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Role of Thalapothichil in Stress Induced Hair Loss

Anjana. R.S

ABSTRACT

Thalapothichil is a traditional Ayurvedic treatment of Kerala. The treatment relaxes and calms down the mind and relieves symptoms of stress. In today's fast world, people are being exposed to a lot of stress as part of their occupation, family relationships, studies .etc. Thick and healthy hair plays an important role in the personality and confidence of a person. Stress related hair loss is thus emerging as a major issue. In Ayurveda, the gradual loss of hair is termed as Khalitya. It comes under Kshudra roga. This is a condition where, the vata dosa along with increased pitta dosa reaches the hair follicles and causes hair to fall. After that, the Kapha dosa along with Raktha prevents new hair growth. The procedure of Thalapothichil re-establishes the functional integrity of these dosas. This articles aims to review the benefits and action of Thalapothichil in stress related hairloss.

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Classification: DDC Code: 613 LCC Code: R1

Language: English



London
Journals Press

LJP Copyright ID: 925685
Print ISSN: 2631-8490
Online ISSN: 2631-8504

London Journal of Research in Science: Natural and Formal

Volume 22 | Issue 13 | Compilation 1.0



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Thalapothichil is a traditional Ayurvedic treatment of Kerala. The treatment relaxes and calms down the mind and relieves symptoms of stress. In today's fast world, people are being exposed to a lot of stress as part of their occupation, family relationships, studies .etc. Thick and healthy hair plays an important role in the personality and confidence of a person. Stress related hair loss is thus emerging as a major issue. In Ayurveda, the gradual loss of hair is termed as Khalitya. It comes under Kshudra roga. This is a condition where, the vata dosa along with increased pitta dosa reaches the hair follicles and causes hair to fall. After that, the Kapha dosa along with Raktha prevents new hair growth. The procedure of Thalapothichil re-establishes the functional integrity of these dosas. This articles aims to review the benefits and action of Thalapothichil in stress related hairloss.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Stress has become an integral part of human life, adversely affecting its quality. It can be induced by several factors which are both physical and psychological, like environmental changes, extremes of temperature, high altitude, restraints, fear, anxiety, grief, pain and so on. According to Ayurveda stress or *sahasa*, as it is known plays a major role in the etiology of many diseases, Caraka advises to avoid *sahasa* as it adversely affects the body ¹. Vata is the main *dosa* vitiated by excessive physical stress. Psychological stress factors, like *udvega* (excitement), *soka* (anxiety)

also leads to disequilibrium of *vata dosa*, whereas, *pitta* is the main *dosa* vitiated by *krodha* (anger).² The vitiated *vata* is responsible for a lot of disease conditions. About 80 types of diseases are mentioned as caused by vitiated *vata dosa* by *Carakacharya*. *Kesabhumi sphutana* or cracking of the scalp is one such disease which can lead to hair loss.³ The hair loss in Ayurveda is termed as *Khalitya*. It comes under *Kshudra roga* according to *Susrutha Samhita* and *Ashtanga Sangraha* and *Shiroroga* according to *Caraka Samhita* and *Ashtangahrdaya*. This is a condition where, the *vata dosa* along with increased *pitta dosa* reaches the hair follicles and causes hair fall. After that, the *Kapha dosa* along with *Raktha* prevents new hair growth. Stress especially, psychological, is thus a major factor contributing to hair loss. The cosmetological issues related to hair loss again affect the quality of life.⁴

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Literature review was done referring various Ayurvedic literatures related to Kerala Ayurvedic practices, *Kshudra roga*, *Shiroroga* etc. PUBMED, MEDLINE databases were also used for the search of relevant research papers.

2.1 Importance of Thalapothichil

Ayurveda has a long history of being enriched by different contributions from different regions that suits their geographical, climatic and cultural conditions. Kerala has also contributed many *kriyakramas* that are being widely practiced in Ayurveda now a days. *Thalapothichil* is one such procedure. The word is derived from two Malayalam words '*thala*' means head and '*pothichil*' means covering. The procedure is similar to *shirolepa* where application of medicated paste is applied over the head after a gentle oil massage. The head is then covered with

herbal leaf. It is recommended in Autism, diseases of head and in various mental disorders. The drugs are selected as per the disease condition of the patient. The procedure has action over vitiated *vata* and *pitta*. It stabilizes the nervous system and has a soothing effect on the mind and body.⁵

2.2 Method of Thalapothichil

The procedure of *Thalapothichil* is done in the following steps:

- Prepare the medicines used into a thick paste.
- Ask the patient to sit comfortably in a straight arm chair.
- Tie a band of cotton cloth around the forehead above the level of ears.
- Apply paste initially over the vertex, followed by front, right, back and left side of scalp. The thickness of the paste should be 1-2 cm.
- Cover the head with a lotus leaf and tie it along the forehead.
- Cut a small area of leaf from the vertex region.
- Remove paste from that area to get a dip of about 1cm and fill the dip with some oil.
- Pour oil in a gap of 15 to 20 minutes.
- Maintain the position for 30 to 90 minutes.
- Remove the paste and clean the head with a clean and dry towel.
- Abhyanga is done with suitable oil.
- Apply rasnadi choorna on the vertex.
- Patient is then advised to follow pathyakramas.⁶

III. DISCUSSION

Thalapothichil, if logically done can reduce stress induced hair loss. The medicinal combinations that prevent hair loss like the *tilasamalakadi* paste can be chosen for application over the head. The ingredients include, *Tila choorna*, *Amalaki choorna*, *Lotus seed choorna*, *Yashtimadhu choorna* and Honey. The abhyanga done after lepana also has significant effect on promotion of hair loss. According to *Sushruta*, *Shiro Abhyanga* eliminates diseases of head, and makes the hair grow soft, long, glossy and black⁷. According to *Charaka*, by applying oil to head, hair loss can be prevented.⁸ *Akshatwagadi taila*

with the ingredients *Aksha tvak-kashaya*, *Guluchi-Bhringaraja-Neeli swarasa*, *Ksheera* and *Triphala*, *Yasti-kalka*; *ksheerivrukshadi taila* with the ingredients, *Ksheerivruksha-kashaya*, *Madhura varga-kalka*, *Aksha taila*, *Tila taila* that prevents hair loss and improves hair growth can be taken for *siro abhyanga*.

IV. CONCLUSION

Thalapothichil may be effectively used in stress induced hair loss. It corrects the imbalanced *pitta* and *vata dosha*. The pressure and vibration created over the head due to the pre procedure of *siro abhyanga* and a little increase in temperature due to covering after application of *lepa* play a significant role in bringing down the stress related hormones also. The medicine for oil and *lepa* may be selected according to the underlying conditions like dandruff, dermatitis etc.

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