

Homoeopathic Perspective on Dandruff: A Comprehensive Review

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Abstract—Dandruff, medically known as pityriasis capitis, is a common scalp condition that affects people across all age groups. Though not life-threatening, it can cause significant discomfort, social embarrassment, and psychological stress. While conventional treatments provide temporary relief, recurrence is common. Homoeopathy offers a holistic and individualized approach to treating dandruff, addressing the root cause and constitutional predisposition. This article explores dandruff from a medical and homoeopathic viewpoint, including its causes, pathophysiology, miasmatic background, repertorial approach, and effective remedies.

Index Terms—Dandruff, homeopathy, miasmatic analysis, repertory, individualized treatment, *Materia medica*

I. INTRODUCTION

Dandruff is a superficial disorder of the scalp characterized by white or grey flakes of dead skin that appear on the hair and shoulders. It is often associated with itching and sometimes redness or inflammation. Though benign, it can have significant cosmetic and psychological implications.

Definition

Dandruff is defined as excessive shedding of dead epidermal cells from the scalp, often resulting in white flakes and itching. It is a mild form of seborrheic dermatitis without visible inflammation.

Causes

Overgrowth of *Malassezia furfur* (yeast)- Oily scalp (seborrhea)

- Harsh chemicals or irritants
- Hormonal imbalances
- Weather extremes (especially winter)
- Poor scalp hygiene
- Stress and anxiety
- Nutritional deficiencies (zinc, B-complex vitamins)

Risk factors

- Age (commonly starts in adolescence)
- Male gender (due to androgens)
- Oily scalp and skin conditions
- Family history
- Neurological or immunocompromised conditions (e.g., Parkinson's disease, HIV)

Etiology

The root cause lies in the imbalance between epidermal cell renewal and shedding. *Malassezia furfur* metabolizes sebum, producing fatty acids that irritate the scalp and accelerate cell turnover. Genetic, environmental, and hormonal factors contribute to the development.

Pathophysiology

- Increased scalp sebum supports *Malassezia* growth.
- The yeast hydrolyzes triglycerides in sebum, producing oleic acid.
- Oleic acid penetrates the skin barrier, causing inflammation and hyperproliferation of keratinocytes.
- Leads to scaling, flaking, itching, and occasionally redness or secondary infections.

II. TYPES OF DANDRUFF

• *Dry skin dandruff:*

This type often occurs from an excessively dry scalp, leading to flaking. Harsh weather, inadequate hydration, or hair care products that strip the scalp of natural oils can lead to this type.

• *Oily skin dandruff:*

Occurs due to an overproduction of sebum—the skin's natural oil. As a result, you may have a greasy scalp and larger, yellowish flakes.

• *Fungus-related dandruff:*

Caused by the yeast-like fungus *Malassezia*, which is part of the skin's natural microbiome (or, community of bacteria, fungi, and viruses). *Malassezia* thrives on

sebum, and excess oil can cause an overgrowth of the fungus, triggering an inflammatory response and an increase in scalp flaking.

- *Skin condition-related dandruff:*

Certain skin conditions, including psoriasis, eczema (e.g., contact dermatitis), and seborrheic dermatitis, cause excess skin flaking.

III. SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

White or yellowish scalp flakes

- Itching and irritation
- Scalp dryness or greasy patches
- Possible redness or sensitivity
- Chronic cases may show hair thinning or loss

IV. INVESTIGATIONS

Clinical examination of scalp and symptoms

- KOH test (potassium hydroxide prep) to rule out fungal infections like tinea capitis
- Wood's lamp examination (UV light) may help identify fungal or bacterial causes
- Scalp biopsy is rarely needed, used for atypical or severe cases

V. CONVENTIONAL TREATMENT

Medicated shampoos (e.g., containing zinc pyrithione, ketoconazole, selenium sulfide)

- Topical corticosteroids for inflammation
 - Antifungal creams for resistant cases
 - Salicylic acid or coal tar as keratolytic
 - Advising lifestyle changes: improve scalp hygiene, reduce stress, and maintain balanced diet
- Statistical Data: • Up to 50% of adults globally are affected.
- Higher prevalence in males, due to hormonal influence.
 - Peak onset between ages 15–35.
 - High recurrence rate with allopathic treatment, especially without lifestyle changes.

VI. HOMEOPATHY PERSPECTIVE

1. Homeopathic Management: Homeopathy focuses on treating the individual constitutionally, targeting the root imbalance rather than just the symptoms. Remedies are selected based on totality of symptoms,

miasmatic background, and the patient's physical and mental state. It avoids suppression and aims for deep healing.

2. Miasmatic cleavage:

- Psoric miasm: Dryness, itching, scaling
 - Sycosis: Oily, thick crusts, recurrent episodes
 - Syphilitic tendencies: Severe scaling, crust formation, foul-smelling discharges
- Homoeopathic treatment involves miasmatic analysis to choose deep-acting anti-miasmatic remedies.

3. Repertorial approach:

Common rubrics include:

- Head – Dandruff
- Scalp – Dryness, itching, crusts
- Skin – Desquamation

Primary repertories used:

- Kent's Repertory
- Synthesis Repertory
- Phatak's Repertory

4. Materia Medica View

Natrum Muriaticum

- Indications: Dry, scaly dandruff with oily hair roots; itching; hair loss at the front.
- Modalities: Worse from sun, emotions; better in open air.
- Miasm: Psora
- Constitution: Reserved, grief-prone, introverted

Thuja Occidentalis

- Indications: Oily, waxy dandruff; sticky crusts; hair fall; history of vaccination
- Modalities: Worse from cold/damp; better with warmth
- Miasm: Sycosis
- Constitution: Secretive, anxious, delusional

Graphites

- Indications: Crusty scalp with sticky discharge; eruptions behind ears
- Modalities: Worse at night, with heat; better with cold
- Miasm: Sycosis-Psora
- Constitution: Obese, slow, eczema-prone

Sulphur

- Indications: Dry, itchy, burning scalp with white flakes

- Modalities: Worse from bathing, night; better in dry weather
- Miasm: Psora
- Constitution: Intellectual, messy, philosophical

Phosphorus

- Indications: Large flakes; sensitive scalp; hair fall
- Modalities: Worse from light, thunderstorms; better with cold
- Miasm: Tubercular
- Constitution: Tall, open, friendly, emotionally sensitive

Lycopodium

- Indications: Dry, itchy scalp, mainly right-sided; greasy scales
- Modalities: Worse 4–8 p.m., heat; better with cold, after sleep
- Miasm: Psora-Sycosis
- Constitution: Intellectual, bossy, low self-esteem

Mezereum

- Indications: Thick crusts with pus; bad odor; severe itching
- Modalities: Worse from bed warmth, touch; better in cold air
- Miasm: Syphilitic
- Constitution: Reserved, over-sensitive, worried about health

VII. CONCLUSION

Dandruff is a complex disorder with multiple causes and aggravating factors. While modern medicine treats symptoms, homoeopathy works constitutionally and miasmatically to achieve lasting relief. The emphasis on individualization, totality of symptoms, and internal harmony forms the cornerstone of homoeopathic success in such chronic, recurring conditions.

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