal, Karnataka**.

RESULTS:

Among the 230 children most of the informants of the survey were mothers. As per the data collected, most of parents got to know about Swarnaprashana from their friends (i. e. 45.2%) and then from the hospitals, family members, advertisements in newspapers and neighbours.

Observed Health Effects:

1. Immunity:

211 (91.73%) parents were satisfied with improvement in immunity of their child, 19 (8.26%) parents could not appreciate the difference, no one found any deterioration in immunity.

2. Memory and Learning:

204 (88.69%) parents were satisfied with improvement in memory power of their child, 26 (11.31%) parents could not appreciate the difference and no one found to be having decrease in memory status.

3. Concentration and attention:

192 (83.47%) parents were satisfied with improved concentration of their child, 38 (16.53%) parents couldn't appreciate the difference and no one found to be having decrease in concentration and attention status. Majority of parents had noticed improved academic result of their children due to good concentration in school classes.

4. Appetite and Digestion:

174 (75.65%) children noticed improvement in appetite, 54 (23.47%) parents didn't appreciate any change and 2 (0.86%) children had reduced appetite and digestion.

5. Sleep quality:

195 (84.78%) parents were satisfied with improved sleep of their child, 35 (15.21%) parents couldn't appreciate the difference and no one found to be having decrease in sleep quality status.

6. Energy Level:

192 (83.47%) parents were satisfied with improved energy level of their child, 38 (16.53%) parents couldn't appreciate the difference and no one found to be having decrease in energy level status.

7. Emotional Stability:

154 (66.95%) parents were satisfied with emotional stability of their child, 76(33.04%) parents couldn't appreciate the difference. Parents had given a feedback that "now children use to complete their homework in one sitting by themselves without swerve their mind in TV Computer, Play or any other activities."

8. Side effects:

Swarnaprashana showed no side effects in this study.

9. Overall Health:

228 (99.130%) parents were satisfied with improved overall health of their child, 2 (0.87%) parents couldn't appreciate the difference and no one found to be having decrease in overall health.

General Opinion of Parents:

"In a survey of 230 children, all participating parents unanimously perceived the intervention as beneficial for their child's well-being and expressed a strong willingness to recommend it to others."

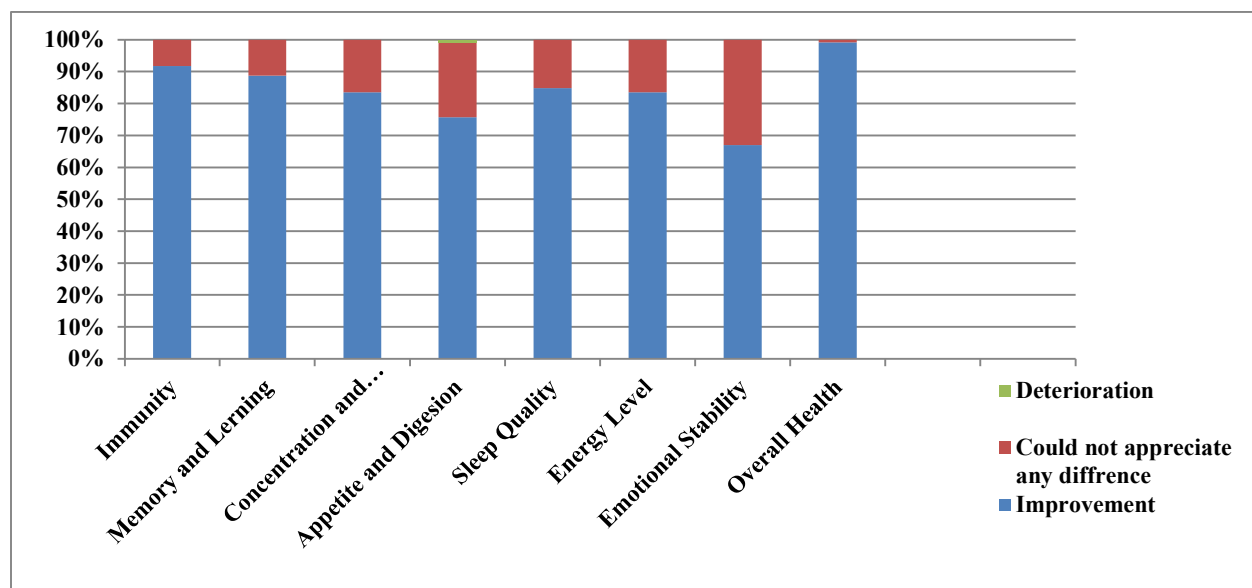


Figure 1 : Result

DISCUSSION:

Children under 15 years of age comprise about 30% of India's population. Childhood is the state when the human being is growing and developing. It is the age to acquire good habits, values and lifestyles that would make

children fit, responsible and productive adults and citizens. The brain enlarges rapidly during the latter months of fetal life and early months of postnatal life. At birth, the head size is about 65-70% of the expected head size in adults. It reaches 90% of the adult head size

by the age of 2 years. Thus, the fetal phase and the first two years are crucial periods for brain development. Later periods are also important for acquiring neuromotor functions and cognitive ability [7]. In this developing age swarnaprashana can make a fruitful impact.

The present survey, conducted through questionnaire-based personal interviews, proved to be an effective method for data collection. Administering the questions for better understanding and engagement from the participants. This approach not only enabled clear communication but also provided an opportunity for parents to clarify their doubts and express their views openly. The interactive nature of the interviews contributed to the authenticity and depth of the responses. Furthermore, the majority of parents reported finding the survey experience beneficial, as it increased their awareness of Swarnaprashana and allowed them to reflect on their own practices and beliefs regarding its use in children.

The positive perception observed in the survey regarding Swarnaprashana (SP) may be attributed to the presence of various essential trace elements in its formulation. administering gold without proper purification and processing can have harmful effects, potentially diminishing an individual's happiness, potency, and physical

strength, and may lead to the development of various diseases. This highlights the critical importance of meticulous purification (Shodhana) of gold prior to its use in Swarnaprashana, ensuring both safety and therapeutic efficacy [8]. Swarna (gold) is regarded as a highly potent and sacred metal in Ayurveda, used extensively in Swarnaprashana for its immunomodulatory, rejuvenative, and intelligence-enhancing properties.

Ayurvedic texts like Kashyapa Samhita describe Swarnaprashana as a unique neonatal and pediatric regimen involving orally administered purified Swarna Bhasma mixed with honey and ghee along with herbal extracts [3]. Honey In Ayurvedic texts, honey is described a Yogvahi—a substance that enhances the effects of other drugs without changing its own properties. It possesses antimicrobial, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and immunomodulatory activities, supporting digestion, metabolism, and immunity⁹. Ghrita increases smriti (memory), medha (intellectual property), ojas (immunity/essence), and kanthi (glow) [10]. According to Charaka Samhita, ghrita supports the nourishment of dhatus (body tissues) and stabilizes homeostasis, resulting in improved immunity and strength. Sushruta Samhita highlights its ability to enhance

memory, intellect, aura, voice, and immunity, providing overall physical and cognitive benefits [11].

Brahmi (*Bacopa monnieri*), a key herb in Swarnaprashana formulations, is known for its nootropic, immunomodulatory, adaptogenic, and rejuvenating properties. In Swarnaprashana, Brahmi is commonly used in the form of Brahmi Ghrita, which supports cognitive function, memory enhancement, and neuroprotection [12]. The effects of Vacha (*Acorus calamus*) used in Swarnaprashana have been studied clinically and show promising results, particularly in enhancing immunity and promoting growth in infants and children [13].

Shankhpushpi is described to have medhya (intellect-promoting), balya (strengthening), and rasayana (rejuvenative) properties. It supports improved cognitive function, memory, and mental sharpness, as well as neuroprotection [14]. Guduchi is classified as a rasayana (rejuvenator) with potent immunomodulatory, adaptogenic, antipyretic and cognitive-enhancing properties, making it a vital component of Swarnaprashana formulations for children [15]. Yashtimadhu is recognized for its adaptogenic, immunomodulatory, and nootropic effects [16].

These trace elements are known to play significant roles in the human body at the molecular level. They function as cofactors or catalysts in a variety of enzymatic reactions—ranging from general ionic interactions, as seen in metal-ion activated enzymes, to more specific roles in metalloenzymes, where metal ions are tightly bound to proteins to enable proper enzymatic function. Such biochemical roles could underlie the perceived health benefits of SP, as reported by respondents, especially in terms of immunity enhancement, cognitive support, and overall wellness.

Although the present survey was conducted on a limited sample size, it provided valuable insights into parental perceptions and practices related to Swarnaprashana (SP) administration in children. The findings revealed that a considerable number of parents were not fully aware of SP in its traditional or classical context. In many cases, the initiation of SP was influenced by informal sources, primarily suggestions from friends or family members, rather than through consultation with healthcare professionals. This highlights the significant role of social circles in shaping health-related decisions among parents. The reliance on peer recommendations over professional advice suggests a strong trust in community-driven health practices.

Interestingly, despite the informal basis for adoption, several parents reported positive outcomes, indicating potential benefits associated with SP administration—an observation supported by the data in this study. None of parents observed any adverse reaction for this preparation, which indicates the safety of the preparation.

CONCLUSION:

This survey study reveals that, Swarna Prashana is effective to promote health (Immunity), growth (height & weight) and development (maturation of CNS) of children and at the same time it does not any adverse drug reaction. SP shows maximum relief in all over parameters of growth and development. To achieve optimum benefit from this preventive medicine, we should promote this immune-booster treatment to maximum number of children.

This clinical and survey study shows promising results and also generated a quest and curiosity for researchers to find out the exact mode of action of these drugs through modern parameters. Many parents reported a reduction in the frequency of infections in their children following the regular administration of Swarnaprashana.

This experiential feedback aligns with existing research findings that support the immune-modulatory potential of SP in

pediatric populations. Such responses from parents not only reinforce the traditional claims regarding SP's role in enhancing immunity but also highlight its relevance as a preventive health measure in contemporary clinical practice.

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