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An insight on *Vicharchika* and its management

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ABSTRACT

The skin serves as the body's interface with the external environment, constantly interacting with physical, chemical, and biological agents. These interactions can lead to specific reaction patterns, resulting in characteristic skin lesions across various body parts. Environmental stimuli vary, and the body's innate resilience determines the occurrence of spontaneous remissions and relapses. In Ayurveda, skin diseases are categorized under *Kustha*, further divided into *Mahakustha* and *Kshudra Kustha*. *Vicharchika* falls under the latter category. It is characterized by symptoms such as itching (*Kandu*), eruptions (*Pidaka*), dark discoloration (*Shyva Varna*), and excessive discharge (*Bahusrava*). Charaka Samhita describes *Vicharchika* with predominance of *Kapha*, while Sushruta Samhita highlights symptoms indicating *Pitta* dominance. *Vicharchika* is regarded as a challenging condition to treat, categorized as a minor skin disorder (*Kshudra-Kustha*) yet considered a significant health issue. Ayurvedic texts outline various *Sodhana* (purification) and *Shamana* (palliative) treatments to balance the *Doshas* involved in *Kustha*. *Shamana* therapies include applications of medicated pastes (*Lepa*), internal medications (*Pradeha*), and herbal oils (*Taila*). Overall, addressing *Vicharchika* requires a comprehensive approach that integrates Ayurvedic principles with lifestyle modifications aimed at restoring balance and promoting skin health.

Key words: *Vicharchika*, *Kshudra Kustha*, *Mahakustha*, *Eczema*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, a traditional Indian medicine, focuses on preventive health and holistic well-being. Increasing global recognition stems from its natural, safe methods and potential to address diverse health needs. However, modern challenges include identifying at-risk individuals, assessing disease severity, and tailoring treatments.

Skin, the body's largest organ, reflects internal and

external health. Ayurveda categorizes skin diseases under *Kustha*, with *Vicharchika*, characterized by itching, discharge, and vesicles, among them. Charaka attributes *Vicharchika* to *Kapha* dominance, while Sushruta emphasizes *Pitta* imbalance.

SN	Nidana	CS	SS	AS	BS	HS
A.	Aharaja Hetu	+	+	+	+	+
1.	<i>Viruddha Ahara</i> - Intake of chilchim fish & milk					
2.	Intake of food mostly containing <i>Hayanaka</i> , <i>Yavaka</i> , <i>Chinaka</i> , <i>Uddalaka</i> & <i>Koradusa</i> along with <i>Ksheera</i> , <i>Dadhi</i> , <i>Takra</i> , <i>Kola</i> , <i>Kulattha</i> , <i>Masha</i> , <i>Atasi</i> , <i>Kusumbha</i> & <i>Sneha</i> .					
3.	Intake of <i>Mulaka</i> & <i>Lashuna</i> with <i>Ksheera</i>	+				
4.	Continuous intake of <i>Gramya</i> , <i>Audaka</i> & <i>Anupa Mamsa</i> with <i>Ksheera</i>		+		+	

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5.	Use of <i>Pippali, Kakmachi, Lakucha</i> with <i>Dadhi & Sarpisha</i>				+	
6.	Use of meat of deer with milk				+	
7.	Use of <i>Mulaka</i> with <i>Guda</i>				+	
8.	Excessive use of alcohol & milk				+	
9.	Intake of articles having sour taste with milk				+	
10.	Excessive use of green vegetables with milk				+	
11.	Intake of honey & meat after taking hot diet & vice-versa				+	
12.	Use of fish, citrus & milk together				+	
Mithya Ahara						
1.	Excessive use of <i>Navanna, Dadhi, Matsya, Amla & Lavana</i>	+			+	+
2.	Excessive use of <i>Tila, Ksheera & Guda</i>	+			+	+
3.	<i>Drava, Snigdha, Guru Aharanam Atyartha Sevanam</i>	+			+	+
4.	Excessive oleation	+				
5.	Continuous & excessive use of <i>Madhu & Phanita</i>	+				
6.	Intake of food that would cause burning sensation	+	+			
7.	Intake of food during indigestion	+	+		+	+
8.	<i>Adhyasana</i>	+	+		+	+
9.	<i>Asatmyahara</i>		+		+	
10.	Intake of polluted water					
B. Vihara Hetu						
(a) Mithya Hetu						

1.	To do physical exercise & to take sunbath after heavy meals		+		+	+
2.	To perform sexual act during indigestion		+	+	+	+
3.	To do exercise/sexual act after <i>Snehapana & Vamana</i>	+				
4.	Sudden change from cold to heat or heat to cold without following the rules of gradual change	+	+		+	+
5.	Sudden change from <i>Santarpana</i> to <i>Apatarpana</i> & vice-versa	+				+
6.	Entering into cold water immediately after one is affected with fear, exhaustion & sunlight	+			+	+
7.	<i>Mithya Sansarga Sevana</i>			+		
(b) Vega Vidharana						
1.	Withholding of the natural urges i.e. <i>Mutra & Purisha Vega</i> , etc.		+			
2.	Suppression of the urge of emesis	+	+		+	+
(c) Panchakarma Apacharaj						
1.	<i>Panchakarma Kriyamane Nisshidha Sevana</i>	+				
2.	Improper administration of <i>Snehapana</i>					
C. Achara Hetu						
1.	Insulting acts to Brahmins, Teachers & other respectable persons		+	+	+	+
2.	Indulgence in sinful activities in present or past life	+	+	+	+	+
3.	Use of money or material acquired by unfair means		+	+		
4.	Censuring or killing virtuous persons		+	++		

Treatment involves *Shamana* (palliative) and *Shodhana* (purification) therapies. Skin diseases, while not life-threatening, disrupt routine and appearance, causing discomfort and distress. Eczema, correlated with *Vicharchika*, manifests as inflammatory skin eruptions, particularly affecting children. Overall, Ayurveda's approach to skin ailments underscores the importance of holistic care and personalized treatment for optimal health and well-being.

Etymology of Vicharchika

Vicharchika stems from the Sanskrit origin '*Charch Adhyane*,' with the prefix '*Vee*' added. '*Adhyane*' consists of '*Adhi*' and '*Ayane*,' where '*Adhi*' denotes 'above,' and '*Ayane*' refers to 'to spread out.'

Thus, it can be concluded that *Vicharchika* refers to a distinct skin condition, characterized by its tendency to coat, cover, or injure the skin, particularly leading to cracking of the skin on the hands and feet. This definition is derived from the text *Shabdakalpdrum*.

Vicharchika As Eczema

Definition

Vicharchika is defined as, '*Rajyo Atikandu Atiruja Sa Ruksha Bhavanti Gatreshu Vicharchikayam*'. (Su.Ni.5/13)

Accordingly, condition in which skin is dry with severe itching & marked linings present in *Vicharchika*. Furthermore, he added that if the same condition appears at the feet with pain, then it is known as '*Vipadika*'

Etiopathology of Vicharchika and eczema

Nidana, or the causative factors, play a crucial role in the development of diseases in Ayurveda. The etiological factors of *Kustha*, categorized under three headings, namely

- *Aharaja Nidan* (dietary factors),
- *Viharaja Nidan* (lifestyle factors), and
- *Acharaja Nidan* (environmental factors), serve as the basis for understanding *Vicharchika*'s causes

Purvarupa

There is no classical description regarding the *Purvarupa* of *Vicharchika*, but being a variety of *Kshudra Kustha*, the *Purvarupa* of *Kustha* should be considered as its *Purvarupa*. This can be summarized in the following table.

SN	Purvarupa	CS	SS	AH/AS	BS	KS
1.	<i>Aswedanam (anhidrosis)</i>	+	+	+	+	+
2.	<i>Atiswedanam</i>	+	+	+	+	+
3.	<i>Parushyam</i>	+	+			
4.	<i>Atishlakshnata</i>	+		+	+	+
5.	<i>Vaivarnyam</i>	+		+	+	+
6.	<i>Kandu</i>	+	+	+		
7.	<i>Nistoda</i>	+		+	+	+
8.	<i>Suptata</i>	+	+	+		
9.	<i>Paridaha</i>	+		+	+	
10.	<i>Pariharsha</i>					+
11.	<i>Lomaharsha</i>	+	+	+	+	+
12.	<i>Kharatvam</i>	+		+		+
13.	<i>Ushmayanam</i>	+			+	+
14.	<i>Gauravam</i>	+				
15.	<i>Shwayathu</i>	+				
16.	<i>Visarpagamanam Abhikshanam</i>	+				
17.	<i>Bahya Chhidreshupadeha</i>	+				
18.	<i>Pakva-Dagdha-Danshta-Bhagna-Kshata Upashkhaliteshu Ati Matram Vedna</i>	+				

19.	Svalpanam Api Vrananam Dusti	+				
20.	Kothonnati	+		+		
21.	Swalpanam Api Vrananam Asamrohnam		+			
22.	Shrama	+		+		
23.	Klama	+				+

Rupa

Rupa of Vicharchika, according to different Ayurvedic classics are summarized in the following table -

Rupa	CS	SS	AH/AS	BS	KS
Subjective symptoms					
Kandu	+	+	+	+	+
Vedana	-	-	-	-	+
Ati-ruja	+	-	+	-	-
Daha	-	+	-	-	-
Colour of Pidika (lesion)					
Shyava	-	+	-	+	-
Shweta	+	-	+	-	-
Rakta	+	-	-	+	+
Srava (nature of discharge)					
Bahusrava	-	-	+	+	+
Ruksha	-	+	-	-	-
Lasikadhya	-	-	+	-	-
Praklinna (Mamsenopachita)	-	-	-	+	-
Raji	-	+	-	-	-
Pakavati	-	-	-	-	+

Pathogenesis of Vicharchika

According to Charaka: The vitiation of the Tridosha occurs due to improper lifestyle choices (Nidana Sevana), leading to the contamination of the Dushya. This imbalance causes the Shaithilya (loosening) of the skin (Twak), blood (Rakta), muscles (Mamsa), and lymph (Lasika). The disturbance in the Tridosha, along

with the involvement of the four Dhatus and the Saptako Dravya Samgraha, contributes to the manifestation of Kushtha (skin disorders) (Ch.Ni. 5/6, Ch.Chi. 7/9-10).

According to Sushruta: Due to the influence of Doshaja and Karmaja Nidana Sevana, the aggravation of Pitta and Kapha leads to an obstruction (Avarana) in the movement of Vata. This aggravated Vata becomes vitiated and, along with Pitta and Kapha, enters the Tiryaga Sira (lateral channels), where it further spreads and contaminates. As a result, these Doshas reach the external pathways of the body (Bahya Rogamarga), including the skin (Twaka), blood (Rakta), muscles (Mamsa), and lymph (Lasika), and spread throughout the body. Wherever these Doshas accumulate, they form Mandala (lesions). If left untreated, they can penetrate deeper into the tissues (Dhatu) of the body (Su.Ni. 5/3).

Samprapti Ghataka of Vicharchika

Saptako Dravya Sangraha

Dosha : Tridosha, Kapha Pradhana (Ch.) , Pitta Pradhana (Su.)

- Vata: Vyana, Samana, Udana
- Pitta: Pachaka, Bhrajaka
- Kapha: Avalambaka, Kledaka

Dushya: Twak, Rakta, Mamsa, Lasika

Agni: Jatharagnimandya, Dhatvagnimandya and Amavisha

Srotasa: Rasavaha, Raktavaha, Mamsavaha, Swedavaha, Udakavaha

Srotodushti: Sanga, Vimargagamana

Udbhava : Amashaya

Adhithana : Twak

Rogamarga : Bahya

Prabhava : Chirakari (Chronic)

Chikitsa of Vicharchika

All the varieties of the Kustha are caused by the simultaneous vitiation of Tridosha, hence depending

upon the signs and symptoms one should decide the line of treatment. Initially the predominantly vitiated *Dosha* should be alleviated; later the remaining secondarily vitiated *Dosha* should be alleviated.

<i>Dosha-Avastha</i>	<i>Chikitsa Upkrama</i>
<i>Vata Pradhana Kustha</i>	<i>Sarpipana</i>
<i>Pitta Pradhana Kustha</i>	<i>Virechana</i> and <i>Raktamokshana</i>
<i>Shleshma Pradhan Kustha</i>	<i>Vamana</i>
<i>Prachchhana</i>	<i>Alpa Dosha Yukta Kustha</i>
<i>Siravyadha</i>	<i>Mahat Dosha</i>
<i>Bahudosha Avastha</i>	<i>Samshodhana</i> therapies

According to *Sushruta*, the treatment should be started in the *Purvarupa* stage itself. He says during *Purvarupa* stage, *Ubhaya Bhaga Shodhana* i.e., *Vamana* and *Virechana* should be done (Su.Chi.9/6).

- In Su.Chi.9/6, *Chikitsa* is described for *Twagadi Dhatugata Kustha*.
- Initially *Snehapana* should be done for *Vamanadi Shodhana* purpose (*Dalhana* on Su.Chi.9/6). *Snehapana* should be done with the specific *sneha* mentioned according to *Avastha* of *Doshadi*. In *Vataja Kustha*, *Swedana* is said to be *Pathya* (Ha.S.3/39/20).
- *Tuvaraka* and *Bhallataka Sneha* are useful in all types of *Kustha* (Su.Chi.9/7).
- ***Snehamatra in Kushtha***: *Madhyama Matra Sneha* is advised in *Kustha* (Ch.Su.13/34)
- ***Swedana***: according to *Charaka*, if the lesion is *Sthira*, *Kathina* and *Mandala*, then *Swedana* can be done with *Prastara* and *Pranadi* (Ch.Chi.7/50).

Shodhana Chikitsa:

Vamana Karma:

In Ch.Chi.7/43, says that when the *Dosha* are located in *Hridaya* or the centre of the body, *Dosha* are in a state of *Utklesha*, and then the patient having *Kustha* in the

upper parts should be given *Vamana* with *Kutaja*, *Madana Phala*, *Madhuka* mixed with decoction of *Patola* and *Nimba*.

Virechana Karma:

- Drugs like *Trivruta*, *Danti* and *Triphala* are useful for *Virechana*. The recipe can be prepared by adding *Souviraka*, *Tushodaka*, *Alodana*, *Asava* and different types of *Sidhu*.
- If *Vata* and *Kapha* make their seat in *Pitta Sthana*, then *Vamana* and *Virechana Karma* and if *Pitta* and *Kapha* are localised in *Vatasthana*, then *Virechana* should be conducted, depending upon the nature of the therapy, *Samsarjana Krama* should be followed (Ch.Chi.7/45).

Asthapana Basti:

If there is excess of *Vayu* then *Asthapana Basti* should be given with the drugs like *Darvi*, *Bruhati* etc. (Ch.Chi.7/46).

Anuvasana Basti:

When there is excess of *Vayu* even after *Virechana* and *Asthapana* and if the patient is suitable for the administration of *Anuvasana* and then he should be administered with *Madanaphala*, *Madhukayukta Anuvasana Basti* (Ch.Chi.7/47). But in the general indications both types of *Basti* are contraindicated, but depending upon the situations it can be done (Ch.Vi.8/138)

Nasya:

Nasya is indicated with the drugs like *Saindhava*, *Danti*, *Maricha* etc. which are effective against *Krumi* and *Kustha* and diseases caused by *Kapha Prakopa* (Ch.Chi.7/48).

Dhumapana:

Virechanika Dhuma cures *Krumi*, *Kustha* and *Kilasa* affecting the *Shira* (Ch.Chi.7/49).

Raktamokshana:

- If the patches of *Kustha* are *Sthira*, *Kathina* and *Mandala*, *Prastara* and *Nadi Sweda* should be done and rubbed with *Kurcha*. The blood oozing out

through this process should there after be eliminated (Ch.Chi.7/50).

- *Bhela* in *Chikitsa* 6/40 mentions that the *Raktajanya* and *Sannipataja Kustha* are initially treated with *Siravyadha*. In *Alpa Kustha Pracchanna* is indicated, either with the help of *Jalauka*, *Alabu* or *Shrunga* (Bh.Chi.6/40).
- Site for *Raktamokshana* is mentioned in a.h.chi.19/15. *Siravyadha* can be done *At Lalata*, *Hasta* and *Pada* also. *Siravyadha* can be done 2 *Angula* above the *Kshipra Marma* (Su.Sa.8/16).
- *Snehapana* is necessary after *Raktamokshana* and *Virechana* to control the aggravation of *Vata* (A.H.Chi.19/16-17).
- Even though *Bahu Doshavastha* is found in *Kustha*, only little quantity of *Dosha* should be eliminated repeatedly otherwise aggravated *Vata* destroys the *Bala* (Ch.Chi.7/41, A.H.Chi.19/15).
- repeated administrations of *Vamanadi* procedures are mentioned: *Vamana* once in 15 days, *Virechana* once in 30 days, *Rakta Mokshana* once in 6 months and *Nasya* for once in 3 days (Su.Chi.9/43).
- *Bhela* has mentioned *Avapeedana Nasya* for once in 3 days

Shamana Chikitsa:

Some of the *Yoga* early in the morning like *Guduchi Swarasa*, *Kwatha* or *Siddha Ghruta* for one month helps to nullify all types of *Kustha* (Su.Chi.10/14).

Kwatha of *Darvi*, *Khadira* and *Nimba* is said to be *Kushtahara* (A.H.Chi.19/37).

Tuvaraka, *Bhallataka*, *Bakuchi*, *Chitrakamula* and *Shilajatu* are indicated for *Rasayana Prayoga*.

Specific treatments for Vicharchika are:

Arka Taila, *Marichyadi Taila*, *Visha Taila*, *Shadbindu Taila*, *Aragwadhadi Kwatha*, *Rasamanikya* etc.

Kshara Prayoga:

- In case of anaesthetic patches, *Shastra* is contraindicated and *Kshara* should be applied after elimination of blood and *Dosha* (Ch.Chi.7.54).

- The *Lepa* prescribed for *Kustha* becomes instantaneously efficacious only after the elimination of impurities in the blood and in *Koshtha* (Ch.Chi.7/53).
- The drugs like *Kustha*, *Amrutasanga*, *Daruharidra*, *Kasisa*, *Kampillaka*, *Musta*, *Lodhra*, *Sougandhika*, *Sarja Rasa*, *Vidanga*, *Manashila*, *Haratala*, *Karaveera Twak* are indicated for *Avachrnana* in *Vicharchika* (Ch.Su.3/11).

Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa:

Vrata, *Dama*, *Yama*, *Guruseva*, *Tyaga*, *Shilabhiyoga*, *Dwija-Sura-Guru Puja*, *Maitri* to all living creature, *Aradhana* of *Shiva*, *Kartikeya*, *Tara* and *Bhaskara* will subside all types of *Kustha*.

Tapopasevana (Su.Ni.5/31) and *Karmakshya* (Ch.Sha.1/117) will subside the disease. *Harita* has mentioned *Dana* of *Go*, *Bhumi*, *Swarna* or *Anna* for *Papakarmottapanna Kustha* (Ha.Dwi.1).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Ayurvedic perspective on skin diseases like *Vicharchika* (eczema) offers valuable insights into their aetiology, progression, and management. Through the lens of Ayurveda, it becomes evident that *Kshudrakustha*, including *Vicharchika*, primarily involves *Alpa Dosha*, indicating a localized and slow progression nature of the condition. Furthermore, the holistic approach of Ayurveda, encompassing *Ahar*, *Vihar*, *Nidan Parivarjan*, and *Panchakarma* purification methods, not only treats the symptoms but also prevents recurrence and promotes overall well-being.

Unlike medications used in modern medical science, which may carry lifelong side effects, embracing ayurvedic principles and practices provides individuals suffering from *Vicharchika* with a comprehensive and sustainable approach to managing their condition, improving their quality of life, and preventing future episodes. By fostering awareness and adherence to ayurvedic principles, we can empower individuals to lead healthier, happier lives free from the burdens of *Vicharchika* and other skin ailments.

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