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Trichology in Ayurveda, a review

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Abstract:

In today's day to day life the problems related to hair and skin are increasing. Every other person has some or the other issues related to hairs or skin. Increasing pollution, work life stress, nutritional deficiencies, faulty food habits and increasing night club culture had resulted in overall deterioration in human health. Here in accordance with Ayurveda - Trichology the causative factors, Hetu or Nidan are to be studied so that the issue can be addressed in holistic way. Various hair problems such as hair whitening, hair fall, alopecia, dandruff, split ends etc. are encountered widely. The specific causes – Nidan mentioned by Acharya in various Ayurveda classics are briefed in following study along with Holistic management approach towards it.

Keywords: Hetu, Nidan, Trichology

Introduction:

Trichology, the study of hair and scalp disorders, has become an increasingly important field in modern dermatology. However, Ayurveda, the ancient system of medicine originating from India, has long been concerned with maintaining healthy hair and addressing hair-related issues through holistic treatments. In Ayurveda, hair health is not just about external beauty but is intricately tied to overall physical health, mental well-being, and the balance of internal energies. This understanding of trichology in Ayurveda is rooted in its principles of balance between the three *Dosha*—*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*—and the importance of proper diet, lifestyle, and herbal remedies.

The Ayurveda Perspective on Hair:

In Ayurveda, hair is considered a *Mala* - by-product of the tissue called “*Asthi Dhātu*” (bone tissue) and is also influenced by “*Rasa Dhātu*” (plasma or lymph). Therefore, a healthy scalp and hair depend on the balance of the body's internal energies and the nourishment provided to these tissues. Hair is seen as a reflection of one's overall health, vitality, and internal equilibrium.

The *Dosha* and Hair Health:

The three *Dosha*—*Vata* (air), *Pitta* (fire), and *Kapha* (earth and water)—are fundamental in

Ayurveda and determine an individual's physical and mental characteristics. When these *Dosha* are in balance, hair is healthy and vibrant. However, imbalances in the *Dosha* can lead to a variety of hair-related issues such as hair fall, thinning, premature greying, dandruff, and dryness.

Vata Dosha and Hair:

Vata, associated with air and space, governs movement, dryness, and flexibility. When *Vata* is imbalanced, it can lead to dry, brittle hair, split ends, and hair loss. A person with a predominant *Vatadosha* may notice their hair becoming thin, dull, and frizzy.

Symptoms of *Vata* imbalance in hair: Dry scalp, dandruff, hair breakage, and excessive hair fall.

Pitta Dosha and Hair:

Pitta, associated with fire and water, governs metabolism, transformation, and heat. When *Pitta* becomes aggravated, it leads to excessive heat in the body, which can manifest in the scalp as inflammation, irritation, or premature greying of hair. An imbalance in *Pitta* can also cause excessive oil production, leading to oily scalp and hair.

Symptoms of *Pitta* imbalance in hair: Premature greying, thinning hair, inflammation of the scalp, and dandruff with a greasy texture.

Kapha Dosha and Hair:

Kapha, associated with earth and water, governs structure, lubrication, and stability. When *Kapha* is imbalanced, it can result in excessive oil production, leading to a greasy scalp and hair. *Kapha* imbalances can also contribute to slow hair growth and a lack of volume.

Symptoms of *Kapha* imbalance in hair: Excessive oil on the scalp, slow hair growth, and thick, heavy hair.

Nidan according to Ayurveda classics:

Asthi Kshaya – Ayurveda describes *Kesha* – hairs to be the *Mala* of *Asthi Dhatu*. Hence any deficiency in formation of *Asthi Dhatu* affects the normal growth of hairs. (A.H. Su. 11/18)

Sweda Kshaya – Acharya had mentioned that low or no sweating *Sweda Kshaya*, a pathological condition which results in *Roma Chuti* i.e. drying and falling of hairs. This may be due to vitiation of underlying *Dosha* which causes *Margavrodh* and thus causes *Sweda Kshaya*. (A.H.Su. 11/22)

Ashti Pradoshaj Vikara – Acharya Charaka had mentioned *Asthipradoshaj Vikara*. The disorders caused due to improper formation of *Asthi Dhatu*. Here the vitiation of *Dosha* causes deformity at *Asthi Dhatu* and in turn causes further hair problems. (Ch. Su. 28/16)

Darunaka – it is a disorder of scalp which results in loss of hairs. It can be correlated to Alopecia in modern science. Here *Kesha Chuti*, sudden fall of hairs of specific area occurs. (A.H. U. 23/23)

Krimi Prabhava – the *Krimi*– maggots or microbes which causes various disorders are also responsible for hair problems. *Raktaj* and *Keshajkrumi* has following effect – *Kesha Samshru Loma*

Pakshma Apadhvansa. (Ch.Vi. 7/12)

Lavana Kshara Prayoga – this is also a leading cause which is observed in today's world. The use of additives and preservatives in packed food are main cause of hair problems – *Khalitya*. (Ch.Vi. 1/17-18)

Dushta Pratishyaya Upeksha – some diseases which when left untreated can also cause hair fall. Here one such disease is described by *Acharya –Dushta Pratishyaya* which causes *Khalitya* which when left untreated. (Ch.Chi. 26/109)

In Ayurveda, hair loss, or *Khalitya*, is primarily attributed to imbalances in the three *Dosha* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*), with *Pitta* aggravation being a key factor, leading to inflammation and weakened hair follicles.

Apart from *Dosha* vitiation there are other factors which are encountered in day to day life which are responsible for hair problems,

Other Factors -

Diet - Excessive consumption of spicy, sour, or oily foods, and excessive caffeine or alcohol can aggravate *Pitta* and contribute to hair loss.

Lifestyle - Irregular sleep, stress, and anxiety can disrupt the *Doshas* and contribute to hair loss.

Environmental Factors - Pollution, chemicals, and sun exposure can damage hair follicles and cause brittleness.

Hormonal Imbalance - Changes during pregnancy, menopause, or thyroid disorders can affect hair health.

Improper Hair Care - Harsh shampoos, tight hairstyles, and heat tools can weaken hair and contribute to hair loss.

Nutritional Deficiencies - Poor digestion and inadequate nutrient intake can weaken hair roots and lead to hair loss.

Genetics - A genetic predisposition to hair loss, known as androgenic alopecia, is a common cause.

Inference:

Incorporating Ayurveda into hair care not only addresses symptoms but also aims to restore the balance in the body, leading to healthier hair and a calmer mind. The overview of the *Nidana* for the Hair problems in accordance to Ayurveda leads us to the better understanding of the issue and helps us in planning the treatment protocol to be followed.

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