

Chapter 22. Sirolepa (Thalapothichil)



Sirolepa or **Thalapothichil** is a therapeutic Ayurvedic procedure in which a **medicinal paste** is applied over the scalp for a prescribed duration. It is a **specialized Kerala treatment** and is particularly effective for treating **psychosomatic** and **dermatological disorders**. This therapy provides cooling and soothing effects to the head and nervous system.

Indications

Sirolepa is particularly indicated for:

- **Psychological disorders** (Manovikaras), such as **Anidra** (insomnia), **Manasamandata** (mental dullness)
- Conditions where a cooling and calming effect on the mind is required

Contraindications

Sirolepa is contraindicated in:

- Conditions associated with **Ama** (toxic metabolic by-products)

Commonly Practiced Medicines

- **Amalaki** (Indian Gooseberry)
- **Musta** (Cyperus rotundus)
- **Kooshmanda** (Ash Gourd)



- **Mandookaparni** (Centella Asiatica)
- **Panchagandha Choorna** (a combination of aromatic herbs)

Infrastructure Facilities

- **Manpower:** Qualified and experienced Ayurvedic technicians
- **Space:** A spacious room for the procedure

Materials Required

- **Medicinal paste** (prepared from the selected herbs)
- **Taila** (medicated oil)
- **Lotus or banana leaf**
- **Cloth and straw**
- **Vessels**
- **Varti** (cloth bandage)

Pre-Operative Procedures (Poorvakarma)

1. **Preparation of the Medicine:**
 - **240 grams** of dried **Amalaki** (devoid of seeds) are soaked in buttermilk a day prior to the treatment.
 - The soaked Amalaki is then ground into a **paste**.
2. **Preparation of the Patient:**
 - The patient is asked to **relieve natural urges** (bowel and bladder) and **sit comfortably** in an armed chair with a **completely shaved head**.
 - The head is massaged with **warm medicated oil**, followed by **mild fomentation** using a towel dipped in hot water to relax the scalp.

Season and Time

- **Time:** The procedure is generally performed in the **evening** for **1 hour**.
- **Duration:** It can be performed for **7 to 14 days**, depending on the condition and physician's recommendation.

Procedure

1. **Application of Varti:**
 - A **varti** (cloth bandage) is tied around the head, just above the ears and eyebrows to secure the paste.
2. **Application of Paste:**
 - The medicinal paste is applied **thickly** (0.5 to 1 cm) to the scalp, starting from the front, then moving to the right, back, and left sides. A small portion of the central part of the head is left uncovered.
3. **Pouring of Oil:**
 - A small amount of **medicated oil** is poured into the central portion left open.
4. **Covering with Leaf:**
 - The scalp is covered with a **lotus or banana leaf**, ensuring the entire head (except the center) is covered. A second **varti** is tied to hold the leaf securely in place.
5. **Duration:**
 - The paste is kept on the head for **30-60 minutes**. The temperature is maintained during this time to provide optimal benefits.
6. **Removal:**
 - After the specified time, the paste is carefully removed, and the head is thoroughly wiped clean.

Post-Operative Procedure (Paschat Karma)

1. **Cleaning:** The paste is wiped off the head, and the scalp is cleansed.
2. **Rasnadi Choorna:** After cleaning, **Rasnadi Choorna** is applied to the scalp to prevent cold or other



complications.

3. **Abhyanga**: Perform **abhyanga** (oil massage) on the body.
4. **Bathing**: The patient can take a bath with **lukewarm water** after an hour.

Precautions

1. The procedure has a **cooling effect** on the body, so patients should avoid exposure to **air conditioning** and **fans**.
2. The patient should not be exposed to **wind, dust, heat, or rain** after the procedure.

Complications and Management

1. **Pratisyaya (Cold or Runny Nose)**: If the patient develops a cold, the procedure should be stopped, and symptomatic treatment should be provided.
2. **Sirasula (Headache)**: Stop the procedure if the patient experiences headache and manage accordingly.

Clinical Vital Data Recording

- Record **temperature, pulse rate, blood pressure, and respiratory rate** before and after the procedure.
- Routine **pathological investigations** should be done on the first and last day of treatment to assess its effects.

Sirolepa (Thalapothichil) is a highly effective Ayurvedic treatment for **psychosomatic disorders** and conditions affecting the scalp and hair. Its cooling and soothing nature helps in calming the mind and alleviating stress-related disorders while improving hair and scalp health.