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# The physiological study of *Twak Upadhatu* w.s.r. to Skin

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# ABSTRACT

In Samhitas Twak/Twacha is described as outermost protective layer of body as well as largest sensory organ of body. According to Acharya Charaka, Twacha is the Mula of Mansavaha Srotas and Updhatu of Mansadhatu. 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. Skin, the largest organ of human body, holds significant importance in maintaining normal human physiological condition. The conceptual aspect of skin needs to be understood because skin disorder is outer exhibition of some kind of internal pathology. The ancient science of Ayurveda has noted its features ages back. Ayurveda, the "Science of Life", is a real wealth of medical sciences. In Ayurvedic oldest text Sushruta Samhita- Shareer sthana, Acharya Sushruta has mentioned five sensory organs i.e. Gyanendriyas. Sparshanendriya is one of them whose Adhishthana is Twacha (skin). As we know, skin is the largest sense organ of the body which sense touch, pain, pressure, temperature etc. It is also known as "The First Line of Defense". Ayurveda is real wealth of medical sciences which gives preference to prevention of health in healthy person and provides best treatment to diseased one. It believes in complete elimination of root cause of disorder rather than short-term relief. Skin is the largest and first site visible organ of body which acquires 1.5-2 square meter surface area of the body. It is not merely protecting covering but it is reflection of the internal system of the body.

Key words: Twak, Upadhatu, Skin.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Skin is called "Twak" which covers the whole body. Today whole world is familiar about most of the modern concepts about skin, but still many concepts about Twacha (Skin) mentioned in various Ayurvedic Text is yet to disclose. In this study an attempt is

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made to explore the hidden concept about Twacha Sharir such as formation and development of skin (Twacha Utpatti), skin layers with associated disorder (Twacha Stara & Roga-Adhisthana), Physiological aspect of skin (Dosha, Dhatu & Mala Sambandha of Twacha), Relation of skin with soul (Atma) and mind (Mana). Twacha as diagnostic tool in clinical aspects & Twacha serving as prognostic tool. All above mentioned concepts should be enlighten, So that Ayurveda's glory and respect in society will be revitalize by clarifying doubtful opinions and proving the principles described by our Maharishis. Acharya Charaka defines skin as the structure covering the whole body. Acharya Sushruta has stated that the thickness of Twacha is different in different sites of body as in Mansalasthaana and Lalaat the Twacha Pramaan varies. Modern science also stated the same concept that skin is thickest on palms and soles of feet while thinnest on eyelids and in post auricular region.

We know well about the skin but the details of Twacha mentioned in various Avurvedic Texts are yet to be explained. The knowledge of Rachnatmaka and Krivatmaka aspect of Twacha is of great importance as Twacha is the seat for various Rogas. Sensory organs (Gnyanendrias) mean which those organs which receive the knowledge through their location (Adhisthanas). Twak (skin), Jivha (tongue), Nasa (nose), Akshi (eye), Karna (ear) these are five Sense Organs. Shabda (voice), Sparsh (touch), Rupa (vision), Rasa (taste), Gandha (smell) are five subjects of those sensory organs (Tanmatras). 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 Srotas), hairs (Loma), hair pits (Lomkupas). It is the largest organ constituting 15 -20% of total body mass. Skin is known as "The First Line of Defense" as it protects us from microbes and other invading elements. It is a part of integumentary system that contributes to homeostasis by protecting the body and helping regulate body temperature. It also allows us to sense pleasurable, painful and other stimuli in the external environment.

#### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

#### Twacha Utpatti

In Ayurvedic texts, it is stated that the development of *Twacha* (skin) occurs in *Tritiya Masa* (third month) of intrauterine life. *Twacha Uttapati* formation and development of *Twacha* is took place during the "*Garbhanirmati*" i.e. Process of formation and development of *Garbha*. *Twacha Uttapati* in *Brihattrayee* the whole process of formation of *Twacha* is compare with formation of creamy layer over the surface of milk, when it is boiled and allowed to cool down, formation of thick layer of skim take place which is explained as "*Ksheerat –Santaanika*. Different *Acharyas* have different views regarding the development of *Twacha*.

Acharya Sushruta described the development of Twacha in Shareersthana by taking the example of Ksheer and Santanika. Twacha develops like a layer of Santanika (cream) developed on Ksheer (Milk) after

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heating. The formation of *Twacha* results from heat generated in the process of union of *Shukra* and *Shonita* during the *Garbhanirmaana Kala*.

Acharya Charaka states that development of the Twacha results from the Shukra Shonita Sanyoga and the formation of all Sapta Dhatu.

Acharya Vagbhata states that the development of Twacha occurs due to Paka of Rakta Dhatu by Dhatvagni.

In Modern texts, it is stated that the development of skin starts at about fourth week after the fertilization.

*Indu* in his commentary "*Shashilekha*" explains the appearance and arrangement of skin layers by giving an illustration of *Kadalidal* i.e. Stem of Banana, which has several layers that are arranged in systematic concentric manner. He states that *Twacha* is formed from the *Sara Bhaaga* (*Prasaad*) of *Rakta Dhatu*, shiny and lustrous appearance of skin is due to *Rakta Dhatu*.

Hemadri in his commentary "Ayurved Rasayan" depicts that whole body is "Panchmahabhautik" and Twacha is formed by metabolization of Rakta dhatu by its own Dhatwagni, several layer of Twacha are formed over outer surface of embryo.

According to *Bhavaprakash Twacha* is formed by *Pachan* that is metabolization of *Shukra* and *Rasa Dhatu*.

#### Synonyms for Twacha

Twacha, Charma, Sparshan, Chavi, Chadani, Asrugdhara, Kruti, Ajin, Dehacharma, Romabhumi, Shariravaranam, Asrugvara, Shariravarakam Shastram.

#### Twacha Uttapati Kala

*Charak* describes *Bala-Varna-Upachaya* in sixth month of intrauterine life, As *Varna* complexion is the attribute of skin it is clear that *Twacha* is formed in sixth month of intrauterine life.

According to Astang Sangraha & Hridya Uttapati of Kesha, Roma, Nakha, Asthi, Snayu, Bala, Varna, Sira and Twacha develops in sixth month of intrauterine of life.

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As per modern all layers of skin is formed in fourth month of intrauterine life.

#### **Types**

Acharya Sushruta mentioned the concept of Twacha in Shareera Sthana as Twacha has seven layers;

| SN | Name       | <i>Parmaan</i><br>(measurement)                | Twakroga Adhishtana   |
|----|------------|--|---|
| 1. | Avabhasini | 1/18th part of<br><i>Vrihi</i> (rice<br>grain) | Sidhma (small ulcers) and<br>Padmakantaka<br>(Pemphigus mollaceous)                             |
| 2. | Lohita     | 1/16th part of<br>Vrihi                        | Tila Kaalaka (moles),<br>Nyachchha (pimples) and<br>Vyanga (Acne vulgaris)                      |
| 3. | Shweta     | 1/12th part of<br>Vrihi                        | <i>Charamdala, Ajagalli</i> and<br><i>Mashaka</i> (taenia infection<br>of skin and candidiasis) |
| 4. | Tamra      | 1/8th part of<br><i>Vrihi</i>                  | <i>Vividha Kilasa</i><br>(lepromatous) and <i>Kustha</i><br>(tuberculoid leprosy)               |
| 5. | Vedini     | 1/5th part of<br><i>Vrihi</i>                  | <i>Kushtha</i> (leprosy) and<br><i>Visarpa</i> (erysipelas)                                     |
| 6. | Rohini     | which<br>measures<br>about a <i>Vrihi</i>      | <i>Kushtha</i> (leprosy) and<br><i>Visarpa</i> (erysipelas).                                    |
| 7. | Mansadhara | which<br>measures<br>about two <i>Vrihi</i>    | Bhagandara (fistula-in-<br>ano), Vidradhi (abscess),<br>Arshas (piles)                          |

#### Acharya Charaka mentioned six layers of Twacha

| SN | Name                | Twakroga Adhishtana / Karma  |
|----|---------------------|--|
| 1. | Udakadhara          | holds the Udakdhatu  |
| 2. | Asrikdhara          | which carries Rakta  |
| 3. | Tritiya<br>Twacha   | Sidhma kilasa  |
| 4. | Chaturthi<br>Twacha | <i>Dadrukushtha</i> means light elevation in the skin (macular rash) |

| 5. | Panchami<br>Twacha | Alajividradhi             |
|----|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 6. | Shashthi<br>Twacha | Tamahpravisyati, Arushika |

#### Sharir Kriya aspect

Sharir Kriya aspect of Twacha to examine the role of skin, we will have to assess the effects of Dosha, Dhatus and Malas.

#### Role of Vata Dosha in Twacha

*Vata Dosha Vrddhi* in the body results in *Karshanyam* (hyperpigmentation) of *Twacha*.

#### Role of Pitta Dosha in Twacha

| Prakrat Karma                   | Kshaya                                  | Vrddhi   |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| lusture of the<br><i>twacha</i> | loss of lusture of<br>the <i>twacha</i> | yellowish<br>discoloration of the<br><i>twacha</i> |

#### Role of Kapha Dosha

| Kshaya                    | Vrddhi   |
|---------------------------|--|
| <i>Rukshata</i> (dryness) | <i>Shaukalyam</i> (whitish<br>discoloration) and <i>Shaityam</i><br>(coldness of <i>Twacha</i> ) |

#### Role of *Dhatu*

Rasa and Rakta Dhatus are indirectly related to Twacha. Vitiation of Rakta Dhatu leads to skin diseases like Visapra, Kustha, Vyanga etc. while in Kshaya of Rakta Dhatu in the body results in Twakaparushyam (rough skin). The presence of Shudh Shukra in the body is also reflected by the lusture of the Twacha. While describing the Ashtasaarpurush, Acharya Charak considered Twaksaarpurush instead of Rasasaarpurush.

#### Role of Mala

| Prakrit Karma   | Kshaya                          | Vrddhi   |
|---|---------------------------------|----------|
| Maintaining the moisture content, tonicity and elasticity | Dryness and cracks in the skin. | Pruritus |

#### of the skin.

#### Role of Twacha in Rogamarga

Acharya Charaka describes Bahya, Madhya, Abhyantara as three Rogmargas. Twacha is included in Bahya Rogmarga as it is outermost layer and first line of defense and every element in external environment will come in contact with Twacha first.

#### Role of Twacha in Gyanendriya

*Twacha* is the *Adhishthana* of *Sparshanendriya* as it carries the sensation of touch because of *Vayu Mahabhuta*. It covers the external part of body including the sense organs.

#### Twacha Stara (Skin layers)

In Ayurveda Samhita several layers of Twacha has been described on the basis of different names, associated skin disorders observed in Twacha Stara (Skin Layers) their variable thickness and functions performed by these layers. These skin layers are described from superficial to deep. Its thickness is measured on the parameter available in that era i.e. "Vrihi" that can be taken as thickness and size of paddy or barley. There is different opinion about numbers of skin layers Twacha Stara is observed among Atreya and Dhanwantri denomination. This controversial opinion about number of skin layers is due to prospective vision of surgeon and physician.

| Name of <i>samhita</i>  | Twacha Stara                        |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Sushruth Samhita, Astanga<br>Hridya, Bhavprakash samhita<br>and Sharangdhar samhita | seven layers of <i>Twacha Stara</i> |
| Charaka samhita, Bhel samhita<br>& Astanga Sangrah                                  | six layers of <i>Twacha Stara</i>   |

#### Comparison of Tawcha Stara by various Acharyas

#### **First layer**

| Name of<br><i>Twacha Stara</i> | Name of Acharya | Roga Adhisthana/Karma  |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Avabhasini                     | Sushruta        | Sidhma and Padamkantka |

| Avabhasin | Dalhan                      | Exhibition of Gaur,<br>Shyamadi Varan<br>(complexion) and five       |
|-----------|-----------------------------|--|
|           |                             | types of Prabha (glory)  |
|           |                             | and Chaya (shades) of the  |
|           |                             | body with help of Bhrajak  |
|           |                             | Agni present in this layer   |
| Udakdhara | Charak & Vriddha<br>Vagbhat | holds the Udakdhatu  |
| Udakdhara | Indu                        | Carries Udaka Dhatu and  |
|           |                             | prevents outflow and   |
|           |                             | maintain 'Aradrata Bhava '   |
| Bhasini   | Laghu Vagbhat               | Holds the Udakdhatu  |
| Avabhasin | Ghanekar                    | Exhibition of complexion,<br>glory and different shades<br>of Twacha |

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#### Second layer

| Name of <i>Twacha</i><br>Stara | Name of<br>Acharya             | Roga<br>Adhisthana/Karma   |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Lohita                         | Sushruta                       | Tilkalka, Nyacha &<br>Vyanga   |
| Asrugadhara                    | Charak &<br>Vriddha<br>Vagbhat | which carries Rakta  |
| Rudhantva Asram                | Indu                           | It holds the blood and<br>prevents outflow of<br><i>Rakta dhatu</i> from the<br>body |
| Lohini                         | Hemadri                        |  |
| Avabhasini                     | Ghanekar                       |  |

#### **Third layer**

| Name of<br>Twacha Stara | Name of <i>Acharya</i>       | Roga<br>Adhisthana/Karma            |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Shweta                  | Sushruta                     | Of Charmadal, Ajagalika<br>& Mashak |
| Tritiya twacha          | Charak & Vriddha<br>Vagbhata | Sidhma & Kilasa                     |

| Tritiya twacha | Astanga Hridya | Sidhma, Shivtra |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Shewta         | Ghanekar       |                 |

#### **Fourth layer**

| Name of<br>Twacha Stara | Name of Acharya                  | Roga<br>Adhisthana/Karma |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Tamra                   | Sushruta                         | Kustha and Kilasa        |
| Chaturthi<br>twacha     | Charak                           | Dadru and Kustha         |
| Chaturthi<br>twacha     | Astang Sangrah<br>and Hridya     | Sarva Kustha             |
| Tamra                   | Sharangdhara and<br>Bhavprakasha | Kilas and Shivtra        |
| Tamra                   | Ghanekar                         | Production of melanin    |

#### **Fifth layer**

| Name of Twacha<br>Stara   | Name of <i>Acharya</i>         | Roga<br>Adhisthana/Karma |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Vedini                    | Sushruth                       | Kustha and Visarpa       |
| Panchami twacha           | Charak & Vagbhat               | Alaji & Vidradhi         |
| Tvagavedini/<br>Rogkarini | Hemadri                        |                          |
| Vedini                    | Sharangdhar and<br>Bhavprakash | Sarvakustha & Visarpa    |
| Vedini                    | Ghanekar                       | Perception of sensation  |

#### Sixth layer

| Name of <i>Twacha</i><br>Stara | Name of <i>Acharya</i> | Roga<br>Adhisthana/Karma                             |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|--|
| Rohini                         | Sushruta               | Granthi, Apachi,<br>Galganda, Arbuda, &<br>Shleepada |
| Shashthi twacha                | Charak &<br>Chakrapani | Arunshi and Tama<br>Pravesha                         |
| Pranadhara                     | Vagbhat                | Prana-dharan   |

| Shashthi twacha | Indu     | Tama Pravesh and<br>Arunshi                                      |
|-----------------|----------|--|
| Rohini          | Ghanekar | Formation of<br>granulation tissue and<br>helps in wound healing |

#### Seventh layer

| Name of Twacha<br>Stara | Name of Acharya                 | Roga<br>Adhisthana/Karma          |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Mansadhara              | Shaushruta                      | Bhagandara, Vidradhi<br>& Arsha   |
| Sthula                  | Sharangdhara and<br>Bhavprakash | Vidradhi                          |
| Sthula                  | Adhamal                         | Vidradhi, Bhagandara<br>and Arsha |
| Sthula                  | Gannath Sen                     | Snehaadi Karshnam                 |

#### **According to Modern**

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. 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. It is the largest organ of body. It is uniformly thick; at some places it is thick and thin at some place. Average thickness is about 1 to 2 mm.

#### Definition

The skin is a vital organ that covers the entire outside of the body, forming a protective barrier against pathogens and injuries from the environment. The skin is the body's largest organ; covering the entire outside of the body.

#### **Types**

The epidermis, the outermost layer of skin, provides a waterproof barrier and creates our skin tone. The Epidermis is further grouped into five layers;

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- 1. Stratum Corneum or Horny Layer
- 2. Stratum Lucidum
- 3. Stratum Granulosum
- 4. Stratum Spinosum or Malphigian Layer
- 5. Stratum Basale or Germinative Layer

The dermis, beneath the epidermis, contains tough connective tissue, hair follicles, and sweat glands. The Dermis is further divided into two regions:-

- Papillary region
- Reticular region

The deeper subcutaneous tissue (hypodermis) is made of fat and connective tissue.

| Ayurveda   | Modern              |
|------------|---------------------|
| Avabhasini | Stratum corneum     |
| Lohita     | Stratum Lucidum     |
| Shveta     | Stratum Granulosum  |
| Tamra      | Malpighian Layer    |
| Vedini     | Papillary Layer     |
| Rohini     | Reticular Layer     |
| Mamsadhara | Subcutaneous tissue |

#### Functions

- 1. Thermoregulation
- 2. Blood Reservoir
- 3. Protection
- 4. Cutaneous sensations
- 5. Excretion and absorption
- 6. Synthesis of Vitamin D

# DISCUSSION

Classical texts and modern texts have different opinion about skin. But they both describe the layers, pigments, and thickness of skin. Moreover classical text describes the diseases which occurred in particular layer of skin. After detailed study of various concepts about *Twacha Sharir* from various *Ayurvedic* literatures and modern science. We can state that *Twacha* is well established tool in clinical examination, diagnostic & prognostic aspect in medical science. This study is an effort to bring autocracy about various doubtful concept of *Twacha Stara*, which may be useful for scholars, teachers & physicians for the purpose of people's interest.

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#### CONCLUSION

This detailed study of Twacha Shareer in both Ayurvedic and Modern sciences provided well established concept of Twacha (skin) in medical science. To know about the Vikriti of Twacha, it is necessary to know the normal physiology i.e. Prakriti of the Twacha. Thus, in medical science, for better diagnosis, detailed study of Twacha as per Ayurveda in Rachnatmaka and Kriyatmaka aspect as well as Modern concepts are necessary. Skin is most presentable part of body having definite role in personality. Hence to know abnormalities of skin one must have knowledge about normal state of its structure and function of skin must to be studied in detail. In above literary research structural and functional aspects of skin according to modern and classical text were studied. The entire article concludes that skin not only protects the internal structure of the body, but its complex structure and function create a unique environment which protects the inner functioning of the body and provides an incredible interface with which to interact with the outside world.

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