

SHIROBASTI – A CONCEPTUAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Shirobasti is a classic remedy for *Shirogata Rogas*. This is among *Murdhni Taila*. "*Shirasi Yat Tailam Diyate Tan Murdhnitailamucchate*" i.e. anointing head with oil is called as *Murdhnitaila*. *Shirobasti* is formed from 2 different terms: *Shiras* (head) and *Basti* ("*Vas Nivase*"- which retains, or which holds) is the procedure where medicated *Sneha* is retained over the head for stipulated period of time and temperature. *Shirobasti* is considered as superior among *Murdhni Taila* as it serves both preventive and curative ailments. *Shirobasti* helps in relaxing and revitalizing central nervous system, hormonal functions and has soothing effect on endocrine system, here an attempt is made to describe the procedure in detail.

Keywords: *Murdhni Taila, Shirobasti, Shiroroga.*

INTRODUCTION

Acharya Charaka quotes *Snehana*(oleation) as the treatment which produces *Snigdata* (viscosity), *Mruduta* (softness), and *Kledhata*(sliminess) in the *Shareera*(body). *Snehana* is one among the *Shadvidhopakrama*, there are two ways of *Snehana* i.e.

Abhyantara Snehana(internally) and *Bahya Snehana*(externally). *Murdhni Taila* is one among the *Bahya Snehana* procedure, *Shirobasti* is one of the *Murdhnitaila* procedure in which a container hollow on either end is prepared from leather and placed

firmly overhead and medicated *Sneha* is poured into this container and made to retain on the head for certain period of time. According to Sharangadhara Samhitha Gudarth Deepika by Bhishak Adamalla, it is mentioned that "*Shirasascha Charmanirmitha Paatrakaro Bastirityucchate*"¹. *Shirobasti* has synonyms like *Mastishkya*, *Mastakataila*, *Shirasa Prati-purana* and *Shirosantarpana*. *Murdhni Tailas* are mainly beneficial in curing falling of hair, greying and splitting of hair, diseases of head of Vata origin, brings clarity to senses, strength to voice, lower jaw and head². *Abyanga*, *Seka*, *Pichu* and *Basti* are 4 *Murdhni Tailas*³ having Individual actions like, *Abhyanga* (Application of oil over head) removes *Rukshata* (dryness), *Kandu* (itching) and *Mala*(dirt) over the scalp. *Seka* (Pouring of medicinal liquid in stream) is beneficial in *Daha* (burning sensation), *Shopha*(edema) and *Vrana*(wound). *Pichu*(Placing of cloth piece soaked in medicinal liquid) is beneficial in *Kesha Shatha*(falling of hairs), *Sputana*(splitting), *Dhupana* and *Nethrasthambha*(stiffness of eyes). *Basti* (Pouring of oil in a hollow container fixed over the head) is beneficial in *Prasupti*(numbness), *Arditha*(fascial palsy), *Jagara*(insomnia), *Nasa Shosha*(dry nose), *Asya Shosha*(dryness of mouth), *Timira*(myopia) and in *Shirorogas*(diseases of head)⁴.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Materials Required

Masha Churna -200g, *Sneha* (*Gritha*[ghee] or *Taila*[oil]-1.5 liter, *Shirobasti Kosha* (*Shirobasti* cap), knee height chair, vessels, *Kindi* or cotton cloth or sponge or coconut leaf, *Venika*.

SHIROBASTHI KOSHA : In Astanga hridaya Acharya vagbhata has mentioned that the *Charmapatta* (*Charma* of *Gavya*[cow] or *Mahisha*[buffalo]) having 12 *Angula* width, length same as circumference of head is taken, now *Shirobasti* cap prepared of leather or synthetic is used instead. Sharangadhara Samhitakara opined that it should be made of leather with *Dwimukha*(two openings), height of 12 *Angula* and circumference a/c to patient and chakradatta opines that it should be of 16 *Angula* height i.e, first 3 *Angula* from lower covered with

strap of cloth tied overhead, upper 1 *Angula* left free and rest 12 *Angula* filled with *Sneha Dravyas*.

METHODS OF SHIROBASTI

1. PURVA KARMA

2. PRADHANA KARMA

3. PASCHAT KARMA

1. **PURVA KARMA:** As Acharya vagbhata⁵ and Dalhana have explained, the patient after proper *Snehana*(oleation), *Svedana*(sudation), and *Shodana* (purification) according to the condition of the patient, is made to sit comfortably on a knee height chair in the "*Dinante*" i.e, it should be done after food in the evening. Bhavaprakasha⁶ and in deepika⁷ commentary by Aadamalla it is mentioned that it should be done in empty stomach at forenoon, among 4 *Murdhni Tailas* only *Shirobasti* is done before meals. Scalp hairs are removed for easy placement of *Shirobasti Kosha* and for better absorption.

2. PRADHANA KARMA:

The patient seated on knee height chair is tied with a strap of cloth of 3 *Angula* smeared with *Masha Kalka*, at the level of forehead, along the margin of hairs i.e. above ears and eyebrows. Then the *Shirobasti Kosha* of 12 *Angula* length, corresponding to the circumference of patient's head is prepared and is fixed around the patient's head by using *Chailavenika*(climbers) nowadays it is an adjustable cap which can be stuck. Then a strap of cloth smeared with *Masha Kalka* is wrapped above the lower border of cap again. Inside the *Shirobasti* cap i.e. the angle between cap and the scalp skin is properly sealed with *Masha* dough to avoid oil leakage. According to the condition of the patient oil is selected, made Lukewarm and poured by using *Kindi* or dipping cloth or sponge and squeezing or with coconut leaf without any delay i.e., oil should be poured before the *Masha* dries to avoid leakage. Different acharyas have opined regarding this height of oil poured i.e. Astanga Hridayakara, Astanga Sangrahakara and Srikantadatta and Shivadasasena in Vrunda Madhava Tika opined as upto height of 1 *Angula* above the scalp (*Keshabhumi*) and regarding the retention period of oil over the head, Acharya vagbhata and commentator Adamalla opined as the oil is retained till secretions come out through *Nasa*(nose), *Karna*(ears), *Mukha*(mouth) etc. The secretions of waste products through the fascial orifice

are due to the effect of oil through *Romakupas* (hair follicle), Acharya vagbhata added that oil is retained till *Vedana Upashamana* occurs (pain gets relieved). Chakradatta⁸ has mentioned that in *Vataja Purusha* retained till pain gets relieved, in *Pittaja Purusha* retained about 1 *Yama* and in *Kaphaja Purusha* retained about ½ *Yama*. Ashtanga sangraha⁹ stated according to the status of doshas i.e. in *Vata* 10000 *Matrakala*, in *Pitta* 8000 *Matrakala*, in *Kapha* 6000 *Matrakala* and in *Swastha* for about 1000 *Matrakala*. Jejjata commented on Sushruta Samhitha as 10000 *Matrakala* for *Vata* predominant disorder (in the context of *Netra Chikitsa*).

DURATION OF SHIROBASTI

Shirobasti procedure should be done for 7 days only as mentioned by Acharya vagbhata in *Astanga Hridaya* i.e., “*Param Saptaham*”. In *Sirasekadi Vidhi* there is mentioning by sridasa as it is done for 3,5 or 7 days. In *deepika*, Adamalla commented as it can be done for a day or till disease gets pacified.

3 PASCHAT KARMA:

Astanga Hridayakara and Astanga Sangraha⁹ opined similarly, that after stipulated period of time, *Sneha* is removed with cotton cloth. then *Mrudu Mardana* (mild massage) is done over *Skan-da* (shoulder), *Greeva* (neck), *Prusta* (back) and *Lalata* (forehead) and patient is advised to take *Ushnam-bhu* (hot water), *Snana* (bath) and *Yatarha Bhojana* (light food) then asked to follow *Snehapana Acharas* (regimens of *Snehapana*). *Shirobasti* can be done in all seasons.

INDICATIONS AND CONTRAINDICATIONS OF SHIROBASTI

Astanga Hridayakara as stated that it is indicated in *Prasupti* (numbness), *Arditha* (facial palsy), *Jagara* (insomnia), *Nasa Shosha* (dry nose), *Asya Shosha* (dryness of mouth), *Timira* (myopia) and in *Shirorogas* (diseases of head). commentator Adamalla in *deepika* of *Sharangadhara Samhitha* stated that it is effectively indicated in *Vata* disorders like *Shirokampa* (stiffness of head), *Vata* along with *Pitta* and *Kapha* also. Chakradatta opined that it helps in avoiding occurrence of *Shirorogas*, reduces pain in *Hanu* (jaw), *Manya* (neck), *Akshi* (eyes), in *Ardita* and *Murdhakampana* (tremors of head) and it is contraindicated in *Kapha Pradhana Vyadhi*, where there

is *Avashishta* (ruminant) *Kapha* after *Nasya*, where there is *Vatanubandha* and *Kevala Kaphaja Vyadhi*.

PRECAUTIONS

- Temperature of the oil should be maintained same throughout the procedure, it should not be too hot or too cold (i.e. approximately 40° C ± 1)
- Make sure that there is no space at the junction of scalp and *Shirobasti* cap while sealing so that *Taila* (oil) will not be leaked out.
- Strap of cloth tied should be neither too tight (causes discomfort), nor too loose (causes leakage).

WHICH SNEHAS CAN BE USED?

In swastha for *Vata Prakruthi Himasagara Taila*, for *Pitta Prakruthi Chandanadi Taila*, *Chandana Bala Lakshadi Taila*, *Ksheerabla Taila* and for *Kapha Prakruthi Triphaladya Taila* is used.

In specific disorders like; *Ardita Bala Dhatrayadi Taila*, *Trimishraka Taila*. in *Khalithya* (hairfall) and *Darunaka* (dandruff) *Dardurapatradi Taila*. in *Palithya* (premature greying) *Nilibrungadi Taila*, *Bringaraja Taila*, *Bringaamalaka Taila* and in skin conditions *Karanja Taila*, *Dardurapatradi Taila* is used.

DISCUSSION

Shiras is one among *Trimarmas* and called as *Utta-manga* so, it should be protected and kept strong and healthy for the entire system to be fit and healthy. Acharya Sushruta has mentioned that there are 37 *Marmas* (vital points) in *Shiras* (head) which indicates its importance, many treatment modalities are explained for the disorders of *Siras*, among them *Shirobasti* is effective in psychosomatic, central nervous system ailments and many scalps related problems. Its mode of action can be understood by the knowledge of scalp anatomy i.e., the scalp comprises 5 layers: skin, superficial fascia, aponeurosis, loose areolar tissue and pericranium. The *Sneha* used in *Shiro Basti* gets absorbed transversally into the scalp through the skin. The connective tissue layer of scalp is rich in blood vessels and nerves. Emissary veins are present in the loose areolar tissues of the scalp, these veins have fewer valves and connects the super-

ficial veins of the scalp with the diploic veins of the skull bones which drains into the intracranial sinuses. This will result in the maximum absorption of oil. So, the *Shirobasti* procedure is known for its higher absorption rate compared to other *Murdhnitaila*, as it involves retaining a larger quantity of oil on the scalp for an extended period.

CONCLUSION

The effectiveness of *Shirobasti* depends on various factors, including the patient's condition and the type of *Sneha* (oil) used. This procedure is particularly proficient in alleviating vitiated *Vata Dosha*. It offers a spectrum of advantages, including enhanced blood circulation, positive impacts on the endocrine system, nourishment for the scalp and hair, and relief from insomnia (*Anidra*). Moreover, it plays a pivotal role in preventing *Shiroroga* (head disorders), *Hanuroga* (diseases of jaw), *Manya Roga* (diseases of the neck), *Akshi Roga* (eye disorders), and *Murdhakampana* (tremors or shaking of the head). By maintaining the health of the *Shiras* (head), it indirectly contributes to overall *Shareera Arogya* (body health).

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