

## AN AYURVEDIC REVIEW OF DARUNAKA VYADHI WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PITYRIASIS SICCA (DANDRUFF)

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### ABSTRACT

*Darunaka* is a commonly encountered scalp disorder described in *Ayurvedic* literature under *Kshudra Roga* and *Kapalagata Roga*. Although it is not life-threatening, it significantly affects an individual's cosmetic appearance, self-confidence, and psychological well-being. In recent times, increasing environmental pollution, unhealthy dietary habits, stressful lifestyle, and excessive use of chemical-based cosmetic hair products have led to a rising prevalence of *Darunaka*. Clinically, the disease presents with itching, dryness, scaling of the scalp, and hair fall, primarily due to vitiation of *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha*, along with the involvement of *Rakta Dhatu* and *Swedavaha Srotas*. On the basis of clinical similarity, *Darunaka* can be correlated with dandruff (pityriasis sicca) described in modern dermatology. The present review aims to critically analyze classical *Ayurvedic* texts to elaborate the

etiology, pathogenesis, clinical features, management principles, and preventive aspects of *Darunaka Vyadhi*, highlighting its relevance in contemporary clinical practice.

**KEYWORDS:** *Darunaka, Kshudra Roga, Kapalagata Roga, Ayurveda, Dandruff, Pityriasis Sicca.*

## INTRODUCTION

*Darunaka Vyadhi* is one of the most common scalp disorders described in *Ayurvedic* classics and holds significant importance due to its cosmetic implications. Different *Acharyas* have classified *Darunaka* under *Kshudra Roga* or *Kapalagata Roga*. *Vaghbata* and *Sharangadhara* consider it a disease localized to the scalp,<sup>[1]</sup> whereas *Sushruta* includes it under minor diseases.<sup>[2]</sup> Although *Acharya Charaka* does not explicitly mention *Darunaka*, the pathogenesis of similar scalp conditions is described under *Shirah Kapalagata Roga*. According to *Ayurveda*, *Darunaka* arises due to vitiation of *Kapha* and *Vata Dosha*, affecting *Rasa* and *Rakta Dhatus* along with *Swedavaha Srotas*.<sup>[3]</sup>

Dandruff, medically known as *Pityriasis simplex*, affects nearly 50% of adults across various cultures, climates and ethnic groups. The condition commonly affects adolescents and young adults and is equally prevalent among both sexes, particularly after puberty when sebum production increases. Physiological shedding of scalp skin is a normal process; however, excessive desquamation results in dandruff, itching, and discomfort. Almost everyone experiences dandruff at some point in their life. The condition is frequently associated with itching, flaking, dull hair and even hair fall, with affected individuals often losing hair at a faster rate than those without dandruff. Cold and dry weather tends to worsen the symptoms.

Despite extensive research, experts have not reached a unified conclusion regarding the exact cause. However, findings indicate a strong association between dandruff and the activity of *Pityrosporum ovale* and multiple *Malassezia* species. These organisms break down scalp lipids, releasing irritating fatty acids and toxins that damage the skin and trigger inflammation. Antifungal shampoos are commonly prescribed to reduce fungal load, yet recurrence is frequent once treatment is stopped. Lifestyle factors, such as stress and poor sleep, increase sebum secretion and subsequently promote fungal proliferation.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The present review is based on a comprehensive literary study of classical *Ayurvedic* texts including *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Ashtanga Sangraha*, *Sharangadhara Samhita*, *Bhavaprakasha*, *Yogaratnakara*, and *Gadanigraha* along with their authoritative commentaries. Relevant modern dermatological textbooks and research articles were also referred to for correlation. The collected information was critically analyzed and systematically presented to ensure clarity, originality, and relevance.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To review classical *Ayurvedic* literature related to *Darunaka Vyadhi*.
2. To understand the etiopathogenesis of *Darunaka* in the light of *Ayurveda*.
3. To highlight *Ayurvedic* management principles applicable in the present era.

### 2.1. Review of Literature

The term *Darunaka* is derived from the verb *Darayati*,<sup>[4]</sup> which denotes splitting, tearing, or a condition that is difficult to endure. *Dalhana* explains *Daruna* as *Kathina*, implying hardness and intolerance (Su.Ni.13/35). Clinically, *Darunaka* is characterized by a troublesome and uncomfortable nature.

According to *Vaghbata* and *Sharangadhara*,<sup>[5]</sup> *Darunaka* is classified under *Kapalagata Roga*, whereas *Sushruta*, *Bhavaprakasha*,<sup>[6]</sup> *Madhava Nidana*,<sup>[7]</sup> *Yogaratnakara*,<sup>[8]</sup> *Bhaiṣajya Ratnavali*,<sup>[9]</sup> and *Chakradutta*<sup>[10]</sup> describe it under *Kṣudraroga*.

*Acharya Sushruta* defines *Darunaka* as a condition in which the scalp becomes *Daruna* (scaly and rough), *Ruksha* (dry), and is associated with *Kandu* (itching). The primary etiological factors involve vitiation of *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha*. Furthermore, based on the observations of *Videha*, the involvement of *Pitta* and *Rakta* is also noted in the pathogenesis of *Darunaka*.

As per *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Darunaka* presents with *Sirapradesh Kandu* (itching over the scalp), *Rukṣhata* (dryness), *Sirotvaka Sphuṭanam* (cracking and exfoliation of scalp skin in the form of fine flakes), and *Keshachyuti* (hair fall). The disease predominantly manifests due to the vitiation of *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha*. The vitiated *Doshas* localize in the scalp region leading to characteristic clinical features.

### 2.2. NIDANAS

**Table 1** Nidanas of *Darunaka*.

1. <i>Aharajanidana</i>	<i>Amlaahara Atisevana</i>
	<i>Atisheeta Ambusevana</i>
	<i>Dushta</i>
	<i>Guru Ahara</i>
	<i>Haritha Ahara Atisevana</i>
	<i>Hima Ahara</i>
2. <i>Viharajanidana</i>	<i>Atapa Atisevana</i>
	<i>Diva Swapna</i>
	<i>Jagarana</i>

	<i>Praagvata</i>
	<i>Rajahasavana</i>
3.Vegas	<i>Athi Maithuna</i>
	<i>Vashpa Nigraha</i>
	<i>Rodana</i>
	<i>Vegadharana</i>
4.Psychological factor	<i>ManasTapa</i>

### 2.3. POORVA RUPA

*Poorvarupa* denotes *Praguthpathi lakshnam vyadhi*. There is no reference of *Purvaroopa* of *Darunaka* in ancient classics.

### 2.4. RUPA

The principal clinical manifestations (*Rupa*) of *Darunaka* are described as follows:

#### 2.4.1. *Kandu* (Itching)

*Kandu* occurs primarily due to the vitiation of *Kapha Dosha*. Factors such as accumulation of *Mala* over the scalp and excessive perspiration contribute to the manifestation of itching. The aggravated *Kapha* creates a moist and obstructive environment, leading to persistent irritation of the scalp.

#### 2.4.2. *Keshachyuti* (Hair fall)

Hair fall is commonly observed during the progression of *Darunaka*, particularly over the affected scalp regions. This condition reflects inadequate nourishment of the hair follicles. Continuous itching along with thinning and dryness of the scalp weakens the hair roots, making them loose and unhealthy, ultimately resulting in hair fall. *Keshachyuti* is caused by aggravated *Pitta Dosha* in association with *Vata Dosha*. Due to diminished *Snigdhata* (unctuousness) from vitiated *Vata*, the hair loses its luster and becomes rough. Excessive dryness renders the hair brittle, short, thin, and prone to easy breakage and shedding.

#### 2.4.3. *Svapa* (Altered touch sensation)

*Svapa* refers to abnormal or altered tactile sensation, which may present as partial or temporary loss of sensation over the scalp. This symptom arises due to the predominance of vitiated *Vata Dosha*, affecting the sensory functions of the skin.

#### 2.4.4. *Rukṣhata* (Dryness)

*Rukṣhata* of the scalp is a classical manifestation of aggravated *Vata Doṣha*. Factors such as *Abhyanga-Abhava* (absence of oil application) and other *Vata*-provoking etiological causes contribute to increased roughness and dryness of the scalp skin.

#### 2.4.5. *Tvak-Sphuṭana* (Scaling and fissuring of the skin)

*Tvak-sphuṭana* denotes cracking, splitting, or scaling of the scalp skin and is a characteristic feature of *Darunaka*. It occurs as a consequence of repeated scratching and abnormal epidermal keratinization. This manifestation is primarily attributed to the vitiation of *Vata Doṣha*, leading to loss of skin integrity and exfoliation.

### 2.5. UPASHAYA AND ANUPASHAYA

Classical Ayurvedic texts do not explicitly describe the *Upashaya* of *Darunaka*. Therefore, the etiological factors (*Nidana*) responsible for the manifestation of the disease may be regarded as *Anupashaya*. Conversely, avoidance of these causative factors and adoption of measures antagonistic to them can be inferred as *Upashaya* in the management of *Darunaka*.

### 2.6. SAMPRAPTI

The genesis of any disease occurs when vitiated *Doṣha* combines with susceptible *Duṣhya* within the *Srotas*, a process known as *Doṣha-Duṣhya Saṃmurchana*, which is elaborated under *Samprapti*. In *Darunaka*, the primary *Doṣhas* involved are *Kapha* and *Vata*, as indicated by the etiological factors. Additionally, *Videhacharya* has described the association of *Pitta* and *Rakta* in the pathogenesis of *Darunaka* (*Su.Ni.13/35 tika*).

*Tvak* (skin) is derived from *Rakta Dhatu* during the process of *Dhatu Pariṇama*. According to the principle of *Ashraya-Ashrayi Bhava* between *Doṣha* and *Duṣhya*, *Pitta Doṣha* has a close relationship with *Rakta Duṣhya* (*A.H.Su.11/26*). *Bhrajaka Pitta* is situated in the skin; therefore, vitiation of *Pitta* in *Darunaka* invariably leads to the vitiation of *Rakta* as well.

In this condition, the *Sannikriṣṭa nidana* primarily results in the aggravation of *Kapha* and *Vata Doṣha*. The vitiated *Doṣhas* circulate through the *Raktavahini Srotas* and localize in the *Kapala Pradesha* (scalp). During disease evolution, the *Doṣhas* undergo the sequential stages of *Chaya*, *Prakopa*, and *Prasara*. Subsequently, in the stage of *Sthana Saṃshraya* or clinical manifestation, the aggravated *Doṣhas* interact with the *Duṣhyas*, leading to the expression of disease (*Su.Su.21/37*).

In *Darunaka*, *Kapha*, *Vata*, and *Pitta* *Doṣha* associate with *Rasa* and *Rakta Dushya* at the level of the scalp. This *Doṣha–Dushya Saṃmurchana* results in the clinical features such as *Kandu*, *Keshachyuti*, *Svapa*, *Rukṣhata*, and *Tvak-Sphuṭana*, thereby manifesting the disease *Darunaka*.

## 2.7. CHIKITSA

### 2.7.1. *Shamanoushadhi*

#### Shiro Abhyanga

- *Malatyadi Taila*<sup>[11]</sup>: *Taila* is to be prepared with *Malati*, *Mandura*, *Bhringaraja*, *Utpala*, *Sariva*, *Triphala* and applied on scalp.
- *Bhringaraja Taila*<sup>[12]</sup>: *Taila* is to be prepared with *Bhringaraja*, *Lohakitta*, *Triphala*, and *Sariva* and applied on the scalp.
- *Prapoundareeka Taila*<sup>[13]</sup>: *Taila* is to be prepared with *Triphala*, *Pundarik*
- *Gunja taila*<sup>[14]</sup> - *Taila* prepared using *Gunja*.

#### *Shiro lepana*<sup>[15]</sup>

- Paste of *Priyal* seeds, *Yasti*, *Kushta*, *Masha*, *Sarshapa* and honey and applied on the scalp.
- Paste of Mango seeds, unripen *Haritaki* and milk and applied on the scalp.
- *Khakhasabeejadilepa*<sup>[16]</sup>.
- *Kodrava palaala siddha mashi lepa*<sup>[17]</sup>

#### *Shiroprakshalana*:(*Su.Chi.20/30*)

- *Ksharambuprakshalana*

## 2.7.2. SHODHANA

- *Siramokshana* (*Su.Chi.20/29*)- After *Sneha* and *Sweda* *Karmas* of *Moordha*, *Raktamokshana* by *Siravyadha* in *Lalata* region.
- *Nasya*: *Nasya* with *Prapoundarika Taila*

## 2.8. SADHYASADHYATA

*Acharya Vaghbata* mentioned nine *Kapala Gata Rogas*. *Darunaka* is one of the *Kapalagata Rogas*. It is *Sadhyā Vyadhi*.

### 3. DISCUSSION

In *Ayurveda*, *Kandu* in *Darunaka Vyadhi* is predominantly attributed to the vitiation of *Kapha Doṣha* and plays a significant role in its pathogenesis. Factors such as the accumulation of *Mala* over the scalp and excessive perspiration contribute to *Kapha* aggravation, resulting in persistent itching. *Keshachyuti* is produced by the involvement of aggravated *Pitta Doṣha* in association with *Vata Doṣha*. In *Darunaka*, hair fall may also occur due to reduced *Snigdhata* caused by vitiated *Vata*, leading to loss of hair nourishment. Consequently, the hair becomes dull, rough, brittle, thin, and short, making it more susceptible to breakage and shedding.

*Svapa*, or altered tactile sensation, refers to temporary or partial loss of sensation over the scalp and is mainly due to the predominance of vitiated *Vata Doṣha*. *Rukṣhata* increases with *Vata* aggravation, and etiological factors such as *Abhyanga-Dveṣa* (avoidance of oil application) along with other *Vata*-provoking *Nidanas* result in increased roughness and dryness of the scalp. *Sushruta* has described *Darunaka* as *Kathina* and *Karkasha*, indicating hardness and roughness of the scalp. *Sphuṭana*, characterized by cracking or splitting of the scalp skin, is one of the classical features of *Darunaka*. It develops due to repeated scratching and abnormal keratinization of the epidermis and is further intensified by aggravated *Vata Doṣha*.

### 4. PREVENTION

Maintenance of proper personal hygiene plays a vital role in the prevention of *Darunaka*. Neglect of scalp hygiene significantly increases the recurrence rate of the disease. *Acharya Sushruta* has emphasized the importance of personal hygiene in *Nidanasthana*. Additionally, *Acharya Charaka* (*Ch.Su.5/85–88*) has highlighted that regular application of oil and cleansing of the scalp are effective preventive measures and can substantially reduce the occurrence of *Darunaka*.

### 5. CONCLUSION

*Darunaka Vyadhi* is a common scalp disorder with significant cosmetic and psychological impact. Classical *Ayurvedic* literature provides a detailed understanding of its etiopathogenesis and management. When combined with proper lifestyle modification and preventive measures, *Ayurvedic* principles offer an effective and sustainable approach for long-term management of *Darunaka*.

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