



Review Article

## AN AYURVEDIC APPROACH TO PALITYA (PREMATURE GREYING OF HAIR)

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### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the most ancient among the holistic health science donated to humanity by the perfect Indian heritage. *Palitya* disease has been explained in all *Samhitas* in different context. So in *Charaka Samhita kala Akala Palitya* is mentioned under *Sirogata vyadhi*, whereas other authors explained it in *Sirokapalagata roga* and *Kshudrarogadhikara*. *Akala Palitya* has been mentioned in the Ayurvedic classics among *Sirokapalagata vyadhi*, *Keshashauklatyam*, *Kalapurvapakava*. Trichological Society defined Premature Canities (*Akala Palitya*) as a pigment deficiency frequently seen in middle aged people of either gender. *Akala Palitya* is an accompaniment of premature greying and possesses a clinical challenge to the medical practitioners. In present days because of altered lifestyle and stressful occupation signs of aging are seen much earlier. Increasing urbanization and industrialization has posed greater danger, due to pollution and contamination of water and air, with variable both exogenous and endogenous factors, there is definite increase in the incidence of Premature Greying of Hairs, especially in tropical and developing countries.

### INTRODUCTION

Greying of hairs is a result of natural aging process in human being. Normally appearance of grey hair varies from person to person depending upon one's genetic inheritance. But premature canities refers to the greying of hair in young or before the age of 35 years. In Ayurveda, this is called "*Palitya*". Grey hair is caused by gradual reduction of melanin production in hair follicles. Melanin is a pigment that gives colour and smoothness to our hairs. *Bhrajaka pitta* is a pigment responsible for imparting natural colour to our skin as well as to hair also seated in superficial layer of skin (*Avabhasini*), because of over work, fatigue excessive grief or anger, provoked *Dehoshma* (body heat) along with *Pitta* do enter into region of head (scalp). Thereby tends to make hair grey prematurely before the natural period of senile decay is called *Palitya*<sup>[1]</sup>.

In present days because of altered lifestyle and stressful occupation signs of aging are seen much earlier. Increasing urbanization and industrialization has posed greater danger, due to pollution and contamination of water and air, with variable both exogenous and endogenous factors, there is definite increase in the incidence of Premature Greying of Hairs, especially in tropical and developing countries. Incidence as per W.H.O is largely between the age group of 25-30 years. Accordingly, '*Akala Palitya*' is such condition, which is prevailing more and increases more in day to day clinical practice. Unfortunately, contemporary medical science has some nutritional supplements for the treatment of premature greying of hair, but it is not offer satisfactory treatment, only temporary treatment is artificial dyeing with chemical substance. Later on, it gets worse condition after going away for dyeing. This regular dyeing will lead to many adverse effects like hair fall and other scalp diseases. Understanding hair and related problems, is not merely cosmetic claim, but it reflects the psychological and pathological conditions of whole-body system. But, when we look at Ayurveda for this problem, we have the best choice, because Ayurveda the 'Science of Longevity' promotes positive health, natural beauty and long life.

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**Definition of Palitya:** *Palitya* occur at the stage of *Vardhakya* but due to increased *Ushna guna* of *Pitta* early greying (untimely) of hair is observed.

ii. Greying of hair at young age, called as *Palitya*.

**Causes of Palitya:** All the *Nidana* described by various *Acarya* for *Shiroroga* can be classified under four broad categories: *Aharaja Viharaja Manasika* and *Anya hetuja*

- *Aharaja* (Dietetic factors)
- *Viharaja* (External and behaviour factors)
- *Manasika* (Psychic factors)
- *Anya Hetuja* (Miscellaneous factors)

**Aharaja**

*Aharaja Nidana* can be taken as *Vipakrishta Nidana* and under this group different diet food habit is included. These *Nidana* affects *Rasa dhatu poshana*, *Rasa dhatu* responsible for nourishing the other *Dhatu* leading to *Rasavaha* and *Asthivaha strotodushti* are nourishing factor for both *Kesha* and *Kesha varna*. *Anashana adhyashana*, *Viruddha ahara* etc types of *Apathya ahara* is contributory factor for *Akala Palitya*. *Charaka* has said, those villagers, townsmen and citizens, who use alkaline ashes and salt frequently in large quantity become affected with baldness and greying hairs<sup>[2]</sup>. The excessive use of saline tastes provokes the *Pitta dosha* and generates wrinkles, gracing of hair and baldness<sup>[3]</sup>.

**Mithya viharaja**

The *Nidana* related to the habit and regimen of the Patient is *Mithya vihara*. *Acharya Vagbhata* demonstrated *Palitya* under *Shirogata roga* since *Nidana* of these *Roga* can be considered as *Nidana* of *Palitya*, as follows:

Exposure to cold, fog, *Raja*, unwholesome air, smoke, frost - They make the scalp dry due to the increase of *Sthanika rukshata*, in turn *Sthanika vata prakopa*, resulting in reduction of *Snigdhanash* may lead to greying of hair.

**Ratrijagarana and day sleeping**

Due to *Ratrijagarana*, *Vata Vriddi* and due to day time sleeping *Kapha Vriddhi* takes place which in turn causes *Rasavaha Shrotodushti* leading to *Palitya*.

**Symptoms**

Types of <i>Palitya</i>	Signs and symptoms	Astang Samgraha	Astang Hridaya	Yog Ratnakara
1. <i>Vataja</i>	Split hair	+	+	-
	Grey hair	+	+	-
	Rough	+	+	-
	Dry	+	+	+
	Watery hue	+	+	-

**Aatapa sevana**

Excessive *Aatapa sevana* leads to increase *Dehoshma* directly in turn increase the *Ushma* and *Keshabhumi* and *Romakupa* to produce *Akal Palitya*.

Suppression of natural urges, inhalation of unwholesome air, excessive involvement in sexual act, excessive weeping, talking too loudly.

**Manasika hetu**

*Krodha*, *Shoka*, *Adhika chinta* and *Manasika shrama* are considered to be both *Pitta* and *Vata Prakopak Nidana* which are responsible for early greying of hair<sup>[4]</sup>.

**Anya Hetuja**

*Jati* and *Kulaprasakta*- The heredity is the colour deciding factor in healthy persons but there is no references available to consider it as *Hetu*<sup>[5]</sup>.

**Prakrati pariksha**

In *Pitta Prakrati* persons early developed premature graying of hair<sup>[6]</sup>.

**Deshanupatini**

*Charaka* has stated about incidence *Akala palita* which is more prevailing in the areas like *Valhika saurashtra saindhava*, where salt is more in soil. In such condition even though persons are having *Lavana Satmya*, they develop *Akala palita*.<sup>[7]</sup>

**Types:** Classification of *Palitya*: According to *Acarya Sushruta* <sup>[8]</sup>

- *Prakrta Palitya*
- *Vaikrta Palitya*

**According to Acarya Sharangadhara** <sup>[9]</sup>

- *Kalajanita Palitya*
- *Akalajanita Palitya*

**According to Acarya Vagbhata**<sup>[10]</sup>

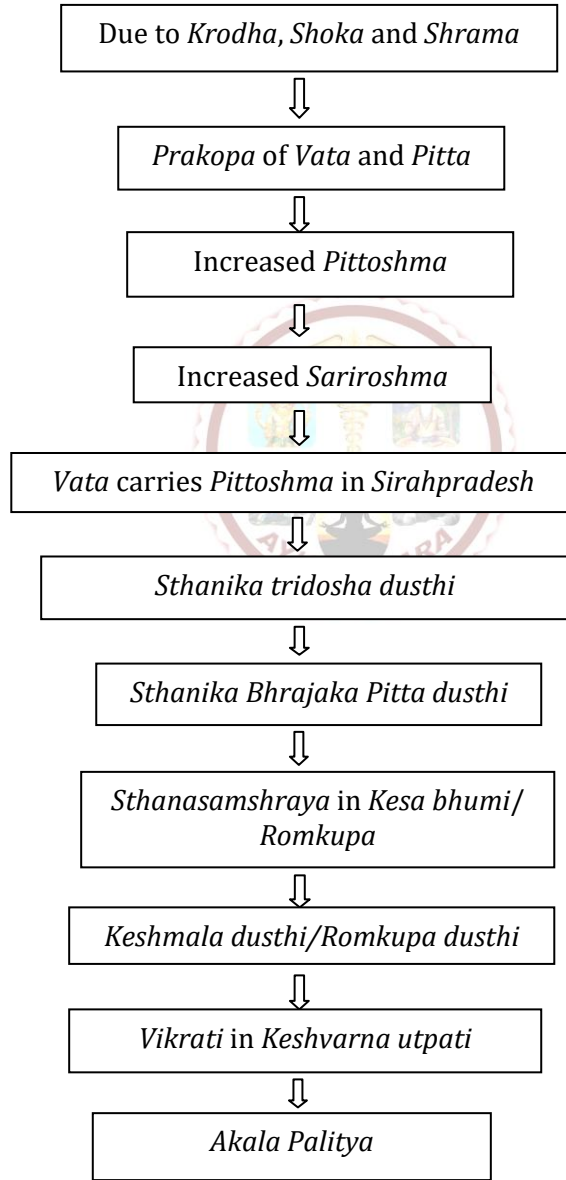
- *Vataja*
- *Pittaja*
- *Kaphaja*
- *Dvandaja*
- *Tridoshaja*

**According to Acarya Bhela**<sup>[11]</sup>

- *Vataja*
- *Pittaja*
- *Kaphaja*

	Irregular	-	-	+
	Burning	+	+	-
2. Pittaja	Yellowish hair	+	+	+
3. Kaphaja	Unctuous	+	+	-
	Growing	+	+	-
	Thick	+	+	-
	Whitish	+	+	+
4. Sannipataja	Mixed	+	+	+
5. Shirorujodbhava	Discoloured Hair	+	+	-
	Intolerance in touch	+	+	-

**Samprapti**



## Treatment Principle

All the *Pittashamaka karma* can be done according to Ayurveda principles. There is no any specific treatment principle of *Palitya* given in *Samhitas*. So *Pittashamka* drugs like *Aamaki*, *Haritaki*, *Vibhitak* apart them *Nasya karma* and external application of some oil and *Lepa* that give colour of hair. *Nasya* can be a best treatment for it.

## DISCUSSION

*Akala Palitya* is not life-threatening disease hence *Bhrahtrayi* have not concentrated over definition of *Akala Palitya*. *Acarya Sushruta* considered it under *Kshudra roga*, *Acharya Charaka* and *Vagbhatta* have considered it under *Shirogatroga*. There are two types of *Palitya* are mentioned in Ayurvedic literature one is *Kalakrta* or *Prakrita Palitya* that occurs naturally in old age and the second one is *Akala Palitya* or *Vaikrita Palitya* which occurs before the age of 33 years. In *Kala Palitya* as there is decrease in functioning of *Pitta Dosh* including *Bhrajaka pitta* so all the organs like skin, nails and hairs starts to lose their normal color but in *Akala Palitya* there is some impairment of functions of *Bhrajaka pitta* because of involvement of *Vata* and *Kapha*. *Bhrajaka pitta* is considered as melanin, and in the process of hair graying there is decrease in melanin production. Finally, we can say that in *Palitya* there is definitely some impairment of functioning of *Bhrajaka pitta* due to excessively increased *Ushna* and *Tikshna guna*.

## CONCLUSION

*Palitya* is a very common disease with grate prevalence rate. It affects the hairs. *Palitya* is categorized under different type of disease by various *Acharya*. It is explained as *Kapalaroga* by *Sarangadhara*, *kshudra roga* by *Bhavaprakash*, *Madhava nidana* & *Chakradatta* and *Shiiroroga* by *Vagbhatta*. The description of *Palitya* in Ayurveda corresponds well with the clinical picture of premature Canities i.e., premature greying of hairs.

- Modern literature describes premature Canities may occur alone as an autosomal dominant condition or in association with various autoimmune or premature ageing syndromes. Reduction in melanogenically active melanocytes in the hair bulb of grey anagen hair follicles with resultant pigment loss is central to the pathogenesis of greying.
- The *dravya* which are having *Madhura*, *Tikta*, *Kashaya Rasa Shita*, *Ruksha*, *Guru guna* and *Dipana Pachana* and *Vata Pittashamaka* properties and also having *Kesharanjana* and *Keshya guna*, are choice of drugs for treatment of *Palitya*.
- The Ayurvedic *Samprapti Prakriya* of *Nija roga* is based on six different *Kriya kala* and efforts were

made to draw the sketch of *Palitya samprapti* in its accordance. *Tridosha Sanchaya Prakopa* and *Prasara* gets the *Sthanasanshraya* with the association of specific *Dushya* in specific *Srotasa* and finally manifest the disease by unloading of *Dhatu mala* on the two *Kala* of *Tvacha udakadhara* and *Asragdhara* especially on *Sirah kapala*.

- *Acharya Sushruta* in *Nidana sthana* 13/36 given a specific *Samprapti* of *Palitya* and said that *Pitta* is dominant *Dosa* in *Palitya*. Due to causative factors like *Krodha*, *Shoka* and *Shrma*, *Pitta Dosh* is aggravated and there by increases *Pittoshma* and *Shariroshma*. *Vata* which is also aggravated by *Shoka* and *Shrama* carries this *Pittoshma* to the *Shiras*. *Sthanika Kapha* is also get vitiated as the *Siras* is the important location of *Kapha*. Thus, vitiated *Tridosha* settled in the *Romakupa (Sthanasanshraya)*. Locally settled *Tridosha* further vitiate locally available *Bhrajaka Pitta*, which gives colour to the hair. In this way the natural colour of the hair is affected and *Akala Palitya* is caused.
- *Acharya Vagbhatta* has been quoted *Palitya Vataja*, *Pittaja*, *Kaphaja*, *Dvandaja* and *Tridoshaja* which having symptoms according to *Dosa*.

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