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 Vagbhatta 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. These factors aggravate vata and pittta 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. 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. Acharya Charak has stated heat of the body being solely responsible for both khaliya 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. Treatment of palitya includes body purification, nasya therapy, paste application on scalp, head oiling and massage. 

Term khaliya, indralupta, ruchya and chacha are used synonymously. Acharya Kartika has made a differentiation between them referring as term khaliya to scalp, indralupta to beard area and ruchya to whole body alopecia. Acharya videha has described a striking observation regarding khaliya 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 khaliya (alopecia) or its low prevalence in ladies. Pathogenesis of khaliya 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. 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. There is also falling of hairs, dryness itching and small cracks on skin of scalp. Treatment includes siraveda in lalata and apaaang area (forehead), nasya, lepa, abhyanga and prakshalan of hairs. 

On evaluating these scalp diseases, general treatment protocols for curation of disease includes:

- 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. Diseases which do not get corrected by therapeutic measures are pacified quickly and fully by the act of venipuncture. Vitiated blood at a site produces symptoms like swelling, heat, redness, suppuration and pain. 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. On selection of a vein Acharya Sushruta has stated for head disorders of blood origin, veins from apang and lalata region (forehead) are to be chosen for the act of bloodletting. In khaliya 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. In Ayurveda classics various nasya measures are prescribed to treat khaliya, palitya, darunaka and other Shiroroga. Snigda nasya and shirobasti are administered in case of vata dominant diseases. Apyida 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 Sushruta. 16 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. 17 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. Pradeha 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. 18 In khaliya and paliya 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. 19 In Shiroroga like khaliya, 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 sin 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 oiling of regular oiling of head, ears and feet should be done on a regular basis. 20 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. 21 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 Dhatus of body. Rasayana are of 3 types - kaamya, nimaitika and ajasrika rasayana. Kaamya 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, Rasayana like Amalaki, Krishna tila, bhringraja can be used in curing hair disorders in Ayurveda. 22

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

SHIROABHYANGA

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

NASYA

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

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. 26
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.\(^{27}\) Combing of hairs help to get rid of *raja, jantu and mala*, so is beneficial to hairs.\(^{28}\)

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<th>KESHYA DRUGS</th>
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<td><em>Keslya</em> is a drug beneficial to hairs. <em>Bhavprakash nighantu</em> has mentioned total of 16 drugs, which possess <em>keshya</em> property (mentioned in <em>shloka</em> from). These drugs can be used for therapeutic and preventive purposes in hair disorders.</td>
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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 khaliyta, Avpida nasya in palitiya 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 *palitiya*. 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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