

A Critical Review on Shirodhara through Scientific Approach

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ABSTRACT

Shirodhara comes from the two Sanskrit words “shiro” (head) and “dhara” (flow). It is an Ayurvedic healing technique that involves having someone pour liquid- usually oil , milk , buttermilk or water – onto your forehead. Acharya Vagbhatta has described four types of Murdha Tail i.e., Abhyanga ,Parishek, Pichu , and Shirobasti , which is successively more beneficial than the previous one. Shirodhara or Shiroparishechan is one of them. Indication of Shirodhara was found in our ancient textbooks in various diseases like Ardhavabhedaka, Suryavarta, Ardita, Pakshaghata, Hanugraha, Akshishula, Nidranasha, ShirogataVata and Shirahkampa. To influence and enhance the perception , it is needed to have the critical analysis regarding the apparent mode of action of procedure in performing shirodhara .

Keywords : Shirodhara, Ayurveda, forehead , dravyas.

I. INTRODUCTION

The word Shiro , which suggests head, and Dhara, which suggests flow , are derived from Sanskrit. Shirodhara is an Ayurvedic treatment during which heated liquids are gently poured over the forehead in a specific manner and height .[1] Shirodhara comes in various variations, including Tailadhara , Takradhara, Ksheeradhara, Jaladhara and Kwathdhara . Traditionally this process is included under Snehana Karma instead of being explained under Panchkarma. The Ayurveda describes Murdhatailam as having four types: Shiroabhyanga, Shirosheka , Shiropicchu, and Shirobasti[2]. It is one of the Bahya Snehana (external oleation therapy) procedures that involves applying Snehana to the head or gently pouring liquids over the forehead and has been used to treat neurological diseases , psychosomatic disorders. These diseases damage people’s quality of life , create anxiety , depression , and reduced capacity to function, additionally to being a disease condition. The physical condition is compared to an inverted tree in Ayurveda, with the top serving

as the trunk and the other organs as the branches. [3] Therefore the head controls every system ; hence application of drugs in the form of Shirodhara , on the top can cure much disease of different parts of the body

Indications of Shirodhara

- * Conditions involving aggravated Vata Dosha
- * Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- * Apasmar
- * Anxiety disorder
- * Brain –Fog
- * Irritability
- * Hypertension
- * Insomnia
- * Phobia, Depression, and other Neurological and Behavioural Disorders.[4,5]

Contraindications of Shirodhara

- In kaphaja vikaras
- Inflamed skin
- Drugs or Alcohol Intoxication
- Pyrexia [6]

Procedure of Shirodhara

The Shirodhara Procedure is divided into 3 parts

1. Purva karma
2. Pradhana karma
3. Paschata karma [7]

Purva Karma

Materials required : ShirodharaPatra , Shirodhara Stand, Shirodhara table, Gauze, , Cotton, Earplug, Vessels, Soft Towels , Suitable oil /milk/ any liquid.

Preparation of the Patient – The Patient is thoroughly examined whether he is fit or not for procedure. Patient should be advised to pass stool and urine. Pulse , Temperature and Blood Pressure of the patients should be recorded. Patient is

advised to lie down in supine position and dharapatra should be fixed 4 angula above the forehead . The eye and ear should be covered with cotton to prevent the entry of liquid into eyes.

Selection of sneha - According to Dharakalpa , sneha is taken according to the condition of dosha- [8]

VataDosha –TilaTaila [9]

Pitta Dosha –Ghrita

KaphaDosha- TilaTaila

RaktaDosha –Ghrita

Vata+ Pitta + Rakta – Ghrita and Taila in equal portion

Vata+Kapha+ Rakta- ½ part Ghrita and 1 part Tila Taila [10].

Pradhana Karma

Shirodhara room should be cleaned well , ventilated , and very quiet. Shirodhara is done in the morning time on empty stomach after massage . Any type of liquid (taila, milk, kwatha, water) should be kept in dharapatra. Dhara should be poured continuously on forehead neither very fast or slow. The liquid of shirodhara should not be too hot or too cold . The stream of dhara liquid is moved in the pendulum manner starting from lateral side to the other lateral side . The liquid is collected in other vessel kept and is used to refill the dharapatra before its becomes empty . This is done for at least ½ hour process in the morning upto 14/21 days. Temperature of liquid for Shirodhara should be above to the body temperature. It should not be too thick or thin. When the liquid starts pouring then the vessel

Period of changing the liquid- When milk and water is used in Shirodhara , it should be changed everyday. When dhanyamla is used it can be used upto 3 days. The oil also should be changed every 3rdday , but in the other half of the oil should be used , for next 3 days and on the 7th day all the first and second half both are mixed together , then it should be an be reused , so in the first 3 days, half of the oil should be used , for next 3 days , discarded.

Paschata Karma

After the Shirodhara process is completed ; the head of the patient should be wiped out and dried . This is followed by a short duration of rest and massage of the body including head with oil and then a lukewarm bath. Patient is advised to have a Pathya(laghu) ahara .

Diet and Lifestyle

Light digestible food is recommended on the days of treatment. Fried and refrigerated foods and heavy foods are avoided. Hot and fresh should be taken. Hot water should be used for drinking and bathing purposes.

Probable mode of action of shirodhara
Tranquilizing effect

Continous pouring of taila on forehead for a specific period has Tranquilizing effect and induces sleep. According to modern science local applications as ointment pass through the stratum corneum into blood vessels and produces desirable effects by reaching the target organ. The continous pouring of oil in relaxed and comfortable position has an additional effect which can be compared to cradling of a mother to a child. This function act as a sedative and soothing effect for the brain and produces sleep. Medicated oil poured on fore-head may be absorbed , producing tranquilizing effect by reaching the brain cortex. [10]

Effect on Autonomic Nervous System

Shirodhara may also have alpha adrenergic blocking effect and can thus block certain actions of adrenaline and nor adrenaline.

Effect on Endocrine System

The effect of Shirodhara on hormone secretion can also be postulated considering the effect on hypothalamus as hypothalamus is the main controller of endocrine secretions. The hypothalamic neurons which secrete the regulatory hormones are themselves under the control of specialized monoaminergic ; neurotransmitter neurons which arise in mid brain.

Regulation of Emotional and Behavioural Patterns

Together with the limbic system with the hypothalamus regulates the feeling of rage , aggression, pain and pleasure and behavioural patterns of sexual arousal. Shirodhara may have effect on hypothalamus resulting in decrease of most of the psychic and somatic disorder .

Effect of Temperature in Shirodhara Procedure

The continous flow of warm liquid on the forehead for such a long period will cause mild vasodilatation. Shirodhara improves the circulation in these areas and help in regularization the blood supply of the brain.

II. CONCLUSION

Shirodhara is a crucial therapeutic technique in the Ayurvedic medical system, which has gained popularity throughout the world due to its ease of use and effectiveness in treating a wide range of illnesses and lifestyle conditions. It is purifying and revitalizing therapy that relieves stress and any negative effects on the central nervous system, as well as toxins and mental tiredness.

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