

## ALOPECIA AND ITS AYURVEDIC MANAGEMENT: A CASE REPORT

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**ABSTRACT**

Alopecia areata is a common autoimmune disorder that often results in unpredictable hair loss. The most common form of Alopecia treatment is the use of corticosteroids, powerful anti-inflammatory drugs that can suppress the immune system. Long term use of oral steroids is fraught with undesirable side effects. In Ayurveda, Alopecia can be correlated with *Indralupta*. The present case is about a 7-year-old girl who was diagnosed with Alopecia areata, was treated on lines of *Kshudra kushtha roga chikitsa* (skin diseases) and *Aama janya vyaadhi chikitsa* (Auto immune diseases) successfully.

**Keywords:** Alopecia, *Indralupta*, *Sanjeevani vati*, *Taalkeshwar ras*, *Panchatiktaghrit guggulu*, Anagen Grow hair serum

**INTRODUCTION**

Alopecia areata is a common form of non-scarring alopecia involving the scalp and/or body, characterized by hair loss without any clinical inflammatory signs<sup>1</sup>.

It is one of the most common forms of hair loss seen by dermatologists and accounts for 25% of all the

alopecia cases. It was first described by Cornelius Celsus and the term AA was coined by Sauvages in 1760. It accounts for 2-3% of the new dermatology cases in UK, and USA, 3.8% in China, and 0.7% in India. Both males and females are equally affected, it can occur at any age<sup>1</sup>.

The most common form of Alopecia treatment is the use of corticosteroids, powerful anti-inflammatory drugs that can suppress the immune system. These are most commonly administered through local injections, topical ointment applications or orally. Long term use of oral steroids and some topical applications is contraindicated because of likelihood of undesirable side-effects<sup>2</sup>.

Ayurveda, the Indian System of Medicine, practised for more than 3000 years describes almost all diseases in detail and has given cure for them. One who has a good knowledge of Sanskrit, and a deep insight can interpret the shlokas correctly described in ayurvedic texts. Ayurveda has a holistic approach of treatment, it aims in curing the person, not the disease. That is the reason why each and every person's treatment protocol changes according to their body constitution, digestive capacity, their disease tolerance etc.

Acharya Sushruta has described a disease *Indralupta* or *Khalitya* or *Ruhya*<sup>3</sup> which can be correlated with alopecia. Both *Shodhana* (Purificatory Procedures) and *Shamana Chikitsa* (Palliative Treatment) have been prescribed for *Indralupta*.

The present case is about a 7-year-old girl who was diagnosed with Alopecia areata and was treated successfully with ayurvedic medicines on lines of *Kshudra kushtha roga chikitsa* & *Aamjanya vyadhi chikitsa*.

#### Case

A female patient 7-year-old was presented with complain of loss of a patch of hair from the right temporal

region followed by loss of eyebrow hairs since August 2018. There was no etiological factor, and the patient was otherwise enjoying good health. She had already taken allopathic and ayurvedic treatment from multiple places with no promising results. She came for ayurvedic treatment in the month of August 2019. It was diagnosed as *Indralupta* and was prescribed *Taalkeshwar ras* and *Sanjeevani Vati* for 1 month along with *Pathyapathya* (Dos & Don'ts), She took this medicine for a month and did not come for follow up but came again in the month of December 2019 when she was again prescribed the above 2 medicines for 2 months along with local application of JRK Siddha's Anagen Grow hair serum. She came for follow up in the month of February 2020. Her temple hair had grown back, only eyebrow hair had yet to grow. She was put off *Taalkeshwar ras* and prescribed *Panchatikta Ghrita Guggulu* and told to continue with *Sanjeevani Vati* and the hair grow serum. The patient's hair has kept growing and the follow up in the month of June 2020 shows the growth of eyebrows too. She was advised to stop oral drugs and continue local application of serum for another 3 months.

Patient came for follow up on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2020 and her eyebrows had fully grown back along with growth of hair on scalp. The patient was called for follow up yearly once and there is no recurrence of the disease till date.

#### Rogi pareeksha:

<i>Prakriti</i>	<i>Kaphapittaja</i>	<i>Nadi</i>	<i>Pittakaphaja</i>
<i>Vikriti</i>	<i>Pittakaphaja</i>	<i>Mutra</i>	<i>Samanya</i>
<i>Saar</i>	<i>Medasaar</i>	<i>Mala</i>	<i>Kaphaja</i>
<i>Samhanan</i>	<i>Madhyam</i>	<i>Jihva</i>	<i>Kaphaja</i>
<i>Saatmya</i>	<i>Madhyam</i>	<i>Shabda</i>	<i>Samanya</i>
<i>Satva</i>	<i>Madhyam</i>	<i>Sparsha</i>	<i>Samanya</i>
<i>Pramaan</i>	<i>Madhyam</i>	<i>Drishti</i>	<i>Samanya</i>
<i>Aahar shakti</i>	<i>Madhyam</i>	<i>Aakriti</i>	<i>Samanya</i>
<i>Vyayaam shakti</i>	<i>Uttam</i>	<i>Koshtha</i>	<i>Mandaagni</i>
<i>Vaya</i>	<i>Uttam</i>	Weight	25kg

Detailed description of medicines & dosage:

Medicines	Dose	Duration
Taalkeshwar Ras	1 tablet once daily at 6AM	2 Months
Sanjeevani Vati	1 tablet at 7.30PM	
Anagen Grow Hair Serum	Twice daily	
Panchatiktaghrit Guggulu	2 tablets to be crushed & taken after lunch	4 Months
Sanjeevani Vati	1 tablet at 7.30PM	
Anagen Grow Hair Serum (local application)	Twice daily	
Anagen Grow Hair Serum (local application)	Twice daily	3 Months

*Pathya Ahaar*- Protein rich foods like fish, dry fruits, paneer, and timely meals namely breakfast at 8AM, lunch at 1PM, any fruit at 4PM, Dinner at 8PM and bedtime by 10.30PM.

*Apathya Ahaar*- Oily, Spicy, Fried foods, Junk foods like Kurkure, potato wafers, etc, fast foods like Pizza, Burger, Momos, Maggi etc, snacks like Mixture (contain high amount of salt) and to avoid *Viruddha ahaar* like taking milk along with salty and sour things or along with fish, remaining awake late into the night.



November 2019



February 2020



June 2020



August 2020



August 2021



December 2022

### Review of Literature

Alopecia areata is a common autoimmune disorder that often results in unpredictable hair loss. It affects roughly 6.8 million people in the United States and 147 million people worldwide<sup>2</sup>. It is a peculiar type of hair loss that usually affects the scalp but can occur on any hair-bearing skin. It produces one or more patches of balding without any obvious change in the texture of the affected skin<sup>4</sup>. Many people who develop Alopecia areata are otherwise healthy. They have hair loss and sometimes nail changes, but they remain in good health. It can begin at any age; however, most people develop it during childhood or their teenage years. About half of them see their hair regrow within 12 months without treatment.<sup>5</sup> Current evidence suggests that alopecia areata is caused by an abnormality in the immune system that damages hair follicles. This particular abnormality leads to autoimmunity, the body's own immune system attacks the hair follicles and disrupts normal hair formation. Biopsies of affected skin show immune lymphocytes penetrating into the hair bulb of hair follicles.<sup>4</sup> It is occasionally associated with other autoimmune conditions such as:

Thyroid Disease, Vitiligo, Lupus, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Ulcerative colitis

The diagnosis or treatment of these diseases is unlikely to affect the course of alopecia areata. Sometimes, alopecia areata occurs within family members, suggesting the role of genes<sup>4</sup>.

Signs and symptoms of different patterns of alopecia areata are:

Alopecia areata: the most common pattern is one or more well-defined spots of hair loss on the scalp<sup>4</sup>. This patchy baldness can develop anywhere on the body including the scalp, beard area, eyebrows, eyelashes, armpits, inside nose, or ears.<sup>5</sup> If Alopecia occurs in an ophiasis pattern (hair loss involving the temporal and posterior scalp) or if large areas of the scalp are involved for long periods of time, the prognosis is worse<sup>4</sup>.

A more generalized form of hair loss is referred to as diffuse alopecia areata where there is widespread thinning of the scalp hair<sup>4</sup>.

Alopecia totalis: The person loses all hair on the scalp, so the scalp is completely bald. Alopecia universalis: The person loses all hair, leaving the entire body hairless. This is rare<sup>5</sup>.

Alopecia areata is not contagious. It should also be distinguished from hair shedding that may occur following the discontinuation of hormonal estrogen and progesterone therapies for birth control or the hair shedding associated with the end of pregnancy. The longer the period of time of hair loss and the larger the area involved, the less likely the hair will grow spontaneously. Therefore, there are a variety of treatments, but none of these can confidently be predicted to impact the course of this disease. Local steroid injections intracutaneously may be very helpful in restarting the hair growth cycle in treated areas. Steroid creams, lotions, and shampoos have been

used for many years but are of limited benefit at best. Although oral systemic steroids are known to induce hair growth in affected patients, their long-term use is contraindicated because of the likelihood of undesirable side effects. The topical sensitizers, diphencyprone have been used in those suffering from more than 50% hair loss. The goal of treatment is to create an allergic contact dermatitis of the scalp. This alteration in the immune response occasionally is accompanied by hair regrowth. The efficacy of these sensitizers has been demonstrated in both young children and adults, but it probably works less than half the time<sup>4</sup>. In fact, there have been a handful of documented cases where the use of diphencyprone has led to the development of vitiligo<sup>2</sup>. Treatment options for children 10 years of age and younger are corticosteroid applications to the bald spots and minoxidil application. Minoxidil can help maintain the regrowth after corticosteroid application is stopped<sup>6</sup>.

#### Ayurvedic view

Acharya Sushruta has described the falling of hairs as *Indralupta*. It is one type of *Kshudra roga* (44 *Kshudra Rogas* are described in ayurveda). The *Pitta Dosh*a along with *Vaata Dosh*a, vitiates the hair follicles due to which the hairs fall off. Thereafter, *Kapha Dosh*a along with *Rakta*, obstructs the hair follicles so that new hairs do not grow. So, all the three *Dosh*as along with *Rakta Dhaatu* are responsible for the pathogenesis of this disease<sup>3,7</sup>. Acharya Sushruta has mentioned *Khalitya* and *Ruhy*a as its synonyms whereas Acharya Vagbhata is of the opinion that sudden falling of hairs is *Indralupta* and gradual falling of hairs is *Khalitya*. Acharya Kaarthik mentioned these terms as types, loss of hairs from beard is *Indralupta*, loss of hairs from the scalp is *Khalitya* and loss of hairs from the entire body is *Ruhy*a<sup>7</sup>. Acharya Sushruta has mentioned *Rasayan Vidhi* (RejuvenationTherapy) and/ or application of oil medicated with *Chameli*, *Chitrak*, *Kaner*, *Karanja* or *Lepa* (paste)with either *Devadaru* and *Tagar* or *Lepa* with *Gunja* paste and has advised *Siramokshan*(venipuncture)<sup>8</sup>. Acharya Charaka has mentioned *Vamana* (Emesis) and *Virechan* (Purgation) *Karma* followed by *Nasya Karma* (Nasal Ad-

ministration) with *Anu Tel* and application of oil namely *Vidaarigandhadi Tel* as the treatment for *Khalitya* and *Palitya*<sup>9</sup> (Greying of hair).

## DISCUSSION

*Indralupta* was treated on lines of *Kshudra Kushtha Roga Chikitsa* (various skin diseases) and *Aama janya vyaadhi chikitsa* (Auto immune disorders). *Aama-janya vyaadhis* may be correlated to auto immune disorders. In Ayurveda many food combinations and preparations have been described which are *Ahita Aahaar* (Unhealthy Food) and *Viruddha Aahaar* (Incompatible Food) and so are advised against consumption. These *Ahita* substances do not get digested properly, remain incongruent to body tissues (*Dhatus*) and are termed as *Aama Visha*. These incongruent substances (*Aama Visha*) vitiate the body humors (*Dosh*as) and remain in the body in a hostile form and are the cause for various diseases like *Jwara* (Fever), *Raktapitta* (Bleeding Disorders), *Vaata Vyadhis*, *Ashmari* (Calculi), *Kushtha*, *Prameha* (Urinary Diseases), *Udara Rogas* (Gastro-Intestinal Diseases), *Arsha* (Piles), *Bhagandar* (Fistula -in-ano) etc<sup>10,11,12</sup>. This *Aama Visha* can be correlated with antigens circulating in the blood. Body forms antibodies in response to these antigens (*Aama Visha*), and if these antigens resemble in any way with any of the body tissues, the antibodies start destroying these tissues triggering an auto immune disease. So, it is very likely that this *Aama Visha* formed due to consumption of *Ahita Aahaar* and *Viruddha Aahaar* enters the *Rakta*(circulation), acts as an antigen which may resemble hair follicles for which antibodies are formed. These antibodies start damaging the hair follicles giving rise to *Indralupta* or *Khalitya*. So, *Aam-pachan* drug, *Sanjeevani Vati* was given to digest the *Aama Visha* formed due to *Ahita* and *Viruddha Aahaar*. *Taalkeshwar ras* is a herbo-mineral preparation used in almost all types of skin diseases like a *Rasayan*, whereas *Panchatikta ghr*ita guggulu is a poly herbal preparation given in various conditions like *Kushtha*, *Vidradhi* (Abscess), *Arsha*, *Shwasa*, *Kaasa*, various *Vaata* diseases etc and is also a blood

purifier. All three oral drugs prescribed were Ayurvedic proprietary medicines<sup>13</sup>.

Anagen Grow hair serum, a poly herbal hair serum formulated with the following herbs *Murrayya koenigii*, *Lawsonia alba*, *Indigofera tinctoria*, *Hibiscus rosa sinensis*, *Eclipta prostrata*, *Phyllanthus emblica* has been evaluated for its hair growth promoting effect. Hair growth elongation property and the possible alpha reductase enzyme inhibition makes Anagen grow a safe and effective hair growth promoting serum and alternative to finasteride. The Minoxidil users also would benefit greatly from Anagen growth both for promoting hair growth and as well as to minimize scalp dryness due to minoxidil<sup>14</sup>.

Ayurveda lays lots of emphasis not only on a well-balanced diet but its proper timing too and also following a healthy daily routine. The harmful effects of *Viruddha* and *Ahita Aahaar* like junk foods, canned & processed foods have already been discussed. An ayurvedic prescription is never complete without advice of *Pathya Apathya Ahaar & Vihaar*.

## CONCLUSION

This is a case report of a seven-year-old girl who came for ayurvedic treatment with the complaint of hair loss in patches along with loss of eyebrows. It was diagnosed as *Indralupta* and treated accordingly. She showed full recovery within 8 months. She has been advised to stop oral medicines but to continue with the topical application along with *Pathyapathya* (dos & dants). Now, it has been three and a half years, she has not been taking any medicines and her hair and eyebrows have returned to normal.

This can be taken as a pilot case and further research done to prove the efficacy of ayurvedic treatment in Alopecia areata.

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