

## HEALING ALOPECIA AREATA WITH AYURVEDA: A CLINICAL CASE STUDY OF *INDRALUPTA*

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### ABSTRACT

Alopecia areata, an autoimmune condition leading to hair loss on the scalp, face and other body areas, is associated with psychological distress, including anxiety and depression. Conventional treatments include corticosteroids, but in Ayurveda, it is linked to "Indralupta," a condition caused by imbalances in the body's vital energies (doshas). This case study discusses the treatment of a male patient with patchy hair loss, dandruff, and thinning hair, unresponsive to prior corticosteroid treatments. Ayurvedic therapies, including Panchakarma procedures and both oral and topical medications, were applied. Over five months, significant hair regrowth was observed, along with an improvement in associated symptoms. The case illustrates the effectiveness of Ayurvedic treatment in managing alopecia areata.

**KEYWORDS:** Indralupta, Pracchana karma(shodhana karma), Shaman karma.

### INTRODUCTION

Alopecia areata(*Indralupta*) is an autoimmune illness that causes hair loss all over the body, particularly on the scalp, with no clinical inflammatory symptoms. Its prevalence in the general population is estimated to be 0.1-0.2%, with a lifetime risks of 1.7%. The unexpected loss of hair is referred to as '*Indralupta*'. according to *Ayurveda*, the state of the hair and scalp is determined by the balance of important biological energy in the body: *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*. Any imbalances in these *tri-doshas* would cause a variety of scalp and hair issue.

*Sushruta* mentioned *Indralupta* as *Raktapradoshaja vikara*.<sup>[2]</sup> Alopecia areata is related to *Indralupta* illness, which is documented in *Ayurvedic* medicine. In *Ayurveda*, *Indralupta* is treated with both *Shodhana* (internal and exterior cleansing methods) and *shaman* (disease-specific internal remedies).<sup>[3-4]</sup> Here in case of male patient suffering from Alopecia areata was successfully treated with *Ayurvedic shamana* therapy and *shodhana* therapy along with *nidan parivarjana*.

**Case study:** A 25-year-old male patient presented to the *Panchakarma* OPD with complaints of patchy hair loss, dandruff, and hair thinning for the past three months. He also reported pain in both knee joints. The patient had no history of diabetes, hypertension, or any other systemic illness and had previously undergone treatment with corticosteroids and topical serums, which yielded minimal improvement.

**Chief Complaints:** The patient has been experiencing patchy hair loss, dandruff, knee joint pain, and thinning of hair for the past three months.

**Associated complaints:** generalized hair fall in 3 months.

**Case Finding:** The patient was started to be asymptomatic before three months. Then he had a routine haircut and discovered the bald spot on his scalp, which had been there for three months. He did not take any medicines and approached the OPD of the *Panchakrama* Department at Mahatma Gandhi Ayurved Hospital and Research centre Salod(H), Wardha.

**Past History:** No history of diabetes, hypertension, thyroid dysfunction or any other allergic illness. No surgical abnormality.

**Family History:** No any abnormality related family found in this case.

#### **Personal History**

- Occupation : Teacher
- Dietary habits : Irregular diet, non- vegetarian
- No significant history of addiction

**On Examination:** Patchy hair loss measuring 3\*1.5 cm over right temporal region of the scalp.

**General Examination:** Vitals- normal, medium- built, without any other associated pathological condition.

**Table 1: General examination.**

General examination	
Pulse	72/min
BP	110/70mm/hg
RR	20/min
Temperature	Normal
Tongue	Normal
Disease specific examination	
Site of involment	right temporal.
Shape	vertically oval
Measurement	3*1.5cm
Scalp	dry scalp

### Laboratory examination

Haematological investigation carried out to exclude any other disease.

Bleeding time, clotting time & serological investigation carried out to perform *Raktamokshana (Pracchana vidhi)*.

**Table 2: Laboratory examination.**

Haematological		
Hb%		12%
Total R.B.C.		5.13 mil/c.mm
Total W.B.C.		6635/cumm
DC	Neutrophil	50%
	Eosinophil	1%
	Basophil	0.00%
	Monocytes	9%
	Lymphocytes	40%
ESR		04 mm/hr
B.T.		1 min 25 sec
C.T.		3 min 10 sec
Serological		
HIV		Negative
HBsAg		Negative
HCV test		Negative
VDRL		Negative
Bio chemistry		
Random blood sugar		95 mg/dl

***Samprapti***

The aggravated *Vayu* and *Pitta Doshas* attack the hair roots, leading to hair fall, while the imbalanced *Rakta* and *Kapha* in the affected area block the hair follicles, preventing new hair growth. This condition is known as *Indralupta*, *Rujya*, or *Khalitya*. (*A.Hru. Ut. 23 / 24, 25 Aruna* pg 859-860.)<sup>[5]</sup>

*Acharya Madhava* states that *brajakapitta*, when combined with *Vata*, leads to hair fall, while *kapha* along with *rakta* blocks the hair roots, preventing new hair growth. He attributes the condition to the involvement of all four *doshas* and considers the nature of the disease to be impermanent. (*M. Ni.ut, 55/28, 29.*)<sup>[6-7]</sup>

**Samprapti ghatak****Table 3.**

<i>Dosha</i>	<i>Tridoshaja</i>
<i>Dushya</i>	<i>Rasa, Rakta, Asthi</i>
<i>Srotas</i>	<i>Rasavaha, Raktavaha, Asthivaha</i>
<i>Sroto-dusti</i>	<i>Ati-pravritti, Sangha</i>
<i>Agni</i>	<i>Dhatwagni</i>
<i>Vyakthasthana</i>	<i>Kapala pradesha</i>
<i>Rogamarga</i>	<i>Madhyama</i>
<i>Sadhyaadyata</i>	<i>Kastasadhya</i>

**Differential diagnosis**

*Khalitya* : gradual hair fall

*Darunaka* : hair fall with dandruff

*Indralupta* : sudden patchy hair loss without regrowth of hair.<sup>[8]</sup>

**Treatment*****Shodhan chikitsa for Indralupta(Pracchana karma)******Poorva karma***

The materials gathered included an insulin syringe, gloves pairs, sterile gauze piece, Betadine solution and *Triphala kashaya*. The patient's vital werw assessed and found to be stable. Tests for hemoglobin percentage (Hb%), hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg), random blood sugar(RBS), clotting time (CT), and bleeding time(BT) werw conducted, all of which returned within normal limits.

***Pradhana Karma***

Patient was made to recline comfortably on a time in front of strong light. The patchy area should then be cleansed with a Betadine solution. An insulin syringe is used, and close pricks are made continuously over the afflicted area of the scalp. are made continuously over the afflicted area of the scalp. The prick should be neither too deep nor too superficial, but just deep enough for the blood to seep out. Examine the bleeding and wipe it with sterile cotton balls.

***Paschat Karma***

After the bleeding stops, wipe the area with a cotton swab soaked with *Triphala kashaya*. And use *lepa* of *ushana churna* with honey.

***Shaman chikitsa for Indralupta*****Table 4: Treatment plan.**

No.	Drug	Dose	Route of administration
1	<i>Mahamanjisthadi kashaya</i>	20 ml BD after food	Oral with Luke warm water
2	<i>Gandharv haritaki churna</i>	1 tsp at night	Oral with Luke warm water
3	<i>Indralupta mashi with gomutra</i>	At night	Local application

***Pathya – Apathya<sup>[9]</sup>*****Table 5: *pathya apathy*.**

<b><i>Pathya</i></b>	<b><i>Apathya</i></b>
<i>Aharaja- Dugdha, Ghrita, Shastikashali.</i>	<i>Aharaja- Excess salt, Excess spice</i>
<i>Vihara- Chatra dharana</i>	<i>Vihara- Head bath, Jagarana, Exposure to sunlight, dust</i>

**OBSERVATION AND RESULTS****Image-1: before starting the treatment****Image-2: after treatment**

- Day 1: Medicine administered to the patient.
- Day 7: No significant improvement in hair loss, but appetite increased.
- Day 15: Bowel movements are satisfactory.
- Day 21: Mild improvement in hair loss, with a reduction in dandruff.
- 1 Month: Slight improvement in the patch, with some thin hair beginning to grow.
- 1.5 Months: Hair thinning in the patch turns black.
- 2 Months: Noticeable improvement in hair growth on the patch.
- 3 Months: The hair got densely covered with normal growth and colour.
- 5 Months (continued): Patient was completely cured with no further complaints.

## DISCUSSION

The *Ayurvedic* treatment for alopecia areata in this case study involved a comprehensive approach targeting both internal and external factors. The pathogenesis of the condition was addressed through "*Nidana Parivarjana*," which emphasizes lifestyle and dietary changes to prevent further aggravation of the *doshas*. *Deepana-Pachana* therapy was employed to manage the involvement of all four *doshas*-*Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*, and *Rakta*-through digestion-stimulating and cleansing treatments.

*Pracchana Karma*, a form of bloodletting (*Raktamokshana*), was a key component in removing vitiated *Rakta* (blood) and *Pitta* and clearing *Kapha* obstructions. *Mahamanjisthadi Kashaya*, an oral medication, helped purify the blood and detoxify the body.<sup>[10]</sup> *Haritaki churna* was administered at night with lukewarm water for promoting *Vatanulomana* (the balancing of *Vata dosha*) and facilitating regular purgation.<sup>[11]</sup> *Indralupta mashi* is believed to help promote patchy hair regrowth, prevent premature hair loss and graying, and restore the natural shine of the hair.<sup>[12]</sup>

In terms of prognosis for the present case, as mentioned in classical *Ayurvedic* texts, *Indralupta* is considered treatable with various therapeutic approaches, as outlined earlier. This particular case was of recent onset and showed complete recovery, with full regrowth of hair over the affected area. The effectiveness of the treatment was evaluated through both subjective and objective changes in clinical features before and after the treatment. During the 3-month follow-up period, there was no recurrence of hair loss in this case.

## CONCLUSION

This case demonstrates the potential of *Ayurvedic* treatments in managing alopecia areata by focusing on both symptomatic relief and addressing the root cause of the condition through *dosha* balancing and blood purification techniques. The combination of dietary adjustments, cleansing procedures, and medicinal applications contributed to significant hair regrowth, reduced symptoms, and overall improvement in the patient's condition. *Ayurvedic* therapies offer a promising alternative for those seeking holistic approaches to alopecia management.

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