

Ayurvedic Management of Shwitra (Vitiligo) - A Case Study

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Abstract: *Vitiligo is one of the stigmatizing dermatological disorders found with a worldwide preponderance. It is a condition in which white patches develop on the skin caused mainly by loss of melanin pigment in the skin. Ayurveda has incorporated this condition into the broad heading of Shwitra which is described under Kushtha (Dermatosis). It is caused due to vitiation of Tridosha and dhatus like Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa and Medas. Though kushtha is caused by Tridosha as per Ayurveda whereas the cause of vitiligo is autoimmune or it may be associated with some autoimmune diseases like Diabetes mellitus, Pernicious anemia and Addison disease results in destruction of melanocytes thus causing depigmentation. The condition is often a matter of concern for social embarrassment and also for cosmetic purpose. In modern medicine, there is no safe and effective treatment till date. Thus, the following case study of treating the condition of Shwitra is a safe and effective method which includes diet (sprouted black gram) and compound ayurvedic drugs (Kaishor guggulu, Khadirarista, Navayas lauha, Triphala churna, Arogyavardhani vati and Brihat Marichadi tail. The treatment protocol was found to be effective in the reversal of depigmented patches to repigmentation, which may be adopted in future cases, using different combinations of drugs based upon different ayurvedic parameters to obtain even better results.*

Keywords: Ayurveda, vitiligo, shwitra, kushtha

1.Introduction

Vitiligo is an acquired condition affecting 1% of the population worldwide. Focal loss of melanocytes results in the development of patches of hypopigmentation. A positive family history of vitiligo is relatively common in those with extensive disease, and this type is also associated with other autoimmune diseases. It is thought to be the result of cell-mediated autoimmune destruction of melanocytes but why some areas are targeted and others are spared is unclear. The impact of vitiligo differs markedly between populations¹. Its incidence ranges from 0.093% to 8.8% across the different countries of the globe.²⁻⁴ In India, it ranges from 6.25% to 18%.⁴ The emotional impact of vitiligo may be immense; psychological support is essential and is important in conveying realistic expectations of possible treatment approaches¹. Topical or systemic corticosteroids, tacrolimus (immunosuppressive drugs), and pimecrolimus (immunomodulating agent of calcineurin inhibitor class) are used extensively in the management of vitiligo in the contemporary medicine that reported to be useful in rapidly progressive vitiligo. They have fair control over the disease, but after long term use, manifest complications, and they are not cost effective too.^{5, 6} In ayurveda all skin disease comes under Kustha Roga^{7, 8} and Shwitra is one of them. Shwitra is mentioned in Kustha roga chikitsa where white patches appear on the whole body or a local region. Shwitra is considered as Tridoshaja (~three regulatory functional factors of the body). It is said to be Aparisravi (~not having discharge) which has similar etiological factors as Kustha (~skin diseases)⁹.

The following case was treated with shaman aushadhi (compound herbal drugs) over a period of 6 months with great improvement which is evident from inspection and photographs. The outcome of this study will give the efficacious findings of ayurvedic medicines in vitiligo.

2.Aims and Objectives

To evaluate the effects of ayurvedic treatment in Shwitra.

Case Description

A male patient 20 yrs old, opd reg no.2653 residing in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh visited kayachikitsa opd, Ayurvedic and Unani Tibbia College And Hospital, Karol Bagh, New Delhi on 8 february 2021 presented with white discoloration over neck and left clavicular region with mild itching since 6 months.

History of Present Illness

Patient was healthy before 6 months. Gradually, he developed some discoloration on his neck and clavicular region with mild itching. Initially size of lesions was small, patient neglects it but gradually the lesions became larger in size and starts increasing. Patient went to a nearby hospital and was diagnosed as vitiligo and given medications. He took medicines for 3 months but got no relief. In order to get permanent results for the above complaints, patient visited our hospital for ayurvedic management.

Past History

No history of above skin complaints before 6 months
No history of HTN/ DM/ THYROID DISORDER/T.B.

Family History

No family history of such complaint was present.

Personal History

Appetite – good
Sleep – disturbed
Bowel – irregular bowel

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Bladder – 5-6 times per day
Diet – non veg diet with 2 to 3 times a week including chicken, deep fried fish, curd and other spicy food.
Habit – tea 2 to 3 times a day.

Psychological History

Patient was well before 6 months of his illness but gradually he became depressed and embarrassed. His sleep was disturbed as the discoloration of patches increases day by day.

General Examination (At first visit in OPD)

Pallor- present
Icterus – absent
Cyanosis – absent
Clubbing – absent
Lymph nodes – not palpable
Oedema – absent
B.P – 110/ 70 mm of hg
Pulse rate- 78/min.

Systemic Examination

C.V.S – S1, S2 normal, no added sounds
C.N.S- conscious, oriented
R.S – normal vesicular breathing, clear airways

Simple and Single Case Study

p/a – soft, non -tender

Ashta Vidha Pariksha

Nadi – 78/min.
Mutra – 5-6 times per day
Mala- badha koshtha
Jivha – sama
Shabda – prakruta
Sparsh – khara, anushna
Drik – prakruta
Akruti – madhyama

Local Examination

Site of lesion- neck and clavicular region (left side)
Distribution – asymmetrical
Character of lesion – white macular patch with mild itching
Inflammation – absent
Discharge – absent

3.Material and Method

Centre of study – This study was carried out in Kayachikitsa department of Ayurvedic &Unani Tibbia College & Hospital, Karol Bagh, New Delhi – 110005.

Table 1: Hetu (causative factors)

AAHARA	VIHARA	MANSIKA
Chicken and deep-fried fish – twice a week. Curd – once daily at night	Ratri-jagrana Vega dharana (mutra)	Chinta and shoka from personal financial problem

Samprapti Ghataka

Dosha: Tridosha
Dushya: Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa, Meda
Adhithana: Twak

Table 1: Assessment Score Chart (ASC)¹⁰. Assessment of case was done on the basis of ASC.

Score	0	1	2	3
Type	No improvement	Stationary	Resistant	Progressive
Site Of Lesion		Follicular	Mucosal	Acral
Number Of Patches	Absent	Single patch	Segmentary	Generalized
Hair In Patch	Black	Mild black	White	
Margins Of Patch		Normal	Inflamed	
Color Of Patches	Normal	Pigment spot on patch	Pink	Milky white
Re-Pigmentation	Fully pigmented	Perifollicular pigmentation	Hyper pigmentation of margin	No pigmentation

Table 2: Baseline assessment score of the patient on first visit

Score	0	1	2	3
Type				Progressive
Site of the lesion			Mucosal	
Number of patches			Segmentary	
Hair in patch			White	
Margins of patch		Normal		
Color of patches				Milky white
Re- pigmentation				No pigmentation

Table 3: Treatment plan: patient was treated on opd basis. During period of treatment, diet was pure vegetarian and includes black sprouted gram**Treatment**

Drug	Dose	Duration	Anupana
Kaishor guggulu	500 mg bd	6 months	Water
Khadirarista	4 tsf bd	6 months	Water
Haridra khanda	1 tsf bd	6 months	Water
Arogyavardhani vati	125 mg tds	5 months	Water
Navayas lauha	125 mg bd	2 months	Water
Triphla churna	3 gm bd	3 months	Lukewarm water
Brihat marichadi tail	Q.S for local application	6 months	NA

**Figure 1:** Before treatment**Figure 2:** Two months after treatment**Figure 3:** Four months after treatment**Figure 4:** Six months after treatment**4.Observation and Result**

The internal use of ayurvedic compound drugs like Kaishor guggulu, Khadirarista, Navayas lauha, Arogyavardhani vati, Haridra khand along with local application of Brihat Marichadi tail minimizes the size of vitiligo and changes the color of patches from white to reddish then to the normal color of the skin.

Table 4: Shows sign and symptoms before treatment and after treatment (6months)

Sign & Symptoms	Before treatment	After treatment (6 months)
Number of patches	2	0
Hair in patch	2	0
Margins of patch	1	1
Color of patches	3	0
Repigmentation	3	0

5.Discussion

Kaishor guggulu is a herbal formulation containing Triphala (Haritaki, Vibhitaki, Amalaki), Trikatu (Shunthi, Maricha, Pippali), Guduchi, Vidanga, Danti, Trivratta and Guggulu mentioned in classical texts like Yogratnakar, Bhaishajya Ratnavali, Sharangdhar Samhita and Chakradatt. 'Kaishor guggulu' means the medicinal drug cures all the vyadhis (diseases) of kishoravastha (adulthood) and offers Rejuvenating effect. Kaishor guggulu is having Anti-Allergic, Anti-Bacterial, Analgesic, Anti-inflammatory and Blood Purifying properties. It acts as a detoxifying agent, hence removes toxins from the blood.¹¹

Khadirarista is indicated in sarvakustha and has role in all types of skin disorders. It also contains Bakuchi which has the prime effect on shwitra. Bakuchi increases the rate of synthesis and amount of melanin and hence encouraging skin to recover from a vitiliginous state.¹² Khadirarista also contains Khadira extract (Acacia Catechu). Khadira extract is used as immune- modulatory, purify blood, astringent, bactericidal, refrigerant and antiphogistic.^{13, 14}

Arogyavardhani vati is indicated for all types of skin diseases with Deepana (digestive fire stimulating) and pachana (improve digestion) properties. It helps to improve Ama toxins from the body. It has anti -oxidants, antipruritic nature alleviates itching sensation.¹⁵

Navayas lauha has the contents like lauha bhasma which has the raktvardhak property, iron is also present in amlaki and musta. Presence of ascorbic acid (vitamin c) in amla

has significant effect on iron bioavailability. Musta also contains copper and manganese which may increase iron metabolism. Iron upregulates melanogenesis gene expression; increase the melanosome number, thereby increasing pigmentation.¹⁶

Haridra khanda has antiallergic, raktashodhak, rasayana, jeevaniya, brihaniya, balya, ojovardhaka, & dhatuposhaka properties which indirectly increases the immunity. Various

Ingredients of Haridra khand has Vatakapha shamaka, Tridosha shamaka properties which helps to bring the affected doshas in normal level.¹⁷

Brihat marichadi taila which was used for topical application contain drugs which mainly subsides vatakapha doshaj and kushtha (skin diseases), vrana (wound), vicharchika (eczema) etc¹⁸. Triphala powder is a combination of three drugs namely Haritaki (Terminalia Chebula), Bibhitaki (Terminalia Belerica) and Amalaki (Embllica Officinalis). It possesses properties like anti-oxidant, immunomodulator, rejuvenator, anti-aging, analgesic, anti-mutagenic, anti-cancerous, anti-microbial and blood purifier. It removes Tridosha and also flushes out harmful toxins from the body.¹⁹

Insufficient levels of anti-oxidants, or inhibition of the antioxidant enzymes, cause oxidative stress and may damage or kill cells. Sprouted black gram which were advised to the patient contains β -carotene, ascorbic acid which has anti-oxidant properties, acts as immune modulator, quench singlet oxygen, and reduce peroxy radicals.²⁰ Patient had given these medicines for 6 months and he has got significant improvement. (fig-1)

6. Conclusion

The lesions or white patches which was present on neck and left clavicular region of 20 year old male patient was fully recovered after 6 months of treatment by ayurvedic medications and diet. This case study on Shwitra conclude that significant results can be achieved by ayurvedic medicines in the earliest stages of Shwitra (vitiligo) with no side effects. These treatments may play a major role in the management of Shwitra (vitiligo).

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