

Review of *Kushtha Hetu* according to *Bruhatrayi*

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Abstract

Our nature is full of surprises but for every incidence there is at least one causative factor. This rule cannot be changed and that's why for retrogression of every disease it's etiology is important. In most of the instances hetus are directly responsible for the disease but sometimes not. It is therefore, important to take a view of the disease in etiological manner. In *Ayurveda* the causative factor of any condition is classified as '*Hetu*'. Its importance can be noticed simply because in every *samhita* the *hetu* of any disease has been described firstly while describing the disease and other factors are told after it. We all know that skin covers our whole body and disorders of skin are great matter of interest. In *samhitas* the disorders of skin are designated as '*Kushthas*'. *Kushtha* denotes the change in appearance, texture and functioning of the skin. It is a term used for broad meaning and our ancient scholars have divided *kushtha* in various types according to its *doshik* involvement and power of affecting the body. Although it is a disorder of skin but due to its vast extension, other systems of body also get affected by the disease. Knowledge of *hetu* is important to restrict the occurrence and progression of disease.

Keywords

Samhita, Hetu, Kushtha



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INTRODUCTION

The causative factors behind any disease should be known to rule out that particular malady. Sometimes we don't get cause of an event. May be because of our lack of knowledge or due to ignorance of the observable facts. In modern medical science also, causative factors of any disease are the great point of interest. Our ancient scholars knew the importance of causative factor completely and they described it thoroughly in their texts. *Acharya Charaka* has described *nidanapanchaka* and kept first place for *nidana* or *karana*¹.

First impression of a person is the look of that individual that's why skin is the great matter of concern. The nature of skin is different according to people living in different areas but the basic composition is same everywhere. *Kushtha* is the term used by our ancient scholars for representing the skin disorders. *Acharya Charaka* told the *sparshaghnanam* for *kushtha* because of its command to destroy the skin². *Acharya Sushruta* has correlated the progression of the disease with the development of roots of the tree³. He described this disease as generated from *beeja dosha* and spread as hereditary disorder also⁴. A variety of

aetiological factors are described in *bruhatrayi* for the development of the *kushtha*. It is valuable to revise the aetiology of *kushtha* for enhanced understanding of the disease and taking care of the patients.

According to modern system of medicine *kushtha* can be compared to leprosy. It is a chronic infectious disease caused by the acid fast rod mycobacterium leprae. The mode of transmission probably is respiratory and involves prolonged exposure in childhood. The disease is endemic in tropical and sub tropical Asia, Africa, Central and South America and the pacific regions⁵.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

These are the aims and objectives for the current study.

1. To study the aetiology of *kushtha* in *bruhatrayi*.
2. To ensure the importance of aetiological factors of *kushtha*.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Ayurvedic textual materials have been used, mainly *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya* and available commentaries of these *samhitas*, for the study. Some books of modern system of

pathology and medicine have also been evaluated. From these books references have been collected.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ayurveda is the science of knowledge. Skin disorders have a great impact in life that's why in all the books of *bruhatrayi* knowledge of *kushtha* has been given by scholars in the particular chapters. These are the *hetu* which have been described by different authors of *bruahatrayi*.

Charaka Samhita

Acharya Charaka has described *kushtha* in both *nidana* and *chikitsa sthana*. The *hetu* explained in *nidana sthana* are as follows⁶:

- 1) Who uses cold and hot things in contradictory and disorderly manner.
- 2) Who uses saturating and desaturating food in contradictory way.
- 3) Who takes honey, *phanita*, fish, *lakucha*, radish and *kakamachi* constantly, excessively and while suffering from indigestion.
- 4) Who takes *chilchima* fish with milk.
- 5) Who takes diet mostly containing *hayanaka*, *yavaka*, *chinaka*, *uddalaka* and *kodo* combined with milk, curd, butter milk, *kola*, horse

gram, black gram, and oils of linseed and *kusumbha*.

- 6) After taking these in excessive quantity who indulges in sexual activity, physical exercise and exposure to immense heat.
- 7) Who Dips in cold water immediately after affliction with fear, exhaustion and intense heat.
- 8) Without vomiting the burnt food again takes food of similar nature.
- 9) Suppresses the urge of emesis.
- 10) Applies too much oleation.

The *hetu* described in *chikitsa sthana* are as follows⁷:

- 1) Those who habitually takes contradictory food stuff and liquids, unctuous and weighty substances.
- 2) Who stifles the natural urges especially of vomiting
- 3) Who are exposed to bodily exercise and intense heat after eating in excessive amount
- 4) Who uses cold ,hot ,lightening events and against the prescribed order

- 5) Who applies cold water instantly after intensive exposure to sun, exertion and fear
 - 6) Who takes food during indigestion and when earlier meal is not properly digested
 - 7) Who uses contra indicated objects while undergoing *panchakarma* therapy
 - 8) Who uses excessively new cereals, curd ,fish ,salt and sour materials
 - 9) Who indulges in eating black gram, radish , flour preparations, sesamum, milk and jaggery.
 - 10) Who executes sexual intercourse during indigestion.
 - 11) Who Sleeps frequently in day.
 - 12) Who insults *brahmana*, teachers.
 - 13) Who indulges in sinful activities.
- 2) Who indulges in physical work out and sexual intercourse after taking *sneha* or emesis
 - 3) Who frequently eats meats of domestic, swampy and aquatic animals with milk
 - 4) Who takes dip in water after having heat by fire
 - 5) Who suppresses vomiting

Beside these *hetu acharya Sushruta* has mentioned that *kushtha* can be got by that person also who died with *kushtha*. According to *acharya Sushruta* it follows in rebirth too⁹.

Acharya Sushruta also mentioned *kushtha* as infectious disease as it spreads from man to man by indulgence in physical contact, expired air, intake with others in same plate, sharing bed and chair, applying fabric, garland and paste¹⁰.

Ashtanga Hridaya

Acharya Vagbhata has described *hetu* of *kushtha* in *nidana sthana*, which are as follows^{11, 12}:

- 1) Who takes defective diet and deeds particularly eating weighty, mismatched, unsuitable and unwholesome items and also during indigestions.
- 1) Who indulges in unsuitable foods and activities, especially the incompatible
- 2) Who is abusing the ascetics

- 3) Who commits murder
- 4) Who usurps the properties of others
- 5) Sinful acts
- 6) Effects of actions of past lives.

DISCUSSION

In all *samhitas* *kushtha* is divided mainly into two parts: *maha kushtha* and *kshudra kushtha*. *Maha kushtha* are the severe type of *kushtha* while *kshudra kushtha* are less brutal than the previous one. In *Charaka Samhita* it is mentioned that *kushtha* cannot be built up by only one *dosha*. There can be variation in the pain, color, shape, specific manifestations, name and treatment of the various type of *kushtha*. These variations occurred even though they are produced by same type of factors. It is because the permutation and combination of the various fractions of *dosha* and their location in the body¹³. It is also described in *Charaka Samhita* that vitiation of three *doshas* viz. *vata*, *pitta*, *kapha* and four *dhatu*s of the body viz. *tvak*, *mamsa*, *shonita* and *lasika*; occurs during *kushtha*¹⁴. In *Sushruta Samhita* it is mentioned that different type of characters of *kushtha* originates from the vitiation of the different type of *doshas* i.e., due to vitiation of *vata* contraction of skin, numbness, perspiration, swelling, tearing,

crookedness of hands and loss of voice occurs; due to vitiation of *pitta* suppuration, bursting, falling off the fingers, redness of the ears etc occurs ; due to vitiation of *kapha* , itching, swelling, heaviness etc occurs¹⁵. Therefore, by visualizing the nature of manifestation of *kushtha*, it can be said that types of *hetu*. These *hetu* not only damage the skin but also affect the peripheral nervous tissue¹⁶. *Doshik* evaluation of *kushtha* is also important for the proper treatment of disease. *Acharyas* have considered *manas hetu* also responsible for manifestation of *kushtha*.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, following points must be considered:

- 1) *Acharya Charaka* has given most numbers of *hetu* of *kushtha* in *bhruhatrayi*
- 2) *Hetu* of *kushtha* are the aggravating factors of all three *doshas* i.e., *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*.
- 3) *Kushtha* affects not only the skin but affects other systems also.
- 4) For removal of the disease proper understanding of its factors must be done.

- 5) *Manas hetu* are also responsible, we should consider it while treating *kushtha*.

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