



TITLE - PREMATURE GRAYING OF HAIR W.S.R. TO PALITYA – AN AYURVEDIC REVIEW

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ABSTRACT:

In Ayurveda, the body's functions are governed by three fundamental energies known as humours: Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. Pitta dosha, responsible for metabolic processes, typically regulates bodily activities. Premature graying, termed Palitya, often occurs in older individuals and is influenced by various factors such as Pitta-dominant constitution, dietary habits, lifestyle choices, psychological factors, and other unknown causes. Research was conducted by consulting diverse Ayurvedic texts, journals, and online sources. Palitya manifests differently based on the dominance of specific doshas. Therapeutic approaches such as Sanshodhana, Nasya, Shiroabhyanga, and Pralepa, alongside supportive treatments, help alleviate premature graying. Additionally, adhering to appropriate dietary and lifestyle practices enhances the synergistic effects of treatment.

Key words - Palitya, Pitta, Prakriti, Ushna.

INTRODUCTION –

In Ayurvedic tradition, lustrous hair is deemed vital for one's beauty and serves as a reflection of an individual's immune system and hormonal balance. The condition of one's hair often mirrors the overall health or illness of the body. Ancient Ayurvedic texts, dating back thousands of years, prescribe a diverse range of daily hair care practices, including rituals such as Nasya, Snana, and Moordha Taila application. However, in the contemporary era of industrialization, people struggle to adhere to traditional daily routines (especially Moordha Taila application) or seasonal practices (Ritucharya) due to time constraints. The term "Palitya" originates from the Sanskrit root "Pali" with the prefix "kta," signifying the graying of hair with age. Presently, factors such as modern scientific advancements, hectic lifestyles, excessive use of harmful medications or plants, environmental pollutants like air, water, and noise, intense competition, stress, dietary irregularities, nutritional deficiencies, and premature aging are resulting in imbalances of the body's doshas, leading to conditions like Palitya.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES –

- Gathering all available information concerning Palitya from various Ayurvedic texts and presenting it coherently after thorough analysis.
- Collecting and organizing data on Palitya.
- Clarifying and presenting knowledge in a structured manner
- Review and critical analysis of Palitya or Graying of hairs according to Ayurveda.

MATERIALS AND METHODS –

Information on premature graying of hair (Palitya) is collected from different Ayurvedic and contemporary medical textbooks, magazine, journal, internet. It is a review article and data has been collected from all available sources.

FUNCTIONS OF PITTA - Pitta governs all transformations within the body, operating from systemic functions down to the cellular level. Functions such as digestion, vision, maintaining body temperature, regulating hunger and thirst, enhancing body luster and softness, as well as mental attributes like forgiveness and intellect, are under the influence of pitta dosha. When digestive fire (agni) is weak (mandagni), it leads to the production of toxins (ama), while excessive stimulation of pitta results in excessive digestion (paka) and subsequently eliminates it.

AYURVEDIC ASPECT OF PALITYA - According to Ayurveda hair (Kesha) is Mala (material that is to be excreted) of Asthi Dhatu Palitya are hair disorders which occur due to internal factors like Rasadushti, Asthi-Dhatu Dushti or due to Sthanik Dushti i.e.Dushti at the scalp region.

SYNONYMS OF PALITYA¹ –

Kesha Shukalta, Palit, Palitya, Keshpaka, Vridha, Shelaj, Tap, Kardam.

DEFINITION OF PALITYA –

Hetusevan like krodha, shrama etc leads to increase in shariroshma which further vitiates pitta leading to change in colour of hair .This change is called palitya. According to Charakacharya, all three doshas are involved in aetiopathogenesis of Palitya, while according to Sushrutacharya only 'Pitta' Dosha is involved.

CLASSIFICATION OF PALITYA -

In Ayurveda greying of hair is called as Palitya, a type of kshudra roga (minor diseases). Ayurveda accounts for two types of grey hair viz. Akala palitya (premature grey hair) & Kala palitya (senile grey hair). Premature grey hair is mainly caused by excess Ushna (hot) guna (property) of Pitta dosha (biological entity related to exothermic reactions or transformation)². Astanga hridaya text classified on the basis of dosha (biological entity) predominance viz. Vataja (biological entity related to movement), pittaja, kaphaja (biological entity related to structure or conglomeration), dwandaja (combination of two dosha) & tri doshaja (all three doshas)³ Shoka, shram, and Krodh results in vitiate the pitta and drives it towards mastishka and results in Palitya.⁴

CAUSE OF PALITYA -

There are four main reasons. First one is dietary (Aharaja), second one is life style (viharaja), third one is psychological (mansik) & fourth one is other reason unknown (adibalapravritta).

1. Nutritional (Aharaja): There is description of excess use of pungent (katu), sour (amla), salt (lavana), pungent (tikshna), hot (ushna), light(laghu), vidhai, sesamum oil (tilaitaila), pinyaka, kuathha, mustard (sarshapa), linseed (alasi), green vegetable(haritakashaka), flesh of godha, fish (matsya), goat (aja), sheep (aavika), curd (dadhi), takra, kurchika, water of curd (mastu), sauviraka,suravikara and amlaphala cause the vitiation of pitta and leads to palitya.⁵ The study shows that deficiency of Iron, vitamin B12, Calcium & Vitamin D3 causes the graying of hair.⁶ Excess use of salt causes palitya because lavana is pitta prakupita diet as mentioned in charaka sutra sthana atreya bhadrakapiya adhyay. Alsi or tisi and mustard aggravate the Raktapitta and vitiate the pitta as mentioned in charakasutra sthana annapanavidhyadhyay. There is no such study that mustard and linseed affect the absorption of iron and vitamin B12.

2. Environmental & behavior (Viharaja): Over indulgence in physical exercise & over exertion, awakening during night (raatrijagarana), excessive exposure to sunlight (atiatapasevan), use of smoking & dust particle (atirajo and dhumasevan), intake of vitiated air (dushitvayusevan), excess exercise (ativyayama) and fast (upvasa) may cause the palitya.⁷

3. Psychological (Mansik): Certain psychological factors like anger (Krodha), grief (shoka), afraid (bhaya)and mental stress (maansika shrama) vitiate the pitta dosha causes palitya & other paittik diseases.⁸

PHYSICAL FACTORS

- Suppression of natural urges
- Inhalation of unwholesome odour
- Morbid chime
- Excess sunlight, exposure to cold weather, fog, dust, frost.
- Waking at night
- Day sleeping, excess consumption of cold water and alcohol.
- Excessive involvement in sexual act
- Facing ahead wind breeze
- Excessive weeping
- Talking too loud
- Massage unwillingness

MENTAL FACTORS

- Overwork
- Fatigue, excessive grief or anger, provoked body heat and Pitta Dosha

ACCORDING TO MODERN SCIENCE

- Fast lifestyle
- Excessive environmental expose to high pollution
- Excessive use of spicy, oily food, fast food and junk food
- Prolonged medication
- Genetic causes
- Hormonal imbalance

- Use of strong hair cosmetics
- No or less use of hair care

POORVAROOPA- PREDROMAL SYMPTOMS⁹

- Thinning of hair
- Black hair turn to brownish
- Dryness of scalp and hair
- Temples usually shows graying fast

ROOPA- SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS¹⁰

Not any specific sign & symptoms are described related to disease.

SAMPRAPTI- PATHOGENESIS^{11,12,13}

Mechanism by which Doshas are vitiated by their Nidanas and the way by which they spread up in the body to manifest a disease called Samprapti. But, because of over work, fatigue, excessive grief or anger provoked Dehoshma (body heat) along with Pitta dosha enter into region of head (scalp). Thereby tends to make hair grey prematurely and such silvering the hair before the natural period of senile decay is called Palitya, as per said by Acharya Sushruta. Acharya Charaka said Teja along with Vatadi doshas burn the Kesha bhoomi (scalp) to produce Khalitya but when scorches partially, it causes graying of hair.

COMPONENTS OF PATHOGENESIS¹⁴

Udbhava Sthana- Amashaya
 Sanchara- Rasayanies
 Vata- Saman, Udana
 Pitta- Bhrajaka, Pachaka
 Dushya- Asthi Dhatu, Rasa Dhatu
 Srotas- Asthivaha, Rasavaha
 Srotodusti- Sanga
 Vyakti Sthana- Sirah Pradeshastha Kesha
 Agni Dusti- Jathragni Mandya and Rasa agni, Asthya agni mandhya

SITE OF OCCURRENCE¹⁵

The graying process usually is gradual and firstly appears near the temple region “Shankha”. Then the greyness spreads to the crown and later to the back of the head.

TYPES¹⁶

On Account of Age – 2

- Akala Palita (Premature graying)
- Kala Palita (Graying due to ageing)

Akala Palita (Premature Graying)¹⁷

When it occurs in very young age, it said to be Akalaja or premature graying. People who regularly consume too much salt experience early baldness, hair graying, and wrinkles.

Kala Palitya (Graying due to ageing)¹⁸

- Graying manifested in proper age
- Sign of old age

Types of Kala Palitya-5¹⁹

Vataja, Pittaja, Kaphaja, Sannipataja, Shirorujaudbhava

DISCUSSION –

In Ayurvedic terms, Palitya disease arises from a multitude of causes, including dietary habits, environmental influences, genetic predispositions, complications from other illnesses, inefficient metabolism, poor hygiene, and mental well-being. However, these various factors primarily lead to an imbalance of the Vata-Pitta doshas. When these doshas are imbalanced, individuals are susceptible to Palitya disease. Ayurveda categorizes Palitya as a Rasa Dushti Janya Roga and also Kesha Roga, affecting different types of body hair such as Shamshu due to disturbances in the Asthi Dhatu. To address Rasa Dushti Janya Roga, Ayurveda recommends ten types of Langhana therapies, including Vamana (emesis), Virechana (purgation), Shirovirechana (nasal medication), Niruha Vasti (decoction enema), Pippasa (thirst), Vayu Sevana (exposure to wind), Aatapa Sevana (exposure to sun), use of digestive herbs, fasting, and exercise. Similarly, to manage Asthi Dhatu disturbances, therapies like Basti karma (medicated enema) and the consumption of Ghrita (medicated ghee) and milk enriched with bitter substances are suggested. Additionally, proper dietary and environmental measures are essential for maintaining overall hair health.

CONCLUSION –

The graying of hair occurs due to the heat attribute (ushna guna) of Pitta dosha. It manifests in two forms: a natural process and an abnormal occurrence. In certain individuals and as one ages, it is a natural phenomenon. Those prone to early graying should steer clear of sour (amla), salty (lavana), pungent (katu rasa), hot (ushna), and Pitta-aggravating foods. Additionally, they should avoid behaviors that exacerbate Pitta attributes.

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