A CONCEPTUAL STUDY ON SHIRODHARA PROCEDURE

Nidhi Gupta 1*, Gopesh Mangal 2

1PG Scholar, Department of Panchakarma, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India
2Assistant Professor & Head, Department of Panchakarma, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

Received on: 26/02/19 Accepted on: 26/04/19

* Corresponding author
E-mail: dr.nidhigupta20@gmail.com

DOI: 10.7897/2277-4343.100353

ABSTRACT

Pouring of medicated Kwatha (Decoction) or oil on forehead is known as Shirodhara. Shirodhara is also a type of Parayan Snehana (external oleation therapy) as mentioned in Ayurveda. Shirodhara is mainly indicated in neurological and psychosomatic disorders. Today’s modern life style is full of stress and thus interfering the individual daily function. In current era the problems like insomnia, headache, facial paralysis, scalp psoriasis, hair fall etc. are the most common and challenging conditions. But till now effective management for these complaints are still lacking. Hence it is the need of time to find out the safe and effective treatment modalities for these diseases. Thus an effort is made to rule out the efficacy of Shirodhara in different psychological disorder. The apparent mode of action of this procedure is not understood. Ayurveda mainly highlighted the outcomes of the procedure rather than its action. So a review of Samhita, Chikitsa Grantha, Nighantus and Ayurveda text with regard to Shirodhara was conducted. Indication and Contraindication and therapeutic efficacy of Shirodhara were noted during the study.

Keywords: Shirodhara, Murdha Taila, Panchakarma, Dharapratha

INTRODUCTION

There are various form of Shirodhara such as Tailadhar, Takradhar, Keeradhar, Jaladhar and Kvathadhara. Classically this procedure is not described under the Panchakarma, but it incorporated under Snehana karma. Murdhatalam has been described in the Ayurveda which is of four type’s viz. Shiroabhyanga, Shiroheka, Shirochipu, Shirobasti. These are superior in their succeeding order [1]. It is one of Bhaya Snehana (external oleation therapy) procedure in which Snehan is applied in head or it is a procedure wherein involves gently pouring liquids over the forehead and has been indicated for psychosomatic disorders and neurological disorders etc. These disorders are not only the diseased condition but also affect the quality of life and cause anxiety, depression and work ability is decreased. In Ayurveda human body is compared to an inverted tree where the head is the main part of the body and other organ are its branches [2]. So the head controls every system, hence application of medicine in the form of Shirodhara, on the head can cure many disease of different parts of the body. Classically Shirodhara is advised for many diseases like Headache, Daha (burning sensation), Paka (Abscess), Vrana (Wound), Arunsika (Boils) etc. It also indicated in Ardhavbedak (Migraine) [3], Suryavarta (Type of headache) [4]. Application of oil does not follow any form of massage. By the employment of this procedure one can achieve all the benefits in dermatological condition of scalp as well as psychological disorders. It can be performed in painful conditions or ulcerations of the scalp also. References regarding Shirodhara were collected from various textbook, published research papers, previous work done and compilation was done. Concept of Shirodhara and procedure was studied in detail.

Definition- Shirodhara term comes from the Sanskrit words, Shiro-means Head and Dhara-means Flow. Shirodhara is a form of Ayurveda therapy that involves gently pouring warm liquids over the forehead. It is the process in which medicated oil, milk, Kwatha is poured in a continuous stream of drip on the forehead in a specific manner and height [5].

Procedure- The Shirodhara procedure is divided in to 3 parts [6];
1. Purva Karma
2. Pradhana Karma
3. Paschata Karma

Purva Karma


Preparation of the patient- The patient is thoroughly examined whether he is fit with for procedure. Patient should be advised to pass stool and urine. Then pulse, temperature and blood pressure of the patients should be recorded. Patient is advised to lie down in supine position and Dharatra 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 Dosh [7]-
Vata Dosh- Tila Taila
Pitta Dosh- Ghrita
Kapha Dosh- Tila Taila
Rakta Dosh- Ghrita
Vata + Pitta + Rakta- Ghrita and Taila in equal par portion
Vata + Kapha + Rakta-1/2 part Ghrita and 1 part Tila Taila

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. Dharatra should be poured continuously on forehead neither very fast nor very slow. The liquid of shirodhara should not be too hot or too cold. The stream of Dhara liquid should not be too thick or thin. When the liquid...
starts pouring then the vessel is moved in the pendulum manner
starting from one lateral side to the other lateral side. The liquid
is collected in another vessel kept and is used to refill the
Dharapatra before it becomes empty. Shirodhara process is done
for at least ½ an hour in the morning up to 14/21 days.
Temperature of liquid for Shirodhara should be above to the body
temperature.

Period for changing the liquid-When milk and water is used in
Shirodhara, it should be changed every day. When Dhanyamila is
used, it can be used up to 3 days. The oil also should be changed
every 3rd day, but it can be reused, so in the first 3 days, half of
the oil should be used, for next 3 days the other half of the oil
should be used and on the 7th day all the first and second half both
are mixed together, then it should be 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. The patient is advised to have a Pathya
Ahara (light diet).

Indications- Stress and psychosomatic disorders such as IBS
(Irritable Bowel Syndrome), Neurological disorders (Headache,
Epilepsy etc.), Psychiatric disorders (Psychosis, Neurosis,
Insomnia etc.), Convulsive disorders and also in Psoriasis,
Eczema, Hypertension etc. Shirodhara is also used in patient Vata
Vyadhi, Facial palsy, Loss of memory.

Contraindication- In Kaphha Vikara, Shirodhara further
increase Kaphha, this makes the diseases difficult to cure.

DISCUSSION
Clinically the efficacy of Shirodhara is proved; still it is a difficult
task to understand the mode of action of this procedure.
Shirodhara is effective in following ways.

A/c to Ayurveda- In a living being, the head is the substratum of
all the sense faculties, or Indriyas (sense organs), it is also known
as Uttramanga [8]. Because of this, Shirodhara gives strength to
the Prana and Indriyas, which are mostly vitiated in case of
psychological disorders. Indriyas are in close contact with the
mind, so when Indriyas stay healthy the mind automatically stays
healthy. Shirodhara thus keeps the body and mind healthy.
Imbalance of Prana, Udana and Vyana Vayu, Sadhaka Pitta and
Tarpak Kapha can produce stress and tension. Shirodhara re-
establishes the functional integrity between these subtypes of
Dosha through its mechanical effect [9].

Therapeutic effect of medicament- As per the principle of drug
absorption, absorption of the 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
Shirodhara 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 part of body and absorption is faster and
more from the scalp. (As per the principle of drug absorption
maximum absorption is in the scalp region and comparatively oil
is better absorbing than water [10].)

Dermal absorption [11]- The skin is relatively permeable to fat
soluble substances and relatively impermeable to water soluble
substances. Essential oil molecules are so minute that when they
are applied to the skin; they are able to pass through the stratum
corneum (the outer layer of the epidermis). From here the oil
molecule passes through dermis, into the capillaries and into the
bloodstream. Absorption also occurs through the hair follicles
and sweat ducts. There are many factors that affect absorption of
an oil molecule. Both rate of circulation and the warmth of the
skin increase blood flow to the surface, therefore increasing the
skin’s ability to absorb the oil. Circulation and warmth can be
increased by massage

Procedural effect of the Shirodhara process- Each substance at
a certain altitude possesses potential energy, and that energy
becomes kinetic energy when it falls down from a certain altitude
under ‘Law of Energy Conservation’. This law means that energy
can neither be created nor destroyed; rather, it can only be
transformed or transferred from one form to another [12].

Potential energy depends on the mass and height of the substance.
If height remains constant then potential energy depends on mass
of substance or mass energy, more mass of a substance will be the
energy the substance possesses. When anything pours on the
forehead from a certain height due to the change in the form of
energy it generates momentum, it can cause voltage changes and
stimulate the generation of nerve impulses or accentuate the
conduction of nerve impulses. The magnitude of momentum is the
factor that determines the voltage difference between the
generation and conduction of the nerve impulse if its magnitude
is small; the energy is absorbed by the skull. According to modern
physiology continuous electrical activity in the brain that
generates electromagnetic waves and that is recorded by the
Enccephalogram (EEG).

Effect of temperature in Shirodhara procedure- The
continuous 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 regularizing the blood
supply of the brain. Vibration along with temperature may
activate the function of thalamus and the basal forebrain which
then brings the amount of serotonin and catecholamine to the
normal stage.

Effect of constant pressure in Shirodhara procedure- Constant
pressure and vibration produced in the Shirodhara procedure,
amplified by the hollow sinuses present in the frontal bone. The
vibration is transmitted inward through the fluid media of
cerebrospinal fluid (CSF). Pressure also affects impulse
conduction. If prolonged pressure is applied to a nerve, impulse
conduction is interrupted, and part of the body relaxes in
Shirodhara’s procedure. Due to the tricking of medicated liquid
over the forehead, prolonged and continuous pressure causes
tranquility of mind and reduces stress by modulating nerve
stimulation. When nerve ending of autonomic nervous system is
stimulated, they produce chemical substances like Acetylcholine
which exists in the tissues in the inactive form and is activated by
a nerve impulse vibration produced due to continuous pouring of
liquid over the forehead which may stimulate nerve ending and in
turn Acetylcholine cause fall of blood pressure leading to
deceased activity of central nervous system resulting in
tranquility of mind. During the process of patient concentrations
of Dhara Drvya (Medicated oil or any type of liquid), this
is falling on his forehead, which increases the intensity of brain
waves and decreases the brain cortisone and adrenaline level. This
factor is also work as an anti-stress effect of Shirodhara.

On the basis on Marma- Some Marma (Vital spot) are located in
forehead and head region as mentioned in Ayurveda classics.
Mainly Sthapni, Ushpeha, Avara, Shankha and Apana Marma
are situated in this region [13]. According to Acharya Bhela
Bhumadhya (Between both eyebrows) is the site of Chitta
(Mana). It is also place of Sthapni Marma [14]. Most of the
Marma of head region are Agni and Vayu Pradhana Mahabhoota

Nidhi Gupta & Gopesh Mangal / Int. J. Res. Ayurveda Pharm. 10 (3). 2019
CONCLUSION

Shirodhara is an important therapeutic measure in Ayurveda system of medicine, which has got worldwide popularity because of its simple administration and effectiveness in several disorders and life style diseases. It is a purifying and rejuvenating therapy which eliminates toxins and mental exhaustion as well as relieves stress and any ill effects on the central nervous system. On the basis of above description, it is clear that Shirodhara has both the therapeutic effect of medicament and procedural effect. These can be understood from the aspect of Ayurveda, mechanical and Marma science. Shirodhara can be used for treatment of scalp, hair and psychological disorders.

REFERENCES

2. Charak smriti, Vidyotini Hindi commentary vol.1, Sutrasthana, 17/3 Chaukhamba Bharati Akademi; Varanasi By Dr. Gorakha Natha Chaturvedi & Pt. Kashinatha Shashtri, page no.332
8. Charak smriti, Vidyotini Hindi commentary vol.1, Sutrasthana, 17/3 page no.332
11. https://healingscents.net/blogs/learn/18685875-how-essential-oils-enter-the-body

Cite this article as:


Source of support: Nil, Conflict of interest: None Declared

Disclaimer: IJRAP is solely owned by Moksha Publishing House - A non-profit publishing house, dedicated to publish quality research, while every effort has been taken to verify the accuracy of the content published in our Journal. IJRAP cannot accept any responsibility or liability for the site content and articles published. The views expressed in articles by our contributing authors are not necessarily those of IJRAP editor or editorial board members.