

A REVIEW ON VICHARCHIKA FROM AYURVEDIC & WESTERN PERSPECTIVES WSR TO ECZEMA

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ABSTRACT

Skin is one of the five '*Gyanindriyas*' as described in *Ayurvedic* texts. It is responsible for '*Sparsh Gyan*' or touch sensation, therefore it plays a great role in physical and mental well being of any individual. It is the largest organ of the body which is exposed to external environment. It protects the internal organs from physical, chemical, mechanical and biological injuries. Any injury or disease in the skin becomes a great problem for a person because it is visible for all. The protective ability however may not always be able to deal with the environmental stimulus and this leads to the production of skin diseases. The protective ability of an individual is influenced by a variety of factors which include genetic factors, nutritional

deficiencies, poor hygiene, overcrowding, other diseases and intake of certain drugs. Ayurveda has also described various factors which can cause skin diseases. There are so many diseases which do not kill, but create physical impairment along with psychological stress and strain. *Vicharchika* is one of them, which is one of the varieties of *Kshudra Kushtha*. *Vicharchika* has been compared with the modern disease Eczema by many authors. The clinical presentation of *Vicharchika* similar to Eczema in modern dermatology. The modern science has greatly advanced, particularly in dermatology but there is no specific medicaments for sure cure of eczema but symptomatic treatments like steroids are used, but they produce serious side effects like nephrotoxicity, osteoporosis, skin cancer etc. Ayurveda offers treatment for the root of eczema by cleansing vitiated *Dosha* and balancing the *Dosha* and *Dhatus*.

KEYWORDS: *Vicharchika*, Eczema, *Kshudra Kushtha*.

INTRODUCTION

Skin is a significant and most visible organ of our body. It has many important functions like it protects the internal organs from infectious organisms, chemical & mechanical injuries etc. These various invectives are the origin of many of the dermatosis i.e. eczema or dermatitis. Major of the skin disease are not fatal but create comparatively abundant stress and strain to the patient. Another reason for the skin diseases being more painful and irritant and some of them are contagious. Skin diseases are haunting mankind since ages past. Skin disease produces both psychological and physical discomfort due to tarnished skin. Different studies also recommend that skin infections are more prevalent in extreme climatic conditions. Most skin infections transmit through contact.^[1]

AIMS & OBJECTIVES:

- ❖ To review the concept of *Vicharchika* as per *Ayurvedic* classics.
- ❖ To review the the concept of Eczema as per western perspectives.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The whole article is based on literary review collected from classical *Ayurvedic* texts, modern books and journals. The text from *Brihatrayee* i.e. *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya* and their respective commentaries in Sanskrit as well as Hindi have been referred for this literary work.

DISEASE REVIEW

Vicharchika: An Ayurvedic Perspective

In *Ayurvedic* literature Eczema is considered to be a type of *kustha*, which is a disease of skin. Eczema is broadly considered to be specific type of *kustha* known as *Vicharchika*, a skin condition with a complex pathology, varying presentations and numerous treatment within the literature of *Ayurveda*. *Vicharchika* can most certainly be correlated with modern interpretation of eczema and atrophic dermatitis.

Nirukti of *Vicharchika*

According to *Acharya Charaka* “*Sa Kandū Pidikā Shyavā Bahū Sravā Vicharchikā*” (Ch.chi.7/26)^[2] i.e. The skin disease where eruptions over the skin appear with dark pigmentation, itching with profuse discharge from the lesion.

According to *Acharya Sushruta* “*Rajyo Atikandu Atiruja Sa Ruksha Bhavanti Gatreshu Vicharchikayam*”(Su.Ni.5/13)^[3] i.e. condition in which skin is dry with severe itching and marked linings present is *Vicharchika*.

Nidana of Vicharchika^[4]

- Intake of incompatible foods & drinks.
- Excessive use of *Dadhi, Matsya, Amla & Lavana*.
- Excessive use *Tila, Ksheera & Guda*.
- Intake of food that would cause burning sensation.
- Intake of Food during indigestion.
- *Adhyasana*.
- Intake of polluted water.
- Withholding of natural urges.
- Improper administration of *Snehapana*.
- Improper method of Administering *Panchkarma*.

Samprapti of Vicharchika^[5]

In *Ayurvedic* literature *samprapti* described for *kustha* in general, is taken as follow *Vicharchika* also.

According to *Charak Samhita* due to various *Nidana sevana*, *Tridosha* gets vitiated simultaneously & produces *shaithilya* in the *Twak, Mamsa, Rakta & Ambu*. Then *Tridosha* gets seated in *Shithila Dhatu* & vitiating them with *lakshnotpatti* of *Kustha Roga*.

Purvaroop of Vicharchika(Prodromal stage)^[6]

There is no specific mention of *Purvaroop* of *Vicharchika*, but *Purvaroop* of *Kustha* as a whole are given in many *Samhitas* which are applicable to *Vicharchika*.

According to *Acharya Charka* the prodromal symptoms include:

- *Atiswedanam*(Excessive perspiration)
- *Aswedanam*(No perspiration)
- *Vaivarnyam*(Deranged complexion)
- *Kandu*(Itching)
- *Suptata*(Numbness)
- *Lomharsha*

- *Paridaha*
- *Shawyathu*
- *Nistoda* etc.

Roopa (Symptoms) of Vicharchika^[7]

In *Ayurvedic* literature *Vicharchika* is characterized by the following symptoms, which corresponds with commonly known symptoms of eczema:

- *Bahu- sraava* (profuse discharge)
- *Ati Kandu* (Excessive itching)
- *Shyava* (Blackish discolouration)
- *Pidika* (Creates inflammation & redness)
- *Ruja* (Pain due to chronic nature of disease)
- *Paaka*(Infection & purulent discharge)
- *Vrana* (Ulcerated lesion)
- *Raji* (Linings)

Eczema: Western Perspective^[8]

Definition

Eczema is a noncontagious inflammation of the skin characterized by erythema, scaling, oedema, vesiculatios, oozing and later lichenification. (P.N.Behl Practice of Dermatology 1998)

Etiology of Eczema

Hypersensitivity is the main cause of eczema. General predisposing causes of eczema are as follows:

S.NO.	CAUSE	EXAMPLES
1.	Age	Infancy, puberty, menopause
2.	Familial predisposition	Familial sensitiveness is an important factor. Personal or family history of allergy is found
3.	Allergy	Like Asthma, hay fever etc, Genetic predisposition are responsible for the preponderance of eczema in certain families and their absence in others
4.	Climate	Extreme of climate like heat, dampness, or severe cold trigger the onset of eczema.
5.	Local factors	Xeroderma, ichthyosis, greasy skin, hyperhidrosis etc.
6.	Chemicals	Insecticides, fertilizers, cement etc
7.	Cosmetics	Powders, lipsticks, hair dye, creams, perfumes. etc
8.	Medicaments	Topical applications, inhalations, systemic application like

		sulphonamides, penicillin, arsenic etc.
9.	Infection	Streptococci, staphylococci, dermatophytes and yeast organism
10.	Focal sepsis	Internal septic focus shedding toxins or causing bacteraemia

Classification of Eczema^[9]

Depending upon the causative or provocative factors, the eczema has been classified mainly in two groups i.e. exogenous and endogenous eczema.

❖ Exogenous Eczema

An external cause for the eczema is identifiable and when this is removed, eczema does not recur such as:

- Irritant dermatitis
- Allergic contact dermatitis
- Infective dermatitis
- Photo-allergic contact dermatitis
- Eczematous dermatophytosis.
- Eczematous polymorphic light eruptions
- Dermatophytide

❖ Endogenous Eczema

An internal cause or an inherent property of the skin is responsible for the occurrence of eczema, such as:

- Atopic eczema
- Seborrhoeic dermatitis and pityrosporum folliculitis
- Seborrhoeic dermatitis of infancy
- Asteatotic eczema
- Nummular eczema
- Dry discoid eczema
- Exudative discoid and lichanoid dermatitis
- Chronic superficial scaly dermatitis
- Pityriasis alba
- Gravitational eczema
- Juvenile planter dermatosis

- Pompholyx
- Chronic acral dermatitis

Symptoms of Eczema

A) Exogenous Dermatitis

- Typical eczematous lesion varying from erythema to violent, vesiculation, pustulation, oozing and crusting.
- Accompanied by market itching.
- The sticky sep of plants containing phenolic oil resin or plant derived antigen substance are usually responsible.
- Usually occurs on exposed part.

B) Endogenous Eczema

- Pruritus and scratching
- Coarse marked, by exacerbation and remissions.
- Lesions typical of eczematous dermatitis
- Positive family history or personal history of allergy.
- Clinical course lasting longer than six week.

Comparative aspects of Vicharchika and Eczema

S.NO.	Vicharchika	Eczema
(I)	Rupa	Sign & Symptoms
1.	<i>Pidika</i>	Papule
2.	<i>Pidika-Sarga Shopha</i> (Ca.su.18/24)	Inflammation with marked reddening
3.	<i>Pidika-Kustha Rogadhikare</i> <i>Pidadayake Kshudrasphotka</i>	Vesicles
4.	<i>Kandu</i>	Itching
5.	<i>Srava-Lasikadhya</i>	Oozing Serum
6.	<i>Raji</i>	Linear markings (Lichenification)
7.	<i>Paka</i>	Pustules
8.	<i>Vrana</i>	Ulcer
9.	<i>Vrana-Lohita</i>	Reddening (Acute Stage)Hyper pigmentation (Chronic Stage)
(II)	Bheda	Types
1.	<i>Ruksha (Vatic)</i>	Dry Eczema
2.	<i>Sravi (Paitika or kaphaja)</i>	Wet Eczema

Line of Treatment

A) Ayurvedic Perspective

In general it is an accepted fact that the skin diseases are time consuming as far as the treatment is concerned i.e. not easily cured, longstanding & requires patience in treatment.

- *Acharya Sushruta* has explained that the treatment of *Vicharchika* should be carried out like that of *Kushtha* (Su.Chi 20/18)^[10]
- Also in *Sushruta Uttartantra Acharya* has mentioned that “*Sanksheptah Kriyayogo Nidana Parivarjanam*” i.e. the first step for treatment is avoiding the *Nidana* factors.
- According to *Acharya Charka*^[11]
 - *Vata* predominant *Kushtha* : *Ghee* is indicated
 - *Pitta* predominant *Kushtha* : *Virechana* followed by *Raktamokshna*
 - *Kapha* predominant *Kushtha* : *Vamana* is indicated
- *Acharyas* have advocated for *Shodhana* therapy before the *Shamana* treatment for *Kushtha*.
- *Lepa*, *Parisheka*, *Avachurana*, *Avagahana* and *Dhuma* have been mentioned in the management of all types of *Kushtha*.
- *Charaka* has mentioned use of *Gandhaka* in the treatment of *Kushtha*.
- *Karanja Taila*, *Devdarvyadi Taila*, *Lakshadi Taila*, *Musta Taila*, *Laghu* and *Mahamarichayadi Taila*, *Tikta Ghrita*, *Neela Ghrita* etc. are used.

- ***Shamana Chikitsa***

When a full *Shodhana chikitsa* is not feasible due to weakened *Ojas*, or concerned regarding patient compliance then *Vicharchika* treated by *Shamna Chikitsa*.

B) Western Perspective: General line of treatment consists of the following steps^[12]

- Elimination of causative factors and correction of environment.
- Palliative treatment must be carried out to effect a complete cure.
- **Systemic therapy:** They can provide symptomatic relief only.
 - ACTH and corticosteroids
 - Antihistaminics
 - Calcium gluconate and strontium bromide
 - Antibiotics in infective eczema
 - General tonics and multivitamins.

➤ **Local treatment**

- Weeping eczema react well to astringent like lotion silver nitrate 0.5 - 1% in aqueous solution.
- Infective eczema, crusts are removed with condy's fluid and then silver nitrate lotion or lotio gentian violet 0.5 - 1% in aqueous solution. A potassium permanganate solution 1:4000 is also useful.
- In chronic eczema steroid and other allied local preparations, crude tar and superficial x - ray therapy may be helpful

CONCLUSION

The skin is the outside boundary between outside world and ourselves. It is also a direct representation of health and disease between us. When we are healthy mentally and physically, our skin glows, and conversely without health our skin lacks luster shows our imbalance. Whether called eczema, atopic dermatitis or *Vicharchika* this condition greatly effects the quality of life of individual. It is a complex disease, stemming from deep imbalances. An awareness of all aspects of disease both from the western and *Ayurvedic* approach provide a basis of understanding that will assist the sufferer move towards a state free of disease –a state of health.

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