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An overview of *Kushtha* and its management approaches in *Ayurvedic* texts

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ABSTRACT

Our skin serves as a barrier to ward off numerous outside intrusions. The body's skin is the only organ that is easily visible to the eyes. The largest organ and one that is most vulnerable to illness and damage is the skin. Skin is an indicator of normal physiology and expresses emotions due to its visibility. It connects the internal and exterior environments and houses the complexion that preserves personality and beauty. In the society, it helps people develop their own identities. A homeostatic imbalance in the body may be the cause of changes in skin colour. Skin health is influenced by a variety of interconnected elements, including diet, hygiene, circulation, age, immunity, genetics, psychological state, and medication. Skin is referred to as 'Twacha' or 'Charma' in *Ayurveda*. *Twacha* is derived from the Sanskrit term *Dhatu - Twach Samvarne*, which means body covering. The broad categories of *Kushtha* have been used to discuss all skin conditions in *Ayurveda*. The seat of *Sparshajnanendriya*, one of the *Vata Jnanendriyas*, is *Twacha*, and it is the largest of the five *Jnanendriyas*.

Key words: *Kushtha*, *Kitibha Kushtha*, *Psoriasis*

INTRODUCTION

Maha Kushtha and *Kshudra Kushtha* are the two forms of *Kushtha* that are covered in the classical *Ayurvedic* literature. *Maha Kushtha* is divided into seven categories, whereas *Kshudra Kushtha* is divided into eleven. *Kapala*, *Udumbhara*, *Mandala*, *Rushyajihwa*, *Pundarika*, *Sidhma*, and *Kakanaka* make up the *Maha Kushtha*. *Kshudra Kushtha* consists of *Eka Kushtha*, *Charmakhya*, *Kitibha*, *Vipaadika*, *Alasaka*, *Dadru*,

Charmadala, *Paama*, *Visphota*, *Shataru*, and *Vicharchika*. *Shyava Krushna Varna*, *Parushata*, *Kharasparsha*, *Kandu*, *Ghanatwam*, and *Srava* are some of the *Lakshanas* of *Kitibha Kushtha*.

Psoriasis and *Kitibha Kushtha* share many of the same defining features, according to modern science. Skin and joints are both impacted by the illness *psoriasis*. On the skin, it frequently results in reddish scaly patches. *Psoriasis* is a condition that alters a person's typical skin texture and aesthetic appeal, which leads to social stigma and may lower one's self-esteem. One of the most fascinating and puzzling skin disorders is *psoriasis*. It is a papulosquamous skin condition characterised by erythematous-squamous lesions that are clearly defined. *Psoriasis*' precise cause is still unknown, but genetics are thought to play a role. It is renowned for its remission and exacerbation cycles. Climate, streptococcal infection, etc. can cause *psoriasis* to flare up. One of the main triggering elements in the disease's exacerbation is stressed out psychologically. The disease itself may make a patient

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depressed in response, which could make his condition worse. A specific patient's course and prognosis are unpredictable. It's referred to as a *Punarbhavakara Vyadhi* in *Ayurvedic* literature. Psoriasis rarely poses a threat to life. Psoriasis currently has no viable treatments available. PUVA and corticosteroids are the main treatments for psoriasis in contemporary medicine. Serious side effects of these treatments include liver and kidney failure, bone marrow depletion, etc.

Twacha Sharira

Acharya Sushruta revealed how *Twacha* forms in a growing foetus. According to him, *Twacha* grows after ovum fertilisation just like cream does on the top of boiled milk. *Acharya Vagbhata* adopted a similar strategy. One of the *Matruja Bhava* is *Twacha*. *Twacha* development in the foetus will be finished, according to *Vagbhata*, in the sixth month. The creation of *Twacha* as a result of *Paka* of *Rakta Dhatu* by its *Dhatwagni* in the foetus was described by *Vagbhata*. It forms *Paka*, and then dries off to become *Twacha*.

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

Twacha's connection to Dosha-Dushya^[1]

Vata : *Adhishtana* of *Vata* is *Sparshanendriya* and *Adhishtana* of *Samana Vayu* comprises *Swedavaha Srotas*, which is present in *Twacha*.

Pitta : *Bhrajaka-Pitta* type of skin contains *Pitta Dosha*.

Kapha : Although there isn't any concrete proof that the *Kapha Dosha* is the skin's *Adhishtana*, its influence can be seen in the skin's *Mardavata* (softness) and *Snighdhata* (oiliness).

Rasa : The texture of a person's skin can indicate the quality of their *Sara Purusha* (basic constitution). If the skin is *Shaitya* (cool) and *Rukshta* (dry), it suggests a deficiency (*Kshaya*) of *Rasa* (body fluids), while if it is soft and moist, it indicates an excess (*Vrudhi*) of *Rasa*.

Rakta : The function of *Rakta Dhatu* (blood tissue) is described as *Sparsa Jnana* (sense of touch) and *Varna Prasadana* (providing colour). Skin is the *Adhistana* (site) of skin diseases caused by *Rakta Dushti* (blood-related disorders) such as *Kushtha*, *Neelika*, and *Visarpa*, which suggests a relationship between skin and *Rakta Dhatu*.

Mamsa : The *Prasada Bhaga* (nutritive part) of *Mamsa Dhatu* (muscle tissue) forms the six layers of the skin.

Sweda : The function of *Sweda* (sweat) is to maintain the moisture of the body and the softness of the skin. Imbalances in *Sweda Lakshanas* (sweat-related symptoms) can also be manifested in the skin.

Kushtha

Amarakosha claims that the word *Kushtha's* derivation is derived from the root "*Kush*," which denotes that it originates from the inner part. The meaning can be deduced from the look of the impacted *Twacha*, which is caused by the body's *Rakta*, *Lasika*, *Ambu*, and *Tridoshas* becoming vitiated.

Shabdakalpadruma defines *Kushtha* as something which produces contempt and disdain.

The *Kushtha Roga*, according to *Acharya Vagbhata*, is what leads to *Vaivarnya* and *Dushti* in the *Twacha*.

Shabdakalpadruma claims that the meaning of the word "*Kitibha*" is "*Kesa Keeta*."

According to *Monier Williams*, the English translation of the word *kitibha* means "louse" (a parasitic insect that infects human skin and hair and spreads several diseases).

Nidana

There is no explanation of specific *Nidana*^[2] for *Kitibha Kushtha* in the *Ayurvedic* classics. The *Samanya Kushtha Roga Nidana*, which is the general *Nidana* for the *Kushtha Roga*, should be taken into consideration. Studying *Nidana* aids in both therapy planning and revalidation for the current study. *Nidana* falls into the following categories:

Aharaj Nidan

Following improper diet and lifestyle habits (*Mithyahara Vihara*).

1. Consuming excessive amounts of sweet, sour, and oily foods such as honey, yogurt, and oily substances.
2. Consuming excessive amounts of sweet, sour, salty, and oily foods, as well as sesame seeds.
3. Eating spicy and dry foods such as chili and dried fish, along with milk.
4. Consuming milk after consuming sour foods.
5. Consuming sugarcane juice.
6. Overeating.

Viharaj Nidan

1. Daytime sleep (*Diwaswapna*).
2. Sexual intercourse (*Maithuna*).
3. Physical exercise (*Vyayama*).
4. Sexual activity after improper diet (*Ahitasana*) consumption.
5. Suppressing the urge to vomit (*Chardi Vegadharana*).
6. Drinking cold water after experiencing fear, fatigue, or heat exhaustion (*Bhaya, Shrama, Santapa*).

Lakshana

The word "*Lakshana*" is used to describe a *Roga's* distinguishing characteristics. *Lakshana* has the synonyms *Rupa* and *Linga*. On the fifth stage of the *Kriyakala*, also known as the *Vyakta* stage, a *Roga's* *Lakshana*^[3] will appear. There are several *Ayurvedic*

manuscripts that contain the *Lakshanas* of *Kitibha Kushtha*, including the following:

- *Shyav Varna*: The dark complexion (*Shyava Varna*) is due to the presence of *Vata Dosha*.
- *Kharatvam*: Roughness (*Khartvam*) and dryness (*Parusham*) of the skin indicate the involvement of *Vata Dosha*. The roughness can also result in a harsh touch (*Karkasha Sparsha*).
- *Krishna Varna*: The bluish-black colour (*Krishna Varna*) is due to the presence of *Vata Dosha*, which turns the reddish colour (*Aruna Varna*) of the skin into a darker shade.
- *Snigdha*: The term *Snigdha* is contradictory in the context of skin conditions, as it can refer to both oily and moist properties. In the case of excessive *Kleda Guna* (moistness), the skin may appear oily or moist. In *Kitibha* (a skin condition), the predominance of *Kapha Dosha* can cause the skin to appear moist.
- *Srava*: Discharge (*Srava*) from a wound or lesion is due to *Pitta Dosha*.
- *Ugra Kandu*: *Ugrakandu* (severe itching) is due to *Kapha Dosha*.
- *Vridhi*: *Vridhi* (increase in size) of a lesion can occur due to various reasons, including *Dosha* imbalance, infection, or growth.
- *Guru/Dhrudam/Ghana* refers to the thickness of the wound site (*Vrana Sthana*). The phrase "*Prashanthani Cha Puna Punarutpadhyante / Vartate Cha Samutpnnam*" means that the disease tends to recur even after complete disappearance.

Acharya Charaka has listed the symptoms of *Kitibha Kushtha*, which include *Shyava Varna*, *Kharasparsha*, and *Parushata*. Other prominent *Ayurvedic* texts such as *Sushruta*, *Madhavanidana*, *Vagbhata*, *Yogaratanakara*, and *Kasyapa* have also described *Kitibha Kushtha* using the same set of symptoms as mentioned by *Charaka*.

Samprapti

Samprapti is the term for the chain of events starting with the vitiation of the *Doshas* as a result of a

particular *Nidana* and ending with the full-fledged manifestation of the illness following the *Dosha-Dushya Sammurchana*. The understanding of *Samprapti* aids the doctor in comprehending the distinctive characteristics of a sickness, such as the involvement of a certain *Dosha* or *Agni*^[4] etc. If the *Chikitsa* planning is not in accordance with the *Samprapti Ghataks*, it is said to be in vain. *Samprapti* of *Kitibha Kushtha* is being derived here based on *Kushtha Roga* because no detailed *Samprapti* of *Kitibha Kushtha* is mentioned in literature.

Tridoshajanya Vyadhi is *Kushtha*. This *Roga* is thought to require the involvement of multiple *Doshas* in order to materialise. The *Amshamshakalpana* of *Dosha* serves as the foundation for categorising *Kushtha*. *Tridoshas*, *Twak*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, and *Ambu* are the *Kushtha Sapta Dravyas*.

Acharya Charaka asserts that *Nidana Sevana* results in *Prakopa* of *Tridosha*, which then causes the vitiated *Doshas* to get *Ashraya* in *Twak*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, and *Ambu*, creating the *Shaithalyatha* in these *Dhatus*, which results in the manifestation of *Kushtha Roga*. He has also been told that the *Vatadi Doshas* get *Prakopa* and perform *Dushana* of *Twak*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, and *Ambu*, resulting in seven or eleven different forms of *Maha* and *Kshudra Kushtha*, respectively, in *Chikitsasthana*.

Sadhyasadhyata

The *Kushtha Sadhyasadhyata* is mentioned in *Ayurvedic* texts; however, the *Kitibha Sadhyasadhyata* is not explained individually. The status of the *Roga's Sadhya* and *Asadhyata* was discussed by *Acharyas* before they explained *Chikitsa*, which provides doctors with a thorough guide for treatment.

Sadhya Kushtha

Sadhya Kushtha - *Eka Dosholbana Vata-Kapha Pradhanata*, which has only affected *Twak*, *Rakta*, and *Mamsa*, has the chance to fully get back in this state,

Krichrasadhya Kushtha

If the patient has either *Kapha Pitta Mishrita*, *Vata Pitta*, or just one *Pitta Dosha*, there is a slim chance that they will be cured during this *Avastha*.

Yapya Kushtha

The *Rogi* will be free from the *Roga's* sufferings if the *Doshas* are in *Medo Dhatu*, he performs the right *Bheshaja*, and he abides by *Pathya*. *Vyadhi* is likely to relapse after he quits the *Aushadhis* and begins to follow the *Apathya*.

Asadhya Kushtha

If the following characteristics are present, such as *Sarva Lingayukta*, *Abala*, *Trushna*, *Daha*, *Santhagini*, the existence of *Jantu*, *Doshas* that have attained *Asthi*, *Majja*, and *Shukra Dhatus*.

Updrava

Upadravas might happen before the disease has fully shown or while the sickness is still active. The following are the *Kushtha Upadravas*:

These are just a few examples of the various names of health conditions such as *Prasravana*, *Angabheda*, *Patana Anyangavayavanam*, *Trushna*, *Jwara*, *Atisara*, *Daha*, *Dourbalya*, *Arochaka*, and *Avipaka*.

Pathya - Apathya

When something is harmful to the *Srotas* but pleasing to the *Manas*, it is known as *Pathya*. Combining *Pathya Sevana* with medication can accelerate the healing process of the disease and minimize discomfort.

Pathya : The recommended dietary regimen includes light food (*Laghu Anna*), bitter greens (*Tikta Shaka*), split chickpeas (*Bhallataka*), a mixture of three fruits (*Triphala*), rice mixed with *neem* leaves (*Nimbayukta Anna*), ghee (*Ghrita*), ancient grains (*Purana Dhanya*), meat from wild animals (*Jangala Mamsa*), mung beans (*Mudga*), and pointed gourd (*Patola*). For drinking (*Pana*), bathing (*Snana*), and sprinkling (*Parisheka*), consumption of *Khadira Kashaya* is suggested.

Apathya : *Acharya Sushruta* suggests avoiding *Mamsa* (meat), *Vasa* (fat), *Dugdha* (milk), *Dadhi* (curd), *Taila* (oil), *Kulatha* (horse gram), *Masha* (black gram), *Nishpava* (green gram), *Ikshu* (sugarcane), *Amla* (sour fruits), *Virudha Ahara* (incompatible food), *Adhyasana* (overeating), *Ajeerna* (indigestion), *Vidahi* (burning sensation), and *Abhishyandi* (mucus-forming foods). On the other hand, according to *Acharya Charaka*,

Guru (heavy food), *Amla* (sour fruits), *Payas* (rice pudding), *Dadhi* (curd), *Anupamamsa* (unwholesome meat), *Matsya* (fish), *Guda* (jaggery), and *Tila* (sesame) should be avoided (considered *Apathya*).

Chikitsa

Skin disorders take a long time to develop, are frequently incurable, and call for patience to take treatment for a longer period. Without the vitiation of *Tridoshas*, *Kushtha Roga* is not possible.

Nidana Parivarjana should be the primary line of treatment because the sickness manifests itself from the *Nidana*. By limiting the vitiation of *Doshas*, it halts the further advancement of illnesses.

Samshodhana is the name of the therapy that tries to eliminate the morbid elements that are to blame.

Acharya Sharangadhara asserts that *Dosha Bahulyata* is the cause of *Kushtha Roga*. *Shamana Aushadhi* finds it extremely challenging to address these *Tiryagami Doshas*.

According to *Acharya Vagbhata*, the *Kushtha Rogi* receives *Snehapanam* in the *Purvarupa Avastha*.

According to *Acharya Charaka*, *Virechana* should be given initially, followed by *Niruha Basti* and *Madhuphaladi Sidha Taila* for *Vata Dosha Pradhana Kushtha*. Since *Kushtha* is a *Tridoshajanya Vyadhi*, it is best to treat the predominant *Doshas* before moving on to the *anubandha Doshas*. Regular *Panchakarma* process advice reveals the degree of *Dosha* participation in the *Kushtha Roga*. *Bahudoshaavastha* mentions *Shodhana Karmas*. In *Charaka Chikitsasthana*, *Vamana Karma* is recommended for *Kaphapradhana* and *Doshoklesa Kushtha*.^[5] *Raktamokshana*, *Virechana*, and *Vamana* are performed every six months, one month, and every fifteen days, respectively, for this reason. The use of *Shaman* is in the treatment of *Kushtha*. It is advised to use *Shamana Chikitsa* to calm the remaining *Doshas* after finishing the *Shodhana Karma*. *Shamana* treatment is recommended in circumstances where people in the modern world do not have enough time in their hectic schedules for *Shodhana* therapy. *Tikta*

and *Kashaya Dravyas' Shamana* therapy has been detailed by *Charaka*.

When used after *Samshodhana*, *Shamana Aushadhi* is more effective. External therapy plays a vital role in treating *Kushtharoga* because the affected areas, *Sthanasamasraya*, and *Vyaktasthana*, are located in the *Twacha* (skin). The traditional literature frequently refers to *Lepa Yoga*, highlighting the significance of external medical care in treating the condition.

DISCUSSION

Modern medical descriptions of dermatological problems sometimes draw comparisons to *Kushtha Roga*. *Kushtha Roga*, including psoriasis, is considered a persistent and challenging illness to treat due to its complex pathophysiology, which is influenced by various factors such as dietary, behavioral, environmental, genetic, and immunologic factors. Psoriasis is an inflammatory condition that leads to excessive proliferation of keratinocytes in the epidermis and an increased rate of cell turnover. Up to 30% of individuals with this condition may experience joint involvement, and it commonly affects the skin in areas such as the elbows, knees, scalp, lumbosacral region, intergluteal clefts, and glans penis. Immunological changes brought on by *Kapha* disruption favour the emergence of psoriasis. Keratinocyte hyperproliferation develops in the epidermis as a result of *Pitta* disruption. Vitiating *Vata* is the cause of an increase in the epidermal cell turnover rate. Therefore, psychological stress resulting from any factor has a negative impact on *Mana*, which in turn causes the onset or exacerbation of an underlying skin condition. Psoriasis and psychological stress have a substantial correlation, according to several research on the condition.

CONCLUSION

One of the first diseases that mankind is aware of is *Kushtha*. It is said to be one of the most chronic diseases in the *Ayurvedic* medical system. A vast variety of dermatological problems were described by *Ayurveda*, including their classification, etiopathogenesis, clinical manifestation, prevention,

and therapy. The seat of the *Saparshanendriya* (organ responsible for touch sensation), the skin is an important organ of communication with the outside world and has an enduring bond with *Mana*. Therefore, any kind of psychosocial stress can contribute to the development or worsening of dermatological disorders, whether directly or indirectly. The emergence of a wide variety of dermatological illnesses today is primarily caused by stress and weakened immunity. The *Ayurvedic* pharmacological and non-pharmacological treatments for dermatological problems are effective immuno-modulators and stress-reducers. Therefore, when implemented properly, these measures are both economical and offer management in a natural manner without any negative effects.

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