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Ayurvedic Management of Shwitra Vyadhi : A Case Study

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Abstract

Shwitra is a type of *Kushtha* characterized by white depigmented patches on the skin due to vitiation of *Tridosha*, predominantly *Pitta*, involving *Twak* and *Rakta Dhatu*. *Shwitra* can be correlated with vitiligo or leucoderma, where it manifest as white patches on the skin due to partial or complete loss of skin pigmentation and causes cosmetic imbalance of the body. A male patient, aged 27 yrs. suffering from white patches on face and neck region from last 6 months and he was treated with the *Shodhana* and *Shamana Chikitsa* for a period of 2 month. Result was assessed from the changes in the size of patch and photographs. Proper written consent was taken from the patient. Follow up was done at 15 days interval and after 2 months there was marked improvement seen in patches and colour. The present study elucidates various therapeutic perspectives on *Shwitra Kustha*, demonstrating a management protocol that is both economically viable and clinically safe.

Keywords: *Tridosha, Shwitra, Vitiligo, Virechana, Shamana Aushadhi.*

Introduction :

Shwitra is a condition characterized by whitish discoloured patches on the body, which is caused due to involvement of *Sapta Dravyas* i.e. *Vata*, *Pitta*, *kapha*, *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa* and *Meda*.^[1]

Shwitra can be correlated with vitiligo. Vitiligo is an autoimmune condition in which skin became hypopigmented due to loss of melanocytes cells. It is very distressing disease and because of its ugly appearance and presentation of the body, it may disturb patients personal, familial, social life. It affects both sexes equally. Worldwide prevalence of vitiligo is 1% among which highest incidence has been recorded in Mexico and India. In India it is estimated between 3-4% although incident is high as 8.8% in dark skinned people.^[2] Numerous theories exist regarding the etiology of vitiligo, including the main reasons include autoimmune, chemical contact, endocrine, genetic, psychological, and adverse drug interactions.^[3]

Dishonesty, ungraciousness, contempt for the gods, insulting the preceptors, evil deeds, sins from past incarnations and eating contradictory foods are the actual reasons that are considered *Nidana* in *Ayurveda*.^[4] There is no complete cure for Vitiligo and hence, there is a scope for *Ayurveda* to intervene. *Ayurvedic* treatment employs a comprehensive protocol: purification therapies to eliminate systemic toxins, complemented by targeted topical applications and internal medications. Together, these interventions disrupt the "*Dosha-Dushya Sammurchana*" to address the root cause of disease.

Aims And Objectives :

- 1) To study the case of *Shwitra* (vitiligo) through *Ayurveda*.
- 2) To analyze the role of *Ayurvedic* management in *Shwitra Vyadhi*.

Case Description:

A 27 years old male patient came at OPD of R.T. *Ayurved* Hospital, Akola. With complaints of white patches on face and neck.

History of present illness :

Patient was healthy before 6 months but gradually he noticed that small white patches over face and neck. Initially he neglected but with the time the size of patch gets increased. For this patient visited dermatologist in his town where he was diagnosed as vitiligo and given treatment. Patient took treatment for nearly 2 months and didn't get any significant results. Later on for permanent solution for the said complaints he visited the OPD of R.T. *Ayurved* Hospital, Akola for further management.

Past History :

No History of any major illness like Diabetes mellitus, Hypertension or Thyroid Disorder.

Family History : Nil; Family history negative for *Shwitra* (vitiligo).

Personal History :

- Appetite - Irregular
- Sleep - Normal
- Bowel - Regular but not clear
- Bladder - 4-5 times /day
- Weight - 62 kg
- Height - 156 cm
- Diet - Veg and Non veg (Mostly preferred high protein diet)
- Psychological history - Nil (Mostly worried for

exams)

- Occupation - Student

General Examination :

- Temperature - 98.2° F
- Pulse rate - 76/min
- Blood pressure - 120/70 mm of hg
- Pallor - Absent
- Icterus - Absent
- Oedema - Absent

Ashtavida Pariksha :

- Nadi - Pitta-Vataj
- Mutra - 4-5 times/day
- Mala - Drawamal (1 to 2 episode, Durghandiyukta)
- Jivha - Saam
- Shabda - Spashta
- Sparsha - Ushna
- Drik - Prakrut
- Aakruti - Madhyam

Diagnosis :

On examination the case was identified as *Shwitra* based on the clinical signs and symptoms.

Samprapti Ghatkas -

- Doshā- Tridoshaja
- Dushya- Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa & Meda
- Agni- Agnimandhya
- Srotas- Rasavaha, Raktavaha, Mamsavaha & Medovaha
- Srotodusti- Sanga
- Rogamarga- Bahya
- Udbhava Sthana- Amashaya
- Vyakta Sthana- Twacha
- Swabhava- Chirakari
- Sadhyasadyata- Yapyya

Treatment protocol :-

Total duration - 2 months

Treatment given -

Ayurveda categorises treatment into 3 main stages

1) *Nidanparivarjana*^[5] 2) *Sanshamana* 3)

Sanshodhana.^[6] The treatment protocol was

formulated by following *Ayurvedic* principles and aphorisms. The *Doshas* were deep seated in *Rakta*,

Mamsa and *Medo Dhatu*. *Shodhana* was done prior to *Shamana* to eliminate the toxins from the body.

As *Acharya Vagbhata* says the person should be prepared with *Deepana* and *Panchana* before

Snehapana^[7], *Chitrakadi Vati* in a dose of 2 tablet twice after food with lukewarm water was given for

2 days. *Snehapana* was done with *Panchatikta*

Ghrita for 5 days as *Samyak snigdha lakshana* was seen at 5th day. All precautions were followed

during *Snehapana* procedure. 1st day - 30ml.....2nd day - 60ml.....3rd day - 90ml.....4th day -

120ml.....5th day - 150ml. After proper internal *oleation* is achieved, patient was given a 3 day

resting period. During this period *Bahya Snehan*

was done by *Neem Taila* followed by *Swedana*.

Patient is given *Snigdha*, *Ushna*, *Drava Ahara*.

Virechana Karma is performed on 4th day after the *Kapha Kala* with the help of *Trivrit Avleha* along

with the *Aragwadh Kwath*. During the *Virechan* karma, the patient experienced 18 Vegas

(*Kaphantar*). This indicated a *Madhyam shuddhi*. A

5-day *Samsarjan* karma with 2 *Annakalas* was prescribed according to the standard dietary

guidelines.

Medicine (Shaman *Aushadhi*) given after *Virechana* karma :

Medicine	Dose	Time period
<i>Arogyavardhini vati</i>	2 Tablets twice after meal with water	2 months
<i>Krumikuthar ras</i>	2 Tablets twice after meal with water	2 months
<i>Bakuchi Ghanawati</i>	2 Tablets twice after meal with water	2 months
<i>Khadirarishta</i>	20ml twice after meal with water	2 months
<i>Avalgujadi lepa</i>	Local application (Sufficient quantity F/B - 10 minutes exposure to sunlight.	2 months

Follow up was taken at every 15 days of interval to examine the patient condition and to see the efficacy of the drugs.



Discussion :

Role of *Virechana* in *Shwitra* *Vyadhi* :- *Shwitra* is classified under *Kushta Roga*. While it involves a *Tridosha* imbalance, it primarily affects *Bhrajaka Pitta* (the subtype of *Pitta* residing in the skin that provides color and complexion) and *Rakta Dhatu*

(blood). Since *Pitta* and *Rakta* have an intimate relationship (*Ashraya-Ashrayi bhava*), vitiated *Pitta* directly vitiated the blood, leading to the loss of skin pigmentation. *Shwitra* is a *Raktapradoshaj Vyadhi*^[8]. *Acharya Charaka* explains *Virechana* is the ultimate treatment for *Pitta*-related^[9] disorders. *Virechana* expels toxic *Pitta* and purifies the blood thus restores the normal functioning of *Bhrajaka Pitta*.

Arogyavardhini Vati^[10] - It is indicated under *Kushtaroga Adhikara*. *Arogyavardhini Vati* contains *Shuddha Parada*, *Shuddha Gandhak*, *Loha Bhasma*, *Abhraka Bhasma*, *Tamra*, *Triphala*, *Shilajatu*, *Guggulu*, *Chitrak Moola*, *Katuki*, and *Nimba Patra* extract. This formulation supports digestion, helps eliminate excess *Snigdha Dravyas*, aids in digestion of *Drava* and *Kleda*, and improves blood quality. Acts as a potent liver stimulant and *Mala Shodhana*, balances *Pitta* and clears *Strotas*. Also helps in purgation due to presence of *Kutki*. It works on the *Meda Dhatu* and the *Dhatwagni*, thus digesting and removing the *Ama Janit Medo Dhatuvridhi*. In *Shwitra Vyadhi* there is a *Sanga*(Obstruction) of *Doshas*. *Arogyavardhini* clears the obstruction in the micro channel's. In modern aspect melanin synthesis requires the enzyme *tyrosinase*. And copper is an essential cofactor for *tyrosinase* activity. Presence of *Tamra bhasma* (micro particles of copper) may helps *tyrosinase* activity to stimulate *melanogenesis*.

Krumikuthar Rasa^[11] - *Acharya Sushruta* has mentioned that all types of *Kushta* originate from *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha* and *Krimi*.^[12] *Raktaja Krimi* circulating in the blood affects the *normalacy* of blood in which the *Bhrajak Pitta* reside. Which is

responsible for the normal pigmentation of skin. *Krumikuthar* Rasa is used to break the pathogenesis of the disease and not directly used for repigmentation.

Bakuchi Ghanavati^[13] - *Bakuchi Ghanavati* is a concentrated, water-extracted tablet made from the raw *Bakuchi* drug. According to Raj Nighantu (*Shwitrashamani para*) and Bhavprakash Nighantu (*Shwitrahari para*) it is the ultimate remedy for *Shwitra*. The *Tikta Rasa*, *Ruksha Guna* and *Katu Vipaka* clears the main *Strotodushti*. *Laghu* and *Ruksha Guna* subsides the vitiated *Kapha*. It has properties like *Kushtahara*, *Kaphavatahara* and making promote shining of skin.^[14]

The main constituent of *Bakuchi* is *Psoralin*. It increases the rate of synthesis and amount of melanin and hence encouraging skin to recover from a *vitiliginous* state.^[15] *Psoralia corylifolia* is the only drug that has a dual action on both *Rouget's* cell and the *melanoblastic* cell of the skin.

^[16] The active principles in *Bakuchi* (*Psoralens*) act on these cells to dilate the *intradermal* capillaries. This increases local blood plasma flow, which is why applying *Bakuchi* or taking it internally often causes the characteristic redness (*erythema*) over the white patches.

Khadirarishta^[17] - The primary ingredient of *Khadirarishta* is *Khadira* extract. As *Acharya Charaka* said *Khadira* is the best drug in *Kushta Vyadhi*. And also told that use of *Khadira* in *Kushta Vyadhi* in every possible way like in *Ahara*, *Pana* (Drinking), *Vihara* (Bath/Wash), *Bheshaja* (Medicine). It has *Laghu*, *Ruksha Guna*, *Tikta*, *Kashaya* Rasa, *Katu Vipaka* and *Sheeta Virya*

properties. The extract is used for its *immunomodulatory* properties, blood purification, astringent effects, bactericidal action, cooling properties and anti-inflammatory benefits.^[18] As a result, it enhances liver function, purifies the blood, and supports the production of melanin pigments by melanocytes which are essential for skin pigmentation.

Avalgujadi lepa^[19] - It is made from *Avalguja* (*Bakuchi*) seeds and *Hartala* (*Arsenic trisulphide*) processed with *Gomutra*. And as *Acharya Vagbhata* says it is "*Savarnakaranam Param*" i.e. it is a supreme application for restoring the natural colour of the skin. The active constituent in *Bakuchi* is *psoralin*. When applied topically and exposed to sunlight, it triggers a phototoxic reaction that stimulates the proliferation of melanocytes and promote the synthesis of melanin^[20].

Hartala breaks the pathogenesis of *Shwitra* which prevent the self destruction of melanocytes. The *Vyavayi* and *Ashukari* properties of *Hartala* may help the other drugs to reach the site quickly and remove the obstruction of *Shwitra*.^[21] *Gomutra* is *Katu*, *Tikshna*, *Ushna*, and *Kshara* in potency. It is effective in destroying *Kilas* and *Kushta* along with other diseases.

Sun exposure therapy : *Acharya Sushruta* describes applying *Lepa* then exposing the skin to the sun. It causes *Sphota* (Blisters), which are then punctured to release the fluid followed by healing which promotes *repigmentation*.

Apathya - A patient is 27 years old student. He often consumed the incompatible food such as milk shake, street food, *panner*, pickles and non veg food. He was strictly instructed to avoid above food

along with sour (*Amla*), *Lavana*(Salty), *Dadhi*(curd), *Tila*(Sesame), *Guda*(Jaggery), *Udid* (Black gram).

Pathya - Patient was encouraged to take light food, *Tikta Rasa Pradhan Dravyas*, *Shak*, *Puranshali*, *Shashtishali*, *Mudga*, *Masoor*, *Godhuma*.

Conclusion :

In today's modern era, due to lack of knowledge about correct eating habits, We inattentively follow wrong dietary habits. Which manifest dermatological disorder like *Vitiligo*(*Shwitra*), *Eczema*, *Psoriasis*, etc. About *Shwitra* there is a social stigma. There is no complete cure for *Vitiligo* and hence, there is a scope for *Ayurveda* to intervene. The *Ayurvedic* treatment protocols targets the underlying pathogenesis to eradicate the root cause and prevent disease recurrence. Clinically this comprehensive approach reduces the restoration of normal skin pigmentation. In this present case study, the white patches which were present on face and neck region was almost recovered within 2 months of treatment. Here *Nidanparivarjana*, *Shodhana*, *Shamana Chikitsa* administered, which helps in purification of body, eliminated vitiated *Doshas* and prevent recurrence of the disease. Therefore it can be concluded that the treatment protocol along with external application gives significant relief to the patient within 2 months. Therefore, this therapeutic protocol demonstrates promising potential in the management of *Shwitra*. However, well-designed clinical trials with a larger sample size are needed to establish statistical significance and validate these clinical findings.

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