Kesha Shareera as per Acharya Charaka - A conceptual study

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of Ayurveda is to maintain the health of an individual and treat illness if occurs. As Samyavasthata of Dosha disturbs and illness occurs, the structures and functions of body alters as Dosha influences Dhatu accordingly. The study of these structures acts as criteria to understand the health and illness of a person and one among such structure of health or disease is Kesha. Kesha being one such parameter of health, description about it regarding its formation, characteristics, variation according to different body constitution (Prakruti), beneficial and harmful factors for Kesha, its maintenance, importance in clinical diagnosis and prognosis of a disease etc. is available in Ayurveda. In this article, an attempt is made to understand Kesha Shareera and its concepts according to Charaka Samhita.

Key words: Kesha, Hair, Prakruti, Swastha, Arishta, Pitruja Bhava, Charaka Samhita.

INTRODUCTION

Kesha in Ayurveda is used for denoting the hair. It is an indicator of health and also has much influence on the psychological confidence of a person. Kesha synonyms as per Amarakosha are like - Chikura, Kuntala, Bāla, Kacha, Kesha, Shiroruha[1] etc. According to Sanskrit dictionary meaning the word Kesha has been used mainly to denote the scalp hair.[2]

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. Study of the concept of Kesha Shareera as per Charaka Samhita.
2. Understanding of Kesha in different contexts.

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METHODOLOGY

Study design
Literary review of Kesha in Charaka Samhita.

Source of Information
Information of Kesha is collected and compiled from Charaka Samhita and classified the information according to different categories like anatomical, healthy and in diseased.

LITERARY REVIEW

Structural concept of Kesha

Kesha considered as a Parthiva Dravya[3] i.e., it is derivative of the Prithvi Mahabhuta and is one among the Pitruja Bhava[4] (paternal entities) which is obtained from father. Child having black, soft and long hair are among the ideal features mentioned in the contact of Putreshthi Yagna.[5] Kesha (hair) is said to be formed in third month on pregnancy.[6] Kesha is Kittabhagha of Ahara[7] and also Upadhatu of Asthi.[8]

During the description of the Deerghayu Lakshana (signs of longevity), it is mentioned that the person having discrete, soft, sparse, oily, deep rooted and black hairs will enjoy a long life.[9] The physical
attributes of the hair also vary according to the Prakruti (body constitution) and Sara Lakshana (constitutional essence) of the person. The person with Vata Prakruti will have coarse and small hairs,[10] whereas person of Pitta Prakruti will have soft, sparse, grey hair followed by early hair fall.[11] The person having a constitutional essence of Meda Dhatu will have soft and oily hairs on his body.[12] Acharya Charaka enumerates Kesha are about 29,956 present in the body,[13] while explaining Srotas inside the body are connected to the root of the hairs.[14]

The Kesha (hair) and Nakha (nail) don’t have Adhishthana of Atma[15] and Indriya, specifically the Sparshanendriya.[16] Dosha affects Dhatu till the activity of Sparshanendriya present. Absence of knowledge of any sence Rom Kesha indicated that there is absence of Atma, Manas and Indriya. Diseases like Khalitya (baldness), Palitya (greying of hairs) etc. is the result of Dosha affecting Dhatu present in Sparshanendriya Adhishthana which affects Kesha (hair) and Nakha (nail). The place where Kesha grows is called as Keshabhum[17] and any abnormality in Keshabhum will reflect in the health of Kesha.[18]

Concept of Kesha (hair) in healthy

Although the Kesha doesn’t have Atma, Satva and Indriya Adhishtana in Kesha, but its health have significant role in social living. Hence, nurturing and maintaining of Kesha is also of prime importance. The various Ahara (food activity) Vihara (physical activity) and Vichara (mental activity) mentioned in the context of health of Kesha. Such factors which are good for Kesha (hair) mentioned by Charaka are like Dhumapana which prevents hairfall.[19] Use of Anu Taila regularly in the form of Nasya helps for hair growth.[20] Murdhni Taila (Shirodhara, Shiroabhyaanga, Shirobasti, Shiro Pichu) strengthens the hair and also helps for its growth and darkening its colour.[21] Madhuka drug is considered good for the hair growth.[22] Madhura Rasa Ahara is good for the health of hair.[23]

Krishna Tila (Black sesame oil) is effective in hair health.[24] Kshara Dravyas are bad for the health of Kesha (hair).[25] Consumption of Shami fruit frequently is also considered as bad for the health if Kesha.[26]

Maintenance of health of Kesha is explained while describing Sadvrutta (the virtuous conduct) of a person. Cutting and proper dressing of hair, moustache and beard etc. will act as an aphrodisiac, promotes as nutritive and also enhances the beauty and cleanliness of a person.[27] Kesha should be cut once in every three months.[28] One should not strike at the hair tips frequently.[29] Presence of Kesha in food items is considered as the Bhojyagata Dosha (the polluted food).[30] Preparation of hair dye is mentioned using drugs like Loha Churna, Shukta Amla and Saindhava Lavana etc.[31]

Pathological consideration of Kesha (hair)

Acharya Charaka explained many areas where Kesha (hair) has very significant role in understanding both prognosis and diagnosis values. Here we can see the explanation related to Kesha (hair) in diagnosis aspect, prognosis aspect and treatment aspect. Kesha Potana (hair fall) is a condition of sign in Asthi Dhatu Kshaya.[32] When Dosha affects Asthi Dhatu, morphological changes can be seen[33] as well as growth of hairs.[34] Kesha Jatilata (matting of hairs).[35] There will be abnormal growth of Kesha associated with increased loss of Kesha in case of Rajayakshma[36] and the person also dreams of walking on the heap of Kesha.[37]

When Kesha comes out without pain upon pulling, this condition is considered like that patient is dead[38] or he may not survive beyond 6 days.[39] If a person pulls out his Kesha after fainting and feels weak even after having a good amount of food is going to die soon.[40] Arishta Lakshana related with Doota, it was believed that, if the Doota (messenger) touches his own hair before meeting the doctor, the patient would die.[41] In certain condition, deep-seated and long standing fever with parting line of Kesha is considered as Asadhya.[42] In death due to poisoning, there will unusual hair fall in the person.[43] Keshada, Lomada, Lomadveepa etc. are responsible for the destruction of Kesha as they are considered as the seat for Bahya Malajanya Krimis[44] and Shonitaja Krimis.[45]
In some of the treatment modalities like, pulling of Kesha is advised to recover a patient with Sanyasa Roga.[46] When Keshabhumi (scalp region) is burnt due to Agni and Vayu Mahabhuta in the body, it leads to Khalita (hair loss) and Palitya (greying of hair). Fumigation with human hair is done in treatment of Arshas.[47] In cases of Unnada Roga, Siravyadha is done at the junction of Shankha Pradesha and Keshanta (hair line).[48]

**DISCUSSION**

Study of Kesha in detail helps a physician to understand the overall health of a person. Kesha is a very important structure in the body, it has significant role in approaching a patient due to its role in health and ill health, and its impact on psychology of a person. Kesha (hair) acts as an indicator of Swastha and Roga and also because of its Arishtha Lakshana (prognosis) in certain disease conditions. Though the information of Kesha is vastly available in Charaka Samhita, it is discrete and spread throughout the different chapters.

Kesha being studied under different categories like the structural consideration, healthy condition like maintenance good health of hairs, and pathological consideration like diagnosis, treatment and prognosis consideration. In structural aspect of Kesha, it mainly involves the general physical attributes like the thickness, enumeration of Kesha, the colour etc. depending on the different Prakruti (body constitution) and Sara (constitutional essence) of a person. The formation of Kesha starts in the third month of intrauterine life, and later we find that Kesha explained as Kitta Bhaga (waste portion) of food as well as an Updhatu of Asthi Dhatu. Kesha is mainly Prithvi Mahabhuta in predominance. This relation will certainly help to understand the Prakruthi of a person before diagnosing and advising the precise treatment by understanding Rogi Bala. This knowledge helps physician to select proper medicines, based on the Panchabhoutika predominance of the drug as well as on which particular Dhatu physician should concentrate on. It also gives us knowledge that Atma, Satva & Indriya are absent in Kesha except at their roots. Kesha plays a very important role in the psychological aspect and social aspect of the person and hence, its maintenance and nourishment is also of equal importance. In explanation of Dincharya in Charaka Samhita, procedures like, Dhumapana, Nasya with Anu Taila, Murdhni Taila (Shiro Abhyanga, Shiro Basti, Shirodhara and Shiro Pichu) practices have been mentioned which not only strengthens the hair, but also helps for its growth and darkening its colour. Grooming of hair in regular intervals and their benefits like social influence has also been mentioned. Dying of Kesha and its maintenance like which is good and which is bad for hair also been told.

The structure of Kesha is also studied in different disease conditions as the Poorvarupa and Roopa signs in diseases like Prameha and Rajayakshma as well as signs of problems with Dhatu like Asthi Dhatu Kshaya or Asthi Pradoshaja Vikaras and in prognostic values in conditions like Visha, Krimi Roga, Arishta Lakshana (prognostic signs of death) etc.

In some of the treatment modalities of diseases like, pulling of Kesha is advised to recover a patient with Sanyasa Roga, Dhupna (fumigation) with human hair in treatment of Arshas, Siravyadha in cases of Unnada Roga, and the reasons for Khalita (hair loss) and Palitya (greying of hair) etc. have been mentioned.

**CONCLUSION**

Kesha is one among important structure of the body where a physician can understand Prakruti of a person through which he can decide various treatment plans. Physician can use Kesha as diagnostic, prognostic and treatment tool in his clinical practice. Now a day’s hair care became a most expensive and socio economical practice, and through the knowledge of Kesha Shareera a physician can achieve benefits by utilizing this knowledge and find success in his clinical approach.

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88


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