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Ayurvedic management of Alopecia Areata - A Single Case Study

Sushama Narlewad¹, D.V. Hange²

¹Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Rog Nidan Evum Vikruti Vigyan, Govt Ayurveda College and Hospital, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.

²Assistant Professor, Department of Rog Nidan Evum Vikruti Vigyan, Govt Ayurveda College and Hospital, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.

ABSTRACT

Alopecia areata is defined as patches of hair loss on the scalp. It is considered a psychosomatic disorder in present era. Today, the young generation is more likely to be victims of Alopecia areata, based on clinical grounds. There are many causes of alopecia areata, such as fungal infection, dandruff, scalp psoriasis, seborrheic dermatitis, pediculosis, systemic disorders, autoimmune disorders, etc. It may also be seen as a side effect of chemotherapy or radiotherapy. A 16-year-old patient had patches of hair loss on his scalp. He had taken treatment with conventional modern medicine, but in vain. The patient was given Ayurvedic treatment for six months on an OPD basis, including *Karanj oil* for local application, *Rakt Pachak Churna*, *Rasayan Churna*, *Aarogyavardhini Vati*, and *Jalaukavacharan* (leech therapy). After a 3-months interval, regrowth of the hair was found. This study suggests that *Shaman* and *Shodhan* treatment can provide noteworthy relief in Alopecia areata, i.e., *Indralupta*.

Key words: Alopecia areata, Indralupta, Ayurveda, Jalaukavacharan, Leech therapy

INTRODUCTION

A person's hair has a big impact on their appearance. Hair loss is a major issue in today's era, which is attributed to a variety of factors, including changed lifestyles, systemic diseases, sleep disorders, countless advertisements that promote hair growth, medications, a stressful life, and cold weather.^[1]

Alopecia areata (AA) is considered a psychosomatic and complex autoimmune disorder. It causes a non-scarring pattern of hair loss. The typical presentation

includes sharply demarcated spherical patches of hair loss, which may present at any age. There are fewer cases in children than in adults, but it has been found to be associated with emotional stress, family history, Down syndrome, and autoimmune disorders.^[2] In India, the lifetime risk of Alopecia Areata is 1.7% and its prevalence is 0.7%.^[3]

According to signs and symptoms, the disease can be correlated with *Indralupta* in Ayurveda. In which, vitiated *Vata*, *Pitta* causes hair fall, and *Kapha*, *Rakta* blocks the opening of the hair follicle, so new growth of hair does not occur.^[4] In modern medicine, corticosteroids are used to treat this type of illness, but they have some drawbacks and side effects, so a harmless and effective medicine is expected from alternative medical sciences. *Ayurveda* plays a major role in treating this type of autoimmune disorder.^[5]

In *Ayurvedic* texts, we have detailed studies of the *Indralupta*. Here is a case of Alopecia areata, which is successfully treated through *Ayurvedic* management by using *Shaman*, *Shodhan* (*Jalaukavacharan*), and *Nidanparivarjan*.

Address for correspondence:

Dr. Sushama Narlewad

Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Rog Nidan Evum Vikruti Vigyan, Govt Ayurveda College and Hospital, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.

E-mail: narlewadsushama@gmail.com

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AIM AND OBJECTIVE

To study the role of *Shaman, Shodhan (Jalaukavacharan)* in *Indralupta* with special reference to Alopecia areata

CASE REPORT

A 16-year-old patient came to Rog Nidan OPD in Government Ayurveda College, Nagpur with the following complaints since 2yrs.

- Patchy hair loss
- Dandruff
- Itching
- Constipation
- Weak appetite

History of present illness

After taking a detailed medical history of the patient, it was found that he suffered from typhoid fever, for which he received complete treatment in a private hospital and was completely cured. After that, he started losing hair in multiple patches. In addition to that, he was also suffering from dandruff. He was treated with corticosteroids and topical serum for 3 to 5 months in GMC Nagpur but got no relief, so he approached Rog Nidan OPD No. 4 in GAC Nagpur and was diagnosed with *Indralupta* (Alopecia areata), and treatment was started on an OPD basis.

Past medical history

- H/O of Typhoid 2yrs ago
- No H/O any significant family history of autoimmune disorder and Alopecia areata.

Personal history

- **Diet** - Mixed diet (Nonveg - two to three times a month)
- **Addiction** - Non specific
- **Sleep** - Regular sound sleep
- **Occupation** - Student

Ashtavidha Pariksha

- *Nadi* - 80/Min
- *Mutra* - *Niyamit*
- *Mala* - *Aniyamit (Malavshambh)*
- *Jivha* - *Alpa Saam*
- *Shabda* - *Spashta*
- *Sparsha* - *Samsheetoshna*
- *Druka* - *Prakruta*
- *Aakruti* - *Krusha*
- Pulse - 80/Min
- BP - 120/80mmhg

Systemic examination

R/S - Clear, AEBE

CVS - S1, S2 normal, no added sounds.

CNS - Conscious, well oriented

Laboratory Investigation

Haematological investigations carried out to exclude any other disease. CBC, B.T., C.T. and Serological investigations carried out to perform *Jalaukavacharan*.

Table 1: Laboratory Investigations of Patient

Hematological	
Hb%	14.0%
Total R.B.C	5.14mil/c.mm
Total W.B.C	7000/cu.mm
Neutrophil	56.8%
Eosinophils	4.1%
Basophil	1%
Monocytes	3.5%
Lymphocytes	34.1%
ESR	05mm/hr
Bleeding time	1min 26sec

Clotting time	3min 06sec
Biochemistry	
RBS	94mg/dl
Serological	
HIV test	Negative
HBsAg Test	Negative
VDRL test	Negative

Table 2: Thyroid profile

T3	168.5ng/ml
T4	10.44ug/dk
TSH	2.50u/U/ml

Scalp Examination**Inspection**

Frontal region: One large patch of 12×5 cm, Multiple small patches of 2×1 cm

Parietal Region: Multiple patches of 4×2 cm

Temporal Region: Both sides, 2 patches of 3×2 cm

Occipital region: More than 3 patches of 3×2cm

Scalp: 3 to 4 boils on the scalp with intense itching.

Samprapti Ghataka

Dosha - Vata, Pitta, Kapha

Dushya - Rasa, Rakta, Asthi

Agni - Mandagni

Srotas - Anna, Rasa, Rakta, Asthivaha Srotas

Sroto Dushti - Sanga

Adhithana - Shirah and Shirah Kapala

Sadhyasadyata - Kriccha Sadhya

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Clinical assessment made from classical symptoms and SALT score.^[3]

Table 3: Following medicines were prescribed during the course of treatment.

Medicine	Dose & Duration	Action
1. <i>Aampachak vati</i>	1BD for first 7 days	(<i>Aampachan</i>) Digestion and Appetizer
2. <i>Laghmalini Vasant</i> <i>Godanti Bhasm</i> <i>Gudvel Satwa</i> <i>Sitopaladi Churna</i>	10gm } 32 parts 10gm } 10gm } 30gm } 1part BD with milk for 16 days.	<i>Jwaraghn</i> , <i>Saptadhatuwardhak</i>
2. <i>Aarogyavardhini Vati</i>	2BD After meal, for 42 days	Hepatoprotective, Blood purifier
3. <i>Raktachak Churna</i>	1gm BD After meal for 6 months.	Blood purifier
4. <i>Rasayana Churna</i>	1gm BD After meal for 6 months.	Promote immunity
5. <i>Yashtimadhu Churna</i>	1gm BD After meal for 6 months.	Promote hair growth
6. <i>Vidang Churna</i>	1gm BD After meal for 6 months.	<i>Krimighn</i> , antifungal
7. <i>Saptamrit Loha</i>	1BD After meal for 6months.	<i>Raktadi</i> <i>Dhatuwardhak</i>
8. <i>Trivritt Avleh</i>	5gm at night with lukewarm water for 6 months.	<i>Sukhvirechak</i> (purgative)
9. <i>Karanj Tail</i>	<i>Shirobhyanga</i> (Local application), Twice a day for 6 months.	Antiseptic, Antifungal, Antioxidant (boost overall hair health)
10. <i>Aamlakichurna</i> <i>+ Yashtimadhu</i> <i>Churna + Bhringraj</i> <i>Churna</i>	<i>Shirolepa</i> (L.A) Once a day, for 6 months.	Promotes hair regrowth.
11. <i>Bhringaraj</i> <i>Ghanvati</i>	1BD For 6 months	<i>Keshya</i>

Panchakarma procedures

- 3 Setting of *Jalaukavacharan*, after 15 days interval.
- Snehan-Swedan* was prescribed prior to leech therapy.
- Cleaning of part of the body to which *Jalauka*, is going to be applied.

Mode of action of *Jalauka*^[6]

Wherever *Shastra Karma* is not appropriate, *Anushastras* like *Jalauka* can be applied to human beings as well as animals. According to the type of disease, the patient, and the predominance of *Doshas*, many methods of bloodletting have been developed. *Jalauka* are primarily employed in *Pitta* and *Rakta Dushti Vikar* since they are *Madhura Rasa Yukta* and live in cold and fresh water, making them suitable for *Pitta Prakriti* people. In the same way that the Hansa bird separates milk from water and only consumes milk, *Jalaukas* sucks only impure blood first then pure blood. *Shringa*, *Jalauka*, and *Prachhan*, have localized action; only *Siravedha* has generalized action; hence, *Jalauka* can be used in many *Pitta* aggravated *Raktaj* disorders by applying it to the affected region locally. It contains not only hirudin but also a number of enzymes like bdellin apyrase, decrosin, collagenase, egilin, hementin, hyaluronidase, and orgelasel etc. It also has the action of vasodilaton and is an anesthetic.

RESULT

After 6 months of treatment, there was marked improvement in the signs and symptoms of Alopecia areata.

This was assessed by the SALT score, which is useful for the quantitative assessment of hair loss.

After treatment, S4 turns into S0.

Salt Score^[3]**Table 4: Scalp divided into 4 quadrant**

Top	$0.4 \times 80\% = 32\%$
Post	$0.24 \times 90\% = 21.6\%$

Right side	$0.18 \times 40\% = 7.2\%$
Left side	$0.18 \times 40\% = 7.2\%$
Total	68.0%

Table 5: Severity of Scalp Hair loss was classified as^[7]

S0	No Hair loss
S1	1 to 24% Hair loss
S2	25 to 49% Hair loss
S3	50 to 74% Hair loss
S4	75 to 99% Hair loss
S5	100% Hair loss

Total = 68% Hair loss so score is S3

Table 6: *Pathya-Apathya*

<i>Pathya</i>	<i>Apathya</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Nidanparivarjan</i> <i>Laghu-Snigdha Ahar</i> Fresh fruits, leafy green vegetables and sprouts <i>Nidanparivarjan</i> <i>Meditation (Yoga, Pranayam)</i> Regular exercise Spend time with positive people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Atiushna, Tikshna, Amla, Lavanyukt Sevan</i> <i>Viruddha Ahar</i> <i>Vegavrodh</i> <i>Vatpitta Prakopak, Chinta, Bhaya, Krodha</i> <i>Divaswap, Ratrojagaran</i> Street Food

Table 7: Observation and Results

Days	Observation
1 Day	Investigation done and medicine given
7 Days	Constipation recovered and appetite increased.
15 Days	Dandruff reduced
21 Days	Mild Improvement in hair loss.
1 Month	Improvement in hair fall and growing of some thin hair, from the bald patches.

1.5 Month	Bald patches turn into black patch.
2 Month	Improved growth of hair on the patches
3 Month	All the patches fully covered with black hair
6 Month (Con.)	No any new patches observed till date.

Before treatment



After 2 months of the treatment



After 3 months of the treatment





DISCUSSION

The most crucial and first line of treatment in any *Vyadhi* is *Nidana Parivarjana*. *Pathya Ahara Vihara* plays a significant role in the *Samprapti Bhang* of the diseases. As *Agnimandya* is the root cause of all diseases, *Deepana-Pachana Chikitsa* is helpful. *Aama Pachak Vati* was administered as the patient had *Mandagni* in order to aid in the digestion of toxins^[8] that move through *Sira* and impede the *Roma-Koopa*. Lukewarm water was administered at to *Trivritt Avleh* night for *Nitya Virechana* and *Vatanulomana*. After obtaining adequate *Agni*, *Rasayana Chikitsa* was initiated to work on the *Dhatu* level. *Rasayana Churna*, as portrayed by *Acharya Vagbhata*, predicts that someone will live with black hair for 100 years.^{[9],[10]}

In addition to that, *Saptamrita Lauha* advertises *Kesha* by *Dhatu Vardhana Karma*. For local treatment, *Aamalki*, *Yastimadhu*, *Bhringraj Churn* for *Shirolepa*, and *Karanja Taila* for *Darunaka* (dandruff). According to *Acharya Sharangdhara*, *Karanja Taila*, when administered as *Shirobhyanga*, will quickly treat *Indralupta*.^[11] *Laghmalini Vasant*, *Godanti Bhasm*, *Gudvel Satwa*, *Sitopaladi Churn*, useful for *Jirnjwar*, and *Dhatuwardhan*, *Bhringraj Ghan Vati*, useful for *Keshwardhan* and *Kesharanjanarth*, *Aarogyavardhini Vati* and *Raktapachak Churn* act as hepatoprotective and blood purifiers. As the best *Chikitsa* for *Rakta*

Dushti, *Jalaukavacharan Karma* was chosen as the *Raktamokshana*.^[6]

CONCLUSION

Alopecia areata (*Indralupta*) is a difficult, complex condition with a poor prognosis. *Ayurveda* has its own principles for the diagnosis and treatment of diseases. In *Ayurveda*, treatment changes from individual to individual even though their disease is the same. *Ayurveda* treats every disease, considering diseases such as *Prakriti*, *Desha*, *Kala*, *Avastha*, and *Bala*. *Nidanparivarjan*, following *Dincharya* and *Ritucharya* as described in *Ayurveda*, is very essential to getting rid of any disease. *Indralupta* is considered *Tridoshaj*, but *Vata Pitta* is more predominant. In this case, we have given *Aampachak Vati*, *Raktapachak Churna*, *Rasayana Churna* and *Aarogyavardhini Vati* to this patient. As there was a previous history of enteric fever, we have given *Laghmalini Vasant*, *Guduchil Satwa*. Leech therapy was given with a 15-day regular interval; in this case, we observed a significant result within 3 months.

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