

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF MURDHA TAILA IN THE MANAGEMENT OF VARIOUS AILMENTS

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ABSTRACT

The procedure which involves administration of *sneha* (fatty substances) is called as *Snehana*. External application of *Sneha* is termed as *Bahya Snehana*. Oral/internal administration of *Sneha* is termed as *abhyantara Snehana*. *Snehana* is one of the preparatory procedures that are done before administration of *Panchakarma*. *Panchakarma* are a set of five purificatory procedures that help in eliminating excess of *doshas* from the body which in turn enable a person to maintain health or even cure various ailments. *Murdha taila* is a type of *bahya snehana* (external application of *sneha*). It is a vital therapeutic measure in *murdha* related ailments. It is a simple, yet

effective procedure that relieves the mental exhaustion and stress. This article is an attempt to explain the importance of *Murdha taila* in the management of various ailments as single therapy or adjuvant therapy depending upon the severity of the disease.

KEYWORDS: Snehana, Murdha taila, Panchakarma.

INTRODUCTION

Murdha taila is a type of *bahya snehana*. *Murdha* means *shiras* or head and the application of *sneha* over head region is termed as *Murdha Taila*. *Murdha* or *Shiras* is described in *Charaka sutra sthana* 17/12 in the following way:

Shira (head) is prime (*uttama*) among all organs as it is the region where the vital centres and all the senses (*indriya*) of a living-being are located.^[1]

Importance of *shiras* in human body

In *Charaka siddhi sthana* 9/4, it is considered as one of the three vital *marmas* viz. *Shira*, *Hridaya*, *Basti*.^[2]

The *shiras* is the site of *indriya* (sense organs), *srotas* (channels) through which the *indriya* perceive and *prana* (vital life force) flows. All these are related to each other, just as the rays of sunlight are associated with the sun.

Shiras is also one of the 10 principal seats of life forces. Hence, any injury to the *shiras* may lead to serious consequences or even prove to be fatal. The consequences of injury to the *shiras* explained in *Charaka siddhi sthana* 9/6 are as follows:^[3]

- *Manyastambha* (Neck stiffness)
- *Ardita* (Hemiplegia with facial palsy)
- *Chakshu vibhrama* (Improper movements of eyeball/lesions in sight)
- *Moha* (A state of confusion)
- *Udveshtana* (Twisting pain in head)
- *Cheshta nasha* (Loss of body functions)
- *Kasa* (Cough)
- *Shwasa* (Breathlessness)
- *Hanugraha* (Stiffness of jaw)
- *Mooka* (Dumbness)
- *Gadgada* (Hoarseness of voice)
- *Akshi nimeelana* (Ptosis)
- *Ganda spandana* (Twitching in cheek)
- *Jrimbha* (Excessive yawning)
- *Lala srava* (Dribbling of saliva)
- *Svara hani* (Aphonia)
- *Mukha jihma* (Deviation of face)

Various *shiro rogas* described in *Charaka sutra sthana* 17/13-14 are as follows^[4]

- *Ardhavabhedaka* (Hemicrania)
- *Shiroruja* (Headache)
- *Pratishayaya* (Coryza)
- *Mukha, Nasa, Akshi, Karna roga* (Disorders of mouth, nose, eyes and ears)
- *Shirobhrama* (Giddiness/ vertigo)

- *Ardita* (Hemiplegia with facial palsy)
- *Shirakampa* (Tremors of head)
- *Gala manya hanu graham* (Stiffness of neck, nape & jaw)
- Various diseases due to *vatadi doshas*
- *Krimi* (Worms)

Shiro abhyanga is one of the *dinacharya* (daily health regimen) which preserves all the structural and functional entities of the head region, as mentioned in *Charaka sutra sthana* 5/81-84.^[5]

One who applies oil over scalp gets the following benefits

- Alleviates headache
- No greying of hair and alopecia
- Gives strength to the cranium
- Hair roots become stronger
- Senses become clear
- Good skin
- Sound sleep and happiness

Types of *murdha taila*

According to *Ashtanga Hrudaya* 22/23, *murdha taila* is applied in 4 different ways.^[6]

1. ***Shiro abhyanga***- refers to application of *Sneha* followed by massage over scalp.
2. ***Shiro Seka/ Shiro dhara***- pouring luke warm *sneha* over head using an instrument (*Shirodhara yantra*) is called as *Shiro Seka*. While pouring, the instrument is oscillated about 30 times a minute over head
3. ***Shiro pichu***- In this procedure, cotton or gauze soaked in *sneha* is kept over vertex of head.
4. ***Shiro basti***- In this process, *sneha* is retained over head for about 45 minutes with the boundary made of black gram dough. These days, to strengthen the support, acrylic sheets are used around the black gram dough boundary and bandaged to prevent seepage. Luke warm *sneha* is then poured slowly into it from a height of 8cm until the compartment is filled 1 finger high from the scalp.

An extra procedure called *Mastishkya* is also done. *Mastishkya* is the application of *sneha* in the form of *lepa* over head by mixing *sneha* with *churnas* (powders) etc. It is also known as *Tala* or *Tala potichil* in Kerala.

- It is important to maintain certain warmth by adding warm *sneha* and equally removing the previous *sneha*. Among these 4 procedures of *murdha taila*, *Shirobasti* is most effective and *shiro abhyanga* is least effective. While *shiro abhyanga* can be done daily.

Indication of *murdha taila*^[7, 8, 9]

Some of the various ailments are listed below in the table where *Murdha taila* is indicated.

Disease	ShiroAbhyanga	Seka/Dhara	Pichu/Basti	Lepa
Dandruff	<i>Dhurdhurpatradi oil</i> ^[8] <i>Ayyapala kera taila</i> <i>Eladi taila</i>			
Dry scalp	<i>Jeevantiyadi yamaka</i>			
Scalp psoriasis	<i>Ayyapala kera taila</i>			
<i>Palitya</i> (premature greying of hair)	<i>Nilibhringyadi tailam</i>			
<i>Khalitya</i> (alopecia)	<i>Malatyadi taila</i> ^[7] <i>Nilibhringadi taila</i> ^[9] <i>Triphladi taila</i> ^[9] + <i>jatyadi taila</i>			
<i>Suryavarta</i> (migraine)	<i>Baladhatryadi taila</i> ^[7]			
<i>Vataj shirashula</i> (Tension headache)	<i>Kshirabala taila</i> ^[7] <i>Brahmi taila</i>	<i>Dhanwantara m taila</i>		
<i>Anantavata</i> (trigeminal neuralgia)			<i>Mahanarayana taila</i> ^[8] <i>Balaguluchy adi taila</i> ^[8]	
<i>Ardita</i> (Facial paralysis)	<i>Karpasastyadi taila</i> ^[9] <i>Kshirabala taila</i> <i>Prabhanjana taila</i> ^[9]		<i>Dhanwantaram taila</i> ^[8]	<i>Nimbamritadi tail + Rasnadi churna</i> ⁷
<i>Apasmara</i> (Epilepsy)	<i>Balashwagandha Lakshadi Taila</i> ^[7]		<i>Kshira bala taila</i>	
<i>Anidra</i> (Insomnia)		<i>Kshirabla taila</i> ^[8] <i>Jatamasi taila</i> <i>Brahmi taila</i> ^[8]		

<i>Smritinasha</i> (dementia)	<i>Brahmi taila</i> <i>Balashwadandhadi taila</i>			
<i>Chitta udvega</i> (Anxiety)/ Stress		<i>Balashwadand halakshadi taila</i> <i>Brahmi taila</i> + <i>Himsagar taila</i> ^[8]		<i>Kachura di churna</i> + <i>kshirabala taila</i>
<i>Avasada</i> (Depression)	<i>Jatamansi taila</i>	<i>Balashwagand halakshadi taila</i> ^[7]		<i>Kachura di churna</i> + <i>kshirabala taila</i>
ADHD	<i>Brahmi taila</i>			<i>Yashtima dhu taila</i> + <i>Amlaki churna</i> + <i>Jatamasi churna</i> ^[8]
<i>Kampavata</i> (parkinsonism)		<i>Kshirabala taila</i> ^[8] <i>Brahmi taila</i> ^[8]		
<i>Bhrama</i> (Vertigo)			<i>Baladhatrya di taila</i> <i>Kshirabala taila</i> <i>Mahanarayana taila</i> ^[8]	
<i>Tritiya patala gata timira</i> (diabetic retinopathy)			<i>Baladhatrya di taila</i> ^[8]	
Optic nerve atrophy			<i>Baladhatrya di taila</i> ^[8] <i>Mahamasha taila</i> + <i>kshirabala taila</i>	
<i>Kapha vidagdha drishti</i> (retinitis pigmentosa)			<i>Baladhatrya di taila</i> ^[8]	

Contraindications of *snehana*^[10]

1. While suffering from *Kapha* diseases and *Santarpana janya* diseases (*Santarpana janya vikara*)
2. While suffering from indigestion
3. Post *Shodhana* (Purificatory therapies)
4. While suffering from *Ama*
5. While suffering from acute pyrexia

DISCUSSION

The indication of *Murdha taila* with specific oils in particular diseases pacifies the *doshas* of that disease by the *guna-karma* (properties) of *dravya* (medicine) present in the formulation of oil. It is also stated in the *guna karma* of *taila* in *Charaka sutra sthana* 13/15 as follows.^[11]

- *Taila* pacifies *vata* and doesn't aggravate *kapha*. It increases strength and is good for the skin. It is hot in potency and provides structural stability to the body.

Another *sutra* describing the multi utility of *taila* in *Charaka sutra sthana* 27/287 is as follows:^[12]

- *Taila* when comes in contact of other drugs, then due to processing it attains the qualities of those drugs which helps in alleviating all sorts of ailments.

Oils used for the purpose of *Murdha taila* have following properties (*guna karma doshaghnata*) in various diseases.

- ❖ *Baladhatryadi taila* has *sheeta virya* ingredients and *brimhana* (nourishing) in nature, such as *amlaki*, *shatavari*, *bala*, *usheera*, *chandana*, etc. It is therefore indicated in *pitta vata* predominant diseases such as *suryavarta* (migraine), various eye ailments, etc.
- ❖ *Mahanarayana* oil is *sheeta* in potency. Its main ingredient is *shatavari*. It is used in the treatment of *Ardita*, *Vepathu* (tremors), *shiroruja* (headache), *unmade* (mania), etc.
- ❖ *Kshirabala* oil is also *sheeta* and is indicated in *anidra* (sleeplessness), *kampavata* (parkinsonism), *ardita* (facial paralysis), *apasmara* (epilepsy), stroke, Meniere's disease, etc.
- ❖ *Balashwagandhalakshadi taila* is a *sama sheetoshna yoga*. Its main ingredients are *bala*, *ashwagandha*, *laksha*, *dadhimastu*. It is used in *unmade* (mania, psychosis, paranoia, schizophrenia etc), *anidra* (sleeplessness), *avasada* (depression), etc.
- ❖ *Malatiyadi Taila* is *ushna* in potency. Its main ingredients are *Malati*, *chitraka*, *chakramarda*, *aragwadha*, etc. It is indicated in *Indralupta* (alopecia areata) and dandruff, etc. It is chosen when *kapha* and *vata* are predominant.
- ❖ *Triphladi taila* is *samasheetoshna*. Its main ingredients are *triphala*, *bhringaraj*, *ksheera* (milk), etc. It is indicated in *palitya* (premature greying of hair), *indralupta* (alopecia areata) which are *pitta rakta* predominant
- ❖ *Dhurdhurpatri* oil is *ushna* in potency. Its main ingredient is *dhatura*. It is indicated in seborrheic dermatitis, dandruff, etc.
- ❖ *Nilibhringyadi* oil is *sheeta* in potency. Its main ingredients are *nili*, *bhringaraja*, *aja ksheera*, *narikel ksheera*. It is indicated in *khalitya* and *palitya*.

- ❖ *Dhanwantaram taila* is *samasheetoshna*, its main ingredients are *bala*, *dashamoola*, etc. It is indicated in disorders like *ardita* (facial paralysis), *vataj shirashoola* (tension headache)
- ❖ *Ayyapala kera taila* is *sheeta* in potency. It contains *shweta kutaja* and *neem*. Both are *rakta prasadaka* and *pitta shamaka*, hence are indicated in scalp psoriasis which is *pitta rakta* predominant in nature.
- ❖ *Jeevantiyadi yamaka* consists of *Aragwadha*, *manjishtha*, *darvi*, *kampillaka*, *ghrita*, *tila taila*, etc. making it a *kapha vata* pacifying *taila*. Hence, indicated in *Darunaka* i.e. *kapha vata* disease.
- ❖ *Jatyadi taila* cleanses the channels and heals wounds by its *pitta shamaka*, *rakta prasadaka* properties of ingredients like *jati*, *kinshuka*, *parpata*, *katuki*, *durva*, etc.

How do medicated oils reach deep into the system is scientifically mentioned by *Susruta* in *sharir sthana* 9/8-9) as follows^[13]

- ***Tiryagga dhamani***- (Arteries spreading sideward/transversely) Each one of the four *dhamani* divide into hundreds and thousands of branches further and so becomes innumerable; by these, the entire body appears to be full of windows; these are knit together broadly, their mouths (openings) are attached to the hair follicles; these purvey *sweda* (sweat to the exterior) and *rasa* (chime/nutrient tissue) both inside & outside; through these only the potency (effect) of materials (medicines) used in the form of anointing, pouring liquids on the body & applications of pastes, get cooked (processed by heat) in the skin, enter into the interior of the body. The sensation of touch both comfortable & uncomfortable, are perceived (understood) by these only. Thus were described the four *dhamani* along with their branches, spread throughout the body.

CONCLUSION

Head is the abode of all sense organs and it is one of the vital parts of our body. So, one should protect it from any harm by following daily health regimen. In case of any injury or disease, *murdha taila* is indicated. So, *murdha taila* is both preventive as well as curative in action.

External application of *sneha* in the form of oil or *ghrita* (clarified butter) in various diseases helps in pacifying the disease due to its *sukshma guna* (i.e. higher permeability in cells) and the properties of the drugs used in its preparation get more potentiated and acts specifically in diseased condition by the principles of *Samanya Vishesha Siddhanta*. Some oils are

processed with *ushna virya* i.e. hot potency drugs which help to pacify *kapha* and *vata dosha*. Whereas, certain oils are processed with *sheeta virya* i.e. cold potency drugs with help in pacifying *pitta dosha*.

While in some diseases *Murdha taila* is sufficient enough alone to pacify the disease. But, in many cases, adjuvant therapies and/or oral medicines are also required for treating as per *dosha, dushya, prakriti, vikriti, desha, kala* and other such considerable factors. For instance, it is said in *Charaka Siddhi sthana* 9/88, which implies nose is the gateway to the head region.^[14] Hence, *Nasya karma* is mostly selected to administer medicines in various ailments of head region for desired benefit to the patient.

Murdha taila is one of the simplest and highly effective procedures which is not limited to merely curative aspect but it can be administered to the healthy individuals as well to prevent ailments and maintain health.

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