

SIGNIFICANCE OF MURDHA TAILA IN AYURVEDA: A REVIEW***¹Dr. Jahanara Parbin Ahmed and ²Dr. Ranjan Kumar Kalita**

¹PG Scholar, Dept. of Kayachikitsa, Govt. Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Guwahati, Assam.

²Asst. Professor, Dept. of Kayachikitsa, Govt. Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Guwahati, Assam.

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***Corresponding Author**

**Dr. Jahanara Parbin
Ahmed**

PG Scholar, Dept. of
Kayachikitsa, Govt.
Ayurvedic College and
Hospital, Guwahati, Assam.

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda has holistic approaches in a particular way to prevent and promote a healthy life by following certain methods and therapies in a day to day activities which could be considered as a part of a health. Also Ayurveda aims at removing the vitiated doshas from the root in chronic disease conditions. 'Murdha' means head and taila means oil. Murdha taila is a process in which sneha is applied on the head or it is a procedure of anointing the head with oil also known by the name 'shirastarpana'. Head is known as the "uttamanga" part of the body because it is the control centre of the entire body which controls and regulates all the sense organs and prana. To fulfil the aim of Ayurveda in today's scenario, promotion among the fast moving people and

stressful life of this 21st century and people suffering from different types of stress related disorders like anxiety, insomnia, depression etc, Murdha tailas are one among the best treatment procedure.

KEYWORDS: *Indriyas, Murdha taila, prana, shirastarpana, uttamanga.*

INTRODUCTION

Panchakarma is the traditional ayurvedic detoxification of the body and mind that facilitates rejuvenation. Murdha or head is one among the 'trimarma' (vital point) of the body which is called as uttamanga as it is the region where the vital centres and all the senses (indriyas) of a living being are located.^[1] Any trauma to this part may disturb the function of prana as loss of that organ or site may lead to so many complications and even death may occur.^[2] Murdha taila belongs to the category of external application of oil and refers to applying the

oil to the head. In healthy person it is either plain or medicated oil is used in this procedure or oils may be selected according to the prakriti of the person and in the disease person the oil processed with specific drugs that can cure the illness is preferred.

Therapeutic effects of murdha taila^{[3],[4]}

In general, the application of oil to the head has the following beneficial effects.

- Shirashoolam na jayate- prevents and cures headache due to different causes.
- Na khalityam –prevents and cures baldness.
- Dridhamula dirgha Krishna kesha-desirable in person who wish to have firm, long and dark hair.
- Na palityam-prevents and cures premature greying of hair.
- Na kesha prapatani cha- effective in curing hairfall.
- Balam shirakaplanam- scalp bones becomes stronger.
- Indriyani prasidanti-improves the ability of sense organs.
- Nidra labha- induce sound sleep.

Very effective in the management of stress. This therapy effectively brings down the blood pressure in hypertensive. It is efficacious in the management of psychological disorders. It also cures dryness of head, cures itching and diseases of scalp and hair like ulcerations, inflammation etc. This procedure is also useful in the management of cranial nerve disorders.

Types of murdha taila^[5]

Depending upon the degree of snehana effect as well as the method of application of oil four distinct methods of murdha taila has been described as listed below.

1. Shiro abhyanga- application of oil to the scalp followed by massage.
2. Shirahseka/ shirodhara- procedure of pouring the medicated oil or other liquids on the forehead.
3. Shiropichu- a procedure in which cotton swab soaked in oil is placed on the vertex for certain period.
4. Shirobasti- certain amount of oil is poured on the vertex and is made to remain there for specific period.

A) SHIROABHYANGA^[6]

Shiro means head and abhyanga is massage. Shiroabhyanga means smearing the oil over head followed by massage by specific maneuvers. This procedure is the most ideal for routine

practice especially in healthy persons. Mere smearing the oil with no following massage, smearing the oil followed by simple massage and smearing the oil followed by placing specific strokes on the head, all these three methods are known as shiro abhyanga.

Requirements

- Comfortable, cushioned knee high chair.
- Lukewarm oil, plain or medicated for application
- Cloth for draping the body below the neck.

Selection of Sneha

In healthy individuals oil may be prescribed according to the prakriti of the individual like.

Vata prakriti- himsagar taila

- Pitta prakriti- chandanadi taila, chandan bala laksadi taila etc.
- Kapha prakriti- triphaladi taila
- Sama prakriti- asanabilvadi taila

In other conditions like-

- Hairfall- dhaturapatradi taila
- Dandruff – dhaturapatradi taila
- Cranial nerve disorders- narayan taila, dhanvantara taila, masha taila etc.
- Premature greying of hair- nilibhringadi taila, bhringraj taila, bhringamlaka taila.

METHOD

PRADHAN KARMA: shiroabhyanga may be performed at any time of the day before bath. Even then early morning at the time of sunrise is the most ideal time for the shiroabhyanga procedure. Person after brushing his teeth and washing the face after evacuating natural urges, made to sit on a cushioned knee high chair. His body is draped with cloth below the neck. The therapist should first chant swastivachana hymn or prayer and then perform shiroabhyanga. Then the lukewarm oil should be applied slowly and gently to the scalp and hair in the direction of hair. The therapist apply massage in different styles like- garshana hasta (massage from before backwards), mridvanguli tadana (picking strokes), dvihasta tadana (flat palm strokes), Taranga hasta (rocking strokes), anguli kridana hasta (finger strokes), mridu mushti tadana (fist strokes) etc.

PASCHAT KARMA: patient is advised to take rest for about 15-20 minutes and he may be allowed to take head bath with hot water.

INDICATION^[7, 8]

- Shirorogas.
- Nourishes shiropadesha.
- Nourishes hairs and make them strong, black in colour, smooth, long.
- Provides good lustre to the face.
- Helps in reducing rukshata, kandu, mala of shiropadesha etc.

CONTRAINDICATION

- Kapha dominant disease
- Indigestion
- Tarunajwara
- Amadosha
- Person given vaman, virechan, niruha basti etc.

B) SHIROSEKA/ SHIRODHARA^[9,10]

Continuous pouring of decoction, oil or other liquids on the forehead and then allowing it to flow over the scalp using a special instrument dhara yantra is known shiroseka which is also popularly known as shirodhara.

Requirements

- 6 feet long and 4 feet wide cotton cloth for draping the body.
- Medicated or plain oil or infusions or buttermilk/milk.
- Cotton pads to cover eyes.
- Gauze.
- Dhara table and dhara yantra.

Selection of sneha^[11]

- According to dharakalpa, sneha is taken according to the condition of doshas.
- Vata dosha- tila taila
- Pitta dosha- ghrita
- Kapha dosha – tila taila

- Rakta dosha- ghrita
- Vata +pitta+rakta- ghrita + taila in equal portion
- Vata+kapha+rakta- ½ part ghrita + 1 part tila taila

METHOD

PURVAKARMA: patient should be advised to pass urine and stool. Then patients pulse, temperature, blood pressure should be recorded. Patient is advised to lie down on dhara table in supine position and dhara patra should be fixed 4 angula above the forehead. The eyes and ears should be covered with cotton pads to prevent the entry of liquids into eyes. Abhyanga is done all over the body or at least face, neck, shoulder and chest.

PRADHAN KARMA: the room where shirodhara is to be performed should be clean, well ventilated and very quiet. Then lukewarm / sukhoushna nearly equal to body temperature medicated oil is to be poured into the dharapatra. A continuous flow of liquid should be maintained and the entire forehead should be sprinkled by a rhythmic oscillation of dharapatra. A gentle massage following the dhara over the forehead should be done in between the process. The oil is collected in the vessel placed beneath the droni should be reheated and poured again in the dharapatra.

DURATION: it should be continued for 45-60 minutes for 4-7 days and depend upon yukti of physician. according to dharakalpa (ch.17) the patient having dryness and pittayukta vata, the period of shirodhara should be two and half prahara or 2 prahara and in snigdha, kaphayukta vata it is one prahara.

PERIOD FOR CHANGING THE LIQUID: when milk is used, it should be changed every day. when dhanyamla is used, it can be used upto 3 days. oil also should be changed after 3 days. in the first 3 days half of the oil should be used, for next 3 days the other half of the oil should be used and on the 7th day all the first and second half both are mixed together, then it should be discarded.

PASCHATA KARMA

After the dhara process is completed, the head of the patient should be wiped out and dried. This is followed by a short duration of rest and massage of the body including head with oil and then a lukewarm bath. apply rasnadi churna to the vertex of head. the patient is advised to have a light diet.

INDICATION

- Stress and psychosomatic disorders such as IBS (irritable bowel syndrome)
- Neurological disorders (headache, epilepsy etc)
- Psychiatric disorders (psychosis, neurosis, insomnia etc)
- Convulsive disorders
- Psoriasis
- Eczema
- Hypertension
- Facial palsy,
- Neuropathy
- Loss of memory

CONTRAINDICTION

Kaphaja vikara

C) SHIROPICHU^[12]

Shiropichu is a procedure in which a piece of cloth or gauze is folded and dipped in specific oil and kept on the anterior frontanalle (brahma randhra).

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Suitable sneha – 50 to 100 ml.
- Cotton, gauze, vessel, soft towel.
- Rasnadi churna.
- Armed chair.

METHOD

PURVAKARMA: abhyanga is to be done over head, neck, and shoulder.

PRADHAN KARMA: the patient is made to sit comfortably in an armed chair. Tie a band of cloth around the forehead above the ears. Place a piece of cloth having length and breadth of 16 cm each over the vertex. Then keep cloth pieces of same size one over the other to reach a height of about 2 cms. Pour the lukewarm oil at the centre till the cloth is soaked completely. generally picchu is maintained for 30-90 minutes.

PASCHAT KARMA: remove the pichu and wipe the head completely. Apply rasnadi churna on the vertex region (brahma randhra).

INDICATION: As.Hr. Su. 22/25

- Keshapata
- Keshabhumi sputhana (cracking of skin over the scalp region)
- Palitya (premature greying of hair)
- Vrana (wound)
- Netrastambha
- Pakshaghat
- Ardita
- Anidra
- Cerebellar dysfunction etc

D) SHIROBASTI

It is a procedure of murdha taila in which a basti cap is constructed over the head of the person (in sitting position) using a leather cap, its junction with the head sealed with wet flour of black gram and filled with medicated oils.

REQUIREMENTS

- Two piece of thin cotton cloth.
- Black gram flour ½ kg.
- Clean water.
- Medicated or plain oil.
- Shirobasti hat.

SELECTION OF SNEHA

According to prakriti of the person oil is prescribed as below.

- Vata prakriti- himsagara taila.
- Pitta prakriti- chandanadi oil, chandan bala lakshadi taila, kseerabala taila.
- Kapha prakriti- triphaladya taila.
- Sama prakriti –asanabilvadi taila.

METHOD^[14]**PURVA KARMA**

Purvakarma includes atura siddhanta and sambhara sangraha. Atura siddhanta includes the procedure of shodhan by vaman and virechan karma. Sambhara sangraha includes the preparation of charmapatta and 2 strips of cloth.

PRADHAN KARMA: fixing the shirobasti hat on the head with no possibility of leakage, followed by pouring of the lukewarm oil into the hat. Oil is then kept in this state for certain period of time. This is the procedure of shirobasti.

PASCHAT KARMA: immediately following shirobasti soles, palms, shoulders and back of the ear pinna of the patient is made warm by gently rubbing this parts. patient is then allowed to take rest for 15 minutes before taking hot water bath. For removing the oil one can use green gram powder instead of soap. After bath patient is advised to take his regular meals.

DURATION: the oil is kept in position undisturbed in shirobasti for certain period of time according to the morbidity of doshas and the illness the patient is suffering from.

- Vata dosha- 53 minutes (10,000 matra kala)
- Pitta dosha-43 minutes (8000 matra kala)
- Kapha dosha- 32 minutes (6000 matra kala)

INDICATION

- Loss of sensation in scalp
- Facial palsy (ardita)
- Insomnia (anidra)
- Dryness of nose and mouth
- Timira
- Shiro rogas

DISCUSSION

Shiroabhyanga is a type of murdha taila where head is smeared with oil followed by massage by specific maneuvers. Oil applied to the head is absorbed into the hair roots which in turn are connected with nerve fibres leading directly to brain. Shiro abhyanga increases the supply of fresh oxygen and glucose to the brain along with the circulation of prana. It also increases the growth hormones and enzymes necessary for growth and development of brain.

Shirodhara is a purifying and rejuvenating therapy which stimulates nervous system, eliminates toxins and mental exhaustion as well as relieves stress and ill effects on the central nervous system. Shirodhara has both the therapeutic effect of medicament and procedural effect. Shirodhara can be used for the treatment of scalp, hair problems, vision related problems and also psychological disorders. Shiropichu helps in the balance between the circulation of rakta and pitta. It enhances blood supply and nutrition to the brain healing marma. By the employment of this procedure one can achieve all the beneficial effects of murdha taila. Shirobasti helps to control over vitiated vata, pitta, marma, endocrine and pituitary functions etc. Shirobasti is the treatment of choice in conditions like ulcerating lesions, bleeding from the wound, painful or tender lesions and other dermatological conditions of the scalp. Shirobasti is also found to be effective in combating diseases like numbness of head, insomnia, headache, psychological disorders etc.

CONCLUSION

In present era, mankind are under various stress and anxiety, depression and other psychological disorders. This stress and strain affects people through several psychophysical mechanism. The modern therapeutic approaches involves use of various sedatives, tranquilizers, anti psychotic drugs etc which have adverse effects like abuse and addiction. due to which their role in curing the disease is very limited. As Ayurveda has holistic approaches in a particular way to prevent and promote healthy life so Ayurveda is boon for the society, and with the help of murdha tailas (abhyanga, seka, pichu, basti) can successively cures the disease.

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