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Concept of Autoimmune Disease as per Ayurveda w.s.r. to *Indralupta*

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ABSTRACT

Alopecia areata, is an autoimmune disease which is characterised by hair fall in small patches. It can be correlated to *Indralupta* through its *Nidana Panchaka*. Alopecia areata is the commonest cause of patchy hair loss. It may be regarded as an immune-mediated type of hair loss. The condition affects 0.1% to 0.2% of the population and occurs in both males and females. A single round or oval patch of complete baldness develops rapidly usually over the vertex or in the occipital region. There are no subjective symptoms and the denuded area of scalp is of normal color and texture. Patches in the beard may occur alone or in association. In an auto immune disease, there is a wrong reaction of our body immune system against the body's own tissue. Ayurveda suggests this in a slightly different way that the immune system do not accidentally attack own tissues but it does defence against a form of harmful metabolites called *Ama*.

Key words: *Indralupta, Khalitya, Alopecia areata, Autoimmune Disease.*

INTRODUCTION

Alopecia areata, is an autoimmune disease which is characterised by hair loss and can be correlated with *Indralupta* in Ayurveda. Hair fall is a physiological phenomenon, generally after the mid-forties, but it is considered as a disease if it occurs before this period.^[1]

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Hair plays an important part in the personality or the appearance of the people. Today, changed lifestyle and different dietary habits have made loss of the hairs of the people a cumulative problem. Different types of propaganda to promote the growth of hairs has made the condition worse.

Acharya Sushruta has described *Indralupta* in *Kshudra Roga* along with its pathogenesis in *Nidan Sthana*.^[2] He elucidates *Khalitya* as a synonym of *Indralupta*. But *Astang Samgrahkara* has mentioned *Khalitya* under the heading of *Kapal Vyadhi* along with its pathogenesis. He was the first who has made differentiation between *Indralupta* and *Khalitya*. Moreover, this he also has described different types of *Khalitya*, its symptoms and its prognosis. *Pitta* present at the hair follicles associated with *Vata* causes falling off of the hairs afterwards *Kapha* associated with *Sonita* (blood) blocks the hair follicles, hence no new hair grows in that place. This disease is known as *Indralupta*.^[3] *Indralupta* is caused by

vitiating of *Vata* and *Pitta Doshas*. In *Indralupta* there will be vitiating of *Rakta* with *Kapha* which obstructs the hair follicles and causes *Indralupta*.

AYURVEDA CONCEPT – AUTOIMMUNE DISEASES

Due to consumption of *Aharaja* (*Abhojana*, *Ajirnaatibhojana*, *Vishamashana*, *Guru* etc.), *Viharaja* (*Sneha Vibhrama*, *Vega Dharana* etc.) *Manasika* (*Irshya*, *Bhaya*, *Lobha*, *Krodha* etc.) *Nidana*, it leads to *Dosha Prakopa*. These vitiated *Dosha* causes *Agnimandya* leading to formation of *Ama*. In response to this, body develops certain mechanisms resulting in autoimmune diseases.

Autoimmune diseases are usually caused by large amounts of *Ama* penetrate certain body tissues or physiological systems. In addition, prolonged exposure to poorly digestible food, pollutants, allergenic, toxic synthetic chemicals and drugs is another cause of autoimmune diseases. *Indralupta* is an autoimmune disease which affects 0.1% to 0.2% of the population and occurs in both males and females.

Management of Autoimmune diseases

1. Customised intervention according to individual *Prakriti* and the stage & phase of disease.
2. Multi-component intervention involving *Aushadha*, *Ahara*, *Sadvrutta*, *Panchakarma* and *Yoga*.
3. *Shodhana Chikitsa* using techniques of *Panchakarma* that is unique to Ayurveda.
4. A treatment approach that has homeostasis or restoration of balance as its end point. In this approach, stress is laid on two things:
 - a. *Apunarbhavatva*: Achieving a stable state of homeostasis that does not relapse to the prior diseased stage (non-recurring).
 - b. *Yo Anyam Anyam Udeerayet*: Achieving homeostasis without causing any disturbance to any other systems (without side effects).
5. *Rasayana* - Ensure excellence of tissue elements by *Deepana*, *Pachana* (enhanced metabolism), *Srotoshodhana* (detoxification), *Poshana*

(nourishment). All these three events singly or jointly lead to improved nutritional status in the body leading further to the formation of the best qualities of cells and tissues which sustain aging and stress.

Alopecia areata

Synonyms: Alopecia Celsi, Vitiligo Capitis, Jonston's Alopecia^[4]

Alopecia areata is an autoimmune disorder that causes your hair to come out in small patches, often in clumps the size and shape of a quarter. The amount of hair loss is different in everyone. Some people lose it only in a few spots. Others lose a lot. Sometimes, hair grows back but falls out again later. In others, hair grows back for good.

There are different types of this condition. Alopecia areata is most common in its main form, but there are other, more rare types:

- Alopecia areata totalis means you've lost all the hair on your head.
- Alopecia areata universalis is the loss of hair over your entire body.
- Diffuse alopecia areata is a sudden thinning of your hair rather than lost patches.
- Ophiasis alopecia areata causes hair loss in a band shape around the sides and back of your head.

Alopecia Symptoms

Typical first symptoms of alopecia areata are small bald patches on the scalp.

- The underlying skin is unscarred and looks superficially normal.
- Patches may get larger and grow together into a bald spot, they are usually round or oval.^[5]
- Alopecia areata most often affects the scalp and beard, but may occur on any part of the body with hair.
- Different areas of the skin may exhibit hair loss and re-growth at the same time.
- The disease may also go into remission for a time, or may be permanent.

- More hair loss in cold weather
- Fingernails and toenails become red, brittle, and pitted
- Patients also tend to have a slightly higher incidence of conditions related to the immune system, such as asthma, allergies, atopic dermatitis, and hypothyroidism.
- The area of hair loss may tingle or be painful.

Samprapti Ghataka of Indralupta

1. Doshā: Pitta - Pachaka, Bhrajaka

Vata - Saman, Vyan

Kapha - Tarpaka

2. Dushya: Dhatu - Asthi, Rasa, Rakta

Mala - Sweda, Kesh

3. Srotasa: Asthivaha, Rasavaha, Raktavaha, Swedavaha, Manovaha.

4. Srotodusti: Sanga

5. Agni: Jatharagni, Rasagni, Raktagni & Asthyagni

6. Rogamarga: Bahya

7. Udbhavasthana: Amashaya.

8. Adhithana: Keshabhoomi

Management of Indralupta

In a case of *Indralupta* (baldness or Alopecia), the bald part or seat should be anointed (*Abhyanga*) and fomented (*Swedana*) and then *Raktamokshana* (by venesection) should be resorted to, after this *Lepa* composed of *Manahsila*, *Kasisa*, *Tuttha* and *Marica*, or *Kutannata* and *Devadaru Lepa* should be applied to it. As an alternative to *Raktamokshana*, *Pracchana Karma* (deep scrapping) can also be done and then covered with a paste of *Gunja* seeds. As an alternative Rasayana medicines should be administered for its cure. An oil cooked with *Malati*, *Karaveera*, *Chitraka* and *Naktamala* is highly efficacious in curing a case of Alopecia.

Deep incisions or scraping with a brush of needles is done (to remove the vitiated blood) and then covered

with the warm paste of root of either *Kapotavanka* or *Langalika* macerated in buffalos milk.

The head thus scraped and coated with paste is wrapped with leaves of *Eranda* at night and allowed to remain for the night. Next morning it is removed, head washed and smeared with butter of buffalos milk or with ghee cooked with leaves of *Markava* and flowers of *Sahacara*. Oil cooked with the fruits of *Vartāka* added with honey and *Anjana* should be applied or the juice of *Ksudravartaka* mixed with honey or paste of *Jalasuka* added with ash of *Palasa* (may be applied.)

Areas of loss of hair is rubbed with rough powder of cowdung; is smeared with the juice of *Ruskara* and sprinkled over with the powder of ash of a tortoise shell burnt in a closed hearth; or with ash of a tortoise shell soaked in the juice of *Surasa*, or with ash of the elephant tusk mixed with oil. A paste of leaves of *Pūtikaranja* added with *Saindhava* should be applied; or a paste of *Pippalī*, *Añjana*, *Rasāñjana* *Bākucika Phala* and *Loharaja* macerated in cows urine.^[6]

DISCUSSION

Acharya Charaka mentions that *Pitta* by involving *Vatadi Doshā* when reaches the *Talu* (scalp), it results in *Indralupta*.^[7]

According to *Acharya Sushruta*, *Pitta* along with *Vata* by involving the roots of hair (*Romakoopa*) causes fall of hair and thereafter *Shleshma* along with *Shonita* obstructs the channel of *Romakoopa* leading to the stoppage of the regeneration of hair and this condition is known as *Indralupta*.^[8]

Thus *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha Doshā* and *Rakta Dushya* are the main internal causative factors of *Indralupta*. This disease may occur either independently or as a symptom of morbid *Asthidhatu*.

The normal functions of *Pitta Doshā* are *Darshana*, *Paka*, maintaining the *Ushma* of the body etc. whereas *Vata* is *Utsah*, Inhalation, Exhalation, Mobility, *Dharana* etc. The vitiation of *Pitta* and *Vata Doshas* occurs due to the over indulgence in their respective aggravating factors.

Due to etiological factors the *Pitta* gets augmented in its *Usna* and *Tikshna Gunas* whereas the *Ruksha*, *Khara* and *Chala* properties of *Vata* are augmented. The *Pachaka Pitta* situated in the *Adhoamashaya* gets vitiated which in turn, vitiates the *Saman Vayu* situated nearby. This creates a reverberating cycle at this point as the vitiation of the *Pachaka Pitta* which controls the *Dehoshma*, vitiates the *Saman Vayu* which does the *Dhamana* of *Jatharagni* further vitiates the *Pachaka Pitta*. All other types of *Pitta* viz. *Alochaka*, *Bhrajaka*, *Sadhaka* and *Ranjaka* as well as all the types of *Vata* viz. *Prana*, *Udana*, *Vyana* and *Apana* are vitalized by the *Pachaka Pitta* and *Samana Vayu* respectively. Thus, in a long run the *Bhrajaka Pitta* situated in the skin throughout the body especially in the scalp and the *Vyan Vayu* moving throughout the body get vitiated.

The increase of *Usna* and *Tikshna Gunas* of *Pitta* (esp. *Bhrajaka Pitta*) decrease the *Snehamsha* of *Pitta* and supported by the vitiated *Dehoshma* burns the *Keshbhoomi*, prematurely ripening the hair. Whereas the increased *Ruksha* and *Khara* properties of *Vata* (esp. *Vyana Vayu*) super add in the vitiation of *Pitta* giving rise to a more frequent and comparatively prolonged *Shira Samkocha* and along with the increased *Chalaguna* creates the gradual dislodgment of the prematurely ripened hairs of the scalp.

The normal functions of *Kapha* are *Sneha*, *Bandha*, *Sthiratva* etc. and properties are *Snigdha*, *Pichchhila*, *Shlakshana* etc., which are prevalent throughout the pores of the body so as to keep it moistened and soft. But due to the increase in *Usna*, *Tikshna*, *Ruksha* and *Khara* properties of *Pitta* and *Vata Dosha* respectively, the *Sneha* and *Pichchhilatva* of the *Kapha Dosha* are dried up within the pores of the skin of the scalp thus, the obstruction to the further growth of new hairs causes *Indralupta*.

CONCLUSION

Indralupta is one of the Auto immune disorders where there is patchy hair loss, which may be unnoticed in many individuals. It will not produce any serious

symptoms, but cosmetically it causes shame and embarrassment about the appearance. Auto immune disorders, as per Ayurveda is the defense mechanism of body against the metabolites formed. These cannot be cured completely but can be manageable. Observation of *Sadvrutta*, *Rasayana Sevana*, *Rutu Shodhana* and *Yogasanana* would help in avoiding such disorders. *Rasayanas* are responsible for normalcy of *Dosha-Dhatu*. This homeostatic balance of *Dosha - Dhatu* and *Dhatu Shodhan* improve immunological responses leading to prevention of auto-immunity disorders.

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