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An Ayurveda approach to Androgenetic Alopecia (Khalitya) - A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Face is the mirror of our personality and healthy vibrant hairs add a lot in improvement of our confidence and personality. In today's developing world there are lots of changes in the dietary habits and lifestyle due to which its ill effects are seen in the form of systemic and local minor diseases. Hair fall has erupted as a major problem. Hair loss also known as Alopecia refers to loss of hair from part of the head. Androgenetic Alopecia (male pattern baldness) is commonest type of alopecia. Pattern hair loss by age 50 affects about half of men and a quarter of women. About 2% of people develop Alopecia at some point in time. In Ayurveda, gradual falling of hair is termed as *Khalitya*. It comes under the heading of *Kshudra roga* (minor disease) or *Shiroroga* (diseases of head & scalp). In the present case, a 20 years old male presented with problem of hair loss. He has severe itching in head since last two years. Also, he complained of severe dandruff and dryness in skull. He was having hair loss on vertex of skull. On basis of symptoms, he was diagnosed as severe case of *Khalitya* which is caused by *Dushti* of *Chatur Dosha* i.e., elevated *Pitta* along with *Vata Dosha* and *Rakta Kapha Dushti*. The principle of treatment is to regain the *Samavastha* of all the vitiated *Doshas* by oral medication like *Narsimha Rasayana*, *Bhringraj Asava*, *Ashwagandha Churna*, *Aragvadha Phal Majja* and by local application of *Dhardhur Patradi Taila*. There was gradual reduction in itching. Scaling and dryness of scalp reduced many folds with each consecutive follow up visit and then disappeared completely. Hairs start growing on the vertex bald patch. This case report showed that combined *Ayurveda* modalities resulted in great improvement in overall condition of the patient with no side effects.

Key words: Androgenetic Alopecia, Ayurveda, Khalitya.

INTRODUCTION

Hairs have cosmetic importance in one's life which also enhances the personality of an individual. Nowadays Alopecia is a very common ailment associated with several comorbidities, including

depression, anxiety, and several autoimmune diseases (thyroid disease, lupus erythematosus, vitiligo, psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease). These autoimmune comorbidities suggest that patients with Alopecia are at increased risk of developing various T cell-driven inflammatory skin diseases.^[1] Dermatology life quality index scores in patients with hair loss were similar to those recorded in severe psoriasis.^[2] The rate of spontaneous remission makes it difficult to assess the efficacy of a therapy. Even, leaving Alopecia untreated is a legitimate option for many patients.^[3] Androgenetic Alopecia is a common form of hair loss in both men and women. In men, this condition is also known as male-pattern baldness. Hair is lost in a well-defined pattern, beginning above both temples. Over time, the hairline recedes to form a characteristic "M" shape. Hair also thins at the crown (near the top of

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the head), often progressing to partial or complete baldness.^[4] Androgen and genetic background are prerequisites for developing this Alopecia. Androgens make hair follicles grow smaller and smaller. If left untreated, they eventually disappear. Most commonly, the first symptoms of baldness appear early, between the ages of 20 and 25, in men. It is transmitted as an autosomal dominant trait.^[5]

In Androgenetic Alopecia thinning of hair shaft occurs in initial stage and after that increase in the number of villus (short and fine) hair occurs. Slowly the majority of hair region turn into villous hair. Finally, the scalp looks smooth and bald with only fine villus hair. First sign of male pattern baldness is seen during the early twenties as recession of temporal line and then in late twenties the frontal line. As the condition progress, there is further frontal and temporal recession and patch of baldness on the vertex. Finally, even the parietal and then occipital hair may be lost leading to complete baldness.^[6]

Hair fall or Alopecia has been described in *Ayurveda* literature as *Khalitya*. *Acharya Charak*^[7] and *Ashtang Hridayakar*^[8] have included *Khalitya* in *Shiroroga* on the basis of *Rogasthana* and etiopathogenesis of disease which is similar to that of *Shiroroga*. *Sushruta Samhita*,^[9] *Ashtang Sangrah*,^[10] *Madhav Nidana* and *Yog Ratnakar* has included *Khalitya* under *Kshudra Rog* on basis of less severity and mildness of disease. The *Samprapti* or pathogenesis of *Khalitya* is very well explained by *Acharya Sushruta* as *Vata* along with *Virruhd Pitta* reaches *Rom Koopa* causes hair fall and after that *Shleshma* hinders the *Romkoopa* along with *Rakta* which ultimately stops regeneration of hairs.^[11] Gradual falling of hair is known as *Khalitya*. When *Pitta* combines with *Vata* or *Kapha Dosha* to destroy the hair, it is called *Khalitya*.^[12] When *Khalitya* is due to *Vata*, it causes burning over scalp; when due to *Pitta*, it causes sweating and when due to *Kapha*, it causes thickening of skin.^[13]

Incidence

The overall incidence of Alopecia (hair fall) is approximately 20.2 per 100,000 person-years.^[14] The prevalence of Alopecia ranges from 0.1 to 0.2%,

depending on the geographic location and ethnic background. Alopecia incidence appears to increase almost linearly with age, but the mean age of onset appears to be between 25 and 36 years.^[15] Androgenic alopecia affects about 60% of men, throughout their lives, and probably 25% of women.

CASE STUDY

A 20 years old male patient with registration number - 19423112019 came to the OPD of Department of Rachana Sharira, NIA, Jaipur on 23 Nov 2019 with chief complaint of itching in scalp (*Shirah Kandu*) along with hair fall (*Khalitya*). There was scaling present on the scalp region and the presence of dandruff (*Rukshata*) could be very well seen.

History of present illness

Patient experienced dandruff and itching of scalp since last 2 yrs. After few months he suffered from hair fall. Gradually he developed a bald patch on vertex of his scalp. He was under mental stress due to hair loss at an early stage. He had also undergone treatment from other modalities but that couldn't help him out. With these complaints' patient approached OPD of NIA, Jaipur.

Personal History

Reveals that patient is vegetarian with increased appetite, normal sleep and normal bladder habit but bowel habit was irregular and usually patient suffers from constipation. (Table 1)

Table 1: Showing personal history of patient.

Diet	Vegetarian
Micturition	Normal
Appetite	Increased Appetite
Sleep	Normal
Bowel	Irregular and Constipated
Addiction	Nil

Past History

There was no relevant past history of Diabetes, Hypertension, Thyroid disorder and Tuberculosis etc.

Family History

No member of family had relevant history of such illness.

Therapeutic Intervention

The patient was given *Shuddha Gandhak* (250 mg) and *Amalaki Churna* (3gm) orally with 5ml of Honey at a time schedule of 8AM and 5PM empty stomach. *Panchatikta Ghrita* was given in a dose of 10 ml twice a day with meals. *Narsingh Rasayana* was administered orally in a dose of half teaspoon twice a day at a time schedule of 6AM and 4 PM. *Bhringraj Asava* was given twice a day after meal in a dose of 20ml. *Aragvadh Phalamajja Kwatha* was also given for oral administration. Approximately four *Angula* length of *Aragvadh Phala* was dipped in 200 ml of water for 4-5 hours. Then the pulp of the *Aragvadh* was removed in the water and this water was given at bed time. Along with these *Dhurdhur Patradi Tailam* was advised for local application (Table 2). Initially, this treatment was recommended for 15 days to see the initial response of the patient. After 15 days, patient came back with 25-30% relief in symptoms. So, this treatment plan continues further.

Table 2: Showing days and dosage of treatment administered.

Name of the drug used	Dose	Route of administration
<i>Dhurdhur Patradi Taila</i>	-	Local Application
<i>Narsingh Rasayana</i>	Half teaspoon BD (6 am & 4 pm)	Oral
<i>Bhringraj Asava</i>	20 ml with equal amount of water just after meal BD	Oral
<i>Shuddha Gandhak + Amalaki Churna</i>	250 mg + 3gm - twice a day with 5ml of honey	Oral (empty stomach at 8AM and 5PM)
<i>Aragvadh Phala Majja</i>	10gm - once in night (dip 4 <i>Angula</i> of <i>Aragvadh</i> in 1/2 glass water in	Oral

	morning and filter it and drink at night)	
<i>Panchatikta Ghrita</i>	10 ml - twice a day with meals	Oral

Patient follow up and outcome

The patient was followed up every month till three consecutive months. After a month, patient get fifty percent relief from hair fall. The scaling, dandruff and itching were also reduced significantly. In consecutive follow up patient start regaining hairs. The scaling, dandruff and itching were completely eradicated. The photographs of patient before, during and after treatment are in Figure 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

Figure 1: Before Treatment



Figure 2: After 1 month treatment



Figure 3: After treatment



DISCUSSION

There are 4 *Dosha* i.e., *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha* and *Rakta* that are involved in *Khalitya*. The *Sanshaman Chikitsa* of *Khalitya* must be based on balancing of all four vitiated *Dosha* and *Rasayan* Therapy. As per *Ayurveda*, *Khalitya* is a sign of ageing process and *Rasayan* therapy plays an important role as antiaging. *Narsingh Rasayan* has been administered as it calms *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha* *Doshas*. Moreover, it makes hair lengthy, shining and strong. *Bhringraj* having *Katu*, *Tikta Rasa*, *Laghu-Ruksha Guna*, *Ushna Veerya*, *Katu Vipak*, *Rasayana* and *Keshya* properties by which it acts as *Aampachak* and *Srotoshodhak*. Its main action is on *Vata* and *Kapha* *Dosha*. It detoxifies *Pitta* *Dosha* which is main vitiated *Dosha* in *Khalitya*. It helps to excrete *Pitta* and heat from the body by stimulating gall bladder and liver functions which leads to bile flow in the intestine, thereby improving digestion and excretion of excess *Pitta* in faeces. *Gandhak* has *Kashay*, *Madhur*, *Katu* and *Tikta Rasa* and *Ushna*, *Snigdha* and *Sara Guna* by which it acts as laxative, *Rasayana* and *Vata-Kaphahar*. *Amalaki* is mainly used to treat *Pitta* imbalance. It is considered as powerful tonic due to its ability to rejuvenate and regenerate all seven vital tissues of body. *Amalaki* is known for increasing hair growth and treating hair loss. *Amalaki* is *Sheet Virya* and *Madhur Vipak* with its capability to reduce *Vata-Pitta* *Doshas* thus breaking the process of *Samprapti* of *Khalitya*. *Aragvadh Phal Majja* acts as

mild purgative, thereby optimising *Pitta* *Dosha* and acts as *Raktashodhak*. *Panchtikta Ghrita* has the property of *Tridoshaghna*. The drug used for Local application i.e., *Dhurdhurpatradi Taila* has *Datura* as one of its main ingredients which is *Laghu-Ruksha* in *Guna*, *Katu-Tikta* in *Rasa* and *Katu Vipaka*. It is useful to balance *Kapha-Vata* *Dosha* and effective in *Keshchyuti*. Thus, the cumulative effect of all these drugs helps in balance of vitiated *Doshas* and acts as *Srotoshodhak* which is very useful in *Khalitya Roga* as it promotes regrowth of hairs.

Table 3: Showing symptoms before treatment and after treatment

Symptoms	Before Treatment	After 1 month	After Treatment
<i>Khalitya</i> (hair fall)	++++	++	+
<i>Shirah Kandu</i> (Itching)	++++	+	-
<i>Kesha Rukshata</i> (Dandruff)	++++	+	-
Scaling	+++	+	-

Table 4: Showing ingredients, properties and action of the drugs given.

SN	Drug	Ingredients	Property & Action
1.	<i>Dhurdhur Patradi Taila</i> ^[16]	<i>Tila Taila</i> - oil of sesamum indicum Extract of <i>Dhurdhur Patra</i> -leaves of <i>Datura metel</i> Seed of <i>Datura metel</i>	Effective in <i>Kandu</i> and <i>Keshchyuti</i>
2.	<i>Narsingh Rasayan</i> ^[17]	<i>Khadira</i> (<i>Acacia catechu</i>) <i>Shikhi</i> (<i>Plumbago zeylanica</i>) <i>Shimshapa</i> (<i>Dalbergia sissoo</i>) <i>Asana</i> (<i>Pterocarpus marsupium</i>) <i>Haritaki</i> (<i>Terminalia chebula</i>)	Premature greying or hair loss.

		<i>Vidanga (Embelia ribes)</i> <i>Akshaka (Terminalia bellerica)</i> <i>Bhilava (Semecarpus anacardium)</i> Ayas (iron plates)- 8 parts <i>Bharanga Nirayasa (Eclipta alba)</i> <i>Vara Kashaya</i> <i>Hayangween</i>	
3.	<i>Bhringraj Asava</i> ^[18]	<i>Bhringraj (Eclipta alba)</i> <i>Haritaki (Terminalia chebula)</i> <i>Pippali (long pepper)</i> <i>Guda (Jaggery)</i> <i>Jatiphala (Myristica fragrans)</i> <i>Lavang (Syzygium aromaticum)</i> <i>Chaturjata (Twak, Patra, Ela, Nagkesar)</i>	<i>Aampachak</i> and <i>Srotoshodhak</i>
4.	<i>Shuddha Gandhak</i> ^[19]	Purified Sulphur	<i>Saptadash Kushthaghati</i>
5.	<i>Amalki Churna</i> ^[20]	Indian Gooseberry Fruit Indian Gooseberry juice Honey Sugar Clarified Butter	Constipation, Hair disorders
6.	<i>Aragvadh Phal Majja</i> ^[21]	Single ingredient (<i>Chaturaangula</i>)- 4 finger length.	<i>Sransan, Ruchya (Khalitya), Kushtha, Pitta Kapha</i> disorder
7.	<i>Panchtikta Ghrita</i> ^[22]	<i>Azadirachta Indica – Neem (bark)</i> <i>Trichosanthes Dioica – Patola (leaves)</i> <i>Tinospora cordifolia – Giloy (Guduchi)</i>	<i>Tridoshaghna, Kushtha, Visarpa Nashak.</i>

	<i>Adhatoda vasica – Vasaka</i> <i>Solanum xanthocarpum – Kantakari</i> Water for decoction Cow's Ghee <i>Terminalia chebula – Haritaki</i> <i>Terminalia bellirica – Bibhitaki</i> <i>Emblica officinalis – Amla (Indian Gooseberry)</i>	
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CONCLUSION

The above said *Sanshaman* (disease specific internal medicine) therapy was found safe and effective in controlling hair fall and improving the overall condition of hairs. This case study shows the successful management of a case of Androgenetic Alopecia (*Khalitya*). The Ayurveda management of *Khalitya* has shown a great possibility to break the *Samprapti* of *Khalitya* and thus showing very effective results. The recovery in the case was promising and worth documenting.

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