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# A conceptual study on role of *Pracchana* in *Vicharchika* with special reference to Dry Eczema

Madhushree K V<sup>1</sup>, Duragappa H<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Shalyatantra, Government Ayurveda Medical College, Bangalore, Karnataka, India.

<sup>2</sup>Professor, Department of Shalyatantra, Government Ayurveda Medical College, Bangalore, Karnataka, India.

## ABSTRACT

*Vicharchika* (Eczema) has been considered one among 11 *Kshudra Kushtas* by *Brihatrayees*. It is also enumerated under *Kshudra Rogas* by *Sushruta*.<sup>[1]</sup> Features like *Raji* (Excoriations), *Ati Kandu* (Excessive itching), *Ruja* (Pain), *Ruksha* (Dryness), *Arati* (Uneasiness) are said by *Sushruta* which can be clinically correlated to dry eczema. Eczema is not contagious inflammation of the skin characterised by erythema, scaling, dry skin, itching, red to brownish grey patches.<sup>[2]</sup> In *Brihatrayees*, *Rakta Dushti* (Vitiating of blood) has been told as the prime reason for skin diseases for which letting out the vitiated blood gives better relief in symptoms. In *Vicharchika*, there is localized vitiating of blood. Hence *Rakthamokshana* (bloodletting) by *Pracchana* is an effective method of treatment, as *Pracchana* is a mode of *Shastrakrita Raktamokshana* indicated for *Eka Deshastha* (localised) *Twak Vikaras* (Skin disorders).<sup>[3]</sup>

**Key words:** *Vicharchika*, *Pracchana*, Dry Eczema, skin disorder.

## INTRODUCTION

*Vicharchika*, also known as eczematous skin lesions, is considered as *Kshudrakushta* or minor skin disease in *Ayurveda*. It falls under the category of *Raktapradoshaja Vikara*<sup>[4]</sup>, indicating a condition caused by vitiating of blood, with the dominance of *Kapha dosha* as per *Charaka*. However, according to *Susrutha*, it is predominantly *Pitta* in nature and involves features like *Kandu*, *Arti*, *Ruja*, *Rukshata* and *Raji* which is more similar to dry eczema.

Eczema, is a non-contagious inflammation of the skin characterized by inflammation, redness, itching, scaling,

oedema, dry skin, red to brownish grey patches. It can manifest as localized lesions on the skin. The contemporary strategies for managing eczema includes usage of emollients, topical corticosteroids, anti-histamines and immunomodulatory agents.

In *Ayurveda*, management of *Kushta* includes *Shodhana* (Bio purification) based on predominant *Dosha* followed by *Shamanoushadhas* which include *Abhyanga*, *Parisheka*, and *Lepa*. *Rakta Dushti* is one of the prime reasons for skin disease. Hence patients may get relief after letting out the *Dushita Rakta*. Among the various methods of *Raktamokshana*, *Pracchana* comes under *Shastrakrita Raktamokshana*. *Pracchana* is a technique of letting the vitiated blood out of the body from a localised lesion, where blood is in *Pindita Avastha* in the superficial layer of the skin.<sup>[5]</sup> This is done through the artificially made cut wounds in the skin with the help of a sharp, pointed surgical instrument. The indication of *Pracchana* are *Alpa Kushta*<sup>[6]</sup> i.e., mild congregation of vitiated *Doshas*, with *Dushta Rakta* in *Pindita Avastha* (lump form), *Eka Deshastha* (localised region of the skin), *Grathita* (stagnated and coagulated in the layers of skin) etc. In *Pracchana* blood is drained along with the stagnated fluids (*Rasa* and *Laseeka*) rich with the deranged

### Address for correspondence:

Dr. Madhushree K V

Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Shalyatantra,  
Government Ayurveda Medical College, Bangalore, Karnataka,  
India.

E-mail: madhushreekenaje@gmail.com

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*Doshas*. Every cut that is made on the skin drains the area of about one *Angula* i.e. 3/4" around it.<sup>[7]</sup> By removing the vitiated blood through bloodletting, the body's natural balance can be restored, thus alleviating the symptoms of *Vicharchika*.

### DISEASE REVIEW

In *Ayurveda*, all types of skin diseases have been discussed under the broad heading *Kustha* which is further divided as *Maha Kustha* and *Kshudra Kustha*. *Vicharchika* is one among the *Kshudra Kustha*. According to Acharya Charaka, the skin disease where eruptions over the skin appear with dark pigmentation, itching with profuse discharge from lesion is *Vicharchika*<sup>[8]</sup>, whereas as per Acharya Sushruta severe itching, severe pain and dryness is seen is *Vicharchika*.<sup>[9]</sup>

*Vicharchika* is defined as *Visheshena Charchyate Panipadasya Twak Vidaryate Anayaiti Roga Vishesha*. A disease typically characterised with intense itch and breaking of skin specially of hands and feet.<sup>[10]</sup>

### Dosha Pradhanyata in Vicharchika

According to different authors the disease *Vicharchika* is manifested by predominance of different *Doshas*, as explained in the table below.

**Table 1: Dosha Pradhanyata of Vicharchika according to different Acharyas.**

Author	Pradhana Dosha
Sushruta	Pitta
Charaka	Kapha
Vagbhata	Kapha
Madhava	Kapha
Kashyapa	Kapha
Hareeta	Kapha
Bhela	Kapha

### Nidana

- *Mithya Ahara* - *Ahita Ahara*, *Viruddha Ahara*, *Asatmya Ahara*, *Ajeernashana*.

- *Mithya Vihara* - Excessive exposure to heat and cold, suppression of natural urges, Increases mental stress etc.
- *Visha* - Toxic substances
- *Krimi* - microorganisms
- *Beeja Dosha* - Genetic factors etc.

### Purvarupa

- *Asweda* or *Ati Sweda* (loss or excessive sweating at the site of localization of vitiated *Doshas*)
- *Kandu* (Itching)
- *Vaivarnya* (Discoloration)
- *Nistoda* (Pricking pain)
- *Ati Shlakshnata* or *Ati Parushya* (excess rough or excess smooth skin)
- *Paridaha* (Burning sensation)
- *Suptata* (Numbness)
- *Loma Harsha* (Horripilations) etc.

### Rupa

Features of both *Shuska Vicharchika* (Dry eczema) and *Sravi Vicharchika* (Wet eczema) are explained in our classics. *Acharya Charaka* and *Vagbhata* have described *Sravi* type of *Vicharchika* whereas *Sushruta* has explained *Shushka Vicharchika* which are summarized in the below table.

**Table 2: Lakshanas of Vicharchika as per different authors.**

Lakshanas	Sushruta	Charaka	Vagbhata	Bhela	Harita	Kashyapa
<i>Kandu</i>	+	+	+	+	+	-
<i>Pidaka</i>	-	+	+	-	+	-
<i>Shyava</i>	-	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Srava</i>	-	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Ati Raji</i>	+	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Arati</i>	+	-	-	-	-	-

Ruja	+	-	-	-	-	+
Rookshata	+	-	-	-	-	-
Raktata	-	-	-	+	-	+
Praklinnata	-	-	-	+	-	-
Vrana	-	-	-	-	-	+
Paridaha	-	-	-	-	-	+

**Lakshanas of Vicharchika with special reference to dry eczema**

Features said by Sushruta more likely can be correlated to dry eczema

- Raji (crackings / excoriations)
- Ati Kandu (severe itching)
- Ati Ruja (severe pain)
- Ruksha (dryness)
- Arati (uneasiness)

**Samprapti**

The Vata, Pitta and Kapha provoked and vitiated by the etiological factors cause Agnimandya and enter the Tiryaggamani Sira and reach the Twak, Laseeka, Rakta and Mamsa where they cause the Shithilata (softening) of them, rendering finally incapable of their functions. Later these Doshas exhibit the Lakshana (symptomatology) of the disease on the Twak by ruining its healthy structure and colour.

The three Doshas and the four Dhatus which are the basic important factors i.e., Twak Laseeka, Rakta and Mamsa these entire together make the material for the production of any Kushta including Vicharchika. Hence this combination of seven factors is called as Saptadravya Sangraha.

**Samprapti Ghataka**

**Table 3: Samprapti Ghatakas of Vicharchika**

Dosha	Tridosha
Dushya	Rasa, Rakta, Mamasa, Laseeka

Srotas	Rasavaha, Raktavaha, Mamsavaha, Swedavaha
Sroto Dushti	Sanga, Vimarga Gamana
Agni	Mandagni
Udbhava Sthana	Koshta
Sanchara Sthana	Tiryaggami Sira
Vyakta Sthana	Twak
Rogamarga	Bahya

**Dosha and Lakshanas of Vicharchika**

Though Vicharchika is manifested by the combined effect of all the three Dosha Kapha is considered as main causative Dosha. The symptoms are produced as the disease progresses through its different stages (Shatkriyakala of Sushruta). Based on these Lakshana, the Dosha behind them can be understood as follows:

**Table 4: Involvement of Doshas in particular Lakshanas of Vicharchika.**

Dosha	Lakshanas
Vata	Shyava Varna, Atiraji, Ruja, Rukshata
Pitta	Rakta Varna, Arati
Kapha	Kandu, Praklinnata

**Chikitsa**

Acharya Sushruta in the context of Kshudra Roga Chikitsa has mentioned Vicharchika to be treated in the line of Kushta Chikitsa. Based on the stages of Kushta specific treatment options are also told for the same.

**Table 5: Treatment modalities based on stages of Kushta**

Purvarupa Avastha	Vamana, Virechana
Twak Samprapta	Shodhana Lepas
Shonita Samprapta	Raktamokshana, Lepas, Kashaya Pana
Mamsa Samprapta	Lepas, Arishta, Mantha
Meda Samprapta (Yapya)	Shodhana, Rakta Mokshana, Bhallataka, Shilajatu, Ayaskriti, Tugaraka Pana
Asthi Samprapta (Asadhya)	Naivopakramet

*Sushruta* also indicated *Pracchana* in skin lesions having *Mandala* and *Utsanna* pattern. The raised circular patches should be scraped repeatedly or incised superficially<sup>[11]</sup>

### Eczema

Eczema or eczematous dermatitis is a condition in which a series of highly characteristic changes develop in the epidermis of skin, when some external agent inflames the skin. However, frequently this type of reaction occurs in the absence of external factors also, when the condition is called as Constitutional Eczema.

The first sign of eczema is erythema, caused by the dilatation of the dermal blood vessels. Next stage consists of invasion of epidermis by lymphocytes and an increase in its cellular and intercellular fluid. The later collects into minute vesicles appearing on the surface of the skin. The vesicles soon rupture leading to exudation of serum, which after sometime dries up to form crusts. Sometimes the epidermal oedema resolves before vesication and weeping occur. In either case as a result of these changes the normal function of epidermis is disturbed. Firstly, the healthy horn cells will not be formed, and then the surface of the skin becomes scaly. Secondly the cellular division may be increased leading to a general thickening of the epidermis which when extreme, results in lichenification. These physical changes need not be necessarily seen in an orderly sequence in every case.

The cardinal sign of eczema is vesication and the essential symptom is itching. The intensity of this depends both on the cause and individual affected and varies from almost nothing to uncontrollable paroxysms of scratching. Further, the degree of itching varies with the site, being on the whole worse in those areas rich in itch points like bend of the elbow, knee, anus, groin, sides of the neck etc.

The constitutional eczema is of five types mainly. Eczema due to external agents varies widely depending upon the causative agent (Contact dermatitis)

The five constitutional eczemas are:

1. Atopic eczema
2. Nummular eczema

3. Pompholyx
4. Seborrheic dermatitis
5. Varicose eczema / Stasis dermatitis

### Procedure Review

*Pracchana* is one among *Ashta Vidha Shastra Karma*, as it comes under the heading of *Rakta Visravana* (bloodletting).

The derivation of the word *Pracchana* is from the root *Ch'* to mean as to cut, to cut off or cut as under. Often it is pronounced as *Pracchana* also and these words are from the root '*Cchad*' to mean a private door or a loop-hole or a window. However, the literal meaning of the word *Pracchana* is, to bleed by making incisions or cuts in the skin.<sup>[12]</sup>

The synonyms of *Pracchana* are (1) *Pada* (2) *Shastra Pada* (3) *Kuttana*

### Indications

#### General Indications:

- *Ekadeshastha* (localized) *Twak Vikara*
- In *Pindita Rakta* (When vitiated blood has formed a lump)
- *Dushita Rakta* present in *Uthaana Sthana*
- In *Asukumara* persons
- As *Purva Karma* (pre procedure) for *Shrunga* and *Alabu* type of *Raktamokshana*

#### Specific Indications:

A physician should apply scarification therapy for the following:

- *Vātāsṛk* (nodes developed as a result of rheumatoid arthritis and gout,
- *Granthi* (enlarged lymph glands)
- *Pidaka* (pimples)
- *Kotha* (urticarial patches)
- *Rakta-Mandala* (red and circular patches in the skin)
- *Kustha* (lepomatous growths)

- *Shotha* (oedematous parts)
- *Apakva Vidarika* (Unripen *Vidarika*)
- *Indralupta* (Alopecia areata)
- In undeveloped ears *Pracchana* should be done on the anterior aspect after *Sthanika Snehana* and *Swedana*
- Pre procedure of *Lekhana Karma* in *Vartmagata Rogas*
- Post procedure of *Bhedana* (incision) in *Shleshmopanaha*

Procedure of *Pracchana* is described in *Sushruta Samhita Sutra Sthana*<sup>[13]</sup> and *Ashtanga Hridaya Sutra Sthana*<sup>[14]</sup>

#### **Purvakarma**

On a day when the weather is neither too cold nor too hot, when the sky is free of clouds, when the patient has digested the food taken in the morning, he should be applied with luke warm oil over and around the lesion and sudation is done over this. Patient is advised not to withhold his natural urges. A tourniquet is then applied, firmly about 3-4 *Angula* i.e., 2-3" above or superior to the region of the lesions.



**Fig. 1: *Sthanika Abhyanga***



**Fig. 2: *Sthanika Sweda***

#### ***Pradhana Karma***

With a sharp pointed instrument said for the '*Visravana*' purpose, i.e., *Koorcha/Soochi* (or any other similar instrument found convenient) *Pracchana* is carried out. It is done briskly without causing any damage to the underlying tissue like veins, arteries, or any vital parts. The process should be started from the lower end of the lesion and carried towards the upper or superior end. The operation should be done gently, and the cutting of the skin should be done at an equal distance. It should be neither very superficial nor too deep but should just allow a normal flow of blood. No repetition of cutting is made on a single point.



**Fig. 3: Procedure of *Pracchana***



**Fig. 4: Procedure of *Pracchana***

#### ***Pashchat Karma***

When bleeding stops spontaneously the tourniquet is to be released. The skin should then be examined for any extensiveness by which oozing of blood still continues. In such case the measures told for the management of the conditions are to be adopted. *Panchavalka Kwatha* wash followed by sterile dressing should be done.

#### **Instruments for *Pracchana Karma***

As per classics:

As *Pracchana* comes under type of *Visravana*, following *Shastras* (surgical instruments) are told as per *Sushruta*<sup>[15]</sup>

- *Suchi*
- *Kusha Patra*
- *Aati Mukha*
- *Shrari Mukha*
- *Antarmukha*
- *Trikurchaka*

*Acharya Vagbhata* has told *Nakha Shastra* along with the above mentioned *Shastras* for *Pracchana*.<sup>[16]</sup>

As per Conventional Method:

- Surgical blade No.11 is used to make multiple superficial parallel incisions.
- Sterile surgical needle is used to make multiple superficial punctures.

- Modified instruments like Derma roller, Derma stamp and Derma pen are also used for *Pracchana Karma*

#### **DISCUSSION**

##### **Probable mode of action:**

According to *Ayurveda* concept, after *Prachhana Karma* i.e., taking superficial parallel incisions or multiple superficial punctures in skin, vitiated *Rakta* is drawn out from the lesion along with the vitiated *Dosha*, stimulating the natural physiology of *Prakruta Dosha* and *Dhatu*. Thus, reducing the *Vyadhi* and the *Lakshanas*.

*Prachhana Karma* enhances the drug delivery system across the skin as it bypasses the stratum corneum and deposit the drug directly to the vascularized dermis. As well as after taking the superficial parallel incisions stimulates the wound healing cascade to start. In the manner to heal the wound, body releases few growth factors like PGF, TGF- alpha and Beta, connective tissue growth factor etc. which promotes to form the neovascularization and angiogenesis which removes the toxic blood from the site and promotes the healthy tissue to regrow thus disease reduces.<sup>[17]</sup>

*Pracchana* removes the vitiated *Doshas* and improves perifollicular vascularization. This helps in the better absorption of *Lepa*, *Taila* which are applied later.<sup>[18]</sup>

In *Pracchana*, pricking wounds are created over the skin of the affected area. Hence, we are inducing an acute physiological inflammatory response in that area which will promote the healing of the wound as well as the skin disease.<sup>[19]</sup>

*Pracchana karma* helps to reduce itching, ESR and AEC due to improved microcirculation, removal of dead RBC's, hemosiderin and histamines, inflammatory mediators and stasis.<sup>[20]</sup>

#### **CONCLUSION**

*Prachhana Karma* can be described as an easy, OPD based, effective method for performing *Raktamokshana*. It is particularly effective for accumulated vitiated *Rakta* and for localized skin conditions. *Vicharchika* with special reference to dry

eczema is notable for its chronicity, dryness, discoloration and lichenification which gets cured hardly with internal medications. By creating superficial incisions, *Pracchana* stimulates local blood flow, releases stagnant *Doshas*. Thus, adopting *Pracchana* in *Shushka Vicharchika* helps to let out *Sthanika Doshas* and *Dushyas* viz, *Rakta and Lasika*, thus aid to relieve the symptoms.

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