

“Ayurvedic Management of *Khalitya* (Hair Fall)”

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, a vast repository of ancient knowledge, provides in-depth insights into both systemic and localized diseases, including minor conditions. Hair loss, affecting approximately 1.7% of the global population, is one such challenge that poses a significant concern for healthcare professionals. In Ayurveda, hair loss is referred to as *Khalitya Roga*, categorized under *Kshudra Roga* (minor diseases) or *Shiroroga* (diseases of the head and scalp). This progressive condition is increasingly common among individuals with sedentary lifestyles, stressful routines, and poor dietary habits, leading to imbalances and deficiencies in the body, which ultimately manifest in hair loss. Ayurveda offers a holistic approach to managing and reducing hair fall through lifestyle modifications, purification therapies, and targeted medications.

Keywords: *Khalitya*, *Indralopa*, hair oil, *Nasya*.

INTRODUCTION

Healthy, long, and vibrant hair significantly contributes to an individual's overall personality and well-being. Just as the face reflects the health of the body, hair serves as an external manifestation of internal health. In the present age of modernization, while individuals are surrounded by luxuries and advancements, they are simultaneously burdened with a sedentary lifestyle, stress-induced hectic schedules, and poor dietary habits. These factors disturb

27 the homeostasis of the body, leading to a variety of health issues, among which
28 *Khalitya* (hair fall) is a significant concern. The prevalence of hair fall is
29 progressively increasing in society, which in turn adversely affects the quality
30 of life. Chronic hair loss has a profound impact on mental health, and studies
31 have shown that patients with hair loss have *Dermatology Life Quality Index*
32 (DLQI) scores comparable to those with severe *Psoriasis*. The emotional
33 consequences include diminished self-confidence, lower self-esteem, and
34 heightened self-consciousness.

35 In Ayurveda, hair loss is referred to as *Khalitya*, and it is classified under
36 *Shiroroga* (diseases of the head and scalp). Both Acharya Charaka and
37 Ashtanga Hridaya have described *Khalitya* as part of *Shiroroga* based on its
38 location and similar etiopathogenesis to other head-related diseases. The
39 Ashtanga Hridaya specifically mentions that the diseases affecting the outer part
40 of the head, particularly the scalp, are categorized as *Shiroroga*. Furthermore,
41 Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Samgraha, Yogaratnakara, and Madhava Nidana
42 categorize *Khalitya* under *Kshudra Roga* (minor diseases) due to the relatively
43 mild nature of the condition. These disorders are not life-threatening and are
44 less severe compared to other major ailments. According to Gayadasa, they are
45 termed "minor" due to the smallness of their cause, symptoms, and treatment.
46 Despite being of lesser severity, these conditions can cause significant
47 psychological distress, frequently resulting in embarrassment and discomfort for
48 the patient.

49

50 **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

51 This review work is based on a thorough study of various Ayurvedic texts,
52 including both the *Brihat-Trayi* and *Laghu-Trayi*, alongside modern medical
53 literature and recent research publications.

54 ***Khalitya and Indralupta:*** Gradual hair loss is termed *Khalitya* in Ayurveda.
55 When *Pitta* combines with *Vata* or *Kapha* doshas to cause degeneration of hair,
56 it is referred to as *Khalitya*. According to Acharya Charaka, the *Tejas Dhatu*
57 (heat of the body) in association with *Vayu* and other doshas scorches the hair
58 follicles, leading to alopecia or *Khalitya* in humans. Another term used in
59 Ayurvedic texts for hair fall is *Indralupta*. *Ruchya* and *Chach* are listed as
60 synonyms of *Indralupta*. According to Acharya Kartika, hair loss from the
61 entire body is referred to as *Ruhya*.

62 **Differences Between *Khalitya* and *Indralupta*:** In *Khalitya*, hair loss occurs
63 gradually and is generalized over the scalp. In contrast, *Indralupta* presents as
64 sudden, patchy hair loss. When *Kapha* dosha combines with *Rakta Dhatu*, it
65 results in the complete degeneration and shutdown of hair follicles, ultimately
66 causing baldness. If *Khalitya* is caused by *Vata*, it leads to burning sensations
67 on the scalp; if due to *Pitta*, it causes sweating; and when caused by *Kapha*, it
68 results in thickening of the skin.

69 **Origin of Hair in Ayurveda:** According to Ayurvedic principles, the human
70 body is composed of seven primary *Dhatu*s (body tissues) — *Rasa*, *Rakta*,
71 *Mansa*, *Meda*, *Asthi*, *Majja*, and *Sukra*. The production of subsequent *Dhatu*s
72 occurs from the preceding one through the influence of their respective *Agni*
73 (digestive fire). For instance, *Rasa Agni* transforms *Ahara Rasa* into *Rasa*
74 *Dhatu*, *Rakta Agni* converts part of *Rasa Dhatu* into *Rakta*, and so on. Along
75 with the production of *Dhatu*s, there is also the generation of their by-products,
76 known as *Upadhatu*s and *Malas*.

77 During the metabolism of *Asthi Dhatu*, *Majja Dhatu* is produced from its *Sara*
78 portion, and simultaneously, hair on the scalp and body, along with nails, form
79 as *Malas*. According to Acharya Sharngadhara, hair on the scalp and body are
80 considered *Upadhatu*s of *Majja Dhatu*. Furthermore, among the *Garbhaj*
81 *Bhavas* (factors responsible for fetal development), hair is classified under

82 *Pitraj Bhava*, meaning its structure, color, and quantity are primarily influenced
83 by the paternal lineage. Hair formation begins during the sixth month of
84 intrauterine development.

85 In modern science, hair is defined as a modified epithelial structure resulting
86 from keratinization of the germinal cells. Hair is an appendage of the epidermis
87 and is present in all regions of the skin, except for the palms, soles, and lips.
88 Hair grows from hair follicles, which are small pockets located within the
89 epidermis. The hair growth cycle consists of three phases: *Anagen*, *Catagen*,
90 and *Telogen*. The *Anagen* phase is the active growth phase, lasting 3-5 years.
91 On a healthy scalp, approximately 100,000 hair follicles exist, with 90% being
92 in the *Anagen* phase. This is followed by the *Catagen* phase (2-3 weeks), during
93 which the follicles become dormant, and the *Telogen* phase, a resting phase
94 lasting 3-4 months, after which hair sheds and new hair begins to grow.

95 **Causes of *Khalitya Roga*:**

- 96 1. The *Usna Guna* (hot qualities) of *Pitta* dosha can cause early hair loss
97 and premature graying in individuals with *Pitta Prakriti*.
- 98 2. Aging naturally leads to the loss of hair color. However, lifestyle factors
99 such as diet, stress, mental health, and environmental conditions can
100 accelerate premature aging, which in turn causes early hair fall. In a
101 survey, 81.66% of individuals aged 30-40 years experiencing premature
102 aging reported hair fall as a significant concern.
- 103 3. Causative factors of *Shiroroga* include excessive exposure to smoke,
104 sunlight, mist, water sports, irregular sleep patterns, and excessive stress.
105 These factors exacerbate *Doshas* and contribute to *Khalitya*.
- 106 4. *Darunaka* which is caused by the deranged *Kapha* and *Vayu* doshas,
107 results in minute fissures on the scalp, leading to dryness, itching, and
108 subsequent hair fall. This condition may also involve *Pitta* and *Rakta*.

- 109 5. Excessive consumption of salty foods and alkaline substances (*Kshara*)
110 leads to *Khalitya*. In pregnant women, excessive salt intake can cause hair
111 fall in the child due to *Pitta* vitiation.
- 112 6. Stressful factors such as anger, excessive laughter, sneezing, and
113 overexertion post-*Nasya* therapy may lead to both *Khalitya* and *Palitya*
114 (premature graying of hair).
- 115 7. A decrease in *Asthi Dhatu* or its vitiation can lead to hair loss, as hair is
116 considered the *mala* of *Asthi Dhatu*.
- 117 8. Excessive combing during the *Ritukul* (seasonal change) may lead to hair
118 fall in children.

119 **Modern Causes:** In modern science, hair fall can be attributed to nutritional
120 disorders, local skin conditions, hormonal imbalances, stress, drug use, cosmetic
121 treatments, and genetic predisposition.

122 **Approach to *Khalitya* Patients:** Hair fall can manifest as a primary disorder or
123 as a secondary symptom of other diseases. Due to its diverse etiopathogenesis, a
124 thorough patient history, including medical, family, and personal history, should
125 be obtained. A careful scalp and body examination is essential for detecting any
126 abnormalities.

127 **Management of *Khalitya* (Hair Fall)**

128 1. ***Nidanparivarjana* (Avoidance of Causative Factors):**

- 129 ○ **First line of treatment:** Identifying and eliminating the causative
130 factors (*Nidana*) is essential in managing *Khalitya*. All contributing
131 factors, including lifestyle, dietary habits, and environmental
132 exposures, should be thoroughly examined and avoided to prevent
133 the progression of the disease.

- 134 ○ **Prevention is better than cure:** Individuals with a *Pitta Prakriti*
135 are more prone to premature hair loss. They should follow a diet
136 and lifestyle as outlined in Ayurvedic texts to balance their doshas.
137 During the rainy season and autumn season (*Sharad*), *Pitta dosha*
138 tends to aggravate, making these periods more unfavourable for
139 people with a genetic predisposition to baldness.
- 140 ○ **Rasayana Therapy:** In cases of premature aging, *Rasayana*
141 (rejuvenation) therapy is necessary, primarily using *Vayasthapana*
142 (anti-aging) herbs and formulations to restore vitality and delay
143 aging processes.
- 144 ○ **Shiroroga (Head-related disorders):** To manage hair fall, patients
145 should protect themselves from environmental factors like dust,
146 smoke, cold water, and excessive sunlight. They should also avoid
147 unhealthy habits such as sleeping during the daytime or staying
148 awake at night, which can aggravate doshas.
- 149 ○ **Dietary Restrictions:** Avoiding excessive salt and *Kshara*
150 (alkaline substances) is crucial. Overuse of these substances can
151 aggravate *Pitta dosha*, leading to hair loss.
- 152 ○ **Limit Harsh Chemical Treatments:** Modern chemical-based
153 treatments and excessive heating treatments used for cosmetic
154 purposes should be avoided to protect the integrity of hair.

155 2. Hair Care Practices (Samhita Guidelines):

- 156 ○ **Moordha Taila (Oil Massage):** Regular oil application (*Moordha*
157 *Taila*) to the scalp is recommended. This practice nourishes the
158 hair follicles, strengthens the hair roots, and prevents hair fall.
159 Common oils include **Mustard oil** or **Coconut oil**, which provide
160 nourishment and maintain the natural colour and texture of hair.

- 161 ○ **Nasya (Nasal Drops):** Annual Nasya therapy with *Anu Taila* is
162 beneficial for hair health. It is recommended during the rainy,
163 autumn, and spring seasons, when the weather is clear. *Nasya* helps
164 nourish the *Srotas* (channels) above the clavicle, including the hair
165 follicles, and accelerates hair growth.
- 166 ○ **Snana (Bathing):** According to **Acharya Sushruta**, the head and
167 hair should not be washed with excessively warm or cold water.
168 Warm water can weaken the hair and eyes. Regular hair wash (at
169 least three times a week) using mild, chemical-free shampoos or
170 herbal decoctions like *Henna*, *Bhringraj*, *Shikakai*, and *Triphala*
171 is recommended for cleansing the scalp without causing damage.
- 172 ○ **Dhoomapana (Medicated Smoke):** Medicated smoke therapy
173 (*Dhoomapana*) helps clear doshas from the head region and
174 enhances the firmness of hair. It is also beneficial for the head,
175 eyes, and other sensory organs.
- 176 ○ **Kshaurakarma (Hair Cutting):** Regular haircuts, beard grooming,
177 and nail trimming are recommended to maintain hair health.
178 **Acharya Charaka** suggests that haircuts should be done thrice
179 every fortnight to maintain hair strength and hygiene.
- 180 ○ **Ushnishka (Head Covering):** Wearing a *Ushnishka* (turban or
181 cap) protects the hair from harmful environmental factors like
182 wind, dust, and heat, contributing to better hair health.

183 3. Purification Procedures (Panchakarma):

- 184 ○ Panchakarma therapies like *Vaman* (emesis), *Virechana*
185 (purgation), *Vasti* (enema), and *Rakta Mokshana* (bloodletting)
186 are indicated based on the involvement of *Pitta dosha* in hair fall.
187 These therapies help detoxify the body and balance the *doshas*,

188 leading to improved hair health. *Virechana* and *Rakta Mokshana*
189 are commonly prescribed for hair fall and baldness due to *Pitta*
190 aggravation.

191 4. Medicated Oils for *Shiroabhyanga* (Head Massage):

- 192 ○ *Neeli Taila* (Sushruta)
- 193 ○ *Sairiyaka Taila* (Sushruta)
- 194 ○ *Mahaneel Taila* (Ashtanga Hridayam)
- 195 ○ *Snuyadi Taila* (Chakradutta)
- 196 ○ *Chandanadhya Taila* (Chakradutta)
- 197 ○ *Mulethi, Amla, Milk, and Taila Paka* (Chakradutta)

198 5. Pastes for Local Application on the Scalp:

- 199 ○ *Madhuka, Amla, and Honey* (Acharya Sushruta)
- 200 ○ *Til (Sesame), Amla, Honey, and Oil* (Acharya Sushruta)
- 201 ○ *Kapikakshu Moola and Aksha Taila* (Acharya Sushruta)
- 202 ○ *Dugdhika Karveera (Milk) and Karveera Paste* (Acharya
203 Sushruta)
- 204 ○ *Kapalaranjaka Lepa* (Chakradutta)
- 205 ○ *Bhringpushadi Lepa* (Chakradutta)
- 206 ○ *Mandoora Bhasma, Amla Churna, Japapushpa* - wash with
207 *Triphala Kwath*
- 208 ○ *Ayas Churna, Triphala, Sour Liquid* (Chakradutta)

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210 **6. Medicated Oils for Nasal Medication (*Nasya*):**

- 211 ○ *Anu Taila Nasya* (Acharya Sushruta)
- 212 ○ *Brihatyadi Navana* (Acharya Sushruta)
- 213 ○ *Sahacharadi Navana* (Acharya Sushruta)
- 214 ○ *Nimba Taila* (Chakradutta)
- 215 ○ *Bhringaraja Rasa, Mulethi, Milk, and Taila Paka* (Chakradutta)

216 **7. Other Ayurvedic Herbs & Rasayana for Hair Health (as per Charaka**
217 **Samhita):**

- 218 ○ *Agastya Haritaki*
- 219 ○ *Kankarishta*
- 220 ○ *Dwipanchmool Ghrita*
- 221 ○ *Amalaki Rasayana*
- 222 ○ *Navayas Lauha*
- 223 ○ *Mandoora Bhasma*

224 By combining proper *Nidanparivarjana* (identification and avoidance of
225 causes) with *Shiroabhyanga*, *Nasya*, **Panchakarma** therapies, and *Rasayana*
226 (rejuvenation) treatments, *Khalitya* can be effectively managed. This approach
227 helps balance the *doshas*, promote healthy hair growth, and prevent further hair
228 loss. Regular lifestyle modifications, coupled with Ayurvedic therapies, can
229 significantly improve hair health and prevent premature aging or thinning of
230 hair.

231 **Discussion:**

232 *Khalitya* (hair loss) is a prevalent and complex condition affecting a significant
233 portion of the global population. It has profound implications on both physical
234 and emotional well-being. The condition is primarily triggered by various
235 factors, including *viruddha ahara* (incompatible foods), *pitta-vardhak ahara*
236 *vihara* (diet and activities that increase *Pitta*), *abhishyandi ahara* (diet that
237 causes the accumulation of fluids), and a sedentary lifestyle, all of which
238 increase the *Pitta* and *Vata doshas*. The imbalance of these doshas can lead to
239 the development of *Khalitya*.

240 From an Ayurvedic perspective, the management of *Khalitya* involves a holistic
241 approach, focusing on *Abhyanga* (oil massage), *Shodhana* (detoxification),
242 *Lepana* (local application of medicinal pastes), *Nasya* (nasal therapy), and
243 *Rasayana* (rejuvenation) therapies.

244 1. ***Abhyanga***: *Abhyanga*, or oil massage, is particularly effective in calming
245 *Vata dosha*. Oiling with medicinal oils prepared from herbs that balance
246 *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* doshas helps normalize the imbalances of all
247 three *doshas*, particularly *Vata* and *Pitta*, contributing to the restoration of
248 hair health and preventing hair loss.

249 2. ***Shirolepana (Head Application of Pastes)***: This therapeutic practice
250 involves the application of medicinal pastes prepared from *Vata*, *Pitta*,
251 and *Kapha*-reducing herbs. The paste normalizes the aggravated doshas
252 (*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*) and improves circulation in the scalp, which
253 may contribute to the rejuvenation of hair follicles and prevent further
254 hair loss.

255 3. ***Shodhana (Detoxification)***: *Shodhana* is a specialized detoxification
256 therapy that removes accumulated *doshas* from the body, thereby purging
257 the root cause of the imbalance. *Shodhana* therapies, such as *Virechana*
258 (purgation) and *Vamana* (emesis), help eliminate the excess *doshas* from

259 the body, thereby facilitating the restoration of balance and improving the
260 health of hair.

261 4. *Nasya*: *Nasya therapy*, involving the administration of medicinal oils
262 through the nasal passages, is effective in addressing hair loss. *Nasya*
263 purifies the head region, nourishes the scalp, and strengthens the hair
264 follicles, promoting healthier hair growth.

265 5. ***Rasayana* (Rejuvenation)**: *Rasayana* therapy includes the use of
266 **immune-modulating, antioxidant, and rejuvenating** substances to
267 combat hair loss. It is especially beneficial in cases of chronic illness,
268 premature aging, or nutritional deficiencies, as it helps restore vitality to
269 the body and improve overall hair health.

270 **Conclusion:**

271 *Khalitya* is a multifactorial condition that requires comprehensive management.
272 Minor adjustments in lifestyle and dietary habits can help prevent hair loss.
273 Regular **hair care practices** such as **oil massage, proper washing, and**
274 **protection from environmental factors** (e.g., chemicals, pollutants, excessive
275 heat) are essential for maintaining healthy hair and preventing further damage.

276 Before initiating any treatment for hair loss, it is crucial for the physician to first
277 identify the underlying cause. The initial line of treatment should be
278 *Nidanparivarjana* (elimination of causative factors). Once the cause is
279 addressed, other therapies like *Abhyanga, Lepana, Shodhana, Nasya*, and
280 *Rasayana* should be prescribed based on the specific needs of the patient. By
281 following this integrated Ayurvedic approach, *Khalitya* (hair loss) can be
282 effectively managed and treated.

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