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Pemphigus Vulgaris - A pragmatic approach through Panchakarma

Preeti Chaturvedi¹, Nupur Namdeo²

¹Reader, Dept. of Panchakarma, Pandit Khushilal Sharma Govt. Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India.

²Post Graduate Scholar, Dept. of Panchakarma, Pandit Khushilal Sharma Govt. Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India.

ABSTRACT

Blistering disorders are a group of diseases presenting with vesicles and bullae over skin and mucous membrane.^[1] Pemphigus describes a group of chronic bullous eruptions of the skin, where Pemphigus vulgaris is the commonest one.^[2] Which is a life threatening autoimmune mucocutaneous blistering disease with a mortality rate of 5-15%. In *Ayurveda* all the skin disorders are collectively named under the heading of *Kushta*. *Ayurveda Acharyas* have described all the *Kushta* are having the involvement of all the three *Dosha*'s. But the signs, symptoms and the treatment depend on the predominance of the *Dosha* involved. *Visphotaka* and *Agnivisarpa* can be compared to *Pemphigus vulgaris* due to its resemblance in signs and symptoms. This disease needs early and proper treatment to prevent further morbidity or mortality. To control these diseases, generally physicians use corticosteroids and immunosuppressive drugs as adjuvants. Here, an attempt is made to study in detail about the disease *Pemphigus vulgaris* and its understanding through *Ayurveda*. Management of such diseases through *Ayurveda* is rarely reported. A case report of 32yr old male patient presenting with the similar complaints treated with *Vamana* followed by *Virechana Karma* along with *Shaman* drugs is presented in this paper.

Key words: *Pemphigus vulgaris*, Autoimmunity, *Visarpa*, *Visphota*.

INTRODUCTION

The word Pemphigus is derived from the Greek word "Pemphix" which means blister or bubble.^[3] The Pemphigus vulgaris (PV) is a group of highly lethal autoimmune disease. In case of pemphigus, the immune system mistakenly produces antibodies against specific proteins in the skin called desmogleins.^[4] These proteins form the glue that keeps the skin cells attached and intact. When desmogleins

are attacked, skin cells separate from each other and fluids gets collect in-between the layers of skin forming infection and blisters that do not heal. These lesions may occupy a part of body or can spread in the entire body. *Charakacharya* explains in *Chikitsasthana* as they are *Sarvashareeragata* (appear in the whole body), with burning sensation, associated with fever and thirst.^[5] *Vagbhata* explains about *Visphotaka* in *Nidanasthana* having *Tanutvacha* (thin skin at the wound site), with reddish discolouration.^[6] *Sushruta* in *Nidanasthana* explains about *Visphotaka* as, they are associated with *Rakta* and *Pitta*^[7], they look similar to the lesions of a burnt skin, associated with fever. *Madhava Nidana* has explained a separate chapter named after it.^[8] He explains 6 types of *Visphotaka* namely, *Vataja*, *Pittaja*, *Kaphaja*, *Dvandvaja*, *Sannipataja* and *Raktaja*. A similar entity i.e., *Agni Visarpa* which is an extreme *Atyayik Roga* that can prove fatal if left untreated. It is said to be caused by the vitiation of the *Tridoshas* and shows specific variations in the manifestations depending on the *Dosha* predominance. The types of *Visarpa* stated in

Address for correspondence:

Dr. Nupur Namdeo

Post Graduate Scholar, Dept. of Panchakarma, Pandit Khushilal Sharma Govt. Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India.

E-mail: drnupurnamdeo1017@gmail.com

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the classics are *Vataja*, *Pittaja*, *Kaphaja*, *Sannipatika*, *Agni*, *Kardama* and *Granthi Visarpa*.^[9] The *Vishesh Samprapti* varies in accordance with the *Doshas* involved leading to variable manifestations. Pemphigus vulgaris bears a resemblance with to *Agni Visarpa* wherein vitiation of *Vata* and *Pitta* and in turn *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Twak*, and *Mamsa* is the reason of *Lakshanotpatti*. *Prakupit Pitta* and *Rakta* cause *Aaraktata*, *Shotha* and *Pidika*.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To study the effect of *Vamana Karma* followed by *Virechana Karma* in the management of pemphigus vulgaris.
2. To find out the effective *Ayurvedic* management of Pemphigus vulgaris.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Selection and source of patient

For this study, patient was registered from OPD of Panchakarma department and admitted in General IPD ward of Pt. Khushilal Govt. (Auto.) Ayurveda Hospital Bhopal.

Plan of study: The drugs required for *Vamana Karma* and *Virechana Karma* were procured and prepared in *Prakalpa* of *Panchakarma* Theatre in Pt. KLS Govt. Ayurveda Hospital Bhopal.

Duration of study: 40 days

CASE REPORT

A 32yr old male patient came in the hospital (OPD no. 39858, IPD no. 20222863) with the complain of Mouth ulcer (blister), *Pidakas* (eruptions blister) over face and back region since 4 yrs. Associated complain joint pain. The *Pidakas* were *Vedanayukta* (painful) with *Daha* (burning) and there was some pus discharge and *Raga* (redness). Fluid filled bullae all over body were also present, which turned to crusting erosions after getting ruptured during course of healing.

History of Present Illness

Patient was apparently well 3 years back. One day he noticed recurrent episodes of mouth ulcers took some

allopathic medicine and got temporary relief. Also, few blisters over face, trunk and back region so he consulted allopathic doctor he took treatment but there was no improvement in the presenting complain. Patient had tried other alternative medicines, but was not relieved. In February 2022 he went for skin biopsy and was diagnosed with pemphigus vulgaris. So, the Patient was admitted in our hospital to adopt ayurvedic treatment which was planned to go for classical *Vamana* followed by *Virechana Karma* in this autoimmune disease.

Past history: No relevant past history was noted.

Family history: Mother having psoriasis

Personal History

Dietary habits revealed intake of non veg and spicy food, *Viruddha Ahara*, irregular bowel habits. Sleep-disturbed

Vihar - *Diwaswapna*

Aahar - *Virudha Aahar*

General examination

Icterus - absent

Cynosis - absent

Clubbing - absent

BP - 100/60 mmHg

Pulse - 80/min

Astavidha Pareeksha

- *Nadi* - 80 bpm
- *Mala* - *Baddha Kosta*
- *Mutra* - 7-8 times per day and one time at night
- *Jihva* - *Aliptata*
- *Shabda* - *Prakruta*
- *Sparsha* - *Anushna Sheeta*,
- *Drika* - *Prakruta*
- *Shabda* - *Prakruta*
- *Aakruti* - *Madhyam*

Dashavidha Pariksha

1. Prakriti - Vata-Pittaja
2. Vikriti - Dosha-Dushya Samoocchana
3. Sara - Madhyama
4. Samhanana - Madhyama
5. Pramana - Madhyama
6. Satva - Madhyama
7. Saatmya - Madhyama
8. Ahara-Shakti - Aawara
9. Vyayaam Shakti - Aawara
10. Vaya - Madhyama

Local Examination

1. Site of lesions - whole body mainly over face and back region
2. Nature - eruptive blister, painful
3. Shape - irregular
4. Colour - reddish
5. Itching - mild
6. Discharge - present with pus

Investigation

Skin biopsy (16/2/2022) - Skin biopsy was done which showed revealing features suggestive of Pemphigus vulgaris.

17/08/2022

Total cholesterol - 158mg/dl

Triglyceride - 99mg/dl

RBS - 93 mg/dl

SGOT - 17 U/L

SGPT - 20 U/L

26/09/2022

USG (whole abdomen) was done which showed rest and normal. ECG was normal, Chest x-ray (PA view) was done, which showed normal.

Treatment regimen

| Treatment | Dose | Timing | Duration |
|--|---|--|---|
| Deepan Pachana with 1. Dhanyasunthi Churna 2. Panchakola Phanta | 5gm 15ml | Bid Tid | 3 days 3 days |
| Snehpan with Dadimadya Ghrita, orally, empty stomach | Start with 60 ml in increasing dose up to 400ml till Samyak Lakshanas seen | In the morning | 8 days |
| Sarvang Abhyanga with Amritadi Tail and Mridu Vashpa Swedan with Dashmool Kwatha | Q.S | In morning | 2 day |
| Vamana Karma Madanphala Churna Vacha Churna Saindav Lavan Madhu (honey) | In the morning 10 gm 8 gm 6 gm Q.S | Empty stomach after Abhyanga and Swedana | Patient got 6 Vega (Madhyam Shuddhi) after that - Vairachanika Dhoompana done |
| Samsansarjana Karma | | | 5 days |
| After 15 th day of Vaman again Snehapana For Virechana | | | |
| Snehpana with Dadimadya Ghrita orally, empty stomach | Start with 35ml in increasing dose up to 450ml (till Samyak Lakshan seen | In morning | 5days |

| | | | |
|---|---|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Sarvang Abhyanga with Amritadi Tail and Vaspasweda with Dashmool Kwatha | Q.S | In morning | 3 days |
| Virechana Karma Haritaki Kwath Churna, Trivart Kwath Churna, Amaltas Kwath Churna, Kutki Kwath Churna, Draksha each 50 gm | 300ml Virechan Kwath + 100ml Nimba Amratadi Eranda Tail | morning 10 'o' clock | Patient got 15 Vega (Madhyam Shuddhi) |
| Samsarjana Karma | | | 5 days |

DISCUSSION

Pemphigus vulgaris is the common type of pemphigus. It is an acute spreading and fatal skin manifestation. It simulates with the *Lakshanas* of *Visarpa* explained in our classics. *Dushya* such as *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Lasika* and *Twak* are mainly involved in this condition which leads to production of *Anunnata Aashu Shopha* that has *Sarpana Prakruti* along with *Daaha* and *Vedana*. *Agnidagdha Prakara Sphota* is the main characteristic feature of *Agnivisarpa* and the fatality is more when compared to other skin diseases. Person suffers from severe burning sensation and become restless. To be specific the manifestations of pemphigus vulgaris more matches with the clinical presentations of *Agnivisarpa*. *Visphota* is also having a similar manifestation. But it is not as much fatal as that of pemphigus vulgaris.

CONCLUSION

As per the general principle of treatment for this disease, repeated application of *Shodana Karma*, *Shaman Karma* as well is beneficial. The present case study shows that *Vamana Karma* followed by *Virechana Karma* works effectively and can break the pathogenesis of pemphigus vulgaris. This *Ayurvedic*

modality helps to prevent the progression of disease with subside in presenting complaint. The case reported here shows significant regression in the condition in short span of time. Repeated *Shodhana* is needed according to the patient condition to stop the uses of modern antihistamines and corticosteroids.

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