

AN AYURVEDIC APPROACH IN PSORIASIS - A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Background: Psoriasis is a complex, chronic, multifactorial, inflammatory disease that involves hyperproliferation of the keratinocytes in the epidermis, with an increase in the epidermal cell turnover rate. Environmental, genetic, and immunologic factors appear to play a role. The disease most commonly manifests on the skin of the elbows, knees, scalp, and lumbosacral areas, intergluteal clefts, and glans penis. At present, there is no permanent cure other than providing symptomatic relief in modern medical science. Skin disorders respond better to Ayurvedic treatment. Due to psoriasis, the patient also has psychological symptoms like anxiety and depression. In this disease medicine as well as counselling is important in treating it. **Case presentation:** A 25-years old male, diagnosed with a case of psoriasis, came to our hospital with complaints of itching in the whole body, scaling especially from the scalp, with red patches all over the body for 7 years. He was tired of trying all kinds of medicine and depressed. After a thorough examination, an ayurvedic treatment plan was designed in the form of *Panchakarma* and oral medicines.

Outcomes: significant improvements were noticed in all symptoms; the duration of treatment was 3 months. And then follow-up was done after every month. PASI score decreased after treatment.

Keywords: Psoriasis, *Kustha*, Ayurvedic management

INTRODUCTION

Psoriasis is a common dermatologic disease, affecting up to 1% of the World's population¹ both males and

females suffering equally^[2]. The word Psoriasis is derived from the Greek word 'Psora' meaning 'itch'

and 'sis' meaning 'acting condition'. Psoriasis is a non-infectious, chronic inflammatory disease of the skin, characterized by well-defined erythematous plaques with a silvery-white scale with a predilection for the extensor surface and scalp, and a chronic fluctuating course^[3]. In psoriasis, the main abnormality is increased epidermal proliferation due to excessive multiplication of cells in the basal layers. The transit time of keratinocytes is shortened, and epidermal turnover is reduced to 5-6 days from 28-30 days^[4]. Even though the aetiology is unknown, the factors involved are genetic, biochemical and immunopathological^[5]. Precipitating factors like trauma, infections, sunlight, some drugs and emotions may flare up the disease. As there is no available cure for the disease it has remained a great problem for the patients^[6]. Patients not only have physical problems but also suffer mental and social distress. Diagnosis of the disease is made mainly based on clinical symptoms that are^[7],

- Erythematous sharply defined plaques, covered with silvery-white scales.
- Extensor surfaces primarily involved such as the knees and elbows.
- Koebner's phenomenon is present in the active phase of the disease.
- Wornoff's ring is often present in the healing phase of the disease.
- Auspitz sign and candle grease sign are other classic features of the disease.

The goal of the treatment for the disease is to alleviate symptoms that interfere with the patient's life both physically and socially. In the modern system of medicine coal tar preparations, calcipotriol, retinoid, corticosteroids and ultraviolet radiations are the local measures to manage Psoriasis. The systemic treatment commonly used is photo chemotherapy with PUVA, retinoid, methotrexate and cyclosporine –A and corticosteroids^[8]. These medicines usually provide good symptomatic control, but in long term cause several unpleasant side effects. Several types of Psoriasis can be related to certain diseases described in *Samhitas*. While the description of *Kushtha* is present since the Vedic period, *Kushtha* has described

in Garuda Purana^[9] and almost all Ayurvedic classics after that period i.e. *Brihatrayees*, *Laghutrayi* and all texts afterwards. *Eka Kushtha* is mentioned in all Ayurvedic classics under *Kshudra Kushtha* and has a predominance of *Vata* and *Kapha dosha*^[10]. The causative factor of *Eka Kushtha* is the same as *Kushtha*. Dietary factors such as *Viruddha Ahara*, excessive consumption of *Drava*, *Snigdha*, *Guru ahara*, *Navanna*, *Vega dharana* especially of vomiting are major etiologies. Indulgence in the sinful act and ill *Manovritti* (negative mentality) are associated mental factors for causing the disease. *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned the symptoms of *Eka Kushtha* as *Aswedanam*, *Mahavastu*, and *Matsyashakalopamam*. *Acharya Sushruta* described its symptoms as *Krishna-Aruna Varnata*. The etiological factor leads to vitiation of *Tridosha* especially *Vata* and *Kapha*. These *Dosha* through *Tiryakvahini Siras* proceed to *Bahya Rogamarga* i.e. *Twacha*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, and *Lasika* and cause the symptoms of disease. Repeated *Samshodhana* along with *Samshamana* is the main line of treatment. Both *Antah Parimarjan* and *Bahiparimarjan* therapies have been indicated in *Kushtha Roga*.

Case Presentation:

A 25-year-old male patient, diagnosed with psoriasis for 7 years, came to our hospital in Feb- 2021. He had the following chief complaints.

1. Dryness in the whole body
2. Itching with red patches especially in the scalp, elbow, and chest region.
3. Scaling mainly from the scalp region.

History of Present Illness:

The patient was relatively healthy before 7 years, he noticed itching and red patches which started from the scalp. Gradually itching occurred to the whole body, and patches widened. He took homoeopathy and modern medicine for 7 years but didn't get relief. So, he came to our hospital for further treatment.

Family History: Negative for HTN, DM and any skin diseases.

Clinical Examination:

CVS: 82/min, RRR, normal S1 S2 sound, no murmur
RS: B/L air entry clear with clear breath sounds

Mental status: somewhat depressed.

PASI score: 5.8, Auspitz sign: negative, Candle grease sign: Positive

ASSESSMENT: (before treatment Feb-2021)

Table 1: Line of treatment

Day	Treatment
1 st -5 th day	<i>Shodhnarth Snehpan</i> with <i>Panchatikta Ghrita</i> (started from 40 ml, 15 ml increased every day till 5 th day)
6 th day	<i>Abhyang</i> with <i>Jatyadi oil</i> , <i>Sarvang Bashpa Svedan</i> with <i>Nimb Patra</i>
7 th day	<i>Vaman Karma</i> with <i>Madan phal Churna</i> - 4 gm
8-10 th day	<i>Samsarjan Karma</i>
11 th to 14 th day	<i>Shodhanarth Sneha pan</i> with <i>Pachtikta Ghrita</i>
15 th day	<i>Abhyang</i> , <i>Svedan</i>
16 th day	<i>Abhyang</i> , <i>Svedan</i>
17 th day	<i>Virechana Karma</i> with <i>Dindayal Churna</i> (5gm) and <i>Erand oil</i> (50ml)
18 th -20 th day	<i>Samsarjan karma</i>
21 st day to 60 th day	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Sarvang Abhyang</i> with <i>Jatyadi oil</i> 2. <i>Sarvang Bashpa Svedan</i> with <i>Nimb Patra</i> 3. <i>Niruh Basti</i> with <i>Pathyadi Kwatha</i> (320 ml) 4. <i>Rakta Mokshan</i> (<i>Sira Vedh</i>) weekly 5. <i>Nasya karma</i> with <i>Brahmi Ghrita</i> (16-16 drops) 6. <i>Shamanarth Snehpan</i> (20 ml twice a day) 7. <i>Manjisthadi Kwatha</i> (40 ml twice a day) 8. <i>Kaishor Guggulu</i> (250 mg) 3 tabs thrice daily 9. <i>Gandhak Rasayan</i> (250 mg) 2 tabs twice daily 10. <i>Erand Bhrishtha Haritaki</i> (250 mg) 5-tab HS 11. <i>Panchavalkal Kwatha</i> for bath

Results: The Patient had started improving during treatment and all over recovery was done in 2 months, also new spots which were seen during treatment, were all gone. The patient's PASI score after treatment was 1.4. The candle grease sign was also negative after treatment.

Mode of action of Snehpan in Kushtha:

वातोत्तरेषु सर्पिर्वमनं श्लेष्मोत्तरेषु कुष्ठेषु पित्तोत्तरेषु मोक्षो रक्तस्य विरेचनं चाग्रे|| (cha.chi. 7)

In the line of treatment of all kinds of *Kushtha* in *Vataj* condition, *Sarpi* is suggested. Here where scaling and dryness are more, *Snehpan* has a great role in treating disease.

Also, *Panchatikta Ghrita* is mentioned in *Bhaisajya Ratnavali Kushtha Adhikar*, it is a widely used medicine for *Snehpan* for skin diseases. *Patola*, *Guduchi*, *Nimba* etc. which are in *Ghrita* works on *Vata*, *Kapha* and *Rakta*.

स्नेहस्य पानमिष्टं शुद्धे कोष्ठे प्रवाहिते रक्ते वायुर्हि शुद्धकोष्ठं कुष्ठिनमबलं विशति शीघ्रम्|| (cha.chi.7)

After *Shodhana karma*, *Panchatikta Ghrita* was administered as a *Shamanarth Snehpan* (20 ml twice a day).

Mode of action of Vaman and Virechana:

बहुदोषः संशोधः कुष्ठी बहुशोऽनुरक्षता प्राणान् दोषे ह्यतिमात्रहते वायुर्हन्यादबलमाशु|| (cha.chi. 7)

Shodhan is highly indicated in patients with skin diseases. *Vaman* does evacuation of *Kapha*, and *Virechana* works on *Pitta*, so Itching which is mainly due to *Kapha* decreases. Skin is a sight of *Bhrajak pitta*, where *Virechana* works.

Mode of Action of Gandhak Rasayan:

लेलीतक प्रयोगो रसेन जात्याः समाक्षिकः परमः। सप्तदशकुष्ठघाती माक्षिकधातुश्च मूत्रेण||७०|| (cha. Chi. 7)
Lelitaka (Sulphur) when administered with the juice of *Jati* (*Amlaki*) along with honey is beneficial in 17

types of *Kushtha*. *Gandhak rasayan Vati* is effective in the treatment of *Kushtha*. Different *Bhavana dravyas* in *Gandhak rasayan* act as bactericidal and thus causes blood purification. *Bhavana dravyas* like *Guduchi*, *Nakesha*, *Haritaki*, *Sunthi*, has the properties of *Katu*, *Kashaya Rasa* and *Ushna Virya*. Thus, it does *Dipana*, *Pachana*, *Kledhar* and *Kaphghna* and in this way also acts as *Kushtaghna* and *Kandughna*, which helps in curing the disease.

Mode of action of Kaishor Guggulu: In *Sharandhar Samhita Madhyama khand-7*, the verse "*Jayet Sarvani Kushthani*" is mentioned about *Kaishor Guggulu*. The main drug used in *Kaishor guggulu* is *Triphala*, which is described in classics in *Kushtha Chikitsa*.

Mode of action of Manjishthadi Kwatha:

Manjishthadikwath has contents like *Manjishtha*, *Guduchi*, *Bakuchi*, *Nimb*, *Haridra*, *Patola* etc., which not only detoxifies but purifies the blood. Also helps in pacifying *Kapha Dosh*. *Kushtha* is a *Santarpanotha Vyadhi* as per *Charak Samhita*. *Manjishthadikwath* also helps to reduce obesity.

Mode of action of Panchtikta Ghrita:

It is described in *Bhaisajya Ratnavali Kushtharogadhikar* 114-11, *Shaman Sneha pan* indications are described in *Charak Samhita Sutra sthana*.

Mode of action of Raktamokshan:

Symptoms like *Twakvaivarnta*, *Kandu*, *Daha* will reduce after *Siravedha Karma* due to *Prabhutdosh Nirharan* by *Siravedha* and *Raktashudhi*, *Sharirlaghvta*, *Vedana shanti*, *Twakshotha*. According to Acharya Charak and Acharya Sushruta, *Shodhan* is necessary for dis-ease due to the *Bahudosh Avastha*. As *Kushtha* is *Tridoshaj* Condition, so *Siravedha karma* (Bloodletting) can be given. *Siravedha* (bloodletting) procedure is effective to absorb toxic materials so they can be easily evacuated from the body. Besides eliminating *Pitta* and *Kapha Dosh*, the main seat of *Vata* is also purified thereby making *Siravedha Karma* a truly *Tridoshahar* procedure.^[11]

Mode of Action of Nasya Karma:

In skin diseases, psychological involvement is common. Nothing is better than *Nasya* where the mind is involved. As "*Nasa hi Shiraso Dwaram*". Also,

Brahmi has *Kushth har* qualities mentioned in *Bhava Prakash Nighantu- Guduchyadi Varga*.

Why Erand Bhrishta Haritaki?

For patients where *bahu dosh* involvement is seen, *nitya sodhan* should be done. *Erand Bhrishta haritaki* acts as *Mridu Virechana* and Acts on *Pitta dosha*. Here it is important to monitor the patient's *Bala*.

Mode of Action of Niruh Basti:

As we have seen earlier, when *Bahu dosh* involvement is seen, *Shodhan* is essential, *Niruh Basti* does *Mridu Shodhan*, and *Kushtha* is described under indications of *Niruh Basti* in *Charak Samhita Siddhi Sthan*.

DISCUSSION

Causative factors of *Kushtha* or Psoriasis are faulty diet and lifestyle, which leads to impairment of digestion and aggravation of *tridosha*. *Kapha* manifests in the skin and causes the accumulation of toxins. The vitiated three *Doshas- Vata, Pitta, Kapha* along with impaired *Tvak, Rakta, Mamsa* and *Ambu* together constitute seven essential entities that play role in the pathogenesis of this skin disorder. Here scaling was a primary symptom, so *vata* and *Kapha* are involved. We go through the exact line of treatment of *Kushtha*, mainly in skin conditions *Katu, Kashay, Tikta* aushadhis should be given as *shaman*. They all do *Rakta dhatu Shodhan*. The patient was asked to avoid food, which is heavy to digest, sour food, milk, and curd. Where there's chronicity in disease, *Shodhan* is a must, because due to previous medicines which were taken by the patient, somewhat produces Resistant or *Avarana*. For removal of that *Shodhan* is essential. So *Niruh Basti, Erand Bhrishta Haritaki* was given. Here I must say we should not think of *Shodhan* as only *Panchakarma* procedures, but also medicines that do *dosha Nirmulan* by the nearest route.

CONCLUSION

Kushtha is described in various classics, and it is considered as *Kriccha sadhya Vyadhi*. Skin disorders not only affect a patient's social life but also his mental health. So, with treatment, we advised the patient to do meditation. Mainly *tikta, katu, Kashay* medicines should be given in all skin conditions.

BEFORE TREATMENT:



After treatment:



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