



Review Article

TAKRADHARA - A PROCEDURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Takradhara, a specialized form of *Shirodhara* in Ayurvedic medicine, involves the rhythmic application of medicated *Takra* over the forehead, facilitating both physical and mental healing. This therapy is particularly effective for psychosomatic and neurological conditions, benefiting those with ailments such as insomnia, diabetic neuropathy, psoriasis, hypertension, and various mental health disorders. While similar to *Shirodhara*, *Takradhara's* distinction lies in its primary therapeutic agent, *Takra*, which has unique properties due to its cooling, *Vata-Pitta* balancing, and rejuvenating effects. The rich lactic acid content in *Takra*, combined with the therapeutic application, helps diminish stress, enhances cerebral circulation, improves memory, nourishes the scalp, and calms both mind and body. These benefits are achieved through *Takradhara's* capacity to regulate *Doshas*, especially balancing *Pitta* and pacifying *Vata*, making it an effective intervention for a range of conditions from dermatological issues to neurological and metabolic disorders.

INTRODUCTION

In the Ayurvedic system, *Panchakarma* is a comprehensive set of therapies aimed at body detoxification, longevity, and disease prevention. These procedures have a profound impact on health preservation and disease management. Among these therapies, *Shirodhara*- a process involving a continuous stream of medicated liquid poured over the forehead- has gained prominence for its effects on the mind and body, specifically in psychosomatic conditions. *Shirodhara* can use various therapeutic fluids: *Taila* (oil), *Ksheera* (milk), or *Takra*. *Takradhara* is notable for its primary ingredient, *Takra*, which offers unique physiological and therapeutic properties, such as lactic acid for skin and scalp health, and *Vata-Pitta* balancing effects [1,2].

This article explores the components, preparation, and application of *Takradhara*, its clinical indications, the theoretical framework behind its physiological effects, and the recent scientific support for its efficacy in treating a range of psychosomatic and dermatological disorders.

Properties of *Takra*

- *Rasa* - *Kashaya, Amla, Madhura*
- *Guna* - *Grahi, Laghu, Ruksha*
- *Virya* - *Ushna*
- *Vipaka* - *Madhura*
- *Karma* - *Deepaniya, Vrishya, Prinana, Vata Nashaka.*
- 2 Types of *Takra Acharya Charaka* is described
- 3 types of *Takra* in *Grahani Chikitsa* on the basis of property. They are –

- 1) *Ruksha* Indication
- 2) *Ardha Sneha Yukta Kaphadosha Pitta dosha*
- 3) *Purna Sneha Yukta Vata dosha.*

Takradhara has demonstrated significant effectiveness in managing a variety of disorders, particularly psychosomatic and neurological conditions such as anxiety, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and schizophrenia.

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Additionally, it has shown promising results in treating obesity, hypertension, vascular disorders, migraine, nausea, psoriasis, insomnia, premature greying of hair, and diabetic retinopathy. Scientific research supports its therapeutic benefits, underscoring *Takradhara* as a viable treatment option for these conditions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Procedure

Poorvakarma

Materials Required

Musta Choorna (125g), *Ksheera* (1 liter), *Jala* (4 liters), *Amalaki Choorna* (200g), *Rasnadi Choorna*, *Droni*, *Dharapatra*, coconut shell with serrated base, towels, plantain leaf, and other necessary items [3].

Medicine Preparation

On the day prior to the procedure, *Musta Ksheera Kashaya* is prepared by boiling *Musta Choorna* in a mixture of *Ksheera* and *Jala*. After boiling, it is allowed to cool, then *Takra* is added, and the mixture is left to ferment overnight. This fermentation enriches the *Takra* with beneficial acids and enzymes, enhancing its therapeutic potency.

Patient Preparation

The patient undergoes an *Abhyanga* on the head and body, which helps relax muscles, prepare the scalp, and open skin pores. The eyes are covered with gauze, ears are plugged, and a cloth band is tied around the forehead to support the flow of the medicated liquid and prevent seepage into the eyes [4].

Pradhanakarma

Medicated *Takra* is poured in a continuous stream over the forehead from a height of 12

Angulas (approximately 9 inches). This stream is moved back and forth rhythmically, covering the forehead uniformly. The stream is kept warm throughout the procedure by refilling and reheating as necessary. The entire process lasts between 45 and 75 minutes and is repeated over 7 to 14 days, depending on the patient's condition. This prolonged, rhythmic pouring induces a deep state of relaxation, which is central to its therapeutic effects [5].

Paschatkarma

After the procedure, the patient is advised to bathe with lukewarm water. The head is dried with a towel and *Rasnadi Choorna* is applied to the scalp. This is followed by a rest period of 5 to 30 minutes to allow the therapeutic effects to settle in [6].

Dietary and Lifestyle Recommendations

Patients undergoing *Takradhara* are encouraged to avoid heavy, cold, and indigestible foods, instead consuming easily digestible, nourishing items such as green gram, *Shashtikasali*, and boiled *Takra*. Food and lifestyle guidelines also include avoiding curd, fish, alcohol, and cold exposures while focusing on gentle activities that support relaxation and dosha balance [7].

Clinical Indications: [8,9]

Takradhara is recommended for a variety of conditions:

- **Neurological:** insomnia, hypertension, diabetic neuropathy, migraines, and paralysis
- **Dermatological:** psoriasis, dandruff, premature hair greying
- **Psychosomatic:** anxiety, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and schizophrenia
- **Circulatory and Metabolic:** hypertension, vascular disorders, low immunity, and fatigue

Dhara poured on forehead-skin & skull



Magnetic waves are converted into electrical waves



Sends impulses to cerebral cortex & hypothalamus



Centres of stimulation and inhibition functions



The soothing effect on hypothalamus secretes neurotransmitter agents: Nor epinephrine system, dopamine system, serotonin system, acetylcholine system



Controls & regulates the secretions of pituitary gland (endocrine glands)



Controls all functions of the body

DISCUSSION

Takradhara has a unique mode of action influenced by both the medicinal properties of *Takra* and the specific procedural method. *Takra*, rich in lactic acid, serves as an effective transdermal medium for delivering therapeutic agents, which is especially beneficial in treating conditions like psoriasis, where it helps control scaling and reduces inflammation^[10]. The *Musta* and *Amalaki* herbs used in the medicated *Takra* possess antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, which contribute to the relief of chronic skin conditions and joint inflammation^[11].

In hypertension, *Takradhara* reduces symptoms such as headaches and anxiety by stimulating the *Sthapani Marma*, located between the eyebrows. This point, considered a *Sira Marma*, is believed to have reflexive effects on the baroreceptor pathways that regulate blood pressure. The continuous flow of *Takra* over the forehead induces a cooling effect that pacifies the aggravated *Pitta Dosha*, often associated with heat and inflammation, providing relief in *Pitta*-related disorders^[12].

The role of *Takradhara* in improving sleep is attributed to its calming effect on the hypothalamus and central nervous system. The rhythmic pouring and cooling nature of *Takra* act as natural tranquilizers, stimulating the release of neurotransmitters like serotonin, dopamine, and endorphins, which induce relaxation and enhance sleep quality^[13].

In psychosomatic disorders, the application of *Takradhara* stimulates several *Marma* points on the head, particularly *Apanga*, *Avarta*, *Shankha*, and *Sthapani*. These points correspond to energy centers associated with mental clarity, memory, and emotional balance. *Takradhara's* impact on these points facilitates blood circulation to the brain, improving cognitive function and reducing symptoms related to anxiety, depression, and other mental health conditions^[14].

CONCLUSION

Takradhara is a distinctive Ayurvedic procedure with extensive therapeutic benefits for both psychosomatic and physical ailments. This non-invasive, cost-effective therapy, involving the medicated buttermilk stream over the forehead, harnesses the synergistic effects of *Takra's* medicinal properties and the therapeutic technique itself. *Takradhara's* influence on neurotransmitter release, *Dosha* balance, and cerebral circulation enhances neurocognitive abilities and mental

tranquility, rendering it particularly effective in managing psychosomatic disorders, hypertension, dermatological issues, and metabolic dysfunctions. As a holistic intervention, *Takradhara* offers promising potential for integrative healthcare, combining traditional wisdom with modern therapeutic relevance.

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