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Systemic review on *Shirodhara* and mode of action of *Takradhara* in Psoriasis

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ABSTRACT

In Ayurvedic classics, Shirodhara therapy is indicated in mainly Vata- Pitta disorders; it gives good results in stress related lifestyle disorders like ulcerative colitis, hypertension, psoriasis & other psychosomatic diseases etc. Kushtha in general and Ekakushtha particularly has excessive accumulation of Doshas and is Chirakari in nature. Considering the psychosomatic nature of the disease and the role of stress as the most common predisposing factor for psoriasis, Takradhara therapy is mostly used in psoriasis in practice. As various studies conducted on Dhara therapy, specifically Takradhara have shown significant role in relieving the stress induced disorders. Continuous pouring of Shirodhara on fore-head for a specific period has Tranquilizing effect & regulates rhythm Mana & Prana Vayu it also induces Sleep.

Key words: *Shirodhara, Takradhara, Psoriasis, Ekakushtha.*

INTRODUCTION

In today's era people are suffering from mental and psycho somatic disorders due to unhealthy social and working environment. In our ancient Ayurvedic texts some special therapies like Shirodhara were described for psycho somatic disorders which are very effective in present Materialism era. Shirodhara is from shira (head) is the Seat of Mind and dhara (a steady flow). Shirodhara is a stream of continuous pouring of liquid with specific rhythm over forehead or scalp with specified time and specific liquid according to Dosha and diseases is known as the Shirodhara.^[1] It is a procedure in which certain liquids like oil, butter milk,

etc. are poured over the forehead & scalp from a distance of 4 Angula for a period of 30 to 60 minutes for 7 to 21 days as per requirement. Shirodhara induces a relaxed state of awareness that makes a dynamic psycho-somatic balance. Abhyanga is used in day to day life routinely and Seka or Dhara in most of the diseases. Dhara is not only used in psychic diseases but, also used in psychosomatic diseases like psoriasis. Dhara is done by different medicaments like Taila, Takra, Kshira, Kwatha etc. In the southern Dhara therapy is most commonly practiced. Shirodhara is mainly indicated in Manasabhava pradhan vikaras (mental disorders) i.e Raja & Tama Dosha Pradhana (predominated). Shirodhara is one of the Bahyasnehana (external Oleation therapy) procedures being practiced in Ayurveda. According to Vagbhata Shirodhara is a type of Murdni taila.^[2] Murdhataila which means keeping the medicated oil on the head region. The types of Murdhataila other than Shirodhara are Shiro Abhyanga, Pichu and Shiro Basti.

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AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To study the Systemic review of Shirodhara in ayurvedic classics
2. To explore the role of Takradhara in Psoriasis.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Indications

Ardhavabhedaka, Suryavarta, Ardita, Pakshagata, Hanugraha, Akshisula, Nidranasha, Shirogatavata, Shirahkampa .

Contra-ndications of Shirodhara

Kaphajavikaras-Shirodhara further increases Kapha, which makes the diseases difficult to cure.

Method of pouring of Dhara^[3]

The procedure of Dhara may be divided into three stages for the descriptive purpose:

- 1) Purvakarma
- 2) Pradhanakarma
- 3) Pashchatkarma

1) Purvakarma

Purvakarma is related with the preparation of the patient. First, it should be confirmed that the patient is fit for Shirodhara or not. Patients who are suffering from headache, Pinus, Sankhaka, Suryavarta, Arunshika, Pratishtaya, Shirodaha, Shiropaka, Shirovrana, Anidra, Timira, Karnaroga, Akshiroga, Valita, Palita, Murchha etc. diseases are fit for Shirodhara. It is advisable for the better results that the hairs of the patient on the scalp should be removed, if the patient permits. The patient should pass stool and urine. Then patient's pulse, temperature, blood pressure should be recorded. Proper posture of the patient is the supine position and Dharapatra should be brought 4 inches above his head. The eyes and ears should be covered with cotton so that, liquid may not enter in the eyes. His head rests in slightly elevated position, preferably on wooden piece. The anointing of oil generally done at first by the physician and then by attendants all over the body of the patient.

Droni: For Shirodhara a special type of table is used and it is known as Droni. The table is made up of wood with raised edges in all the four sides so that the oil / liquid may not flow out. In this table

arrangements are made at the head end so that, the oil poured may be collected in another vessel and may be re-used.

Dimension of Droni^[4]: 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, the height 2.5 feet. On all the sides of the tables, 3 inches elevated boundary is constructed towards the side of the head, 2.5 feet-one horizontal midline strip of wood may be constructed, by which table is divided into two parts. This small portion of the table towards the head end is used for Shirodhara. In the middle 3 inches from the horizontal line a circular metallic Plate of having 6 inches diameter with a central hole may be fixed. This arrangement may be made to collect the oil / liquid in a vessel for its re-use. Above Shirodhara portion of the table, Dharapatra should be suspended with the help of a strong wire to enable liquid to fall from the proper distance.

Dhara Patra^[5]: Dhara Patra is a vessel in which liquids used for Shirodhara are put in. It is prepared from brass, steel, clay etc. The mouth of the vessel should be wide and the sides are tapering gradually to a ventral point in the bottom. At this point a hole may be made approximately of little finger size. The depth of the vessel may be 5 to 6 inches. The capacity of the vessel may be two prastha. Inside the vessel a small wooden bowel having a central hole should be put inversely so as to both holes of the vessel comes in medial line. In this small vessel a wick should be entered passing through the both holes and hanging down from the big vessel, so as to maintain a continuous flow of the liquid. The length of the wick outside the vessel should be 4 inches. The upper end of the wick should have knot to prevent slipping from the vessel. The Dharapatra should be hanged just above the head of the patient. The end of the wick should be 4 finger (3 inches) above the forehead of the patient. The vessel is kept refilled with the recollected liquid. On the upper edge of the vessel, three holes should be made to hang it in a horizontal plane to avoid spillage.

Aushadha (Drug): The drug should be selected according to the disease. The quantity required is above 1-2 kg or 2-3 litre approximately.

2) Pradhanakarma^[6]

The selected liquid should be kept in the vessel and be poured continuously and slowly on the forehead of the patient. A mild oscillation should be given so, as to maintain the flow all over the forehead. This liquid gets collected in the vessel, which is kept below the table, which the liquid in the vessel gets emptied, then it is replaced from the lower vessel.

Dharakala^[7]: The patient having dryness and Pittayukta Vata, the period is 2.5 Prahara or 2 Prahara, and in Snigdha Kaphayukta Vata, it is one Prahara or it should be upto perspiration. 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 A.M.

Period for Changing the Liquid: When milk is used for Parishechana, it should be changed everyday. When Dhanyamla is used, it can be used upto 3 days. Oil also should be changed at 3 days. In the first 3 days, half of the oil is used, 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

Temperature of the Sneha / Liquid: It should be Sukhoshana near about to the body temperature.

3) Pashchatkarma^[8]

After completing Shirodhara the oil/liquid from the head should be removed by a piece of cloth. Then the patient may be advised to drink ghee or medicated ghee according to the disease. His eyes should be washed with cold water, he should removed cough. He should take mild wind. He should rest for sometime. Then he should take bath with hot water. Then he should take light. Diet and he should drink water, which is Sidha with Vatanashka Aushadi. He should take the meal. He should take Pathya up to 7 days. He should not worry about his physical and

mental condition. For drinking purpose warm water boiled with Dhanyajirka, ginger and cumine seeds may used. For washing and ablating purpose only warm water should be used.

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 and dust should 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. During the course of the treatment, the patient should be also cheerful, happy and should avoid wearisome exertions, distasteful diet or excessive indulgence in tasty foods. He should wear clean and dry cloths and may have Lepana of Sandalwood paste.

Pariharakala^[10]: He should take Pathya and remain as Jitendriya upto the period which is taken for the completion of Dharakarma.

Dhara Dosha: Shirodhara^[11]: In Dharakalpa complications of Dhara is mentioned

- Dhaha
- Visarpa
- Shir, Swara, Sharir-Sada
- Sandidalana
- Chhardi
- Jwara
- Kotha

For the treatment of Dhara-Dosha following measures may be adopted:

- a) Gandusha.
- b) Nasya
- c) Kashayapana with Sunthi
- d) Light diet at evening, Yusha with black pepper

e) On the third day, Basti should be given in which Saindhava is mixed.

Takradhara¹²: When Takra is poured on the forehead & scalp, it is called Takradhara. This Takradhara cures premature Grey hair, fatigue, infirmity and emaciation, headache, lack of vitality, pricking pains of palm and sole, diabetes, lack of proper functioning of the limb, joints, pains in the chest, heart diseases, disgust for a food, indigestion, dyspepsia and diseases of the eyes, nose, throat & ears. This “DHARA” also alleviates the derangement of the three Doshas and improves the power of all sensory organs.^[13]

Preparation of Takra for Dhara:

The following is an abstract from the book “Dharakalpam”. Twenty Pala (Savva Prastha) of the dry endocarp of Amlaka fruits (*Embllica Officinalis*) is boiled with nine Prasthas of pure water, till reduced to 1/6 of a decoction. To this is added an equal quantity of buttermilk (butter freed) made from fresh boiled cow’s milk, fermented overnight. This mixture is used for Dhara for the head, the patient being anointed previously with the prescribed oil on the head and body.^[14] The following method is in general practice in Kerala, but is not found mentioned in ancient Ayurvedic classics. Two Prasthas (≈1.5 lit.) of cow’s milk diluted with eight Prasthas of water is boiled with two Palams (≈100gm) of skinned and crushed tubers of Musta (*Cyperus rotundus*) tied in a muslin bag, till reduced to the original quantity of milk taken viz. two Prasthas. This is then removed from the fire, the bag of medicament taken out and squeezed well. When cool, this prepared milk is fermented by the addition of a little sour buttermilk overnight. Next morning now the fermented medicated curd is churned, sprinkling over with, one prastha of decoction derived by boiling and a reducing four Prasthas of water with four Palams (≈ 200gm) of dry endocarp of Amalaki fruits, till all the butter is completely removed. The mixture of buttermilk and decoction thus, obtained is used for Dhara. In this case also, the patient is previously anointed on the head and body with the respective oils as prescribed by the physician. Other drugs such as dried pepper

(Piper longum), yastimadhu (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) or the green stalks of Tamarind leaves etc. may be used for boiling of the milk for buttermilk. The choice of drug depend upon the nature of the disease, the patient is suffering from.^[15]

DISCUSSION

Effect of Shirodhara: Dhara is not only used in psychic diseases but also used in psychosomatic diseases like IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome), Psoriasis, EHT, etc.

Effect on Marmas: Marmas are the Pranas may be correlated with vital energy of body on stimulation they activate immune system.

- **Sthapani Marma:** Just below this area inside the skull lies the venous reservoir of the brain the superior Sagittal and Cavernous Venous Sinuses.
- **Shankha Marma:** It corresponds to temporal bone of the skull underneath which lies the temporal lobe of cortex arterial branches and at the base is also some of the important structures of the brain.
- **Utkshepa Marma:** Intracranial cavity and venous sinuses the wall of which are made of coverings of the brain lie in this region
- **Adhipati Marma:** This location is well known as the anterior fontanelle on the vertical groove of the frontal bone. Underneath this point, there is saggital sinus of the brain and also the sulcus between two hemispheres of the cortex. Shirodhara stimulates these Marmas and improves circulation; liquid used for Shirodhara is always luke warm which causes vasodilatation of all the channels and Thereby improving their circulation which in turn improves the blood circulation of brain. This improves the higher intellectual functions also. So an improvement in psychic symptoms is achieved. Improvement in circulation to hypothalamus also improves the function of Autonomic Nervous System as its stimulation during stress causes many physiological disturbances.

Effect on Chakras: Shirodhara may stimulate Acharya Chakra thereby improving the functions of mind which is vitiated in Stress as it is the place of subtle mind. Structures like Pituitary gland, pineal body, subcortical structures of mid brain are related with mental functions like anger, grief, pain, fear, memory and other higher intellectual functions. Shirodhara acts at this level correcting their functions.

Effect on Autonomic Nervous System: Shirodhara may also have Alpha Adrenergic blocking effect and can thus block certain actions of adrenaline and nor-adrenaline. Shirodhara may also act on the adrenergic neuron probably produce their effects by modifying the synthesis storage and uptake mechanisms of nor-adrenaline.

Effect on Endocrine system: The effect of Shirodhara on hormone secretion can also be postulated considering the effect on hypothalamus as hypothalamus is the main controller of endocrine secretions. The hypothalamic Neurons which secrete the regulatory hormones are themselves under the control of specialized Monoaminergic, neurotransmitter neurons which arise in the mid brain. These latter release Dopamine, nor-adrenaline and Serotonin. In turn, these mid brain nuclei are under the control of visceral brain and are responsive to stress and emotional disturbances.

Regulation of emotional and behavioral patterns: Together with the limbic system with the hypothalamus regulates the feeling of rage, aggression, pain and pleasure and behavioral patterns of sexual arousal ultimately it can be postulated that Shirodhara may be having some effect on hypothalamus resulting in decrease of most of the psychic and somatic disorders like psoriasis.

Probable mode of action of Takradhara in psoriasis.

Takra^[16]: Takra has Pancha-Rasa except Lavana Rasa, Amla Vipaka, Ushna Virya, & Vata Kaphaghna property. Ekakushtha is also having Vata Kapha dominant Disease. Takra (Buttermilk) contains large amount of lactic acid. It is scientifically proved that lactic acid is used to moisten & lessen the appearance of thickened psoriatic scales. Lactic acid is a good for

vehicle transdermal absorption of drugs. The efficacy of lactic acid-containing products is linked to their ability to deliver it to specific skin strata. The penetration of L+ lactic acid to different skin layers of porcine skin from various emulsions was measured in vitro using flow-through diffusion cells. As Takradhara contain Amalaki & Musta which has anti-inflammatory & antioxidant property, lactic acid in Takra may help in the transdermal absorption of these drugs & systemic anti-inflammatory, antioxidant effects in psoriasis.

Musta^[17]: Musta (*Cyperus rotundus*) has Tikta, Katu, Kashaya - Rasa, Rukshya, Laghu- Guna & Sheet Virya. It also has Kushthaghna property. Psoriasis is a chronic immune-mediated hyperproliferative inflammatory skin disease. Skin is a major target of oxidative stress & there is specific role of the Oxidative stress in the pathogenesis of psoriasis. Musta has protein glycation inhibitory, anti-inflammatory and antioxidant activity, Glycation has role in the production of inflammatory cytokines

Amalaki^[18]: Amalaki (*Embilica officinalis*) has five Rasa except Lavana rasa Guru, ruksha Guna, Sheeta Veerya & Madhura Vipaka in psoriasis, cells divide faster than normal which produces scales. The ascorbic acid content of Amalaki fruit has antioxidant activity & Immunomodulatory effects. Scientific researches on Amalaki extract shows inhibited cell proliferation, induced apoptosis, and increased reactive oxygen species production & control scaling.

CONCLUSION

Continuous pouring of Takradhara on forehead for a specific period has Tranquilizing effect & regulates rhythm Mana & Prana Vayu it also induces Sleep. As per Modern science Lactic acid & active ingredients of Amalaki & Musta may pass through the Stratum corneum into blood vessel and producing desirable effects by reaching the target organ.

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