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Effect of *Shirodhara* in *Ardhambhedak* w.s.r. to Migraine during Pregnancy: A Review Study

Yashi Joshi¹, Sucheta Ray², Ekta Singh Parihar³, Priyanka Hajare⁴

¹First Year Post Graduate Scholar, PG Department of Prasuti Tantra Evum Stri Roga, Mansarovar Ayurvedic Medical College Hospital and Research Centre, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India.

²HOD & Professor, PG Department of Prasuti Tantra Evum Stri Roga, Mansarovar Ayurvedic Medical College Hospital and Research Centre, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India.

^{3,4}Assistant Professor, PG Department of Prasuti Tantra Evum Stri Roga, Mansarovar Ayurvedic Medical College Hospital and Research Centre, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India.

ABSTRACT

The demands of today's stressful lifestyles can pose challenges during pregnancy. Elevated stress levels may lead to issues such as preterm birth, low birth weight, or developmental concerns for the baby. It's crucial for pregnant individuals to prioritize self-care, manage stress through relaxation techniques, and seek support to promote a healthier pregnancy despite the demands of contemporary life. Migraine attacks may be triggered by Stress and anxiety depression Changes in sleep patterns, such as not getting enough sleep. The reported prevalence of headache in pregnancy is as high as 35%. Ayurveda, an ancient system of medicine, emphasizes the balance of mind, body, and spirit. Through holistic approaches, Ayurveda promotes calmness by incorporating practices like *Shirodhara*. *Shirodhara* is a classical and a well-established ayurvedic procedure of slowly and steadily dripping medicated oil or other liquids on the forehead. It's believed to have a soothing effect, promoting relaxation and relieving stress by calming the nervous system. *Shirodhara* is a simple yet profound technique specifically designed to balance and stabilize the nervous system and the activities of the mind. *Shirodhara* is widely acclaimed for its many health benefits which better the mind and body, the most popular being its deeply relaxing properties and its ability to promote better sleep and enhance sleep quality. In this review, a conceptual study is being elaborated regarding the *Shirodhara*.

Key words: *Shirodhara*, pregnancy, anxiety, hormones.

INTRODUCTION

Pregnancy is one of the most important periods in a woman's life, as it brings along numerous changes, not only in the physical aspects, but also socially and psychologically. There are plenty of researches done around the world about anxiety during pregnancy.

Several factors can trigger anxiety during pregnancy, including: Hormonal Changes, Fears and Uncertainties, Previous Pregnancy Experiences, Personal and Work-related Stress etc. It's important for pregnant individuals to communicate openly with healthcare providers, seek emotional support, and consider stress-reducing strategies to manage anxiety effectively.

Ayurveda offers various practices and remedies that serve as effective stress busters. These may include: Herbal Remedies, Yoga and Meditation, Balanced Diet, *Shirodhara* etc. Ayurveda emphasizes a balanced and mindful lifestyle, including proper sleep, regular exercise, and stress management practices, to maintain overall harmony. Incorporating these Ayurvedic principles into daily life can help manage stress and support a healthier, more balanced existence.

Address for correspondence:

Dr. Yashi Joshi

First Year Post Graduate Scholar, PG Department of Prasuti Tantra Evum Stri Roga, Mansarovar Ayurvedic Medical College Hospital and Research Centre, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India.

E-mail: yashijoshi03@gmail.com

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The Ayurveda explains the episodic nature of *Ardhavabhedaka* (Migraine). Pain is the major symptom in the *Ardhavabhedaka* which affects the person's activities. While describing *Shiroroga*, many Acharya counted *Ardhavabhedaka* in *Shiroroga*. Acharya Charak has stated that *Vata* either alone or in combination with *Kapha*, there will be severe pain in half side of the head, affecting particularly *Manya*, *Bhru*, *Shankha*, *Karna*, *Akshi* and *Lalaat*. The pain is like *Shastra Arani Nibham*.^[1]

According to Acharya Sushrut there will be severe tearing and pricking pain in one half of the head associated with giddiness. These features appear every fortnightly or ten days or any time, *Ardhavabhedaka* caused by all the three *Doshas*.^[2]

A definition of migraine is a recurring syndrome of headache, nausea, vomiting and/or other symptoms of neurologic dysfunction in varying admixtures. Migraine Attacks typically include: headache, which is of moderate or severe intensity, one-sided, pulsating in quality, aggravated by routine physical activity, with duration of hours to 2-3 days, nausea, attack frequency is anywhere between once a year and once a week.^[3]

Hormone changes during pregnancy are not the only thing that can trigger migraine headaches. Most women have a combination of triggers. For instance, stress, skipped meals, and lack of sleep may all trigger a migraine. And something that triggers a migraine one day may not bother you at all the next. Headaches can be caused by a pregnancy complication called pre-eclampsia.^[4]

A union of two words: *Shiro* and *Dhara*; '*Shiro*' meaning head and '*Dhara*' meaning to flow, pour or stream, this is called *Shirodhara*. There are various form of *Shirodhara* such as *Tailadhara*, *Takradhara*, *Ksheeradhara*, *Jaladhara* and *Kwathadhara*. Classically this procedure is not described under the *Panchakarma*, but it incorporated under *Snehana Karma*. *Murdhatailam* has been described in the Ayurveda which is of four type's viz. *Shiroabhyanga*, *Shirosheka*, *Shiropichu*, *Shirobasti*. These are superior in their succeeding order.^[5] It is one of *Bahya Snehana* procedure in which *Snehan* is applied in head or it is a

procedure which involves gently pouring liquids over of the forehead and has been indicated for psychosomatic disorders and neurological disorders etc. These disorders are not only the diseased condition but also affect the quality of life and cause anxiety, depression and work ability is decreased. The *Shirodhara* with *Tila Taila* mentioned in ancient Ayurvedic books include *Madhura Rasa*, *Kasaya Anurasa*, *Ushna Virya*, and *Madhura Vipaka*, as well as *Usna*, *Vyavayi*, *Visada*, *Suksma*, *Tiksna*, *Guru*, *Vikasi*, *Lekhana*, and *Sara*.

METHODOLOGY

Materials

The materials required are *Droni*, *Shirodhara Patra*, *Shirodhara* stand, *Shirodhara* table, Gauze, cotton earplug, Vessels, Soft towels, Suitable oil/milk/any liquid.

Droni - *Droni Pramana* length- 4 hasta, breadth- 1 hasta, Height-1/4th hasta.

Dharapatra - *Mrittika*, *Swarna* or *Loha Patra*. The size of *Shiropatra Nalika* should be equal to the size of the *Kanista Anguli* of the patient.

Preparation of medicine - The *Dravya* should be lukewarm of temperature 38°-40°c.

Preparation of *Dharapatra* - Filling of *Patra* with *Sukhoshna Dravya*.

Method

Shirodhara is classified into three *Karma* i.e., *Purva Karma*, *Pradhan Karma*, *Paschat Karma*.

Purva Karma

Preparation of the patient - The patient is thoroughly examined whether he is fit with for procedure. Patient should be advised to pass stool and urine. Then pulse, temperature and blood pressure of the patients should be recorded. Patient is advised to lie down in supine position and *Dhara Patra* should be fixed 4 *Angula* above the forehead. The eye and ear should be covered with cotton to prevent the entry of liquid into eyes and ears.

Pradhana Karma

Shirodhara room should be cleaned well, ventilated and very quiet. Shirodhara is done in the morning time on empty stomach after massage. Any type of liquid (Taila, Milk, Kvatha, water) should be kept in Dharapatra.

Dhara should be poured continuously initially in the centre of the forehead neither very fast nor very slow. The liquid of Shirodhara should not be too hot or too cold. The stream of Dhara liquid should not be too thick or thin. When the liquid starts pouring then the vessel is moved in the pendulum manner. The continuous flow and the temperature should be maintained.

The liquid is collected in another vessel kept and is used to refill the Dharapatra before it becomes empty.

Shirodhara process is done for at least ½ an hour in the morning up to 7/14/21 days.

Paschat Karma

After the Shirodhara process is completed, and then cotton pads were removed over the eyes and ears. The head of the patient should be wiped out and dried. This is followed by a short duration of rest and massage of the body including head with oil and then a lukewarm bath. The patient is advised to have a Pathya Ahara (light diet). Patient should avoid exposure to cold, dust, wind.

Method of Administration of drug

Drug - Tila Taila

Dose - 500ml/day/patient

Duration - 30 mins for 7days for 3 consecutive cycles

Probable mode of action

Ardhabhedaka can be scientifically correlated with Migraine due to its cardinal feature unilateral headache and paroxysmal nature. The various types of pain and paroxysmal nature of Ardhabhedaka suggest the Vishama nature of Vata Dosha. So, we can say that prominent Dosa in Ardhabhedaka is Vata.

Effect of Tila and Taila

Action of Tila Taila mentioned in different text of Ayurveda - Brihana, Vrishya, Prinana, Medhakara, Sthairya, Varnakara, Tvakprasada, Balya,

Chakshusya, Laghutakarak. According to Acharya Charak, Guna of Taila is Vata Shamak.^[6]

Effect of Shirodhara - The continuous pouring of Tila Taila in a relaxed and comfortable position has an effect. This acts as a sedative and soothing effect to the brain and induces sleep. This eventually stabilizes Vata Dosh. As Shirodhara is considered under Snehan.^[7]

Effect of Temperature - The continuous flow of warm liquid on the forehead for such a long period will cause mild vasodilatation. Shirodhara improves the circulation in these areas and help in regularization the blood supply of the brain.^[8]

Effect on Marma

Marma is defined as an Anatomical site where muscles, veins, ligaments, bones, and joints meet together. They are also the sites where not only Tridosh are present but their subtle forms like Prana, Ojas, and Teja are also present with Sattva, Raja and Tama.^[9]

Some Marma (Vital spot) are located in forehead and head region as mentioned in Ayurveda classics. Mainly Sthapni, Utshepa, Avarta, Shankha and Apanga Marma are situated in this region.^[10]

The site of pituitary and pineal gland is at the same level of Sthapani Marma. It regulates the endocrine system of human body. Shirodhara on the Sthapani Marma reliving the mental stress by regulating the function of this gland.

DISCUSSION

As Taila molecules are Sukshma (extremely tiny), they are able to penetrate the skin through hair follicles, pores, and sweat glands. From there they reach lymph nodes and blood capillaries, which then transport them throughout the body by the circulatory system.^[11] As Shirodhara is considered under Snehan and Snehan is Yoga for Garbhini. The procedural effect of Shirodhara itself seems to produce a relaxation response. As Shirodhara is Vata Shamak. In Shirodhara, patients feel relaxation both physically as well as mentally. It is a purifying and rejuvenating therapy which eliminates toxins and mental exhaustion as well as relieves stress and any ill effects on the central nervous system.

Note - As seen in various researches, *Shirodhara* is advice during first and second trimester of pregnancy and *Shirodhara* with the *Tila Taila* is indeed recommended during the first and second trimesters of pregnancy to help alleviate stress and anxiety. Although no direct indication of *Shirodhara* is mentioned in *Ayurvedic* classics but can be considered under *Snehan*. However, caution is advised in the third trimester due to concerns about potential muscle relaxation, which could have implications for the fetus. Safety is paramount during pregnancy.

CONCLUSION

Shirodhara where in continuous pouring of *Tila Taila* in relaxed and comfortable position has sedative and soothing effect to the brain. Also, the *Taila* enters into the circulation does the *Vata Shamana*. Thus, *Shirodhara* pacify *Vata*, *Pitta*. This procedure has been successfully practiced to treat stress induced various disorders like anxiety, depression, tension headache, etc during pregnancy.

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