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Viruddh Aahar role as an etiological cause of Skin Diseases

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ABSTRACT

Aahar is one of the *Trayo-Upstambha* (Aahar, Nidra, Brahmacharya). Healthy diet is the key of healthy, long and disease-free life. It is well said that right kind of food is the most important single factor in the promotion of health and the wrong kind of food is the most important single factor in the promotion of disease. We don't need a bag full of medication to heal our body; all we need is to focus on what type of diet we should consume. If healthy food consumed and metabolized properly, it improves the quality and span of life. Due to fast paced life, there has been a major shift in diet pattern and increase in consumption of incompatible food. The substances which are contrary to *Sharir Dhatus* behave opposite to them. This antagonism may be in terms of properties, combination, processing, place, time, dose etc. or natural composition. 'Viruddh Aahar' is considered as the incompatible food i.e., the wrong combination of food which when consumed can cause disturbances in the normal physiological functioning and metabolism of body starting at the molecular level. In this paper we are going to infer the result that consumption of *Viruddh Aahar* can cause *Rakta Dushti* in human body. Also, how we can analyze it from the modern point of view through the concept of free radicals.

Key words: *Viruddh Aahar, Rakta Dushti, Pitta Dosh, free radicals, oxidative stress*

INTRODUCTION

Etymologically *Aahar* word stands for to eat food, or whichever thing is consumed or eaten is considered as *Aahar*. Food should be consumed in accordance with our *Agni*. We should consume *Aahar* in accordance of our *Agni*, which differ from person to person. Because *Agni* is responsible for food being digested and assimilated at different levels.

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A healthy diet is a diet that maintains or improves overall health. A balanced diet can be defined as one which contains variety of foods in such quantities and proportion that the need for energy, amino acid, vitamins, minerals, fats, carbohydrates and other nutrients are adequately met for maintaining health, vitality and general well-being and also makes a small provision for extra nutrients to withstand short period of starvation.^[1] This definition explains the importance of quantity of *Aahar* in daily life that should be consumed for healthy living. But concept of quality is somewhat lost in these lines. Drastic changes in the lifestyle have also brought about changes in the dietary habits of people. These days consumption of *Viruddh Aahar* is one of such commonly seen dietary habits.

There can be disturbances in normal physiological functions of human body if right combination food is not consumed. These physiological disturbances are caused due to following improper methods of food intake i.e., *Samshan, Adhyashan, Vishamashan* or by the consumption of *Viruddh Aahar*.

Starting with most common example i.e., a cup of tea which is a day starter in every household. Tea contains flavonoids called catechins, which have many beneficial effects on the heart. When milk is added to tea, then a group of proteins in milk, called caseins, interact with the tea to reduce the concentration of catechins. So, tea and milk together should be avoided.^[2]

Tea contains anticoagulant compounds called coumarins. When combined with garlic (that also has anticlotting properties), they may increase the risk of bleeding.^[3] Deep frying of potatoes can develop toxic substances, such as acrylamide, which can prove to be carcinogenic.^[4]

Concept of Viruddh Aahar

According to text 'the substances which are conflicting to *Deha Dhatus* behave opposingly (antagonism) to them. This antagonism may be in terms of properties, combination, processing, place, time, dose etc. or natural composition.^[5]

The unwanted effect of wrong combinations of food is not limited up to gastrointestinal tract only but may hamper the major systems of the body.

Viruddh Aahar can be understood as antagonist food, incompatible food or incorrect combination of food. Broadly saying this *Viruddh Aahar* may interfere in the digestion process in the body and produce indigestion or cause *Agnimandya*.

The entire *Aahar* or *Aushadhi*, which excites the *Dosha* but does not eliminate them out of the body, becomes harmful and hence termed as *Viruddh Aahar*.^[6]

The literal meaning of word *Viruddha* is opposite. It sounds that the food combination of certain type of food may have^[7]

- Opposite properties
- Opposite activities on the tissues
- May exert some unwanted effect on the body when processed in a particular form
- May exert undesirable effects, when combined in certain proportion

- May have unwanted effect if consumed at wrong time.

Viruddha Ahara can lead to inflammation at a molecular level. Number of food incompatibilities are mentioned in *Ayurveda* texts, by *Acharya Charaka & Sushruta*. These types of dietary combinations mentioned in the text are not observable in present time. We have to identify new food incompatibilities, which are used today in day-to-day life as per *Ayurvedic* perspective. Such food combinations can prove harmful, which may be imparting its problematic effects on immune system, cellular metabolism, growth hormone, and Dehydroepiandrosterone sulfate (DHEAS).^[8]

The unwanted side effects can emerge inside the body when two or more types of foods are consumed together. Such reactions can be less important but in long term, it can be fatal due to precipitating serious side effects.

There are 18 types of *Viruddh* mentioned by *Acharya Charaka*, which are explained below:

1. *Desh Viruddh: Dhanwan / Jangal / Maru Bhoomi* → *Ruksha & Tikshna Dravya*
Anoop Desha → *Snigdha & Sheetala Dravya*^[9]
2. *Kaala Viruddh: Sheeta Kaala* → intake of *Sheetala & Ruksha Aahar/ Aushadh*
Ushna Kaala → intake of *Katu & Ushna Aahar/ Aushadh*^[10]
3. *Agni Viruddh: Intake of Aahar* opposite to functioning of four types of *Agni*^[11]
4. *Matra Viruddh: Intake of Madhu & Ghrita* in equal quantity^[12]
5. *Satmaya Viruddh: Person who has adapted to Katu Rasa & Ushna Virya Aahar*, intake of *Madhura Rasa & Sheeta Virya*^[13]
6. *Dosha Viruddh: Intake of Aahar/ Aushadh* similar to *Dosha*^[14]

7. *Samskar Viruddh*: During *Samskara* if *Aahar* turns into *Visha*^[15]

E.g., in the case of the peacock's flesh roasted on a spit made of a stick of the castor plant^[16]

8. *Virya Viruddh*: When *Sheeta Virya* and *Ushna Virya* substances combined together are taken^[17]

9. *Kostha Viruddh*: *Kroor Kostha* → Taking food in less quantity or *Manda Virya Aahar*^[18]

Mridu Kostha → Taking food in large quantity or *Guru Dravya*^[19]

10. *Avastha Viruddh*: *Shrama, Vyavaya or Vyayama* → *Vatavardhaka Aahar*

Nidra, Aalasya → *Kaphavardhaka Aahar*^[20]

11. *Krama Viruddh*: When one takes food before *Mala Mutra Tyaga* and without appetite or excessive hunger^[21]

12. *Parihar Viruddh*: *Ushna Aahar* is taken after intake of *Varah Mans*^[22]

13. *Upchara Viruddh*: Intake of *Sheeta Aahar Aushadhi* after *Ghrita Sevan*^[23]

14. *Paka Viruddh*: Cooking on damaged or bad fuel or if the grains are uncooked, over-cooked or burnt^[24]

15. *Sanyog Viruddh*: *Amla Rasa* with *Dugdha Sevan*^[25]

16. *Hridaya Viruddh*: Intake of unliked things^[26]

17. *Sampad Viruddh*: When *Rasa* in *Aahar/Aushadhi* is *Ajata Rasa, Atikranta Rasa* or *Vipanna Rasa*^[27]

18. *Vidhi Viruddh*: When the *Aahar Vidhi Vidhan* is not followed^[28]

Above mentioned *Viruddh* leads to occurrence of diseases such as *Shandya, Andhya, Visarpa, Dakodar, Visphotaka, Unmada, Bhagandara, Murcha, Mada, Adhmana, Galagraha, Pandu, Aama Visha, Kilasa, Kustha, Grahani Gada, Shotha, Amlapitta, Jwara, Peenasa, Santana Dosha* & even *Mrityu*.^[29]

Table 1: Involvement of various system in diseases

Name of disease	System involved / <i>Dhatu</i> / <i>Strotas</i>
<i>Shandya</i>	<i>Shukra</i> / Reproductive system
<i>Andhya</i>	<i>Annavaha</i>
<i>Visarpa</i>	<i>Raktavaha</i>
<i>Dakodar</i>	<i>Udakavaha</i> / Gastrointestinal system
<i>Visphotaka</i>	<i>Raktavaha Strotas</i>
<i>Unmada</i>	<i>Manovaha</i> / Central nervous system
<i>Bhagandara</i>	<i>Annavaha, Purishvaha</i> / Gastrointestinal system
<i>Murcha</i>	<i>Manovaha</i> / Central nervous system
<i>Mada</i>	<i>Manovaha</i> / Central nervous system
<i>Adhmana</i>	<i>Manovaha</i> / Central nervous system
<i>Galagraha</i>	<i>Annavaha</i> / Gastrointestinal system
<i>Pandu</i>	<i>Kapha Dosh</i>
<i>Aamvisha</i>	<i>Rasavaha,</i>
<i>Kilasa</i>	<i>Annavaha, Rasavaha</i> / Gastrointestinal system
<i>Kustha,</i>	<i>Rasa, Rakta, Mansa</i>
<i>Grahani Gada</i>	<i>Twak, Rakta, Mansa, Ambu</i>
<i>Shotha</i>	<i>Annavaha, Purishvaha</i> / Gastrointestinal system
<i>Amlapitta</i>	<i>Rasa, Rakta, Mansa</i>
<i>Jwara</i>	<i>Rasa, Rakta, Mansa</i>
<i>Peenasa</i>	<i>Annavaha Strotas/</i> Gastrointestinal system
<i>Santana Dosha</i>	<i>Rasavaha Strotas</i>
<i>Mrityu</i>	<i>Pranavaha Strotas</i>
	<i>Shukra</i> / Reproductive system

Common wrong food combinations according to ministry of AYUSH^[30]

1. Milk is not compatible with fruits, melons, sour fruits, and bananas. It should not be consumed with salty items such as samosa/paratha/khichadi. Don't boil it with tea.
2. Grains should not be consumed with Tapioca and Fruits.
3. One should not consume fruits and milk with vegetables.
4. Beans are the wrong combination with eggs, milk, fish, fruits, yogurt, and meat.

5. Yogurt is to be avoided with cheese, hot drinks, sour fruits, milk, mangoes, nightshades, beans, eggs, and fish.
6. Fat and proteins are mismatched foods as they need different digestive juices.
7. Cheese cannot be paired with eggs, fruits, hot drinks, milk, beans, and yogurt.
8. Proteins are not compatible with starches and their collective consumption may result in delayed digestion.
9. Nightshades (tomato, potato, etc) are not compatible with fruits like cucumber, melon, and dairy products.
10. Milk, yogurt, tomatoes, and cucumber are incompatible with lemons.

Rakta Dhatu

Rakta is one of the seven Dhatu which plays an important role in providing ‘Jeevana’ to the human body. Rakta is formed from its preceding Rasa Dhatu and its Mala is Pitta.

Consumption of healthy food leads to formation of healthy Aahar Rasa, which is further responsible for the formation of ‘Shudha Rakta’.^[31]

Blood is essential to life, and has several functions. First it functions to transport oxygen and nutrients to the tissues from pulmonary and digestive systems while taking away waste products such as carbon dioxide from the tissues to the pulmonary system. In doing so, it performs an important role in maintaining the pH of the body fluids. Other waste products that are removed from tissues by the blood include lactic acid from muscles, as well as urea and ammonia. It is also important for maintaining body thermal equilibrium as well as in immunity.^[32]

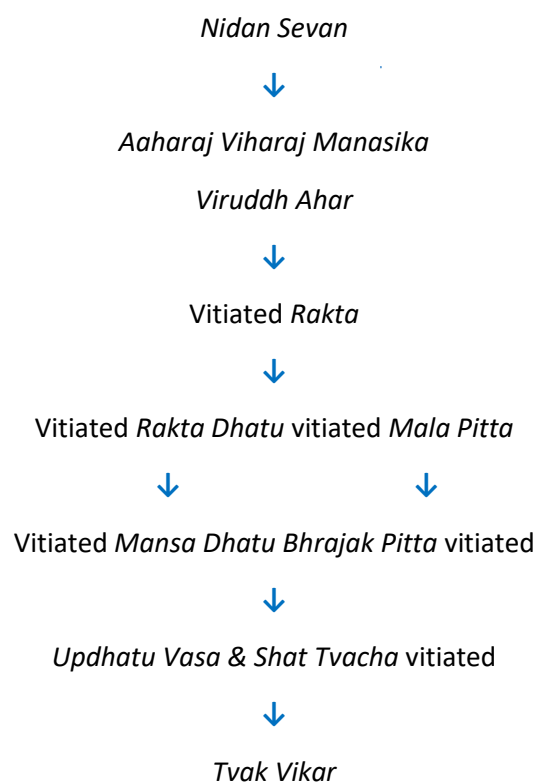
All the following factors lead to vitiation of Rakta Dhatu which is the main trigger in causing various diseases out of which following are the skin diseases^[33]

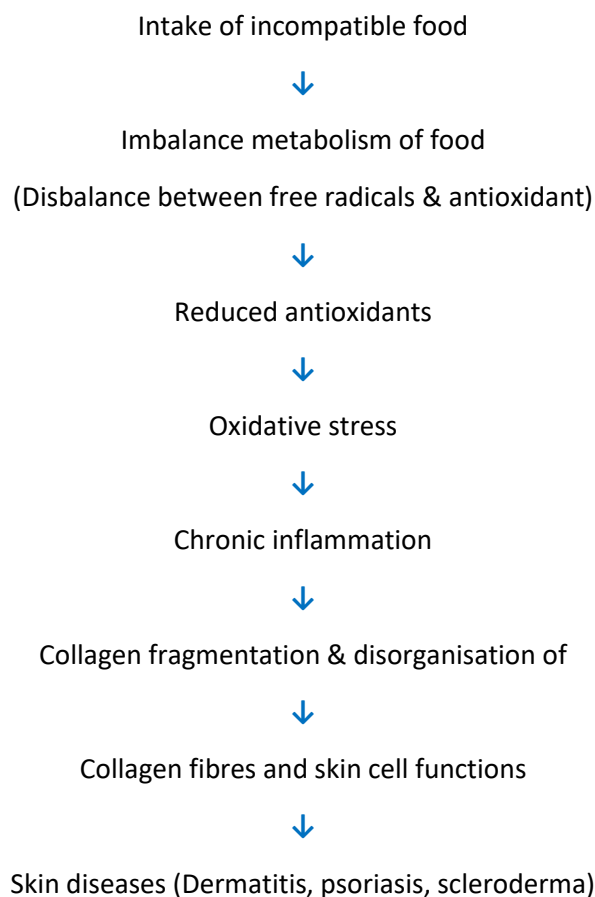
Visarpa, Pidika, Kotha, Charmadala, Kustha, Santapa, Kandu, Vaivarnya.

Table 2: Factors affecting vitiation of Rakta Dhatu.

Aaharj Nidan ^[34]	Viharaj Nidan ^[35]	Other ^[36]
Madira Sevan - Dushta, Bahu, Tikshna, Ushna	Divaswapna after Drava, Snigdha, Guru Sevan	Sharadakala
Atirasa Sevan - Lavana, Kshara, Amla, Katu	Krodha, Aatapanalsevan	
Kulatha, Masha, Nishpav, Til Tail, Pindalu, Mulak, Harita Varga	Chardivega Pratighata	
Mansa Sevan - Jalaj, Anoop, Bilshaya, Prasah	Abhighata	
Dadhi, Kanji, Mastu, Sattu, Sauveer	Krodha	
Viruddh Aahar, Klinna/ Pooti	Aatap & Vayu Sevan	
Aahar, Ajirna, Adhyshana	Santapa	

Flow chart 1: Samprapti of Tvak Vikar w.r.t. Rakta Dushti



Flow Chart 2: Modern Aspect of Skin Diseases**Pathophysiology of skin diseases**

According to *Ayurveda*, intake of *Viruddh Aahar* may lead to improper formation of *Aahar Rasa*. *Rakta* is the next succeeding *Dhatu* to *Rasa Dhatu*. Vitiating *Rasa Dhatu* leads to formation of the vitiating *Rakta*. Vitiating *Rakta* further leads to formation of its vitiating *Mala Pitta*. *Pitta Dosha* is connected to skin through *Bhrajaka Pitta*. *Bhrajaka Pitta* is one of the five types of *Pitta* which reside in the skin. And maybe one of the leading causes of skin diseases due to intake of *Viruddh Aahar*.

Coming to modern criteria, it might not follow a common pathophysiology of skin disease but it might be understood through oxidative stress.

After the intake of the *Viruddh Aahar* it might not follow the normal assimilation process. Free radicals are the end product of normal metabolism. There might be an increase in free radical chain reaction which can eventually disrupt and damage the whole cell. It may disrupt the balance between free radicals

and antioxidants. Antioxidants are molecules in cells that prevent free radicals from taking electrons and causing damage to the cell. This leads to oxidative stress inside the cell. An increased number of oxidants, exceeding the antioxidant defence system capacity are called oxidative stress, leading to chronic inflammation, which, in turn, can cause collagen fragmentation and disorganisation of collagen fibres and skin cell functions, and thus contribute to skin diseases including cancer.^[37]

A diet-based questionnaire, cross sectional study was conducted in the skin outpatient department, which clearly showed the importance of diet in the skin diseases. Scores for consumption of incompatible diet and dietary habits were found to be higher in acne and psoriasis patients compared to controls.^[38]

Repeated administration of the combination of *Kadaliphala* (banana) and cow milk showed statistically significant increase in SGOT & urea. There was a marked variation in SGOT, urea and creatinine levels and alteration in sections of heart, liver, and spleen are indicative of mild toxicological implications of the combination of banana and milk.^[39]

And continued use of this combination may lead to harmful effects in future.

Immediate negative affects might not be visible to us. *Viruddh Aahar* can be a hidden factor behind many diseases.

DISCUSSION

In *Ayurveda* the concept of *Ashraya Ashrayi Bhava* explains the reason why vitiation of *Rakta Dhatu* leads to formation of vitiating *Pitta*. Both *Rakta* and *Pitta* possess *Ushna* and *Aagneya Guna*. Therefore, an increment in the *Rakta Dhatu* will directly lead to an increment in the *Pitta Dosha* and vice versa. Ultimately it will be a causative factor to both *Raktja Vikara* and the *Pittaja Vikar*.

In modern oxidative stress is the leading cause of not only various skin diseases like dermatitis, psoriasis or scleroderma but also a leading factor in causing rheumatoid arthritis, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, atherosclerosis and many more.

There are 18 types of *Viruddh Aahar* mentioned in *Charaka Samhita*. At present times these 18 *Viruddh Aahar* which are more specifically the 18 factors which can cause disturbances in the body. Following conclusions can be drawn:

1. We should consume food according to *Desha & Kala* i.e., a wide variety of dietary patterns can be observed in different parts of India due to its vast variety of vegetations & availability.

People follow different dietary patterns in winter season & summer season. For e.g., diet rich in fluid and electrolytes is consumed in summer season to prevent dehydration.

Similarly in winter season, a diet rich in protein and carbohydrates as source of energy for heat production in the body is required.

2. *Agni, Matra, Satmaya, Dosha & Koshta* differ from person to person. So, food is to be eaten on the basis of above factors.

3. *Sansakar* is defined as *Guna-Antardhanam* i.e., changes in the food is brought through *Jala*(water), *Agni, Shuchi*(cleaning), *Manthan, Desha, Kala, Bhavna, Kala-Apkarsha & Bhajan*. These changes can have both aspect positive as well as negative. It depends on us to carry out the *Sanskar* of food properly.

In a study, boiling destroyed vitamin C in almost all the samples, with nutrient retention ranging from 0 to 73.86%; the greatest loss was found in boiled chard. Blanching also destroyed vitamin C in the samples, indicated by the retention that ranged from 57.85 to 88.86%, with the greatest loss found in blanched spinach. Steaming treatment significantly reduced the retention of vitamin C in all vegetables except broccoli; retention ranged from 0 to 89.24%. Microwaving had less of an impact on vitamin C content, with high retention (> 90%) observed for spinach, carrots, sweet potato, and broccoli. Steaming and microwaving retained higher concentrations of vitamin C than boiling because of the reduced contact with water at relatively low temperatures. Using minimal cooking

water and cooking for shorter time periods should result in higher vitamin C retention^[40]

4. Consuming *Ushna & Sheeta Virya* Food (hot & cold) can easily cause indigestion in the stomach. This will stimulate gastric vasoconstriction, slow down gastrointestinal peristalsis, and reduce the secretion of digestive juice; when the temperature drops, the activity of digestive enzymes will also decrease.

5. After doing rigorous activities like *Vyayama* or *Maithuna*, it is required to eat nourishing diet rather than *Vatavardhak Aahar* which may further cause weakness.

6. *Paka Viruddh* instruct to cook food hygienically & properly. Humans become infected after consuming raw or uncooked, infected meat, or food and water contaminated with bacteria or viruses leading to various diseases like neurocysticercosis, food poisoning or cholera etc.

7. *Sanyog Viruddh* is understood through combining milk and amla rasa. During digestion of milk process, coagulation of casein micelles and milk fat globules can occur due to pepsin-induced hydrolysis of the proteins that provide steric stabilization. The gastric coagulation leads to delayed gastric emptying of casein and fat. Taking milk with *Amla Rasa* can aggravate the above process.^[41]

8. When a person smells or eats favorite foods salivation is greater than when disliked food is smelled and eaten. The appetite area of brain the brain, which partially regulates these affects, is located in proximity to the parasympathetic centers of the anterior hypothalamus. Overall, it aids in better digestion.^[42]

CONCLUSION

Consumption of *Viruddh Aahar* can be considered as the one of the causative factors in causing skin diseases. To know how the pathophysiology of skin disease takes place may help in approaching a different pathway for treatment. It can be treated at various

level starting from the intake of right kind of food. After the occurrence of disease, it can be treated at the *Dosha* level aur *Dhatu* level. Treatment can be carried out in accordance to vitiated *Rakta or Pitta Dosha*. Or for future prevention of skin disease, we can start right from the intake of correct combination of foods and stopping the disease at the first stage of *Kriya Kala*. Because *Nidaana Parivarjan* is always the first step in preventing any disease which justifies the aim of *Ayurveda* that is the protection of the health of a healthy being. *Ayurveda* is also a science of healing. It is something where even *Aahar* is considered as source of healing without getting involved with the drugs if taken care at right stage. Importance of way of healthy eating should be introduced among the human population. Modern days food incompatibility also needs to be further explored as there has been a wide change in the dietary of the people. *Viruddh Aahar* is not only about eating wrong kind of food. At the same time it teaches us how food should be cooked or when it shouldn't be consumed. And the 10 *Aahar Vidhi Vidhan of Aahar* need to be followed. To summarize we should try to improve our diet and avoid these incompatibilities as much as possible for ailment free life or at least reduce it to some extent through healthy dietary patterns.

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