



**A SCIENTIFIC REVIEW ON MURDHANI TAIL IN AYURVEDIC PANCHKARMA  
WITH REFERENCE TO ITS PHARMACODYNAMIC ACTION**

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Article Received on 21/01/2025

Article Revised on 11/02/2025

Article Accepted on 01/03/2025

**ABSTRACT**

Ayurveda, or the science of life, has been benefiting humanity since historical times. Its sole intention is to treat the cause of diseases and not merely the disease itself. In this competitive modern world, numerous people suffer from many physical and mental illness. Ayurveda provides several measures to combat these pathological conditions and ancient *Panchkarma* is one such approach that provides benefits in several diseases. *Panchkarma* therapy purify body by virtue of its different approaches including *Abhyanga* and *Shirodhara*, etc. These activities are performed with the help of some liquid preparation like *Taila*, which used for various purposes in *Panchkarma* therapy. These *Taila* preparations penetrate skin and affect both local and systemic functions by virtue of their *Snigdha*, *Ushna*, *Sukshma* and *Vyavayi* properties. Considering importance of this Ayurvedic approach present article briefly summarizes scientific aspects on *Murdhani Tail* with reference to its Pharmacodynamic actions.

**KEYWORDS:** *Ayurveda, Murdhani Tail, Panchkarma, Abhyanga, Shirodhara, Pichu, Shirobasti.*

**INTRODUCTION**

The *Murdhni* and *Taila* words stands for head and oil respectively; so *Murdhni Taila* is a medical process by which medicated oil is put on the head so that it touches the scalp for some time. Since the head houses the nerves, sense organs and brain, it is considered the most essential organ, because all activities in the body are regulated from here. Thus any therapeutic procedure meant for this organ benefited all other organs of body. Ayurveda suggested various relaxation therapies for this organ including *Shiro Abhyanga* and *Shirodhara*. *Murdhni Taila* is one such approach of Ayurvedic *Panchkarma* that mainly focuses to retain health of body as well as mind.<sup>[1-4]</sup>

*Murdhni Taila* is also a category of treatments in which different herbal decoctions, *Ghruta* or *Taila* are applied to the scalp for a specific duration. This treatment has four forms, one being the *Shiro Abhyanga* wherein the head is massaged with herbal oil. This type of treatment is highly useful in *Rouksha* scalps with symptom of *Kandu*. A number of herbal oils are employed in this treatment, including *Prapaundrikadi Taila* for all head disorders, *Brahmi Taila* for headache and upper body disorders, *Asanabilvadi Taila* for eye disorders, *Nimbadi Taila* for dandruff, and *Triphaladi Taila* for hair loss, sinusitis and other scalp disorders.<sup>[3-5]</sup>

Another significant variety is *Shirodhara* in which a steady flow of medicated oil, ghee, *Takra*, *Ikshu Rasa*, *Kashaya* or *Ksheera* are slowly dripped over the forehead and permitted to flow rhythmically over the scalp, with profound relaxation and therapeutic effect. *Murdhni Taila* is recommended for a number of head-related ailments, including *Paka*, *Daha*, *Shirastoda* and *Arunshika*, etc.<sup>[2-4]</sup>

**General Procedure**

*Purva Karma* is the first step in the process, which entails a *Abhyanga* over the shoulders, face and neck, etc. Cotton is generally inserted into the patient's ears to keep oil out, and a gauze band is wound around the patient's head just above the eyebrows. The patient lies on the treatment table in a supine position during the *Pradhana Karma*. The wick and the forehead are separated when a *Dharapatra* is placed over the forehead. The vessel is then filled with medicinal oil, which ensures even coverage by enabling a steady, mild stream to move over the forehead in a rhythmic oscillation. The final procedure, called *Pashchat Karma*, is followed by a gentle cleansing of the head, a little period of rest, a light massage and a lukewarm water bath. The major vitiated *Dosha* should be the basis for choosing *Sneha*.<sup>[3, 4]</sup>

### Kala of Therapy

The length of this therapy varies two and a half *Prahars* are recommended for those with dry and *Pitta*-dominant *Vata*, whereas one *Prahar* is recommended for people with oily and *Kapha*-dominant *Vata*. Since the body and mind are most responsive to therapeutic interventions in the morning, this treatment is best administered during that time. *Murdhni Taila* should be administered in the *Pratahakala* and should not be done at noon or at night. The procedure can be repeated for 7 to 14 days based on the condition.<sup>[3-5]</sup>

### Materials for *Murdhni Taila* Therapy

- ✓ *Tila Taila* is chosen for *Vata* problems and *Kapha* conditions.
- ✓ *Mahavishgarbha Taila* is suggested for head injuries caused by *Vata*.
- ✓ *Himasagar Taila* for head disorders associated to *Pitta* and *Rakta*
- ✓ *Ksheerabala Taila* is advises for inflammation and burning sensations.
- ✓ *Shiro Pichu*, is one of the forms of *Murdhni Taila*, entails applying a cotton pad soaked in warm medicinal oil to the top of the head.
- ✓ *Triphaladi Taila* for baldness and premature graying.
- ✓ *Naradiya Taila* for facial paralysis or *Ardita*
- ✓ *Mashabaladi Taila* is effective in managing *Kampavata*.
- ✓ *Dhanvantaram Taila* is also useful in *Kampavata*.

### Pharmacodynamics of *Murdhni Taila* in *Panchakarma*

This approach imparts deep nourishment and soothing relief to the mind and nervous system. *Shirobasti*; is one of the main operations under *Murdhni Taila* along with others as mentioned in **Figure 1**.



**Figure 1:** Various approaches associated with *Murdhni Taila*.

### Descriptions of *Abhyanga*, *Shirodhara*, *Pichu* and *Shirobasti*

*Murdhni Taila* consists of four major procedures; *Abhyanga*, *Parishek/Shirodhara*, *Pichu*, and *Shirobasti*. *Abhyanga* is gentle massage of warm oil over the scalp,

which enhances circulation, relieves stress, and nourishes hair. *Parishek* or *Shirodhara* refers to the steady dripping of medicated oil over the forehead or scalp, with a soothing action on the nervous system and capacity to treat conditions such as anxiety, insomnia, and hypertension. *Pichu* means applying a cotton pad soaked in medicated oil to the head, imparting local nourishment and relief in chronic neurological disorders. *Shirobasti* is a more intense treatment in which oil is held on the head with a special cap, providing deep tissue nutrition and long-term relief in conditions such as chronic headache, mental exhaustion and facial palsy, etc. These treatments are selected according to the condition of the individual, mainly to calm *Vata* and inducing mental relaxation.

The length of oil retention is calculated depending on the preponderant *Dosha*, in *Vata* diseases 1000 *Matra*, in *Pitta* 800 *Matra*, in *Kapha* about 31 minutes. According to traditional texts, the treatment can be given for 3, 5, or 7 days. These durations are considered essential for optimum therapeutic relief. Appropriate duration and *Matra* enhances relaxation and therapeutic effect of procedures.<sup>[4-6]</sup>

*Murdhni Taila*, involves applying therapeutic oil to the scalp, mainly acts on the central nervous system and transdermal absorption to produce its pharmacodynamic effects. Being heavily innervated and vascularized, the scalp makes it easier for *Sneha* to deeply penetrate the underlying tissues, enabling the active phytoconstituents to reach the brain and surrounding structures. These oils, which include *Brahmi Taila*, *Ksheerbala Taila* and *Mashabaladi Taila*, etc. penetrate the skin and affect both local and systemic functions because they are *Snigdha*, *Ushna*, *Sukshma* and *Vyavayi* in nature. The *Ruksha* and *Sheeta* qualities of vitiated *Vata* pacifies by the above mentioned qualities of oils.<sup>[5-7]</sup>

Warm medicinal oil applied or left on the scalp over time dilates sweat glands and hair follicles, improving transdermal medication transport and activating the autonomic nervous system, particularly the parasympathetic branch. This promotes restful sleep, mental relaxation, and stress reduction by having a soothing, sedative, and anxiolytic action. In order to achieve a balanced condition, the therapy also affects the three main subtypes of *Doshas* in the head region as follows.

- ✚ *Sadhaka Pitta*, which regulates emotions and intellect
- ✚ *Tarpaka Kapha*, which nourishes brain tissues
- ✚ *Prana Vata*, which governs mental and sensory functions

Furthermore, the *Rasayana* and *Medhya* qualities of the herbs employed in *Murdhni Taila* promote memory, focus and general brain function. As a *Snigdha Sweda Yukta* technique, *Murdhni Taila* combines the advantages of *Swedana* and *Snehana*. This dual effect calms *Vata*, especially *Vyana Vayu*, which controls the body's motor and sensory activities, in addition to softening and liquefying the irritated *Doshas* for their removal. This

therapy is therefore essential for treating ailments like chronic headaches, depression, anxiety, insomnia, facial paralysis, and neurodegenerative illnesses.

*Murdhni Taila* functions as a thorough neurorestorative therapy by enhancing circulation and feeding the nervous system. Combining the nourishing qualities of *Snehana* with the gentle heating action of *Swedana*, *Murdhni Taila* treatments are regarded as *Snigdha Sweda Yukta* procedures. Due to its opposing properties, *Snehana* is notably useful in calming *Vyana Vayu*. This makes it particularly efficient against vitiated *Vata Dosh*.

*Murdhni Taila* is extremely nourishing for the brain, nervous system, sensory organs, and hair, according to *Acharya Vagbhata*. It aids in controlling *Vata* and *Pitta* imbalances in the head area. Calming the brain and nerves using *Murdhni Taila* promotes systemic well-being because they control how the entire body functions. According to *Acharya Charaka*, applying oil to the head on a daily basis helps to stop hair loss, migraines, baldness, and early greying. Additionally, by lowering tension, it promotes mental calm, improves complexion and face glow, promotes healthy sense organs and promotes sound sleep.<sup>[3, 5-8]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

According to Ayurveda for promoting neurological, psychological, and sensory well-being, medicated oil can be applied and retained on the head as a part of the entire Ayurvedic therapy called *Murdhni taila*. The treatment is able to pacify disturbed *Vata* and *Pitta doshas* because the brain and key *Marma* points are located in the head. Subject to the condition and intensity desired, other types are employed, namely *Shiro Abhyanga*, *Shirodhara*, *Shiro Pichu* and *Shirobasti*. All these treatments prove particularly beneficial for the treatment of headaches, paralysis of the face, diseases brought about by stress, insomnia, and scalp as well as hair disorders. *Murdhni Taila* promotes holistic health, energizes the nervous system, enhances hair condition by combining the effects of *Snehana* and *Swedana*, also provides mental relaxation and treat many illness related to the stress and anxiety.

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