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Ayurvedic treatment of Psoriasis (*Ekakustha*) through Shaman therapy : Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This case study highlights the successful management of psoriasis (*Ekakustha*) through Ayurvedic *Shaman Chikitsa* in a 30-year-old male patient with dry, scaly lesions on the scalp and extensors. The patient, unresponsive to allopathic treatment, exhibited dietary indiscretions and irregular bowel habits. Ayurvedic treatment involved *Shamana Chikitsa*, incorporating *Panchanimba Churna*, *Kaishor Guggulu*, *Khadirarista* and Psoria oil, alongside dietary modifications. Over four months, the patient experienced progressive improvement in itching, erythema and scaling, leading to a significant reduction in the Psoriasis Area and Severity Index (PASI) score from 22.1 to 0.6 which is near remission. This case underscores the efficacy of Ayurvedic *Shaman* therapy and the importance of personalized treatment strategies guided by classical Ayurvedic principles in managing psoriasis.

Key words: Psoriasis, *Ekakustha*, *Kaishor Guggulu*, *Khadirarista*, *Psoria Oil*, *Ayurveda*

INTRODUCTION

Psoriasis is a type of papulosquamous disorder characterized by erythematous, scaly, annular lesions with relapsing and remitting course.

It is a chronic autoimmune, inflammatory condition often distributed on scalp, pressure points and extensors. It affects 0.5% - 3% of global population

posing a significant health burden, which has impact on patient's quality of life and psychosocial health.^[1] The exact etiology of psoriasis is not clearly understood. The role of genetic component is well recognized and over 50% of patients shows a positive family history.

In *Ayurveda*, Psoriasis is often correlated with *Ekakustha*, which is a type of *Vata-Kaphaja Khsudra Kustha* (~minor skin disease) characterized by *Aswedanam* (~anhidrosis), *Mahavastu* (~Broad based), *Matsyasakalopamam*^[2] (~alike scales of fish), *Krishnaaruna*^[3] *Varna* (~Blackish Red). In *Samhitas* (classics) the factors such as *Mithya Achar* (~Irregularity in daily routine), *Virudhaahar* (~incompatible food habits), *Vega Dharana* (~suppression of natural urges) followed by *Divaswapna* (~Day sleeping), and *Papakarma* (~indulgence in sinful acts) are mentioned as important predisposing factors for manifestation of this disease.^[4] This case report will give an approach how

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to manage a case of *Ekakustha* through Ayurvedic *Shamana Ausadhis*.

CASE REPORT

30 years- old, non-hypertensive, non-diabetic male patient presented at OPD on 26th April 2023 with chief complaint of dry, scaly, annular lesions on scalp and extensors since 2 years. There was a significant family history of chronic skin disease. There was no history of any major illness, no history of alcohol Intake, smoking, and any other type of addiction. Not any drug allergy and surgical history was found. Appetite and sleep were normal with regular bladder function but bowel habit was irregular with inadequate evacuation. The patient gave positive history of daily consumption of dairy products like; curd, buffalo milk etc., excessive salt rich diets, fast food and day time sleeping etc.

Clinical Findings

The patient was presented with asymmetrical, dry, itchy, reddish patches over scalp, elbow, leg, back and abdomen without Pain. [fig. 1]

Examination the Auspitz sign, Koebner’s phenomenon and Candle grease sign were positive. Nail, mucosal linings and joints were not affected. The patient was found afebrile with normal vitals. Further examination of Respiratory, Cardiovascular, Musculoskeletal and Central nervous system was found to be normal.

Table 1: Evolution of treatment and interventions for *Ekakustha* management.

Date	Patient summaries from initial to follow up visit	Interventions
April 26, 2023 (Before Treatment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dry, scaly, reddish, annular lesions on scalp, elbow, leg, back and abdomen ▪ Patches were well defined. ▪ Auspitz Sign and Candle Grease sign were positive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3g of <i>Panchanimba Churna</i> twice a day with luke warm water. ▪ 500mg of <i>Kaishor Guggulu</i> thrice a day. ▪ 20ml of <i>Khadirarista</i> with equal

		quantity of water after food twice a day. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Psoria</i> oil for Local application ▪ 1gm <i>Kutaki Churna</i> with luke warm water at night time ▪ Patient was also advised to avoid excessive sour, salty, spicy, dairy product, packaged diet intake and to avoid day time sleeping etc.
May 10, 2023	Moderate improvement was present in itching, erythema and scaling.	Continuation of same treatment (except <i>Kutaki Churna</i> and <i>Kaishor Guggulu</i>) + <i>Arogyavardhini Vati</i> 250mg twice a day after food and <i>Triphala Churna</i> 3gm at night time.
July 26, 2023	Marked improvement was seen in scalp, and lesions on the other parts of the body were also reduced.	Continuation of same (<i>Kaishor Guggulu</i> , <i>Khadirarista</i> and <i>Psoria</i> oil) + Cap. <i>Charmarogantak</i> 2 cap twice a day with luke warm water + <i>Eranda Bhrista</i> <i>Haritaki Churna</i> 3gm at night time + <i>Nisoria</i> soap for local application.
August 16, 2023 (After treatment)	The lesions of scalp, arms and trunk were subsided and also itching was reduced. Auspitz sign, candle grease sign and koebner’s phenomenon were not present.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continuation of Cap. <i>Charmarogantak</i> and <i>Psoria</i> oil + ▪ <i>Guduchi Ghan Vati</i> 2 tab twice a day with luke warm water.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 20ml <i>Sarivadyasava</i> with equal quantity of water after food. ▪ 1gm <i>Kutaki Churna</i> with luke warm water at night time.
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Diagnosis Assessment

On March 20, 2022, the patient went to an allopathic hospital with complaints of multiple scaly, itchy lesions on scalp and was diagnosed with psoriasis. He took allopathic medications for 3 months and got symptomatic relief for 3-4 months. However, by September 2022 lesions gradually developed on different body surface and became more worsen. The patient revisited an allopathic dermatologist in October 2022 and resumed previous medications, but he didn't find any satisfactory improvement. Therefore, he came to Ayurveda Hospital at National Institute of Ayurveda for proper management of the disease. The severity of psoriasis was assessed using the Psoriasis Area and Severity Index (PASI) score which indicate the severity level of 22.1. All allopathic medications were discontinued before initiating Ayurvedic treatment.

Clinically case was assessed based on classical signs and symptoms of *Ekakustha* (*Aswedanam, Mahavastu, Matsyasakalopamam, Krishnaaruna Varna*). Routine laboratory investigations were conducted and most of the results were within normal limit, except for the erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR) which was elevated, measuring 39mm/hr. Ayurvedic treatment was started on April 26, 2023 with only *Shaman* therapy for nearly 4 months. Improvement was assessed using PASI score and symptomatic relief was present.

Dashavidha Pareeksha (~tenfold examination of patient) was assessed for *Aturabala Pramana* (~strength of individual) described as below,^[5]

1. *Prakriti* (~physical constitution) - *Vata-Kaphaja*

2. *Sara* (~excellence of tissue elements) - *Madhyama*
3. *Samhanana* (~compactness) - *Madhyama*
4. *Pramana* (~measurement of body constituents) - *Madhyama*
5. *Ahara Shakti* (~power of intake and digestion of food) - *Madhyama*
6. *Satva* (~psychic condition) - *Avara*
7. *Vyayama Shakti* (~power of performing exercise) - *Madhyama*
8. *Satmya* (~homologation) - *Madhyama*
9. *Vaya* (~Age) - *Yuvaavastha*
10. *Vikriti* (~Morbidity) - *Vata-Kaphaja*

Table 2: Samprapti Ghatakam

<i>Dosha</i>	<i>Vata-Kapha</i>
<i>Dushya</i>	<i>Tvak</i> (~ Skin) <i>Rakta</i> (~Blood Tissue) <i>Mamsa</i> (cMuscle Tissue) <i>Ambu</i> (~Watery element of the body)
<i>Srotas</i>	<i>Rasavaha Srotas</i> (~Channels carrying nutrients in body), <i>Raktavaha Srotas</i> (~Channels carrying blood in body)
<i>Sroto Dusti</i>	<i>Sanga</i>
<i>Adhistan</i>	<i>Tvak</i>
<i>Agni</i>	<i>Mandagni</i> (~mildness)
<i>Svabhava</i>	<i>Chirakala Anubandhini</i>

DISCUSSION

In Ayurveda, there are 2 basic treatment principle such as *Shodhan* and *Shaman* therapy.^[6] Those patients who are not able to take *Shodhana Chikitsa* for any sort of reason they can be treated as well by *Shaman Chikitsa*. This patient got dramatic improvement in all his symptoms by a planned *Shamana Chikitsa* and proper dietary regimen. In this case the patient was having *Tridosha* vitiation with predominance of *Vata-Kapha-*

Dosha, so treatment plan was based upon *Dosha-Dushya Shamak Chikitsa* as mentioned below.

Probable mode of action of interventions

In *Arogyavardhini Vati* the main ingredient *Kutki* (*Picrorhiza kurroa* Royle ex Benth) which is with 18 parts and most of the ingredients present are used in skin disease which has *Kusthaghna*, Hepatoprotective, Blood purifier, Anti-inflammatory and Anti-oxidant properties.^[7]

- *Kaishor Guggulu* composed of variety of herbal ingredients such as *Guggulu*, *Guduchi*, *Triphala*, *Vidanga* and many more. These ingredients work synergistically to provide therapeutic effects like reducing redness, inflammation and act as natural blood purifier by pacifying the deep seated vitiated doshas involved in psoriasis.^[8]
- *Panchanimba Churna* there are 5 parts of *Nimba* are used such as: leaves, root, bark, flowers and fruit which combinedly has Immunomodulatory, Anti-inflammatory, Anti-oxidant and Anti-fungal properties.^[9]
- *Khadirarista*, with *Khadir* as its main ingredient, possesses anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, and wound-healing properties. It's traditionally used in Ayurveda to treat various skin conditions, particularly psoriasis, due to *Kusthagna* and *Kandughna Prabhav*. The formulation is noted in *Ayurvedic* texts for its effectiveness in addressing all types of skin diseases, especially *Ekakustha*.^[10]
- *Triphala Churna* and *Eranda Bhrista Haritaki Churna* both act by their Anti-inflammatory, Anti-oxidant, Anti-bacterial and Anti-fungal properties. Both the *Churna* contain a similar drug named as *Haritaki* which prevents accumulation of pus in skin diseases, act as a *Rasayana* along with wound healing properties.^[11]
- Psoria oil made from *Wrightia tinctoria* leaves mainly used for psoriasis and skin conditions similar to it, which retrieves the skin texture and relieves from itching and scaling.^[12]
- *Guduchi Ghana Vati* is an *Ayurvedic* classical preparation prepared from aqueous extract of *Guduchi* stem. It is otherwise known as *Samsamani*

Vati which takes *Dosas* to *Sama Sthiti*. It has Anti-inflammatory, Anti-pyretic, Hepatoprotective action and many more.^[13,14]

- *Sarivadyasava* having ingredients like *Anantamula*, *Nagarmotha*, *Guduchi* etc. having *Rakta Shodhaka*, *Tridosha Shamaka* and *Sodhana* properties which are used in various skin disorders.^[15]

Table 3: Patient’s Psoriasis Area Severity Index Score Before and After Treatment

Parameters	Head and Neck		Arms		Trunk		Legs	
	BT	AT	BT	AT	BT	AT	BT	AT
Skin area involved score %	30-49	10-29	10-29	0	30-49	0	30-49	<10
Redness	3	1	2	0	2	0	2	1
Thickening	4	0	3	0	2	0	3	0
Scaling	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	0

BT (total PASI score = 22.1); AT (total PASI score = 0.6)
 PASI (Psoriasis Area severity Index); BT (Before Treatment); AT (After Treatment)

CONCLUSION

The above case demonstrates the significant impact of *Shaman Chikitsa* in alleviating the symptoms of psoriasis. The patient experienced notable improvements such as reduced itching, scaling, and redness, as well as a significant decrease in their PASI score within duration of 4 months. Patient has done proper dietary restrictions as advised. Therefore, *Shaman Chikitsa* along with proper adhering to *Pathya* (therapeutic measures) and *Apathya* (avoidable measures), can play a significant role in managing the symptoms of psoriasis (*Ekakustha*).

Patient Consent Declaration

The observed satisfactory relief in this case suggests that while complete symptom relief may not be achieved with short-term treatment lasting three months, Ayurvedic therapies can yield promising

results in alleviating psoriasis symptoms without significant adverse effects.

	
Figure 1: Lesions on abdomen before treatment	Figure 2: Lesions on abdomen after treatment
	
Figure 3: Lesions on leg before treatment.	Figure 4: Lesions on leg after treatment
	
Figure 5: Lesions on arm before treatment.	Figure 6: Lesions on arm after treatment

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