



Review on Management of Hypertension through Shirodhara

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Abstract

Shirodhara is an Ayurvedic healing practice performed in India for over 5000 years. Shirodhara, one of the classical Ayurvedic treatment in which medicated liquid is poured continuously on the forehead. This procedure induces a relaxed state of awareness that results in a dynamic psycho-somatic balance. Shirodhara is one of the most powerful treatments to relieve Vata (wind) in the mind. Shirodhara is the specific treatment for these disorders and any other disorder that is stress related. With eighty percent of all disease attributed to stress, Shirodhara becomes one of the most important treatments.

Keywords: Hypertension, *Shirodhara*, Stress management

Introduction

- Due to a stressful lifestyle which is now being followed by a maximum number of population, health issues like high [blood pressure](#) or hypertension is now common among the people of all age groups.

- Hypertension is a public health concern due to its magnitude, risks, difficulty in management, high medical and social costs and severe cardiovascular and renal complications.
- It has been suggested that chronic exposure to psychological stress can cause increased blood pressure and lead to hypertension development. Hypertension is due to the increase in the pressure of blood in the arteries.
- Stress is the feeling of being under too much mental or emotional pressure. For human beings in this world maintenance and restoration of both body and mind is essential. Stress is directly connected with mental state.
- Ayurveda emphasized that Sharira and Satva both interact with one another in all sphere of life. Stress is particularly relevant to psychiatric illness and frequently part of diagnostic criteria for specific disorders.



- The purpose of the present article was to assess the effect of psychological stress on blood pressure increase.

Aim & Objectives

The aim and objective is to postulate the role of stress in Hypertension and its management through *shirodhara*.

Review of literature

Hypertension (known as *Rakta Gata Vata* in Ayurveda) is elevated pressure of the blood in the arteries.

Hypertension treatment in Ayurveda has a long-term and deeper impact because instead of controlling symptoms, it treats the root-cause of the problem.

Pathogenesis:

- When accumulated in the heart's channels, these toxins cause narrowing of the channels. The blood has to therefore end up exerting more pressure to circulate through these channels, leading to the condition of high blood pressure.
- Additionally, stress, anxiety and negative mental feelings also cause increase in blood pressure.
- It is to be mentioned that a poor lifestyle is considered to a major factor behind health ailments.
- Different theories have been proposed to explain hypertension from an Ayurvedic perspective, but there is no consensus amongst the experts. A better understanding of the applied physiology and aetio-pathogenesis of hypertension in the



light of Ayurvedic principles is being attempted to fill this gap. Many parallels were drawn from the concepts such as *Shad Kriyakala* (six stages of Dosha imbalance) and *Avarana of Doshas* (occlusion in the normal functioning of the *Doshas*) to the modern pathogenesis of hypertension to gain a deeper understanding of it.

- Hypertension without specific symptoms in its mild and moderate stages cannot be considered as a disease in Ayurveda. It appears to be an early stage of pathogenesis and a risk factor for development of diseases affecting the heart, brain, kidneys and eyes etc. Improper food habits and modern sedentary lifestyle, stress provokes and vitiates all the *Tridoshas* to trigger the pathogenesis of hypertension. It is proposed that hypertension is to be understood as the *Prasara-Avastha* which means spread of vitiated Doshas from their specific sites, specifically of *Vyana Vata*, *Prana Vata*, *Sadhaka Pitta* and *Avalambaka Kapha* along with *Rakta* in their disturbed states.
- The *Avarana* (occlusion of normal functioning) of *Vata Dosha* by *Pitta* and *Kapha* can be seen in the *Rasa-Rakta Dhathus*, which in turn hampers the functioning of the respective *Srotas* (micro-channels) of circulation.

Preventive Measures

EARLY SIGNS OF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE AND HYPERTENSION

- Dizziness: Sudden dizziness or loss of balance should not be ignored. While dizziness can also be due to blood pressure medication but if you are not on medication and experiencing dizziness, it is advisable to consult the doctors.
- Face flushing: While it can also occur due to the exposure to harsh sun rays or due to consumption of any alcoholic or spicy content but if that's not the case, there is a possibility that you might be in the early stage of high blood pressure or hypertension.
- Likewise, nose bleeding or headaches are commonly referred as factors of high blood pressure but take some rest before panicking or reaching any conclusions.

SHIRODHARA

Application of liquid medicines by pouring continuously on any part of body for a prescribed time is called Seka or Dhara and on head it is called 'Shirodhara' The word shiro means head and the word dhara means stream. Shirodhara is a classical and a well-established ayurvedic procedure of slowly and steadily dripping medicated oil or other liquids on the forehead. **Benefits of shirodhara:** Shirodhara soothes and invigorates the senses as well as the mind. A total state of wellness is induced in the process.

Techniques of Shirodhara: There are several kinds of dhara techniques, depending on the medium for dripping. For example, *takra dhara* uses *takra* that is prepared with the curd of cow's milk. *Kshira dhara* uses cow's milk mixed with

some medicinal herbs such as *Sida cordifolia* or *Asparagus rasemosus*. *Taila dhara* uses medicated oil mixed with cow's milk, water, herbs, and sesame oil. Different liquids are used depending on the conditions being treated. Commonly used liquids include water, various oils, buttermilk, or coconut water.

- First, the oil stream or *dhara* should be thick and heavy.
- Second, the oil stream should be continuous so that if the treatment needs to last an hour, it can be provided.
- Third, the oil needs to be warmed and needs to be maintained just above body temperature at all times.
- The fourth component is that the stream needs to be moveable and not stationary.



Ayurvedic perspective of effect of stress

: Mind or Mann possesses three qualities viz *Satva, Raja, Tama* and two dosha (*Raja, Tama*). Since mind and living body are interdependent, psychological set up of an individual plays important role in management of health. Imbalanced in any one leads to *Manovaha Strotas dushti*. As it is considered *Satwika Manas* as healthy and *Rajas Manas* and *Tamas Manas* are considered as *Manasika dosha* Shirodhara is the awakening of intelligence on the cellular level.

Takradhara stimulates *Marmas* (located in the head viz., *Apanga, Avarta, Shanka, Utkshepa, Seemantha* and *Sthapani Marma*) and improves circulation; Thereby improving their circulation which in turn improves the blood circulation of brain. This improves the higher intellectual functions also.

Discussion:

Overall, studies show that stress does not directly cause hypertension, but can have an effect on its development.

While reducing stress might not directly lower blood pressure over the long term, using strategies to manage stress can improve health in other ways. *Shirodhara* may act as a stress management techniques that reduce blood pressure.

Conclusion:

The bottom line here is to manage the stress while optimizing Hypertension for the betterment through *Shirodhara*. Doing so can make all the difference in the world and can be incredibly healing on many levels. Thus *Shirodhara* helps to reduce the stress which will positively affect the health.

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