

A Review on Palitya Chikitsa In Brihatrayi

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Abstract

We live in a world where pollution is increasing at an alarming rate which is directly degrading the quality and natural color of hairs. Moreover, stress which is the other important factor in greying of hair is evident in everyone's life. Thus, in today's times the problem of greying of hair is on the rise. Premature greying of hair is a trouble which reduces one's self confidence and increases the dependence on harmful chemical dyes. A large number of people are now totally dependent on harmful synthetic products for coloring their hair. Ayurvedic medicines and natural coloring agents thus are promising for the future since they are derived from wholesome natural plant ingredients and moreover can reverse the greying process if used regularly. Problem of Palitya is described as a disease in Brihatrayi (Greater trio of text books of Ayurveda) i.e. Charak Samhita, Sushrut Samhita, Astang Sangraha and Astang Hridaya with chikitsa yogas (medicinal formulations) that are cost effective, easy to prepare and use. Thus people can benefit from this knowledge.

Keywords: Palitya, Chikitsa, Yoga.

Introduction

Hair is probably one of the first things you notice about people when meeting them for the first time. This is especially true for women. Beautiful and shiny hair always leaves good impression, which is why proper hair care is important. In today's scenario, even the young people are having this problem. It was a very rare phenomenon even a few years ago but it is increasing every day. As the living standards are increasing stress is also increasing. According to Ayurveda, the color of hairs is directly correlated with the dosha (bodily humors) as for example stress and anxiety leads to vitiation of Vata and Pitta dosha which are held responsible for Palitya. Also, prakriti (bodily constitution) plays a major role in hair texture. Thus, any disturbance of doshas has its effect on hairs.

Definition of Palitya (greying of hairs)

Premature graying is defined as the onset of graying before the age of 20 in Caucasians and before the age of 30 in Africans and Asians or, alternatively, when 50 percent or more of scalp hair turns gray before the age of 50. The medical term for grey hair is Canities/ Leukotrichia/ Poliosis.

Normal hair physiology

Melanocytes are the cells that are responsible for the colour of hairs, every hair follicle has melanocytes in it. Melanocytes inject melanin into the strand that makes the hair colored. Usually as we grow old, the melanocytes slowly stop producing the melanin, thus the hair strands turn gray and then white. But other factors are also responsible for grey hairs like lack of proper nutrition chronic illness or stress. Thus, the hairs turn grey before time. Following factors cause premature graying of hair.

Causes of greying of hairs

- Pollution
- Lack of proper nutrition
- Hyperthyroidism
- Hormonal imbalances
- Hypothyroidism
- Pernicious anemia
- Usage of chemical dyes
- Keeping scalp unclean
- Consumption of some high dosage drugs
- Autoimmune disorders
- Treatment for cancer and AIDS.
- Vitamin B 12, iron, copper and iodine deficiency.

Experts associate premature hair graying with cigarette smoking.

Excess Vitamin E could lead to premature graying.

Hair experts say that cosmetic choices such as the use of some hair products like rods, dyes.

Excessive intake of tea, coffee, alcohol, meat, and fried, oily, greasy, spicy, sour, and acidic foods can reduce the moisture and nutrients reaching the hair follicles, which could also lead to premature graying².

LITERARY REVIEW

Palitya Nidan according to Charak Samhita

The tejas (heat) of the body in association with vayu and other doshas, scorches up the hair root giving rise to alopecia. But if there is partial scorching, then it gives rise to premature graying hairs³. Charak has described Palitya in Trimarmiya Chikitsa since the Trimarma includes shir, vasti, hriday. The description of shirorogas has been continued with the Palitya roga.

Palitya Chikitsa according to Charak Samhita Samanya Chikitsa Sutra (Treatment protocol) of Palitya

In above diseases the patient should be given shodhan therapies and then given nasya with medicated oils, and application of drugs over head and face. Various yogas mentioned in the treatment of Palitya in Charak Samhita are:

Vidarigandhadi Tail

Medicated oil should be prepared by cooking with vidarigandha (*Desmodium gangeticum*), prishna parni (*Uraria picta*), brihati (*Solanum indicum*), kantakari (*Solanum xanthocarpum*), gokshura (*Tribulus terrestris*) or with jivaniya drugs this oil or the anu tail cures alopecia and grey hairs⁴.

Sahacharadi Tail

One prashtha (725grams) of each of milk and juice of sahachara (*Barleria prionitis*), bhringaraja (*Eclipta alba*) and surasa (*Vitex negundo*), one kudava (187 grams) of Til tail(oil) and paste of one pala (46.5 grams) of yasthimadhu (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) should be cooked and set inside a pot of stone or the horn of sheep its nasya cures grey hairs⁵.

Palitya nashak Yoga

Dugdihika (*Euphorbia thymifolia*) and karvira (*Nerium indicum*) should be made a paste with milk and after pulling out grey hairs this paste is applied⁶.

Prapaundreekadi Tail

One kudaav (187 grams) of oil and two kudava of juice of amlaki (*Emblica officinalis*) should be cooked by adding the paste of one karsha (11.5 grams) of each of prapaundrika (*Nelumbo nucifera*), yasthi (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), pippali (*Piper longum*), chandana (*Santalum album*), utpala (*Saussurea lappa*), it is used as pratimarsha cures all diseases of head⁷.

Priyaladi Yoga

Application of paste of Priyala (*Buchanania lanzan*), milk, yasthi (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), and Jivaniya mahakasaya that are (jivaka, rishbhaka, meda, mahameda, kakoli, ksheerkakoli, mudgaparni, mashaparni, jivanti, madhuka), honey, tila (*Sesamum indicum*) and pippali (*Piper longum*) over the face cures grey hairs⁸.

Tiladi Yoga

Application of paste of tila (*Sesamum indicum*), amlaki (*Emblica officinalis*), kinjalaka (*Nelumbo nucifera*), madhuka (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) and honey over the head restores the colour of hairs and promotes their growth⁹.

Palitya nashak other Yogas

Lauha bhasma, cooked with saindhava (*Sodium chloride*), suktamla (sour vinegar) and rice (all in equal amounts) should be applied over the scalp and kept overnight. In the morning head washed with Triphala¹⁰.

Markav swaras Yoga

One kudava (187 grams) of oil should be cooked by adding one prasha (725 grams) of markava (*Eclipta alba*) juice and milk and one pala (46.5 grams) of yasthi (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*)¹¹. This is used for inhalation.

Other Kriyakrama (treatment) for Palitya mentioned in Charak Samhita

- Dhoompan 12
- Nasya 13
- Shiroabhayanga 14

Palitya Nidan according to Sushruta

Sushruta has considered Palitya in the Kshudraroga vyadhis. Sushruta opines that mainly Pitta dosha is responsible. While according to Charak Vata and Pitta are the predominant doshas¹⁵.

Palitya Chikitsa according to Sushruta

Chikitsa is not dealt with in Kshudraroga chapter rather mentioned in Mishraka chikitsa. Following yogas are mentioned:

Nili taila

The swaras (expressed juice) of Bhringaraj (Eclipta alba) and the kwath (decoction) of Triphala, powder of indigo (Indigofera tinctoria) leaves, Arjuna bark (Terminalia arjuna) Bhringraj (Eclipta alba), Pinditak (Randia spinosa), black iron, flowers of sahachara (Barleria prionitis), Haritaki (Terminalia chebula), Bibhitaki (Terminalia bellerica) and Amlaki (Emblica officinalis) mixed together and pasted with a quantity of mud found adherent to lotus bulbs weighing as much as the combined weight of the aforesaid drugs should be kept in an iron pitcher well covered and preserved inside a room for a fortnight. After this period it should be cooked with an adequate quantity of oil and with expressed juice of Bhringraj and a decoction of Triphala. For knowing the proper cooking of oil, a white feather of Balaka (crane) should be dipped into it, and satisfactory preparation should be judged from the deep blue colour imparted to the feather. This oil should be preserved in black iron pitcher for a month used as anointments, this oil arrests the premature greying of hairs¹⁶.

Shirovasti

A leather belt is used to tighten around the head so as to make a kind of well over the head which is filled with oil and set to absorb for a stipulated time.

Palitya Nidan according to Ashtang Sangraha¹⁷

The heat of the body moving on to the head gets mixed with doshas ripens the hair. Vagbhat has given doshanusar (according to dosha) lakshanas (symptoms) of Palitya.

Palitya Chikitsa according to Ashtang Sangraha

The roots of hairs should be smeared with paste of madhuka and amlaka added with honey, or of tila (Sesamum indicum), amlaka mixed with honey and oil. Or with that of tuttha, kernel of amra (Mangifera indica) and jambu (Syzgium jambolanum), kasisa (Ferri sulphas/ green vitriol), and sarkara (sugar) or with that of saireyaka (Barleria prionitis), nilini (Indigofera tinctoria), triphala, bhringraja, in urine of black goat¹⁸.

Asanadi yoga

A container made from flowers and leaves of asana (Terminalia tomentosa) is covered externally with amlaki paste. It is filled with aksa tail¹⁹ and kept in paddy²⁰.

Kapikacchu tail

Oil prepared with roots and fruits of kapikacchu (Mucuna pruriens) using aksa tail is kept in iron vessel for six months acts similarly²¹.

Navan Abhayanga Tail

Seeds of slesmataka (Cordia Latifolia) removed from its husk is macerated in fermented rice, washed and smeared to a wooden staff, that is kept in sunlight and the oil exuding is collected²².

Palitya Chikitsa according to Astang Hridaya

Various oils and lepas mentioned in Astang Hridaya are mentioned below.

A medicated oil is prepared with jivaniya gana²³ and brahatyadi gana²⁴ or nimba (Melia azadirachta) tail should be used for nasal medication. One should lead life of an ascetic and drink only milk²⁵.

Sehcharadi tail

Medicated oil prepared with one prastha each of milk, juice of sahachara, bhringraj and surasa one kudava of oil and one pala of yasthi and preserved either in stone vessel or horn used for nasya²⁶.

Tiladi lepa

Paste made from tila (Sesamum indicum), amlaka, Padmakinjalka (Prunus malus), madhuk and honey applied on the head²⁷.

Mansiadi lepa

Mansi (Nardostachys jatamansi), kustha, krisna til, sariva (Hemidesmus indicus) and nilotpala (Nymphaea lotus) made paste with milk added with honey and applied to head²⁸.

Prapaundreekadi tail

Oil prepared with prapaundrika (Nelumbo nucifera), madhuka (Glycyrrhiza glabra), pippali (Piper longum), chandana (Santalum album), utpala and juice of dhatri, used for nasya and local application²⁹.

Discussion

Palitya is described in Shiroroga Prakaran in Charak Samhita and in Kshudraroga adhyay of Sushruta Samhita. Vitiation of Pitta dosha has been held responsible for Palitya. For the treatment of

Palitya both external and internal medicines are used in Brihatrayi. For external application various oils and lepas have been mentioned and internally dosha shamak chikitsa is mentioned in form of Nasya. Shodhana (internal purificatory measures) are given prime importance in its management. Apart from them rasayana is also beneficial.

- Regarding recent researches on bhringraj, it is for blackening and growth of the hair. High therapeutic and medicinal values are due to its chemical composition with wedelolactone, demethylwedelolactone, 14-hepatocosanol.
- Regarding the dyeing action of Madayanti, it is due to lawsone and due to activation of dermal papilla, enhanced circulation and increased nutrition.
- Amla is specially Pitta shamaka. Thus, it is used in most of the Yogas.
- Modifiers like Amla and Lauha bhasma in ratio 1:1 enhances penetration of black particles, lawsone, indigotin into medulla of hair.

Conclusion

The problem of Palitya is mentioned in all major text books of Ayurveda. Doshas involved in pathogenesis are Vata and Pitta and their management is firstly through Nidana parivarjana that is to renounce all the factors responsible for the disease like Pitta prakopaka Aahar (amla, lavana, katu rasas) and Vihara (anger, stress). Then Shodhan therapy is the next step in which Raktamokshana and Virechana are prime. After internal purification local applications of lepas, abhayanga, nasya (instillation of nasal medications) are considered as they will act better thereafter, Nasa being the gateway to Shira according to Charaka Acharya. To conclude the Chikitsa siddhant of Palitya roga involves the following: Nidana parivarjana, Shodhana, Nasya, Abhayanga, Pralepa, Rasayan prayoga. Today when Palitya is a burning problem in society researches can be undertaken on these herbal, cost effective and simple formulations of hair dyes. Most hair colours now contain ammonia which is very harmful thus these yogas are promising for the future. Healthy hair makes one self-confident and good looking. There are wide lists of yogas in other granthas also they can be exploited based on the ease of availability.

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