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)

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- 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:
 - o 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:
 - o 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:
 - o 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

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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.

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