

Ayurvedic Treatment of Psoriasis: A Case Report

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Abstract

Twacha is a vital component of human body. It reflects both, the state of well being and disease state. A structural and functional insult to *twacha* compromises its main function of protection; produces discomfort symptoms as well as has a cosmetic concern. *Ek-kushtha* is a condition where disfigurement of the skin along with other features like- itching, scaling and discharge are cause of worry for the patient. Genetics, dietary, lifestyle related, environmental and behavioural/psychological factors play major role in pathogenesis. Vitiating of all three *doshas* is major contributing factor in the manifestation of the disease. Ayurveda advocates holistic approach of *shodhan*, internal drug administration and external application in the treatment protocol. In this article, a patient treated with similar treatment protocol is presented as a case study.

Keywords

Ayurveda, Psoriasis, Panchkarma



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INTRODUCTION

Skin covers the entire body. It plays the important functions like protecting against pathogens, insulation, temperature regulation, sensation and vitamin D and B synthesis. It has two layers: an outer layer called the epidermis and an inner layer called the dermis. Skin cells are created in the dermis and move up through the epidermis to the skin surface. Skin cells are continually dying and being replaced. Normally, skin cells mature and shed in about a month. In psoriasis, the skin cells reproduce many times faster than normal and live only three to four days.

Similar condition called as *Ek-kushtha* has been described in Ayurveda which matches etymological derivation, pathogenesis and the clinical picture. *Ek-kushtha* is described in classical Ayurvedic literature under *Kushtha Roga*. On basis of our present understanding of the disease Psoriasis, it is an autoimmune disease which requires genetic predisposition and environmental triggers in addition to dietary and lifestyle factors to establish. It is not just restricted to the skin but if remained untreated, disturbs the psyche of the individual; and may end up in complications like psoriatic arthritis. Even though there are varieties of treatment

options available in modern sciences, the relief is only symptomatic, and patient has to keep on taking the treatment to continue the symptomatic relief also.

As per Ayurveda, each patient of Psoriasis needs a different approach as the etiology and pathology are variable. *Vata-Kapha/Rakta* vitiation is the basic pathology and needs a holistic approach to treat.

Here is described a patient with psoriasis who took treatment for the condition from more than two dozens of physicians from four countries, and was bed ridden at times due to his aggravated symptoms; and was seeking consultation for past 31 years, which included corticosteroids orally and topically, topical tars and various other *Ayurvedic* and *Homeopathic* treatment. However, even after so many efforts, patient had very slight symptomatic relief, and if ever there was a relief, it was soon followed by relapse of symptoms. Subsequently he visited this hospital on suggestion of his friend.

CASE STUDY I

The patient, a 62 year old man, sikh by religion, shopkeeper, living in Punjab presented at the OPD of Panchkarma Deptt.

of Mehar Chand DAV Ayurvedic Hospital Jalandhar on 02/08/2013 with complaints of red coloured raised patches over skin of almost whole of the body, including the palms and the soles, scaling and intense itching over the lesions, and occasional discharge from the lesions for past 31 years. He was a pre diagnosed case of psoriasis since 1984. His problem started when he was 31 years old with a single eruption over scalp, which had intense itching. On scratching the eruption there was discharge. Itching persisted, and patient started applying Ointment Betnovate on his own. During this he shifted to Iran during winters for some time where it was the climate was cold. Subsequently, few more similar eruptions appeared over the scalp and then over the other parts of the body. He took treatment from various Allopathic, Homeopathic and Ayurvedic physicians but the record of none is available with patient. During treatment from some of physicians he had good relief but symptoms resurfaced while taking the treatment. On examination the patient had sharply demarcated, erythematous, scaling plaques over almost whole the body.

SAMPRAPTI

Onset of the disease from an eruption (*pidika*), and the *Pittaj Prakriti* suggested that the basic pathological factor as per Ayurvedic aspect might be *Pittaja*, which led to deranged *dhatwagni*. *Nidana* like cold atmosphere, use of alcohol, excessive exercise and *adhyashna* lead to vitiation of all three *doshas* and *ama utpatti*, which jointly led to *twak shaithilya*.

TREATMENT

All oral and topical medicines were stopped. Considering the condition as *Ek-kushtha* wherein vitiation of *Vata* and *Kapha doshas* are prevalent, and the *Vata-Pittaj Prakriti* of the patient, he was first given *Virechan karma*¹. He was given *Chitrakadi Vati*², 250 mg thrice a day for *Aam Pachan*. Then he was given Internal Oleation with *Panchtikta Ghrita*³. Internal Oleation was given till the *Lakshanas* of *Samyak snehan* appeared; in this case on 7th day. On eighth and ninth day *Sarwang Abhyang* and *Sarwang Swedan* was done. On tenth day, he was advised not to take anything orally. *Sarwang Abhyang* and *Sarwang Swedan* was done and for *virechan Kwath* of 10 gm *Trivrit*⁴ and 15 gm *Triphla*⁴ was given. Patient had *pravar shuddhi* with 24 *vegas*⁵. Then he was advised *samsarjan karma*⁶ for next seven

days. After this the patient reported 40 % relief in the symptoms.

After *virechan* he was given following medicines.

- *Nimbadi Churna*⁷ : 1.5 g
- *Sudarshan Churna*⁸ : 1g
- *Kutaki Churna*⁹: 1g
- *Giloye Churna*¹⁰: 1 g

Three times a day with water.

- Mahamanjishthadi Kwath 20 ml twice a day.¹¹
- A patent medicine for local application containing *Indrayav*.^{12,13}
- A patent medicine for local application containing *Indrayav*¹² and *Doorva*^{14,15}

Along with the above medicines he was advised to avoid pickles, sauce, baked items, curd, cheese, oranges, lemon, non-vegetarian diet; and was advised to take pathya aahar like moong, masoor, parval etc. Within 2 weeks of treatment patient reported 70 % relief in terms of symptoms like scaling and itching; and the patches vanished from most of the areas of the body, but there was slight discharge from the remaining patches. He was advised to continue the same treatment for further 2 weeks.

On next visit he reported further improvement but the discharge was still there, so he was given *Yashad Bhasm*¹⁶ 125 mg twice a day for 2 weeks.

Two months after starting the treatment he had marked relief in the symptoms, but few small patches were still present over the scalp. Patient was advised to get his scalp shaved but he did not agree for that on religious grounds.

After 3 months of starting the therapy *virechan karma* was again done. And this was subsequently repeated every 3 months¹⁷. After 8 months of treatment patient complained of appearance of 1 fresh patch over Left arm. The treatment was continued as such except that *Mahamanjishthadi Kwath* was replaced with *Khadirarishta*¹⁸ and *Panchtikta Ghrita*¹⁹.

On continuing this treatment along with repeated *Virechan Karma* every 3 months¹⁷, patient is free from the symptoms except few patches over scalp. The complexion of skin is very natural.

CONCLUSION

Case presented here was the one with sudden appearance of few eruptions which ultimately settled as Psoriasis. Adopting the

holistic approach, it was considered that the *Pittaj prakriti* of the patient along with vitiation of *Vata* and *Kapha* was responsible for the condition. Thus to establish the humoral balance, procedure *Virechana* was performed followed by administration of oral and local drugs.

According to Ayurvedic point of view Psoriasis is not a problem limited to just skin, rather it is manifestation of disturbed metabolism due to deranged humoral balance and subsequent depletion of body tissues, and cannot be treated without establishing this balance.

Systemic *Pitta* predominant *Tridoshar* therapy *Virechana* was performed. Then oral and local use of the drugs to treat the *kushtha* was done. *Kutaki* was added for regular *Pitta Virechan* and its *Kushthahar* properties . *Yashad Bhasm* was added to control the discharge. It was ensured that *Jathragni* of the patient was always normal, and that the patient follows the do's and don'ts in respect to *Aahar* and *Vihar*.

Shodhna by *Virechana* and use of *Kushthahara* and *Vranasravahara* drugs followed by repeated *Virechana* worked well in relieving the patient.

Thus we can conclude that by adopting the holistic approach of *Ayurveda*, we can provide subjective and objective relief to the Psoriasis patients.

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