

A review of *Kesha* as diagnostic and prognostic tool in Ayurveda

Review Article

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Abstract

Hair is one of the essential characteristic features which not only adds beauty to the person but also helps maintain normal physiological functions, especially by excreting sweat through the *Lomakupa*, which is considered one of the roots of *Swedavaha Strotas*. It also helps in thermoregulation, protection etc. It is *Pitruja Bhava* and is the *Mala* of *Asthidhatu*. Depending upon the Hair conditions, one can assess some of the underlying pathological status of the body. Aims & Objectives: Review the literature concerned with *Prakruta* and *Vikruta Lakshnas* of hairs in Ayurvedic classical texts for diagnosis and prognosis of the disease. Material and Methods: Material related to Hair has been collected from *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Astanga Samgraha*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya* along with respective commentaries available and data associated with a topic general at different journals and books. Observations: As *Kesha* is one of the factors which build up a person's personality, Ayurvedic classics state the advantages of hair maintenance. In the present era, changes in lifestyle, food habits, excess use of shampoos, and hair dyes, lack of oil massage to Hair, pollution, stress and strain etc., may be the cause of different types of hair problems like *Khalitya* (Alopecia totalis), *Palitya* (premature greying of Hair) etc. Therefore a proper understanding of *Prakruta Lakshanas* of *Kesha* will help in understanding the *Vaikrutha Avastha* which will thus ease the line of treatment. Results: Thus, *Kesha* and *Loma* play an essential role in diagnosing the *Prakruta* and *Vaikrutha Lakshana* and help in the prognosis of the disease.

Key Words: *Kesha*, *Loma*, *Prakruta Lakshana*, *Pitruja Bhava*, *Vaikrutha Avastha*.

Introduction

Hair is one such natural ornament that we would flaunt. The beauty of the face is enhanced by the person's crowning glory, i.e. the Hair. Hair is a protein filament that grows from follicles found in the dermis. It is defining characteristic of mammals. Hair is the common name given to the appendage irrespective of the region where it is present on the body. The normalcy of health depends upon the equilibrium of *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala*, as these are responsible for maintaining the body's physiological functions. (1) As there is an increase in Hair related problems, it is essential to rule out *Prakruta* and *Vaikrutha Avastha* about *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala*. In Ayurvedic classics, various concepts like *Prakruta Lakshanas* of *Kesha* and *Loma*, *Pitruja Bhava*, *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala*, *Pathya Apathya Yojana*, *Manasa Rogas*, *Janapadodhwansa Karana* and other miscellaneous factors like lifestyle changes are explained about *Kesha* and *Loma* in a scattered manner all over the Ayurveda classics.

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Materials and Methods

This article is mainly based on a review of Ayurveda classics. *Prakruta* and *Vaikruta*, *Kesha Lakshana* material, has been collected from *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Astanga Samgraha*, *Ashtanga Hridaya* along with respective commentaries available and data related to the topic general at different journals and books.

Ayurvedic Loma Utpatti karma

Loma is a *Pruthvi Mahabhuta Pradhana* developed and nourished from *Pitruja Bhavas*(2, 3). It is one of the *Shadabhavas* responsible for the formation of *Garbha*. It was designed from the 6th month of gestation(4). After digestion of *Asthidhatu* by *Dhatvagni*, *Rasabhaga* is converted into *Asthi*, and *Malabhaga* is converted into *Nakha*, *Roma* and *Kesha* (5).

Prakriti

Prakriti is defined as the group of characters inherited by an individual from the *Shukra* and *Shonita* of parents depending upon the predominance of *Dosha* at the time of union. (6) Many references to *Prakruta Lakshana* of *Kesha* about *Deha Prakriti* are mentioned in our classics. Such as

Table No.1: Lakshanas Of Kesha According Different Prakriti

SL. No.	Vata Prakriti	Pitta Prakriti	Kapha Prakriti	Reference
1	Parusha (Coarse)	Mrudu (Soft), Alpa (Less), KapilaVarna (Coppery)	---	Charaka Vimanasthana
2	Sphutita (Split), Alpa (Less), Ruksha (Dry)	PingalaKesha, Alpa (Less)	Sthira (strong root), Kutila (Thick), AtimeelaKesha	Sushruta Sharirasthana
3	Sphutita, Dhusara Varna (Smoky), Atisukshma Kesha	Mrudu	Ghana (Thick), Neelkesha (Black), Shyama (Black), Sukeshi	Asthanaga Hridaya Sharirasthana

These natural qualities of hair will remain constant till death as they are inherent in nature i.e. thin and curly hair will never become thick and straight.

Pitrujabhava

Pitrujabhava is one among the Shadbhava samudbhava, which is responsible for the formation of Garbh. (7) As Kesha is the Pitrujabhava, good family history helps rule out hereditary involvement in hair-related problems. Pitruja Bhavas of maternal forefathers should also be considered along with the paternal side.

Dosha

Maharshi Sushruta had explained the following pathophysiology of Khalitya. Vitiated Pitta, along with Vata, reaches Lomakupa leading to Khalitya. Later vitiated Rakta, along with Kapha, obstruct the Lomakupa, thus affecting the hair growth in that region. (8)

Khalitya is not a disease but a symptom of so many conditions. Sometimes this symptom becomes so severe that it overshadows the other signs of the disease, and patients come to OPD to treat only the symptoms.

Dhatu

Rasadhatu

Agni plays an essential role in the metabolic transformation of Ahara into Sara and kitta bhaga, where Sarabhaga nourishes the tissues. Kittabhaga is responsible for the production and nutrition of Malas like Sweda, Mutra, Pitta, Kapha, Kesha, and Loma etc. (9) Normalcy of Agni is responsible for the formation of Shrestha Rasa Dhatu. Utilizing Uttarotara Dhatuposhana helps in the production and nutrition of the rest all Dhatu. (10) According to Maharshi Sushruta, the nourishment of Kesha is from the end part of Dhamani, which is attached to the Lomakupas.

Rasadhatu Dushti Lakshana

Palitya (premature greying of hair) is due to Rasadhatu Dushti. Hence Agni, along with Poushtikaahar, should be considered while treating Palitya. (11)

Twakasar Purusha Kesha Lakshana

The Twakasar Purusha person possesses Snigdha (unctuous), Slakshna (Smooth),

Mrudu (Soft), Prasanna (Attractive), Sukumara, Gambheera (deep-rooted) Kesha. (12)

Medodhatu

Snigdhatva, Swedottpati and Asthiposhana are the functions of Medodhatu, (13) Atisthulata (obese person) is described as one of the Ashtaunindita Purusha. (14) Only Medhodhatu increases, leading to Uttarothara Dhatu Kshaya.

Therefore Keshapatnam (hair fall) may be due to Asthikshaya, and impairment of Lomakupa may be due to Kleda Vikruthi and Kleda Vidruthi occurring in Atisweda.

Medosara Lakshana

It possesses soft and shiny hair. (15)

Asthidhatu

Kesha and Loma are the Mala of Asthidhatu. The Asthidhatu has emerged from Medodhatu. Ahararasa, under the action of Jatharagni and Dhatvagni, gets converted into Prasada and Kittabhaga. After Uttarotara Dhatu Poshana under the act of Asthidhatvagni formation of Poshaka Asthidhatu, Poshya Majjadhatu occurs from Prasadabhaga and Kesha, Lomadi Malas occurs from Kittabhaga. (16)

Asthidhatu Dushti Lakshana

Maharshi Charaka said that all diseases of Kesha, Loma etc. are due to Asthidhatu Dushti. (17)

Asthidhatu Dushti Kshaya Lakshana

The Kshaya of Asthidhatu causes Kesha, Lomapatnam (Hairfall). (18) Maharshi Sushruta stated that Krodha, Shoka, Chinta etc. will vitiate Pitta and causes Palitya. (19)

Janapadodhvamsa Karana

In present era prevalence of hair related problems is increasing day by day inspite of consuming healthy diet which may be due to Dhushita Vayu, Dushita Jala, and Dushita Desha. The food i.e. grown in such polluted areas becomes less potent and is the cause for many disorders. (20)

Miscellaneous Factors

The following few external factors may also the cause for hair problems like

- Abstaining from following the *Sadvrithapalana* like *Sirobhyanga*, (21) *Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya* etc.
- Excess use of Shampoo, Hair-dyes etc.
- Application of heat in form of hair straightening machines, Hair dryer etc.

Results

Hair as a Diagnostics and Prognostic Tool

Table 2: Poorvarupa Lakshana (Prodromal Symptoms)

Sr. No.	Lakshana	Poorvarupas
1	<i>Jatilibhavam Kesheshu</i> (Matting of hair) and <i>Kayachidreshu Upadeham</i> (<i>Mala</i> in the form of <i>lepa</i> in <i>Lomakupas</i>) and excess growth of <i>Kesha</i> and <i>Nakha</i>	<i>Poorvarupas</i> of <i>Prameha</i> .(22)
2	<i>Lomaharsha</i> (23) (Horripilations)	<i>Poorvarupa</i> of <i>Kushtha</i> . (24)
3	<i>Lomaharsha</i>	<i>Vatavyadhi</i> (25) <i>Kushtha</i> (26), <i>Urustambha</i> (27), <i>Pandu</i> (28) and <i>Visha</i> .(29)
4	<i>Lomaharsha</i>	In <i>Vamana Karma</i> is indicative of movement of <i>Doshas</i> from <i>Shakha</i> to <i>Koshtha</i> .(30)
5	<i>Kashyapa</i> stated that hair on chin and Cheeks	Indicate <i>Pushpagani Jataharani</i> (PCOS) indicates anovulation.(31)
6	<i>Romaraji</i> in downward direction	Indicate <i>Yamalagarbha</i> (Twin pregnancy).(32)

Table 3: Asadhya Lakshana

Sr. No.	Asadhya Lakshana	Effect
1	Appearance of red colour hair on patches	<i>Svitra</i> .(33)
2	<i>Aloma</i> and <i>Atiloma</i> are described as <i>Nindita</i>	There is no treatment for such patients.(34)

Table 4: Arishta Lakshana (Fatal Sign)

Sr. No.	Arishta Lakshana	Effect
1	No pain on plucking of <i>Kesha</i> , <i>Loma</i> etc. and unctuous appearance of hair though no oily substance is applied to it	Death in 6 days (35)
2	Mattered eyelashes	Death (36)
3	Development of new <i>Seemanthas</i> and <i>Avarthakas</i> in the eyebrows/scalp hair	Death in 3 days (37)
4	<i>Haritha Varna Sira</i> (green discolouration veins) and <i>Lomakupa Samvrutha</i> (constriction)	Death due to <i>Pittaja Rogas</i> (38)

Role of Lomakupa in Nourishment of Garbha

Maharshi Charaka opined that *Garbha* gets nourished through *Nabhinadi* (Umbilical cord) and *Lomakupa* by *Upasneha Karma*.(39)

Line of treatment

1. Correction of *Agni*
2. *Rasayana Chikitsa* for maintenance of healthy *Dhatus*
3. *Asthiposhaka Ahara* in *Asthikshaya*
4. *Sthoulyahara Chikitsa* in *Medodhatu Vriddhi* that is causing Hairfall
5. *Manasa Roga Chikitsa* by *Asthanga Yogas*
6. Use of *Yogas* that are mentioned in our classics that acts on *Kesha*
7. Use of *Krishnataila* 10gm with *Guda* during *Vataja Kala* has proved to be effective in Hairfall.

Maintenance of Hair through Ayurveda Treatment-

Ayurveda treatment is a safe and long-lasting treatment for hair loss. It includes all-natural ingredients that nourish the hair and revitalize the scalp, where the hair follicles grow. Hair thinning occurs when hair begins to stop growing, usually simultaneously falling out virtually. Hair loss has been a joint development in

the youth and older people. So many Ayurveda plants are used as therapeutic treatments that promote hair growth and prevent hair fall. Several of them are very effective, while some of them are most likely less, but normative is that it at least stops hair loss. Ayurvedic treatments such as *shodhana* and *shamana* can significantly relieve hair-related disorders such as *indralupta*. (40)

Ayurveda texts strongly support hair is considered to be a secondary product of bone structure. The tissues reliable for building bones are also responsible for hair growth. Ayurveda strongly believes that too early hair loss is connected to body type and the stability of the body-mind (psycho-somatic) constitution known as *Doshas*. *Pitta* influences much in hair as *Pitta* characters, and those who have surplus *Pitta* in their system are likely to have prematurely thin or grey hair or lose their hair too early in life. Extra *Pitta* in the sebaceous gland, at the root of the hair, or folliculitis can make the person begin losing hair.

Discussion

The tool to diagnose and state the Prognosis of the body's homeostasis can be predicted by the status of the hairs. When it is impaired, it affects the health of

hair, which can be seen in the following conditions. In the *Purvarooopa* of *Prameha*, the hair gets matted. In the *Purvarooopa* of *Kushtha*, the hair becomes stiff. In *Yakshma*, hairs and nails proliferate. A weak person, who pulls out his hair in a state of unconsciousness and eats food in excess quantity as he is a healthy man, is equivalent to death. The mating of eyelashes and the manifestation of *Simantas* in the head and the eyebrows indicates the sign of death. If a person with or without a disease does not feel a sensation when his hair is pulled, he does not survive more than six nights. If the strands of the individual appear greasy even when no unctuous substance is applied to it, then such a person should be considered at the far end of his life and should not be treated. The messenger type is to be regarded as inauspicious, which indicates an unfavourable Prognosis, who is not entirely shaved and whose hair is matted.

In *Vataja Prakriti Parusha*, *Atiruksha*, *Sphutita Dhushar*, *Alpa* and *Ruksha Keshha* are seen. In *Pittaja Prakriti Mrudu*, *Alpa*, *Kapil*, *Karabha*, *Virala*, *Pinga Keshha* are observed. In Case of *Kaphaja Prakriti Sthira*, *Kutilla*, *Atinila*, *Ghana*, *Nila*, *Sukeshha*, *Shyama Keshha* are found. Thus the study of *Keshha* will give information about the status of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala*, *Prakriti* etc. As *Keshha* is one of the factors that build up a person's personality, Ayurvedic classics state the advantages of hair maintenance. Trimming hairs and nails removes inertia, provides pleasure, lightness, and charm and increases enthusiasm. It is observed on the body that the hairs cover the many *Sadya PranaharMarma* of the head region. It is utilized as *Upayantra* because of its peculiar character. As a drug, hairs are also used to treat *Hikka* in the form of *Keshha Dhuma*. Based on the changes in hair, one can get the idea of *the Purvarupa and Rupa Lakshanas* of different *Vyadhis*. Plucking the hair from the head and body is a method used in *Sanyaasa*, which helps bring about consciousness. Many diseases are related to hairs, e.g. *Darunaka*, *Indralupta*, *Khalitya*, *Palitya* etc. In Ayurvedic Classics, the pathophysiology of these diseases is explained very systematically. Considering the relation between the hairs and *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala* etc., it is used as a tool for diagnosis and can state the Prognosis of the diseases. The nature and arrangement of hairs are different in the *Purvarooopa* of *Prameha*, *Kushtha*, *Rajayakshma* etc. Acharyas have explained the signs of death by observing the status of *Keshha*. Thus *Keshha*, as a part of the body, has proved its significance in all aspects.

Conclusion

The whole world tends towards Ayurveda with a ray of hope for successful treatment, keeping modern treatment's limitations and adverse effects in mind. So during treatment, the *Prakruta Lakshana* of *Keshha* and *Pitrujabhava* has to be considered along with the *Vaikruta Avasthas* related to *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala* etc. that are involved in causing the hair problems. In such a way, Hair is also considered an essential part of the body, which helps diagnose disease in its early stage.

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