

A Study on Ekakushtha (Psoriasis) With Its Ayurvedic Management

Priyanka^{1,*}, Bipin Bihari Keshari², Vandana Gupta³

Abstract

The skin, the delicate outer layer of vertebrates, often reflects internal imbalances and stress-related conditions within the body. In Ayurveda, the skin (Tvak) is considered a mirror of internal health, revealing various abnormalities or disorders. All skin diseases are collectively categorized under the term "Kushtha" in Ayurvedic texts. The ancient Acharyas explain that Kushtha involves the imbalance of all three doshas, with the specific type of Kushtha determined by the predominance of one dosha over the others. According to Acharya Sushrut kushtha is 'Aupsargika Vyadhi' (Infections disease). Acharya Sushrut also use 'Tvkgamaya' word for kushtha. Acharya Charak described kushthas. The types of kushtha are Mahakushtha and Shudrakushtha. In Mahakushtha 7 types of kushthas and in Shudrakushtha involved 11 types of kushthas i.e Ekakushtha is a type of Shudrakushtha. Ekakushtha is primarily a Vata-Kapha disorder and is often equated with psoriasis due to its striking similarities in clinical presentation. The most common affected areas of psoriasis are forehead, back of neck or behind or backside of hands and legs. Ayurveda advocates a comprehensive and holistic approach to managing psoriasis. Acharyas follows treatment with the herbal medicine drugs and preparations are mentioned. Various number of herbal drugs are used to cure disease and regulate body functions. In this study the Ayurvedic management of psoriasis is mentioned. Acharyas described the line of treatment of skin diseases shodhana and shaman therapy.

Keywords: Psoriasis, Kushtha, Ekakushtha, Shodhana and Shaman Chikitsa.

INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda, all skin disorders are collectively categorized under the term "Kushtha." Ekakushtha, classified as one of the minor types (Shudrakushtha), is described in the Ayurvedic text *Charaka Samhita* (Chikitsasthana, Chapter 7) as a condition caused by Vata and Kapha dosha imbalances. The characteristic features of Ekakushtha, including Aswedanam (absence of sweating), Mahavastu (large lesions), and Matsyashakalopamam (fish-scale-like appearance), closely resemble the symptoms of psoriasis. Psoriasis is marked by itching, well-defined deep pink to reddish plaques, induration, and silvery scaling. The most common affected areas of psoriasis are forehead, back of neck or backside of legs and hands. [13]

In Charaka Samhita, Kushtha is discussed immediately after Prameha, suggesting its classification as a Santarpanajanya Vyadhi (disease caused by overnutrition or indulgence). This highlights that the etiology and pathogenesis of Kushtha align with those of Santarpanajanya disorders. It is aptly stated that "Kushtha Dirghroga-nam," emphasizing its nature as a chronic condition. This underscores the chronic nature of Kushtha. The disease arises from the vitiation of seven factors, namely the three Doshas and four Dushyas.[4] However, variations in pain, color, and shape are observed in Kushtha due to the Anshanshakalpana (proportional dominance) of the Doshas. According to Acharya Charaka, Kushtha manifests in countless forms, but for systematic understanding, it is broadly categorized into two main groups: seven Mahakushthas and Shudrakushthas.[5]

Psoriasis is one of the earliest documented skin conditions and remains one of the most fascinating and complex skin disorders. In this the eruption of skin is usually symmetrical and most commonly effects on elbows, knees, scalp and nails etc. [6]

*Author for Correspondence

Atul Khajuria

E-mail: directoralliedhealthsciences@deshbhagatuniversity.in

¹PG Scholar, PG department of Samhita and Siddhanta, V.Y.D.S Ayurvedic medical college and hospital khurja (U.P) India.

²Associate Professor, PG department of Samhita and Siddhanta, V.Y.D.S Ayurvedic medical college and hospital khurja (U.P) India.

³Associate Professor, Department of Kayachikitsa, V.Y.D.S Ayurvedic medical college and hospital khurja (U.P) India.

Received Date: December 13, 2024

Accepted Date: February 27, 2025

Published Date: February 28, 2025

Citation: Atul Khajuria, Gagandeep Singh. A Study on Ekakushtha (Psoriasis) With Its Ayurvedic Management. Journal of AYUSH: Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy. 2025; 14(1): 15–18p.

The precise cause of this disease remains uncertain. It tends to run in families and is precipitated by climate streptococcal infections etc. Male and females are equally affected in all age groups. Psoriasis is a chronic condition with no definitive cure, but treatments can provide temporary relief. Management may involve topical therapies, systemic treatments, or a combination of both, depending on the case. Modern medical science treats psoriasis with PUVA and Corticosteroids. However, the treatment can lead to severe side effects, including liver and kidney failure, as well as bone marrow depletion. Ayurveda offers a comprehensive and holistic approach to treating psoriasis. There are many research works that have been done to re-establish and prove the treatment described in Ayurvedic texts in different directions. The distinctive treatment approach of Ayurveda offers long-term benefits and enhances overall quality of life.[7]

Aims and Objectives

- To better understand and explain the Ekakushtha and its ayurvedic management
- To evaluate the quality of life of psoriasis patients.

Literature Study

The term "Kushtha" is a general classification that covers nearly all skin conditions. According to the commentator Arundatta, Kushtha is responsible for both vitiating and discoloring the skin. Ekakushtha, a type of Shudrakushtha, bears a strong resemblance to psoriasis due to its notable similarities. Bhavaprakasha also recognizes Ekakushtha as the most significant among the Shudrakushthas because of its prominent symptoms. Thus it is called Ekakushtha "Shudrakushtha Mukhyatvata Ekakushtamiti". Comparison between psoriasis and shudrakushtha show in Table 1. [89]

Ekakushtha lakshana	Psoriasis signs and symptoms
Aswedanam	The lesion of this disease are dry and rough
Mahavastu	Bigger lesions are found all over the body and deeply rooted
Matsya Shakalopamam	Well-defined raised macules papules and erythematous plaques found which covered silvery scales.
Krishna Aruna Varna	Varna raised and erythematous thick lesion becomes black in colour
Twaka Parushya	dryness in skin

Table 1. Comparison between psoriasis and shudrakushtha.

- *Nidana of Ekakushtha:* There is no specific description about etiological factors of the disease ekakushtha the etiological factors of kushtha are to be accepted as the etiological factors of the Ekakushtha too. [11]
- *Roopa (Clinical symptoms):* Acharya vagbhata has followed Charaka but has used the word 'Maha Ashryam' in place of 'mahavastum' of Charaka. 'Maha Ashryam' means widely spread

Bhava Prakasha describes that the lesions of Ekakushtha are chakrakara (Circular) and abhrakapatrasama i.e. silvery scales like mica. [12]

These two important features indicate Ekakushtha towards psoriasis, main symptoms of which is silvery white scaling. Thus it is clear that Ekakushtha occurs mainly due to Rasa, Rakta and Mansa dhatus dusti. It indicates that remaining other Dhatus are generally not involved. However, with the progression of the disease, involvement of the nails and joints may occur, indicating the deeper tissues (dhatus) are also affected.

Management

Psoriasis is one of the most prevalent dermatological conditions and continues to pose a challenge across various medical systems. Extensive research has been conducted on psoriasis within both Ayurveda and modern science, but no treatment has yet been found to offer a complete cure. However, psoriasis can be more effectively managed through the Ayurvedic principles of treatment, which include

1. Nidana parivarjana
2. Shodhan (Panchkarma therapy)
3. Shamana chikitsa

Nidana Parivarjana

This emphasizes the importance of avoiding factors like incorrect diet and lifestyle (Mithya Ahara-Vihara) as well as incompatible foods (Viruddha Ahara). By removing these causative factors (Nidana Parivarjana), the progression of the disease can be halted.

Shodhana Chikitsa

Ekakushtha, being a chronic condition, involves the tridoshas (Vata, Pitta, Kapha) as well as the tissues such as skin (Twak), blood (Rakta), muscle (Mamsa), and lymph (Lasika). Hence, detoxification (Shodhana) becomes essential in its treatment. As per Ayurvedic texts, Samshodhana is a significant therapeutic approach in Ayurveda that focuses on expelling accumulated doshas from the body. Procedures like Vamana (therapeutic emesis) and Virechana (therapeutic purgation), followed by appropriate internal medications, are considered highly effective for managing skin disorders.[13]

Shamana Chikitsa

Role of Manasbhavas and Medhyarasayana

It is interesting to note that Astang haridyam explains to follow certain strict code of conduct such as Varta, Tapa, Dhyana, Tyaga, Shila etc. This highlights the necessity of psychological support to patients suffering from Kushtha. It becomes more important in case of wide spreaded chronic and mentally irritating disorders like Ekakushtha (psoriasis). Addition of Medhya Rasayana is conservative management of Ekakushtha helps in well controlling of different Manas Bhavas. Various drugs mentioned for Ekakushtha in Ayurveda.

- *Siddharthka Yogo*: includes Musta, Madanphala, Amalki, Vibhitka, Haritki, Karanja, Aragvadhya, Indrayava, Daruharidra and Saptaparna was specially selected. All the drugs have been described in management of kushtha. As various places in all the great treatise of Ayurveda as well as nighantus. Ekakushtha is a disease of a nature of chronicity. So, the importance of samsodhana along with shaman therapy is found to be more helpful in the treatment of this disease. Keeping this view in mind the Siddharthaka Yoga as Kwatha, Lepa and Virechana are used.
- *External Applications*: Various forms of local applications are prescribed like udvartana, pralepa, parisheka, abhiyanga etc. External applications are best suited for patients with Kushtha who have successfully undergone purification therapies and had the vitiated blood removed from the affected areas. [14]

Discussion

Looking at the impact of psoriasis in society. It is necessary to find out cheap, effective and safe medications in Ayurveda.

Siddharthaka yoga as kwatha, lepa and virechana were selected to treat the Ekakushtha because all drugs are having kushthagna and kandughana properties and less side effects. Most of the drugs of Siddharthaka yoga having katu and tikta rasa, ushna virya, katu vipaka, laghu guna and tridoshghana property. Ekakushtha is vata-kapha pradhan vyadhi.[15]

Acharya Sushruta has described Lephana and Ropana property of laghu guna. Lephana property helps in management of scaling, bahalatva and unnati. Acharya Vagbhatta describes the ushna virya has vata-kapha shamak property.

According to Ashtanga haridyam it has ashupaka property which acts quickly at all minute channels. Ayurveda has Samshodhna chikitsa so it is unique speciality. Vamana and virechana show good result in the management of skin disorders. They help to remove vitiated doshas from body. Along with samana yoga are also very helpful for management of this disease. [1617]

CONCLUSION

Managing Ekakushtha can be challenging, but timely and accurate diagnosis can help prevent many complications. Ayurvedic acharyas have categorized Ekakushtha under Shudrakushthas, emphasizing that the first step in treatment is the elimination of causative factors. In this study, we concluded panchkarma and ayurvedic medicines show good result for management of this disease. The Ayurvedic management of Ekakushtha involves Rukshana/Pachana, Shodhana, and Shamana therapies. These approaches facilitate the digestion of Ama, elimination of vitiated doshas, and restoration of dosha balance (Samyavastha). This treatment not only alleviates the symptoms of the disease but also aims to offer a safe and effective therapeutic option for patients. Herbal drugs and ayurvedic procedures are most effective in ekakushtha (psoriasis). In conclusion, psoriasis poses a significant challenge, greatly affecting the quality of life of patients. The goal of Ayurvedic therapy is centered on enhancing

their quality of life. So, the ayurvedic therapies provide highly improvement in the life quality of the patient psoriasis.

REFERENCES

1. Davidson's principles and practice of medicine, chapter 28, skin diseases: common skin infections and infestations, fungal diseases. 22nd ed. Elsevier; 2014. p. 316.
2. Shah B, Sah RK, Prasad SM. Ayurvedic management of Ekakushtha (Psoriasis) – a case report. *Int J Ayush Case Rep.* 2020 Apr 1;4(1):50–4.
3. Bindalkar VS, Ade V, Deshmukh S. Ayurvedic management of Kitibha Kushta w.r.t. guttatepsoriasis – A single case study. *Int J Ayurvedic Med.* 2020 Jan;11(1):136–42.
4. Kushwaha HC. *Charak Samhita Part-2, Chikitsa Sthana Adhyaya-7 Kushtha Chikitsa, Verse-13.* Chaukhambha Orientalia, reprinted 2018. p. 197.
5. Aradhya V, Paltye P, Ranjan M. Ayurvedic management of Kitibha Kushta (Psoriasis) – a case study. *Int J AYUSH Case Rep.* 2019 Oct 3;3(3):212–7.
6. Tripathi B. *Charaka Samhita Vol. 1.* Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan; 2021. p. 647.
7. Davidson's principles and practice of medicine, chapter 28, skin diseases: common skin infections and infestations, fungal diseases. 22nd ed. Elsevier; 2014. p. 900.
8. Kushwaha HC. *Charak Samhita Part-2, Chikitsa Sthana Adhyaya-7 Kushtha Chikitsa, Verse-39.* Chaukhambha Orientalia, reprinted 2018. p. 199.
9. Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health. Validity of outcome measures [Internet]. 2018. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK534046/>
10. Masooda N, Mahapatra AK, Rajgopal S. Ayurveda treatment protocol for the management of Ek-Kushtha (Psoriasis) – A single case report. *Int J AYUSH Case Rep.* 2020;3(4), 290–297.
11. Kushwaha HC. *Charak Samhita Part-2, Chikitsa Sthana Adhyaya-7 Kushtha Chikitsa, Verse-31.* Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia; Reprinted 2018. p. 198.
12. Kushwaha HC. *Charak Samhita Part-2, Chikitsa Sthana Adhyaya-7 Kushtha Chikitsa, Verse-39.* Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia; Reprinted 2018. p. 199.
13. Sukla AB, Tripathi RD, *Charak Samhita of Agnibesh Vol I, Nidanasthana 5/3,* Chaukhamba Sanskrit Prakasan: 2015. p. 513.
14. Sharma AR, *Sushrut Samhita of Maharsi Sushrut vol I, Nidansthana 5/6,* Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi: 2017. p. 494.
15. Shah B, Sah RK, Prasad S M. Ayurvedic management of Ekakushtha (psoriasis) – A case report. *Int J AYUSH CaRe.* 2020;4(1):50–54.
16. Thakral K. *Sushruta Samhita Part-2, Chikitsa Sthana Adhyaya-36, Verse-51, Dalhana Teeka.* Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia; Reprint 2022. p. 748.
17. Parida AN, Bhatt NN, Dave AR, Shukla VD. A comparative study of vamana & virechana karma in Ekakushtha w.s.r to psoriasis. *AYU.* 2009;30(3):255–259.