



## CONCEPT OF PALITA (GREYING OF HAIR): A LITERARY REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda has great aspect of cosmetology. In Ayurveda text cosmetic diseases like Khalitya, Palita, Yauvana Pidaka, Vali, Darunaka, Kunakha is described as kshudraroga. Among these cosmetic diseases Palita (Greying of hair) is not only affects the appearance but also it is embarrassing. It is harmless causing no pain but lowers self-confidence and leads to psychological stress. It is found the limitation to cure this disease by modern medicine. Present study explains the causes, pathogenesis and its treatment in Ayurveda and also explains the preventive measures of palita as per Ayurveda.

**KEYWORDS:** Palita, Akaala Palita, Greying of Hair, Palitadosha.

### INTRODUCTION

Cosmetology emphasizes looking good in which hair plays an important role. Hair is a reflection of our identity which conveys meaning about social and moral aspect including gender sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, age and more. Different types of hair seen in the society like long, short, light, dark, thick, fine, curly, straight, back, brown, red or blend. In short hair has been a symbol of beauty and power. Normal colour of hair gives confidence and beauty to the face. Palita (greying of hair) is a symptom of old age along with another degenerative changes or it can be individual disease. In Ayurveda texts Palitadosha is explained which is suggested the akalapalita means greying of hair in early age or young age. At any age whether in old age or in young age, greying of hair affects the persons self-esteem and confidence. This study is proposed to explain the concept of Palita along with causes, pathogenesis and its treatment in Ayurveda and preventive measures of palitadosha by observing proper diet with respective to the body constitution.

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To study the fundamental concept of Palita from Brihatrayee, Laghutrayee & Various Nighantus in Ayurveda.
2. To spread awareness in the society regarding diet to prevent akaalpalita with respective of body constitution.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

For this study Ayurveda text like Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Sangraha and Ashtangahridaya, Different Nighantus have been referred. The available commentaries of the respective texts in Sanskrit, English and Hindi were also used. Different websites from the internet have been also searched for this study.

#### Conceptual Study

##### Defination of Palita

Palita means keshashuklatwa i.e. silvering or greying of hair. <sup>[1]</sup> The heat and pitta of the body having recourse to the region of the head owing to overwork, fatigue and excessive grief or anger, tend to make the hair prematurely grey and such silvering of the hair (before the natural period of senile decay) is called Palita. <sup>[2]</sup> According to Sushruta Samhita Palita is one of Kshudraroga and considered as a shirogatroga. <sup>[3]</sup> In Sushruta Samhita Palita is included in Rasa pradoshaja Vikara also. <sup>[4]</sup>

#### Kesha utpatti (Production of Hair) as per Ayurveda

Acharya Sushruta has considered the Kesha as a pitrujbhava which means the hairs of the head and body, beard and moustaches are contributed by the paternal element. <sup>[5]</sup> Acharya Charaka has considered the hair as Parthiva Dravya because of its qualities like roughness, steadiness, heaviness etc. <sup>[6]</sup>

### Relation of Asthidhatu and Kesha

During the process of metabolic transformation (transformation of dhatu) two categories of products arise out of it- i) Prasada bhaga (nutrient fraction) and ii) kitta bhaga (waste product). Thus Paka of Ashtidhatu occurs by its own Agni, the MajjaDhatu emerges from prasada bhaga and at the same time hair of scalp and body emerges as mala.<sup>[7]</sup>

### Kesha utpatti kala

According to Charaka the Keshotpatti Kala in foetus is at seventh month.<sup>[8]</sup>

### Relation of Pitta and Kesha Varna

Pitta is responsible for normal & abnormal colour of the body, but in chakrapanitika it is explained that varna of the skin is depend on pitta of the body so kesha is a part of the body and thus we can consider that normal & abnormal keshavarna is also depend on pitta of the body.<sup>[9]</sup>

### Relation of Pitta, Pitta Prakriti and Palita

In Charaka Samhita, due to the hotness of pitta in the body having pittal type of constitution greying of hair occurs.<sup>[10]</sup> In Ashtanga Hridaya Pitta prakriti possess greying of hair.<sup>[11]</sup>

### Palita as a Dosha or Roga

In Ayurveda Palita is mentioned as a dosha or roga.<sup>[12]</sup> When Palita as a dosha or roga it is akalapalita or greying of hair in early or young age.

### Relation between Palita and Age

In Sushrut Samhita Palita is a symptom of Vrudhaavastha which is the decaying age i.e. chronologically it is from forty to seventieth year of life.<sup>[13]</sup>

### Causes of Palita

#### According to Ayurveda

- 1) Excessive intake of Lavana Rasa leads palita.<sup>[14]</sup>
- 2) Pitta Aggravation rise to aggravation of attributes of it.<sup>[15]</sup>
- 3) Everyday intake of lavana rasa in excess leads Sheeghrapalita.<sup>[16]</sup>
- 4) Pitta Prakriti or the person of pitta constitution is prone to greying of hair.<sup>[17]</sup>
- 5) Intake of green vegetables leads Palita.<sup>[18]</sup>

### Types of Palita

In Ashtanga Hridaya 5 types of palita has been explained i.e. Vataja, Pittaja, Kaphaja, Sannipataja and Shirorujodbhavam.

In Vataja palita is caused by vata hair are split (broken) black, rough dry and resembles water.

In Pittaja palita is caused by pitta burning sensation in the scalp and the hairs are yellowish.

In Kaphaja palita is caused by kapha the scalp is unctuous and hairs are growing thick and white.

In Sannipataja palita is caused by all the doshas presence of all the features should be noticed.

In Shirorujodbhavam, palita is caused by headache which has discoloration and intolerance of touch.<sup>[19]</sup>

### Sadhyaasadyatwa (Prognosis) of Palita

Sannipataja Palita is Asadhya (Incurable).<sup>[20]</sup>

### Treatment of Palita

#### As Per Ayurveda

#### According to Charaka Samhita

1. Everyday Intake of two fruits of abhaya processed in decoction of Agastya Haitaki cures greying of hair.<sup>[21]</sup>
2. In palita, the patient should be given elimination therapy (emetics, purgation etc.) and thereafter be given nasya with medicated oil and application of paste of drugs over the head and face.<sup>[22]</sup>
3. Mahanilaghutpana and mahanilataila nasya, abhyanga cures Palita.<sup>[23]</sup>
4. Intake of Jeevaniya Ghrut (medicated ghee) should be taken in the dose of one aksha which destroys grey hair.<sup>[24]</sup>
5. Shatavryadi Anuvasana Basti as a Rasayana cures palita.<sup>[25]</sup>

#### According to Sushruta Samhita

1. Nasya prevents Palita.<sup>[26]</sup>
2. Basti cures Palita.<sup>[27]</sup>
3. Mahakalyanaka Ghruta prevents Palita.<sup>[28]</sup>

#### According to Ashtanga Hridaya and Sangraha

1. Navana (Nasya karma), Gandusha of Anutaila prevents palita.<sup>[29]</sup>
2. Agastya Rasayana (Two pala each of dashmula, swayamgupta, shakhapushpi, shati, bala,
3. Hastipipali, Apamarga, Pippalimula, Chitraka, bhurangi and pushkarmula, one adhaka of yava, hartaki one hundred by number are all boiled in five adhaka of water. When the yava becomes well cooked, haritaki is taken out of the decoction and again cooked along with one tula of guda (jaggery) and one kudava each of ghrut, taila (oil of sesame), powder of pippali and makshika (honey)). This confection consumed daily in the dose of two abhaya per day is a rejuvenator, dispels greying of hairs.<sup>[30]</sup> Nagabala Ghrut (One tula nagbala is boiled in one drone of water and decoction reduced to one fourth, to this are added equal quantities of ghee and milk and powder of half pala each of atibala, bala, yashti, punarnava, prapoundarika, kashmarya, priyala, Kapikachhu, Ashwagandha, Sita, Abhiru, Medyugma, trikantaka, Kakoli, Kshirakakoli, kshirashulathe two jiraka, mrunala, bias, kkarjura, shrungataka and kaseruka and medicated ghee prepared.) wards off palita.<sup>[31]</sup>
4. Palita which is due to changes in the body (metabolism, old age, effect of diseases etc) require rasayana therapy (Rejuvenation Therapy).<sup>[32]</sup>

5. In palita purificatory therapies followed by nasal medication, anointing the face and head and application of paste of drugs should be resorted to.<sup>[33]</sup>
6. In palita medicated oil prepared with the drugs of bruhatyadi (hrasva panchamula) and jivaniya gana should be used for nasya or nimbi taila be used as nasya for one month and patient should drink only milk.<sup>[34]</sup>
7. Seeds of shelu,vaksha,tila and rama soaked and macerated in the juice of Nili, Shirisha, koranta and bhringa and again with goat's milk is taken in the quantity equal to kakandaka (egg of crow) and pasted on an iron plate and exposed to sunlight.The oil that exudes from it used as nasal drops by the person who takes only milk as food,cures palita.<sup>[35]</sup>
8. Medicated oil prepared with one prastha each of milk, juice of sahachara, bhringaraja and surasa, one kudava of oil and one pala of yashti and preserved either in vessel of stone or horn of a ram should be used for nasal medication.<sup>[36]</sup>
9. Nice paste of dugdhika or karaviraka made with milk, applied to the scalp after plucking the grey hair cures palita.<sup>[37]</sup>
10. Paste made from tila, amalaka, padmakinjalka, madhuka and honey applied on the head nourishes the hair and give them black colour.<sup>[38]</sup>
11. Ayoraja (iron filings), powder of bhringaraja, triphala and krishnamrutika (black mud) kept soaked in sugarcane juice for one month applied to the head cures palita.<sup>[39]</sup>
12. Yavagu (thick gruel) fermented for three days with the addition of Masha ,kodrava and dhanyamla and made predominant with loha, shuklotkata imparts colour even to the crane.<sup>[40]</sup>
13. Yamaka sneha (two fats, oil and ghee) are cooked with vari, decoction of jivanti, milk and drugs of jivaniya ganais used for nasal medication cures palita.<sup>[41]</sup>
14. Oil of tuvaraka in the form of nasal drops for fifty days makes the person free from palita.<sup>[42]</sup>

#### According to Nighantus

1. Metals prevents Palita.<sup>[43]</sup>
2. Drinking of water every morning cures palita.<sup>[44]</sup>
3. AnutailaNasya prevents palita.<sup>[45]</sup>

#### DISCUSSION

##### Relation of Old Age and Palita

Asthidhatukshaya and palita are the sign of old age and old age is a decaying age which is the normal process of life. Palita in old age is treated by rasayana therapy. But when palita is in early age it is suggested that this abnormality can be prevented by adopting proper diet and by providing shodhana and Shamana therapy with respective of pitta constitution of the body.

Various modern research paper shows the relation between old age and asthidhatukshaya (Osteopenia or osteoarthritis) and changes in hair colour.<sup>[46]</sup>

##### Pathogenesis

According to Ayurveda: As per Ashtanga Hridaya pathogenesis of Palita is explained as follows.<sup>[47]</sup>

The heat of the body aggravated by grief, exertion and anger moving on to the head and getting mixed with the doshas cooks(ripens) the hairs and produces the disease Palita.

##### Hetusevana

(Intake of excessive Lavanarasa, Shoka, krodha, Shrama, green vegetables along with pitta prakriti or any other prakriti)

Increases shirogata heat

Vayu, Pitta and Kapha gets affected

All doshas accumulates in to the head at romakupa

Vata leads to rise rukshatwa (dryness) to the kesha,Pitta gives rise yellowish colour with burning sensation and Kapha gives whitening colour with heaviness

##### Palita

##### Relation of Excessive Lavana Rasa and Palita

Lavana rasa is formed due to predominance of ap (ambu-jala) and agni (teja) mahabhuta.<sup>[48]</sup> If it is used in excess causes greying of hair.<sup>[49]</sup>

In Ayurveda Samhitas Vara (rock salt), Sauvarchala (Sochal salt), Krishna lavana (Black salt), Bida lavana, Samudra Lavana,Audbhida lavana, Romakalavana, Pamshujalavana, Shisa (Lead), Kshara (Alkali) are included in the group of lavanarasa.<sup>[50]</sup>

##### Relation of Green Vegetables and Palita

##### Contents of green vegetables

Leaf vegetables, also called potherbs, greens, vegetable greens, leafy greens, or salad greens, are plant leaves eaten as a vegetable, sometimes accompanied by tender petioles and shoots. In this group Spinach (Spinacia oleracea) Lettuce (Lactuca sativa) Cauliflower (Brassica oleracea var. botrytis) Green peas (Pisum sativum) Scallions (Allium fistulosum) and many more. All these vegetables are rich in potassium.<sup>[51]</sup> As per WHO ,not only green vegetables but the beans and peas like Cowpeas, Pigeon peas, Lima beans, African yam beans, nuts like Hazelnuts, walnuts, cashew nuts, brazil nuts, the root vegetables like Carrots, Onions, Beetroot and the othe vegetable group Tomatoes, cucumbers, pumpkins and fruits like Bananas, papayas, dates are also potassium rich food.<sup>[52]</sup>

**Daily requirement of potassium:** As per WHO guidelines it is recommended that all adults need to consume 4,700 milligrams of potassium each day where as nursing women require 5,100 milligrams daily for optimal health. Infants and children up to the age of 13 require between 400 - 3,800 milligrams depending on

their age and weight.<sup>[53]</sup> Potassium is safe when obtained from the diet in amounts of 40-80 mEq per day.<sup>[54]</sup>

Thus this study suggested that green vegetables are rich in potassium and potassium is a kind of lavana rasa, so if it consume regularly it will cause symptoms of palita (graying of hair). So excessive intake of green vegetables which contains potassium in large quantity causes palita.

As excessive intake of green vegetables which is potassium rich food (which is included as lavanarasa) disturbs the agni or digestive fire which ultimately causes palita suggested that palita is rasapradoshajavikara.

#### Relation between Akaala Palita and Body Constitution

In Ayurveda it is explained that pitta constitution of the body is more prone to akaala palita but at the old age of any constitution palita is unavoidable but can be delayed by giving rasayana therapy which is suggested to all types of constitution of the body. Palita is cosmetic disease which is very prone to the pittaja constitution of the body. So it will be very difficult to treat.

#### Relation Between Drinking Water And Palita:

Drinking water every morning suggested that it cleanse colon and the toxins of the body removed from the body through waste products.<sup>[55]</sup>

**Relation between Milk and Palita** Proper nutrition is important for hair health. The entire follicle and root are fed by a supply of arteries, and blood carries nutrients to the follicle/root. Milk is considered as rich in the B group of vitamins especially biotin. B<sub>5</sub> (pantothenic acid) prevents hair graying, B<sub>6</sub> helps to prevent dandruff and Vitamin B<sub>12</sub> helps to prevent the loss of hair.<sup>[56]</sup>

As per the research paper published in 2014 in *JAMA Pediatrics* stated that there is no association between milk consumption and bone or fracture of bones.<sup>[57]</sup> So this study suggest that drinking milk directly prevents palita. There is no relation between milk and asthidhatu.<sup>[58]</sup>

In Ayurveda also it is explained that milk promotes dhatu.<sup>[59]</sup> Medicated milk is advised for nasya (Nasal Medication) as a shodhana therapy of palita and drinking milk is advised as shamana therapy or diet to treat palita in Ayurveda. But in early ages greying of hair is curable by adopting some yogas or lepa therapy on scalp.

#### CONCLUSION

- In Ayurveda texts many references found which reveals the causes, pathogenesis and treatment of Palita.
- Sannipataja Palita is asadhya (incurable).
- Prevention of Palita in old age is not possible can be delayed by Rasayana Therapy (Rejuvenation Therapy) followed by Shodhana Therapy

(Purificatory therapy). Agastya Rasayana and Nagabala Ghrut is effective as Rasayana therapy

- But palita in early age can be prevented by taking various shodhana and shamana therapy of Ayurveda.
- Among Shodhana therapy Nasya (Nasal Medication), Gandusha (Gargles of medicated decoctions), Anuvasana Basti (Medicated Oil enema) is very effective in palita.
- Drinking of water every morning will be effective therapy to treat palita.
- Drinking milk is included as diet to prevent palita.
- Palita can be treated by intake of internal medicine as well as by applying lepa (medicinal paste) externally also.
- By avoiding excessive intake of lavana rasa in our diet and green vegetables palita can be avoided.
- Recipe like medicated yavagu is included as a diet to prevent palita.
- Preventive measures should be taken in diet by the pitta constitution of the body as their body is more prone to the palitadosha.

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