

A COMPARATIVE CLINICAL STUDY OF KWATHA DHARA AND TAIL DHARA IN STRESS MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

In ancient India, it was said that worry (*chinta*) had more detrimental effects than a funeral pyre (*Chita*). Today, stress is recognised as a major factor impacting human health, affecting physical, mental, and emotional well-being. In *Ayurveda*, stress is viewed as a condition resulting from *pragyaparadha* (intellectual errors). Although this procedure is not classically detailed under *Panchakarma*, *Ayurvedic* scholars have included it under *snehana karma*. This treatment can serve as a preparatory step or a primary therapy in *Panchakarma*, depending on the patient's condition. *Shirodhara* is recommended for various conditions including insomnia, ADHD, anxiety disorders, phobias, depression, hypertension, and other psychosomatic issues. This paper presents evidence supporting the classical *Ayurvedic* procedure of “*shirodhara*” and reviews recent research to explore its potential mechanisms of action.

INTRODUCTION

Shirodhara is an *Ayurvedic* therapy involving the gentle pouring of liquids over the forehead and the Sixth *Chakra*, which can be part of *Panchakarma*. Derived from the *Sanskrit* words “*Shiro*” (head) and “*Dhara*” (flow), this practice aims to restore physi-

cal and emotional balance by rejuvenating the spirit and alleviating stress. Various forms of *Shirodhara*, such as *Taila Dhara*, *Ksheera Dhara*, *Takra Dhara*, *Jala Dhara*, and *Kwatha Dhara*, exist. *Shirodhara* purifies the mind and enhances awareness,

either as a standalone treatment or as part of a *Panchakarma* detox. The liquid used is specific to the *dosha* being balanced. Lifestyle factors can imbalance *doshas*, leading to diseases. *Shirodhara* primarily targets the *Manomaya Kosha*, calming nerves, harmonizing *Vatadosha*, restoring nerve function, and releasing

Stored emotions, thus aiding stress relief. It is a vital tool in pursuing higher states of consciousness in *Ayurveda*.

Study Objectives:

1. To compare the effects of *KWATHA DHARA* and *TAILA DHARA* in managing stress.
2. To evaluate the clinical efficacy of *Shirodhara*.

Assessment: The treatment's effectiveness will be measured by the relief of subjective and objective symptoms of stress. According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, most physician visits are prompted by stress-related symptoms, which can exacerbate medical conditions. Despite technological advancements, modern life is plagued by stress.

Stress:

Stress is a universal phenomenon experienced throughout human life. It is often depicted in fine arts and literature due to its complexity and the interaction between humans and their surroundings. In psychology, stress is a feeling of mental pressure and tension. While low levels of stress can be beneficial, high levels can lead to biological, psychological, and social problems. Stress is ubiquitous, affecting family, business, and other activities from birth to death.

Ayurvedic Perspective on Stress:

In *Ayurveda*, stress is seen as a disturbance of the nervous system, primarily regulated by *Vata Dosha*, which is easily disturbed by over stimulation, excessive food, time pressure, and activity. Stress, known as *Sahasa* in *Ayurveda*, affects the body by causing *Ojakhshaya* (loss of immunity), making it more susceptible to diseases.

Stressors:

Excessive physical stress mainly vitiates *Vatadosha*. *Charaka* described the theory of similarity and dif-

ferences, indicating that similar features lead to growth while differences lead to degeneration. Unhealthy food, irregular routines, and mental Disturbances like fear, anger, grief, greed, attachment, and confusion cause all types of morbidities.

DISCUSSION

Mode of Action of *Shirodhara*:

Ayurvedic View:

- *Shirodhara* acts as *Samvahana* on the head, restoring the functions of *Vata* and *Mana* due to the involvement of *Twacha*(skin) and *Vata*.
- Continuous flow during *Shirodhara* balances *Raja* and *Tama doshas*, enhancing *Satvaguna*.
- It re-establishes the functional integrity between head and heart *doshas* through its mechanical effects.

Procedural Effect:

- *Bhrumadhya*, the area on the forehead, corresponds to endocrine glands like the pineal and pituitary. *Shirodhara* stimulates serotonin secretion, affecting mood and stress.

Effects:

1. Drug Absorption: *Vaghbhatta's* four varieties of *Murdha Tail* indicate drug absorption from the scalp.
2. Physical Effect: Relieves tension headaches and muscular tension.
3. Blood Supply: Improves brain circulation, alleviating migraine and headache symptoms.

Probable Mode of Action with *Mansyadi Kwatha*:

Charaka says the head houses *Prana* and all sense organs. *Shirodhara* with *Mansyadi Kwatha* strengthens *Prana* and *Indriyas*, which is crucial in psychological disorders. Meditating on *Dhara* enhances *Agya Chakra*, regulating other *chakras* and relieving stress symptoms.

CONCLUSION

1. The mind significantly influences health and disease.
2. Psychological factors impact physical health.
3. *Chittodvega* is the *Ayurvedic* term closest to stress, with *Vata* and *Rajas*

playing key roles.

Shirodhara is a safe, effective therapy for managing stress, free from the side effects associated with anxiolytics and sedatives. Thus, it is recommended as a suitable method for treating stress.

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