

**SHIRODHARA IN MANAGEMENT OF HYPERTENSION - A REVIEW ARTICLE****Sanwariya Rahul Kumar<sup>1</sup> Mishra Pramod Kumar<sup>2</sup> Tyagi Arun<sup>3</sup>**<sup>1</sup>**MD Scholar**<sup>1</sup> PG Department of KayaChikitsa University College of Ayurveda, Dr. S. R. Rajasthan Ayurveda University Jodhpur Rajasthan, India<sup>2</sup>**MD Ph.D(Ayu.), Associate Professor & HOD**<sup>2</sup> PG Department of KayaChikitsa University College of Ayurveda, Dr. S. R. Rajasthan Ayurveda University Jodhpur Rajasthan, India<sup>3</sup>**MD(Ayu.), Associate Professor** PG Department of KayaChikitsa University College of Ayurveda, Dr. S. R. Rajasthan Ayurveda University Jodhpur Rajasthan, India**ABSTRACT**

Hypertension now becomes a Global Endemic. It is truly called “Silent Killer”. Western therapy is some sort of successful in controlling this disorder but it has its own adverse side effects. In *Ayurveda* there is no any direct reference of Hypertension. The burden of hypertension increases with age, and among individuals aged 60, hypertension prevalence is 65.4%. Essential hypertension is high blood pressure with unknown etiology but there are so many causes as like Excessive salt intake, excessive alcohol intake, fatty diet, psychological stress is elicited as the causing factor of hypertension. Out of total hypertensive patients, 95% patients are having essential hypertension. On the basis of *Lakshanas* can be said that it is a *Vatavyadhi* along with involvement of *kapha*, *pitta doshas* and *rakta dhatu*.

The term *Shirodhara* is derived from two *Sanskrit* words: *shiro* and *dhara*. *Shiro* means head and *dhara* means to flow. It involves the rhythmic and consistent flow of lukewarm *ayurvedic* oils on the forehead. This stimulates the *chakra* point just above and between the eyebrows and creates a blissful sensation. The scalp is massaged gently along with this. *Shirodhara* improves blood circulation to the brain and stimulates the pituitary and pineal glands thus improving their functions. *Shirodhara* also has a positive effect on neurotransmitters which helps to cure mental tension. *Shirodhara* cures insomnia, stress, depression, and memory loss. The procedure is also said to synchronize alpha brain waves and increase

**KEY WORDS** – High blood pressure, *Shirodhara*, Insomnia, Stress, Depression.

**INTRODUCTION**

Hypertension is one among the most alarming health problems of present era. It's estimated that approximately 1 billion people worldwide are suffering from high Blood pressure and its number is expected to increase to 2.5 billion by the year 2025 <sup>(1)</sup> The increasing incidence of Hypertension is a cause for global concern as it mainly affects

the adults and elderly population effecting 29 % of adult population and it is an independent predisposing factor for heart failure, coronary artery disease, stroke, renal disease, and peripheral arterial disease (PAD)<sup>(2)</sup>. It is also a risk factor for all clinical manifestations of atherosclerosis. Incidence of Hypertension is also high in Indian population. Around 40-45 million Indians

are believed to be suffering from Hypertension. Essential Hypertension which is also called as primary Hypertension represents a substantial portion of Hypertension accounting 90-95% of the cases. It is that variety of Hypertension wherein no obvious underlying cause can be recognized<sup>(3)</sup>. Despite the considerable attention that has been focused on the diagnosis and management of Essential Hypertension by the clinical and research community, the diagnosis of Hypertension is still a problematic area as the disorder is usually asymptomatic. That is why it is often called as “silent killer”<sup>(4)</sup>. Apart from the problem of diagnosis, the management of essential Hypertension is also an area which has lot of limitation considering the idiopathic nature and chronicity of the disease.

*Shirodhara* is a classical and a well-established *ayurvedic* procedure of slowly and steadily dripping medicated oil or other liquids on the forehead. This procedure induces a relaxed state of awareness that results in a dynamic psycho-somatic balance used by *vaidhya* for various indications which includes psychological, neurological, metabolic and autoimmune diseases. *Tailadhara* is one of the varieties of *shirodhara* which is considered specifically useful in various diseases where *vata dosha* plays predominant role. *Ksheerabalataila* is the most commonly used formulation particularly indicated in *vatavyadhies*<sup>(5)</sup> Looking at EHT from this perspective, we can assume that vitiated *VataDosha* is the main cause of the disease, as the *Dhatu Gati (Rasa Gati)* or *Vikshepa* is achieved by *Vayu* itself. *Pitta* and *Kapha* complement the effect of vitiated *Vata* and support the progress of the disease with *Rasa, Rakta* (whole blood) being the

main mediator of vitiation. This suggests the involvement of *Tridosha* in disease.

## SHIRODHARA



*Shirodhara* is an ancient *Ayurvedic* therapy. Warm oil (or other liquid) pours in a continuous stream over the forehead, an area where nerves are highly concentrated. The pressure of the oil onto the forehead creates a vibration. The oil saturates the forehead and scalp and penetrates into the nervous system. The gentle pressure and soothing warmth of the oil allow the body, mind and nervous system to experience a deep state of rest, similar to meditation. *Shirodhara* is traditionally done as part of the *Panchakarma* cleansing process using specially prepared *shirodhara* oil. It is also safe and effective as a stand-alone therapy.

Herbal oils for *shirodhara*

*Vata* – *Ksheerabalatailam, Dhanvantaratailam*

*Pitta*- *Brahmitailam, Almond oil*

*Kapha* – *Triphalatailam*

### Machenism of *Shirodhara*

There are a few ways to look at how *shirodhara* works it's magic. According to *Ayurveda*, *shirodhara* is beneficial for *Vata* and *Pitta dosha*. When out of balance, *Vata dosha* exhibits as fear, insecurity, worry, racing thoughts. Out of balance *Pitta dosha*

exhibits as anger, irritability, frustration, judgment. The action and qualities of the liquid used in *shirodhara* counters the qualities of the out of balance *doshas*. It soothes, nourishes and pacifies the *doshas* through the application of the liquid to the forehead, scalp and nervous system.

In the Spring 1995 issue of the journal of The Ayurvedic Institute 'Ayurveda Today', Ayurvedic practitioner Ed Danaher explains how shirodhara affects stress. Stress, according to Ayurveda, is a state of imbalance of *pranavayu*, *sadaka pitta*, and *tarpakakapha*. *Shirodhara* reestablishes the functional integrity between these three *doshik (doshas)* subtypes and thus helps alleviate stress. In the procedure of *Shirodhara*, particular pressure and vibration is created over the forehead. The vibration is amplified by the hollow sinus present in the frontal bone. The vibration is then transmitted inwards through the fluid medium of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF). This vibration along with little temperature may activate the functions of thalamus and the basal fore brain which then brings the amount of serotonin and catecholamine to the normal stage inducing the sleep. Again, it is explained in modern text books of physiology that pressure has an effect on impulse conduction through tactile and thermo receptors. If prolonged pressure is applied to a nerve, impulse conduction in interrupted and part of the body may go to rest. In *Dhara* therapy, prolonged and continuous pressure due to pouring of the medicated liquid may cause tranquility of mind and induce natural sleep.

*Shirodhara* is deeply relaxing and induces a relaxant state; these effects are mediated by the brain wave coherence, alfa waves, and a

down regulation of the sympathetic outflow. The center of the forehead, which was evolution wise related to the third eye, is connected atavistically to the pineal gland. This spot is known as *Agneya Chakra* in the yoga tradition. Focusing on *agneya chakra* with closed eyes during meditation leads to psychosomatic harmony. As the oil drips on the *agneya chakra*, it is proposed that the meditation-like effect is a consequence of stillness of mind leading to adaptive response to the basal stress

**After treatment** – Rest for at least one hour. Cover the head and avoid cold breezes, hot sun, travelling, and exercise for the remainder of the day. Wait at least 2-3 hours before rising the oil out of your hair to allow for the full effect of the treatment

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

*Shirodhara* is a method of relieving stress and avoid many mental illnesses. It is the continuous flow of medicated oil through the head. The oil falls on the center of the forehead of the person. The oil will be comfortably warm and the process continues for 25 minutes. The person experiences unexplainable relaxation and brightness, which provides complete rest to mind, allows one to overcome stress related conditions like insomnia, anxiety, chronic headaches, hypertension and asthma. It also strengthens hair and skin of the head. *Shirodhara* brings in several benefits including improved blood circulation to the brain, provides nourishments to hair and scalp, reduces nervous tension, and helps in sound sleep. There can also be different conditions of head, throat, eyes, ears and nose. It improves the functioning of sense organs and central nervous system, also improves your mood and fights depression.

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