

## REVIEW ARTICLE

# Ayurvedic Perspectives on the Management of Skin Diseases – A Review

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### ABSTRACT

Numerous factors can contribute to skin issues, including allergies, autoimmune diseases, and genetics. Kushtha, a sickness marked by skin derangement, is the umbrella term used by Ayurveda to describe skin problems. When considering the incidence of various diseases, skin disorders account for more than 20% of all medical visits worldwide each year. Depending on the severity of the symptoms and the prognosis, all Acharyas classify Kushtha as either Maha Kushtha or Kshudra Kushtha. The Ayurvedic medical system describes a wide range of etiological variables and illness management techniques. When Tridosha, Twak, Rakta, Mamsa, and Lasika are vitiated, Kushtha results. Therefore, Dosha and Dushya's involvement is the foundation of Kushtha's management. The basic idea of treatment is the same for all types of Kushtha, even though some treatment approaches are condition specific. Acharya has highlighted the need for Raktamokshana to eject Dushita Rakta, the primary Dushya in the pathology of Kushtha, and Shodhana (detoxification) therapy to remove the morbid Dosha from the body. Both internal and external drugs, such as Rasa Aushadhi, Churna, Kwath, Asav, Arishta, Guggulu, Ghrita, and Malhara, Tail, Lepa, are part of the Shamana (palliative) therapy. In Ayurveda, dietary control, Dincharya, Ritucharya, Rasayana treatment, and Sadvritta are all highly valued for maintaining good health and preventing illness. To create Ayurvedic-based guidelines for the treatment of skin conditions, it is necessary to examine this holistic perspective of detoxification, palliative care, and lifestyle change.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The largest organ in the human body that covers the body's outside is the skin. In addition, it acts as the initial line of defence. In Ayurveda, the skin is regarded as one of the primary sense organs. Considering the prevalence of various diseases, we discover that 20% of all individuals seeking medical advice worldwide each year suffer from skin conditions, including cosmetic problems.<sup>[1]</sup> People of all ages, from infants to the elderly, are impacted by skin illnesses, which can cause harm in a variety of ways and frequently result in social stigma.

Ayurveda offers novel ideas for identifying and curing a range of skin conditions. In Ayurveda, skin illnesses are called Kushtha, which translates to "unsightly skin." Because Kushtha involves all three Doshas (humour) and four Dushya (pathological elements), it is a difficult disease to treat. The Tridosha is aggravated by the particular

Nidana (etiological component), which vitiates the Tvaka (skin), Mamsa (muscle), Rakta (blood), and Lasika (lymph). The main harmful component of Kushtha comprises these seven components.<sup>[2]</sup> The unique manifestation of Kushtha is a result of the extent and severity of the vitiation of these sevenfold pathogenic substances. It is essential to comprehend the role of vitiated Dushya and dominating Dosha to differentiate between different forms of Kushtha. The manifestation of the many varieties of Kushtha's signs and symptoms makes this easy to understand. Understanding Doshik involvement and the disease's etiology is made easier by the emergence of particular signs and symptoms as well as thorough history-taking. Eliminating vitiated Dosha and avoiding causative causes, or Nidana Parivarjana, is the cornerstone of Ayurvedic therapy. This includes Ahara (diet) and Vihara (lifestyle) modification in addition to Shodhana (detoxification) and Shamana (palliative) Chikitsa.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Astanga Hridaya, Astanga Samgrah, Sarngadhara Samhita, Bhava Prakasha, Nighantu, and

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other classic Ayurvedic literature have all been employed as primary source materials for this study. References have also been made to a number of review and research articles, websites, and the Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia of India.

### 3. CONCEPTUAL STUDY

Examining each patient's Prakriti and their signs and symptoms is crucial when treating skin conditions from an Ayurvedic standpoint. A thorough history of the patient's Doshika composition, food and lifestyle choices, pulse, and disease manifestations is necessary for the diagnosis and treatment of the skin issue. When Tridosha, Twak, Rakta, Mamsa, and Lasika are vitiated, Kushtha results. Therefore, the degree of vitiation of the related Dosha and Dushya determines the management for each form of Kushtha. The main objective of Ayurvedic treatment is to restore Doshika balance. Auxiliary components of management include a healthy lifestyle that includes regular exercise, eating, herbs, meditation, and daily routines.

### 4. CAUSES

The incidence of skin diseases is increasing due to the following factors:

- A poor daily routine and diet; eating unhealthy and incompatible foods; eating before meals that need time to digest; consuming milk with meat and fish (aquatic animals); taking a bath right after being in the sun or after exerting oneself, etc.
- Chemicals, soap, shampoo, deodorant, and other cosmetics are misused and overused.
- Unhygienic practices.
- Excessive and unnecessary usage of steroids and antibiotics.

### 5. MANAGEMENT OF SKIN DISEASE THROUGH AYURVEDA

- *Nidana Parivarjana* (avoidance of causative factors).
- *Shodhana* (Purification)
- *Shamana* (Internal Medication)
- Local application
- Lifestyle modifications: Dietary management, *Dincharya*, *Rutucharya*, *Rasayana* therapy, and *Sadvritta*

#### 5.1. *Nidana Parivarjana* (avoidance of causative factors)

- Avoid consuming things that are unwholesome and incompatible, such as fish (aquatic animals), milk with meats, spicy and salty foods, and meals that are consumed before the preceding meal has had time to digest.
- Do not take a bath shortly after working out or being in the sun. Steer clear of excessive and needless usage of steroids and antibiotics. Steer clear of excessive or inappropriate use of chemicals, cosmetics, soap, shampoo, deodorants, and other products.
- Psychogenic stress and emotional problems are the root causes of some skin conditions. Various yogic techniques should be employed in the therapy of such circumstances to soothe the patient's emotions.

#### 5.2. *Shodhana* (Purification)

The best remedy for eliminating the vitiated Dosha and reducing the buildup of toxins in the body is shodhana. All Acharyas have emphasised the need for Shodhana therapy in the treatment of Kushtha. The morbid Dosha is expelled from the body through Shodhana

therapy. Shodhana is a thorough detoxification and cleansing procedure that eliminates all toxins from the body at the cellular level. Patients with skin conditions have been advised to undergo repeated Shodhana karma at regular intervals. Acharya Sushruta suggested that in a chronic case of Kushtha, Vamana (therapeutic emesis) be administered once every 2 weeks, Virechana (therapeutic purgation) once a month, Raktamokshana (blood-letting) twice a year, and Nasya (nasal installation) once every 3 days. In order to intensify the digestive fire, Deepana-Pachana drugs are administered as part of the Vamana and Virechana treatments. Depending on how Samyak Snigdha Lakshana manifests, Abhyantar Snehepana with Panchtikta Ghrita, Mahatikta Ghrita, etc., is then performed for 3, 5, or 7 days. In order to bring all of the vitiated Doshas into the Koshtha, Abhyanga-Swedana and a rest period of 1–3 days follow. These vitiated Doshas are removed from the Koshtha by the Vamana and Virechana. To intensify the digestive fire, Deepana-Pachana drugs are administered as part of the Vamana and Virechana treatments. Depending on how Samyak Snigdha Lakshana manifests, Abhyantar Snehepana with Panchtikta Ghrita, Mahatikta Ghrita, etc., is then performed for 3, 5, or 7 days. To bring all of the vitiated Doshas into the Koshtha, Abhyanga-Swedana and a rest period of 1–3 days follow. These vitiated Doshas are removed from the Koshtha by the Vamana and Virechana. According to Sushruta, among the Panchkarma (Penta-bio purifying) operations, Raktamokshana is one of the most significant. Through a variety of methods, including Sira Vedha (Venous puncture), Prachhana (Incision), Jalauka Avacharana (leech therapy), Shringa Avacharana (horn application), and Alabu Avacharana (cupping therapy), vitiated Rakta Dosha and Pitta are removed from the body through this significant non-pharmacological intervention. Vata Dushta Rakta is treated with Shringa Avacharana, Pitta Dushta Rakta with Jalauka Avacharana, and Kapha Dushta Rakta with Alabu Avacharana. Ghritapana, or the internal administration of ghee, is crucial in the post-Shodhana and Raktamokshana period to avoid Vata Prakopa.

#### 5.3. *Shamana Therapy* (Internal Medication)

- *Arogyavardhini Vati*: Medications such as Agnideepana, Krimihara, Doshashamak, and Rakta Prasadana are used in the therapy regimen. The main drugs used to treat Kushtha are included here, along with information on how they work.<sup>[3]</sup> *Aarogyavardhini Vati* helps to remove *Ama* (toxins) from the body. It also has an antipruritic nature that relieves itching sensation.
- *Gandhaka Rasayana*: *Gandhaka Rasayana*, *Vishaghna*, *Krimighna*, *Kushthaghna*, *Raktaprasadaka*, *Pachaka*, *Kaphaghna*, *Kledaghna*, and *Agnideepaka* are all considered *vati*. *The Gandhaka Rasayana takes place in Rakta and Twacha. By removing its Malinata, it aids in detoxifying the vitiated Rakta Dhātu and transforming the body's saturated Vikrut Dravya.*<sup>[4]</sup>
- *Krumikuthar Rasa*: The de-worming function of Krumikuthara Rasa is a Krimighna feature that aids in the body's cleansing. It protects the cellular membrane from oxidative stress, clears the airways, stops bacteria from developing, and triggers cell-mediated immunological responses.<sup>[5]</sup>
- *Rasamanikya*: It works as a blood purifier, or *Raktashodhaka*, to alleviate skin issues. It eliminates excess pollutants from the body and reduces pain, oedema, and inflammation. Antioxidant, antifungal, and antiseptic qualities also help heal skin disorders.<sup>[6]</sup>

##### 5.3.1. *Guggulu Kalpa*

- *Kaishore Guuggulu*: *Kaishore Guggulu* is primarily utilised for its blood-purifying, anti-inflammatory, anti-allergic, and antibacterial qualities.<sup>[7]</sup>

- *Amritadi Guggulu*: *Amritadi Guggulu*, which is expressly described in *Kushtha*, functions as *Shothahara* and *Vranahara*. Its constituent *Guduchi* has antiviral qualities and lessens burning.<sup>[8]</sup>

### 5.3.2. *Kashay Kalpa*

- *Guduchyadi Kwath*: Antimicrobial, antiallergic, anti-inflammatory, and antileprotic properties are all possessed by *Guduchyadi Kwath*. It primarily affects *Pitta* and *Kapha* *Dosha* illnesses.<sup>[9]</sup>
- *Patoladi Kwath*: It has *Tikta Rasa Dravyas*, which aid in *Raktadhatu* *Prasadhana* and balance the vitiated *Pitta* and *Kapha* *Doshas*. Its properties include *Kushthaghna*, *Jwaraghna*, and *Vishghna*. It soothes burning, discolouration, and itching in a variety of skin conditions. In addition, it can aid with liver cleansing. An essential organ for *Raktadhatu* and healthy operation is the liver. Its *Amapachana* and *Agni Vardhana* qualities stimulate hunger and aid in digestion.<sup>[10]</sup>
- *Mahamanjishtadi Kwath*: It functions as a *Kushtha* *Nashaka*, *Kaphaghna*, and *Raktashodhaka*.<sup>[11]</sup>

### 5.3.3. *Asav Arishta*

- *Khadirarishta*: *Khadira* is a key ingredient. *Kushthaghna*, *Kandughna*, *Krumighna*, *Raktashodhaka*, and *Vranaropaka* are among *Khadira*'s estates. It possesses antioxidant, antifungal, antibacterial, and anti-inflammatory properties.<sup>[12]</sup>
- *Sarivadyasava*: *Tikta*, *Kashaya* (~astringent) *Rasa*, *Sheeta Virya*, and *Katu Vipaka* are the main ingredients in this composition; they all help to calm *Pitta*, *Rakta* (*sheeta virya*), and *Kapha* (*katu vipaka*). It is well known for its *Raktashodhaka*, *Raktaprasadaka*, and *Pidaka* *Nashaka* activities. It possesses antibacterial, antioxidant, antithrombotic, anti-inflammatory, and anti-ulcerogenic qualities and aids in wound healing.<sup>[13]</sup>
- *Chandanasava*: *Chandanasava* pacifies *Pitta Dosha* and acts as *Raktaprasadaka* and *Agnideepaka*.<sup>[14]</sup>

### 5.3.4. *Churna*

- *Nimba*: *Nimba* is used in *Kapha Pitta Vikara* because of its *Sheeta Virya*, hence utilized for *Dahaprashamana* and as it is *Tikta Kashaya Rasa Dravya*, it is *Kushthaghna*. It is *Krumighna* and *Rasayana*.<sup>[15]</sup>
- *Avipattikar Churna*: The qualities of *Avipattikar Churna* include *Pachana*, *Deepan*, and *Mridu Virechaka* (mild laxative). It eliminates aggravating *Doshas*, rectifies *Agnimandya*, and therefore eliminates *Strotorodha*.<sup>[16]</sup>
- *Vidanga*: *Vidanga* has the properties of *Deepana*, *Pachana*, *Raktashodhaka* and *Rasayana*. It acts as *Krimighna* by its *Prabhava*. *Vidanga* was described by *Charaka* in *Kushthaghna Mahakashaya*. *Vidanga* possesses *Ushna Virya* and therefore works as a good *Kapha Vata Shamaka*.<sup>[17]</sup>
- *Manjishtadi*: *Tikta*, *Kashaya* (~astringent) *Rasa*, *Sheeta Virya*, and *Katu vipaka* are the main ingredients in this composition; they all help to calm *Pitta*, *Rakta* (*sheeta virya*), and *Kapha* (*katu vipaka*). It is well known for its *Raktashodhaka*, *Raktaprasadaka*, and *Pidaka* *Nashaka* activities. It possesses antibacterial, antioxidant, antithrombotic, anti-inflammatory, and anti-ulcerogenic qualities and aids in wound healing.<sup>[18]</sup>
- *Guduchi Satva*: *Guduchi Satva* has *Ushna*, *Tikta*, *Tridoshaghna*, *Rasayana*, *Deepana*, *Twakarogahara*, *Vishaghna*, *Pittasaraka Dravya*. It lowers *Daha*, *Kandu*, and discoloration.<sup>[19]</sup>
- *Amalaki*: In addition to *Tridosahara*, *Amalaki* possesses *Pittaghna*, *Kledaghna*, *Rasayana*, *Agnidipana*, and *Amapachana* characteristics. It's *Kushthaghna*.<sup>[20]</sup>

## 5.4. Local Application

- *Marichyadi Taila*: The majority of *Marichyadi Taila*'s medications consist of *Katu*, *Tikta*, and *Kashaya Rasa*, which reduce *Kandu* by acting as *Kapha Shamaka*. Scaling is reduced by *Laghu*, *Snigdha Guna*. *Swedana*, who possesses immunomodulatory, *Raktashodhaka*, and *Kushtha Kandu* *Nashak* qualities, is raised by *Ushna Virya* by *Vata Kapha* *Nashak Dravya*.
- *Karanj Taila*: It is *Kruminashaka* (antibacterial/antifungal), *Kandughna* (antipruritic), *Vranashodhaka* (wound cleaning), and *Vranaropaka* (wound healing).
- *Gandhaka Malahara*: It is *Kaphavatahara*, hence used to decrease itching and dryness in the initial stages.
- *Shatadhouta Ghrita*: It possesses the qualities of *Sukshma*, *Madhur Rasa*, *Sheet Veerya*, *Madhur Vipaka*, and *Dahashamaka*. All of the aforementioned *Pitta Shaman* qualities are present in *Shatdhouta Ghrita*. It functions as a *Vranaropaka* (wound healing).<sup>[11,21,22]</sup>

## 5.5. Lifestyle Modifications

### 5.5.1. Dietary management

According to *Ayurveda*, a healthy person must have optimal food digestion and absorption as well as effective waste management. The resultant healthy skin is the product of their combined efforts.

- One should consume enough seasonal fruits and green veggies.
- Drinking enough water.
- *Tikta Rasa* veggies and *Laghu Ahar* need to be consumed.
- Diet should be rich in nutrients, antioxidants and easily digestible foods.

### 5.5.2. *Dinacharya*

*Dinacharya*, or "practice of daily routine," has been defined as the proper order of daily activities that one should adhere to to live a long and healthy life. One should incorporate these procedures into their routine to benefit from the attractiveness of their hair, skin, eyes, and other body parts to sustain a young appearance and healthy physique for an extended period of time.

### 5.5.3. *Ritucharya*

*Ritu*, or the season, is defined by a variety of traits that exhibit a range of impacts on the body and surroundings. To survive, one must be able to adapt. People frequently do not know what foods, clothing, and other things are suitable for a certain season, which throws off homeostasis and causes a number of skin conditions. Understanding *Ritucharya* is crucial for cleansing the body in accordance with the various *Ritu*'s *Dosha* aggravation.

### 5.5.4. *Rasayana therapy*

*Rasayana* is described as a therapeutic approach that increases longevity, postpones the ageing process, enhances mental and physical health, fortifies memory, and increases immunity and resistance to illness. Emotional problems and psychogenic stressors are the root causes of some skin conditions. *Medhya Rasayana* (*Ashwagandha*, *Bramhi*, *Guduchi*, etc.) is recommended for patients with persistent skin conditions because it has nootropic properties that improve brain function and intelligence. *Rasayana* (antioxidant and immune modulator) tailored to the disease should be supplied.<sup>[23]</sup>

### 5.5.5. *Sadvirtta*

Guidelines for living a healthy life and mind are provided by *Ayurveda*. These values, always speaking the truth, not hurting anyone, being patient, not interfering with daily activities, etc., apply anywhere and at any time. If we disregard or violate these guidelines, we will face several issues.<sup>[24]</sup>

## 6. CONCLUSION

In the management and prevention of illnesses, Dincharya, Ritucharya, and Sadvritta are extremely important. Skin illnesses are quite common because of sedentary lifestyles and unhealthy eating habits. Ayurveda offers a lot of potential to address these issues holistically. For the treatment of skin conditions, it provides a wide range of treatments, including dietary management, shamana therapy, and shodhana therapy.

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All authors have contributed equally to conception, design, data collection, analysis, drafting, and final approval of the manuscript.

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This study does not require ethical clearance as it is a review article.

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## 12. DATA AVAILABILITY

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