



ISSN 2456-3110

Vol 6 · Issue 2

Mar-Apr 2021

Journal of  
**Ayurveda and Integrated  
Medical Sciences**

*www.jaims.in*

# JAIMS

An International Journal for Researches in Ayurveda and Allied Sciences



**Charaka**  
Publications

Indexed

# Review on the disease *Kushta* and its management in Ayurvedic literature

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## ABSTRACT

Skin is a shield which protects us from various external invasions. Skin is the organ of the body which is readily available for inspection by the eyes. Of all the organs, skin is larger one and is exposed to disease and injury. Because of its visibility, skin reflects once emotions and it is the index of normal physiology. It is a link between internal and external environment and is also the seat of complexion which maintains beauty and personality. It creates an individual identity in the society. Changes in skin colour may be due to homeostatic imbalances in the body. Many inter related factors affect health of the skin, including nutrition, hygiene, circulation, age, immunity, genetic traits, psychological state and drugs. In Ayurveda, the word 'Twacha' or 'Charma' is used for skin. *Twacha* is derived from the *Dhatu- Twach Samvarne* meaning covering of the body. All the skin diseases in *Ayurveda* have been discussed under the broad headings of *Kushta*. *Twacha* is the seat of *Sparshajnanendriya*, which is one among seats of *Vata* and it is very extensive among all five *Jnanendriyas*.

**Key words:** *Kushta, Psoriasis, Dermatological disorder.*

## INTRODUCTION

There are two types of *Kushta* described in *Ayurvedic* classics, *Mahakushta* and *Kshudrakushta*. *Mahakushta* is subdivided into seven and *Kshudrakushta* into eleven types.

*Mahakushta* - *Kapala, Udumbhara, Mandala, Rushyajihwa, Pundarika, Sidhma* and *Kakanaka*.

*Kshudrakushta* - *Eka, Charmakhya, Kitibha, Vipadika, Alasaka, Dadru, Charmada, Paama, Visphota, Shataru* and *Vicharchika*. The *Lakshanas* of *Kitibhakushta*

include *Shyava Krushna Varna, Parushata, Kharasparsha, Kandu, Ghanatwam* and *Srava*. In modern science *Kitibhakushta* can be correlate with *Psoriasis* because of similar and identical characteristic feature.

*Psoriasis* is a disease which affects the skin and joints. It commonly causes reddish scaly patches on the skin. *Psoriasis* is the disease which disturbs the normal texture of the skin and beauty of the individual which in-turn creates a social stigma and can affect a person's self esteem.

*Psoriasis* is one of the most intriguing and perplexing disorder of skin. It is a papulosquamous disorder of the skin, characterized by sharply defined erythematous-squamous lesions. The exact cause of *psoriasis* still unknown, but it is believed to have a genetic component. It is well known for its course of remission and exacerbation.

*Psoriasis* is precipitated by climate, streptococcal infection etc. Psychological stress is emphasized as one of the major triggering factors in the exacerbation of the disease.

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Submission Date: 24/02/2021 Accepted Date: 26/03/2021

### Access this article online

#### Quick Response Code



Website: [www.jaims.in](http://www.jaims.in)

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The disease itself can cause a reactive depression in the patient which could further exacerbate his condition. The course and prognosis in a particular patient are unpredictable. In Ayurvedic literature it is a *Punarbhavakara Vyadhi*. Psoriasis is rarely a life-threatening disease. There is no effective treatment available for Psoriasis at the moment. Modern medical science treats psoriasis with PUVA and corticosteroids. These therapies have serious side effects like liver and kidney failure, bone marrow depletion etc.

### Twacha Shareera

*Acharya Sushruta* described the formation of *Twacha* in the developing fetus. He says that after fertilization of ovum *Twacha* develops just like cream on the surface of the boiled milk. *Acharya Vagbhata* also followed the same. *Twacha* is one among the *Matruja Bhava*. According to *Vagbhata*, *Twacha* formation in the fetus will be completed in the sixth month. *Vagbhata* described the formation of *Twacha* due to *Paka* of *Rakta Dhatu* by its *Dhatwagni* in the fetus. After *Paka*, it dries up to form *Twacha*.

1.	<i>Avabhasini</i>	1/18 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Varana-Chaya Prasadaka, Adhishtana of Sidma and Padmakantaka</i>
2.	<i>Lohita</i>	1/16	<i>Adhishtana of Tilakalaka, Vyanga and Nyaccha</i>
3.	<i>Shweta</i>	1/12	<i>Adhishtana of Charmadala, Ajakallika and Mashaka</i>
4.	<i>Tamra</i>	1/8	<i>Adhishtana of Kilasa Kushtadi</i>
5.	<i>Vedini</i>	1/5	<i>Adhishtana of Kushta, Visarpa</i>
6.	<i>Rohini</i>	<i>Vreehi Pramana</i>	<i>Adhishtana of Granti, apache, Arbuda, Sleepada and Galaganda</i>
7.	<i>Mamsadhara</i>	<i>Vreehi Dwaya</i>	<i>Adhishtana of Bhagandara, Vidradi and Arsha</i>

### Relation between Twacha and Dosha-Dushya<sup>[1]</sup>

*Vata* - *Sparanendriya* is the *Adhishtana* of *Vata* and the *Adhishtana* of *Samana Vata* includes *Swedavaha Srotas* which in turn is present in *Twacha*.

*Pitta* - *Bhrajaka Pitta* is present in *Twacha*.

*Kapha* - Direct reference is not available of the presence or *Adhishtana* of *Kapha Dosha*. But the *Mardavata* and *Snighdhata* of the *Twacha* may be understood as the contribution of *Kapha Dosha*.

*Rasa* - *Rasa Sara Purusha* is assessed by the skin texture of the person. *Rukshta* of *Twacha* indicates *rasa Kshaya* and *Shaitya* indicates the *Rasa Vrudhi*.

*Rakta* - *Karma* of *Rakta Dhatu* is told as *Sparsa Jnana* and *Varna Prasadana*. The *Adhistana* of *Rakta Dushti Rogas* like *Kushta, Neelika, Visarpa* etc are *Twacha*. Hence one can conclude that there is a relationship between *Twacha* and *Rakta Dhatu*.

*Mamsa* - The six layers of *Twacha* formation is from the *Prasada Bhaga* of *Mamsadhatu*.

*Sweda* - *Karma* of *Sweda* is stated as maintenance of *Shareera Ardrata* and *Twak Sukumaryata*. Also the *Kshaya* and *Vrudhi* of *Sweda Lakshanas* will be manifested in *Twacha*.

### Kushta

According to *Amarakosha*, the etymology of the word *Kushta* is derived from the root 'Kush' which means that comes from the inner part. The meaning can be understood by the appearance of affected *Twacha* because of the vitiation in the factors like *Rakta, Lasika, Ambu* and *Tridoshas* of the body.

According to *Shabdakalpadruma*, *Kushta* means which causes despise and contemptible.

*Acharya Vagbhata* has defined the *Kushta Roga* as that which causes *Vaivarnya* and *Dushti* to the *Twacha*.

According to *Shabdakalpadruma*, the word meaning of *Kitibha* is *Kesa Keeta*.

According to *Monier Williams*, the word *Kitibha* in English gives the meaning louse (a parasitic insect, infecting the human hairs and skin and transmitting various diseases).

### Nidana

Specific *Nidana*<sup>[2]</sup> for *Kitibha Kushta* has not been explained in the *Ayurvedic* classics. Hence the general

*Nidana* for the *Kushta Roga* (*Samanya Kushta Roga Nidana*) are to be considered. Study of *Nidana* helps in planning of the treatment as well as to revalidate them to the present study. *Nidana* can be categorized as follows:

#### Aharaja Nidana

- *Mithyahara Vihara*
- *Adhika Madhu, Dadhi, Snigdha Padartha Sevana*
- *Adhika Madhura, Amla, Lavana Sevana, Tila Sevana*
- *Chilichima Matsya* along with *Dugdha*
- *Paya Sevana* after *Amla Sevana*
- *Phanita*
- *Atimatrahara* etc.

#### Viharaja Nidana

- *Diwaswapna*
- *Maithuna*
- *Vyayama*
- *Vyavaya* after *Ahitasana*
- *Chardi Vegadharana*
- *Sheetodaka Sevana* after *Bhaya, Shrama, Santapa*

#### Lakshana

*Lakshana* is the term used to denote the characteristic features of a *Roga*. *Rupa* and *Linga* are the synonyms of *Lakshana*. *Lakshana*<sup>[3]</sup> of a *Roga* will appear on the fifth stage of the *Kriyakala*, also this stage is called as *Vyakta*. The *Lakshanas* of *Kitibhacushta* is available in various *Ayurvedic* texts are as following,

**Shyava Varna** - because of *Vata Dosh*

**Khartwam** - *Vata Dosh*, *Karkasha Sparsha* will be present

**Parusham** - *Rukshata* of the *Twacha* will be present; again it shows the involvement of *Vata Dosh*

**Krishna Varna** - *Aruna Varna* of *Vata*.

**Snigdha** - This is a contradictory statement given by *Acharya Sushruta*. This can be understood as *Snigdha*

*Sparsa* when there is an excessive *Kleda Guna* is present. Also, when there is predominance of *Kapha Dosh* in *Kitibha* this may be observed.

**Srava** - *Pitta*

**Ugrakandu** - *Kapha Dosh*

**Vridhi** - increase in the size of the lesion

**Guru/Dhrudam/Ghana** - indicates the thickness of *Vrana Sthana* (kina)

*Prashanthani Cha Puna Punarutpadhyante / Vartate Cha Samutpnnam* - the disease reoccurs after its complete disappearance.

The *Lakshanas* of *Kitibhacushta* mentioned by *Acharya Charaka* is as following, *Shyava Varna, Kharasparsha* and *Parushata*.

*Sushruta, Madhavanidana, Vagbhata, Yogaratnakara, Kasyapa* has been followed the same as that of *Charaka*.

#### Samprapti

The process beginning with the vitiation of *Doshas*, due to specific *Nidana* and which lead to the full-fledged manifestation of the disease after the *Dosha-Dushya Sammurchana* is called *Samprapti*. The knowledge of *Samprapti* helps the physician to understand the specific features of a disease, like the involvement of particular *Dosha, Agni* <sup>[4]</sup> etc. The planning of *Chikitsa* is told as vain if it is not according to the *Samprapti Ghataks*. Since there is no detailed *Samprapti* of *Kitibhacushta* is mentioned in texts, *Samprapti* of *Kitibhacushta* is being derived here on the basis of *Kushtaroga*.

*Kushta* is a *Tridoshajanya Vyadhi*. It is believed that this *Roga* cannot manifest with a single *Dosha* involvement. The classification of *Kushta* is based on the *Amshamshakalpana* of *Dosha*. The *Sapta Dravyas* of *Kushta* are *Tridoshas, Twak, Rakta, Mamsa* and *Ambu*.

According to *Acharya Charaka, Nidana Sevana* leads to *Prakopa* of *Tridosha* and thus the vitiated *Doshas* will get *Ashraya* in *Twak, Rakta, Mamsa* and *Ambu* causing the *Shaithalyatha* in these *Dhatu*s leading to



the manifestation of *Kushta Roga*. Further in *Chikitsasthana*, he has been explained that the *Vatadi Doshas* get *Prakopa* and does *Dushana* of *Twak, Rakta, Mamsa* and *Ambu* leading to seven or eleven types of *Maha* and *Kshudrakushta* respectively.

#### **Sadhyasadhyata**

*Sadhyasadhyata* of the *Kushta* is explained in *Ayurvedic* classics, but however the explanation of *Sadhyasadhyata* of *Kitibha* is not dealt separately. Before explaining *Chikitsa*, *Acharyas* have briefed about the condition of *Sadhya* and *Asadhyata* of the *Roga*, thus it gives a comprehensive hint to the physicians for treatment.

**Sadhya Kushta** - *Eka Dosholbana, Vata-Kapha Pradhanata*, which has affected only *Twak, Rakta* and *Mamsa*, in this condition always have a chance of good recovery.

**Kruchra Sadhya Kushta** - The chance of getting cure in this *Avastha* becomes with great effort, if it is either of *Kapha Pitta Mishrita* or of *Vata Pitta* or of alone *Pitta Dosh*.

**Yapya Kushta** - If the *Doshas* are in *Medo Dhatu* and the *Rogi* takes proper *Bheshaja* and follows *Pathya*, he will be free from the sufferings of the *Roga*. Once he stops the *Aushadhis* and follows the *Apathya*, relapse of *Vyadhi* is likely.

**Asadhya Kushata** - If the following features like, *Sarva Lingayukta, Abala, Trushna, Daha, Santhagani*, presence of *Jantu, Doshas* which have reached *Asthi, Majja* and *Shukra Dhatus* are considered as *Asadhya Kushta Lakshanas*.

#### **Upadrava**

*Upadravas* occurs either after the complete manifestation of the disease or during the course of the diseases. *Kushta Upadravas* are as following:

- *Prasravana*
- *Angabheda*
- *Patana Anyangavayavanam*
- *Trushna*
- *Jwara*

- *Atisara*
- *Daha*
- *Dourbalya*
- *Arochaka*
- *Avipaka*

#### **Pathya-Apathya**

*Pathya* is that which is not beneficial to the *Srotas* and is *Priya* for *Manas*. *Pathya Sevana* along with medicine will help in easy and speedy recovery of the disease.

**Pathya** - *Laghu Anna, Tikta Shaka, Bhallataka, Triphala, Nimbayukta Anna* and *Ghrita, Purana Dhanya, Jangala Mamsa, Mudga, Patola*. For *Pana, Snana* and *Parisheka Khadira Kashaya* is advised.

**Apathya** - According to *Acharya Sushruta, Mamsa, Vasa, Dugdha, Dadhi, Taila, Kulatha, Masha, Nishpava, Ikshu, Amla, Virudha Ahara, Adhyasana, Ajeerna, Vidahi* and *Abhishyandi* are said as *Varjya*. *Acharya Charaka* says *Guru, Amla, Payas, Dadhi, Anupamamsa, Matsya, Guda, Tila* as *Apathya*.

#### **Chikitsa**

The skin diseases are long time consuming, easily not curable and require patience to take medication for longer duration. *Kushta Roga* cannot occur without the vitiation of *Tridoshas*.

Since the disease manifestation starts from the *Nidana*, first line of treatment should be *Nidana Parivarjana*. It stops in the further progression of the diseases by restricting the vitiation of *Doshas*.

The therapy which aims at radical removal of causative morbid factors is called as *Samshodhana*.

According to *Acharya Sharangadhara, Kushta Roga* occurs due to *Dosha Bahulyata*. These *Doshas* are *Tiryagami* and very difficult to treat by *Shamana Aushadhi*.

*Acharya Vagbhata* says that, *Snehapanam* is given to the *Kushta Rogi* in the *Purvarupa Avastha*.

*Acharya Charaka* states that, in *Vata Dosh Pradhana Kushta*, one should first administer *Virechana* and then give *Niruha Basti* with *Madhuphaladi Sidha Taila*.

*Kushta* is *Tridoshajanya Vyadhi*, therefore first predominant *Doshas* should be treated and then *Anubhandha Doshas*. Periodical advice of *Panchakarma* procedures indicates the extent of the *Dosha* involvement in the *Kushta Roga*. *Shodhana Karmas* are indicated in *Bahudoshaavastha*. *Vamana Karma* is indicated for *Kaphapradhana* and *Doshoklesa Kushta* <sup>[5]</sup> in *Charaka Chikitsasthana*. For this purpose, *Raktamokshana* is done at every six months, *Virechana* is to be done at every one month and *Vamana* is to be given every 15 days. *Shamana* therapy is very useful in treatment of *Kushtha*. After completing the *Shodhana Karma*, *Shamana Chikitsa* is indicated to pacify the remaining *Doshas*. In present life style when people do not have enough time from their busy schedule for *Shodhana* therapy in such cases *Shamana* therapy is to be advised. Charaka has described *Shamana* therapy with *Tikta* and *Kashaya Dravyas*.

*Shamana Aushadhi* is more effective, when it is administered after *Samshodhana*. The use of external therapy is also important in *Kushtaroga* since the *Sthanasamasraya* and *Vyaktasthana* is *Twacha*. The importance of external therapy can be understood by the references of much different *Lepa* yoga in the classics.

## DISCUSSION

Dermatological disorders described in modern medicine many be compared to *Kushtha Roga*. It is considered as one of the most chronic disorder which is very difficult to cure. Dietetic, behavioural, environmental, genetic, and immunologic factors appear to play an important role in the pathogenesis of *Kushtha Roga* including psoriasis. 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. The disease most commonly manifests on the skin of the elbows, knees, scalp, lumbosacral areas, intergluteal clefts, and glans penis. In up to 30% of patients, the joints are also affected. *Kapha* disturbance leads to immunological variations which favour the development of psoriasis. Due to

*Pitta* disturbance, there is a development of hyperproliferation of the keratinocytes in the epidermis. An increase in the epidermal cell turnover rate is because of vitiated *Vata*. Therefore, psychological stress due to any cause directly or indirectly leads to negative impact on *Mana*, which in turn leads to initiation / exacerbation of pre-existing skin disease. Several studies on psoriasis revealed that there is a strong relation exists between the psychological stress and psoriasis.

## CONCLUSION

*Kushtha* is one of the oldest known diseases to mankind. It is described as one of the most chronic disease in Ayurvedic system of medicine. Ayurveda described a wide range of dermatological disorders including its classification, etio-pathogenesis, clinical presentation, prevention and management. Skin is an important organ of communication with the external world, seat of *Saparshanendriya* (organ responsible for touch sensation) and has an eternal relationship with *Mann*. Therefore, any type of psychosocial stress, directly or indirectly involved in the manifestation and or exacerbation of dermatological disorders. In the present era, stress and altered immunity are the major factors responsible for the manifestation of a wide range of dermatological disorders. The pharmacological and non-pharmacological measures for the management in dermatological disorders as described in Ayurveda are good immuno-modulators and anti-stress agent. Therefore, these measures, when used properly are cost effective and provide management in natural way with no or adverse effects.

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**How to cite this article:** Dr. Rozy Sharma, Dr. Manjunatha Adiga. Review on the disease Kustha and its management in Ayurvedic literature. J Ayurveda Integr Med Sci 2021;2:59-64.

**Source of Support:** Nil, **Conflict of Interest:** None declared.

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