

HOLISTIC APPROACHES TO ADDRESS PREMATURE HAIR GREYING IN AYURVEDA

Akhilesh Kumar Verma

Registrar
Ayurvedic evam Unani
Tibbi Chikitsa Paddhati Board, UP, Lucknow.

Abstract:

Premature greying of hair, known as "Palitya" in Ayurveda, reflects an imbalance in the body's doshas, particularly the aggravation of Pitta dosha. Ayurveda, an ancient holistic system of medicine, offers insights into the causes and treatments of premature greying by focusing on balancing the doshas and promoting overall well-being. Factors such as diet, lifestyle, stress, and genetics contribute to the onset of premature greying. Ayurvedic remedies involve dietary modifications, herbal supplements, and therapeutic treatments aimed at pacifying Pitta dosha and nourishing hair follicles. Herbs like Amla, Brahmi, and Bhringraj, along with therapies like Shirodhara and Abhyanga, play a pivotal role in restoring hair pigmentation and vitality. By embracing Ayurvedic principles, individuals can not only address premature greying but also foster holistic health and harmony within the body and mind.

Keywords: Premature greying, Hair health, khalitya, palitya

INTRODUCTION

Premature greying of hair, known as "Palitya" or "Akala Palitya" in Ayurveda, has been a topic of interest and concern for centuries within traditional Indian medicine. Ayurveda, a holistic system of medicine that originated in ancient India, offers a profound understanding of the human body, its functions, and imbalances that lead to various health conditions, including premature greying of hair.

In Ayurveda, hair is considered a byproduct of bone tissue, influenced by the same factors that govern bone health. According to Ayurvedic principles, the body is composed of three doshas: Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. These doshas represent different combinations of the five elements—earth, water, fire, air, and ether—within the body. Any imbalance among these doshas can manifest as various health issues, including premature greying of hair.

The premature greying of hair is primarily attributed to the aggravation of Pitta dosha, particularly within the hair follicles. Pitta governs metabolism and digestion in the body, and when it becomes imbalanced, it can lead to an excess of heat in the body, affecting the quality and color of hair. Excessive intake of Pitta-aggravating foods, stress, anxiety, chronic illnesses, genetic predisposition, and environmental factors are believed to contribute to the aggravation of Pitta dosha and subsequent premature greying of hair.

Ayurveda emphasizes a holistic approach to health, focusing on balancing the doshas through lifestyle modifications, dietary changes, herbal remedies, and therapeutic treatments. The treatment of premature greying of hair in Ayurveda involves addressing the root cause of the imbalance and restoring harmony within the body.

Dietary recommendations in Ayurveda for preventing premature greying of hair include consuming cooling and Pitta-pacifying foods such as fresh fruits, leafy greens, coconut water, cucumber, and dairy products. Avoiding Pitta-aggravating foods like spicy, sour, and oily foods, as well as alcohol and caffeine, is also recommended.

Ayurvedic herbs and oils play a crucial role in the treatment of premature greying of hair. Amla (Indian gooseberry), Brahmi (Bacopa monnieri), Bhringraj (Eclipta alba), Neem (Azadirachta indica), and Jatamansi (Nardostachys jatamansi) are some of the herbs commonly used to nourish the scalp, strengthen hair follicles, and promote hair pigmentation.

Furthermore, Ayurvedic therapies such as Shirodhara (pouring medicated oils over the forehead), Abhyanga (oil massage), and Nasya (nasal administration of medicated oils) are recommended to pacify Pitta dosha, reduce stress, and promote overall well-being, which in turn can help prevent premature greying of hair.

Nidana of Akala Palitya

Krodha, Shoka, Adhika Chinta, Atapa Sevana, Rajo Sevana, Dhuma Sevana

and Dushita Vayu Sevana, Shiro Abhyanga Ayoga, Dushita Jala Snana, excess intake of Lavana Rasaby pregnant lady.

Samprapti

Due to causative factors like Soka, Kroda and Srama, Pittadosha is aggravated and there by increases Pittoshma and Shareeroshma. Vata which is also aggravated by Soka and Srama carries this Pittoshma to the Shiras Stanika Kapha is also get vitiated as the Shiras is the important location of Kapha. Thus, vitiated Tridosha settled in the Romakooopa (Stanasamsraya). Locally settled Tridosha further vitiate locally available Brajaka Pitta, which gives colour to the hair. In this way the natural colour of the hair is affected and Akala Palitya is caused.

Lakshana

Vataja	Sphutita, Shyava, Khara, Ruksha, Jala Prabha.
Pittaja	Pitabha, Dahayukta
Kaphaja	Snigdha, Sweta, Sthula, Vivridha
Dwidoshaja	Mixed Laxanas of Doshas
Tridoshaja	Sarva lakshanas

Modern view

Definition

Premature greying also known as canities is defined as the onset of greying of hair before the age of 20 in Caucasians and before the age of 30 in Asians and Africans or when 50% or more of scalp hair turns grey before the age of 50.

Etiopathogenesis

Nutritional deficiencies (especially iron or vitamin A, B vitamins, iron, copper, and iodine in the daily diet & faulty diet are said to be a contributory factor. Mental worries, Unhygienic condition of scalp, Heredity, Stress (emotional and physical), Hormonal imbalance, specifically androgen sensitivity, Genetics, Thyroid disorders etc. are few causative factors.

Greying of hair is caused when cells at the hair base (melanocytes) stop producing the pigment melanin which is responsible for giving our hair its colour. To continue making the colour producing pigment, the cells need vitamin B12, thus nutritional deficiencies

like vitamin B12, vitamin D3, calcium, iron deficiency, copper deficiency, protein loss etc. are found associated with premature greying of hairs. Other factors like familial predisposition, autosomal disorders, prolonged exposure to UV rays, smoking etc. is considered to be related to premature graying of hairs.

Materials and methods

A compilation of information was made using almost all reference available in Ayurvedic texts and lexicons. Various Samhitas, Nighantu, textbooks, dissertation were used to fulfil the purpose.

Aims and objective

To compile all information related to Palitya which is available in different Ayurvedic texts and after elucidation of knowledge it is presented in a proper manner.

- Compilation of all information related to Palitya.
- Elucidation of proper knowledge

In Ayurvedic texts

- Palityawas common in the period of Samhitas; but Acharya's have described it shortly and consider it as "KshudraRoga".
- AcharyaBhela in Ashtodariyachapter about five types of Palityadisease.
- AcharyaSushrutadescribed Palityain KshudraRogain NidanaSthana.
- AcharyaVagbhatahas mentioned Palityaand its types.
- Madhavarain MadhavaNidanamas a KshudraRoga .Sharangdharadescribed Palityaas a ShirakapalaRoga in Poorva Khanda and T/T mentioned in MadhyamaKhanda.
- AcharyaBhavamishradescribed Palityaas Kshudra Roga -and also mentioned Keshyadravyasfor the treatment.
- Yog Ratnakar described Palitya disease and also its Nidana, types and Samprapti. In BhaisjyaRatnavali,Palitya and its treatment drugs are described. Acharya Chakrapanihas mentioned medicated oil for Palitya

Treatment for akala khalitya

reatment for Akala Khalitya (premature greying of hair) in Ayurveda involves holistic approaches aimed at addressing the underlying doshic imbalances, nourishing hair follicles, and promoting overall well-being. Here is an outline of the treatment strategies:

Balancing the Doshas:

Ayurvedic treatment begins with identifying the predominant dosha imbalance contributing to Akala Khalitya. Usually, Pitta dosha aggravation is associated with premature greying of hair.

Dietary modifications and lifestyle changes are recommended to pacify aggravated doshas. Avoiding Pitta-aggravating foods such as spicy, sour, and oily foods, as well as reducing stress levels, can help balance the doshas.

Herbal Remedies:

Ayurvedic herbs known for their rejuvenating properties are utilized to nourish hair follicles and promote hair pigmentation. Some commonly used herbs include:

Amla (Indian gooseberry): Rich in vitamin C and antioxidants, Amla nourishes hair follicles and helps maintain hair color.

Brahmi (Bacopa monnieri): Known for its calming properties, Brahmi helps reduce stress and balances Pitta dosha.

Bhringraj (Eclipta alba): Promotes hair growth, strengthens hair follicles, and helps restore natural hair color.

Neem (Azadirachta indica): Has antibacterial and antifungal properties, beneficial for scalp health and hair growth.

Ayurvedic Formulations:

Taila (medicated oils) preparations infused with hair-nourishing herbs are commonly used for external application. Regular scalp massage with herbal oils improves blood circulation to the scalp, strengthens hair roots, and prevents premature greying.

Internal medications such as herbal powders, tablets, or decoctions are prescribed to address underlying doshic imbalances and nourish hair from within.

Therapeutic Treatments:

Ayurvedic therapies like Shirodhara (pouring medicated oils on the forehead), Abhyanga (full-body oil massage), and Nasya (nasal administration of medicated oils) are beneficial for balancing doshas, reducing stress, and promoting hair health.

Diet and Lifestyle Recommendations:

Consuming a balanced diet rich in essential nutrients like iron, proteins, vitamins, and minerals supports healthy hair growth and prevents premature greying.

Practicing good scalp hygiene, avoiding harsh chemical treatments, and protecting hair from environmental pollutants and UV radiation are essential.

Yoga, meditation, and stress management techniques help alleviate mental stress and promote overall well-being.

Follow-up and Monitoring:

Ayurvedic treatment for Akala Khalitya is tailored to individual constitution and underlying imbalances. Regular follow-up consultations with an Ayurvedic practitioner are essential to monitor progress and make necessary adjustments to the treatment plan.

Discussion:

Many several factors are there for development of Palitya disease i.e., dietetic, environmental, genetic, as a complication of different disease, due to improper metabolism, worse hygiene, mental health etc. But all these etiological factors are mainly responsible for Vata-Pitta imbalance. Due to imbalance of these Dosha's persons were basically affected by Palitya disease. In Ayurveda, Palitya is mentioned as a Rasa Dushti Janya Roga and also Keshha. Shamshu etc different type of body hair are affected due to Asthi Dhatu Dhusti and mentioned as Asthi Dhatu Dhusti Janya roga. In Ayurveda it is mentioned that to treat Rasa Dushti Janya Roga you have to follow all types of Langhana and these ten Langhana types are Vamana, Virechana, Shirovirechana, Niruha Vasti, Pippasa, Vayu Sevana, Aatapa Sevana, use of Pachana Dravya, Upwasa, Vyayama and also to treat Asthi Dhatu Dhusti Janya roga, Basti karma and use of Ghrita and milk which consists of Tikta Dravyas is mentioned. Also with this proper hair health has to be maintained in terms of dietetics and environmental factor

Conclusion:

According to Ayurveda, the "Bhrajaka Pitta," a type of Pitta dosha, is responsible for imparting natural color to both our skin and hair. This pigment resides in the superficial layer of the skin known as "Avabhasini." In the Ayurvedic approach, premature graying of hair is termed "Palitya" and falls under the broad category of "Shiroroga" or diseases related to the head.

In today's fast-paced and highly mechanized world, characterized by busy lifestyles and psychological stressors, improper and irregular dietary habits contribute to nutritional deficiencies, leading to various health issues, including premature graying of hair. These lifestyle factors disrupt the balance of doshas, primarily Vata and Pitta, within individuals, thereby contributing to conditions like Palitya.

Managing Palitya involves adopting a holistic approach that encompasses dietary and lifestyle modifications along with specific Ayurvedic treatments. A balanced diet rich in iron, proteins, minerals, and vitamins is essential for maintaining the health of hair follicles and preventing premature graying. Regular head massages improve blood circulation to the scalp, while proper combing helps distribute natural oils and stimulate hair follicles.

Nasya, the application of medicated oils into the nostrils, is beneficial for balancing doshas and promoting overall hair health. Ayurvedic formulations known as Keshya, Keshranjana, or Palityanashaka, which include herbs like Amla, Bhringraj, and Brahmi, play a crucial role in nourishing hair follicles and preventing premature graying.

In conclusion, addressing the root cause of Palitya requires a comprehensive approach that integrates dietary, lifestyle, and therapeutic interventions based on Ayurvedic principles. By adopting these holistic practices, individuals can not only manage premature graying of hair but also promote overall health and well-being.

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