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Ayurvedic management of Psoriasis (*Kitibha*) - A Case Report

Anand R Jalawadi¹, Dija T Lawrence², Girish K J³, Tapas Brata Tripathy⁴

^{1,2}Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Kayachikitsa, Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College of Ayurveda and Hospital, Hassan, Karnataka, India.

^{3,4}Professor, Department of Kayachikitsa, Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College of Ayurveda and Hospital, Hassan, Karnataka, India.

ABSTRACT

Psoriasis is a chronic disorder which is commonly encountered in day-to-day clinical practice. It is a chronic non-communicable proliferative autoimmune skin disease which affects 2-3% of worldwide population. Psoriasis is a disorder of hyperkeratinisation characterized by sharply defined erythematous-squamous lesions. WHO considers skin diseases as Psycho-cutaneous diseases. Psoriasis has resemblance with *Kitibha Kushta* in *Ayurveda*. *Kitibha Kushta* is one of the *Kshudra Kushta*, characterized by skin manifestation having the symptoms *Shyava Varna* (blackish brown discoloration), *Kinakhara Sparsha* (rough in touch), *Parushatva* (hard) and *Kandu* (itching). Due to *Bahudosh*a involvement, *Shodhana* (purifying therapy) followed by *Shamana* (palliative therapy) plays an important role in the management of *Kushta*. **Case Summary:** A 35 years old male patient approached with the complaints of diffuse scaly lesions over scalp, bilateral upper and lower limbs, abdomen and back associated with itching and powdery appearance since 8 years. He was diagnosis with Psoriasis (*Kitibha*) on the basis of signs and symptoms. The patient was given with *Deepana*, *Pachana*, *Virechana*, *Kushtahara Shamana Aushadis* (Oral medications) and *Kumarabharana Rasa* as line of management. Significant improvement was observed after 1 month of treatment in terms of PASI Score.

Key words: *Ayurveda*, *Psoriasis*, *Kitibha*, *Virechana*, *Shamana*.

INTRODUCTION

Psoriasis is a chronic inflammatory skin disease that affects 2-3% of the world population.^[1] It is considered as a genetic, immunological and systemic disorder. The prevalence of psoriasis in India varies from 0.5–1.5%.^[2] It is characterized by the presence of well-defined, erythematous, scaly papules and plaques that occur

especially over the scalp, ears, genitalia, and skin over bony prominences. The most common type of psoriasis is plaque psoriasis. The typical lesion is a raised, well-demarcated erythematous plaque of variable size. In untreated disease, silver/white scale is evident with positive Auspitz sign. The most common sites are the extensor surfaces, notably elbows and knees, and the lower back.^[3] Moreover, Psoriasis affects mental health and people suffering from the disease experience social stigma.^[4]

Psoriasis (*Kitibha*) is one among the *Kshudra Kushta* (skin disorder), the signs and symptoms of which are similar to Plaque psoriasis. It is one of the *Rakta Pradoshaja Vikara* caused by vitiation of *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha* predominantly and is characterized by *Shyava Varna* (blackish brown discoloration), *Kinakhara Sparsha* (rough in touch), *Parushatva* (hard), *Rukshata* (dry),^[5] *Ugra Kandu* (itching).^[6] *Kushta* manifests due to vitiation of *Sapta Dushya* viz. *Tridosha*, *Twak*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa* and *Lasika*. The

Address for correspondence:

Dr. Anand R Jalawadi

Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Kayachikitsa, Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College of Ayurveda and Hospital, Hassan, Karnataka, India.

E-mail: anandralawadi73@gmail.com

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treatment is to be carried out according to the predominance of *Dosha* based on *Roga* and *Rogi Bala* (Strength of disease and patient). In *Kushtha* repeated *Shodhana* is indicated due to *Bahu Doshavastha* in order to eliminate the aggravated *Dosha*.

PATIENT INFORMATION

A 35-year-old male patient approached Kayachikitsa outpatient department of SDM Ayurveda Hospital, Hassan with complaints of diffuse dry scaly lesions over scalp, bilateral upper and lower limbs, abdomen and back associated with moderate itching and powdery appearance since 8 years, aggravated since 1 month. Clinical signs and symptoms like *Shyaava* (Blackish brown colour), *Kina Khara Sparsha* (rough in touch), *Parusha* (hard) and *Kandu* (itching) were present. He underwent allopathic treatment from which he got symptomatic relief. But on discontinuing the medication, symptoms re-occurred and he came for further management.

Associated complaints

He had disturbed sleep occasionally due to itching.

Personal history

Habits: taking curd, spicy, oily food, and more non-veg.

Timeline

Table 1: Timeline of the Case

Date	Relevant medical history
May 2015	Acute onset of well-defined, elevated skin margin with scales over B/L legs associated with itching
	Gradual development of skin lesions over other body parts
August 2015	Lesions over scalp, dryness and scales on scratching
September 2015	Disturbed sleep due to itching and lesions
October 2015	Started allopathic treatment (corticosteroids and ointment)

February 2023	Symptoms reappeared after discontinuing medication. Consulted in outpatient department of SDM Hospital and admission advised.
April 2023	Admitted in SDM Ayurvedic Hospital

Clinical findings

On general examination a male patient with moderately nourished having normal vital signs. Other parameters like pallor, icterus, central cyanosis, oedema, digital clubbing and local lymphadenopathy were absent. On Integumentary system examination, distribution of the skin lesion was over scalp, bilateral upper limb and lower limb, abdomen and back. Type of lesion was secondary scaly lesions with diffused distribution. The colour was blackish brown associated with rough surface and itching. Tests like Candle grease and Auspitz sign were positive.

Laboratory parameters

Hb: 13.4 gm%, E.S.R: 20 mm/hr, and other parameters within normal limit.

Diagnostic Assessment

Raktavaha Srotas (Channels involved in blood circulation) involved with symptoms like *Vyanga* (pigmentation), *Kushta* (Skin lesion).^[7]

Psoriasis - Skin lesions are erythematous, sharply demarcated papules and rounded plaques covered by silvery micaceous scale and are variably pruritic.^[4] The *lakshanas* (symptoms) are *Shyava* (Blackish brown colour), *Kina Khara Sparsha* (rough in touch), *Parusha* (hard) and *Kandu* (Itching).^[6,7]

Diagnosis - Plaque psoriasis (*Kitibha*)

Therapeutic intervention

Table 2: Timeline of intervention

Date	Intervention	Dose
23/4/23 to 25/4/23	<i>Sarvanga Udwartana</i> followed by <i>Dhanyamla Parisheka</i> <i>Jeeraka Kashaya</i>	OD 50ml-0-50ml after food

26/4/23 to 28/4/23	<i>Snehapana with Murchita Gritha</i>	Day 1 - 50 ml at 7AM Day 2 - 100 ml at 7AM Day 3 - 180 ml at 7AM
29/4/23 and 30/4/23	<i>Sarvanga Abhyanga with Marichadi Taila followed by Dhanyamla and Dashamoola Qwatha Parisheka.</i>	OD
1/5/23	<i>Sarvanga Abhyanga with Marichadi Taila followed by Dhanyamla and Dashamoola Qwatha Parisheka.</i> <i>Virechana with Trivrit Lehya - Triphala Kashaya -</i>	OD 80gms 100ml

Total Virechana Vegas were 18. Samsarjana Krama, Pathya Apathya and Nidana Parivarjana was advised.

Table 3: Shamana (Discharge Medicine)

3/5/23	1. <i>Panchatikta Guggulu Gritha</i>	20 ml morning Before food with warm water
	2. <i>Kumarabharana Rasa with honey</i>	1-0-0 after food
	3. <i>Marichadi Taila</i>	External application

Outcomes

Improvements were observed in *Lakshanas* of *Kitibha* and PASI Score after *Shodhana* and *Shamana Chikitsa*.

Table 4: Outcomes

Parameter	Before Treatment	After Shodhana	1 month after treatment
<i>Shyava</i>	Present	Reduced	Reduced
<i>Kinakhara Sparsha</i>	Absent	Reduced	Reduced
<i>Parusha</i>	Present	Reduced	Absent
<i>Ugra Kandu</i>	Present	Absent	Absent
PASI Score	27.1	11.7	3.9



Fig. 1 (a&b): Picture showing before the intervention of case

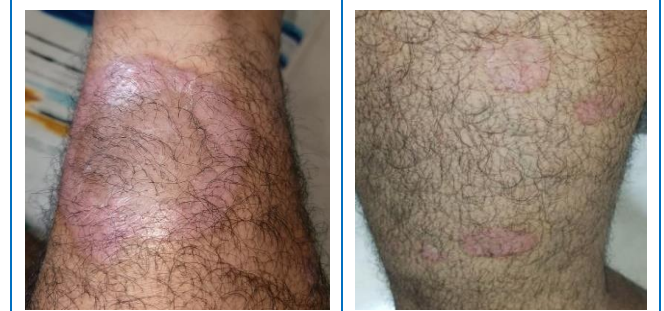


Fig. 2 (c&d): Picture showing after the intervention of case

DISCUSSION

Psoriasis is an immune-mediated disease, where treatment depends on the type, location, and extent of disease. Most cases of localized, plaque-type psoriasis can be managed with midpotency topical glucocorticoids. *Kitibha* is *Raktapradoshaja vikara* which is caused by the vitiation of *Vata Kapha Doshas*, *Twak*, *Lasika*, *Rakta* and *Mamsa*. *Samshodhana* needs to be performed as *Kushta* is *Bahudoshavstha Vyadhi*. *Acharya Vagbhata* highlighted the significance of *Samshodhana* in *Kushtha* by citing *Virechana* once in a month, *Vamana* once in every 15 days, *Raktamokshana* once in every 6 months and *Nasya* once in every 3 days. *Virechana Karma* is chosen among the *Shodhana* due to the involvement of *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha*. The patient in the current study received *Shodhana*, *Shamana* and *Bahirparimarjana Chikitsa*.

Mode of action of Intervention

Deepana Pachana

Deepana Pachana was done with *Jeeraka Kashaya*. *Jeeraka* by its *Laghu Guna*, *Katu Rasa*, *Katu Vipaka*,

Ushna Veerya does *Kapha Vata hara* and does *Deepana* and *Pachana*.^[8] *Triphala* by its property helps in *Koshta Shuddhi* and *Vatanulomana*.

Udwartana and Dhanyamla Parisheka

Udwartana pacifies the *Kapha Dosha*, does *Sroto Shodhana*, alleviates *Kandu* (itching)^[9] and gives *Twak Prasadana*.^[10]

Parisheka Swedana provides *Mriduta* (Softness), *Laghuta* (lightness) and *Agnideepti* (increase of digestive power) of body. The vitiated *Vata-Kapha* is pacified by *Dhanyamla* due to its *Ushna Guna*.^[11]

Snehapana, Sarvanga Abhyanga and Swedana

Doshas can be brought from *Shakha* to *Koshta* by *Vridhhi* and *Vishyandana*. *Snehana* and *Swedana* help in this aspect and bring the *Dosha* to *Koshta* before *Shodhana*. *Snehapana* is done with *Murchita Ghrita*.

Sarvanga Abhyanga was done with *Marichadi Taila* which is indicated in all types of *Kushta*. Based on the properties of ingredients, *Marichadi Taila* acts as *Kapha Shamaka*, *Kandughna* and *Kushtaghna*.

Virechana

Kitibha Kushta is *Vata Kapha Pradhana Kushta*, for which *Virechana* is suitable treatment. *Virechana Dravya* possesses *Ushna*, *Teekshna*, *Sukshma*, *Vyavayi*, *Vikasi Guna*. *Virechana* was given with *Trivrit Lehya*.

Shamana Chikitsa

Panchatiktaka Ghrita is administered in the morning in empty stomach as *Kitibha* is *Vata Kaphaja* and *Bahudosha Avasta Vyadhi*.^[12] It is *Deepana*, *Pachaka*, *Srotoshodhaka*, *Raktaprasadaka*, *Kandughna*, *Kushtaghna*, *Varnya*. Ghee has anti-inflammatory properties due to components such as linoleic acid, which is helpful in the reduction of inflammation of the skin in psoriasis.^[13]

Kumarabharana Rasa contains *Bhasmas* of *Swarna* (Gold), *Rajata* (Silver), *Pravala* (Coral) and *Churnas* of *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*), *Amalaki* (*Emblica officinalis*), *Shunti* (*Zingiber officinale*), *Pippali* (*Piper longum*), *Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula*), *Vacha* (*Acorus calamus*) and *Yasimadhu* (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*). These

drugs exhibit a wide range of biological activities including immunomodulatory, anti-inflammatory activity. The cumulative actions of these drugs are *Kaphahara*, *Lekhana* (scraping), *Deepana* (digestive stimulant), *Pachana* (digestive), *Anulomana* (carminative), *Balya* (nourishing) and *Rasayana* (rejuvenating) property. *Swarna Bhasma* promotes immunity through phagocytosis.^[14] Gold is one of the noble metals used in continuity to increase the vitality and immunity.^[15] *Swarna Bhasma* helps in rejuvenation and immunomodulation for some chronic diseases.

CONCLUSION

Psoriasis is a relapsing disease. The prevalence of psoriasis is increasing day by day. *Shodhana* is of great importance in *Bahudosha Avastha*. *Shodhana Karma* helps to eliminate the *Doshas* and thus prevents recurrence of the disease. This case study shows significant improvements in terms of skin lesion, roughness, powdery appearance and itching after 1 month of treatment. Hence, it can be concluded that *Kitibha Kushta* can be treated with the *Shodhana*, *Shamana*, *Bahirparimarjana Chikitsa*, *Nidana Parivarjana* and following *Pathyaapathya*.

PATIENT PERSPECTIVE

Patient was satisfied with the treatment in terms of reduced skin lesion, dryness, itching, powdery appearance and improved sleep.

PATIENT CONSENT

Informed consent for publication of this case study has been obtained from the patient.

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