Ayurvedic Management of chronic Vitiligo (Shvitra)

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ABSTRACT

Vitiligo is a common autoimmune pigmentary disorder of great socio-medical importance. It is characterized by white spots appeared on the skin due to melanocytes deficiency. It can be correlated with Shvitra in Ayurveda and is of two type Kilas and Varun. Due to side effects and limitation of the contemporary science, some harmless and effective medicines are expected from Alternative medical sciences. Ayurveda has great potential to treat such autoimmune skin diseases. Here a case of chronic vitiligo treated with Ayurvedic management is recorded.

Keywords: Autoimmune, melanocyte, shvitra, kilas, varun. Skin diseases.

INTRODUCTION

Vitiligo is a chronic disfiguring disease involved with systemic autoimmune process. It is characterised by constrained, idiopathic, progressive, hypo-pigmented or white patches of skin.[1] Prevalence of Vitiligo is 1% all over the world, while its incidence ranges from 0.1 to > 8.8%.[2] It can be co-related with Shvitra disease in Ayurveda due to the identical signs and symptoms which are; non exudative white, red or coppery-red colored patches, roughness, dryness, itching, burning sensation of the patches, loss and discoloration of the hair. Generally it is found that Vitiligo develops with unknown causes. Several environmental factors affect the melanocytes of the patient and initiate the processes of malenocytosis. This leads to melanocytes deficiency and ultimately white coloured patches appears on the body.[3] In modern science, mainstream treatment of disease is PUVA (Psoralen + Ultra Voilet A exposure) therapy and corticosteroids which have many harmful side effects like skin cancer, photo aging, ultraviolet light burns and nausea.[4] Traditional medicines may be alternative of these unsatisfactory and harmful approaches and may provide some safe, easier, less complicating, cost effective and fruitful natural remedies for the disease. Ayurveda comprise so many potent formulations for the treatment of such autoimmune disease with chronic nature.[5]

NIDAN (ETIOLOGY)

The causative factors for skin diseases (kusta) and vitiligo (Shvitra) are the same [5] and affect the same basic body tissue (dhatu) levels. Shvitra differs from other skin disorders by the normal functioning of all but the "skin tissue" (twak)[6] resulting in discoloration of the skin (twakvaivarnyata), without discharge (aparisravi).[7],[8] Ayurvedic texts explain following factors as the direct or indirect reasons for vilitigo (shwitra): Viruddhahara (incompatible food), chardivegadharana (suppression of vomiting), atibhojana (excess food intake), Atyamla, Lavana, Madhura, Katu Rasa Sevana (intake of sour, sweet, salt, and pungent food excessively), navanna, dadhi, masyabhakshana (heavy intake of fresh grains, curd, and fish), vipra-guru gharshana (teasing and disrepecting the elders), papakarma (sinful acts), etc.[9]
AYURVEDIC SAMPRAPTI (PATHOPHYSIOLOGY)

Due to one or all of the above said reasons, three doshas – Vata, pitta, and Kapha are aggravated in association with skin, blood (Rakta), muscles (Mamsa), and watery element (Udaka). These altogether involved invariably in different grades, and hence varieties of skin diseases are caused. If lymph (Rasa) and blood (Raktha) are significantly involved, it results in vitiligo that is, shwitra-kushta.[3] Among these, Vata variety is difficult to cure. Pitta variety is still more difficult for treatment, and Kaphaja kind is impossible to treat. Based on the clinical features, the condition where the lesions appear with black hair, thin, nonmatted, newly originated, caused due to other than burn reasons are curable. The lesions which are very white in color and chronic in nature are incurable. The lesions of vitiligo appearing in palm, sole, genitalia, and lips are incurable.

CHIKITSA (TREATMENT):

Vitiligo (Shwitra) is chronic (DeerghaRoga) and should be treated immediately. Classical textbooks of Ayurveda recommend four steps of treatment. The first step (Step 1) is purification therapies (shodhana karma) using an herbal decoction of Psoraliacorylifolia (BakuchiKwatha) and Euphorbia nerifolia (snuhi). This medicine is expected to induce multiple bouts of purgation. In the next step (Step 2) oil massage using oil selected on the basis of patient examination (rogipariksha) and disease (roga). Step 3 is exposure of lesions to the sun rays as long as the patient can tolerate (Sooryapadasanthapam in Ayurveda). Patient receives Gruel (peya) for the following 3 days. If bullae arise after a sun bath they must be punctured using a sterile needle. For the last 3 days, the patient receives decoction (kwatha) made of Ficushispida (malayu), Pterocarpus marsupium (asana), Callicarpamacrophylla (priyangu), Peusedanumgraveolens (satapuspa), Coleus vettiveroides (ambhasa), and alkaline extract of Butea monosperma (palasaksara), along with an alcoholic preparation of jaggery (the preparation is called phanitha in Ayurveda). On these 3 days, the diet should be salt-free and should contain buttermilk.[10]

(Lepa)

AnkollakadiLepa, AvalgujadiLepa, BakucyadiLepa, BalyadiLepa, BhallatakadiLepa, BhringarajadiLepa, GandhakadiLepa, Girikarnika yoga, GrhadhumadiLepa, GunjadiLepa, GunjaphaladiLepa, KatukaladvadiLepa, ManasiladiLepa, MaricadiLepa, PancaNimbavaLepa, PathyadiLepa, PatrakadiLepa, PutikadiLepa, TalakadiLepa, TriphaladiLepa, and VayasyadiLepa. [10]

(Asava-Arista):- Kanakabindvarista and Madhwasava.[10]

(Vati/Gutika):- SwayambhuGuggulu, TriphalaGutika, and BrhatSwayambhuvaGuggulu.[10]

TAIL:- AragwadhayadyaThaila, CitrakadyaThaila, JyotishmatiThaila, KustakaLananalThaila. KustarakasasaThaila, LaghumaricadyaThaila, Maha Vajra kaThaila, ManasiladyaThaila, MaricadyaThaila, and VishaThaila. When treating skin disorders, Thaila may be applied topically with a massage (Abhyanga), instilled into the nostrils in combination with oil massage of the face, or could be given orally (Pana).[10]

CHURAN:- BakucyadyaCurna, Kakodumbarikadi yoga, KhadirasaradiciCurna, and PancanimbaCurna.[10]

DO and DONTs

DO:- Vrata-pooja-patha-dana (fasting, worship, enchanting the sacred hymens, donation, etc.), offering food daily to poor on charity basis, visit to pilgrimage places, old rice (Puranashali), Wheat (Godhumia), Green gram (Mudga), light food (Laguahara), Patola (bitter gourd), Kadirodaka (hot infusion of Khadira), etc.[11]

DON’T:- Viruddhahara (incompatible food), Guru ahara (heavy food), Vidahiahara (spicy, pungent food), Vishtambhiahara (constipatives), Anupamamsa (aquatic animals), Kanda-Moola (roots and tubers), Masha (black
gram), Amla–katu-lavanarasa(sour, pungent, salty food), Kritaghnata (being thankless), Deva-guru ninda (speaking ill of teachers and gods), etc.

**Conclusion:**

In summary, Ayurveda has different approach to the understanding and treatment of vitiligo which requires extensive research. Although medicines and holistic approach may contribute significant benefits to patients of vitiligo, scientific rationale behind use of these medications need to be further explored with modern methods and research.

**REFERENCES**


