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Ayurvedic management of *Shwitra* (vitiligo) - A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: In Ayurveda all skin diseases are classified under heading *Kushta Roga*. *Shwitra* is one among them. *Shwitra* is a condition characterized by whitish discolored patches on the body, it is caused due to involvement of *Sapta Dravyas* i.e., *Vata, Pitta, Kapha, Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa* and *Meda*. The fourth layer of *Twacha* (*Tamra*) mainly considered as prime location of *Shwitra*. It can be correlated to Vitiligo. Vitiligo is a hypopigmentation dermatological disorder, affecting 1% of the population worldwide. **Methodology:** The present case report is of 63 years old male, came with complaints of whitish discolored patches over bilateral legs (shin aspect) with mild itching and no burning sensation; was effectively treated with *Shamana Aushadis* initially, followed by repeated *Shodhana* i.e., with *Virechana* and *Jaloukacharana*. **Result:** Patient showed encouraging result after *Virechana, Jaloukacharana* and followed by *Shamana Aushadis*, where subjective criteria evaluated using scoring method & objective criteria evaluated using VETI scoring method. **Discussion:** Patient was Initially treated with *Shamana Aushadis*, where white discolored patches turned to pinkish, later treated with repeated course of *Virechana* followed by *Jaloukacharana* in regular intervals, where subject was observed with 85% improvement in subjective criteria & VETI scoring improved from 12 to 4. Hence, the present case study highlights the importance of efficacy of Ayurvedic treatment in *Shwitra*, as mentioned in classics.

Key words: *Shwitra, Ayurveda, Vitiligo, Virechana, Jaloukacharana.*

INTRODUCTION

In *Ayurveda* all the skin diseases are categorized under the heading *Kushta*. *Shwitra* is mentioned in *Kushta Roga Chikitsa* in classics. The word *Shwitra* is derived from *Sanskrit* word *Shweta*, which means white patch.^[1] So, *Shwitra* is a disease where white patches appear on body. According to *Kashyapa Samhita*

'*Shweta Bhava Michanti Shwitrām*'.^[2] It is also called as *Kilasa, Daruna, Aruna* and *Shweta Kushta*. *Bhrajaka Pitta* which is situated in the skin is responsible for *Chaya* and *Prabha* of *Twacha* (skin).^[3] Any impairment of *Bhrajaka Pitta* and *Vata Dosha* can cause skin diseases like *Shwitra*. In *Shwitra* morbidity is located in *Medhodhatu*. Depending on the colour and *Ashraya* in *Dhatus* 3 types of *Shwitra* are mentioned i.e., if located in *Rakta* (blood) it is red in colour, if in *Mamsa* (muscle tissue) it is of coppery colour, and if located in *Medas* it is white in colour. Due to similarity in the manifestation of the disease this can be co-related to Vitiligo. Vitiligo is an acquired condition affecting 1% of the population worldwide.^[4] Focal loss of melanocytes results in the development of patches of hypopigmentation. It is thought to be the result of cell-mediated autoimmune destruction of melanocytes. Generalized vitiligo is often symmetrical and involves hands, wrist, feet, knees and neck, as well as areas around body orifices.^[5] Segmental vitiligo is restricted

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to one part of the body but not necessarily a dermatome. The patches of depigmentation are sharply defined.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To determine the efficacy of *Ayurvedic* treatment in *Shwitra*, as mentioned in classical *Ayurvedic* treatises.

Brief history of patient

The present case report is of 63 years old male, not a known case of HTN/DM/Other systemic illness, came with complaints of whitish discolored patches over bilateral legs (shin aspect), associated with mild itching, with no burning sensation since 1 year. All these symptoms said to have aggravated in the past 1 month i.e., in the month of August 2021. Subject initially neglected these symptoms and did not take any medicines. As patches started spreading gradually over the whole length of shin region bilaterally, hence, he consulted at ALN Rao Memorial Ayurvedic Medical College & Hospital for the treatment.

Past History

1. No history of above skin complaints before 1 year or trauma.
2. No history of HTN/DM/Thyroid/other systemic disorder.

Family History

Nothing significant all other family members are said to be healthy.

Personal history

- Occupation - Farmer
- Marital status - Married
- Religion - Hindu
- Diet - Mixed, predominantly non-veg (chicken & fish) weekly twice.
- Appetite - Normal
- Bowel - 1times/day
- Micturition - 3 to 4 times/day, 1time/night

- Sleep - Disturbed, 6 to 7hrs with day sleep of 1 to 2 hours.
- Allergies to any medications/food - No
- Addictions - No

Table 1: Nidana

Aharaja
<i>Viruddha Ahara - Matsya with Dughda</i>
<i>Vishamashana - Intake of water after exposure to sun. Intake of Mamsa, Kulattha, Takra, Matsya and Mulika more frequently.</i>
<i>Adhyashana - intake of food before digestion of previous meal.</i>
Viharaja
<i>Diwaswapna</i>
Exposure to Sun for long hours.
<i>Sheeta-Vata Sevana (Exposure to cold)</i>
Working in mud for longer duration daily. ^[6]
Manasika
<i>Chinta</i>

Clinical findings - Integumentary system

O/E of Skin

- Site of lesion - On both legs over shin aspect
- Lesion - Epidermal
- Distribution - Symmetrical
- Character of lesion - Macules
- No of lesions - Left-20, Right-14; Size-Left-1x0.5cm each, Right-0.25x0.25 cm each;
- Color - White; Arrangement - Non-Segmental.
- Itching - Mild present
- Discharge - Absent

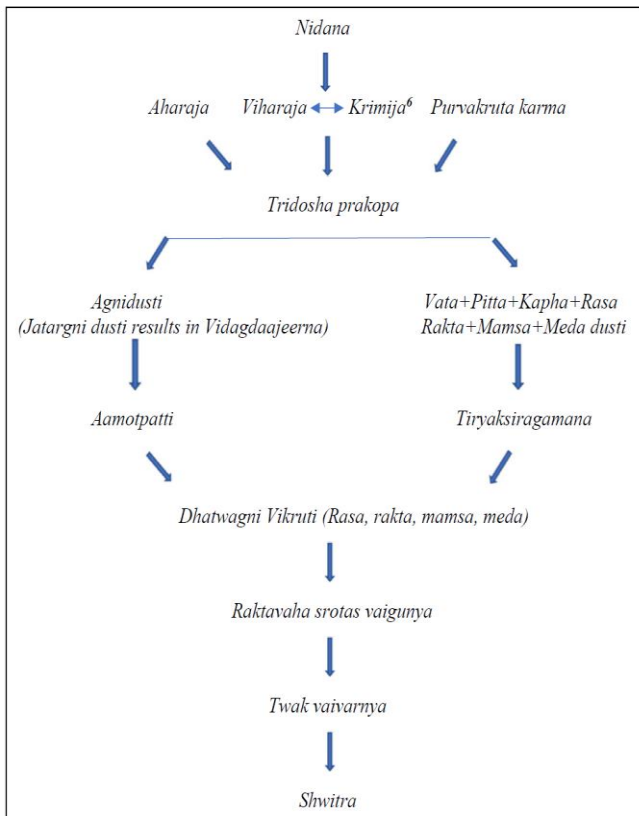
Superficial sensation on lesion

- Pain - Absent
- Swelling - Absent

- Paresthesia - Absent

Aggravating factors - Rainy season, Mud area

Table 2: Samprapti



Samprapti Ghatakas

Dosha - Tridosha

Dushya - Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa, Meda

Ama - Jatargni Janya Ama

Agni - Jatargnimandhya, Dhatwagnimandhya.

Srotas - Rasavaha, Raktavaha, Mamsavaha & Medovaha

Srotodusti Prakara - Sanga

Rogamarga - Bahya

Udbhava Sthana - Amashaya

Vyakta Sthana - Twacha

Roga swabhava - Chirakari

Sadhyasadhyata - Yapyata

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Assessment Criteria

Subjective Criteria

Patient was observed for improvement in Hypopigmented patches, itching and improvement in general condition.

Objective Criteria

Improvement calculated on basis of VETI scoring method.

Table 4: Grading Assessment for Subjective Criteria^[7]

Score	0	1	2	3
Number of Patches depending on % of area involved	Absent	1-29%	30-69%	70-100%
Colour	Normal intensity	>50% filling with normal intensity	<50% of filling with pinkish discoloration	White patches
Itching	Absent	Mild	Moderate	Severe
Hypopigmentation on Patches	Absent	Solitary	Segmental	Generalized

Treatment Plan

- *Amapachana*
- *Snehapana*
- *Abhyanga* and *Swedana*
- *Virechana*
- *Jalokacharana*

Table 5: Treatment Schedule

Course	Shodhana	Shamana	Observation
7/08/21	–	T. Arogyavadhini Vati 1-0-1 AF Bakuchi taila L/A Bakuchi Churna L/A to	White patches

		apply with <i>Taila</i> <i>Aragwadadi</i> <i>Kashaya</i> 15ml BD BF	
18/08/21	–	<i>Bakuchi</i> <i>Churna</i> L/A with <i>Marichadi</i> <i>taila</i> <i>Bakuchi</i> <i>Churna</i> ½ tsp BD with honey <i>T. Gandhaka</i> <i>Rasayana</i> 1-0-1 AF <i>Asanadi</i> <i>ghana plus</i> 15ml BD AF	Patches turned Pinkish from white
31/08/21 to 03/09/21	<i>Snehapana</i> – <i>Guggulutikta</i> <i>Gritha</i> 30 ml on 31/08/21 60 ml on 01/09/21 90 ml On 02/09/21 <i>Sarvanga</i> <i>Abhyanga</i> – <i>Yasti madhu taila</i> + <i>Manjistadi taila</i> <i>Sarvanga Naadi sweda</i> <i>Virechana</i> with – <i>Trivruth lehya</i> 30gm + <i>Vacha</i> <i>Churna</i> 10 gm + <i>Drakshadi</i> <i>Kashaya</i> – 200ml <i>Vegas</i> – 10 <i>Jaloukachrana</i>	<i>Khadiradi vati</i> 1-0-1 <i>Gandhaka</i> <i>Rasayana</i> 0-2-0 <i>Khadirarista</i> 15 ml TID AF <i>Bakuchi</i> <i>Churna</i> L/A with <i>Gomutra</i> <i>Bakuchi</i> <i>Churna</i> ½ tsp BD with honey	Same as Above
5/10/21	<i>Sadhyo Virechana</i> – <i>Gandharvahastadi</i> <i>Taila</i> – 2 cap <i>Vegas</i> – 8	<i>T. Arogyavardini</i> <i>vati</i> 1-0-1 <i>Khadirarista</i> 15mi BD AF	Dark patches over skin (L) present on the depigmented areas (R)

		<i>Raktamrita</i> <i>Kwatha</i> 15ml OD <i>Bakuchi</i> <i>Churna</i> 0- ½ tsp-0 with honey <i>Bakuchi</i> <i>churna</i> with <i>Gomutra</i> L/A <i>Marichadi</i> <i>taila</i> L/A	depigmented patches clearing out c/o occasional itching over legs affected area.
09/11/21	<i>Jalokacharana</i> <i>Sadhyo Virechana</i> – <i>Gandharva</i> <i>Hastadi Taila</i> - 2 cap <i>Vegas</i> – 8	<i>T. Kaishora</i> <i>Guggulu</i> 1-0-0 <i>Khadirarista</i> 15ml BD AF <i>Bakuchi</i> <i>churna</i> 0-0-1/2tsp with honey <i>Bakuchi</i> <i>churna</i> L/A with <i>Gomutra</i> <i>Yastimadhu</i> <i>taila</i> + <i>Marichadi</i> <i>taila</i> L/A	Dark pigmentation over prior whitish patches observed with 80-85% filling (Left) & 90% (Right) Lower limb.

RESULTS

Results: VETI score calculation done as below^[8]

VETI score formula: (Percentage of head involvement x grade of tensity) + (Percentage of trunk involvement x grade of tensity) 4+ (Percentage of upper limbs involvement x grade of tensity) 2+ (Percentage of lower limbs involvement x grade of tensity) 4+ (Percentage of genitalia involvement x grade of tensity) 0.1

Table 6: Percentage of Area effected

Percentage of involvement = Area Score
0 = 0%
1 = 1-9%
2 = 10-29%
3 = 30-49%
4 = 50-69%

5 = 70-89%
6 = 90-100%

Table 7: Tensity

Stage 0	Normal Skin
Stage 1	Hypopigmentation (including trichrome & homogeneous lighter pigmentation)
Stage 2	Complete depigmentation with black hair and with perifollicular pigmentation
Stage 3	Complete depigmentation with black hair and without perifollicular pigmentation
Stage 4	Complete depigmentation with compound of white and black hair with/without perifollicular pigmentation
Stage 5	Complete depigmentation plus significant hair whitening

VETI score before treatment

$$\begin{aligned} \text{VETI: } & (Ph \times Th) + (Pt \times Tt) \ 4+ (Pu \times Tu) \ 2+ (Pl \times Tl) \ 4+ (Pg \\ & \times Tg) \ 0.1 \\ & = (0 \times 3) + (0 \times 3) \ 4+ (0 \times 3) \ 2+ (1 \times 3) \ 4+ (0 \times 3) \ 0.1 \\ & = 12 \end{aligned}$$

VETI score After treatment

$$\begin{aligned} \text{VETI: } & (Ph \times Th) + (Pt \times Tt) \ 4+ (Pu \times Tu) \ 2+ (Pl \times Tl) \ 4+ (Pg \\ & \times Tg) \ 0.1 \\ & = (0 \times 1) + (0 \times 1) \ 4+ (0 \times 1) \ 2+ (1 \times 1) \ 4+ (0 \times 1) \ 0.1 \\ & = 4 \end{aligned}$$

As per VETI scoring for vitiligo patient was observed with significant improvement of VETI scoring 12 before treatment to VETI scoring of 4 after treatment. The improvement was observed in subjective criteria with 80-85% filling of hypopigmented patches with normal skin tensity in left lower limb & 90% filling in right lower limb.

Table 8: Results showing Subjective Criteria's before and after treatment

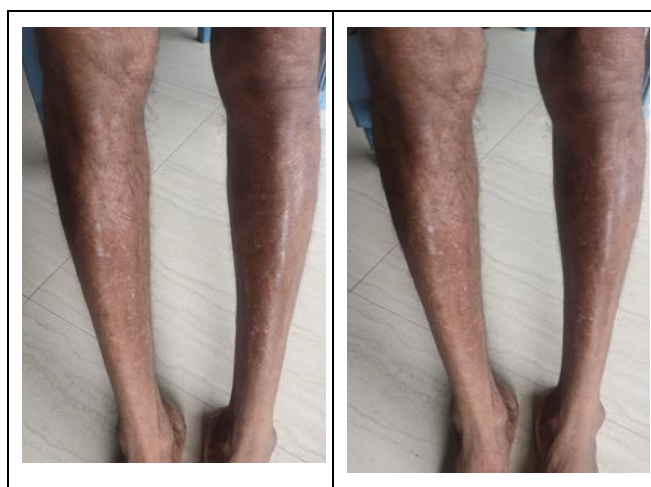
Criteria's	Score	
	Before treatment	After treatment
Number of Patches	1	1
Color	3	1
Itching	2	0
Hypopigmentation Patches	2	1

Fig. 1: Before Treatment



Fig. 2: After 1st Shodhana



Fig. 3: After 2nd ShodhanaFig. 4: After 3rd Shodhana

DISCUSSION

Shwitra can be managed very well in *Ayurveda* by both *Shodhana* & *Shamana Aushadis*, if treatment can be initiated in early stages, we can observe satisfactory results. In this case patient presents with whitish discolored patches in both lower limbs, after 10 days of *Shamana Aushadis* white patches turned to pinkish. Gradual filling of depigmented area with normal skin tensity enhanced after 1st round of *Shodhana*. After 2nd round of *Shodhana* 50% improvement was observed. After 3rd round of *Shodhana* Dark pigmentation over prior whitish patches observed with 80-85% filling in left lower limb & 90% filling in right lower limb was observed. The total improvement is evaluated as per VETI score.^[8]

Bakuchi Churna contain psoralen, isopsoralen, bakuchiol, bavchinin & corylin which have antioxidant properties, stimulates melanocytes for Melanin synthesis and has immuno-modulatory effect.

Khadirarista main ingredient of *Khadirarista* are *Khadira* extract (*Acacia catechu*). *Khadira* extract is as an immune-modulatory, purify blood, bacterial refrigerant and antiphogistic.

Gandhaka Rasayana the main ingredient of *Gandhaka Rasayana* i.e., *Bhavita Gandhaka* (Sulphur) has several potential uses for skin. It is *Raktashodhaka*, *Twachya* and *Kushtagna*.

Arogyavardhini Vati is having *Raktadhushtihara* (blood purifier), *Kushtahara* (alleviates skin disease), *Sroto Vishodhana* (cleansing channels of body) and *Pitta Doshahara* (alleviates *Pitta*) properties. And it improves digestion and metabolic activities.

Raktamokshana activates and stimulates the reaction of body system, which further stimulates brain function towards the diseased part of skin, along with stimulation of the pituitary gland which is responsible for secretion of melanocytes for melanin formation. This helps to regain the normal color of skin.^[9]

CONCLUSION

The incidence of vitiligo is increasing due to faulty life style, so identifying and eliminating multifactorial agents associated with the disease based on Ayurvedic principles is essential. Regaining of pigmentation can be achieved in most of patients by following Ayurvedic treatment protocol as mentioned in *Shwitra Chikitsa*. *Shwitra* is a disease having high impact on body and mind due to cosmetic disfigurement. *Shodhana* along with *Shamana Chikitsa* helps to remove the root cause of the disease and prevents the recurrence of the disease by eliminating aggravated *dosha* in the body, through resulting in overall improvement w.r.t. no of lesion, size of the lesions regaining of normal skin pigmentation.

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