

# Invisible Vectors In Ayurveda: A Modern Perspective On Balagraha And Pediatric Syndromes

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## ABSTRACT

*Kaumarabhritya, a branch of Ashtanga Ayurveda, introduces the concept of Balagraha—diseases caused by invisible and unidentified vectors. Traditionally explained through mythological narratives, Balagraha has been largely dismissed in modern times due to a lack of scientific validation. This paper aims to reinterpret Balagraha through contemporary biomedical parameters and explore its clinical relevance. After a comprehensive review of classical Ayurvedic texts, it is evident that these obscure vectors may correspond to microorganisms such as bacteria and viruses, which are invisible to the naked eye yet capable of causing multisystem disorders and syndromes. This article attempts to bridge ancient wisdom with modern science for practical application in pediatric care.*

**Keywords:** Kaumarabhritya, Balagraha, Graha Roga, neonatal care, Apasmara, Dhupana, microbial correlation

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## INTRODUCTION

The term "Balagraha" is derived from two Sanskrit words: Bal (child) and Graha (to seize or capture). These entities are believed to affect children, causing various disorders through invisible and rapid mechanisms, distinct from conventional pathogenesis<sup>1</sup>.

References to Grahas are found in ancient texts such as the Rig Veda, Mahabharata, Kaushikutsa, Bhaishajya, Agnipurana, Markandeya Purana, and Brhadaranyaka Upanishad. In Kashyapa Samhita, Grahas are described in the Revati Kalpa Adhyaya. Mythologically, these Grahas were created by deities like Shiva, Parvati, Agni, and Kartikeya to protect Kartikeya, manifesting as Skandagraha, Skanda Apasmara, Naigmesha, Mukhmandika, and Putrika<sup>2</sup>.

In modern interpretation, these Grahas may represent microorganisms—bacteria and viruses—that are invisible yet responsible for serious illnesses. Different Acharyas have classified Grahas variably:

- **Charaka:** Considered Grahas as innumerable, influenced by divine forces<sup>3</sup>.
- **Sushruta:** Identified 9 Grahas<sup>4</sup>.
- **Vaghbhatta:** Added 3 more, totaling 12, and categorized them as male (Gram-positive) and female (Gram-negative) microbes.

## TYPES OF BALAGRAHA

Acharya	Number of Grahas	Notable Grahas
Charaka	Innumerable	Divine influences
Sushruta	9	Shakuni, Revati, Putana, Andhapatana, Sheetapatana, Skanda, Skanda Apasmara, Mukhmandika, Naigmesha
Vaghbhatta	12	Adds Swagraha, Pitragraha, Shushka Revati

## Classification by Gender and Microbial Analogy

- **Male Grahas (Gram-positive):** Skanda, Vishakha, Mesha, Swagraha, Pitragraha<sup>5</sup>

- **Female Grahas (Gram-negative):** Putana, Sheetaputana, Andhaputana, Shakuni, Revati, Shushka Revati, Mukhmandika

#### Aims And Objectives

- To review Graha Roga using ancient Ayurvedic literature<sup>5</sup>
- To analyze the probable etiopathogenesis of different Graha Rogas
- To correlate Graha Rogas with modern medical conditions
- To explore clinical applications in contemporary pediatric practice

#### Modern Correlations Of Graha Rogas

Each Graha is correlated with a modern disease based on clinical features and pathogenesis. Below is a summary of key correlations:

Graha	Modern Disease	Key Symptoms
Skanda	Quadriplegia	Spastic limbs, cortical thumb, speech difficulty
Skanda Apasmara	Infantile Seizures	Frothing, limb tightening, unconsciousness
Naigmesha	Bacterial Meningitis	Fever, vomiting, bulging fontanelle
Swagraha	Rabies	Hydrophobia, tremors, opisthotonus
Pitrighraha	Pneumonia	Cyanosis, nasal flaring, poor feeding
Shakuni	Impetigo	Blisters, crusts, foul odor
Putana	Diarrhea	Loose stool, dehydration, disturbed sleep
Sheetaputana	Diarrhea with Dehydration	Watery stool, sunken eyes, lethargy
Andhaputana	Chronic Diarrhea	Malnutrition, edema, prone posture
Mukhmandika	Juvenile Diabetes	Polyuria, polydipsia, fruity breath
Revati	Pernicious Anemia	Fatigue, mouth ulcers, greenish stool
Shushka Revati	Abdominal Tuberculosis	Cachexia, abdominal lump, foul odor

#### Skanda Graha → Quadriplegia

Symptoms: Spastic limbs, improper neck holding, cortical thumb, speech difficulty Ayurvedic Management: Vatahara herbs, ritual bathing, chanting, Rakta Chandan application Modern Management: Physiotherapy, anticonvulsants, supportive care

#### Skanda Apasmara → Infantile Seizures

Symptoms: Frothing, limb tightening, unconsciousness, upward gaze Ayurvedic Management: Bilva kwatha, Panchagavya, Kalyanaka Ghrita Modern Management: Benzodiazepines, electrolyte correction, fever control

#### Naigmesha → Bacterial Meningitis

Symptoms: Fever, vomiting, bulging fontanelle, irritability Ayurvedic Management: Bilva and Agnimantha water, banyan tree rituals Modern Management: Broad-spectrum antibiotics, cerebral diuretics

#### Swagraha → Rabies/Hydrophobia

Symptoms: Tremors, opisthotonus, tongue bite, fear of water Ayurvedic Management: Medicated oils (Satabari, Sariva) Modern Management: Rabies vaccine, immunoglobulin, symptomatic care

#### Pitrighraha → Pneumonia

Symptoms: Cyanosis, nasal flaring, poor feeding, cadaveric odor Ayurvedic Management: Kshirivriksha Kashaya Modern Management: Oxygen therapy, antibiotics, nutritional support

#### Shakuni → Impetigo

Symptoms: Blisters, crusts, foul odor, itching Ayurvedic Management: Vetasa, Amra, Kapiththa water, Vrana Ropana Modern Management: Antibiotics, antifungals, hygiene maintenance

#### Putana → Diarrhea

Symptoms: Loose stool, vomiting, disturbed sleep, dehydration Ayurvedic Management: Kakolyadi Gana, Raksha Mantra, Sunya Griha Bali Modern Management: ORS, IV fluids, antisecretory drugs

#### Sheetaputana → Diarrhea with Dehydration

Symptoms: Watery stool, sunken eyes, lethargy Ayurvedic Management: Kapiththa, Vimbi, Bilva water, Sura Sonita rituals Modern Management: WHO dehydration protocol, IV fluids, antibiotics

### **Andhaputana → Chronic Diarrhea**

Symptoms: Malnutrition, edema, prone posture, sour odor  
Ayurvedic Management: Tikta drugs, fumigation with bird waste  
Modern Management: Etiology-specific treatment, nutritional correction

### **Mukhmandika → Juvenile Diabetes**

Symptoms: Polyuria, polydipsia, fruity breath, venous prominence  
Ayurvedic Management: Vata alleviating therapy, cow shelter rituals  
Modern Management: Insulin therapy, DKA prevention, dietary modification

### **Revati → Pernicious Anemia**

Symptoms: Fatigue, mouth ulcers, greenish stool, foul clay odor  
Ayurvedic Management: Ashwagandha, Sringi, river bathing  
Modern Management: Vitamin B12, folic acid, high-protein diet

### **Shushka Revati → Abdominal Tuberculosis**

Symptoms: Cachexia, abdominal lump, foul odor, hair loss  
Ayurvedic Management: Skanda Graha Cikitsa  
Modern Management: Anti-TB drugs, surgery if needed

## **MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

### **Ayurvedic Management**

- **Snana (Bathing):** At sacred or symbolic locations<sup>6</sup>
- **Dhupana (Fumigation):** Using herbs, animal products
- **Mantra & Bali:** Ritualistic offerings and chants<sup>7</sup>
- **Ghrita (Medicated Ghee):** Astamangal, Abhaya, Purana
- **Herbal Therapies:** Bilva, Kapiththa, Asana, Devdaru, etc.
- **Daiva Vyaprasraya Cikitsa:** Spiritual healing methods<sup>8</sup>

### **Modern Medical Management<sup>10,11</sup>**

- **Pharmacological:** Antibiotics, anticonvulsants, antipyretics
- **Supportive Care:** IV fluids, oxygen therapy, nutritional support
- **Specialized Therapies:** Physiotherapy, insulin therapy, anti-TB drugs
- **Preventive Measures:** Vaccination, hygiene, early diagnosis

## **DISCUSSION**

Balagraha represents one of the most intriguing and often misunderstood aspects of Ayurvedic pediatrics. Despite its mythological framing, the clinical descriptions are remarkably detailed and align with modern pathologies. Pediatricians today are often surprised by the accuracy of symptomatology and treatment protocols described centuries ago.

While skepticism persists, the Graha Roga framework offers a holistic view of disease—combining physical, psychological, and environmental factors. The therapeutic approaches, though rooted in tradition, often reflect broad-spectrum efficacy.

## **CONCLUSION**

Balagrahas, once considered mythological entities, can now be reinterpreted as microbial agents responsible for pediatric diseases. Their classification, symptomatology, and treatment in Ayurvedic texts show a profound understanding of pathology long before the advent of modern diagnostics. Integrating cleanliness, hygiene, and preventive care remains central to managing these conditions. This paper offers a foundational step toward bridging ancient wisdom with modern clinical practice, though further research and refinement are warranted.

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