

AYURVEDA PERSPECTIVES OF TWAK (SKIN) SHARIR- A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the holistic science of medicine. Anatomical and physiological considerations of Ayurveda vaidyas are immensely scientific and well acceptable in this time too. Twak(skin) is one of the important sensory organ of body. In *Samhitas Twak/Twacha* is described as outermost protective layer of body as well as largest sensory organ of body. *Acharya Sushrut* and *Acharya Charak* very minutely described its layers according to their functions and also diseases which are related to those layers. Modern health science described skin in detail according to division of cell. This article comprises all aspects of Twak sharir described in Samhitas.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Twak, Twacha, skin.

INTRODUCTION

Rachana sharir deals with Anatomy of a human body on Ayurveda basis. There are many important references in Ayurveda treatises and these concepts are crucial conceptually as well as practically. Acharya Charak and Acharya Sushruta have explained about Twak in detail. Sensory organs (*dnyanendrias*) mean which those organs which receive the knowledge through their location (*adhistanas*). *Twak*(skin), *Jivha* (tongue), *Nasa* (nose), *Akshi* (eye), *Karna* (ear) these are five Sense Organs,^[1] *Shabda* (voice), *Sparsh* (touch), *Rupa* (vision), *Rasa* (taste), *Gandha* (smell) are five subjects of those sensory organs (*Tanmatras*).^[2] *Twacha* (skin) is one of the five sensory organs which helps to determine the touch sensation and covers whole body, and it is also a location (*ashray sthana*) of sweat channels (*swedvahi strotas*), hairs (*loma*), hair pits (*lomkupas*). It is the largest organ constituting 15 -20% of total body mass.^[3]

Aim and objective of the study

To study the concept of skin (*twacha*) as per Ayurveda.

Formation of Twacha (Utpatti)

When life induced by union of Sperm (*Shukra*) and ovum (*Shonita*) in uterus (*garbhashaya*) it undergoes rapid transformation and formation and seven layers of skin form during embryonic period in third and fifth month of fetal age.^[4] According to modern health science skin is derived from three diverse components: The dermis on the dorsal aspect of head, and trunk arises from dermatomes. The dermis of limb and lateral and ventral aspect of trunk arises from lateral plate of mesoderm. The dermis over most of head and over anterior aspect of neck is derived from neural crest.^[5]

Twak sharir from Samhita- Acharya Charak has described six layers of skin with dimensions and diseases occurring in that layer. These layers are described in table no.1.

Table No. 1: Skin Layers According To Acharya Charak-Cha.Sha.7/4.^[6]

Sr.No.	Skin Layer	Diseases
1.	Udakdhara	Outer layer
2.	Asrukdhara	-
3.	Trutiya	Sidhma-kilas
4.	Chaturthi	Dadru-Kushtha
5.	Panchami	Alaji-vidradhi
6.	Shashti	Arunshika

Similarly as Charaka, Vriddha Vagbhata, kashyapa and bhel have described six layers of skin. Acharya sushruta and Acharya Vagbhat has described seven layers of skin, these are described in table no.2-

Table No.2: Skin Layers According to Acharya Sushruta-Su.sha.4/4^[7]

Sr.No.	Skin Layer	Praman	Vyadhi
1.	Avabhasini	1/18 Brihi	Sidhma Kantik
2.	Lohita	1/16 Brihi	Tilkalak Nyach
3.	Shweta	1/12 Brihi	Charmdal Ajagallika Mashak
4.	Tamra	1/8 Brihi	Kilas Kushtha
5.	Vedini	1/5 Brihi	Kushtha Visarp
6.	Rohini	1 Brihi	Granthi Apachi Arbud Shlipad Galgand
7.	Mamsadhara	2 Brihi	Bhagandar Vidradhi Arsh

Sharangadhara has described seven layers of skin described in table no. 3.

Table no. 3: skin layers according to Sharangadhara-sha.sa.pu.khanda5/37-40.^[8]

Sr.No.	Skin Layer	Vyadhi
1.	Avabhasini	Sidhma
2.	Lohita	Tilkalak
3.	Shweta	Charmdal
4.	Tamra	Kilas Shvitra
5.	Vedini	Kushtha
6.	Rohini	Granthi Apachi Galgand
7.	Sthula	Bhagandar Vidradhi Arsh

Combination of 5 basic elements (Panch bhautiktwam)

Skin (*Twacha*) is one of the five sensory organ (*dnyanendrias*) having dominance of *vayu mahabhut* and related to touch sensation. It is the derivation (*upadhatu*) of flesh (*mansa*) and covers all body and protects inner organs of body. Skin and hairs are related to *parthivansh*, Glow, color are related to *tejansh*, hair pits (*Lomkupas*) and opening of sweat glands are related to *akashansh*., Rasa and lymph etc. related to *aapyansha*.^[9]

Relation with Tridosha

Human body is a combination of Vata, Pitta and Kapha Dosha and skin is mirror of body. Touch sensation (*Sparsh*) and circulation is related to *Vyan Vayu*. *Bhrajak pitta* related for giving luster and color. Excess *vayu* represented by darkness, excess *pitta* by yellowness while excess *kapha* represented whiteness of skin. Skin is the most important clue giving organ in Panchkarma like procedures where extent of *snehana* can be easily evident.^[10]

CONCLUSION

Skin is the mirror of body. Underlying pathology or health can be diagnosed by skin examination. A good clinician should always have a deep knowledge of anatomy and physiology. Skin diseases are found very commonly in practice and to get to the proper diagnosis, all layers of skin should be explored conceptually and a good treatment plan can be scheduled depending on the diagnosis.

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