

ROLE OF VIRECHANA KARMA (THERAPEUTIC PURGATION) IN PSORIASIS – A
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ABSTRACT

Out of 11 types of *kshudrakustha* explained in our classic, *Ekakustha* is one among them which comes under *vatakaphaja* disorder that resembles psoriasis in conventional medical science. Psoriasis is a chronic autoimmune disease characterized by patchy skin lesion which are typically erythematous, itchy, and scaly and vary from small localized to large extensive and spread throughout the body. Psoriasis typically presents with red patches and white silver scales on the top. Psoriasis is generally thought to be genetic disease which is triggered by environmental factors other factors like trauma, general illness and stress are also involved. In allopathic medicine the cure of this disease is out of questions as the cause is unknown. Ayurveda emphasize the holistic approaches in treating psoriasis. The line of treatment of skin diseases are *shodhana* and *shamana* therapy. *Virechana karma* (purgation therapy) followed by internal medications is considered as best line of management for skin disorders.

KEYWORDS: *Ekakustha*, Psoriasis, *Shodhana*, *Shaman*, *Virechana*, Purgation.

INTRODUCTION

Psoriasis is a chronic autoimmune disease characterized by scaly patches with erythematous base over the skin. Skin is the mirror of our emotions and environment and some aspects of normal physiological changes in the skin color may indicate homeostatic imbalance in the body. Patient with skin disorder always experience physical, psychological, and socio economic embarrassment in society. Psoriasis is a chronic inflammatory disease which gets aggravated by several factors such as psychological (anxiety, stress, depression), dietary (incompatible diet) lifestyle disturbances environmental changes, medications, etc. the prevalence of psoriasis in India varies from 0.44% to 2.8% and it more in males than females.^[1] In Ayurveda, skin disorders come under *kustha roga*. *Kustha roga* is one among the *asta maharoga* (major 8 diseases) in Ayurveda. *Ekakustha* is one among these which resembles with the symptoms of psoriasis.

Till date the proper management of psoriasis in allopathic system of medicine is still a question as the causes is unknown and the treatment protocol is associated with adverse effects. According to ayurvedic classics, *Acharyas* have emphasized on *Shodhana* therapy (bio purification) in the management of all *Kushtha* which eliminates the vitiated *doshas*. *Virechana* (therapeutic purgation) is a specific modality for the elimination of *Pitta Dosh*a but it is also effective upon

Vata and *Kapha Dosh*a as well as in *Rakta pradoshaj vikara*. It is less stressful procedure than *Vamana* (therapeutic emesis) and has less possibility of complications. So, *Virechana* (therapeutic purgation) was selected for the *Shodhana* in this case.^[2]

CASE STUDY

A 45 year male patient visited the outpatient department of Kashyap Ayurveda, having complaints of skin lesion throughout the body mainly on, bilateral upper & lower limbs since last 4-5years. Associated complaints were severe itching sensation on lesions along with other body surface. While scrapping patient complaint of shedding off of silvery white powder leaving tiny bleeding spots. According to patient initially the lesions were small round shape started on bilateral upper limbs, trunk and bilateral lower limb and gradually throughout the body. The affected parts were of variable shape, red in color i.e. erythematous with surface covered with silvery scale. Hence it was clear case of psoriasis. He had allopathic medication history for last 3years including corticosteroids. He had found mild improvement in starting phase of treatment, but then there was no relief in the condition.

Personal history

General condition of patient was good along with the routine investigation were within normal limit. Patient was vegetarian with good appetite. Sleep, micturition and

bowel habit was normal and regular. There was no personal history of autoimmune disorders.

On local examination of lesion: Multiple, discrete, erythematous plaque with loosely attached silvery white scales present on bilateral upper and lower limbs also few on trunk. Auspitz sign positive.

Treatment

The patient was admitted for *shodhana* therapy (*virechana*) and internal medication for 2 months. *Virechana karma*, one of the basic procedures of detoxification followed by oral medication *haritakyadi yoga* (*haritaki* + *majistha* + *haridra*) 3gm twice a day before food for 2 months. All other medicine patient was taking were stopped. The details of the therapy are given below:

Virechana procedure

1. *Purva karma* (pre-operative)
2. *Pradhana karma* (operative)
3. *Paschat karma* (post-operative)

Purvakarma

Purvakarma comprises of *deepana*, *pachana*, *snehana* followed by *abhyanga* & *swedaana*. *Deepena*, *pachana* was done by *trikatu churna* 2 gm thrice a day before food. *Snehana* was done internally by *pancha tikta ghrita*. After obtaining of *samyak snigdha lakshana* (proper oleation) for 5 days patient was advised to do *abhyanga* with *murchita taila* and *swedana - sarvanga baspa sweda* by *dashamool* decoction for three days. During the time of *snehana* & *swedana* light warm liquid diet was given whenever patient was hungry. On fourth day *pittaja kala virechana* was performed in the morning.

Before and after treatment pictures



Before treatment



After treatment

Pradhana karma

At the day of administrations of *virechana yoga*, *Abhyanga* followed by *swedana* was done. Vitals were noted (pulse, B.P., temperature, respiration rate). It was recorded in regular interval during *pradhana karma*. *Virechana yoga* was administered in morning 9 am on empty stomach. *Virechana yoga* was prepared from 100ml *trifala qwatha* (decoction) + *kutki churna* 5gm + *trivrit churna* 5gm. Patient was given hot water and advised to take sip by sip repeatedly when needed. The patient was under strict observation to avoid complication. Number of *vegās* (motion) was counted till the symptoms of proper purgation like passing of stool with mucus in the last two motion and later sign and symptoms.

Paschat karma

The time period in between the completion of *vegās* to intake of normal diet special food is designed known as *Paschat karma*. Mainly its duration depends upon the type of *shuddhi* done during the procedure. As soon as purgation completed and patient felt hungry *samsarjana karma* (post dietetic management) according to the type of *shuddhi* patient was given thin rice gruel two times a day for 3 to 5 days. Follow up medicine was prescribed *haritakyadi yoga* (*Haritaki churna* 1gm+ *Manjistha churna* 1gm+ *Haridra churna* 1gm)

RESULTS

Patient got relief from the symptoms of itching, silvery scales and burning sensation after the 3rd day of *snehapana* itself after 15 day of therapy there was marked improvement in the size and colour of lesion. 50 % relief in symptoms after the *shodhana* therapy and 70% relief after taking 2 month oral medicine was observed.



Before treatment



After treatment

DISCUSSION

As per Ayurveda view, psoriasis is considered as a *raktaja* disorder having vitiation of *doshas*. In greater extent *virechana karma* is one of the treatment modality for this ailment pre-operative, operative and post-operative care during *virechana karma* is most important to yield better outcome in psoriasis. The *dosha* situated in *twak*. *Agni* is dearranged therefore *deepana*, *pachana* medicine prior to *snehapana* are important which helps in *Ama pachana* and normalizing the *Agni*, generally *arohana snehapana* administered till *samyak snigdha lakshana* or maximum seven days. Gradually increase the dose of *sneha* helps in loosening the bond between the *dosha*, *dushya*, which helps in breaking the pathogenesis of psoriasis.

For the *snehapana*, *panchatikta ghrita* was taken. *Panchatikta ghrita* contains *nimba*, *patola*, *vyagri*, *guduchi*, *trifala*. The drugs possess *Ushna*, *Tikshna*, *Vyavayi*, *Vikashi*, *Katu*, *Tiktarasatmaka* and *Katu vipaka*. It was observed that the action of drugs was mainly due to properties of these drugs which have *Deepan*, *Pachana*, *Amapachaka*, *Strotoshodhaka*, *Raktaprasadan*, *Raktashodhaka*, *Kandughna*, *Kushthaghna* and *Varnya* mechanisms of actions. They acted mainly for the eradication of *doshas* from whole body and brought them into *Koshtha*. It also pacified the symptoms like itching, discoloration and dryness due to aggravated *Vata* and *Kapha doshas*.

The main components of *Virechana yoga trifala* decoction 100ml + *kutki churna* 5 gm + *trivrit churna* 5gm and their actions are anti-inflammatory, blood purifier and laxatives. During the 15th day course of *Virechana*, patient had reported 50-60% improvement in his symptoms. He had got complete relief from itching. The discolored skin and red scaly patches had developed quite normal lustre. The silver scales disappeared. Also the patient had developed normal bowel habit. Patient was planned *shodhana* therapy followed by *shaman* therapy. *Virechana karma* is one of the treatment modality for this ailment preoperative, operative and post-operative care during *virechana karma* is most important to yield better outcome in psoriasis. The

doshas are situated in *twaka* and *agni* is also deranged. Therefore *Deepana-Pachana* medicines prior to *snehapana* are important, which helps in *Ama Pachana* and normalizing the *Agni*. Generally *sodhana poorva Arohana snehapana* administered till *samyak snigdha lakshana* or maximum 7 days. Gradual increase of dose of *sneha* is important for loosening the bond between *Dosha* and *Dushya*, thereby helping in breaking three pathogenesis of psoriasis. Probable mode of action of *Virechana karma* is a method of bio-purification, process of *Virechana* proceeds with *Deepana* and *Pachana* which reduce the *Ama* and normalize the *Agni* or metabolic activity,^[3] After that in *Snehapana* procedure, which lubricates the all micro and macro channels and responsible for *Uttkleshana* of *Dosha*. It also reduces the dryness, burning sensation and itching. *Ghrita* also having *Rasayana* property may be more beneficial in management of *Kustha*. *Sarvanga Abhayanga* and *Swedana* remove obstruction in *Srotas* and bring the vitiated *Dosha* from *Shakha* to *Kostha*. *Virechana karma* does cleansing the *Kostha* and brings down the morbid *Dosha* from body and helps to maintain the *Dosha* and *Dhatu Samya* or keep up the homeostasis and leads to the refurbish and rejuvenation of body tissues and also boost the body. Immunity and cleanses the *Srotas* (micro channels). Therefore, *virechana* is very important therapeutic measure for psoriasis.^[4]

CONCLUSION

The disease psoriasis appears to be largely a disorder of keratinization. The basic defect is rapid displacement of epidermis in psoriatic lesion (3-4 days instead of 28 days in normal skin). There is evidence that both hormonal and immunological mechanisms are involved at a cellular level. The raised concentrations of metabolites of arachidonic acid in the affected skin of people with psoriasis are related to the clinical changes.^[5] Ayurveda believes in treating psoriasis through *shodhana* & *shaman* treatment. *Virechana karma* is commonly advocated in the management of psoriasis as it helps in correcting the basic pathogenic factors with *pitta*, *rakta*, *Agni*, *twak*. 50 % relief in symptoms after the *shodhana* therapy and 70% relief after taking 2 month oral medicine was observed in this

particular case. Thus, *Virechana karma* (purgation therapy) followed by internal medications is considered as best line of management for skin disorders.

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