

## International Research Journal of Ayurveda &amp; Yoga

Vol. 5 (9),172-176, September,2022

ISSN: 2581-785X;<https://irjay.com/>DOI: [10.47223/IRJAY.2022.5929](https://doi.org/10.47223/IRJAY.2022.5929)A Therapeutic Efficacy of *Shirodhara* in Ayurveda: A Review StudyRavi Sharma<sup>1</sup>  Girish Narain Rai,<sup>2</sup> Akhilanath Parida<sup>3</sup>

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## Article Info

## Article history:

Received on: 13-07-2022

Accepted on: 18-09-2022

Available online:30-09-2022

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## ABSTRACT:

**Introduction-***Shirodhara* is the application of medicinal Kwatha (Decoction) or oil to the forehead. According to Ayurveda, *Shirodhara* is an example of *BahyaSnehana*, or external oleation therapy. The primary indications for *Shirodhara* are neurological and psychosomatic illnesses. Stress is a big part of today's modern lifestyle, which makes it difficult for people to go about their daily lives. The most prevalent and difficult conditions in the modern period include conditions like insomnia, headaches, facial paralysis, scalp psoriasis, hair loss, etc. However, there hasn't been any efficient management of these complaints up to this point. Determining safe and efficient treatment techniques for these disorders is therefore urgently needed. Thus, an effort is made to rule out *Shirodhara*'s effectiveness in treating various psychological disorders. **Methods-**review is collected from classics, commentaries etc.,Results-This procedure's apparent mode of action are unclear. Ayurveda focused more on the results of the method than its action.

**Discussion-**Treat the scalp with medicated oil in such a way that the oil remains in contact with the scalp for a certain period of time called *MurdhaTaila*. In order to better understand *Shirodhara*, a review of the Samhita, Chikitsa Grantha, Nighantus, and Ayurvedic texts was done. During the study, *Shirodhara*'s indications, contraindications, and therapeutic efficacy were noted.

**Keywords:** *Shirodhara*, *Murdha Taila*, *PanchaKarma*

## INTRODUCTION

The words *Shiro*, which suggests head, and *Dhara*, which suggests flow, are derived from Sanskrit. *Shirodhara* is an Ayurvedic treatment during which heated liquids are gently poured over the forehead in a specific manner and height.<sup>1</sup> *Shirodhara* comes in many various variations, including *Tailadhara*, *Takradhara*, *Ksheeradhara*, *Jaladhara*, and *Kvathadhara*. Traditionally, this process

is included under *Snehana Karma* instead of being explained under *Pancha Karma*. The Ayurveda describes *Murdhatailam* as having four types: *Shiroabhyanga*, *Shiroshaka*, *Shiropichu*, and *Shirobasti*. These are better within the order they are listed.<sup>2</sup> It's one of the *Bahya Snehana* (external oleation therapy) procedures that involves applying *Snehan* to the head or gently pouring liquids over the forehead and has been used to treat



neurological diseases, psychosomatic disorders, and other conditions. These diseases damage people's quality of life, create anxiety, depression, and reduced capacity to function, additionally to being a disease condition. The physical body is compared to an inverted tree in Ayurveda, with the top serving as the trunk and the other organs as the branches<sup>3</sup>. Therefore the head controls every system; hence application of drugs in the form of *Shirodhara*, on the top can cure much disease of different parts of the body. Classically *Shirodhara* is suggested for many diseases like Headache, *Daha* (burning sensation), *Paka* (Abscess), *Vrana* (Wound), *Arunsika* (Boils) etc. It also indicated in *Ardhambhedak* (Migraine)<sup>4</sup>, *Suryavarta* (Type of headache).<sup>5</sup> Application of oil doesn't follow any form of massage. By the utilization of this procedure one can achieve all the benefits in dermatological condition of scalp as well as psychological disorders. It is often performed in painful conditions or ulcerations of the scalp also. References regarding *Shirodhara* were collected from various textbook, published research papers, previous work done and compilation was done In-depth research was done on the *Shirodhara* concept and process.

#### **Procedure:-**

The *Shirodhara* procedure is split in to 3 parts<sup>6</sup>; like *Purva* (Before *Shirodhara*), *Pradhan*(During *Shirodhara*) & *Pachata Karma*( After *Shirodhara*).

#### **Purva Karma:-**

*Shirodhara Patra*, *Shirodhara* stand, *Shirodhara* table, gauze, cotton earplugs, vessels, soft cloths, suitable oil, milk, or any liquid are necessary materials.

#### **Preparation Of The Patient-**

The patient is thoroughly examined whether he's fit with for procedure. Pulse, temperature and vital signs should be recorded after the patient has passed stool and urine. Patient is suggested to lie down in supine position and *Dhara Patra* should be fixed 4 *Angula* above the forehead. The attention and ear should be covered with cotton to prevent the entry of liquid into eyes.

#### **Selection Of Sneha:-**

*Dharakalpa* asserts that *Sneha* should be consumed in accordance with *Dosha* conditions<sup>7</sup>. we are using sesame oil in *Vata* & *Kapha Dosha* dominant diseases<sup>8</sup>, Ghee for *Pitta Dosha* & *Rakta Pradoshaja* diseases, if any disease that have *Vata*, *Pitta* & *Rakta* in combined then Ghee & *Tila Tail* in equal quantity and if *Vata Kapha* & *Rakta* have in combined then ½ part Ghee and 1 part sesame oil.<sup>9</sup>

#### **Pradhana Karma:-**

*Shirodhara* chamber must be thoroughly cleaned, well-ventilated, and quiet. After a massage, *Shirodhara* is performed within the morning on an empty stomach. Any liquid (water, milk, oil, and kvatha) should be stored in *Dharapatra*. *Dhara* should be continuously applied to the forehead, neither too quickly nor too slowly. *Shirodhara* liquid should not be too hot or too chilly. The *Dhara* liquid stream should not be excessively thick or thin. When the liquid begins to pour, the vessel is shifted during a pendulum-like motion from one lateral side to the other. The liquid is collected during a different container and used to fill the *Dhara patra* before it runs out of liquid. Up to 14 or 21 days, the *Shirodhara* treatment is performed for a minimum of half an hour in the morning (it is seen in general practice). When milk and water are use in *Shirodhara*, the liquid must be replaced every day. *Dhanyamla* are often used for up to 3 days at a time. The oil should likewise be changed every third day, but since it are often reused, it should be used for the primary three days in half, then for the subsequent three days in the other half, and on the seventh day, the primary and second halves should be mixed together before being thrown out.

#### **Paschata Karma:-**

The patient's head must be cleaned off and dried after the *Shirodhara* procedure. Following this, there's a little period of repose, an oil massage of the body and head, and eventually a warm bath. It's suggested that the patient receive a *Pathya Ahara* (light diet).

#### **Indications Of Shirodhar<sup>10,11</sup>:-**

- \* Conditions involving aggravated *Vata* *Vosha*
- \* Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
- \* *Apasmar* (Epilepsy)
- \* Anxiety disorders
- \* Brain-fag
- \* Irritability
- \* Hypertension
- \* Insomnia
- \* Phobia, depression and other neurological & behavioral disorders

#### **Contraindications Of Shirodhara<sup>12</sup>:-**

- \* In *Kaphaja vikara*
- \* Inflamed skin on the forehead
- \* Drugs or Alcohol Intoxication
- \* Pyrexia

## **DISCUSSION:-**

It has been demonstrated in clinical studies that *Shirodhara* is effective, although it is often challenging to comprehend how it works. Within the following methods, *Shirodhara* is effective. According to Ayurveda, the head, also referred to as *Uttamanga*, is the foundation for all of the sense faculties, or *Indriyas* (sensory organs), during a living being<sup>13</sup>. *Shirodhara* thereby strengthens the *Prana* and therefore the *Indriyas*, which are typically vitiated in cases of psychological illnesses. Since *Indriyas* and therefore the mind are intimately connected, when *Indriyas* are in healthiness, the mind follows suit. *Shirodhara* maintains the wellbeing of the body and psyche. Stress and tension are often caused by an imbalance of *Prana*, *Udana* and *Vyana Vayu*, *Sadhaka Pitta*, and *Tarpak Kapha*. Through its mechanical impact, *Shirodhara* restores the functional integrity between various subtypes of *Dosha*<sup>14</sup>.

### **Therapeutic Effect Of The Drug:-**

As per the principle of drug absorption, absorption of the substances through the skin depends on variety of factors, the foremost important of which are concentration duration of contact, solubility of medication, and fitness of the skin and part of the body exposed. In *Shirodhara* oil form is employed which has good dense concentration with longer duration of contact. Also the scalp is thin as compared to other part of body and absorption is faster and more from the scalp. (As per the principle of drug absorption maximum absorption is within the scalp region and comparatively oil is better absorbing than water<sup>15</sup>).

**Dermal absorption<sup>16</sup>:** The skin is relatively permeable to compounds that are soluble in fat and comparatively resistant to those that are soluble in water. Because volatile oil molecules are so small, they will penetrate the stratum corneum when applied to the skin (the outer layer of the epidermis). The oil molecule leaves this location and travels through the dermis, capillaries, and into the bloodstream. Additionally, sweat ducts and hair follicles are used for absorption. The way an oil molecule is absorbed depends on variety of things. Bloodflow to the skin's surface is increased by both the pace of circulation and therefore the temperature of the skin, which increases the skin's capacity to soak up oil. With massage, circulation and heat can be boosted.

### **Effect Of *Shirodhara*:-**

According to the "Law of Energy Conservation," every material has P.E. at a particular altitude, which transforms

into K.E. when the substance descends from that altitude. Consistent with this concept, energy can only be transformed or changed from one form to a different rather than being generated or destroyed<sup>17</sup>.

The mass and height of the substance affect its P.E. . If height is constant, P.E. is determined by the mass of the substance or mass energy; the more mass a substance has, the more energy it holds. Anything that falls from a specific height onto the forehead might modify the voltage and encourage the production of nerve impulses or emphasize the conduction of nerve impulses because of the change in the form of energy it generates. If the quantity of momentum is modest, the energy is absorbed by the cranium and therefore the magnitude influences the voltage differential between the creation and conduction of the nerve impulse. Modern physiology states that the brain continuously produces electromagnetic waves as a result of electrical activity. Consistent with contemporary physiology, the brain continuously produces electromagnetic waves, which the encephalogram records (EEG).

### **Effect Of Constant Pressure In *Shirodhara* Procedure:-**

The frontal bone's hollow sinus amplifies the constant pressure and vibration created by the *Shirodhara* technique. The spinal fluid serves as the medium via which the vibration is conveyed inward (CSF). Impulse transmission is additionally impacted by pressure. *Shirodhara*'s technique involves applying sustained pressure to a nerve, which interrupts impulse conduction and causes some of the body to relax. By adjusting nerve activation, the trickling of medicinal liquid over the forehead for an extended period of your time induces mental peace and lowers stress. When the autonomic nervous system's nerve endings are stimulated, they release chemicals like acetylcholine, which is present in tissues in an inactive form and is activated by a impulse vibration caused by the constant pouring of liquid over the forehead. This stimulation of the nerve endings may cause Acetylcholine to cause a drop by blood pressure, which successively causes the central nervous system's activity to decrease, leading to mental tranquility. The strength of the patient's brain waves increases and therefore the level of cortisone and adrenaline in the brain lowers as *Dhara Drvya* (Medicated oil or any form of liquid) is concentrated and applied to his forehead. This element also functions as a *Shirodhara* anti-stress action.

### **On The Basis On *Marma*:-**

Consistent with ancient Ayurvedic texts, some *Marma* (Vital Spots) are found on the forehead and head region. This area

is usually home to *Sthapni*, *Utshepa*, *Avarta*, *Shankha*, and *Apanga Marma*<sup>18</sup>. Consistent with Acharya, the situation of *Chitta is Bhela Bhrumadhya* (between both eyebrows) (*Mana*). *Sthapni Marma* is additionally located there<sup>19</sup>. [*Agni and Vayu Pradhana Mahabhoota* structure the majority of the *Marma* in the head area<sup>20</sup>.

At the identical level as the pituitary and pineal gland is the *Sthapni Marma* site. Hormones regulate the pituitary gland's ability to work. It's the gland's master. it's capable of supporting the entire endocrine system in the human body. The endocrine system's imbalanced normal function was caused by mental stress and irritation<sup>21</sup>. Changes within the psycho-somatic level result from the stimulation of *Sthapni Marma* and indirect stimulation of the pituitary gland. *Shirodhara* therapy thereby relieves mental stress by maintaining this gland's normal function.

#### **Effect Of Temperature On The *Shirodhara* Procedure:-**

The prolonged application of a continuing stream of warm liquid to the forehead will mildly dilate the blood vessels. *Shirodhara* increases blood flow to varied regions and aids in regulating the brain's blood supply. The thalamus and therefore the basal forebrain may be activated by vibration and warmth, bringing serotonin and catecholamine levels back to normal.

#### **CONCLUSION**

*Shirodhara* is a crucial therapeutic technique in the Ayurvedic medical system, which has gained popularity throughout the world due to its ease of use and effectiveness in treating a wide range of illnesses and lifestyle conditions. It is a purifying and revitalizing therapy that relieves stress and any negative effects on the central nervous system, as well as toxins and mental tiredness. *Shirodhara* clearly has both a medicinal therapeutic benefit and a procedural effect based on the previous explanation. These can be understood in terms of mechanical, *Marma*, and *Ayurvedic* science. *Shirodhara* can be used to treat conditions affecting the scalp, hair, and mind.

**Acknowledgement- Nil**

**Conflicts Of interest- None**

**Source of finance & Support- Nil**

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**How to cite this article-** Sharma R, Rai g.N, Parida a “A Therapeutic Efficacy Of *Shirodhara* In Ayurveda: A Review Study”

IRJAY.[online]2022;5(9); 172—176

Available from: <https://irjay.com>

DOI link- <https://doi.org/10.47223/IRJAY.2022.5929>