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CONTACT ALLERGIC DERMATITIS THROUGH THE LENCE OF AYURVEDA

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Abstract
A Contact Allergic Dermatitis (CAD), classified under Type IV hypersensitivity, is an inflammatory skin condition caused by direct exposure to specific allergens like metals, fragrances, cosmetics, certain plants (such as poison ivy), and various chemicals found in soaps or detergents. Modern medicine recognizes it as an immune-driven reaction, where the body responds to these substances with localized inflammation. Modern treatment of ACD is effective for symptom relief and flare control, but it often involves long-term management, potential side effects, and dependency on topical/systemic drugs. Hence, patient education, prevention, and barrier repair are crucial. That can be achieved with the help of Ayurveda.
From an Ayurvedic standpoint, CAD can be considered a type of *Kushta* (skin disorder), but no any specific type of *kushtha* or *kshudrakushtha* shows symtoms like contact allergic dermatitis. Depending on the exact nature of symptoms, Ayurveda attributes the manifestation of CAD to an imbalance primarily in the *Pitta and Kapha doshas*, coupled with the vitiation of *Rakta Dhatu* (blood tissue)[8] . These imbalances are often aggravated by both internal and external factors, disrupting the body's natural harmony and leading to the inflammatory response seen on the skin.

Key words- Contact Allergic Dermatitis, *Utkotha, kushtha*, Allergy.

Introduction

The skin serves as the external covering of the entire body and is considered the *Sparshanendriya* (sense organ of touch) in Ayurveda. It acts as a protective barrier, safeguarding the body from environmental factors like heat, cold, and infectious agents. In today's world, an individual's appearance and skin health play a significant role in their overall impression and social perception.[2]
Ayurveda also gives equal importance to skin, so various skin diseases are mentioned in ayurveda under *kushtha vyadhi*. But some skin allergic conditions don't exactly corelate with *kushtha* manifestations. In order to find their corelation with ayurvedic diseases and find reliable treatment in ayurveda ayurvedic literature review is needed.
An allergy is an exaggerated immune response to substances that are typically harmless to most individuals. These substances, known as allergens, include dust mites, pet dander, pollen, insect bites, molds, certain foods, and various medications. When a person with a sensitivity comes into contact with these allergens, the body perceives them as threats and initiates a defensive immune reaction.
One such manifestation is Contact Allergic Dermatitis (CAD)—a condition characterized by skin inflammation that appears 48 to 72 hours after direct exposure to an allergen. The symptoms often include redness, itching, hives, or thickened, leathery patches at the site of contact. In more severe cases, fluid-filled blisters may also develop. While modern medicine views CAD as a delayed hypersensitivity reaction, Ayurveda offers a unique perspective rooted in the balance of the body's fundamental energies or doshas. This article delves into both the biomedical and Ayurvedic views of CAD, aiming to present a comprehensive understanding of its causes and holistic approaches to management.[3]

Review of literature

Modern Review-

Contact allergic dermatitis is a type IV cell mediated hypersensitivity reaction to allergens [4]

It is important occupational disease

Occupations like masons (cement allergy), beauticians (hair dye or chemical allergy), workers in paint, plastic, chemical industries are at risk

Sometimes contact allergic dermatitis may be caused by daily use articles like soaps, fragrances, cosmetics, preservatives or bases in creams.

When the immune system detects a foreign invader, it sets off a chemical reaction, producing immunoglobulin E (IgE) antibodies. This triggers the release of histamines, which cause common allergy symptoms

Diagnosis is confirmed by patch testing

Treatment protocol includes:

1.Topical Therapy

Low to medium potency corticosteroids for mild/moderate cases,

High potency corticosteroids for lichenified, thick lesions.

Calcineurin inhibitors.

2. Systemic Therapy

Oral antihistamines – for itching

Systemic corticosteroids – for extensive/severe flares

Immunosuppressants – for chronic or steroid-resistant ACD

3. Supportive Therapy

Emollients to restore the skin barrier

Cold compresses, wet dressings for oozing

Antibiotics for secondary infection

AYURVEDA REVIEW

Etiology ;[5]

Apathya Aahar

vruddhikar aahar and vihar

Pitta vruddhikar aahar and vihar

Diwaswap

Viruddha aahar

Aamvish

Dushivish

Pathogenesis ;

Agnimandya lead to *Ama* formation, when *Ama* further metabolizes in the alimentary canal, it produces toxic substances, which are known as *Amavisha.*

Intestine can absorb this *Amavisha* into the blood or lymph and mix with *doshas, dhatus* and malas in the body, which leads to various diseases.

Production of ama can vitiate rakta or *pitta* or it can vitiate *kapha* producing different kind of symptoms such as itching, skin rashes etc. [1]

Treatment approach

Nidan parivarjan

Shaman- Abhyantar (internal) and *bahya* (external) according symptoms and *doshas* involved

Abhyantar –Amapachak and *pitta shamak* and *kaph shamak Dravya* like **Manjishtha, Neem**, *Khadira*

Kaishor Guggulu, Arogyavardhini Vati

Triphala, Avipattikar churna

Tikta Ghrita, Mahatikta Ghrita

Guduchi, Haridra, Amalaki

Rasa Rakta prasadak Aushadhi - Raspachak, Raktapachak, Mahamanjishthadi kwath, aarogya vardhini vati, panchtikta ghrita guggul

Snehpana- Goghrita, Mahatiktak ghrit, panchtikta ghrit

Babhya – lepa , malhar,shatdhout ghrita,yashti ghrit, mahatiktak ghrita.

Shodhan- Virechana, Raktamokshan

Rasayan chikitsa for Apunrudbhav

Discussion

Weak immunity plays a role in the manifestation of allergy

Health of skin depends on *rasa dhatu sarata* and *rakta dhatu*.

As most of the skin disorders are mentioned under *raktpradoshaj vikara* .

Sam rasa dhatu causes vitiation of *kapha dosh* and *sama rakta dhatu* vitiates *pitta dosh*.

Vitiated *pitta* and *kapha* travels in the body through *rasa* and *rakta dhatu* While their course through body they get lodged into skin as it is a *sthan* of *bhrajak pitta.*

When allergen comes in contact of skin with vitiated *bhrajak pitta* produce symptoms like hives, rashes, itching, eczema and dermatitis.

Twak-saar (by Acharya charak)i.e. Healthy skin is equal to *rasa-sarta* (according to Acharya Sushruta).

Symptoms of allergic skin reaction is mentioned as *kotha* in *Brihata trayi* as a *Raktpradoshaj vikar*. Skin is the site of *Bhrajak pitta*

Acharya Charak has mentioned *visphota , visarpa, kilas, kushth, shotha* under *viruddha aaharjanya vyadhi*

According to Acharya Sushruta *Dushivish* symtoms include *mandal kotha vaivarnya, shotha*

Medicine	Action
Manjishtha*, *Neem*, *Khadira	Blood purifiers (*Raktashodhana*)
Kaishor Guggulu*, *Arogyavardhini Vati	Detoxifiers and liver support
Triphala*, *Avipattikar churna	Gut and pitta pacification
Tikta Ghrita*, *Mahatikta Ghrita	Skin rasayana and pitta-pacifying *ghritas*
Guduchi*, *Haridra*, *Amalaki	Immunomodulators and r*asayana*

Aspect	Modern Medicine	Ayurveda
Diagnosis	Clinical + Patch testing	Dosha-based (mainly *Pitta-Kapha* vitiation), *Rakta dushti*, *Twak vikara*
Pathophysiology	Type IV Hypersensitivity reaction (immune-mediated)	*Rakta*, *Pitta*, *Kapha* dusti; *Ama* accumulation
Topical Treatment	Corticosteroids, calcineurin inhibitors	Herbal pastes (e.g., *Manjishtha*, *Neem*, *Khadira* lepa)
Systemic Treatment	Oral antihistamines, steroids, immunosuppressants	*Raktashodhana*, *Pitta shamana*, *Shodhana* (Virechana, Raktamokshana), Rasayana
Supportive Therapy	Emollients, antibiotics (if needed)	Ghrita (e.g., *Mahatikta Ghrita*), herbal oils like *Jatyadi Taila*, *Karanja Taila*
Lifestyle/Diet	Avoid allergens, fragrance-free skincare	Pathya–Apathya: Avoid spicy, fermented, heavy foods; use cooling foods; Dinacharya
Side Effects	Risk of skin thinning, systemic effects (long-term steroids)	Minimal if properly administered; risk if improperly detoxified
Sustainability	Risk of recurrence if allergen not fully avoided	Aims for long-term correction of internal imbalances

Conclusion

Contact Allergic Dermatitis (CAD), though well understood in modern medicine as a Type IV hypersensitivity reaction, presents ongoing challenges in terms of chronicity, drug dependency, and lifestyle impact. While conventional treatments offer effective symptom relief, they often require continuous management. Integrating Ayurvedic perspectives provides a complementary approach, emphasizing internal balance, detoxification, and strengthening of the skin's natural defenses. Recognizing CAD as a manifestation of Pitta and Kapha imbalance along with Rakta Dhatu vitiation, Ayurveda advocates personalized, holistic strategies including dietary regulation, herbal formulations, and lifestyle modifications. Thus, despite of modern dermatological care , Ayurvedic principles can offer a more sustainable, preventive, and patient-centered path to managing CAD, enhancing both quality of life and long-term skin health.

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