

Management of skin disorders through ayurvedic dermatology and internal Ayurvedic medicines

Review Article

Shankar Dayal Upadhyay¹, Vinamra Sharma^{2*}

1. PhD. Scholar, 2. Associate Professor, Department of Rasashastra & Bhaishajya Kalpana, Guru Gorakshnath Institute of Medical Sciences, Mahayogi Gorakshnath University Gorakhpur. Uttar Pradesh. India.

Abstract

Background: Skin (*Twak* in Sanskrit) is the largest organ and covers the entire body surface. It acts as a chemical barrier and protects the body from various external hazards. Ayurveda emphasizes that prolonged ingestion of food during indigestion, use of *Viruddha Ahara* (food–food interactions, food processing interactions) and restricted dietary habits i.e. intake of sour, salty, curd, fish etc. excessively are the main causative factors of skin disorders. These causative factors vitiate the Tridosha (*Vata*, *Pitta* & *Kapha*) and affect tissues of *Twak* (skin), *Rakta* (blood), *Mamsa* (muscles), and *Ambu* (lymphatic tissue) of the body. These seven factors are pathogenic materials of skin disorders. **Objectives:** The present review is assessed Skin disorders can be managed using Ayurvedic dermatology and internal Ayurvedic medicines. **Methodology:** Literature available in authoritative Ayurvedic texts, and the research articles published in the journals indexed in Google Scholars, PubMed etc. are the main sources of information for the present review. **Result:** In Ayurveda, the concept of dermatology is very well addressed. Skin diseases are described under the chapter of *Kushtha Roga* (minor and major). The drugs used in the management of skin disorders possess the properties of *Raktashodana*, *Raktaprasadhak*, *Rakta Shamana*, *Vishagna*, *Krimighna*, *Kandughna* and *Rasayana*. Pharmacologically, these drugs are identified as antifungal, antiviral, antibacterial as well as cosmetic agents which not only use in the treatment of skin infections but also for beautification of skin. **Conclusion:** It is concluded that a good number of herbal and compound medicines are mentioned in Ayurvedic texts for skin care, and management of skin diseases. Most of the dosage forms, including *Churna*, *Kwatha*, *Vati*, *Rasashaushadhies*, *Ghrita*, *Rasayana*, *Bhasma*, and others, are being administered internally as an ailments of skin disorders.

Keywords: *Ayurveda*, *Dadru*, *Dermatology*, *Kushtha*, *Skin*, *Twag roga*.

Introduction

Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine, offers a unique approach to dermatology, emphasizing the interconnectedness of skin health with overall well-being. The anatomy and physiology of the skin have been extensively studied in Ayurveda. The imbalance of doshas in the body is often reflected in skin diseases because the skin is the substrate that determines the quality of food. The ICD-10 classification of human disease lists more than 1,000 skin disorders a pattern dominated by a few conditions accounting for most of the skin disease burden (1). Despite this profound impact, skin disease continues to receive relatively little attention in the national or global health debate. Collectively, skin conditions were the 4th leading cause of nonfatal burden expressed as years lost due to

disability in 2010. It is estimated that around 5 to 10% of consultations in general practice involve a skin problem (2).

Here's an overview of the Ayurvedic concept of dermatology and the screening of internal Ayurvedic medicines in managing skin diseases is being discussed. Literature available in authoritative Ayurvedic texts including the Ayurvedic Formulary of India (Part -I & II), and the research articles published in the journals indexed in Google Scholars, PubMed, SCOPUS, Web of Science etc. are the main sources of information for the present review. Additionally, the topic has been looked up online.

Ayurvedic concept of dermatology

In Ayurveda, skin diseases are described by the name of *Kushtha* (3) and has pointed at its multifactorial aetiology. Ayurveda emphasizes that prolonged ingestion of food during indigestion, use of *Viruddha Ahara* (food–food interactions, food processing interactions) and restricted dietary habits i.e. intake of sour, salty, curd, fish etc. excessively are the main causative factors of skin disorders. These causative factors vitiate *Tridosha* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*) and affect *Twak* (skin), *Rakta* (blood), *Mamsa* (muscles), *Ambu* (lymphatic tissues) of body. These

* Corresponding Author:

Vinamra Sharma

Associate Professor,
Department of Rasashastra & Bhaishajya Kalpana,
Guru Gorakshnath Institute of Medical Sciences,
Mahayogi Gorakshnath University Gorakhpur- 273007.
Uttar Pradesh. India.

Email Id: drvnamra.sharma@mgug.ac.in

seven are pathogenic materials for skin disorders (Figure 01) [4]. These skin disorders manifest in a variety of forms and innumerable types of presentations are observed. A total of 166 skin diseases are described in Brihatryi (text triodes of Ayurveda). They can be identified and be named according to involvement of Dosha (Figure 02).

According to Ayurveda, Kushtha is one of the most chronic conditions. The Kushtha Roga is classified into two groups in the majority of Ayurvedic texts (5): Mahakushtha (major group of skin diseases) and Kshudrakushtha (minor group of skin diseases), which are further subdivided into seven and eleven varieties, respectively. In Ayurveda, a vast array of dermatological illnesses (6, 7) is caused by etio-pathogenesis, which includes the Sapta Dravya (seven factors): Vata, Pitta, Kapha, Tvacha, Rakta Mansa, and Ambu/Lasika (3, 4). The psychosomatic approach to treating dermatological illnesses, which includes both pharmaceutical and non-pharmacological treatments, was defined by the Ayurvedic medical system.

1. Kapala– The skin resembling a brown colored piece of a pot shard; rough, coarse and thin; painful and intractable.
2. Audumbara– Pain, burning sensation, redness, and itching hair and nodules developing resembling the fruit of udumbara (*Ficus infectoria*).
3. Mandala – Skin is white or red in color, tight, thickened, and smooth with round elevated patches joined to one another.
4. Rushyajivha – Skin is very rough, red in color outside and black inside, painful and resembling the tongue of black deer.
5. Pundarika– Skin white in the center and red at the edges similar to the petals of the lotus flower with reddish elevated patches.
6. Sidhma– Skin white or coppery red in color, thin, scales coming on scratching, more common on the chest, resembling the flower of pitcher gourd.
7. Kakanaka – Color of Gunja (*Abrus precatorius*), undergoing pus formation, very painful and caused by all three Doshas and which does not respond to treatment.
8. Ekakushtha– Absence of perspiration, large skin area resembling as scales of fish.
9. Charmakhya (Xeroderma)– The skin becoming thick like an elephant skin.
10. Kitibha (psoriasis)– Spots that are dark (black), hard and rough in touch.
11. Vipadika (skin cracks)– Hands and feet cracking and forming painful fissures.
12. Alasaka (cracks)– Developing red colour nodules with itching.
13. Dadru (ring worm)– Raised patches studded with small, itching, reddish papules.
14. Charmadala (impetigo)– Skin studded with red, intolerable pain, itching nodules.
15. Pama (scabies)– Small, plenteous, exudating pustules with itching and burning sensation. The same symptoms of Pama if appears on the hands

and the buttocks with severe pain and itching is called Kacchu.

16. Visphotaka– Thin skin with boils, black or blackish red in color.
17. Shataru (erythema)– Innumerable small ulcers, red or blue in color with severe burning sensation and pain.
18. Vicharchika (eczema)– Nodules which have itching, black color and copious exudation.

Although most of skin diseases are described under the *Kushtha* (skin diseases) and *Kshudraroga* (minor group of diseases) but description of some other skin diseases is also described under headings of *Bahaya Visarpa, Vidradhi, Shotha, Nanatmaja Vyadhi, Shukaroga, Granthi, Arbuda, Upadansh* and *Shilipada*. Allergic conditions which are not included in any of these are described as *Udarda- Kotha-Uattkotha* (8, 9, 10). Dermatological complications of diabetes mellitus are described as *Prameha Pidika* (11).

Figure 1: Common pathogenesis of skin diseases

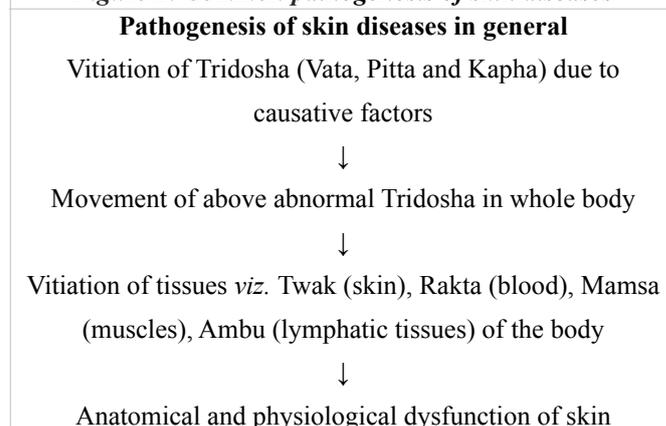
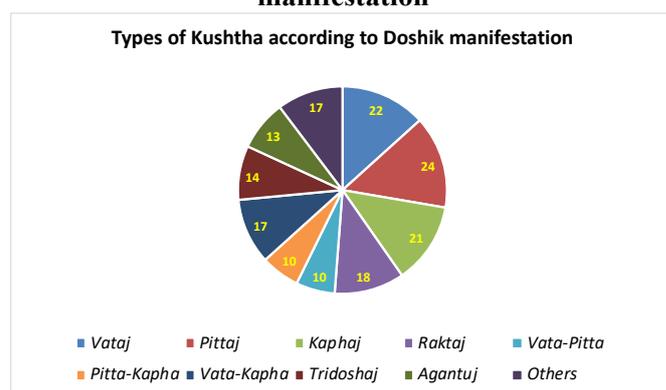


Figure 2: Types of Kushtha according to Doshik manifestation



Management of skin diseases through internal Ayurvedic medicines:

In Ayurveda, skin diseases are very well managed by using of internal medicines as well as external application. A good number of single drugs and a variety of compound formulations are extensively used for the management of skin diseases (Table 01).

Table 01: Showing variety of internal medicines used in Kushtha and associated skin diseases

Sr. No.	Name of formulations	Dose	Indication (s)	References
1	Ayaskriiti (12)	12-24 ml	Kushtha (skin diseases)	A.H.Chi. 12/28-31
2	Babbularishta (13)	12-24 ml	Kushtha	Sh.S.M.Kh. 10/66-68
3	Ushirasava (12)	12-24 ml	Kushtha	B.R.Raktapittaadhikar, 137-141
4	Khadirarishta (12)	12-24 ml	Mahakushtha (group of major skin diseases)	Sh.S.M.Kh.10/60-65
5	Dantadyarishta (12)	12-24 ml	Kushtha	A.H.Chi. 8/69
6	Dasamularishta (12)	12-24 ml	Kushtha	Sh.S.M.Kha.10/78-92
7	Madhukasava (12)	12-24 ml	Kushtha, Kilasa (vitiligo), Raktavikara (disorders of blood)	A.H.Chi. 10/47-50
8	Mrdvikasava (12)	12-24 ml	Kushtha	Sh.S.M.Kh. 10/39-43
9	Punarnavayarishta (13)	12-24 ml	Kushtha, Kandu	B.R. Sotha -rogaadhikar; 192-196
10	Rodhrasava (Lodhrasava) (12)	12-24 ml	Kushtha	A.H.Chi. 12/24-27
11	Rohitakarishtha (12)	12-24 ml	Kushtha	B.R.Plihayakritarogaadhikar, 84-87
12	Lohasava (12)	12-24 ml	Kushtha, Kandu (itching)	Sh.S.M.Kh. 10/34-36
13	Agastya Haritaki Rasayana (12)	6-12 g	Vali Palita wrinkles in skin and graying of hair)	A.H.Chi. 3/125-130
14	Kalyanaka Guda (12)	6-12 g	Kushtha	A.H.Kalpa 2/17-18
15	Danti Haritaki (12)	12-24 g of leha	Kushtha	A.H.Chi. 14/92-96
16	Madhusnuhi Rasyana (12)	12 g	Kushtha, Kilasa	Sahasrayoga, Lehaprakarana, 41
17	Bramha Rasayana (12)	12 g	Vali Palita	A.H.U. 39/15-23
18	Manibhadra Yoga (Guda) (12)	6 g	Kushtha, Svitra (leukoderma/ vitiligo)	A.H.Chi. 19/32
19	Shiva Gutika (12)	12 g	Kushtha	A.S.U. 49/193
20	Aragvadhadi Kwatha (12)	48 g	Kushtha, Kandu	A.H.Su.15/17
21	Trayantyadi Kwatha (12)	48 g	Kushtha	A.H.Chi. 13/11-12
22	Patoladi Kwatha (12)	48 g	Kaphapitta Kushtha (skin diseases caused by Kapha and Pitta)	A.H.Su. 15/15
23	Patolamoladi Kwatha (12)	48 g	Kushtha, Kilasa	A.H.Chi. 19/28
24	Brhan Manjishthadi Kwatha (12)	48 g	Kushtha, Upadamsha (Syphilis/Soft chancre)	Sh.S.M.Kh. 2/137-142
25	Kanchanaar Guggulu (12)	3 g	Kushtha	Sh.S.M.Kh. 7/95-100
26	Kaishor Guggulu (12)	3 g	Kushtha, Prameha Pidika (diabetic carbuncle)	B.R. Vataraktaadhikar, 97-105
27	Mahayogaraj Guggulu (12)	½ to 1 g	Kushtha	Sh.S.M.Kh.7/56-69
28	Saptavimashatika Guggulu (12)	6 g	Kushtha	B.R. Bhagandhararoga 16-21
29	Simhanad Guggulu (12)	3 g	Kushtha	B.R.Amavata, 130-135
30	AmritaBhallataka Ghrita (12)	12 g	Purana Twag Roga (chronic skin diseases), Vali, Palita	A.H.U 39/75-77
31	Brihta Ashwagandha Ghrita (13)	12 g	Vali-Palita	B.R.Vajikaradhikar, 52-62
32	Tiktaka Ghrita (12)	12 g	Pittaja Kushtha (skin diseases due to Pitta Dosha), Kandu, Ganda (maxillar prominence), Visphota (blister), Vyanga (pigmentation disorder)	A.H.Chi. 19/2-7
33	Dhanvantara Ghrita (12)	48 g	Kushtha	A.H.Chi. 12/19-23
34	Pancatikt Ghrita (12)	6 g	Kushtha	B.R. Kushthaadhikar, 114-117
35	Panchatikta Guggulu Ghrita (Nimbadi Ghrita) (12)	12 g	Kushtha	A.H.Chi. 21/57-60
36	Patoladi Ghrita (12)	12 g	Kushtha, Visarpa (erysipelas)	A.H.Chi. 13/6-9
37	Bramhi Ghrita (12)	12 g	Kushtha	A.H.U. 6/23-25

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38	Mahatiktaka Ghrita (12)	6-12 g	Kushtha, Visarpa	B.R. Kushthaadhikar, 118-124
39	Vajraka Ghrita (12)	6 g	Kushtha, Visarpa	A.H.Chi. 19/18
40	Gandhaka Rasayana (13)	1-3 g	Kushtha, Kandu	Y.R. Rasanadhikara, 1-4
41	Trikatu Churna (12)	1-3 g	Kushtha	B.R.Paribhasha, 16
42	Tripahala Churna (12)	3-6 g	Kushtha	Bhavaprakash, Haritkyadi Varga, 41-42
43	Navayasa Churna (12)	1 g	Kushtha, Prameha Pidika	B.R. Pandurogadhikar, 22
44	Narsimha Churna (12)	1.5 g	Kushtha, Vali-Palita	B.R. Vajikaranaadhikar, 30-40
45	Nimbadi Churna (12)	1-3 g	Kushtha, Svitra, Vicharchika, Kandu, Dadru, Kitibha Kushtha (depigmentation)	B.R.Vataraktaadhikar, 31-38
46	Panchanimba Churna (13)	1-5 g	Kshudra Kushtha (group of minor skin diseases), Mahakushtha (group of major skin diseases)	B.R.Kushthadhikar 86-91
47	Bhaskara Lavana Churna (12)	3 g	Kushtha	Sh.S.M.Kha. 6/138-144
48	Shiva Gutika (laghu) (12)	6 g (empty stomach)	Kushtha	Y.R. Rajyakshmaadhikar, 322
49	Kantavallabha Rasa (12)	125 mg	Kushtha	Vaidyayogaratnavali, 209
50	Makardhwaj	125 mg	Vali-Palita	B.R. Vajikaranaadhikar, 237-246
51	Rasa Karpura (12)	62.5 mg- 125 mg	Twag Rakta Roga (skin and blood diseases), Kandu, Mandala Kushtha (lepomatous lesion), Phiranga (Chancroid), Sphota (Boil)	R.T. Taranga 6/65-75
52	Panchamrita Parpati (12)	125-250 mg	Vali-Palita	B.R.Grahani-rogaadhikar, 461-466
53	Rasa Parpati (12)	250 mg	Kushtha	B.R.Grahani-rogaadhikar, 414-416
54	Tamra Parpati (13)	125 -250 mg	Kushtha, Dadru, Svitra	Siddhayogasangraha
55	Lauha Parpati (12)	250 mg	Kushtha, Vali-Palita	Siddhayogasangraha
56	Abhraka Bhasma (12)	125-375 mg	Kushtha, Twagroga	A.P. 2/132
57	Tamra Bhasma (12)	31.5 mg – 62.5 mg	Kushtha	R.T. Taranga 17/40-41
58	Lauha Bhasma (12)	120-250 mg	Kushtha	A.P. 3/280-281
59	Swarna Bhasma (12)	15.5 mg-62.5 mg	Kushtha	Rasamrita, 3/16-18
60	Swarnamakshika Bhasma (12)	125-250 mg	Kushtha	R.S.S. 1/211-212
61	Shuddha Hartala (Hartala Bhasma) (12)	31.5 mg – 125 mg	Kushtha, Visarpa, Visphota, Svitra, Dadru (Taeniasis), Pama (eczema), Vicharchika (eczema)	A.P. 2/184-187
62	Shuddha Mandura (12)	500 mg- 1 g	Kushtha	R.T. Taranga 20/127
63	Mandura Vataka (12)	1 g	Kushtha	A.H.Chi. 16/16-19
64	Arogyavardhini Vati (12)	250mg – 500mg	Kushtha, Visarpa	R.R.S. Visarpadichikitsa, 20/106-112
65	Arkeshwar Rasa (14)	250 mg	Raktamandal Kushtha	R.S.S.
66	Bhutabhairav Rasa (15)	1 g	Nil, bahuruja, Dhatugat Arun shweta Analpa bhrush Kushtha , Ashadasha Kushtha	RA.Chi
67	Chaturbhujra rasa (12)	125 mg	Vali-Palita, Charmoroga (skin diseases)	R.S.S. Unmadachikitsa 20-26
68	Chaturmukha Rasa (12)	125 mg	Vali-Palita, Charmoroga	B.R.Vatavyadhiadhikar, 464-468
69	Chandraprabha Vati	125-250 mg	Shwitra	R.R.S.
70	Chintamani Chaturmukha Rasa (12)	125 mg	Vali-Palita	B.R.Vatavyadhiadhikar, 477-480
71	Kushtharakshas	12 g	Kushtha	R.R.S.
72	Kushthakuthar Rasa-1	250 mg	All Kushtha	R.R.S.
73	Kushthakalanalo Rasa (14)	750 mg	All Kushtha	R.S.S.

74	Lakshmi Vilasa Rasa (Naradiya) (12)	250 mg	Kushtha	B.R.Rajyakshmadhiadhikar, 55-68
75	Mahalakshmi Vilasa Rasa (12)	250 mg	Kushtha	R.S.S. Kapharogachikitsa, 17-29
76	Manikya Rasa (13)	125 – 250 mg	Kushtha, Kandu	B.R. Kushtharogadhikar, 300-308
77	Navayasa Lauha (13)	250 mg	Kushtha	C.S.Chi. 16/70-71
78	Panchanana Rasa (13)	250 mg	Kushtha	Rasayogasagra, 35
79	Paribhadra Rasa (14)	3 g	Dadru Kushtha	R.S.S.
80	Rasaraj Rasa (15)	125 mg	Shwitra, Ashtadasha Kushtha	RA.Chi
81	Rasamanikya (14)	125 mg	Sputiit, Galit Kushtha, vicharchika, Charmadal, vis phot, Mandal	R.S.S.
82	Shrinrapativallabha Rasa (12)	250 mg	Kushtha, Dadru, Upadamsha, Visarpa, Vaivarnya (discolouration)	B.R. Grahanirogadhikar, 523-532
83	Svarnabhupati Rasa (12)	250 mg	Kushtha	Y.R. Rajyakshmachikitsa, 332
84	Sarveshwar Rasa- 1 (16)	125 mg	Prasupti Kushtha	R.R.S.
85	Sarveshwar Rasa-2 (16)	250 mg	Supti, Mandal Kushtha	R.R.S.
86	Shwitrari Yoga (15)	375 mg	Shwitra	RA.Chi
87	Shwitrari Rasa (16)	125-375 mg	Shwitra	R.R.S.
88	Taleshwar Rasa (15)	6 gm	Kushtha, Kandu, sravyukta pidika, Galit Kushtha	RA.Chi
89	Talkeshwar Rasa (Siddha) (15)	125 mg	Ashtadash Kushtha	RA.Chi
90	Tripurantak Rasa (16)	375 mg	Sarvadoshaj Kushthanashak	R.R.S.
91	Udaybhaskar Rasa (14)	125 mg	Galit sputhit kushtha, vipul mandal kushtha, vicharchika, dadru, pama	R.S.S.
92	Vasanta Kusumakara Rasa (12)	125-250 mg	Vali-Palita	R.S.S., Rasayanavajikaranaadhikar, 80-85
93	Vadvanal Rasa (15)	375 mg	Ashtadash Kushtha	RA.Chi
94	Varishoshana Rasa (12)	62.5 mg – 125 mg	Kushtha	B.R. Udarargaadhikar, 129-144
95	Varishoshan Rasa (15)	250 mg	Asadhya Kushtha	RA.chi
96	Vajra Vati (14)	500 mg	Pama	R.S.S.
97	Vijay Vati (16)	375 mg	Seven Kushtha	R.R.S.
98	Vijaybhairav Rasa (14)	125 mg with daily increase of 125mg for 7 days	All Kushtha, visphot	R.S.S.
99	Vishweshwar Rasa (15)	250 mg	Sravi kharsparsh asaukhyada sputhit asputhit visham asthisansthit shushka rakta krushna sadhya asadhya kushtha, Prasupta mandal Kushtha, Kakanak, Pundarik, Gajcharma, Dadru, Pama	RA.Chi
100	Vyoshadi Gutika (16)	1 g	Kushtha	R.R.S.
101	Yogaraja (13)	250 – 500 mg	Kushtha	Ch.S.Chi. 16/80-86

The drugs used in the management of skin disorders possess the properties of *Raktashodana*, *Raktaprasadhak*, *Rakta Shamana*, *Vishagna*, *Krimighna*, *Kandughna* and *Rasayana*. *Haridra*, *Raktachandana*, *Nimba*, *Manjishtha*, *Aragvadh*, *Daruharidra*, *Guduchi* etc. are some frequently used herbal drugs which are the composition of many compound formulations (17, 18, 19). These drugs are identified as antifungal, antiviral, antibacterial as well as cosmetic agents pharmacologically which not only use in the treatment of skin infections but also for beautification of skin (20). For external application,

Taila and *Lepa Kalpana* are used in regular practices. A variety of internal medicines are used in the management of skin diseases. The medicines like *Rasakarpura* (21), *Talakeshwar Rasa* (22), *Gandhak Rasayana* (23) etc. are some examples of *Rasaushadhies* (herbo-mineral medicines) which have also been proven as anti- microbial, anti-fungal medicines in the treatment of skin diseases.

Conclusion

It is concluded that a good number of herbal and compound medicines are mentioned in Ayurvedic texts

for skin care, and management of skin diseases. Most of the dosage forms, including *Churna*, *Kwatha*, *Vati*, *Rasashaushadhies*, *Ghritha*, *Rasayana*, *Bhasma*, and others, are being administered internally as an ailments of skin disorders.

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