

AYURVEDIC MANAGEMENT OF VATAJA SHIRASHULA - A CASE REPORT

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ABSTRACT

Introduction- *Vataja Shirashla* is a commonly described type of headache under *Siroroga* in classical *Ayurvedic* texts, primarily resulting from aggravation of *Vata Dosha*. It is characterized by severe, piercing head pain, stiffness in the cervical region, dryness, and sensitivity to cold. Contemporary management strategies often focus on symptomatic relief through analgesics, which may provide temporary benefit and are associated with recurrence. *Ayurveda* emphasizes *Dosha* specific management through *Shamana* and *Shodhana* therapies to achieve sustained relief and prevent relapse. **Methods-** This is a single case clinical study of a 38 year old male patient diagnosed with *Vataja Shirashula* based on classical *Ayurvedic* diagnostic criteria. The patient presented with recurrent unilateral headache, neck stiffness, dryness of scalp, and aggravation during cold exposure and stress. The treatment protocol included *Shamana Chikitsa* along with *Pancakarma* procedures specifically *Nasyakarma* and *Basti* for duration of 21 days. Internal medications targeting *Vata Dosha* pacification were administered alongside dietary and lifestyle modifications (*Pathya Apathya*). Assessment was carried out using subjective parameters such as headache intensity, frequency, duration, and associated symptoms before and after treatment. A follow up period of one month was observed. **Results-** A marked reduction in headache intensity and frequency was observed by the end of the treatment period. Associated symptoms such as cervical stiffness and dryness showed significant improvement. The patient reported enhanced quality of life and functional capacity. No adverse effects were noted during the intervention. Importantly no recurrence of symptoms was observed during the one month follow up period. **Discussion-** The present case study demonstrates that *Ayurvedic* management, employing an integrated approach of *Shamana* therapy and *Pancakarma* procedures, is effective in providing sustained relief in *Vataja Shirashula*. This holistic approach not only alleviates symptoms but also addresses the underlying *Dosha* imbalance suggesting its potential as a safe and effective alternative in the management of chronic headaches.

KEYWORDS: *Vataja Shirashula*, *Shiroroga* Headache, *Ayurveda*, *Nasya*, *Basti*.

INTRODUCTION

Shiras is described as *Uttamanga* and is considered the seat of *Prana*, *Indriyas*, and *Manas*. Disorders of the head significantly affect quality of life. *Ayurvedic* classics classify *Shirashula* based on *Dosha* predominance. *Vataja Shirashula* manifests due to aggravated *Vata Dosha* possessing *Ruksha*, *Laghu*, *Sheeta*, and *Chala Gunas*. *Acharya Sushruta* states in *Uttara Tantra* 25th chapter “*Vaat tu Shirahshulam Toda Bheda Rujam Bhavet*” This case report is presented to highlight the role of classical *Ayurvedic* management in *Vataja Shirashula*.

CASE REPORT

Patient Information

A 38 year old male, engaged in desk based office work, attended the OPD with complaints of recurrent headache for three months.

Chief Complaints

- Severe episodic headache
- Neck stiffness associated with pain

History of Present Illness

The headache was pricking and splitting in nature, predominantly affecting frontal and temporal regions. Symptoms were aggravated by cold exposure, fasting, night awakening, and stress, and relieved by rest and warmth. Temporary relief was obtained with analgesics.

Clinical Findings

General Examination

- **Nadi-** *Vataja*, Blood Pressure- 120/80 mmHg
- **Tongue-** Dry
- **Bowel habit-** Irregular with constipation tendency.
- **Sleep-** Disturbed

Systemic Examination

- **CNS-** Normal, mild cervical stiffness present.

Ayurvedic Assessment

Dashavidha Pariksha

- **Prakruti-** *Vata- Pitta*
- **Vikruti-** *Vata Prakopa*
- **Sara-** *Madhyama*
- **Satva-** *Madhyama*

Samprapti Ghataka

- **Dosha-** *Vata*
- **Dushya -** *Rasa, Majja*
- **Strotas-** *Rasavaha, Majjavaha,*

- *Adhithana- Shiras,*
- *Vyadhi- Vataja Shirashula*

Diagnosis

- Based on classical *Lakshanas* and *Ayurvedic* assessment, the patient was diagnosed with *Vataja Shirashula*

Therapeutic Intervention

Shamana Chikitsa

Table- 1.

Sl No	Medicine	Dose	Duration
1.	<i>Yogaraja Guggulu</i>	500 mg twice daily	21 days
2.	<i>Dashamula Kwatha</i>	40 ml twice daily	21 days
3.	<i>Kshirabala Taila</i> (internal)	10 drops with warm milk	21 days

Panchakarma Procedures

- *Shiro Abhyanga* with *Kshirabala Taila* (daily)
- *Nadi Sveda* over head and neck
- *Nasya* with *Anu Taila* (6 drops/nostril for 7 days)
- *Anuvasana Basti* with *Dashamula Taila* on alternate days

Pathya and Apathya

- *Pathya*- Warm, unctuous food, adequate sleep, oil massage.
- *Apathya*- Fasting, cold and dry food, excessive screen exposure, night awakening.

RESULTS

Table- 2.

Sl No	Parameter	Assessment Criteria	Before Treatment	After Treatment
1.	Headache intensity	Visual Analogue Scale (VAS)	8/10 (Severe)	2/10 (Mild)
2.	Headache frequency	Episodes per week	Daily (6-7 episodes/week)	Occasional (1 episode/week)
3.	Duration of headache	Average duration per episode	4- 6 hours	< 1 hour
4.	Nature of pain	Patient reported	Severe, pricking, constricting	Mild, occasional discomfort
5.	Neck stiffness (<i>Griva Stambha</i>)	Clinical examination	Present (severe restriction of movement)	Absent
6.	Associated symptoms	Heaviness, dryness, fatigue	Present	Absent
7.	Sleep disturbance	Subjective assessment	Disturbed	Normal
8.	Adverse effects	Drug/procedure related	Not observed	Not observed

After completion of therapy, headache intensity and frequency reduced markedly.

Neck stiffness resolved completely. No adverse effects were noted.

DISCUSSION

Rationale of *Shamana Chikitsa*

In the present case, the line of management was planned in accordance with the *Vataja Shirashula Chikitsa Siddhanta*, where *Vata Dosha Shamana*, *Strotoshodhana*, and *Marga Vishodhana* of *Urdhvajatrugata Pradesha* form the core principles. A combined approach of *Shamana Chikitsa* along with appropriate *Panchakarma* procedures was adopted to achieve sustained relief. *Yogaraja Guggulu* is a classical formulation widely indicated in *Vatavyadhi*. Its ingredients possess *Ushnaa Virya*, *Laghu Ruksha Guna* and *Vata Kapha Shamaka* properties, thereby alleviating pain, stiffness, and obstruction in *Strotas*. It also acts as a *Dipana Pachana* drug, correcting *Agnimandya* and preventing further *Dosha* aggravation, which is commonly associated with chronic headache conditions. *Dashamula Kwatha* is renowned for its *Vatahara*, *Shula Prashamana* and *Shothahara* actions. The ten roots collectively pacify aggravated *Vata* at both systemic and local levels. In *Vataja Shirashula*, where dryness, constriction, and pain dominate, *Dashamula* helps restore *Dosha* balance and improves circulation in the head and neck region. *Kshirabala Taila* (internal use) is a potent *Vata Pitta Shamaka Sneha*, indicated in neurological and pain disorders. *Bala* (*Sida cordifolia*) strengthens *Majja Dhatu* and nervous tissue, while milk enhances its *Brimhana* and nourishing effect. Internal administration provides *Snehana* at the *Dhatu* level counteracting the *Rukshata* and *Kharata* of aggravated *Vata*, thereby reducing the frequency and intensity of headache.

Role of *Panchakarma* Procedures

Shiro Abhyanga with *Kshirabala Taila* provides localized *Snehana* to the scalp and cranial region. *Abhyanga* mitigates *Vata* by virtue of *Sneha*, *Mardava* and *Ushna Guna* improves local blood circulation, relieves muscle tension and induces mental relaxation. Regular application is particularly beneficial in headaches associated with stiffness and dryness.

Nadi Sweda over head and neck facilitates *Strotovilayana* and *Doshavilayana* enhancing the penetration of medicated oil and relieving stiffness in cervical and cranial musculature. *Swedana* further pacifies *Vata* and *Kapha* by alleviating *Avarana* and improves mobility and comfort.

Nasya with *Anu Taila* plays a pivotal role in *Urdhvajatrugata Vikaras*. *Anu Taila*, being *Tridosha Shamaka* with special affinity towards the nasal and cranial structures, nourishes *Indriyas* and clears subtle channels. *Acharya Charaka* clearly states in *Siddhi Sthana*, 9th Chapter "*Nasyat Urdhvajatrugata Vikarah Prashamyanti*" This statement emphasizes that *Nasya* is the prime therapeutic modality for diseases of the head and neck. Since *Nasa* is the gateway to *Shiras*, medicines administered through this route directly influence the *Shira*, *Indriyas*, and *Manovaha Strotas*. In *Vataja Shirashula*, *Nasya* helps expel morbid *Vata* from the cranial region, nourishes tissues, and prevents recurrence.

Anuvasana Basti with Dashamula Taila was included considering that *Basti* is the best treatment for *Vata Dosha*. As the *Pakwashaya* is the main seat of *Vata*, *Anuvasana Basti* provides systemic *Snehana*, regulates *Apana Vata*, and indirectly controls *Prana* and *Udana Vata*, which are involved in headache pathogenesis. This explains the holistic and sustained improvement observed in symptoms.

CONCLUSION

The integrated use of *Samana Chikitsa* and *Panchakarma* addressed both local pathology in *Shiras* and systemic *Vata* imbalance. The treatment not only provided symptomatic relief but also corrected the underlying *Dosha* disturbance,

aligning with classical *Ayurvedic* principles. The reference from *Charaka Samhita* further substantiates the pivotal role of *Nasya* in managing *Vataja Shirashula* highlighting the classical authenticity of the adopted therapeutic approach.

Patient Consent

Written informed consent was obtained from the patient.

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