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Review On Khalitya With Special Reference To Alopecia.

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Abstract:

In Ayurveda, Khalitya refers to hair fall. In the present era, millions of people are suffering from this condition. Khalitya is primarily a Pitta-dominant Tridoshajanya Vyadhi involving Vata, Pitta, Kapha, and Rakta Dosha. Hair adds beauty and enhances an individual's personality. Today, hair fall has become a common cosmetic concern, particularly among the young population. It is primarily due to changing lifestyles, unhealthy dietary habits, disturbed sleep patterns, systemic diseases, medications, and stress. Khalitya is described in Ayurveda under Kshudra Roga (minor diseases) or Shiroroga (diseases of the head and scalp). Sedentary living, stress, and poor nutrition contribute significantly to its progression. Most research focuses on Nasya, Raktamokshana, and Lepa. Various Ayurvedic formulations such as Bhringraja Taila, Malatyadi Tailam, Tila Taila, Asthiposhak Vati, and Rasayana drugs have been found effective in managing hair loss.

Introduction : Healthy, long, and vibrant hair enhances an individual's personality. Maintaining healthy hair is one's responsibility, as hair—like the face—reflects internal health. The problem of hair fall is steadily increasing and affects the quality of life. In Ayurveda, hair fall or hair loss is termed Khalitya. Acharya Sushruta classified it under Kshudra Roga[1], while Acharya Vagbhata placed it under Shiroroga[2].

Hair fall is a common problem; studies report prevalence rates of 60.3% for hair fall, 17.1% for dandruff, and 50.4% for baldness.[3] Around 50–60% of men and 20–40% of women experience noticeable hair loss in their lifetime. By age 50, 85% of men have significantly thinning hair, and 40–50% of women show visible thinning. Khalitya commonly affects individuals aged 18–40 years, and studies suggest that about 40% of men and 25% of women in India are affected.

Materials and Methods :

Literature from classical Ayurvedic texts (Brihat-Trayi and Laghu-Trayi), modern medical literature, and recent research publications were reviewed for this study.

Khalitya and Indralupta

Gradual hair fall is termed Khalitya. When Pitta combines with Vata or Kapha Dosha and destroys the hair, Khalitya occurs.[4] Acharya Charaka describes that the Tejas Dhatu (body heat), in association with Vata and other Doshas, scorches the hair roots, leading to alopecia.[5]

Indralupta is another term used for hair loss, differing from Khalitya. In Khalitya, hair loss is gradual and generalized, whereas in Indralupta, it occurs suddenly in patches. When Kapha Dosha combines with Rakta Dhatu, degeneration and closure of hair follicles occur, leading to baldness.

Vataja Khalitya – causes burning sensation over the scalp

Pittaja Khalitya – causes excessive sweating

Kaphaja Khalitya – causes thickening of scalp skin

Origin of Hair

Ayurveda explains that the body is composed of seven Dhatus: Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa, Meda, Asthi, Majja, and Shukra. Each Dhatu forms from the previous one through the action of its specific Agni. During Asthi Dhatu metabolism, Majja Dhatu develops from the Sara part, while hair and nails form from its Mala.[6]

According to Acharya Sharngadhara, scalp and body hair are Upadhatus of Majja Dhatu.[7] Among Garbhaj Bhava (factors for fetal development), hair is Pitrija Bhava—its structure, color, and quantity are inherited from the father.[8] Hair is primarily composed of the Prithvi Mahabhuta (earth element) and begins forming during the sixth month of intrauterine life.[9]

Modern Perspective

Modern science defines hair as a modified epithelial structure formed by keratinization of germinative cells. Hair is an epidermal appendage situated within the dermis.

Hair growth follows three phases:

Anagen (Growth Phase): lasts 3–5 years, involving 90% of scalp follicles.

Catagen (Transition Phase): lasts 2–3 weeks.

Telogen (Resting Phase): lasts 3–4 months, after which hair sheds naturally.

On average, 50–60 hairs are shed daily under normal physiological conditions.[10]

Causes of Hair Fall

According to Ayurveda

Pitta Prakriti individuals experience early hair fall and greying due to Ushna Guna of Pitta.

Excessive consumption of salt and Kshara.

Overexertion, anger, or inappropriate Nasya practices.

Decrease or vitiation of Asthi Dhatu.

According to Modern Science

Nutritional deficiencies

Local scalp disorders

Endocrine imbalances

Post-illness recovery

Psychological stress

Drugs and cosmetics

Genetic predisposition

Approach to a Patient of Khalitya

Hair fall can occur as a primary disease, secondary manifestation, or symptom of systemic disorders. A thorough history—covering medical, family, and personal aspects—along with general and systemic examinations, is essential for accurate diagnosis and management.

Management of Khalitya

1. Nidan Parivarjan (Avoidance of Causative Factors)

Primary line of management.

Individuals with Pitta Prakriti should follow specific diet and lifestyle is prescribed in Ayurveda.

Avoid excessive salt, Kshara, heat treatments, and chemical hair products.

Follow Ritucharya during rainy and autumn seasons.

Practice Rasayana therapy in premature aging.

Protect scalp from dust, smoke, sunlight, and avoid irregular sleep patterns.

2. Hair Care

Moordha Taila (Head Oil Application): Regular scalp massage prevents hair fall and strengthens roots. Use mustard or coconut oil.

Nasya (Nasal Therapy): Use Anu Taila during rainy, autumn, and spring seasons to nourish Srotas and promote hair growth.

Snana (Bathing): Avoid very hot or cold water. Wash hair thrice weekly using herbal decoctions (e.g., Bhringraj, Triphala, Shikakai, Aloe vera).

Dhoomapana (Medicated Smoke): Clears head region Doshas and strengthens scalp and teeth.

Kshaurakarma (Trimming): Regular cutting of hair and nails promotes scalp health.

3. Panchakarma Therapies

Vamana, Virechana, Basti, and Raktamokshana are indicated as per Dosha involvement.

Virechana and Raktamokshana are especially beneficial for Pitta-dominant Khalitya.

4. Medicated Oils for Shiroabhyanga

Neeli Taila (Sushruta)

Sairiyaka Taila (Sushruta)

Mahaneela Taila (A.H.)

Snuhyadi Taila (Chakradatta)

Chandanadhya Taila (Chakradatta)

5. Pastes for Local Application

Madhuka + Amalaki + Honey (A.S.)

Tila + Amalaki + Honey + Oil (A.S.)

Kapikakshu Mool + Aksha Taila (A.S.)

Dugdhika + Karveera + Milk (A.S.)

Kapalaranjaka Lepa, Bhringpushadi Lepa (Chakradatta)

6. Medicated Oils for Nasya

Anu Taila Nasya (A.S.)

Brihatyadi Navana, Sahacharadi Navana (A.S.)

Nimba Taila (Chakradatta)

Bhringaraja Rasa + Mulethi + Milk + Taila Paka (Chakradatta)

7. Rasayana and Formulations

Agastya Haritaki

Kankarishta

Dwipanchmool Ghrita

Amalaki Rasayana

Navayas Lauha

Mandoora Bhasma

Discussion

Khalitya is one of the most common cosmetic disorders affecting both young and old, often leading to psychological distress. Its pathophysiology involves Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa, and Asthivaha Srotas.

Research demonstrates significant benefits from Nasya, Raktamokshana, Basti, and Rasayana therapies. Nasya acts effectively on Urdhvajatrugata Vyadhis, nourishing the scalp through the vascular nasal mucosa. Raktamokshana purifies vitiated Rakta and Pitta, opening blocked follicles. Basti therapy nourishes Asthi Dhatu, indirectly strengthening hair roots. Rasayana therapy serves as an anti-aging treatment, reversing premature hair fall by rejuvenating tissues.

Thus, Panchakarma procedures combined with Ayurvedic formulations are effective in managing Khalitya.

Conclusion

Individuals with Pittaja Prakriti are more susceptible to Khalitya. Numerous Ayurvedic formulations possess Keshya (hair-promoting) and Asthiposhaka (bone-nourishing) properties. Research has confirmed the efficacy of Nasya, Basti, and Raktamokshana in treating hair loss. Hence, Khalitya can be effectively managed through Panchakarma therapies and Ayurvedic drugs—offering safe, natural, and holistic care without side effects.

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