



## TAKRADHARA: TREATMENT MODALITIES AS A PANCHAKARMA

\*Dr. Sujata Sopanrao Kale and Dr. Vijay B. Mane

Department of Panchakarma, SMBT Ayurveda College and Hospital, Dhamangaon, Igatpuri, Nashik, India

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### ABSTRACT

*Dhara* is one of the pleasant as well as popular therapies. '*Dhara*' is the procedure in which medicated oil, milk or buttermilk is poured in a continuous stream on the head especially on the forehead and when '*Takra*' is poured on the forehead & scalp, it is called *Takradhara*. This *Takradhara* cures premature grey hair, fatigue, infirmity and emaciation, headache, lack of vitality, pricking pains of palm and sole, diabetes, lack of proper functioning of the limb, joints, pains in the chest, heart diseases, indigestion, dyspepsia and diseases of the eyes, nose, throat & ears. Although there are many physicians conducting this treatment, only few manage it with a thorough understanding of its principles. Actually '*Dhara*' is good for all diseases. Changing the liquid as per the *dosha* condition with necessary alteration in its process is useful to alleviate any *Dosha*. They are mainly grouped as *Moordhanya* (on the head), *Sarvanga* (all over the body) and *Pradeshika* (local). The most important of this is *Moordhanya*. It is employed in diseases like insanity, diseases of the head and eyes, chronic cold, sinusitis (*pinasa*), diseases of the ear, mouth, *vata* diseases etc. There are many varieties of *Moordhnyadhara*, among them *Takradhara*, *Ksheeradharma*, *Stanyadhara* and *Snehadhara*. *Takra* has *Pancha-Rasa* except *Lavana Rasa*, *Amla Vipaka*, *Ushna Virya*, and *Vata Kaphaghna* property. *Takra* (Buttermilk) contains large amount of lactic acid. It is scientifically proved that lactic acid is used to moisten and diminish the appearance the conditions like thickened psoriatic scales so very useful in it. This *Dhara* also alleviates the derangement of the three *doshas* and improves the power of all sensory organs. Overall *Takradhara* is non invasive and simple, cost effective as well as pleasant remedy.

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## INTRODUCTION

'*Dhara*' is the procedure in which medicated oil, milk or buttermilk is poured in a continuous stream on the head especially on the forehead. In Ayurvedic texts *Shirodhara* can be correlated with *Shiroparisheka*. *Shirodhara* is the process of pouring the liquid over the head. It can be of three types *Taila*, *Kshira* and *Takra*. If medicated or plain '*Takra*' is poured on the forehead & scalp, it is called *Takradhara*. There are many varieties of *Moordhnyadhara*, among them *Takradhara*, *Ksheeradharma*, *Stanyadhara* and *Snehadhara*. *Takra* has *Pancha-Rasa* except *Lavana Rasa*, *Amla Vipaka*, *Ushna Virya*, and *Vata Kaphaghna* property. *Takra* (Buttermilk) contains large amount of lactic acid. *Takradhara* is a special Ayurvedic treatment that uses medicated buttermilk. *Takra* means buttermilk and *dhara* is a stream.

The physiological benefits of *Takradhara* Ayurvedic Treatment are very similar to that of *shirodhara*. However, the major difference being use of medicated buttermilk. There are varieties of *dhara*. They are mainly grouped as *Moordhanya* (on the head), *Sarvanga* (all over the body) and *Pradeshika* (local). The most important of these is *Moordhnyadhara*. It is employed in diseases like insanity, diseases of the head and eyes, chronic cold, sinusitis (*pinasa*), diseases of the ear, mouth, *Vata* diseases, etc. the second is *Sarvangadhara*. It is to be done in *Sarvangavata* (*Vata* affecting the whole body), *Sarvangeenashopha* (anasarca, swelling all over the body), etc. *Pradeshika* or local in cases of rheumatoid arthritis, swelling, ascitis, abscesses, wounds, etc.

### Moordhani dhara:

There are many varieties of *Moordhnyadhara*. The following are the important among them.

\*Corresponding author: Dr. Sujata Sopanrao Kale  
Department of Panchakarma, SMBT Ayurveda College and Hospital,  
Dhamangaon, Igatpuri, Nashik, India.

- a. *Takradhara*
- b. *Ksheeradhara*
- c. *Stanyadhara*
- d. *Snehadhara*

Not only for *Moordhanya dharas* but for all *dharas* many arrangements are to be made ready earlier. The following are the important ones.

### Preparation of *Takradhara*

Drugs like *Amalaki*, *Musta*, other medicinal herbs like *Chandana* (Sandal wood), *Usheera* (Vetiver), *Jatamansi* (*Nardostachys Jatamansi*), *Madhuyashti* (Licquorice) and *Hribera* (*Coleus vettiveroides*) which are dried for 1 year in sun and shade, which are devoid of seeds, are taken in the quantity of one and quarter *prastha* (80 *karsha*=960gms). To this add 18 *kuduva* (288 *karsha*=3456gms) water and reduce it to 1/6th (750gms) part by boiling. Again to this equal part of *amla Takra* is added. This preparation is used for *shirodhara* as per the procedure told by the ancient *acharya's*.

### Procedure of treatment

July-August, October-November, and February-March timings are considered as the best time for this treatment. In these months when the climatic conditions are favorable, free from excess of wind, mist, cold, rain etc., on an auspicious day, in the morning hours, the treatment should be generally started. The *Dhara* vessel should be suspended exactly above the head of the patient lying in the *Droni*. The wick of thread hanging from the vessel should be so adjusted as to be just 5 cm (four fingers) space from above the forehead of the patient, lying supine in the *Droni*. Then spread the sheet in the *Droni* and set the pillow on its position. The receptacle, the cups for refilling and seats are all to be placed in their respective positions. Now make sure whether the oil for the head and *Dhara* liquid, the bath towel and other necessary equipments are all ready and then light the lamp already placed on the south, the head side. Seeing that everything is ready and in order, the physician can now allow the patient to enter. The patient in his turn should be ready by this time after having attended to the calls of nature and cleaning the mouth, teeth, etc. When the physician calls him, he should wash his feet once again, enter the treatment room and then stand facing the east before the lamp. Then with the permission of the physician, he seats himself in the *droni* facing the east. The physician now stands at the right side of the patient facing the east. Then paying homage mentally to his teacher and the God and taking oil on his palm he applies it on the crown of the patient. Then the patient himself can apply the oil. If the patient has long hair, it has to be parted and tied in the back. The next step is to tie the *Varti* around the head just above the ears, eyebrows. It is not to be too tight or loose. If too tight, the blood supply may be hindered, if too loose, it allows the *Dhara* liquid to pass through it to the inside of the *Droni* and to the body. The knot should be only on the side of the head. If it is on the back, it creates difficulties to lie with the head placed in order. If it is on the forehead, it hinders *Dhara*. Now the patient is to lie in a supine position in the *Droni*. Then inspect the position of the pillow, the thread hanging down from the vessel, its height and thickness are all found to be in order, the liquid is poured into the *dhara* vessel. When pouring, draw back the vessel from the upper part of the head with one hand, and firmly close the hole at the bottom of the vessel with the other hand. So it is clear

that another person pours the fluid. Pouring is to be done very slowly to prevent scattering and spraying. After the whole liquid is poured, the finger at the whole is loosened very slowly and gradually and the liquid is let down along the wick. If the wick is too thick, some thread is drawn out from it. If not which enough press the hole tightly to stop the flow and then add more thread to the wick. When the wick is wet and the liquid starts to flow along it, its edges are to be cut even, with scissors, even if they have been cut earlier. After these precautions, the vessel is brought forward above the forehead and moved to and fro, i.e. left and right slowly. As per traditions, the movements of the wick to the left and right need not be more than 5 cm from the center of the forehead, the middle of the eyebrows. But there could not be any objection to make some alterations so as to allow the liquid to spread all over the head in the beginning. Massaging the scalp under the hair with the free palm of the physician or the attendant, first in the beginning and then at intervals is advised to prevent delay in wetting the whole head with the liquid. Even if the liquid falls correctly on the head, it is the duty of the physician to make sure that it is also flowing out through the proper channel. If it is not followed properly, it may be either because of the hole of the *droni* is blocked or the diverted liquid flows to the part of the *droni* where the body lies. Whatever may be the reason; it has to be corrected immediately. So the physician, who handles the suspended *dhara* vessel, should be vigilant and pay concentrated attention. If he fails in fall in this and doesn't hold the vessel firmly, the scattered liquid may fall in the eyes or nose of the patient, or fail to fall properly on the head, or sometimes when refilling the vessels, may collide with each other, break and create avoidable difficulties. So the physician should be vigilant with a firm hold on the rope and vessel, so that in case of collision or the breaking of the tie of the rope, the danger of their falling down is always prevented. The attendants also should be equally careful. The receptacles should be placed exactly where the liquid comes out. When one receptacle is full, it is immediately replaced. The full vessel is removed carefully and slowly without spilling and again poured inside the *dhara* vessel with no chance of clashes. This goes on continuously. It is always better to take the receiving vessel before it is full and empty it, unto the *dhara* vessel. Paying attention to the filling and emptying of the vessel, one can have to adjust the speed of the refilling.

The fall of the *dhara* liquid from too high or too low level is both harmful. It is the same if it is too fast, or too slow. Either increase or decrease in the thickness of flow is not good. As per tradition, if the wick through which the liquid flows is four fingers (5 cm) above the forehead, circumference of the hole is the size of the little finger of the patient and if the *dhara* liquid is neither too thick nor too thin everything is satisfactory. But in these matters, it will be better to consider the comfort of the patient also. For some people, the fall from 5 cm height may be intolerable for others too low a position may be disagreeable. Some patients like a thick flow, while others a thinner one. These differences in reaction may be due to the difference in temperaments. Sometimes it may also be due to the difference in *doshas*. For instance, in *Pitta* a low fall, but with more thickness is beneficial. A patient with *Kapha* temperaments may like the fall from a higher position. He also appreciates a speedy flow. Different liquids also can create this change in reactions. We have to observe closely and judge accurately. A fall from a higher position causes headache, fever, burning sensation, etc. Too low a fall not only fails to alleviate the disease, but also sometimes, even aggravates the

condition. A speedy flow provokes *vata* and creates headache, swoon, etc. If too slow, *kapha* is increased and heaviness of the head is felt. The disturbance created by using too thick a fall is the same as due to increase in height and slow flow. Too thin a fall fails to give any good results. On the contrary, it causes cold. One has to closely observe and understand these changes. Various other aspects like viscosity are to be considered carefully. Thus, until the scheduled time is over, all have to do their work earnestly and carefully and the patient is to lie still. He is not to turn on his sides, but lie supine. Such necessities as urination, etc. It should not arise during this time if it is unavoidable it should be done in lying position without any movement of the head. Sneezing, coughing, etc. in this position also create troubles. In urgency, the physician is to be informed so that he can draw back the *dhara* vessel from the forehead and hold it aside until it is over. He must be very careful to avoid any interruption in the flow by drawing back the vessel too much. When refilling also, the best thing is to draw the vessel a little to the back and stop the movement to avoid the troubles. If somewhat the *dhara* liquids happen to drop in the eyes or the face, immediately wipe it well. It is for this purpose that storage of old clothes is suggested. One hour *dhara* on the first day is the usual practice in all common disease. Then the duration is increased by five minutes each day, so that on seventh day it is one and a half hour ( $3\frac{3}{4}$  *Nazhikas*). On the eighth day also, the same time is taken as on seventh. From the ninth day onwards, a reduction of five minutes is done so that on the fourteenth day it is again one hour as on the starting day. This order is for a fourteen-day course. If it is a twenty-one days course, the order of increasing the time is the same as given before until the seventh day i.e. reaching to one and a half hour on the seventh day. But from the seventh to fifteenth day, the same duration is kept. From sixteenth day, a reduction of five minutes per day is effected, so that it is one hour again on the twenty-first day. Usually the time for the course of *dhara* is either fourteen or twenty one day. But there is no objection in extending or reducing the duration as per the condition of the patient. Such discretion is the responsibility of the physician. Well-considered decisions are always welcome. But prolongation of the *dhara* time to more than one and a half hours is unnecessary, inconvenient and objected to by the *shastras*. In unavoidable circumstances, competent physicians resort to extensions of the number of days. There is also a version that the maximum time allowed is only three *Nazhikas* (75 minutes). The minimum time allowed is one *Nazhika* or 25 minutes. The physician has to choose the time limit considering all factors like the nature of the disease, *doshas* and the tolerance of the patient.

#### Duties after *Dhara*

At least five minutes before the compilation of *Dhara* all attendants should be particularly vigilant. Everything for the next step, like bath towel, etc. is to be kept ready. Refilling the *Dhara* vessel is to be stopped some seconds earlier before the exact stopping time. At the exact moment, stop *Dhara* by drawing the vessel back. Then wipe the head with the towel. This is not to be done by the patient himself to avoid any shaking. After wiping well, same oil applied himself earlier is again smeared. Then he may take bath as usual. But *Amalaki* water for some people for the head and warm water for the body are indispensable. But for some people warm water may not be agreeable. For them cold water for the body may not be harmful. To remove the oil from the body, pasted greengram,

horsegram etc. and the head, shampoos of leaves like *Vellila* (*Mussaenda frondosa*) which are neither too cold nor too hot in potency are used. For men of *pitta* temperament, the residue of the *Amalaki* water prepared as a paste can be made use of. After bath wipe the head without delay. It has to be done carefully so that no moisture is retained. After wiping well with a wet towel again wipe with a dry one also. After wiping, part the hair and rub medicated powder. As said earlier it is *Rasnadi* power, which is usually taken for this. This prevents cold better. Powers like *Kachoradi* also can be used as per the disease. After bath, enter the room slowly, and then facing the east take in the prescribed medicine. Then lie down for a while on the left. Care should be taken to arrange the bed earlier. But, this rest is only for a while, from a minimum of five minutes to a maximum of thirty minutes only. Then take food with the prescribed restrictions.

#### Restrictions during *Dhara*

Chilies, tamarind, newly harvested paddy, fish, seasmum, black gram, pumpkin, brinjal, onion, drumstick, asafetida are harmful. Natural urges should not be stopped. Day sleep, exposure to mist, sun, dust, wind, and rain are being avoided. Walking long time traveling in jerky vehicles, prolonged standing and sitting are harmful.

#### Mode of action:

- a. **Diabetic retinopathy:** In study of Bhavya et al.: A Comparative Study On *Takradhara* And *Vasakadi Kwatha* In The Management Of Diabetic Retinopathy. *IAMJ*: 4(7) 2016, 1121-1129. *Takradhara* action can be understood in two ways- Pharmacologic action of substances absorbed through the skin (Therapeutically effect), the Procedural effect of *Takradhara* induced by the somato-autonomic reflex through thermo-sensors or pressure sensors in the skin or hair follicles via the trigeminal cranial nerve. The process of *Takradhara* might accelerate the function of *tarpaka kapha*, and may also bring in the specific action as demanded by the disease condition like blockage of channels by *kapha* which can be taken as micro vascular occlusion which is the basic pathological process seen in Diabetic Retinopathy. Apart from this, It also helps in the proper nourishment of retina, thereby preventing further vascular leakage and the *chakshusya* property of drugs helps in the improvement of vision.
- b. **Improving Quality of the Sleep:** In study Mohod Poonam, Mohod Sharad, Shivani, Kour Kirandeep. *Takradhara* the Divine Procedure for Improving Quality of the Sleep. *International Journal of Ayurveda and Pharma Research*. 2015; 3(11):50-54. *Shirodhara* or *Takradhara* is the unique procedure for all types of *Manasa Doshas*. It induces the relaxation and natural sleep by increasing the intensity of alpha brain waves and decreases the brain cortisone and adrenaline level. During the procedure prolonged *Dhara* of the drugs mixed with *Takra* over forehead generate a conduction which not only acts as tranquilizer but also induces sleep. This procedure not only normalizes serotonin and nor-epinephrine but also keep the hypothalamus in normal function.
- c. **Effects of *Takradhara* on Skin diseases:** This *Dhara* treatment cures premature graying of the hairs, fatigue, infirmity and emaciation, headache, lack of vitality,

pricking pains of the palm and sole, diabetes, lack of proper functioning of the limb, joints, pain in the chest, heart diseases, disgust for food, indigestion, dyspepsia and diseases of the eyes, nose throat and ears. This *Dhara* also alleviates the derangement of the three *doshas* and improves the power of all sensory organs. Ayurvedic approach to any disease is like *Kitibhakushta* (Psoriasis) there are somatic symptoms like *kandu* (itching), *Ghana* (thickness), *Parusha* (Dry) and Psychological symptoms like anxiety, stress, depression, and etc are present, so it is considered as psychosomatic disorders in which both mind and body are affected.

## Conclusion

*Takradhara* procedure is found very effective in the management of many disorders like *Anidra*, diabetic neuropathy, headache, psoriasis etc as per many studies. It had *Vata Pitta Shamaka* property which not only reduces stress and tension but also enhances the circulation of brain, improves memory, nourishes the hair on scalp, calms the mind and body. Buttermilk has cooling properties and induces the same effect on body and mind. It helps to relax the mind and reduce mental stress. *Takradhara* prevents greying of the hair, reduces headaches, increases digestive power and alleviates anorexia. It is also useful in insomnia, depression and other stress related ailments. Therefore it can be concluded that *Takradhara* is very safe and efficacious to treat the modalities and can be used effectively in the management for various disorders.

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