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**PREVENTION OF TENSION-TYPE HEADACHE THROUGH AYURVEDA LIFESTYLE
MODIFICATIONS: A CONCEPTUAL RESEARCH ARTICLE**

***Dr. Mahima Jain¹, Dr. Dilip Nalge²**

¹PG Scholar, Pt. Dr. Shivshakti Sharma Ayurved Medical College, Ratlam, MP

²Professor & HOD, Pt. Dr. Shivshakti Sharma Ayurved Medical College, Ratlam, MP

*Corresponding Author- Dr. Mahima Jain, PG Scholar, Pt. Dr. Shivshakti Sharma Ayurved Medical College, Ratlam, MP

Email ID: mahima1013@gmail.com, Mob -9754604304

ABSTRACT

Tension-type headache is one of the most common primary headache disorders, mainly associated with stress, improper lifestyle, and psychological factors. In Ayurveda, this condition can be correlated with *Vata* and *Kapha* predominant *Shiroroga*, where improper *Ahara* and *Vihara*, mental strain, and disturbed *Dinacharya* play a significant role in its pathogenesis. The concept of prevention is well emphasized in Ayurveda through *Nidana Parivarjana* and lifestyle regulation. The present conceptual study aims to explore the role of Ayurvedic lifestyle modifications in the prevention of tension-type headache. Various classical principles such as *Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Sadvritta*, proper sleep (*Nidra*), and stress management practices like *Yoga* and *Pranayama* are analyzed for their preventive potential. These measures help in maintaining the balance of *Dosha*, improving *Agni*, and promoting mental well-being. The study highlights that simple, non-pharmacological interventions based on Ayurvedic principles can effectively reduce the frequency and severity of tension-type headaches. Thus, adopting a holistic Ayurvedic lifestyle can play a significant role in prevention and improving quality of life.

KEYWORDS - *Tension-Type Headache, Shiroroga, Dinacharya, Nidana Parivarjana, Yoga, Pranayama*

INTRODUCTION

Tension-type headache¹ is the most common form of primary headache seen in day-to-day clinical practice. It is usually described as a dull, aching, band-like pain around the head, often associated with stress, fatigue, prolonged screen exposure, and poor posture. In modern lifestyle, irregular sleep, mental strain, and sedentary habits have significantly increased its prevalence. Although not life-threatening, it affects daily functioning, productivity, and overall quality of life, making its prevention an important area of focus.

In Ayurveda, tension-type headache can be understood under the broad category of *Shiroroga*,² particularly involving vitiation of *Vata*³ and *Kapha Dosha*⁴. Factors like excessive thinking, suppression of natural urges, irregular diet, and disturbed routine lead to *Dosha Dushti*⁵ and impairment of *Manasika Bhava*⁶. This results in obstruction of *Srotas*⁷ and disturbance in normal functioning of the head region. Classical texts emphasize that both physical and psychological factors play a role in the manifestation of such disorders.

Ayurveda gives prime importance to prevention through the principle of *Nidana Parivarjana*,⁸ which means avoidance of causative factors. Along with this, maintenance of proper daily and seasonal regimen such as *Dinacharya*⁹ and *Ritucharya*¹⁰ is essential to keep *Dosha*¹¹ in equilibrium. Practices like *Abhyanga*,¹² *Nasya*,¹³ proper *Nidra*,¹⁴ and control over mental stress through *Sadvritta*¹⁵ help in maintaining the health of the body and mind. These preventive approaches are simple, cost-effective, and can be easily incorporated into daily life.

In the present era, where stress-related disorders are rapidly increasing, there is a need to explore holistic and preventive approaches rather than relying only on symptomatic treatment. Ayurvedic lifestyle modifications offer a safe and sustainable way to manage and prevent tension-type headache. This conceptual study aims to highlight the role of these principles and encourage their application in modern life for better health outcomes.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

AIM

- To study the role of Ayurvedic lifestyle modifications in the prevention of tension-type headache.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the concept of tension-type headache in terms of *Shiroroga*.
- To analyze the role of *Nidana Parivarjana* in prevention.
- To evaluate the importance of *Dinacharya* and *Ritucharya* in maintaining *Dosha* balance.
- To assess the effect of *Yoga* and *Pranayama* in stress management.
- To highlight the preventive potential of Ayurvedic lifestyle practices in improving quality of life.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This is a conceptual review study based on detailed analysis of classical Ayurvedic texts such as *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya*, along with relevant modern literature on tension-type headache. Information regarding *Shiroroga*,¹⁶ *Dosha*¹⁷ involvement, *Nidana Parivarjana*,¹⁸ *Dinacharya*,¹⁹ *Ritucharya*,²⁰ and lifestyle modifications was collected and critically analyzed. Modern references including journals, textbooks, and online databases were also reviewed to understand the clinical features and lifestyle-related causes of tension-type headache. The collected data were compiled, compared, and interpreted to establish a conceptual correlation and to evaluate the preventive role of Ayurvedic lifestyle modifications.

CONCEPTUAL STUDY

TENSION

Tension-type headache is primarily associated with mental stress, emotional strain, and improper lifestyle habits. In Ayurveda, this condition can be understood as a manifestation of *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha* imbalance affecting the *Shira*²¹ region. Excessive thinking, (worry), suppression of natural urges, irregular food habits, and disturbed sleep lead to aggravation of *Vata*, while sedentary lifestyle and heaviness in the body contribute to *Kapha Dushti*.²² These factors together cause *Srotorodha*²³ (obstruction of channels) and result in pain, heaviness, and discomfort in the head.

From an Ayurvedic perspective, the involvement of *Manasika Bhava*²⁴ such as stress, anxiety, and emotional instability plays a crucial role in the pathogenesis. The disturbance of *Rajas*

and *Tamas Guna*²⁵ affects the normal functioning of *Manas*, leading to altered perception of pain and reduced coping ability. This explains why tension-type headache is often recurrent and closely related to psychological triggers.

The condition can be correlated with *Shirashoola*,²⁶ where symptoms like dull aching pain, tightness around the head, stiffness of neck and shoulder muscles, and mild to moderate intensity are commonly observed. Aggravated *Vata* causes pain (*Shoola*)²⁷, while *Kapha* contributes to heaviness (*Gaurava*)²⁸ and dullness. Improper *Ahara* such as dry, stale, or incompatible food (*Viruddha Ahara*)²⁹ further disturbs *Agni*, leading to accumulation of *Ama*,³⁰ which worsens the condition.

Thus, tension-type headache in Ayurveda is not only a localized disorder but a result of systemic imbalance involving *Dosha*,³¹ *Agni*,³² *Srotas*,³³ and *Manas*.³⁴ Understanding this holistic concept helps in focusing on preventive measures like *Nidana Parivarjana*,³⁵ lifestyle regulation, and mental health management rather than only symptomatic relief.

HEADACHE

Headache³⁶ is one of the most common symptoms experienced by individuals and can arise due to various physical, mental, and environmental factors. In modern science, it is classified into primary and secondary types, where primary headaches include tension-type headache, migraine, and cluster headache. Among these, tension-type headache is the most prevalent and is often linked with stress, muscle tension, and fatigue. The pain is usually bilateral, dull in nature, and described as a tightening or pressure-like sensation around the head.

TYPES OF HEADACHE

Headache can be classified into different types based on modern as well as Ayurvedic perspectives. Understanding these types helps in proper diagnosis and management.

According to Modern Science

- **Primary Headache**³⁷ These occur without any underlying disease.
 - Tension-type headache
 - Migraine
 - Cluster headache
- **Secondary Headache**³⁸ -These are caused due to other medical conditions.

- Sinusitis
- Hypertension
- Head injury
- Brain tumors
- Infections

According to Ayurveda (*Shiroroga Bheda*³⁹)

- **Vataja Shirashoola**⁴⁰
 - Severe, throbbing or pricking pain
 - Associated with dryness, lightness, and variability
- **Pittaja Shirashoola**⁴¹
 - Burning sensation in the head
 - Redness of eyes, irritability, and heat intolerance
- **Kaphaja Shirashoola**⁴²
 - Dull, heavy pain
 - Feeling of heaviness and stiffness, especially in morning
- **Sannipataja Shirashoola**⁴³
 - Involvement of all three *Dosha*
 - Mixed symptoms with variable intensity
- **Suryaavarta**⁴⁴
 - Headache increases with sunlight and decreases after sunset
- **Ardhavabhedaka**⁴⁵
 - Unilateral headache
 - Severe, piercing pain (similar to migraine)
- **Anantavata**⁴⁶
 - Pain radiating from neck to head

- Associated with stiffness and nerve involvement

In Ayurveda, headache is described under the term *Shiroroga*, which includes various types of head disorders depending upon *Dosha* predominance. According to classical texts, vitiation of *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* either individually or in combination leads to different types of headache. *Vataja Shirashoola* is characterized by severe, throbbing pain; *Pittaja* type presents with burning sensation and redness; while *Kaphaja* headache is associated with heaviness and dull pain. Improper *Ahara* and *Vihara*, exposure to environmental factors, and suppression of natural urges contribute to *Dosha Dushti* and manifestation of headache.

HEADACHE (*SHIROROGA*) – *SAMPRAPTI*⁴⁷

Nidana (Causative Factors)



Improper *Ahara* (dry, irregular, *Viruddha Ahara*), faulty *Vihara* (lack of sleep, excessive screen time), mental stress (*Chinta*, *Krodha*), suppression of natural urges (*Vegadharana*)



Dosha Prakopa (*Vata* ↑, *Kapha* ↑ ± *Pitta*)



Agnimandya (impaired *Agni*)



Formation of *Ama*



Srotorodha (obstruction of channels)



Vitiation of *Manasika Bhava* (*Rajas* & *Tamas*)



Affliction of *Shira* (head region – seat of *Indriya* & *Prana*)



Disturbance in normal circulation and nerve function



Lakshana Utpatti

- *Shoola* (pain)
- *Gaurava* (heaviness)
- *Stambha* (stiffness)
- Band-like tightness



Vyadhi Avastha – Shiroroga (Tension-Type Headache)

The head (*Shira*) is considered the most important part of the body as it is the seat of *Indriya* and *Prana*. Any disturbance in this region directly affects sensory and mental functions. Factors such as excessive use of electronic devices, irregular sleep patterns, stress, and lack of physical activity disturb the normal functioning of *Manas* and *Dosha*, leading to recurrent headaches. Accumulation of *Ama* due to impaired *Agni* further blocks the *Srotas*, aggravating the condition.

Thus, headache in Ayurveda is viewed as a multifactorial condition involving *Dosha*, *Agni*, *Srotas*, and *Manas*. Proper understanding of its etiology and pathogenesis helps in adopting preventive and therapeutic measures like *Nidana Parivarjana*, *Dinacharya*, and stress management practices to maintain overall balance and prevent recurrence.

LIFESTYLE MODIFICATIONS

Lifestyle modifications play a key role in the prevention and management of tension-type headache. Ayurveda strongly emphasizes regulation of daily routine and mental health through principles like *Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya*, and *Sadvritta*. These help in maintaining the balance of *Dosha*, improving *Agni*, and promoting overall well-being. Simple changes in daily habits can significantly reduce the frequency and severity of headaches.

- **Following *Dinacharya* (Daily Regimen)** regular waking and sleeping time, proper oral hygiene, and practices like *Abhyanga* (oil massage) and *Nasya* help in stabilizing *Vata Dosha* and improving circulation in the head region. This reduces muscle tension and prevents headache episodes.
- **Proper Sleep (*Nidra*)** Adequate and timely sleep is essential for mental relaxation. Irregular or insufficient sleep aggravates *Vata* and leads to stress and fatigue, which are major triggers for tension-type headache.
- **Balanced Diet (*Pathya Ahara*)** Light, fresh, and easily digestible food helps in maintaining proper *Agni*. Avoidance of *Viruddha Ahara*, junk food, excessive caffeine, and irregular eating habits prevents *Ama* formation and reduces headache occurrence.
- **Stress Management through *Yoga and Pranayama*** Practices like meditation, deep breathing, and relaxation techniques help in calming *Manas* and reducing *Rajas* and *Tamas*. This directly decreases mental tension and improves coping ability.

- **Practice of *Sadvritta* (Good Conduct)** Maintaining a calm mind, avoiding excessive anger, worry, and overthinking helps in preventing mental disturbances that lead to headache.
- **Avoidance of *Nidana* (Causative Factors)** Limiting screen time, maintaining proper posture, avoiding exposure to loud noise, bright light, and long working hours are essential preventive measures.
- **Seasonal Regimen (*Ritucharya*)** Adapting lifestyle according to seasonal changes helps in maintaining *Dosha* balance and prevents seasonal aggravation of headache.

RESULT AND FINDINGS

- Adoption of Ayurvedic lifestyle modifications showed a significant reduction in frequency and intensity of tension-type headache.
- Regular practice of *Dinacharya* helped in maintaining balance of *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha*, thereby reducing recurrence of headache episodes.
- Implementation of *Nidana Parivarjana* (avoidance of causative factors) resulted in noticeable improvement in associated symptoms like stress, fatigue, and heaviness in head.
- Proper *Nidra* (sleep pattern) contributed to better mental relaxation and decreased headache occurrence.
- Use of *Pathya Ahara* improved *Agni* and reduced formation of *Ama*, which helped in preventing *Srotorodha*.
- Practices like *Yoga* and *Pranayama* were found effective in reducing mental stress and stabilizing *Manasika Bhava*.
- Following *Sadvritta* helped in controlling emotional factors such as anxiety, anger, and overthinking, which are major triggers of tension-type headache.
- Seasonal adaptation through *Ritucharya* helped in preventing *Dosha* aggravation and reduced seasonal variation in headache incidence.
- Overall findings suggest that Ayurvedic lifestyle modifications provide a safe, cost-effective, and sustainable approach for prevention and management of tension-type headache.

DISCUSSION

Tension-type headache is closely associated with modern lifestyle factors such as stress, irregular routine, improper diet, and lack of mental relaxation. From an Ayurvedic point of view, these factors lead to vitiation of *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha*, along with disturbance of *Manasika Bhava*. The conceptual analysis in this study highlights that continuous exposure to such causative factors results in *Srotorodha* and impaired functioning of the head region, producing symptoms like dull aching pain, heaviness, and tightness. This clearly shows that the disease is not only physical but also has a strong psychological component.⁴⁸

The findings of the study indicate that Ayurvedic lifestyle modifications play an important role in breaking the pathogenesis. Practices like *Dinacharya*, *Nidra*, and *Pathya Ahara* help in maintaining *Dosha Samyata* and improving *Agni*, thereby preventing the formation of *Ama*. Similarly, *Yoga* and *Pranayama* contribute to mental relaxation by reducing *Rajas* and *Tamas*, which are responsible for stress and emotional imbalance. The concept of *Nidana Parivarjana* proves to be highly effective, as avoiding the root cause itself leads to significant reduction in the occurrence of headache.⁴⁹

Overall, the discussion supports that a holistic approach focusing on daily routine, diet, and mental health is more effective than symptomatic treatment alone. Ayurvedic principles provide a preventive and sustainable solution for tension-type headache by addressing both body and mind. Therefore, incorporation of these simple lifestyle measures in daily life can significantly improve patient outcomes and enhance quality of life without any adverse effects.⁵⁰

CONCLUSION

Tension-type headache is largely influenced by lifestyle and psychological factors, and its prevention requires a holistic approach rather than only symptomatic management. The present conceptual study shows that Ayurvedic principles such as *Nidana Parivarjana*, *Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya*, proper *Nidra*, and stress management through *Yoga* and *Pranayama* play a significant role in maintaining *Dosha* balance and mental well-being. These simple and practical lifestyle modifications help in reducing the frequency and severity of headache episodes by addressing the root cause. Thus, adopting an Ayurvedic lifestyle offers a safe,

effective, and sustainable method for the prevention of tension-type headache and improvement of overall quality of life.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST –NIL

SOURCE OF SUPPORT –NONE

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