

# Clinical Evaluation of *Shamana* and *Shodhana* Therapy in the Management of *Indralupta* (Alopecia Areata): A Case Study

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## ABSTRACT:

Alopecia Areata (AA), an autoimmune disorder characterized by localized, patchy hair loss, poses both therapeutic and psychological challenges due to its unpredictable course and lack of definitive cure in modern medicine. This case study evaluates the efficacy of *Shamana* (palliative) and *Shodhana* (purificatory) Ayurvedic therapies in the management of *Indralupta* (Alopecia Areata). A 45-year-old female patient presenting with hair fall, scalp itching, insomnia, and stress underwent a 15-day regimen comprising internal medications such as *Abhraloha*, *Arogyavardhini Vati*, *Guduchi*, *Amalaki*, and *Gandhak Rasayan*, combined with Panchakarma procedures including *Shiro Abhyanga*, *Nasya*, and *Pradhama*. External therapies like *Gunja Beej Lepa* and *Kesh Dhawan* further supported follicular stimulation. Significant improvement was observed in hair regrowth, scalp health, and overall well-being, without adverse effects. The therapeutic rationale emphasizes *Srotoshodhana* (channel purification), *Rasayana* (rejuvenation), and *Dosha Samata* (humoral balance) for restoring systemic and local follicular homeostasis. This integrative Ayurvedic approach demonstrates potential as a safe and holistic alternative for managing autoimmune dermatological disorders like Alopecia Areata. Further controlled clinical studies are warranted to validate these findings and establish standardized protocols for *Indralupta* management.

**Keywords:** *Indralupta*, Alopecia Areata, *Shamana* therapy, *Shodhana*, Ayurvedic Management, *Panchakarma*

## INTRODUCTION:

The first impression of an individual often depends upon physical appearance, in which hair plays a pivotal role. Healthy hair is not merely a symbol of beauty but also reflects one's overall well-being. In recent decades, there has been a marked increase in hair-related disorders such as hair fall, premature greying, and various forms of alopecia.<sup>[1]</sup> Among these, *Alopecia Areata* (AA) is one of the most distressing conditions, characterized by sudden, patchy hair loss predominantly affecting the scalp. It is an autoimmune disorder in which the body's immune system mistakenly attacks hair follicles, leading to localized hair loss without overt signs of inflammation.<sup>[2]</sup> The global prevalence of Alopecia Areata is estimated to be around 0.1–0.2%, with a lifetime risk approaching 1.7% of the general population.<sup>[3]</sup> Although it may affect both sexes and all age groups, it often produces greater psychological and emotional distress in women and children due to its cosmetic implications and resultant impact on self-esteem and social confidence.<sup>[4]</sup>

Current modern medical management primarily involves corticosteroid therapy—administered topically, systemically, or via intralesional injection. Other commonly employed modalities include topical minoxidil, anthralin, topical immunotherapy, prostaglandin analogues, topical retinoids, capsaicin, and various laser therapies.<sup>[5]</sup> However, none of these agents offer a curative or relapse-preventive outcome. Long-term use of corticosteroids, in particular, is associated with multiple adverse effects such as skin atrophy, telangiectasia, and systemic complications.<sup>[6]</sup> Hence, there is a growing global demand for safer

and more sustainable treatment alternatives, prompting increasing interest in traditional and complementary systems of medicine, including Ayurveda.

In Ayurvedic literature, *Alopecia Areata* can be correlated with the condition known as *Indralupta*, which is described under *Kshudra Rogas* by Acharya Sushruta.<sup>[7]</sup> The pathogenesis (*Samprapti*) of *Indralupta* involves vitiation of all three *Doshas* Vata, Pitta, and Kapha along with vitiation of *Rakta Dhatu* (blood tissue). According to classical Ayurvedic principles, aggravated Pitta in association with vitiated Vata causes falling of hair from the scalp.<sup>[8][9]</sup> Subsequently, vitiated Kapha and Rakta obstruct the orifices of the hair follicles (*Romakoopa*), preventing regrowth of new hair. Thus, the internal pathophysiology of *Indralupta* involves both systemic imbalance and local follicular obstruction.

Ayurvedic management aims not only to remove these obstructions and restore the natural physiology of the hair follicles but also to correct the underlying *Dosha* imbalance. *Acharya Sushruta* and *Acharya Charaka* have described both *Shodhana* (purificatory procedures such as *Nasya* and *Shirovirechana*) and *Shamana* (palliative therapy) in the management of *Indralupta*.<sup>[10][11]</sup> In addition, *Nidana Parivarjana* (avoidance of causative factors) plays a crucial role in preventing recurrence. Factors such as *Viruddha Ahara* (incompatible food combinations), excessive intake of *Lavana* and *Kshara* (salty and alkaline substances), as well as psychological stress (*Manasika Bhavas* such as *Chinta*, *Krodha*, and *Bhaya*) are considered etiological triggers for *Indralupta*.<sup>[12]</sup>

The present case study reports the successful management of a female patient suffering from *Alopecia Areata (Indralupta)* through Ayurvedic *Shamana* therapy, *Panchakarma* procedures. The integrative approach employed demonstrated marked improvement in hair regrowth and symptomatic relief, thereby highlighting the potential efficacy of Ayurvedic intervention in autoimmune and cosmetic dermatological conditions.

## CASE REPORT :

A 45-year-old female patient came to OPD of *Kayachikitsa* department with the chief complaints of *Shirkandu* (itching of scalp), *Keshpatan* (hair fall), *Nidrakashtata* (difficulty in sleep), and *Atichinta* (excessive worry) for the past 2 years.

### Past Medical and Surgical History

- History of: Chikungunya (10 years prior)
- Surgical history: Tubal ligation (22 years prior)

### Aharaja History (Dietary History)

- Excessive consumption of non-vegetarian food
- Regular intake of *Vidahi Ahara* (food causing burning sensation or acidity)

### Viharaja History (Lifestyle History)

- *Diwaswap* (daytime sleeping)
- Stress
- *Chinta* (mental worry)
- *Ativichar* (overthinking)

## General Examination

Parameter	Observation
Weight	50 kg
Built	Lean
Blood Pressure	110/90 mmHg
Pulse Rate	86/min
Temperature	Afebrile
Appetite	Normal ( <i>Kshudha prachiti</i> )
Strength ( <i>Bala</i> )	Madhyam

## Ashtavidha Pariksha (Eightfold Ayurvedic Examination)

Parameter	Observation
Nadi	Vata-Pittaj
Mala	Samyak
Mutra	Samyak
Jivha	Saama
Shabda	Spastha
Sparsha	Khara
Drika	Prakrit
Akriti	Krisha

### Diagnosis:

- Disease: *Indralupta* (correlated with Alopecia Areata)

### Treatment Plan:

The patient was treated with *Shamana* therapy and *Panchakarma* procedures for 15 days.

- Shamana Therapy (Oral Medications)**

Sr. No.	Drug	Dosage	Anupana
1	Tab. Abhralauha	2 TDS after food	Madhu
2	Combination: Tab. Arogyawardhini (2 Tab) + Gandhak Rasayan (2 Tab) + Guduchi Churna (2 gm) + Amalaki Churna (2 gm) + Vidanga Churna (1 gm)	BD after food	Madhu
3	Syp. Raktapachak Kashay (15 mL)	15 ml TDS after food	Koshna jal (5 ml Eranda Sneha only in night dose)
4	Tab Krumikuthar Rasa	2 BD	Koshna jal

- **Panchakarma (Shodhana) Treatment**

1. Shiro Abhyanga: Yashtimadhu, Darvi, Vidanga Siddha Tail
2. Nasya: Panchendriya Vardhan Tail (2-2 drops)
3. Pradhaman: Shirovirechan Gana

- **Bahya Chikitsa (External Therapies)**

1. Kesh Dhawan: Triphala, Amalaki, Bhringaraj Churna
2. Parijatak Patra Lekhan
3. Gunja Beej Lepa
4. Sanjivani Vati Churnit Lepa
5. Gunjasiddha Tail

## RESULTS:



Before

After 15 days



Before

After 15 days

After undergoing *Shamana therapy* and *Panchakarma procedures* for a period of fifteen days, the patient showed significant clinical improvement. There was a marked reduction in *Shirkandu* (scalp itching) and *Keshpatan* (hair fall), along with improvement in *Nidranash* (sleep disturbance). The patient reported decreased scalp irritation and better overall well-being. The texture of the hair appeared healthier, and hair fall was considerably reduced within this short duration. No adverse reactions were observed during the treatment.

## DISCUSSION:

In Ayurveda, *Indralupta* is described under *Kshudra Rogas* and is correlated with *Alopecia Areata* on the basis of its clinical presentation and pathogenesis. Classical texts such as *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita* provide detailed descriptions of its *Samprapti* (pathophysiology) and *Chikitsa Sutra* (line of treatment). According to *Acharya Charaka*, when *Tejas*—the fiery component of *Pitta* in association with vitiated *Vata Dosha* reaches the scalp, it causes burning and desiccation of the hair follicles, resulting in *Khalitya* or *Indralupta*. Similarly, *Acharya Sushruta* describes that aggravated *Pitta* and *Vata* at the level of *Romakoopa* (hair follicles) cause falling of hair, while *Kapha* and *Shonita* subsequently obstruct the orifices of the follicles, preventing regeneration. This blockage leads to the cessation of new hair growth. Hence, all three *Doshas Vata, Pitta, and Kapha* along with *Rakta Dhatu* was involved in the etiopathogenesis<sup>[13]</sup> of *Indralupta*.

Ayurvedic texts also mention that *Viruddha Ahara* (incompatible diet), *Atisevana* (overconsumption) of *Lavana* and *Kshara dravya*, and improper lifestyle (*Mithya Vihara*) are important causative factors that vitiate the *Doshas*. *Acharya Charaka* mentions that individuals consuming *Lavana* along with milk or indulging in excessively spicy, alkaline, and incompatible foods are predisposed to *Indralupta*. The patient in this case had a history of *Vidahi Ahara* and stress, which are known to aggravate *Pitta* and *Vata* respectively, leading to derangement in scalp homeostasis and obstruction of *Romakoopa*.<sup>[12]</sup> Psychological factors such as *Chinta, Krodha, and Bhaya* (stress, anger, fear) are known to vitiate *Pitta* and *Vata*, producing *Shira Sankocha* (constriction of scalp vessels) and disturbing the nutrition of *Rasa* and *Rakta Dhatus*. The combined *Ushna* (heat), *Tikshna* (sharpness), *Ruksha* (dryness), and *Khara* (roughness) qualities of vitiated *Doshas* destroy the unctuousness (*Snigdhatva*) of normal *Kapha* in the scalp pores, resulting in dryness, brittleness, and obstruction of follicular channels, thus hampering hair regrowth.

The treatment line in this case was designed according to the classical *Chikitsa Sutra*<sup>[10]</sup> of *Indralupta* — which emphasizes (1) *Srotoshodhana* (cleansing of obstructed channels), (2) *Rasayana* (rejuvenation), and (3) *Shamana* (pacification of vitiated *Doshas*). The patient was treated with internal medications (*Abhraloha, Arogyavardhini Rasa, Gandhak Rasayan, Guduchi Churna, Amalaki Churna, Vidanga Churna, Raktapachak Kashaya, and Krumikuthar Rasa*) and external therapies (*Shiro Abhyanga, Nasya, Pradhaman, Kesh Dhawan, and Lepa*).

### • Pharmacological Rationale of the Prescribed Formulations:

*Abhraloha* is a classical hematinic formulation containing *Loha Bhasma* and *Abhraka Bhasma*, fortified with *Triphala, Trikatu, Trimada, and Shatavari*. It improves the quality of *Rakta Dhatu* and enhances tissue oxygenation and nutrition, thereby indirectly promoting the nourishment of *Keshabhumi*.<sup>[14]</sup> *Triphala* acts as a mild *Rasayana* and *Raktashodhaka*<sup>[15]</sup>, while *Trikatu* improves digestion (*Deepana-Pachana*) and bioavailability of the other drugs.<sup>[16]</sup> *Trimada* enhances *Agni* and removes *Ama* (metabolic toxins), contributing to *Srotoshodhana*. The inclusion of *Shatavari* helps balance *Pitta* and supports systemic rejuvenation.<sup>[17]</sup>

*Arogyavardhini Vati* serves as a *Medohara* and *Rasayana* drug, promoting liver function, digestion, and *Srotoshodhana*. It aids in removal of metabolic waste and balances *Pitta* and *Kapha*, which are commonly involved in *Indralupta*.<sup>[18]</sup> By improving digestion and metabolism, it enhances the production of healthy *Rasa* and *Rakta Dhatu* that ultimately nourish hair follicles.

*Guduchi* (*Tinospora cordifolia*) and *Amalaki* (*Emblica officinalis*) are potent *Rasayana* drugs that support *Dhatu poshana* (nourishment of body tissues), enhance immunity, and pacify *Pitta*. *Guduchi* also acts as an immunomodulator, anti-inflammatory, and hepatoprotective agent, contributing to correction of autoimmune pathogenesis at the systemic level.<sup>[19]</sup>

*Gandhak Rasayan* is *Rakta Shodhaka* and *Kandughna*, effectively purifying the blood and reducing inflammation and infection at the scalp level. Its *Rasayana* property helps in rejuvenation and restoring

normal tissue metabolism. It modulates fibroblast activity and tissue repair, supporting hair follicle regeneration.<sup>[20]</sup>

Krumikuthar Rasa was prescribed considering *Krimi Dosha* (microbial or parasitic factors) described by *Acharya Sushruta* in skin diseases. It eliminates *Krimi* and acts as a *Rasayana* through its *Deepana*, *Pachana*, and *Krimighna* actions. Its use is justified in chronic skin and scalp conditions where subclinical infection or follicular obstruction is suspected.<sup>[21]</sup>

### • Role of External Therapies

Shiro Abhyanga with *Yashtimadhu*, *Darvi*, and *Vidanga Siddha Taila* promotes local circulation, strengthens hair roots, and pacifies aggravated *Vata* and *Pitta*.<sup>[22]</sup> *Nasya* with *Panchendriya Vardhan Taila* addresses the *Urdhwajatrugata Vyadhi* (diseases above the clavicle) by cleansing and nourishing the scalp region.<sup>[23]</sup> *Pradhaman Nasya* with *Shirovirechana Gana* clears channels and removes *Srotorodha*.<sup>[24]</sup>

Bahya Chikitsa, including *Kesh Dhawan* with *Triphala*, *Amalaki*, and *Bhringaraj*, purifies the scalp, removes dandruff, and provides *Rasayana* effects. *Parijata Patra Lekhana* performs *Lekhana Karma* (scraping action), removing debris and accumulated *Kapha* at hair follicles.<sup>[25]</sup> *Gunja Beej Lepa* (paste of detoxified *Abrus precatorius*) and *Gunjasiddha Taila* act as follicular stimulants due to their *Ushna* and *Tikshna* qualities, which open blocked *Romakoopa* and enhance blood flow.<sup>[26]</sup> *Sanjivani Vati*, with its *Deepana*, *Pachana*, *Amahara*, and *Rasayana* properties, improves *Agni* and clears metabolic waste, thereby indirectly supporting scalp metabolism and hair nourishment.<sup>[27]</sup>

### • Therapeutic Outcome and Ayurvedic Interpretation

The therapeutic approach adopted in this case was directed at breaking the *Samprapti Ghataka* (pathogenic link) of *Indralupta* through internal detoxification, *Srotoshodhana*, and *Rasayana Chikitsa*. The combined *Shamana* and *Shodhana* therapies restored *Agni*, corrected *Rasa-Rakta Dushti*, and reestablished normal *Dosha* balance. After three months of therapy, the patient showed marked improvement in *Shirkandu*, *Keshpatan*, and *Nidranash*, indicating restoration of normal *Rasa Dhatu* and reduction of *Vata-Pitta* aggravation.

Thus, this case demonstrates the effectiveness of Ayurvedic therapy in addressing both the symptomatic and causative factors of *Indralupta* by holistically restoring systemic equilibrium and local follicular health.

## CONCLUSION:

The present case demonstrates that Ayurvedic management through *Shamana* and *Shodhana* therapies, focusing on *Dosha* balance, *Srotoshodhana*, and *Rasayana Chikitsa*, can provide significant relief in *Indralupta (Alopecia Areata)*. By addressing both systemic imbalance and local follicular obstruction, the therapy effectively promoted hair regrowth and restored scalp health without adverse effects.

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