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Conceptual study of *Shiro Dhara* Procedure - A Review Article

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ABSTRACT

The man of 21st century is breathing under various stresses, strains and anxiety. Co-ordination between ambitions and capabilities is no more seen. People may experience poor concentration, lower productivity and poorer work quality as a result of this stress. In comparison to the treatment of different systems of medicine, *Ayurveda* has a very good approach towards the treatment of these problems by both internal and external medications. So, to overcome this problem a review of *Ayurveda* text regarding *Shiro Dhara* was done. Indication, Contraindication, Procedure, Precautions and therapeutic efficacy of *Shiro Dhara* were noted during this study.

Key words: Dhara, Murdhatail, Shiro Dhara, Shiro Basti

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda considers the human body as an inverted tree where in the roots are at the top and the branches pointing downwards. Just like the roots nurture and controls all the activities and well being of the tree, the head is the operational center of the entire body. The head comprises of all the components to control the entire body mechanics and dynamics.

Since taking care of the head and its components is mandatory for maintaining healthy life. This can be achieved by practicing *Murdhtail* mentioned by *Acharyas*. *Murdhtail* is divided into four type 1. *Shirobhyanga* 2. *Shiroseka* 3. *Shiropichu* 4. *Shirobasti*.^[1]

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They are told '*Uttarottar Gunaprada*'. From above four types *Shiro Dhara* is done by medicated *Taila*, *Ghruta*, *Kashay*, *Sidha-Kshir* etc. *Shiro Dhara* can be categorised under the type of *Bahya Snehana*. *Dhara* is not only used in psychic disease but also used in psychosomatic diseases like Insomnia IBS (irritable bowel syndrome), psoriasis etc.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Shiro Dhara

Gently pouring of decoction, oil or other liquids over forehead and then allowing it to flow over scalp is known as *ShiroDhara*. It can be done by different medicated *Taila*, *Kshira*, *Takra*, *Kwatha*, etc.

Etymology

The word *Dhara* is derived from the root '*Dhru*' with the suffix '*Nich + Ang + Tap*' and is feminine gender.

Synonyms

<i>Seka</i>	<i>Dhara</i>
<i>Parisheka</i>	<i>Sechana - Sinchana</i>
<i>Avasheka</i>	<i>Prasechana</i>

Marmas associated with Shiro Dhara**Sthapani Marma^[2]**

Location - *Sthapani Marma* is located in between the eyebrows exactly at the centre of forehead.

Number - *Sthapani Marma* is only one in number.

Categories in which *Sthapani Marma* is included:

- *Shiro-Greevagat Marma*
- *Sira Marma* - *Sthapani Marma* is predominantly made up of *Sira* i.e., blood vessels.
- *Vishalyaghna Marma* - *Vishalyaghna Marma* are those which causes death when the foreign body impacted in them is removed.
- *Pramana* - $\frac{1}{2}$ *Angula*.
- The site of *Sthapani Marma* (*Sthapani* vital spot) and the site of pituitary gland and pineal gland exist at the same level. The function of pituitary gland is controlled by hormones or nerve signals this gland is activated whenever the stimulus from CNS or hormones. It has the capacity to maintain all the endocrine systems of human body.^[3]

Indications

- *Nidranash* (*Ch.Su.* 5/18), (*Su.Sha.* 4/42)
- *Arumshika*, *Shirodaha*, *Shirodaha*, *Shiropaka*, *Shirovrana* (*Ah.Su.*22/24)
- *Shiropaka* (*Ah.U.* 24/3)
- *Shankaka* (*Ch.Si.* 9/73)
- *Pittaj shiroshool* (*Ch.Chi.* 26/176)
- *Vataj shiropaka* (*Su.U.*26/5)
- *Ardita*, *Pakshaghata*, *Hanugraha*, *Akshishula*, *Shirahkampa* (*Ch. Sam.*; *Su. Sam.*; *B. P.*; *Y.R.*)
- Nowadays, it is indicated in almost all stress and psychosomatic disorders such as IBS, Asthma, Neurological disorders viz. Headache, epilepsy, and psychiatric disorders like psychosis, neurosis, Insomnia and also in psoriasis, eczema, H.T. etc.

Contraindications

- *Kaphaja Vikaras* - *Shiro Dhara* further increases *Kapha*, which makes the disease difficult to cure.
- Person who are planned for or taking *Vaman-Virechana* therapy.
- *Aamaj Vikara*

Procedure of Shiro Dhara

The procedure of *Dhara* may be divided into 3 stages .

- *Purva Karma*
- *Pradhana Karma*
- *Pashchat Karma*

Purva Karma

Purva Karma can be subdivided into

- *Attur Siddhata*
- *Aushadh Siddhata*
- *Yantra Siddhata*

Atursiddhata

It is related with the preparation of the patient. First it should be confirmed that the patient is fit for *Shiro Dhara* or not. The patient should pass stool and urine. Patients pulse, temperature and blood pressure should be recorded. Patient may be subjected to *Shiroabhyanga* if oil is to be used for *Shirodaha*.

Aushadh Siddhata

This can be done in 2 steps

- Selection of Medicine

The drug should be selected according to the disease and *Doshadushti*. The quantity required is above 1 to 2 lit

1. *Vata Dosha* : *Tila Taila*, *Vataghna* liquid
2. *Pitta Dosha* : *Ghrita*, Normal water
3. *Kapha Dosha* : *Tila Taila*, Luke warm water
4. *Rakta Dosha* : *Ghrita* with Normal water
5. *Vata + Pitta + Rakta* : *Ghrita + Taila* in equal proportion

6. *Vata + Kapha + Rakta* : ½ part *Ghrita* + 1 part *Tila Taila*

- Preparation of Medicine

The drug should be selected according to the disease.

- Sidha Tail* or *Ghrut* is prepared according to *Snehapak-Vidhi* which has been given in our classical ayurvedic text.
- Sidha Kshir* is prepared by cooking *bharad churna* in water to get *Kashaya*. After that *Kashaya* and *Gokshir* are reduced on slow flame to get *Siddha Kshir*. This procedure is done in following ratio 1:4:16.
- Sidha Kashaya* is prepared by cooking *bharad* and water in 1:4 quantity.
- Sidha Takra* - It is prepared on previous day of *Shiro Dhara*. Fine powders of medicines (*Churna* - 50gm) is mixed with 250gm of crud on previous night on the next day, 2 lit of luke warm water is mixed in above mixture and *Sidha Takra* is prepared (*Kalk, Bharad Draya, Churna* are selected for above preparation as per indication)

Yantra Siddhata

Following equipment's should be prepared.

1. Dhara Table^[4]

For *ShiroDhara* a special type of table is used and it is known as *Dhara Table*. In this table arrangement are made at the head end so that the liquid poured may be collected in another vessel and may be reused. The construction of *Droni* is explained here by converting the ancient measurements into contemporary one. The length of *Droni* may be 7 feet, breadth 2.5 feet, height 2.5 feet. On all the sides of the tables, 3 inches elevated boundary is constructed towards the side of the head.

2. Dhara Patra^[5]

This refers to a unique vessel of 2-3 lit capacity having wide mouth and rounded base. There is a hole of 1 cm diameter at the bottom of the vessel. The *Dhara patra* is made up of clay or any other suitable metal. Pot is provided with 3 metal chains or rope tied to the margin

of the vessel mouth. The opposite free end of the chain or rope is fixed to a hook so that the *Dhara patra* may be hanged on a stand.

Other requirements *Shiro Dhara* stand, Cotton plug, Cloth to Close the Eyes, Water bath, Gas stove, Rose water, *Churna* for *Avachurnan* etc.

Pradhana Karma

The selected liquid should be kept in the vessel and should be poured continuously and slowly on the forehead of the patient. This liquid gets collected in the vessel, which is kept below the table, when the liquid in the vessel gets emptied, and then it is replaced from the lower vessel.

1. Position of the patient

Proper posture of the patient for *Shiro Dhara* is supine position and *Dhara Patra* should be brought 4 inches above his head. The eyes and ears should be covered with cotton so that liquid may not enter in eyes. His head rests in slightly elevated position, preferably on wooden piece.

2. Dhara Kala^[6]

The patient having dryness and *Pittayukta Vata*, the period is 2½ *Prahara* or 2 *Prahara* and in *Snigdha Kaphayukta Vata* it is one for *Prahara*, or it should be upto perspiration initiates. The patient has to remain in the laying posture on his back. The treatment may be carried on daily for a period of 7 to 14 days, according to the nature of the disease and the physical condition of the patient. Generally treatment is done in the morning hours preferably between 7 to 10 p.m.

Duration of *Dhara* for every day is decided in 2 ways-

1. Steady Method

In this method duration of *Dhara* is fixed throughout the sitting. It is given for healthy person.

2. Aavartan Method

In this method per day duration of *Dhara* is increased by 5 min. First day *Dhara* is given for 15 min. Increase the duration of *Dhara* by 5 min on next day. Thus minimum 15 min, maximum 45 min *Dhara* is given for 7 days. It is given for chronic disease.

The total duration of course may be 7 days, 15 days, 21 days (Depending on the chronicity of the disease.)

3. Period for changing the liquid^[7]

When milk is used for *Shirodhara* it should be changed every day. When *Dhanyamla* is used, it can be used up to 3 days. Oil also should be changed at 3 days. In the first 3 days; half of the oil is used then for next 3 days later half of its used and on the 7th day all the first and second half are mixed together, then it should be discarded on 7th day.

4. Temperature of the *Dravya*

It should be *Sukhoshna* (Luke warm)

Pashchata Karma^[8]

After completing *Shiro Dhara* the oil from the head should be removed by a piece of cloth. For drinking purpose warm water boiled with *Dhanyajiraka*, ginger and cumine seeds may be used. For washing purposes only warm water should be used.

Rest: For 40-50 min after completing the *Shiro Dhara*. Apply *Rasanadi Churna* over anterior fontanelle to decrease excess secretions from nose, eyes.

Complication: If *Takra* is cold it causes cough, cold, shivering, If *Tail* is cold it causes fainting, headache, Rhinitis, Coldness of foot.

Precautions: Avoid *Shiro Dhara* just after an overhead bath. Also avoid *Divaswap*, *Jagarana*, Use a scarf to close head and ear. Food must be light, *Ushna*, *Anabhisandhi*. Use of lukewarm water for *Aahar-Vihara*.

Pariharyani^[9]

The patient should abstain from sexual intercourse as well as from any thought or deed that may excite sexual desire, avoid physical exertions, mental excitement such as anger, grief etc. and exposure to cold, sun, dew, wind, smoke or dust should also be avoided. Riding on elephants or horses, walking, speaking too long or too loud and such other acting that may give any strain to the system must be avoided. Sleeping during daytime and standing continuously for long period must also be avoided. It is

also advisable to use a pillow which is neither very high nor very low, during sleep at night.

Pariharakala^[10]

Patient should follow *Pathya* upto the time which is taken for the completion of *ShiroDhara*.

Dhara Dosh^[11]

If *Dhara* is done from more height, very fast or very slowly then it may produce *Sarvanga Daha*, *Sandhi Shool*, *Jwara*, *Kotha* etc. For the treatment of *Dhara Dosh*, following measures may be adopted.

1. *Gandusha*
2. *Nasya*
3. *Kashaya Pana* with *Sunthi*
4. Light diet at evening, *Yusha* with black pepper.
5. On the third day *Basti* should be given in which *Saindhava* is mixed.

DISCUSSION

The therapeutic effect of *Shiro Dhara* - This effect will be due to diffusion of medicine through the fine pores present over forehead in similar way as seen by the procedure like *Abhyanga*, *Snana*, *Udvardana*, *Parisheka* etc.

Effect due to temperature of medicine - The continuous flow of warm liquid on the forehead will cause mild vasodilatation, improving the circulation which help in regular blood supply of the brain.

Effect on *Marma* - During *Shiro Dhara* warmed liquid falls on *Sthapani Marma*, slight stimulation to this *Marma* produced beneficial effect on *Manovaha Strotas*. It relieves tension, dispels worry, reduces anxiety, calms fear, renews the nervous system, relieves chronic headaches and induces sleep.

Effect of constant pressure in *Shiro Dhara* procedure - In the procedure of *Shiro Dhara* particular pressure and vibration is created over the forehead. The vibration is amplified by hollow sinus present in the frontal bone. Vibration is then transmitted inwards through the thalamus fluid medium of cerebrospinal fluid. These vibrations along with the little temperature may

activate the functions of thalamus and basal forebrain which then brings the amount of serotonin and catecholamine to the normal stage

CONCLUSION

The *Shiro Dhara* a potent *Panchakarma* procedural based therapy of *Ayurveda*, corrects the disturbed and provoked *Vata* and thus pacify all kind of stressors to achieve the state of tranquillity leading to deep relaxation. This procedure done in proper way with indicated medicine gives good results in healthy and ill patients.

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