

Treatment of *Kitibha Kushtha* (Epidermolytic Hyperkeratosis) w.s.r. to *Kushthadi Churna* and *Karanja Oil*– A Case Report

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ABSTRACT

In *Ayurveda*, the skin diseases are described under one common heading, *Kushtha*, which are of 18 types as per almost all the major texts of *Ayurveda*. *Kushtha* are subdivided as *Maha Kushtha* (major skin diseases) and *Kshudra Kushtha* (minor skin diseases). *Kshudra Kushtha* has more social & ornamental value than its medical problems, especially in female patients. Almost all the *Kushtha Roga* are said to be *Tridoshaja* (due to imbalance & impurity in the three biological entities of our body i.e. *Vata*, *Pitta* & *Kapha*). *Kitibha* is a type of *Kshudra Kushtha* and like other *Kushtha* is *Tridoshaja*, but *Vata Kapha* predominant. *Kitibha* closely resembles Epidermolytic hyperkeratosis. A number of *Ayurvedic* drugs & formulations have been described for use in *Kushtha*, but some are found to be more effective clinically and without any adverse effect, which may be due to their beneficial effects on more than one system. Local application of one such formulation, *Kushthadi Churna* with mustard oil and *Karanja* oil, led to substantial improvement in a case of *Kitibha Kushtha* and hence it is being presented here as a case report.

Key words: Epidermolytic Hyperkeratosis, *Karanja* oil, *Kitibha Kushtha*, *Kushthadi Churna*

INTRODUCTION

In *Ayurveda*, description of almost all the skin diseases comes under *Kushtha*, which are further sub-classified as *Maha Kushtha* and *Kshudra Kushtha*. *Kitibha Kushtha* is a type of *Kshudra Kushtha*, whose symptoms have been described by *Charaka* as blackish, rough, hard & dry skin lesion/ patches,^[1] as was seen in this case. Various signs and symptoms described in the major *Ayurvedic* texts are as shown in [Table 1].

Table 1: Signs and symptoms of *Kitibha Kushtha* described in major *Ayurvedic* texts

| <i>Charaka Samhita</i> | <i>Ashtanga Sangaha</i> | <i>Sushruta Samhita</i> |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Shyava</i> (Black) | <i>Asita</i> (Black) | <i>Krashnam</i> (Black) |
| <i>Kin</i> (Scars) | <i>Kin</i> (Scars) | <i>Sravi</i> (Discharge) |
| <i>Kharsparsha</i> (Rough) | <i>Kharsparsha</i> (Rough) | <i>Vrutnama</i> (Round) |
| <i>Parusha</i> (Dry) | <i>Parusha</i> (Dry) | <i>Snigdha</i> (Smooth) |
| | Kandu (Itching) | <i>Ugrakandu</i> (Itching) |
| | <i>Ruksha</i> (Dry) | <i>Ghana</i> (Thick) |

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The symptoms of this patient were itching, dryness, keratosis and blackness (hyperpigmentation) on the neck, which matches well with the *Kitibha Kushtha*. This condition resembles the disease Epidermolytic Hyperkeratosis (EHK) described in modern medicine. In it, as the affected individual gets older, blistering becomes less frequent and the skin becomes thick (hyperkeratotic) specially over joints, on the areas of skin that come in contact with each other, or on the scalp or neck. This thickened skin is usually darker than normal. Bacteria can grow on the affected skin, often causing a distinct odour. EHK is of two types - 1.Palmoplantar or Palm/sole, 2.Other than Palmoplantar. EHK is also considered as a part of a group of conditions called Ichthyosis. However, in EHK skin is thick but not scaly as in Ichthyosis and other related disorders. **Treatment-** Oral retinoids, e.g. etretinate, Acitretin and Isotretinoin, have proven efficacy in its treatment, but may have significant side effects. **Maintenance measures-** EHK patients have fragile skin which needs good care. Regular bath is needed. Baths that include sea salt seems to improve the process of softening & removing the thickened skin. Ointments like petroleum jelly, skin care products as Aveeno, and other barriers like ointments help hold the moisture in skin after a bath.

As with many other conditions, *Ayurvedic* literatures, especially *Charaka Samhita*, has solution for this disease also. The chief preparation selected for local application in this case was *Avachurnana* of *Kushthadi Churna* with mustard oil has been described in *Charaka Samhita*.^[2] *Kushthadi Churna avachurnana*

(rubbing) with mustard oil is an indication for many *Kushthas* including *Kitibha*. Its effectiveness has been observed in a large number of skin diseases such as *Pama* (Scabies) *Dadru* (Fungal infection), *Kitibha* (Hyperkeratosis), *Kandu* (Itching) and *Vicharchika* (Eczema) etc. *Chikitsaadrasa* further advocates that in such conditions, oils having similar properties can be used together. [3]

Owing to a wide recommendation of use of *Karanja* oil (oil of *Pongamia pinnata*) in *Kushthas*, it was added to this formulation, with a view of providing additive effect to mustard oil. Hence, *Kushthadi Churna avachurnana* (rubbing) with mustard oil and *Karanja* oil was the therapy selected for this particular case.

CASE REPORT

A 22 year old, married female patient, muslim by religion, house wife, residing in Muzaffarnagar, visited OPD of S.K.D. Govt. Ayurvedic College, Muzaffarnagar, U.P., India, on April 05, 2014 with complaints as follows:

1. Black, dry skin lesion on neck region- 4 years
2. Itching- 4 years
3. Spreading in more area- 3 years
4. Effect of seasonal variation (increases in winters) - 3 years

She had consulted many physicians for this, but only symptomatic and temporarily relief was attained. Her diet was mixed in nature and without any noteworthy issues. Also, there was no significant history of any chronic disease or any drug intake. It was specially made sure that there was no history of any types of chronic & communicable diseases such as diabetes mellitus, hypertension, rheumatoid arthritis and any kind of allergy/drug allergy conditions etc.

General examination

BP- 110/80 mm Hg; PR- 80/ minute, regular; Height- 150 cm; Weight- 65 Kg; Temperature-Normal; Menstrual history- Normal; has 3 children and all are healthy.

Investigations

Complete hemogram, Absolute Eosinophil Count (AEC), random blood sugar, serum bilirubin and SGPT were performed before & after treatment. All the investigations were reported normal.

TREATMENT

The selected drug *Kushthadi churna* [1] was used for local application on affected areas of skin as *avchurnana* (rubbing) with mustard oil (as described by *Charaka*), [1] along with *Karanja* oil. [3-7] The affected areas were firstly massaged gently with Mustard oil, and then a mixture of *Kushthadi churna* with *Karanja* oil was applied there in a rubbing manner (*Avachurnana*).

Application frequency: Twice a day.

Application duration: For at least 30-40 minutes at a time.

Total duration of treatment: 30 days.

OBSERVATIONS AND RESULTS

The response to aforesaid treatment was as follows:

Table 2: Changes observed in symptomatology of *Kitibha Kushtha*

| S.No. | Symptoms | Before Treatment | After Treatment | | | |
|-------|----------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | | 05/04/14 | A.T. 1 12/04/14 | A.T. 2 19/04/14 | A.T. 3 26/04/14 | A.T.4 03/05/14 |
| 1. | Itching | ++++ | ++++ | +++ | +/- | — |
| 2. | Blackness | ++++ | + | + | — | — |
| 3. | Dryness | ++ | ++ | + | — | — |
| 4. | Hyperkeratosis | ++ | ++ | + | — | — |

A.T.=After Treatment



a) Date:05/04/14

b) Date:12/04/14



c) Date:19/04/14

d) Date:26/04/14



e) Date:03/05/14

Fig. 1: Photographs of changes seen in lesions of *Kitibha Kushtha*

Thus, excellent result of this polyherbal formulation was seen in this case, as evidenced by improvement in all symptomatological parameters.

DISCUSSION

Treatment of skin diseases with modern medicine alone is usually associated with a higher recurrence rate. The success rate in skin diseases managed with *Ayurveda* is high because *Ayurveda*

addresses the root cause as well. Important considerations in management of such cases include the *Dosha*, *Prakriti*, etc. of patient and the availability of drugs. Elaborate descriptions are available in *Ayurveda* regarding management of skin diseases. *Kshudra Kushtha* has more social & ornamental value than its medical problems, especially in female patients. This was a case of *Kitibha Kushtha* in female, in which the chief presenting symptoms were keratosis, dryness & itching. Drugs used for preparing this formulation have properties as *Krimighana* (antiseptic), *Kushthaghana* (pacifying skin diseases), *Jantunashaka* (antibacterial), *Kandughana* (pacifying itching), *Shwedjanaka* (increases perspiration) and *Vranropaka* (wound healer). *Karanja oil* (*Pongamia pinnata*) is well known for its effectiveness in the treatment of itching, keratosis and wound healing. These properties are mainly due to Pongamia oil (Karanjin) which is antibacterial, and pongamol which is *Kushthaghana* (pacifies skin diseases), *Kriminashaka* (antiseptic) and *Ropaka* (wound healer). Besides these, this oil is also a good antiseptic & antifungal. Hence, this preparation may effective in the treatment of a wide range of skin ailments akin to *Kitibha Kushtha* such as, scabies, fungal infection, ring worm, dry eczema, hyperkeratosis, psoriasis, rhagades, etc. However due to the presence of some metals in it, it may be ineffective or allergic in certain skin diseases in which discharge, pustules & pus formation are the prominent symptoms

CONCLUSIONS

The local application of this polyherbal formulation in this case of *Kitibha Kushtha* yielded excellent results, as adjudged on the symptomatological parameters. But being just a single case, its results need to be affirmed on larger groups of patients. However, similar

approach may be taken into consideration for further treatment and research work on management of *Kitibha Kushtha*.

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