

Review Article

Ayurvedic approach to Khalitya – A Review

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ABSTRACT:

Hairs add a lot to one's personality. Loss of hair damages the look of a person and the self-confidence. Hair loss mainly occurs due to deficiency of some nutrients or due to some other disorders. In this 21st century whole world is looking for Ayurveda not only for the diseases and longevity but for beauty and aesthetic purpose. In Ayurveda it is called *khalitya* (baldness). When *pitta* (*doṣa* responsible for regulating body temperature and metabolic activities) combines with *vata* (*doṣa* responsible for movement and cognition) or *kapha* (*doṣa* responsible for regulating body fluids and keeping the body constituents cohesive) to destroy the hair, it is called *khalitya* (baldness). For the prevention of *khalitya* (baldness), one should follow the *dinacharya* (daily regimen) and *ritucharya* (seasonal regimens). It can be treated with *panchakarma* procedures like *vaman* (therapeutic emesis), *virechana* (therapeutic purgation), *raktamokshan* (bloodletting), *nasya* (nasal instillation of medicine), *basti* (therapeutic enema), *shiroabhyang*, *lepa* (covering of body) etc. Many drugs are mentioned for *nasya* (nasal instillation of medicine- *Yashtimadhukadyatailam*, *chandanadyatailam*, *Anu tailam*, etc.), *lepa* (covering of body- *gunjalepa*, *kasisadilepa* etc.), *virechana* (therapeutic purgation), *abhyang* (*irimedaditailum*, *bhrungaraj tailam*, etc.) in *khalitya* (baldness). These procedure show good result when used judiciously. Proper use of *panchakarma* procedure along with shaman medicines give better results.

KEY WORDS: *Khalitya* (baldness), *Panchakarma*, *Shodhan* (eliminative), *shaman* (pacifying therapy), *rasayan* (rejuvenation and revitalization therapy)

INTRODUCTION:

In this era, Ayurveda has emerged as a science for promotion of health and cure to disease. In addition to this, it has become popular for maintenance of beauty. Herbal cosmetic market have a great potential globally and day by day becoming choice of masses.

Hairs add a lot to a beautiful face. Loosing hair affects the psychosocial status of a person very badly. Loss of hair leads to mental stress in people as well as mental stress leads to hair loss.

Male pattern hair loss (MPHL), also known as androgenetic alopecia (AGA), is the most common form of hair loss in men¹. Similarly, female pattern hair loss (FPHL) is the most common form of hair loss in women². The incidence and prevalence of MPHL is dependent on age and race³. Chinese, Japanese, and

African American people are affected less than Caucasians⁴. Its incidence increases by age.

Ayurveda has specified the gradual falling of hair as *khalitya* (baldness). This gradual falling of hair slowly leads to baldness. When *pitta* (*doṣa* responsible for regulating body temperature and metabolic activities) combines with *vata* (*doṣa* responsible for movement and cognition) or *kapha* (*doṣa* responsible for regulating body fluids and keeping the body constituents cohesive) to destroy the hair, it is called *khalitya* (baldness). When the *kapha* (*doṣa* responsible for regulating body fluids and keeping the body constituents cohesive) combines with *rakta dhatu* it results in the degeneration and closure of hair follicles completely thus leading to baldness. In different texts of Ayurveda, *khalitya* (baldness) is

either mentioned in *shiroroga* (diseases of head)⁵ or in *kshudraroga* (minor disorders)⁶ (*ashtangasangrah*, *yoga ratnakar*, *madhava nidan*). Independent description is not given for *khalitya* (baldness). Why *Acharyas* mentioned it in *kshudraroga* (minor disorders)? As it is having insignificant cause and is terrible (diseases which do not leave the patient easily). In real life, it is seen that hair fall is very difficult to deal with. A person having hair fall undergoes stress and that stress in turn increases the hair fall. It is clear that *khalitya* (baldness) not only signifies the physical state of body but mental state too.

In the text, for hair fall two terms are frequently used i.e. *khalitya* (baldness) and *indralupta* (alopecia). Both are almost same but there is difference in pattern of hair fall. In *indralupta* (alopecia), hair are lost suddenly, patch by patch where as in *khalitya* (baldness) hair loss is gradual and is generalised all over the scalp. In this article *khalitya* (baldness) is discussed vividly rather than *indralupta* (alopecia).

Disease Review:

Ashtang Samgrahakara has classified *Khalitya* (baldness) in four types & its symptoms which are as follow⁷:

1. *Vataja Khalitya*- The scalp appears as *Agnidagdha* (burns), *Ruksha* (dryness) and *pandura* (whitish).
2. *Pittaja Khalitya*-The scalp is surrounded by the *Siras* (veins). Sweat may be found all over scalp. Scalp appear red and burnt.
3. *Kaphaja Khalitya*- The colour of the scalp is more or less same as the colour of skin but it appears

as *Ghana* (thick and dense) and *Snigdha* (slimy/unctuous).

4. *Tridoshaja Khalitya*- characteristic of all the three *Doshas* occur. The scalp looks like the burnt and bears nail like appearance.

Acharya Harita has denoted this disease by the name *Keshaghna* and mentioned one additional type of *Khalitya* (baldness) that is *Raktajkhalitya*. Pus (*Sapaka*) is the symptom of *Raktajkhalitya*⁸.

Hair follicle growth occurs in cycles. Each cycle consists of a long growing phase (anagen), a short transition phase (catagen) and a short resting phase (telogen). At the end of the resting phase, the hair falls out (exogen) and a new hair starts growing in the follicle beginning the cycle again. Normally, about 40 (0-78 in men) hairs reach the end of their resting phase each day and fall out⁹. A disruption of the growing phase cause abnormal loss of anagen hairs.

Etiology:

The pathogenesis of *khalitya* (baldness) is mentioned in texts "when *pitta* (doṣa responsible for regulating body temperature and metabolic activities) combines with *vata* (doṣa responsible for movement and cognition) or *kapha* (doṣa responsible for regulating body fluids and keeping the body constituents cohesive) and went to hair follicle, it leads to hair fall or *khalitya* (baldness)¹⁶". So all the causes which lead to this pathogenesis will cause *khalitya* (baldness). It is a *shiroroga* and the *nidan* of *shiro roga* mentioned in text have potential to cause *khalitya* (baldness). Causes are mentioned below¹⁰:-

Table No. 1: Showing Dietary and Non dietary causes of khalitya (baldness)

Dietary causes	Non dietary causes
Consuming excessive alcohol	Hold the urge of- stool, urine, tears
Heavy diet (difficult to digest)	Sleeping after lunch or sleeping late
Drinking cold water	Exposure to eastern wind for long , cold, dust, smoke, harsh sunlight, unpleasant smell, abnormal weather condition specially cloudy weather, mental strain, trauma in head
Taking sour food, chillies, ginger in excess	Excessive crying, sleeping, sweating
Use of salt in excess amount	Not taking bath (head bath), not applying oil on head
Drinking too much water	
Too much use of <i>kshar</i> (alkali)	

There are some other conditions in which *khalitya* (baldness) occurs. These include-

Skin disease (*kushtha*)¹¹, Not following post *nasya* (nasal instillation of medicine) regimen, *Dushtapratishyay* (chronic rhinitis)¹², Improper life style by pregnant mother¹³. *Prakruti* of a person is also responsible for the occurrence of *khalitya* (baldness) asin person with *pittaprakruti*, hairfall starts in an early age and become bald early¹⁴. An important cause is genetics too, *Kesha* are *pittrujbhav*¹⁵. Hence it is seen that *khalitya* (baldness) runs in family. Also hair are *mala* of *asthidhatu*, *kshaya* or vitiation of *asthidhatu* results in hairfall¹⁶. Hair are *updhata* of *majja* so abnormality of *majja* will also result in hairfall. Deficiency of iron, zinc and calcium is also responsible for hair fall. Low level of oestrogen after delivery is responsible for postpartum hairfall. Overuse of hair cosmetic also leads to hairfall. Some *krumi* named as *keshada* and *lomada* are mentioned in text which cause loss to hairs¹⁷. Washing hairs with hot water

Prognosis:

The prognosis depends on multiple factors. As mentioned in *samhitas*, *khalitya* (baldness) is incurable if¹⁸:

- The colour of the scalp is like the nails
- The appearance of hair and scalp is like that of burnt skin, with or without severe burning sensation
- Also modern science says hair don't regrow in cicatricial alopecia

Management of Khalitya (Baldness)

Ayurveda is a life science – its first objective is to prevent the healthy state from being diseased. For the prevention of *khalitya* (baldness), one should follow the *dinacharya* (daily regimen) and *ritucharya* (seasonal regimens). Many *karmas* are specially mentioned for prevention of *khalitya* (baldness), for example-*nasya* (nasal instillation of medicine), oiling of head, combing hair etc.

To cure the *khalitya* (baldness), *Vaidya* should break the etiopathogenesis. For this *nidan- parivarjana* (avoidance of cause) is the first step, then *shodhan* (eliminative) followed by *shaman* (pacifying therapy) and *rasayan* (rejuvenation) drugs.

Avoid the cause- first rule out the cause and treat the

cause. Whatever is the cause, excessive use of chemicals, hormonal imbalance or deficiency of different nutrients, treatment of cause is very necessary.

Shodhana- any of the three *doshas* can be involved, so treatment vary according to the *dosha*. For *shodhan*, *vaman* (therapeutic-emesis)(therapeutic emesis), *virechan*(therapeutic purgation), *basti* (therapeutic enema), *raktamokshana* (blood letting), *nasya* (nasal instillation of medicine), *dhoompaan* (therapeutic smoking) can be done. Some other procedures like *shiroabhyang*, *lepa* (covering of body), *shirodhara* can also be done.

Shaman and *rasayan* drugs are used according to the the *dosha*, *prakruti* ,*kaal* etc.

DISCUSSION:

Khalitya (baldness) involve many *doshas* and *dushya*. There are different factors involved in the pathogenesis of *khalitya* (baldness). These factors are called *sampraptighatak*.

1. *Dosha*:-*Pitta* (*doṣa* responsible for regulating body temperature and metabolic activities), *vata* (*doṣa* responsible for movement and cognition) and *kapha* (*doṣa* responsible for regulating body fluids and keeping the body constituents cohesive) are involved in this condition. Among the 5 types of *pitta* (*doṣa* responsible for regulating body temperature and metabolic activities), *pachak* and *bhrajak* are involved as the lesion occurs on skin. *Vata* involved is *samaan* and *vyan*. *Shira* (head) is site of *tarpakkapha* (*doṣa* responsible for regulating body fluids and keeping the body constituents cohesive), hence *tarpakkapha* (*doṣa* responsible for regulating body fluids and keeping the body constituents cohesive) can be involved.
2. *Dushya*: *dhatu* involved in this disorder are *rasa*, *rakta*, *asthi* and *majja*. *Mala* involved are *sweda* and *kesha*. *Mana* is also involved.
3. *Srotasa*: *Rasavaha*, *Raktavaha*, *Asthivaha*, *Swedavaha* and *Manovaha* *srotas* should be involved. As no disease can occur without the *dushti* of *jatharagni*, so *rasavaha* *srotas* must be affected. In the diseases of *raktavahasrotas*, *khalitya* (baldness) is mentioned clearly by *acharyas*, also in texts involvement of *asthivahasrotas* is quoted. Since stress is also a cause of *khalitya* (baldness), so *manovahasrotas* must be involved in those cases.
4. *Srotodusti*: the type of *srotodushti* in *khalitya* (baldness) is "sanga".

5. Agni: Jatharagni, Rasagni, Raktagni, Asthyagni
6. Rogamarga: Bahya
7. Udbhava: Amashaya
8. Adhisthana: Keshabhoomi

These points should be kept in mind before starting the treatment. *Charaka Samhita* describes that the patient of *Khalitya* (baldness) should be treated by *Nasya* (nasal instillation of medicine), *Tailabhyanga* on head & face and *Pralepa* (covering of body) on the head along with *Shodhan chikitsa*.

In *shodhanchikitsa*, *virechan* is considered to be best for *khalitya* (baldness) as the pathogenesis of *khalitya* (baldness) is *pitta* (doṣa responsible for regulating body temperature and metabolic activities) *Pradhan*. *Abhayadi modak* mentioned in *palitya chikitsa* can be used for *virechanas* the pathogenesis of both the disease is almost same¹⁹. Other than this *vaman* (therapeutic-emesis) can be performed if *kapha* (doṣa responsible for regulating body fluids and keeping the body constituents cohesive) is involved.

Leech therapy (a type of *raktamokshan* (blood letting) a) gives wonderful result in *khalitya* (baldness). *Leech* drains the impure blood caused by vitiated *Dosha* and balance *Pitta* (doṣa responsible for regulating body temperature and metabolic activities), *Rakt*, *Vata* (doṣa responsible for movement and cognition) *Dosha* which in turns hold the hair on scalp and open the blocked hair follicle which helps in regrowth of new hair follicles and hair.

As *khalitya* (baldness) is disorder of *shiro bhag*, *shodhan* of *shirobhag* is important. For the *shodhan* of *urdhavajatru*, *dhoompaan* (therapeutic smoking)²⁰ and *shodhannasya* (nasal instillation of medicine) are indicated.

Pradhamana nasya (nasal instillation of medicine) is indicated by *Acharya sushrut* in *khalitya* (baldness)²¹. *Yashtimadhukadyatailam nasya* (nasal instillation of medicine)²², *chandanadyatailam nasya* (nasal instillation of medicine)²³, *prapondrarikadyatailam nasya* (nasal instillation of medicine)²⁴, *Markavadhyatailam nasya* (nasal instillation of medicine)²⁵, *Vidarigandhaditailam nasya* (nasal instillation of medicine)²⁶, *Jambuadhyatailam nasya* (nasal instillation of medicine)²⁷, *Anutailamnasya* (nasal instillation of medicine)²⁸ can be done in *khalitya* (baldness).

Shiroabhyang is also useful in *khalitya* (baldness). Medicated oils are used for local application.

*Bhringaraj tailam*²⁹, *chitrakadya tailam*³⁰, *irimedadi tailam*³¹, *nilikadi tailam*³², *karanjadi tailam*³³, *adityapakguduchi tailam*³⁴, *malatyad tailam*³⁵, *snuhidugdhadi tailam*³⁶, *jambuadi tailam*³⁷, *dantapala tailam* can be used for *shiroabhyang*.

Lepa (covering of body) are also used for *khalitya* (baldness). *Gunjalepa* (covering of body)³⁸, *hastidanti masi lepa* (covering of body)³⁹, *bhallatakadilepa* (covering of body)⁴⁰, *kasisadilepa* (covering of body) with *kapittha swaras*⁴¹, *langlimulalepa* (covering of body) with *mahish dugdha*⁴² are used for *khalitya* (baldness).

Using these *shodhan* therapies along with *shamana* (pacifying therapy) and *rasayana* drugs, one can get rid of *khalitya* (baldness).

Shamana (pacifying therapy) and Rasayan (rejuvenation) therapy-

1. *Bhringaraj*⁴³: *Eclipta alba* promotes hair growth and stops and reverses balding and premature graying. *Bhringaraj* is used orally as well as applied externally in the form of oil.
2. *Brahmi*⁴³: If *brahmi* is taken internally it relaxes mind resulting into sound sleep. Hair pack when applied with curd gives dramatic results.
3. *Amla*⁴³: It is best hair tonic as it is a rich source of Vitamin C and antioxidants. In powdered form it can be mixed with *hina*, *brahmi* powders along with curd to make a thick hair pack.
4. *Neem*⁴³: This is a natural remedy against dandruff and lice and also has blood purifying properties. It can be used in powdered form with coconut oil or curd to massage scalp.
5. *Ritha*⁴³: These are natural soap nuts that are used for cleaning hair without stripping off the natural oils.
6. *Yashtimadhu*⁴⁴: *Keshya*, *Srotoshodhan*, *Rasayan*, *Immunomodulatory*, *Hepatoprotective*
7. *Jatamamsi*⁴⁵: several researches reported that *Nardostachys jatamansi* have hair growth activity
8. *Japa*⁴⁶: the leaf extract of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* has a potential effect on maintaining the hair growth in-vivo and in-vitro methods
9. *Tulsi*⁴⁷: *Orafidiya et al.* investigated the efficacy of the leaf essential oil of *Ocimum gratissimum* Linn. (*Ocimum* oil) in promoting hair growth in cyclophosphamide-induced hair loss and concluded that *ocimum* oil may be capable of enhanced normal hair growth and promoting follicular proliferation in cyclophosphamide-induced hair loss.

CONCLUSION:

From the above discussion it is clear that hair fall has various etiology. *Panchakarma* therapies can give good result if used properly according to etiology. *Shodhan* therapies followed by *shaman* drug or *rasayan* drugs with the maintenance of dietary regimen impart excellent result. Following *ritucharya* (*seasonal regimens*) and *dinacharya* (*daily regimen*) as mentioned in Ayurveda text, one can prevent these kind of disease. *Panchakarma* according to *ritu* and *nasya* (*nasal instillation of medicine*) *evamdhoompan* (*therapeutic smoking*) according to text will not only prevent this disease but will increase the quality of life.

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