

## Management of Indralupta (Alopecia areata) through Ayurveda - A Case Report

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**Introduction:** Alopecia areata (AA), an autoimmune disease characterized by the appearance of non-scarring bald patches affecting the hair bearing areas of the body. Scalp is the most common site of involvement. It can be compared with Indralupta in Ayurveda. The pathophysiology of Indralupta is the vitiated Tridoshas and Rakta, affecting the scalp and also blockage of hair follicles with aggravation of Rakta and Kapha which further prevents regrowth of hairs. It is described as Kapalgata Roga by Acharya Vagbhata and as a Kshudra Roga by Acharya Sushruta and Madhava Nidana.

**Methods:** This is a case study of 11 years male child brought by his parents to Balroga OPD having complaints of bald patches over scalp region for 6 months. Patient was diagnosed with Indralupta and managed by classical treatment of Raktamoskhan by Jalauka along with some internal and external drugs. Treatment for 4 months along with the diet regimen mentioned in Ayurvedic text was followed.

**Result:** The patient got speedy recovery with remarkable regrowth of scalp hair after 4 months of treatment.

**Discussion:** Classical Indralupta Chikitsa mentioned in Ayurvedic classics is effective in the management of Alopecia areata.

**Keywords:** Alopecia areata, Autoimmune, Ayurveda, Indralupta, Leech therapy, Autoimmune disorder, Hair loss, Patchy baldness

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## Introduction

Alopecia areata is a condition characterized by localized, non-scarring hair loss. It commonly appears as patches on scalp without any scaling or inflammation. The condition has a reported prevalence of 0.1-0.2% in general population, with a lifetime risk of 1.7%. [1] Male was reported to be more affected with disease in comparison to children and women and causes more emotional problems in woman and children due to cosmetic purposes. [2] 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. [3] Contemporary treatment primarily involves corticosteroids, which are associated with significant side effects and are unsuitable for long-term use. [4] Given lack of definitive management in allopathic medicine, so alternative approaches are necessary.

In Ayurveda, it can be compared to similar disease called *Indralupta*. It is described as *Kshudra Roga* by *Acharya Sushruta*, *Madhava Nidana* & as *Kapalgata Roga* by *Acharya Vagbhata*. *Acharya Sushruta* has mentioned *Indralupta* as *Raktapradoshaja Vikara*. *Acharya Charaka* mentioned that Vitiated *Pitta* with *Vatadi Dosha* when reaches scalp, it results in *Khalitya (Indralupta)*. [5] According to *Acharya Sushruta*, *Pitta* along with *Vata* localize at roots of hair (*Romakoopa*) causes fall of hair & thereafter *Kapha* along with *Rakta* obstructs channel of *Romakoopa* leading to stoppage of regeneration of hair & such condition is known as *Indralupta* or *Khalitya*. [6] Thus *Vata*, *Pitta* & *Kapha Dosha* & *Rakta Dushya* are main internal causative factors of *Indralupta*.

*Ayurveda* plays a major role in treating this type of autoimmune disorder. [7] *Ayurveda* provides *Shodhana* (cleansing procedures) and *Shamana* (specific internal medications) *Chikitsa* for managing *Indralupta* effectively. This case reports effectiveness of *Ayurvedic* management of Alopecia areata by using *Shaman* & *Shodhan (Jalaukavacharan)* *Chikitsa* along with *Nidanparivarjan*.

## Aim and Objective

To study the role of *Jalaukavacharan* along with some internal and external medications in *Indralupta* with special reference to Alopecia areata.

## Case Report

A 11-year-old patient came to *Balroga* OPD in Government Ayurveda College and Hospital, Nanded with the following complaints since 6 months.

- Bald patches over scalp
- Dandruff
- Itching over scalp
- Loss of appetite

### History of present illness:

After taking a detailed medical history of the patient, it was found that he suffered from Acute Febrile Illness, for which he received complete allopathic treatment in a private hospital and was completely cured. After that, he started losing hairs in multiple patches with dandruff. He was treated with corticosteroids and topical serum for 3 to 5 months in private hospital but didn't get relief, so he approached Balroga OPD at GACH Nanded and was diagnosed with *Indralupta* (Alopecia areata), and treatment was started on an OPD basis.

### Past medical history:

H/O of Acute febrile illness 8 months ago treated by hospital admission and IV antibiotics.

No H/O of any major illness, any drug allergy and any previous surgery.

### Family history:

No H/O any significant family history of autoimmune disorder and Alopecia areata.

### Personal history:

1.	Diet	Mixed
2.	Appetite	Poor
3.	Bowel habit	Constipation on and off
4.	Micturition	5 times a day/1 time at night
5.	Sleep	Normal

### Ashtavidha Pariksha:

1.	Nadi	102/Min
2.	Mala	Malavshatmbha
3.	Mutra	Niyamit
4.	Jivha	Saam
5.	Shabda	Spashta
6.	Sparsha	Samsheetoshna
7.	Druka	Prakruta
8.	Akruti	Krusha

### General examination:

1.	Pulse rate	92/min
2.	Respiratory rate	24/min
3.	Height	139 cm
4.	Weight	31 kg
5.	Blood pressure	100/70 mmhg
6.	Temperature	97.8°F

### Systemic examination:

1.	RS	AEBE, clear
2.	CVS	S1, S2 normal
3.	CNS	Conscious, well oriented

### Disease Specific Examinations:

Site of involvement	Temporal and Back of Scalp
Pattern	Irregular patches
Number	6 patches (2 - Back of scalp, 1 - Right temporal region, 1 - Left temporal region)
Skin colour	Slight reddish
Discharge	Absent
Sensation	Present

### Laboratory Investigations:

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

Hb%	11gm/dl
Total R.B.C	5.14mil/c.mm
Total W.B.C	8000/cu.mm
Neutrophil	54.8%
Lymphocytes	33.1%
Eosinophils	4.3%
Basophil	1%
Monocytes	3.5%
Bleeding time	1min 24sec
Clotting time	3min 04sec

### Samprapti Ghataka:

- Dosha - Vata, Pitta, Kapha
- Dushya - Rasa, Rakta, Asthi
- Srotas - Anna, Rasa, Rakta, Asthivaha Srotas
- Sroto Dushti - Sanga
- Agni - Mandagni
- Adhithana - Shirah and Shirah Kapala
- Sadhyasadhyata - Kriccha Sadhya

## Materials and Methods

The treatment was planned according to the basic principles narrated in the context of *Indralupta* disease. Primary management of *Indralupta* (Alopecia areata) is *Shodhana* therapy (Detoxification). As per Ayurvedic literature application of *Jalauka* (Leech) on the lesions is a type of *Raktamokshan* (blood-letting) under *Panchakarma Chikitsa*. Vitiated Rakta by Pitta Dosha should be removed from the body (Diseased part) by using *Jalauka*. Leech Therapy (*Jalauka*) was done once a fortnight along with internal medications up to 4 months.

**Table 1: Leech Therapy (*Jalauka*).**

Raktamokshana	Frequency	Duration
Application of Jalauka (Leech) 1 at a time.	Once a fortnight	Up to 4 Months

**Table 2: Following medicines were prescribed during the course of treatment.**

SN	Medications	Dose and duration	Mode of Action
1.	Aampachak Vati	1 tablet twice a day for 15 days	Aampachana and Agnideepana
2.	Asthiposhak Vati	1 tablet twice a day for 4 months	Asthidhatu Poshana and Keshya Guna
3.	Mahamanjishthadi Kwath	7 ml twice a day for 4 months	Raktadhatu Shodhana

**Table 3: Pathya and Apathya.**

Pathya	Apathya
Ahara <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Laghu, Snigdha Ahara</li> <li>▪ Fresh fruits</li> <li>▪ green leafy vegetables</li> <li>▪ Sprouts</li> </ul>	Ahara <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Atiushna, Tikshna, Amla, Lavan Ahara</li> <li>▪ Viruddha Ahara</li> <li>▪ Street Food</li> </ul>
Vihara <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meditation</li> <li>▪ Yoga</li> <li>▪ Pranayam</li> <li>▪ Regular exercise</li> </ul>	Vihara <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Chinta, Bhaya, Krodha.</li> <li>▪ Vegavrodh</li> <li>▪ Divaswap</li> <li>▪ Ratrojagaran</li> </ul>

### Criteria for assessment[8]

1. Number of bald patches
2. Gradation of hair falling
3. Amount of hair growth

Symptoms	Gradation
Hair falls absent	0
Mild-hair falls on wash	1
Moderate-hair falls on combing	2
Severe-hair fall	3

## Observation and Result

- Before Treatment: There was patchy hair loss, no hair roots, slight dryness at the site was present.
- After 2 months of treatment: No new bald patches seen, Hair fall was significantly reduced and new hair growth was seen over bald patches.
- After Treatment: After 4 months treatment, length and density increased. Black hairs easily observed over most of the affected site.

SN	Symptoms	Before treatment (0th day)	After 2 months of treatment	After 4 months of treatment
1.	Bald patches	6	No new patches seen	2
2.	Hair fall	+++	+	No hair fall
3.	Hair growth	0	Mild hair growth	Blackish hair growth over most of the patches



Before treatment



After 2 months of treatment



After 4 months of treatment



Before treatment





After treatment



Before treatment



After treatment

## Discussion

*Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha Dosha* and *Rakta Dushya* are the main internal causative factors of *Indralupta*. *Charaka* in *Vimanasthana*, while describing the disorders occurring due to over indulgence in *Kshara*, *Lavana* and *Viruddha Ahara* has mentioned the occurrence of Hair Loss as a consequence.

It has been mentioned that the *Viruddha Ahara* like, simultaneous intake of *Lavana* (salt) with milk in the diet induces *Indralupta*, as observed in the people of *Saurashtra* and *Bahluka*. Thus, it can be said that a person habituated to excessive *Lavana* or *Kshara* intake and taking *Viruddha Ahara* in routine is prone to have *Indralupta*. [9]

So *Nidana Pariwarjana* is advised here. As, *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha Dosha* and *Rakta Dushya* are the main internal causative factors of *Indralupta*. So, the medications that balance out *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*, and *Rakta* and having action of *Keshaya* (conductive to the growth of hair) and *Rasayana* help promote the regrowth of hairs. [10]

In *Ayurveda*, both *Shodhana* (Internal and external cleansing procedures) and *Shamana* treatment (Disease specific internal medications) are prescribed for *Indralupta*.

### **Aampachan Vati:**

It contains *Katu* drugs like *Chitrak*, *Pipalimula*, *Ajvain*, *Shudhjavakhar*, *Sunth*, *Chavya*, *Saijikhhar* (*Shudhnavsagar*), *Kalimirch*, *Pipali*, *Saudra Namak*, *Hing* and *Saindhav* in which *Bhavna* was given by *Nimbu Swarasa* which is best drug for *Deepan* and *Pachan*. Hence *Aampachan Vati* helps to restore healthy digestion, assimilation and metabolism of essential food elements. [11]

### **Mahamanjisthadi Kashaya:**

It pacifies vitiation of *Kapha* and *Pitta*. However, it is formulated such a way that it can be effective in all types of diseases cause by all three *Dosha*. It is mainly blood purifier. It Detoxifies blood and aids to eliminate toxins accumulated in the body. It increases skin glow.

### **Asthiposhak Vati:**

It contains a powder formulation of the following ingredients: *Kukkutandatvak Bhasma* (processed hen eggshell),

*Shodhit Laksha* (processed *Laccifer lacca*), *Shodhit Guggul* (processed *Commiphora wightii*), *Choorna of Asthisamhruta* (*Cissus quadrangularis*), *Arjuna* (*Terminalia arjuna*), *Amalaki* (*Embilica officinalis*), *Ashvagandha* (*Withania somnifera*), *Guduchi* (*Tinospora cordifolia*) and *Bala* (*Sida cordifolia*). These ingredients undergo processing in a decoction of *Babool* (*Acacia arabica*) in the required quantity. According to *Aacharya Charaka Kesh* is a *Mala* of *Asthi Dhatu*, *Asthi Poshana* causes nourishment of *Kesh* and *Asthi*. *Amalaki* ingredient of *Asthiposhak Vati* is *Keshya*, *Khalitya-Palitiyaha*, *Tridosha*, *Deepan*, *Pachan*, *Rasayan* which help in rejuvenation process. *Guduchi* ingredient of *Asthiposhak Vati* is *Tridosha Shamak* and *Rasayana*. [12] In this way *Shamana Chikitsa* acts and prevents further hair fall.

*Raktamokashana* in this case performed with *Jalaukavacharan* (blood-letting in which leech is used) as, it is described as best method to pacify the vitiated *Pitta* and *Rakta*. [13] Leech sucks the blood and improves local blood circulation mainly by injecting histamine like substances that causes vasodilatation. After the evacuation of vitiated blood from the affected site, re-channelization of blood flow is stabilized. Many studies have confirmed that leeches have more than hundred bioactive substances in its saliva, which mainly have analgesic, anticoagulant and anti-inflammatory effects. [14] This is the reason for selecting the combination of systemic medications and leech therapy for treating this particular case.

The available treatment in modern medicine mainly based on steroid and minoxidil etc. which have their own side effects. Leech therapy works similar to minoxidil as it improves the local blood circulation along with its anti-inflammatory action.

## Conclusion

Hair disorders cause negative impact towards the individual and his or her quality of life. *Ayurvedic* management with *Mahamanjasthadi Kwath*, *Ampachak Vati*, and *Asthiposhak Vati* internally and externally use of *Jalaukavacharna* (leech therapy) was found very effective in the management of case *Indralupta*. During case study no any side effects was found. Observed benefits may be attributed to *Raktashodhak*, Antioxidant, immunomodulatory properties. *Nidanaparivarjana* was also a necessary part of the treatment.

In this case, we observed a significant result within 4 months. This treatment protocol should be clinically evaluated on large number of patients to confirm the efficacy.

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