



Unlocking lustrous Locks: Role of Pathya-Apathya in Hair Health

Chitra Sharan, Suman Panwar

Postgraduate Scholar, HOD & Professor

Department of Dravyaguna Vigyan, SDACH, ChandigarhSKAU, Kurukshetra

INTRODUCTION

Hair has a great aesthetic value for ages and in today's world. To keep hair in healthy state is duty of an individual as this is the mirror of their health. The main reason behind the upsurge of hair problems is more frequently seen due to extremely busy working schedules, environmental pollution and unhealthy dietary habits. In ayurveda many daily regimes for hair health have been mentioned thousand years ago. Some of the modalities are the concept of *Dinacharya* (Daily health promotional activities) and *Ritucharya* (Health promotional activities during specific season), *Ahara* (Specific dietary regimen), *Pathya* (Complementary to medications), *Apathya* (Contradictory to medications) etc. these modalities could be the health promotion approaches in the present world. The holistic approach in ayurveda towards *ahara* furthermore deals with various aspects like food combination, quantity of food, method of preparation, their emotional effect, nature of consumer along with the environmental factors. No classical ayurvedic treatment is complete without *Pathya* and *Apathya*, *Ahara-Vihara* (dietary and activity routine consideration). Vihar also plays an important role in the treatment of diseases as same as *ahara*. The practice of *Sadvritta* and *Achara Rasayan* keeps the balance of *mansik guna* and *dosha*. By the equilibrium of *mansik dosha* (mental health), the *sharirik dosha* (physical health) also stays balanced.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The article is based on review of Ayurvedic classical texts and research papers. Various Ayurvedic classics i.e., *Charak Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Samgraha* and *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Laghutrayi*, commentaries on Ayurveda classics, Ayurveda textbooks, peer reviewed journal were thoroughly studied. This data was analyzed in view of *pathya ahara-vihara* and *apathya ahara-vihara* in accordance with hair related problems.

Literature Review- Acharya Charak stated that “*Anna Vrittikaranam*” i.e, *ahara* is most important for healthy life. *Rasadi dhatus* are formed by *ahara rasa* and *ahara* improves the *ushma*, *upchaya* of *dhatus*, *bala*, *varna*, *sukha* and *ayu*.^[1] “*Ahara sambhavastu rogachahara sambhava*” i.e. the life as well as treatment of disease only possible by *ahara*.^[2] Acharya Kashyap says that “*aarogya bhojana adheene*” i.e. health directly depends upon food.^[3]

Importance of Pathya Apathya in Ayurveda

Charak explained Pathya (wholesome regimen) as

पथं पथोऽनपेतं यद्यच्चोक्तं मनसः प्रियम् | यच्चाप्रियमपथं च नियतं तन्न लक्षयेत् ॥

The dietetic and daily activities that do not adversely affect the body systems and are liked by the mind are regarded as *pathya* (wholesome). Likewise, diet and activities that adversely affect the body system and are disliked by the mind are regarded as *apathya* (unwholesome).^[4] Acharya Lolimbakra has mentioned in *Vaidyak Jeevan*

पथे सति गदार्तस्य किमौषधिनिषेवणैः । पथेऽसति गदार्तस्य किमौषधिनिषेवणैः ॥

If an individual consumes *pathya ahara* then there is no need for medicine and if anyone consumes *apathya ahara*, then there is no need for medicine (medicine will not give the desired results).^[5]

Synonyms of Pathya and Apathya^[6]

Pathya- *Satmya*, *Swasth-hitakara*, *Upshaya*, *Swavasthaparipaalaka*, *Hita-Ahara*, *Swasthaaurjaskara*, *Sharmakara*, *Dhatu-Avirodhi*, *Sukha-parinaamkara*, *Dhatu- Saamyakara*. **Apathya-** *Asatmya*, *Swastha-Ahitkara*, *Ahitkara*, *Anupashaya*, *Asukha*.

According to Acharya Charak *Vihara* is useful in many diseases. Acharya Chakrapanidatta mentioned the role of *vihara* under the topic of *Upshaya*. *Yogaratanakara* stated three important aspects that should be investigated prior to starting the treatment are the etiology of the ailment, the drug to be utilized and the *pathya*. *Yogaratanakara* explains simile of an *Ankura* (seedling) for progressive form of the disease. The *Ankura* will dry and be destroyed if it is not nourished by water; likewise, disease will be destroyed if a patient follows *pathya ahara* and *vihara*.^[7]

प्राणाःप्राणभृतामन्नमन्त्रलोकोऽभिधावति । वर्णःप्रसादःसौस्वर्यजीवितंप्रतिभासुखम् ॥

As Lord Atreya had mentioned in *Charak Samhita*, the source of life for all living beings is food and the world seeks food. *Varna* (Complexion), *Prasada* (clarity), *Swarya* (good voice), *Jeevitam* (long life), *Pratibha* (intelligence), *Sukham* (happiness) are all established by the food.^[8]

Hair and Hair diseases in Ayurveda

In *Ayurveda*, the word “*Kesha*” generally has been used for scalp hair as is evident from its derivation – “*śī + ac + aluk samas*” which has been explained as “*ke mastake śete iti*”.^[9] However, specific terms have been used for various types of hair depending upon the area of their growth on the body. The terms like *keśa*, *kuntal*, *cikura*, *bāla*, *śīroruha* have been used for scalp hair; *roma* & *loma* for body hair; *pakṣma* for eyelashes; *bhrāmaka* for eyebrows and *śmaṣru* for face (beard & moustaches).^[10] Commonly encountered diseases of hair include *indralupta* / *khālitya* (alopecia / baldness), *pālitya* (premature greying of hairs), *dāruṇaka* (dandruff), and *aruṃṣikā* (seborrheic dermatitis). *Āyurveda* offers various treatment modalities for managing these hair-related problems. *Charaka* and *Vagabhata* have mentioned hair diseases under *shiroroga* while *Sushruta* described under *Kshudra roga*. The pathogenesis of these ailments is mentioned as

1. **Khalitya-** In *Charaka Samhita* the pathogenesis is explained as “*Teja* along with *Vatadi Dosha*, scorch the *Keshbhoomi* to produce *Khalitya*”. In *Chakrapani* commentary, this is illustrated that *Dehoshma* must be understood by the word *Teja* and *Dehoshma* is directly linked to *Pitta*.^[11] *Acharya Susruta* has described the pathogenesis in following way that *Pitta* along with *Vata* enters the *Romakupa* (hair roots) and produces *Khalitya* whereas the elevated *Kapha* dosha along with *Rakta* obstructs the *Romakupa* thus preventing the production of new hair. Additionally, *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned various factors which vitiate *Vatadi dosha* by which *Shirogata rakta* also gets vitiated and gives rise to different *Shiroroga*. Thus, the pathogenesis described by various *Acharya* results that the *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha Dosha* and *Rakta Dushya* are the main internal contributory factors of *Khalitya*.^[12]
2. **Palitya-** *Hetu sevan* like *krodha*, *shrama* etc elevates *shariroshma* which further vitiates *pitta* leading to change in color of hair. This change in hair color is called *Palitya*. According to *Charaka*, all three doshas are involved in aetiopathogenesis of *Palitya*, while according to *Sushruta* only ‘*Pitta*’ *Dosha* is involved.
3. **Darunaka-** *Ayurvedic* texts mentioned hair disorders like *Darunaka* is due to the vitiated *Vata* and *Kapha* dosha. In *Darunaka*, one suffers from dead tissue shedding from the scalp with symptoms like *Kandu*, *Kesha Chyuti*, *Rukshata*, etc. and the scalp develops hardness, scratchy, and flakes.

Hair nutrition

The body is maintained by the nourishment gained from the type of food it gets (eatables, drinkables, chewable food) and these could be the cause of ailments. Intake of *pathya* and *apathya* food results in positive health and diseases respectively.^[13] Different types of *pathya* foods consumed in the form of eatables, drinkables, lickables and masticables stimulate the *jathragni* (digestive process) and get properly digested by respective *bhutagni* (specific digestion as per basic constituent or element). Further in due course of time, the ingested food gets transformed into subsequent *dhatu* in presence of *dhatvagni* (the tissue specific digestion and metabolism) and the specific *vata* (*vyana vayu*) by the process of *dhatvagnipaka* or the metabolism, through the channels of circulation the nourishment to the tissues goes without any interruption, and produces health, vigor and vitality. The tissues are sustained by getting fed by various nourishing factors (*poshaka dhatu*).^[14] *Sushruta* described the nutrition *kesha* receives is from the end part of *dhamanis* which are attached to the

romakupa.^[15] The *Asthi dhatu* has arisen from *Meda dhatu*. The *Prasada* and the *Kitta* portion are segregated and the *Kitta* portion of it is *Kesha* or hair on the scalp. In *Sharangdhara Samhita*, *Kesha* are described as the *Upadhatu* of *Majja dhatu*.^[16] The hair has been considered as *Pitiraja bhava* (paternal factor). It is also mentioned that *kesha* is *Parthiva dravya* because of its characteristic roughness, steadiness, and heaviness.^[17]

Samprapti Ghataka in Hair Diseases ^[18]

<i>Dosha</i>	• <i>Vata – Samana Vayu, Vyana Vayu</i> • <i>Pitta- Pachaka Pitta, Bhrajaka Pitta</i> • <i>Kapha- Tarpaka Kapha</i>
<i>Dushya</i>	• <i>Dhatu- Rasa, Rakta, Asthi</i> • <i>Updhatu - Tvaka</i> • <i>Mala- Sweda, Kesha</i>
<i>Agni</i>	• <i>Jatharagni</i> • <i>Rasagni</i> • <i>Asthyagni</i>
<i>Srotas</i>	• <i>Rasavaha</i> • <i>Raktavaha</i> • <i>Asthivaha</i> • <i>Swedavaha</i> • <i>Manovaha</i>
<i>Srotodushti prakara</i>	• <i>Sanga</i> • <i>Vimarga gamana</i>
<i>Udbhava Sthana</i>	<i>Amashya</i>
<i>Sanchara</i>	<i>Rasavaha Srotas</i>
<i>Adhistan</i>	<i>Keshbhumi</i>
<i>Rogamarga</i>	<i>Bahya Rogmarg (Including Trimarma Shira)</i>
<i>Roga swabhava</i>	<i>Mridu</i>

Apathya For Hair

Vata prakopa hetu:

Aharaja	Sheeta guna Pradhan
Viharaja	Vegavidharana (Suppression of the natural urges) Abhyangadwesha (Massage unwillingness) Excess exposure to raja (dust), dhooma (smoke), hima (cold) Avashyaya (Exposure to frost at night) Prajagarana (Waking very early) Ratri jagran (Waking at night) Sheetambu Sevana (Use of very cold water) Atimaithuna (Excessive sex act) Prakvata (Facing east winds) AsatmyaGandha (Inhalation of unwholesome odours)
Mansika	Ati shoka (extreme grief) Ati- bhaya (extreme fear) Manah tapa (Mental affliction) Rodana (Excessive weeping)
Agantuja	Shiroabhighata (Head injury)

Pitta Prakopaka Hetu:

Aharaja	Excess intake of salt, sour and alkaline (kshara) Harit saka ati sevan (excessive intake of green leafy vegetable), sarshapa Madya sevan, Sauviraaka Vidahi anna, Dadhi Pinyaka (residue after oil extraction) Kulatha daal, Matsya, Aja-maans, Aavika maans
Viharaja	Uchaibhashya (Talking too loudly) Aatapa sevan (Excess exposure to heat) Hot water head bath ^[21]
Mansika	Atikrodha (extreme anger)

Kapha prakopaka Hetu:

Aharaja	Guru sheeta ahara (heavy and sweet food) Atisheetambu sevana (excessive cold-water intake) Atyaambu sevan (excessive water intake)
Viharaja	Divaswapna (Day sleep) Exposure to tushara (dew drops) Mruja (unhygienic)

Rakta prakopaka Hetu:

Aharaja	Harit saka ati sevan (excessive intake of green leafy vegetable) Dushta (Undigested or semi-digested material)
Aagantuja	Shiroabhighata

Pathya For Hair

Ahara	Rasayan yog ^[19] (Chyavanprash, Amalaka Rasayan, Brahma rasayan, Markava rasayan, Narsimha rasayan, Krishan tila rasayan)
Vihara ^[20]	Shiroabhyanga, Nasya, Moordha taila, Snana, Dhoompana, Kshaura karma, Ushnishka, Shirolepa, Yogasana

Yog asana

The practice of Yoga is beneficial for hair growth as it increases blood circulation to head and scalp region, which is nutrient for brain and hair. Some asana stimulates and refreshes both body and mind. The relaxation techniques and meditation are quite effective to reduce stress. Some Yogasana beneficial for hair health are Vajrasana (the thunderbolt pose), Shirsasana (the headstand pose), Sarvangasana (Shoulder stand pose), Bhujangasana (the cobra pose), Kapalabhati (Rapid breathing technique of pranayama) , Anuloma viloma (Alternate nostril breathing), Shashankasana (the pose of the moon), Ushtrasana (the camel pose), Pawanmuktasana (the knee to chest pose), Uttanasana (Bending straight forward pose) , Sasangasana (Rabbit Pose).

DISCUSSION

Increase in incidences of hair related problems may be attributed to changes in diet and lifestyle. In this new era, the lifestyle of most people is disturbed resulting in altered *tridosha*. Night shifts jobs, frequent long travelling disturb *vata dosha*, caffeinated drinks, processed food containing strong preservatives alters *pitta dosha*. Processed food and junk food are in trend nowadays. These foods have high levels of processed ingredients, sugar, salt and acidic contents, and can affect hair health. These foods often replace nutrient rich foods leading to vitamin and mineral deficiency. Poor nutrition can impede hair growth. The fast-paced lifestyle can have detrimental effects on hair health. Physical factors as environmental exposure to pollution, radiation and temperature fluctuations can damage hair. Social environment and work atmosphere contributes to disturbed emotional and mental factors, causes stress, anxiety, lack of proper sleep cycles, mental fatigue

which can negatively impact hair health. Incorporating *Ayurvedic pathya-apathya* principles in our day-to-day lifestyle can mitigate the side effects on hair, resulting in healthy vibrant hair.

As main objective of *Ayurveda* is to maintain the health of healthy individuals & relieve the suffering of diseased people. Everything for maintaining health is well described in *Ayurveda* which includes following *Dincharya* (Daily regimen), *Ritucharya* (Seasonal regimen) etc. *Nidana parivarjana* is a must to maintain health and get the best result of the treatment. Proper following of *pathya- apathya* mentioned in *Ayurvedic* texts improves health significantly. Understanding proper diet and lifestyle routine in healing is of utmost significance. No classical treatment in ayurveda is complete without *pathya-apathya*. The diet for hair should be homologous to *Prithivi mahabhuta* as hair mainly composed of *Prithivi mahabhuta*. [20] Avoid all the factors responsible for the disease like *Pitta prakopaka ahara* (*amla, lavana, katu rasa*) as in *Charak Samhita* it is mentioned that excessive consumption of *amla* (sour), *lavana* (salty) and *kshara* (corrosive) cause *khalitya* and blocks the hair growth. Following daily and seasonal regimes (*Shiroabhyang, Nasya Karma, Kshour Karma* etc.) will help in sustaining good health as well as healthy hair. Various *Rasayana* medicines are mentioned in Ayurvedic classical texts for healthy hair. Monitor anger, stress, extreme temperature variations etc., *pitta prakriti* individual must follow *ritucharya* during *varsha* and *sharad ritu* to have a check on *pitta dosha*. From perspective of *shad-rasatmak ahara*, *Madhura* (sweet), *Tikta* (bitter), and *Kashya* (astringent) *rasa* promote hair growth and hair health. All the metals are heavy as *Prithvi mahabhuta* is dominant therefore food rich in iron and calcium. In the ayurvedic texts most of the herbs which are beneficial for hairs have *Tikta–Kashaya–Madhur rasa* which pacifies *pitta*, *Ruksha Guna* and *Ushna Virya* pacifies *Vata*, and *Katu Vipaka* pacifies *Kapha dosha*. *Amalaki, Narikela, Brahmi, Bhringraj* can be used internally and externally. Yoga increases blood flow to the head and provides nourishment to the hair.

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