

Anayurvedic management by *jaloukavacharana* and *shamana chikitsa* on *Indralupta* (alopecia areata): a case study.

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ABSTRACT

Hair is considered an essential part of overall identity, especially for women, for whom it often represents femininity and attractiveness. As hair is considered as barometer of beauty each one is over conscious about it and is in search for a better remedy for the maintenance and management of their crowning glory. Alopecia areata is characterized by acquired skin ailment that can affect all the hair bearing skin including scalp, beard, which is characterized by localized areas of non-scarring hair loss which can be compared with *Indralupta*. In Ayurveda, *Indralupta* is described under *Kshudra Roga* except *Vagabhatta* who has mentioned it under *Kapala Roga*. Its main

treatment in contemporary science is corticosteroids which is having harmful side effects and is not advisable for long term use. So world is expecting some remedies from Alternative Medical Sciences. Ayurveda offers different effective treatment modalities for the management of different autoimmune diseases like psoriasis, eczema, alopecia areata, etc. In *Ayurveda*, both *Shodhan* and *Shaman* treatments are described for *Indralupta*. Here is a case of 10 Y/O female patient suffering from *Indralupta* (Alopecia areata) successfully treated with *Jalaoukavcharana* and *Shamana Chikitsa*.

KEYWORDS:

Indralupta, Alopecia areata,
Jaloukavacharana, Leech Therapy,
Raktamokshana

INTRODUCTION:

Hair is one of the defining characteristics of mammals. Men typically associate a full head of hair with youth and vigor. Although they may be aware of pattern baldness in their family,

many are uncomfortable talking about the issue. Hair thinning is therefore a sensitive issue for both sexes. Hair loss may not harm physically that much but it might lead to psychological impact and may cause depression. For sufferers, it can represent loss of control and feelings of isolation. Alopecia areata, an autoimmune disease characterized by hair loss can be correlated with *Indralupta* in Ayurveda. Alopecia areata is an autoimmune disease characterized by hairloss on body especially on scalp without any clinical inflammatory signs. Its prevalence in general population was estimated at 0.1-0.2% with a lifetime risk of 1.7 %⁽¹⁾. Male was reported to be more affected with the disease while it causes more emotional problems in woman and children due to cosmetic concern⁽²⁾.

In Ayurveda, Alopecia areata can be correlated with *Indralupta*. Acharya Sushrut has mentioned *Indralupta* under *Kshudra Roga*⁽³⁾ while Acharya Vagabhatta has mentioned it under *Kapala Roga*⁽⁴⁾. According to *Ayurvedic fundamentals* Kesha is Mala of *Asthi Dhatu*⁽⁵⁾. According to Acharya Sushrut and Vagabhatta, *Vata Dosha* along with *Pitta Dosha* resides in *Romkoopa* (hair root) resulting in hairfall (*Keshapatan*). After then *Kapha Dosha* along with *Rakta Dosha* block *Romkoopa* (hair root) so no more hair produce on that place which results in *Indralupta*⁽⁶⁾. *Indralupta* occurs

due to *Rakta Dushti*⁽⁷⁾ and major Acharya stated *Prachchhana* karma to be treatment of it. For the treatment of vitiated *Rakta*, *Raktamokshana* is the line of treatment⁽⁸⁾. There are many formulations for *Indralupta* mentioned for local use in various texts of Ayurveda.

According to modern science, Alopecia types are Alopecia areata, Alopecia totalis, Alopecia universalis, Androgenic alopecia, Traction alopecia, Scarring alopecia. But as per the symptoms of *Indralupta*, it is correlated with Alopecia areata. Alopecia areata is the general term for patchy hair loss. It is the most common disease in all age group. In modern medical science, topical steroids, topical immunotherapy, topical minoxidil, oral corticosteroids are used for treatment but that is not a permanent treatment, after sometimes symptoms of Alopecia areata reappears.

CASE REPORT

A 10 year old female came to the clinic with C/O patchy hair loss over the scalp. The patchy hair loss was gradually increasing day by day since 1.5 years. On enquiry it was told that loss of hair was associated with *Keshapatan*, *Kesha Tanutva*, *Kesha Rukshata*, *Shirahkandu* and *Darunaka* (since 1.5 years). She was unable to gain weight since 3 years. Her weight was 17.6 kg since last 3 years along with *Kshudhamandya* (loss of appetite). She took

consultation with allopathic and homeopathic doctors, but no improvement was noticed. Due to steroids withdrawal, the bald patchy areas started developing pus. She came to the OPD after pus subsided but there were scabs when treatment was started (Fig. 1). The patient

was clinically diagnosed as case of *Indralupta* (Alopecia areata) and was advised with *Jalaoukavacharana* (leech therapy) alongwith *Shaman* therapy.

HISTORY OF PAST ILLNESS:

History of Typhoid in January 2021. No H/O DM/HTN/Koch's/Asthma/Surgical intervention was present in the patient. Also, no family history of psoriasis, eczema was found.

DASHVIDHA PARIKSHA:

- *Sharir Prakriti* – Vata-Pittaja
- *Vikriti* – Tridoshaj
- *Sara* – -----
- *Samhanana* – Heen
- *Satva* – Avara
- *Satmya* – Madhyam
- *Ahara Shakti* – Heen
- *Jaran Shakti* – Heen
- *Vyayam Shakti* – Heen
- *Vaya* – Bala
- *Desha* – Saadharan

ASHTAVIDHA PARIKSHA:

- *Nadi* – 70/min, regular
- *Mala* – Samyaka
- *Mutra* – Samyaka
- *Jivha* – Sama
- *Shabda* – Spashta
- *Sparsha* – Ruksha
- *Druk* – Pallor
- *Akriti* – Heen

GENERAL EXAMINATION:

- Pulse – 70/min
- Blood pressure – 90/60 mm Hg
- Height – 135 cm
- Weight – 17.6 kg (same since 3 years)

- Respiratory rate – 14/min
- Temperature – 99°F
- Tongue – Pallor

DISEASE SPECIFIC

EXAMINATION:

- Site of involvement – Scalp
- Pattern – Multiple, asymmetrical patches
- Skin colour – Slight whitish
- Discharge – Absent
- Sensation – Mild
- Scaling – Present
- Dryness – Present

NIDANA PANCHAK

Nidana: Faulty food habits. It was told that patient used to have junk food, packaged chips, wafers and biscuits frequently.

Purvaroop: *Keshapatan* (hairfall), *Shirahkandu* (itching on scalp), *Kshudhamandya* (loss of appetite).

Roopa: Baldness in patches on scalp, itching and scaliness on scalp, no growth on areas other than patches on scalp.

Samprapti:

Nidana sevan



Vata-Pitta dosha prakopa



Rakta-Kapha dushti



Romakoopaavrodha



Indralupta *Nidana* *sevan*

Vata prakop (*Ruksha, Khara, Chala Guna*)

Pitta prakop (*Ushna, Tikshana Guna*)

↓

Aggravated *Pitta* (*Bhrajaka Pitta*) supported by vitiated *Dehoshma* burns *Keshabhoomi*

↓

Increased *Vata* gives rise to more frequent and comparatively prolonged *Shirasankocha* by its *Ruksha, Khara Guna*

↓

Snigdhatva and *Pichchhilatva* properties of *Kapha Dosha* get abrupted due to *Ushna, Tikshna, Ruksha, Khara Guna* of *Vata* and *Pitta*

↓

This vitiation dries up the scalp

↓

Causes hair fall and obstructs growth of new hair and causes *Indralputa*

TREATMENT

Optimum washout period for previous medicine was adopted. She was advised internal and external therapies. External therapy consists of leech therapy and local application of *Gandhak Druti*. Internal therapy consists of medications as follows (table 1)

Table 1: Prescribed medicines

Sr.No.	Medicines	Dose with Anupana	Pharmacological actions	Therapeutic indications
1.	<i>Chitrakadi vati</i>	1 BD after meal	Digestion, Appetizer	<i>Deepan, Pachana</i>
2.	<i>Gandhak Rasayan</i>	1 BD after meal	Antiviral, Antibacterial, Antioxidant	<i>Kushtha</i> , psoriasis, eczema
3.	<i>Vidangaarishta</i>	5ml B Dafter meal	Antibacterial, Anti helminthic, Antioxidant, Antifungal	<i>Krimi, deepan, pachana</i>
4.	<i>Guduchi+Amlaki Churna</i>	2 gm BD after meal	Immunomodulating, Antimicrobial, Antiulcerogenic, Antioxidant	<i>Kushtha, jwara, raktapitta, kamla, daha</i>

She was advised to remove scalp hair for leech therapy and treatment (Figure 2). Leech therapy sittings were done with 15-20 days interval. Within 1 sitting of leech therapy, the diameter of baldness patch was reduced (Figure 3). Also other complaints

like itching and scaliness on scalp was reduced. On 4th visit, visible and dense hair growth was seen (figure 4). On 5th visit, the bald patches were reduced and good hair growth was observed. But still some bald patches were visible (Figure 5). She was

further advised to again remove her scalp hair and to go for another leech therapy sitting (Figure 6). On 7th visit, the bald patches were completely gone and hair growth was dense and normal (Figure 7). On further observation after 1 month, no hair loss and bald patches reoccur.

RESULTS

Gradual reduction in hair loss was noticed. No new itching and bald patches were found. Bald patches over scalp were covered with minute hairs within 6 weeks. After 4 months, normal hair growth was seen on scalp. Also, her appetite was increased and in result her weight also increased. Earlier it was 17.6 kg which was constant since 3 years and it increased up to 21.4 kg within 4 months. Also, her complaints of *Keshatanutva*, *Kesharukshata*, *Shirakandu* were totally reduced.

DISCUSSION

Because of the altered lifestyle, the cases of Alopecia areata are increasing day by day. Cosmetically hairs are important part of personality and baldness produce lots of side effects

e.g. lack of confidence, personality defects, and inferiority complex. According to Ayurvedic principles, vitiated *Vata* and *Pitta* are responsible for hair fall and vitiated *Rakta* and *Kapha* obstructs the channels of hair follicles. Closed follicles lead to stoppage of regeneration of new hairs, the condition known as *Indralupta*, *Khalitya* or *Ruhya*. Our *Acharyas* have considered this condition under *Shiro Rogas*, but according to some *Acharyas* it also comes under *Kshudra Roga*, but the root cause is almost same. *Acharya Vagbhatta*

mentioned about *Keshada Krimi* which also contributes towards the ultimate hairloss. Hence keeping all this in mind, *Vidangaarishta* was given as internal medication. *Acharya Sushrut* advises *Rasayana* in *Kesa Vikara*⁽⁹⁾ and *Rasayana* drugs acts as immunomodulators in *Indralupta*. With this benefit the patient was advised to take *Guduchi* and *Amalaki Churna* as *Rasayana Dravyas* to enhance hair growth. As it is mentioned in Ayurveda that the cause of all disease is *Mandagni*, hence *Chitrakadi Vati* was given as *Deepan* and *Pachana* to increase the *Agni* (appetite) of the body. *Gandhak Rasayana* was used due to its antiviral, antibacterial and antioxidant properties. *Gandhak Druti* application was advised on bald patches due to its antigungal and antibacterial properties. Drugs used for oral therapy are mainly *Tridosha Shamaka*, *Rakta Shodhaka* and *Rasayana* in nature. Line of treatment for this condition is *Snehana* (Oleation), *Swedana* (Fomentation) followed by *Raktamokshana* (Bloodletting)⁽¹⁰⁾.

Rakta, being the vehicle to carry and transport absorbed nutrients, oxygen, metabolites etc. from one place to another, so correction of any abnormality in the *Rakta* by taking it out (Bloodletting) effectively cures number of diseases. Leech therapy is an ideal method for *Raktamokshana* in blood vitiated by *Pitta* and also for females, children, and old age persons. Leeches have more than 20 bioactive molecules in their secretions. These molecules have analgesic, anti-inflammatory, platelet inhibitory, anticoagulant, and thrombin regulatory functions, as well as extracellular matrix degradative and antimicrobial effects. Leech sucks the blood and improves local

blood circulation mainly by injecting histamine like substances that causes vasodilation. After the evacuation of vitiated blood from the affected site, rechannelization of blood flow is stabilized. This is the reason for selecting the combination of topical application, systemic medications and leech therapy for treating this particular case. The treatment available in modern medicine is mainly based on steroids and minoxidil, etc. which have their own side effects.

CONCLUSION

The *Keshya*, *Balya* and *Rasayanika* properties of the specified Ayurvedic drugs showed excellent results on *Indralupta*. In this study, *Krimi* were also responsible for the development of pathogenesis/*samprapti* of *Indralupta* along with *Pitta* and *Raktadushti*. Result concludes that *Krimighna* drugs not only remove the *Krimi*, but also balances vitiated *Doshas* and improves digestion helpful for nourishment of drugs. Leech therapy along with Ayurvedic systemic therapy has a definite role in alopecia areata especially of recent origin. Hence, if done on a large scale, this treatment can be a successful management for alopecia whose sure-shot management is not known till now.



Fig.1 -First visit (previous scabs present)



Fig 2 - Second visit (Scalp hair removed for leech therapy)



Fig 3- After 1st sitting of leech therapy (diameter of bald patches reduced)



Fig 4- 4th visit (visible and dense hair growth seen)



Fig 5- 5th visit (good hair growth seen but still bald patches visible)



Fig 6 - 6th visit - Advised to remove scalp hair and another leech therapy sitting planned



Fig 7 -7th visit (Bald patches completely gone and hair growth came dense and normal)

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