

A CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF SHIROPICHU IN THE MANAGEMENT OF SHIRAHSHOOLA

Kiran Raj

H.O.D & Professor, Govt.Ayurveda College, Vadodara, Gujarat, India

Email: dr.kiranraj11@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

One of the challenging and very common conditions in current modern era is headache. At present all age groups from young to old are affected by it. People in our country have increased desires for all types of modern amenities and hence are working exhaustively for earning more money. This has led to irregular and deficit diet pattern, lifestyle changes, suppression of natural urges and lack of proper sleep in all young generation. So, headache has been seen as a very commonly occurring condition in our today's practice. Modern medications do not help much as analgesics have their own aftereffects. Hence it is the need of time to bring forward such treatment options which do not cause much side-effect and give positive results in the management of headache with minimal use of oral drugs. Among the different treatment modalities of *MurdhaTailam* described in *Ayurveda Shiropichu* is one of the commonly practiced procedures in the disorders of head & scalp. *Shiro Pichu* is the best treatment which *Ayurveda* advises for curing distress relaxing and to get rid of many psychosomatic disorders. It can be done as a daily OPD level treatment. It can also be used as preventive measure in different stressful conditions. Treatment of diseases pertaining to body, mind and all our sense organs is the greatest benefit of *Shiro Pichu*. *Shirahshoola* is a disease as described in *Ayurveda* which involves all kinds of headache we come across in today's present era.

Keywords: *Shiropichu, Murdhatailam, Shirahshoola, Stress, Psychosomatic*

INTRODUCTION

Headache is one of the commonest symptoms, and primary headache disorders are among the most ubiquitous disorders, affecting people in all countries [1]. India appears to be no exception. The Global Burden of Disease Study

2010 (GBD2010) found tension-type headache (TTH) and migraine to be the 2nd and 3rd most prevalent disorders worldwide [2]. Headache disorders, which are characterized by recurrent headache, are associated with

personal and societal burdens of pain, disability, damaged quality of life, and financial cost. Despite regional variations, headache disorders are a worldwide problem, affecting people of all ages, races, income levels and geographical areas. It is not only a painful condition but it also results into disability of life by leading a patient to anxiety and depression. In *Ayurveda* human body is compared to an inverted tree wherein the head is the main part of the body and other organs are its branches, so the head controls every system. Hence application of medicine on the head (cranium) can cure many diseases of different parts of body. *Murdha Tailam* is one of the effective methods to deal with the different types of neurological disorders in which *Shiropichu* shows good results in headache. It is a simple day to day procedure which can be performed even by the patient himself/herself. It does not require much equipments and drugs yet gives relief in headache. *Shiropichu* works in psychosomatic disorders.

Conceptual Study

Definition:

Shiro Pichu is a word comprising of 2 terms, *Shiro* meaning head, *Pichu* meaning a swab or sterile cotton pad or a sterile cloth dipped in medicated oils.

Pichu is one of the palliative treatments in *Ayurveda* used for neuropathic conditions involving the head region or headache and disorders of spine. In this treatment procedure a thick cotton pad or sterile cloth dipped in ample amounts of lukewarm medicated oils or *ghrita* is applied on the top of the head for a specific time interval. The swab is replaced

periodically to maintain the warm temperature. It is used in different diseases but when used in the head region it is termed as *Shiropichu*.

Thus *Shiro Pichu* means an *Ayurvedic* treatment procedure which includes keeping a sterile cotton pad dipped in herbal oils on the crown of the head at the *Brahmrandra* (anterior fontanelle) and wrapping it up with a bandage cloth.

The application of medicine at the vertex region of the head has different methods like *Shiro Abhyanga*, *Shiropichu*, *Shirodhara*, *Shirobasti*, wherein the *Shiropichu* is the easiest and simplest treatment modality.

Nidaana of Shirahshoola[3]

- *Vegavarodha, Divaswapana, Ratrijagara, Madya sevana, Uccha bhashana*
- *Avashyaya, Purvivata, Atimaitihuna, Asatmya gandha, Aghata, Raja, Hima Dhuma, Atapa*
- *Guru ahara, Amla ahara, Harita dravya sevana, Ati-sheet ambusevana*
- *Shirobhighata, Dushta ama, Rodana, Ashruvega nigraha, Meghagama, Manasa santapa*
- *Deshaviprayaya, Kalaviparyaya, Utsveda, Pratetekshana*

Pathogenesis of Shirahshoola

According to *Ayurveda* it is separate disease entity which has symptoms and pathology as per the *Doshika* involvement. *Acharya Sushruta* describes 11 types of *Shirahshoola* in which 7 are according to *Kapha*, *Pitta*, *Vata* and *Rakta* involvement individually as well as combined.

In *Vatika Shirahshoola* aggravated *Vayu* causes pain in the head which is severe at night and it resolves on application of *Ushna/Sheet Chikitsa*. [4] But here we can deduce that due to increase *Kapha/Pitta* there is *Vimargaman* of *Vayu* and hence it causes *Shirahshoola*. Modern science terms it as neuralgia.

In *Paitika Shirahshoola* aggravated *Pitta* causes burning pain in the head which increases at daytime and subsides in the night. [5] Here we can say it occurs due to *Pitta prakopa* where the patient is fasting, travelling, starving which cause increase in *Pitta*. Modern science terms it as bilious headache.

In *Kaphaja Shirahshoola* aggravated *Kapha* causes headache with stiffness, cold and cough and heaviness in head. [6] It subsides on *Ushna Chikitsa*. This can be described as common cold and cough associated headache as well as headaches involving increase in *Kapha* which causes *vimargaman* of *Vayu* causing *Shoola*. This refers to catarrhal headache and sinus involvement.

A headache due to the vitiated condition of the local blood manifests all the symptoms of the *Pittaja* type, and the head becomes incapable of (bearing) the least touch. This is known as the *Raktaja-Siroroga*.

A headache incidental to the lack of the local *Vasa* (fat) or *Kapha* is marked by an intolerable pain (*Abhi-tapa*) in the head which is aggravated by the application of fomentation, fumigation, errhine, emesis and blood-letting. This is termed as *Kshyaja Shiroroga*.

A headache caused by involvement of *Krimi* (infections) is called *Krimija Shiroroga*.

Sannipataja Shirahshula is caused by vitiation of all three *doshas*.

In *Ardhavbhedaka Vata* provoked with various *Nidanas*, it alone or alongwith *Kapha* seizes the one half of head and causes acute neuralgic pain in the sides of the neck, eyebrow.[7]

In *Suryavarta* at Night which is *Swabhavatah Sheeta- Tamoguna* and *Kapha Sanchaya* occurs which cause *Vayu Marga-Avrodha* and *Vata Prakopa* that leads to *Shirobhitapa* in the morning.[8]

In *Anantvata* all the three *doshas* get vitiated and lead to *Vata Prakopa* which causes pain at the neck, eyes, eyebrows, temples.[9]

In *Shankhak* there is acute pain in the tempero parietal region of the head. The pain is similar to burning sensation, one can find swelling of the face and this headache is so severe which lasts for 3days. In Modern medical terms it is called as venous sinuses and is very difficult to cure.

In modern science the pathogenesis depends upon the type of headache. But mostly neuro-muscular and neurovascular involvement is described there.

Chikitsa

In *Vataj Shirahshula Ushna evam Sheet Chikitsa* has been mentioned. On using *Ushna Chikitsa Kapha* declines and by *Sheeta chikitsa Pitta* deteriorates hence making the way for *Vayu*, which when undergoes *Swamargagan* pain in the head subsides.

In *Pittaj Shirahshula* having regular meals and maintaining proper rules during travelling and outing in the sun can remove excess *Pitta* and

hence pain in the head subsides. Similar applies in *Raktaj*

Shirahshula.

Kaphaj Shirahshula subsides with application of *Ushna chikitsa* which lead to expelling of *Kapha dosha* and thus relieving headache.

And in all the other types of headache that is in *Ardhambhedaka*, *Suryavarta*, *Anantvata* various treatment modalities like *Nasya*, *Shirolepa*, *Shiroparishkek*, *Shirodhara*, *Shirobasti*, etc have been advised.

In the treatment of different types of headache according to *Doshik* involvement various medications are advised but alongwith them *Shiropichu* is very supportive as a palliative treatment for giving better results.

Shiropichu falls into the category of *Murdhni Tailam* which has 4 different procedures of application of drug on the head. *Shiropichu* is the simplest and easiest one amongst all 4 of them. It is a type of *Bahya Snehana Karma*. In *Murdha tailam* as we go for application of drug for prolonged time the efficacy of the treatment enhances.[10]

Procedure of Shiropichu

PurvaKarma-

After careful assessment, it is decided if *Shiro Pichu* is suitable to the disease and the patient. As it is a daily OPD based procedure no preparations are required for it.

Materials needed for the treatment are collected beforehand.

The basic material needed for *Shiro Pichu* is oil. The oils can be selected and prepared according to the *Dosha* involved in the type of *Shirahshoola*.

List of oils that can be used for Shiropichu[11]

Shuddha Bala Taila (Vata Roga Shamak)

Ksheer Bala Taila (Vata Shamak)

Bala Ashwagandhadi Taila (Pushtikar Vata Shamak)

Bala Guduchyadi Taila (Raktanugat Vata roga Har)

Lakshadi Taila (Tridosha Shamak)

Aarnaladi Taila (Daha-Peeda Nashak)

Pinda Taila (Shoolahara)

Amrutotar Taila (Shirodaha nashak)

Chandanadi Taila (Pitta shamak)

Mashadi Taila (shiropida shamak)

Triphaladi Taila (Shiropida Nashak)

AsanBilwadi Taila (Shiropida-Karnaroga-Netraroga)

Manjishthadi Taila (netra and shiro ruja nashak)

Bala Hathadi Taila (Shiropida Nashak)

Bala Dhatryadi Taila (Shiropida-Netradaha Shamak, Vata Pitta Shaman)

Tungdrumadi Taila (Shiropida-Netrarog)

Amrutadi Taila (Shiropida-Pitta Shaman)

Neeli Nirgundyadi Taila (Kaphashaman)

Neeli Nishadi Taila (Shiropida)

Durvadi Taila

Tiladi Taila

Prasarani Taila (Vata-Rakta Shamak)

Method of application of *Shiropichu*

Purvakarma-

Other materials needed –

Small vessels for heating oil

Large vessels for heating water

Spoons

Stove for heating

Sterile cotton pads or sterile bandage cloth folded and cut in the form of square shaped swab or pad

Bandage cloth for tying the *Pichu*

Sterile clothes, sponges, napkins or tissue papers for wiping etc.

Pradhan Karma-

The patient is made to sit on a comfortable chair, facing East or North direction. The doctor, therapist (masseur) or attendant (while doing at home) who is conducting the treatment should take the small bowl filled with the medicated oil (chosen for the treatment). The temperature of the oil should be checked. It should be luke warm and not too hot.

Procedure of heating the oil –

The oil used for *Pichu* should not be heated directly on fire. The oil is taken in a small bowl. Another big vessel should be filled with water, kept on fire (stove) and heated until it boils. The small bowl consisting of the oil should be placed over the boiling water. The oil should be allowed to get warm passively. The bowl should be removed after checking the temperature of the oil with the help of sterile fingers and after making sure that it is warm.

The masseur takes a small amount of the heated oil in his hands. He applies a small amount of oil first on the crown of the head.

Preparation of Gauze piece or sterile pad (*Pichu*) –

Take sterile cotton and make a thick pad out of it such that it is square in shape. This gauze pad is interposed between layers of bandage cloth. Alternatively the cotton pad is kept on

the bandage cloth and the bandage cloth is wound around the pad 3-4 times such that the cotton pad is locked within the bandage cloth. The extra hanging edges of the bandage cloth and or cotton are cut and trimmed into a pad of uniform dimension.

Soaking the pad or *Pichu* –

The *Pichu* or cotton pad thus prepared is now dipped in the warm oil in the small bowl. It is left in place until the whole pad gets wet with the oil. This is an indication that the gauze piece or cotton pad or *Pichu* has absorbed the oil.

Placing the *Pichu* on the head of the patient

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The *Pichu* soaked with oil is squeezed along the borders of the bowl to remove excess oil. Otherwise, the oil will start dropping all over the body after the pad has been kept on the scalp. The *Pichu* is now kept on the crown of the head. The pad is now wrapped with another thin pad.

Tying the bandage cloth –

Now the sterile bandage cloth is tied around the *Pichu* in such a way that the bandage cloth takes 3-4 windings starting from the crown of the head and going behind the left ear, down the chin and upwards and behind the right ear and over the crown once again.

The free ends of the bandage cloth are tied and knotted behind the right ear. The knot should be so easily tied that it can be removed easily. This procedure is done to keep the *Pichu* in position and to prevent it from falling down.

Paschat Karma

Sarvang Abhyanga can be conducted after tying the *Shiropichu* if required. But *Shiropichu* alone can also give results for certain diseases.

If further treatments are not planned after *Shiropichu*, the person is advised to relax. The patient should not immediately expose himself to cold or cold measures, wind, sunlight, dust, etc. Doing so might induce some symptoms like cold, headache etc.

Any excess oil dripping around the head should be wiped off using sterile clothes or sterile cotton pads.

Removal of Pichu –

After the completion of decided time of *Pichu* application, the bandage knot shall be opened and the bandage cloth and the *Pichu* should be removed carefully. All the materials used for *Shiropichu* shall be disposed since new materials have to be used on the next day.

Pathya-Apathya regimens described in the *Shiropichu* should be followed after the application of *Shiropichu*.

Probable Mode of action of Shiropichu

Mode of action of *Shiropichu* can be described locally as well as systemically.

Absorption of substances through the skin depends on a number of factors, the most important of which are concentration, duration of contact, solubility of medication, and physical condition of the skin and part of the body exposed. In *Shiropichu* oil form is used which has good dense concentration with longer duration of contact. Also the skin over the scalp is thin as compared to other parts of the body and absorption is faster and more from the scalp. (As per the principle of drug absorption maximum absorption is in the scalp region.)

Local effect of *Shiropichu* depends on the type of medicine used for the procedure.

Local effect is based on cellular absorption of drugs through transdermal route.

Systemically cellular absorption and circulation has effects on CNS.

According to the modern medicine, local application like ointment passes through the stratum corneum into the blood vessel and reaches the appropriate organ. Similarly the oil on forehead can be absorbed and easily reaches the brain cortex.

The symptoms like tension headache, and muscular tension caused due to sustained contraction of skeletal muscles can be relieved by the physical effect of *Shiropichu*.

Shiropichu improves the circulation there by correcting the brain circulation which is very important in stress. Symptom like migraine headache, which is caused by extra cranial Vasodilatation and the neurological symptoms which are produced by intra cranial vasoconstriction. *Shiropichu* may be helpful in regularizing the blood supply of brain and can relieve the pain of migraine.

Shiropichu is one of the most effective treatments for reducing stress and nervous tension. It works through action on *Tarpak Kapha*, *Sadhak Pitta* and *Pran Vayu*.

Due to *Tikshana*, *Vyavayi* & *Sukshma* property of *Taila*[12] it penetrates easily into *Manovaha srotas* correcting vitiation of *Manas Dosha* (*Raja* & *Tama*). At the same time the *Bhrimhana*, *Balya*, *Vaata shamana*, *Medhya* properties of *Taila* corrects all *Maanas vikaras*.

As *Shirahshoola* is a very commonly seen disease in current era alternative measures for its

remedy should be practiced as the oral NSA-IDS lose their effect after prolonged use.

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