

## HAIR CARE IN AYURVEDA - CURATIVE AND PREVENTIVE ASPECT

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### ABSTRACT

Beautiful long, shiny hairs are among asset of a person. They are to be maintained and protected with utmost care. Disorders like hair fall, greying of hairs, dandruff are commonest among young adults today, causing stress and inferiority complex among people. *Ayurveda* which puts preventive measures as first step than curation of a disease provides excellent methods for hair care. *Khalitya*, *palitya*, *darunaka* can be treated with modalities like *siraveda* or *prachana*, *nasya* therapy, different *lepa* application and regular oiling of scalp. Preventive modalities include using *rasayana* as *aahar* or drugs to be started early in middle age and use of *keshya* drugs mentioned in classics. Treatment is taken at two levels. One is clearing channel obstruction by *siraveda* and *udgarshan* (rubbing with a dry powder). Second step include providing nourishment to scalp in form of *lepa* and *abhyanga*. *Rasayana* and *keshya* drugs can be used both, by the one suffering from disease and the other healthy person so as to prevent occurrence of hair disorders.

**Keywords:** *Khalitya*, *palitya*, *darunaka*, *keshya*

### INTRODUCTION

*Shiroroga* includes diseases like *khalitya* (hair fall), *palitya* (greying of hairs), *darunaka* (dandruff) etc. commonly. Factors responsible for causation of *Shiroroga* has been stated by *Acharya Vagbhata* as too much exposure to smoke, sunlight, mist, indulgence in water sports, increased sleep or avoiding sleep, sweating, exposure to direct breeze, control of tears, weeping too much, drinking water and wine in large quantity, presence of worms inside body, suppression of urges, avoiding use of pillow, bath, oiling of head, always looking downwards, unhealthy raw smell, too much speaking etc.<sup>1</sup> These factors aggravate *vata* and *pitta* in head region (site of *Kapha*).

*Palitya* or early greying of hairs is a common condition affecting large number of population today specially in early adolescence. *Palitya* as described by *madhava Nidana* is classified into *kalaja* (timely) and *akalaja palitya* (untimely). *Akalaja palitya* is further stated as *prakriti akalaja palitya* as happens in *pitta prakriti* people and *vikrita akalaja palitya* happening due to factors like anger, grief, fear inducing stress in the body and whitening of hairs before age.<sup>2</sup> *Vikrita akalaja palitya* is due to increased heat (*pitta dosha*) of the body travelling to head with the help of *vata dosha* caused by factors anger, grief and fear getting mixed with other *doshas* causing ripening of hair and grey color of the hairs. Different *dosha* predominance

can be identified as cracked, black, rough and dry hair with presence of water hue in *vataja* dominant *palitya*. By *pitta dosha* dominance there is burning sensation, yellow color and by *Kapha* dominance hairs is smooth, thick and white.<sup>3</sup> *Acharya Charak* has stated heat of the body being solely responsible for both *khalitya* and *palitya* in different proportions. *Teja* in the body in association with *vata* and other *doshas* scorches up the hair, scalp giving instantaneous rise to alopecia (bald patch of hair loss). If there is partial scorching, it give rise to premature greying of hairs.<sup>4</sup> Treatment of *palitya* includes body purification, *nasya* therapy, paste application on scalp, head oiling and massage.

Term *khalitya*, *indralupta*, *ruchya* and *chacha* are used synonymously. *Acharya Kartika* has made a differentiation between them referring as term *khalitya* to scalp, *indralupta* to beard area and *ruchya* to whole body alopecia.<sup>5</sup> *Acharya videha* has described a striking observation regarding *khalitya* being exempted to ladies. Reasons given are soft body built (due to increased *Kapha dosha*), non-indulgence in heavy work and exercises (nonvitiation of *vata* and *pitta dosha*) and monthly purification (no obstruction of raktavaha body channels). All these factors lead to non-development of *khalitya* (alopecia) or its low prevalence in ladies.<sup>6</sup> Pathogenesis of *khalitya* stated by *Acharya Vagbhata* is that *pitta* present in hair follicles associated with *vata* causes falling of hairs, afterwards *Kapha* and *Rakta dosha* in that area blocks the hair follicle to prevent new hair growth.<sup>7</sup> Treatment protocol include blood purification of affected area by *siraveda* or *prachana* (bloodletting), *nasya karma*, *lepa*, *abhyanga* locally and *rasayana* usage by a person.

*Darunaka* is when ground of hairs becomes hard, dry and rough due to aggravation of *vata* and *Kapha dosha* in scalp.<sup>8</sup> There is also falling of hairs, dryness itching and small cracks on skin of scalp.<sup>9</sup> Treatment includes *siraveda* in *lalata* and *apaang* area (forehead), *nasya*, *lepa*, *abhyanga* and *prakshalan* of hairs. On evaluating these scalp diseases, general treatment protocols for curation of disease includes.

- *Rakta visravana*

- *Nasya*
- *Sirolepa*
- *Siro abhyanga*
- *Rasayana*

## CURATIVE TREATMENT

### RAKTA VISRAVANA

Bloodletting or *Rakta visravan* is an art of blood purification to get rid of impure blood in a person. It also promotes blood circulation to a place after removing *sanga* (obstruction). On describing the beauty of bloodletting in body purification *Acharya Sushruta* has said as sap flows out of a *kusumba* flower on cutting, it is said that impure blood flows out first on puncturing of a vein<sup>10</sup>. Diseases which do not get corrected by therapeutic measures are pacified quickly and fully by the act of venipuncture.<sup>11</sup> Vitiated blood at a site produces symptoms like swelling, heat, redness, suppuration and pain.<sup>12</sup> It is said that those who indulges in bloodletting from time to time never suffer from skin disorders, cyst formation, inflammation, swelling and blood disorders.<sup>13</sup> On selection of a vein *Acharya Sushruta* has stated for head disorders of blood origin, veins from *apanga* and *lalata* region (forehead) are to be chosen for the act of bloodletting. In *khalitya* without bloodletting, any other treatment modality like *lepa*, *abhyanga* etc. is not effective because without clearing the channel obstruction in hair follicles one cannot achieve desired result.

### NASYA

*Nasya karma* is the process of instillation of medicated oil in the nostrils to cure disorders of head. It can be either used as a purificatory measure (*shirovirechan*) or as a therapeutic measure (*snehana nasya*). *Nasya karma* pacifies disorders of supraclavicular region (*urdwa jatrugata*) *vikara* clearing sense organs and mouth, providing strength to bony structures present in head and neck region and prevent appearance of wrinkles, greying of hairs, baldness and freckles.<sup>15</sup> In Ayurveda classics various *nasya* measures are prescribed to treat *khalitya*, *palitya*, *darunaka* and other *Shiroroga*. *Snigda nasya* and *shirobasti* are administered in case of *vata* dominant diseases. *Avpida nasya* made up of astringent drugs given in the form of liquid instillation are used in *pitta*

–*Rakta* dominant head disorders. *Navana* term includes both *snehana* and *shodhan nasya* used in condition of *vata* and *Kapha* dominant diseases.

### **LEPA**

*Lepa* is the paste application on skin of face and scalp to correct disorders of *sweda*, foul smell, discoloration as stated by *Acharya sushrut*<sup>16</sup>. As *twacha* (skin) and hair follicles are the *mula* (origin place) of *swedavaha Srotas*, so correction of *sweda* (sweat and sebum glands) purifies skin and hair follicles to get rid of its diseases<sup>17</sup>. *Lepa* can be broadly classified into physical and physiological categories with respect to their properties and mode of application. On physical context, *lepa* are classified by *Acharya Sushruta* as *pralepa*, *pradeha* and *aalepa*. *Pralepa* is cold, thin, drying or nondrying in nature. *Pradeha* is hot or cold, thick, nondrying in nature, correcting *vata* and *Kapha* disorders. It cleanses, heal, and cure inflammation, swelling and pain. *Aalepa* is of medium nature correcting *Rakta* and *pitta* disorders<sup>18</sup>. In *khalitya* and *palitya* head disorders, *pradeha* of cold potency is used to correct all three *doshas* and in *darunaka*, *pradeha* of hot potency is applied. On physiological grounds, *lepa* or paste is applied on body as *udvartana*, *udgarshan* and *utsadana*. *Udvartana* is dry massage pacifying *vata* in body, correcting *Kapha*, liquefying *meda* in body and providing radiance to skin. *Udgarshan* is rubbing with a dry paste causing wide opening of blood vessels and stimulation of heat of skin. It corrects itching, allergic patches and *vata*. *Utsadana* is oily paste application used particularly in women to promote skin luster and cleanliness.<sup>19</sup> In *Shiroroga* like *khalitya*, *udgarshan* is used i.e. to rub scalp skin with a dry powder to remove obstruction caused by *Rakta* and *Kapha* and promote blood circulation which promotes growth of new hair follicles. In condition, like *darunaka*, *udvartana* or *utsadana* can be applied to pacify *vata* and *Kapha* and prevent dandruff on scalp.

### **ABHYANGA**

*Abhyanga* is the application of oil on body. Skin the organ through which tactile sensation occurs in a person. *Vata* is mainly responsible for tactile sensations. So, in turn oiling of skin mitigates *vata* in a person.

*Abhyanga* should only be performed in a person having desires for food and drinks (good digestive power at the time of oiling) as it increases *Kapha dosha* in the body. Ayurveda says regular oiling of head, ears and feet should be done on a regular basis.<sup>20</sup> Massage on head eliminates diseases of head, provides soft, lengthy, glossy, black hairs, is good for skin of the face and refills the empty head to provide nourishment to sense organs.<sup>21</sup> As per *Acharya Sushruta* on oiling up to 300 *matra* (time period), oil enters the hair follicles to exert its nourishing effects.

### **RASAYANA**

*Rasayana* are the preparations which delays ageing process in a person. These are to be started in middle age only to rejuvenate *Dhatu's* of body. *Rasayana* are of 3 types - *kaamyas*, *nimaitika* and *ajasrika* *rasayana*. *Kaamyas rasayana* are used to achieve certain motives like *vayasthan* as antiaging, *medhya rasayana* for boosting immunity etc. *Nimaitika rasayana* show anti diseases effects like using *khadira* for skin disorders, *bhallataka* for *Kapha* disorders etc. *Ajasrika rasayana* are food articles to be used on regular basis like milk, ghee, honey etc<sup>22</sup>, *Rasayana* like *Amalaki*, *Krishna tila*, *bhringraja* can be used in curing hair disorders in Ayurveda.<sup>23</sup>

### **PREVENTIVE MEASURES**

#### **SHIROABHYANGA**

It is said that a person who applies daily *tila* oil on his head does not suffer from baldness, greying of hairs. His hairs become black, long, deep rooted and all sense organs more properly.<sup>24</sup>

#### **NASYA**

Daily practicing of *nasya* therapy by *anu tail* (*pratimarsha nasya*) in time to protect oneself from any disease of the head region. A person's hair and beard never become white or grey, one never experiences hair fall and the hair grow luxuriously.<sup>25</sup>

#### **DHUMPANA**

*Dhumpana* is an act of inhaling medicated fumes by a person. It is to be practiced on a daily basis. *Dhumpana* cures head disorders, alopecia (hair fall), greying of hairs, providing strength to scalp hairs, skin and sense organs.<sup>26</sup>

## OTHER MEASURES

Wearing turban or covering head while going out protect hairs from wind, sun rays and dust. It prevents vitiation of *vata* and *pitta* dosha in head.<sup>27</sup> Combing of hairs help to get rid of *raja*, *jantu* and *mala*, so is beneficial to hairs.<sup>28</sup>

<i>Vibhitaka</i>	<i>Yastimadhu</i>	<i>Bakuchi</i>	<i>Bhallataka</i>
<i>Gambhari</i>	<i>Sinduvara</i>	<i>Japa</i>	<i>Bijaka</i>
<i>Gunja</i>	<i>Nili</i>	<i>Bhringraja</i>	<i>Sairaiyaka</i>
<i>Kashish</i>	<i>Tila</i>	<i>Kadli</i>	<i>avidugdha</i>

Out of 16 drugs, 14 are of plant origin, 1 is of animal origin (*avi dugdha*) and 1 is of mineral origin (*kasisa*). On critical analysis of these drugs, it is found that maximum number of drugs is of *Tikta –Kashaya – Madhur* rasa pacifying *pitta*, *Ruksha Guna* and *Ushna Virya* pacifying *vata* and of *Katu Vipaka* pacifying *Kapha dosha*. They perform *vata Kapha* reducing karma and are *keshya* in nature. Out of these 16 drugs, research work to prove their *keshya* property has been done on 3 drugs - *Japa*, *bhringraja* and *Yastimadhu*.

## CONCLUSION

In modern medicine diseases like Hair fall, greying of hairs and dandruff are only treated symptomatically for months of application. Ayurveda provides relief to these head disorders in form of *siraveda* at forehead region to clear obstruction in the channels. Providing deficient nourishment in form of *shodhan nasya in khalitya*, *Avpida nasya in palitya* and *snehana nasya* and *shirobasti* in *darunaka*. After clearing *Kapha* and *Rakta* obstruction at opening of hair follicles, *vata* and *pitta* dosha are subdued by application of various *lepa* and *abhyanga*. *Lepa* of hot potency drugs are to be used in *darunaka*, of cold potency in *palitya*. Oiling of scalp is to be done regularly. Intake of *rasayana* orally is encouraged to prevent further progression of disease. Beside, *keshya* drugs are also there as curative and preventive modalities of hair care in Ayurveda.

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*Keshya* is a drug beneficial to hairs. *Bhavprakash nighantu* has mentioned total of 16 drugs, which possess *keshya* property (mentioned in *shloka* from). These drugs can be used for therapeutic and preventive purposes in hair disorders.

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