

## International Research Journal of Ayurveda & Yoga

An International Peer Reviewed Journal for Ayurveda & Yoga



### A Review Article On *Vicharchika* - A *Twak Vikar*

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ICV-70.44- ISRA-1.318  
VOLUME 4 ISSUE 2 FEBRUARY 2021

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Article received on 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2021

Article Accepted 21<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021

Article published 28<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021

#### ABSTRACT: -

Skin is the most pervasive sense organ that covers the whole outside of the body, forming a protective barrier against pathogens and injuries from the environment. It puts light on our physical, general health and wellbeing of an individual. In *Ayurveda*, all types of skin diseases can be considered under the shelter of *Kushtha Roga* (Skin diseases) and *Vicharchika* (Eczema) is one *Twaka Vikara* (Skin Diseases) explained under *Kshudra Kushtha* (Minor skin diseases). The clinical presentation of *Vicharchika* (Eczema) viz. *Kandu* (itching), *pidaka* (vesicles), *Srava* (Discharge) and *Shvayavarna* (discoloration) resembles to eczema in modern dermatology. It is not life-threatening disease but affects psychological health causing anxiety, depression, disturbs the person's routine thus interrupts the ability to function normally, lead to social isolation and also disturbs quality of life. Modern science has advanced techniques & treatment but for the cure of eczema there is no satisfactory treatment, antihistamines and steroids are mostly used which shows various side effects. In *Ayurveda Shodhan* (Purification) is the best therapeutic procedure to eradicate the root cause of the disease and in *Kushtha* (Skin diseases) repeated *Shodhna* (Purification) is indicated to balance the vitiated *Dosha*. Amid *Shodhan* (Purification) therapy *Virechan Karam* (Purgation) described in ancient texts is mainly prescribed and it doesn't only cleanse the intestine but has multiple systemic benefits. *Acharya Charak* has indicated *Virechan Karma* (Purgation) for *Pittaj* and *Rakatj Dushti*. Hence the best possible treatment in *Vicharchika* (Eczema) is *Shodhan* (Purification) followed by *Shamana* therapy (Pacification). The present paper emphasizes on the various aspects of *Vicharchika* (Eczema) explained in ancient *Ayurvedic* texts.

**Keywords:** *Kushtha*, *Vicharchika*, eczema, skin disease.



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**How to cite this article:** -Dr Neha, Prof. Sanjeev Sood, Prof. Chander Shekhar Sharma, Dr Amrita Sharma, A Review Article On *Vicharchika - A Twak Vikar*; IRJAY, February: 2021, Vol-4, Issue-2; 66-72; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47223/IRJAY.2021.4206>

## INTRODUCTION

The Skin is the external organ that guards against mechanical trauma, UV light and infection<sup>1</sup>. Skin diseases are very common nowadays that affects all ages from children to the elderly and leading to discomfort, disfigurement, disability and rarely death<sup>2</sup> and their incidence is 2-3 percent of all medical problems seen in practice<sup>3</sup>. *Kushtha* (Skin diseases) is the term which indicates various skin diseases. *Vicharchika* (Eczema) is included under *Kushtha* (Skin diseases) as one type of *Kshudra Kushtha* (Minor skin diseases). All dermatological disorders are considered under eighteen subtypes of *Kushtha*. *Kushtha* is classified into *Maha Kushtha* & *Kshudra Kushtha* (Minor skin diseases). In *Kushtha* all the three *Doshas* are involved<sup>4</sup>. *Acharya Charak* mentioned *Kapha Dosh* predominance in *Vicharchika*<sup>5</sup>. According to *Acharya Sushrut* *Pitta Dosh* is predominant<sup>6</sup>. The clinical features of *Vicharchika* resemble eczema, manifests in the form of pruritis, burning, oozing, papules, vesicles, dryness, scaling, discoloration and lichenification of skin<sup>7</sup>. In clinical practice, we see many patients of skin diseases who are physically and mentally disturbed. In today's scenario due to unhealthy food habits and sedentary lifestyle there is increase in rate of skin disorders and *Ayurveda* is the hope with *Shodhan* (Purification) and *Shamana* (Pacification) therapies described in the ancient texts.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS:

As the present study is a review article, different *Ayurvedic* texts, published research papers and available materials on internet have been reviewed for this article. All the *Brihatrayi*, *laghutrayi* and available commentaries of those have been reviewed. Modern texts and various websites to

collect information on the relevant topics were referred

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Eczema

The literal meaning of eczema is to boil out, because in eczema skin seems to be boiling out or oozing out. The features depend upon the severity of stage, in acute eczema there is exudation, while in chronic eczema dryness, scaling and often lichenification is present<sup>7</sup>. Acute eczema is characterized by redness and swelling, usually with ill-defined margins, papules, vesicles and more rarely, large blisters, exudation, cracking and scaling<sup>8</sup>. Chronic eczema includes all the features of acute eczema and mainly characterized by lichenification. It is a triad of hyperpigmentation, thickening of skin and increased skin marking. In chronic eczema lesions are crustier with less exudation as compared to that of acute eczema. Many classifications of eczema are available, according to etiology it's divided into endogenous, exogenous and combined eczema.

1. Endogenous eczema: where constitutional factors make the patient susceptible to developing eczema.
2. Exogenous eczema: Exogenous eczema develops and mainly triggers due to external stimuli e.g. irritant dermatitis.
3. Combined eczema: Constitutional factors and extrinsic triggers both are responsible for the occurrence of eczema e.g atopic dermatitis<sup>9</sup>.

The common patterns of eczema are atopic dermatitis, seborrheic dermatitis and contact dermatitis etc.

### *Vicharchika*

In *Charak Samhita* *Vicharchika* (Eczema) is defined as the skin lesion along with *Kandu* (itching), *Shyavapidiaka* (eruptions), *Bahusrava* (oozing)<sup>10</sup>. According to *Acharya Sushrut* *Vicharchika* is a

combination of marked linings (*Rajyo*), excessive itching (*Atikandu*), severe pain (*Atiruja*) and dryness (*Rukshata*) in the body<sup>11</sup>. *Acharya Vagbhata* mentioned same *Lakshana* (Symptoms) like *Acharya Charak* but included *Lasika* (watery contents of the body) instead of *Bahusrava* (oozing)<sup>12</sup>.

### **Nidan (causative factors)**

Etiological factors responsible for *Vicharchika* are not specifically described, as it is a variety of *Kshudra Kushtha* (Minor skin diseases), so etiological factors of *Kushtha* are considered as *Nidan* of *Vicharchika*. The Causes can be divided into following groups:

1. *Aharaj Hetu* (Diet related causes)

2. *Viharaj Hetu* (Life style related causes)

3. *Acharaj Hetu* (Behavioral misconduct)

1. *Aharaj Hetu* (Diet related causes): *Mithya Aahar* (improper diet) and *Viruddha Aahar* (incompatible food) are two chief factors responsible for occurrence of *Kushtha* (Skin diseases). *Acharya Charak* described eighteen types of *Viruddha Aahara* (incompatible food)<sup>13</sup> e.g, *Mooli* (Radish) with milk, intake of *Chilchim* fish along with milk. *Ashtaahara Vidhi Visheshayatan* (eight discipline of eating) is an ideal method for intake of *Aahar* (food) and *Aahar* opposite to this is considered as *Mithya Aahar* (improper diet) e.g food intake during indigestion, excessive use of *Tila* (*sesame*), *Lavana* (salt), *Dadhi*(curd), *Guda* (jaggery) etc.

2. *Viharaj Hetu* (Life style related causes): *Viharaj hetu* includes *Vega Vidharana* (Suppression of urges), *Mithya Vihar* (improper activities),

*Panchakarma-Apacharan* (Improper techniques for advocating *Panchakarma*), *Mithya Vihar* (improper activities) means indulge in activities like excessive exercise, exercise after *Snehpana* (internal administration of *Sneha*) and sudden exposure to cold and heat or vice-versa. Thirteen types of *Vega Vidharan* (Suppression of urges) described by *Acharya Charak* and suppression of these *Vegas* causes harmful side effects to the body e.g suppression of vomiting, *Mutra* and *Purishavega*. Improper intake of *Snehpana* (internal administration of *Sneha*) during *Panchakarma* therapy may lead to various skin disorders, after *Shodhan Karam*(Purification) *Pathya-Apathya* (Wholesome-Unwholesome) regimen should be followed and if not followed this may lead to skin diseases.

3. *Acharaj Hetu* (Behavioral misconduct): Its one of the important etiological factors responsible for *Kushtha* (skin diseases) and it includes insulting of respected persons like *Brahmins* & teachers.

### **Poorvarupa (Prodromal symptoms)**

*Vicharchika Poorvarupa* (Prodromal symptoms) are same as of *Kushtha Poorvarupa* (Prodromal symptoms) and are not specifically mentioned. *Poorvarupa* (Prodromal symptoms) shows the signs of *Doshdushya Samurchana* (amalgamation of vitiated *doshas* with weak and susceptible tissues) comes under fourth *Kriya Kala* (stages of disease formation). The signs of *Vicharchika* (Eczema) enlisted in ancient texts are as follow:

**Table 1 Representing Poorvarupa (Prodromal symptoms) of Vicharchika(Eczema)**

| Sr.No. | Poorvarupa (Prodromal symptoms)        | Acharya Charaka | Acharya Sushrut | Ashtang Hridya |
|--------|--|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1      | <i>Asweda</i> (absence of sweating )   | +               | +               | +              |
| 2      | <i>Atiswedan</i> (excessive sweating)  | +               | +               | +              |
| 3      | <i>Parushyam</i> (dryness)             | +               | +               | -              |
| 4      | <i>Vaivarnya</i> (Skin Discolouration) | +               | +               | +              |
| 5      | <i>Kandu</i> (Itching)                 | +               | +               | +              |
| 6      | <i>Paridaha</i> (Burning Sensation)    | +               | +               | +              |
| 7      | <i>Suptata</i> (Sensation loss)        | +               | +               | +              |

### **Rupa Of Vicharchika (Cardinal symptoms)**

*Rupa* are the cardinal symptoms that specifies the disease and helpful for the diagnosis of the disease and to know severity of disease. *Acharya Sushrut* defines *Vicharchika* (Eczema) as *Pitta* dominant with excessive pain, severe itching and dryness. In *Charak Samhita* mentioned *Kapha* predominance with itching, discoloration of skin and excessive oozing. The Symptoms of *Vicharchika* (Eczema) are listed below:

**Table 2 Representing Rupa (Cardinal symptoms) of Vicharchika(Eczema)**

| Sr. No. | Rupa (Cardinal symptoms)             | Charak Samhita | Sushrut Samhita | Ashtang Hridya |
|---------|--------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1       | <i>Kandu</i> (Itching)               | +              | +               | +              |
| 2       | <i>Shyavata</i> (skin discoloration) | +              | -               | +              |
| 3       | <i>Pidika</i> (vesicles)             | +              | -               | +              |
| 4       | <i>Bahusrava</i> (excessive oozing)  | +              | -               | +              |
| 5       | <i>Rajyo</i> (cracked lining)        | -              | +               | -              |
| 6       | <i>Ruja</i> (pain)                   | -              | +               | -              |
| 7       | <i>Rukshata</i> (dryness)            | -              | +               | -              |

### **Samprapati(Pathogenesis)**

*Samprapati* (pathogenesis) is the gradual changes of disease, from the indulgence of causative factors to the clinical manifestation of the disease to its full occurrence. In *Ayurvedic* text, specific *Samprapati* (pathogenesis) are not explained hence, *Kushtha Samprapati* (pathogenesis of skin diseases) can be considered as *Samprapati* (pathogenesis) of *Vicharchika*. According to *Acharya Charak* and *Vagbhata*, due to causative factors *Kapha Pradhan*

*Tridosha* get vitiated and according to *Acharya Sushrut Pitta Pradhan Tridosha* get vitiated, then *Dushti* of *Twaka* (skin), *Rakta* (blood), *Mamsa* (muscles) and *Lasika* (watery contents of the body) get affected hence in this all seven *Dravyas* (substances) i.e three *Doshas* and four *Dhatu* (body tissues) (*Twaka, Rakta, Mamsa and Lasika*) get vitiated which results into a condition called *Vicharchika*

**Table 3 Samprapati Ghatak (Pathogenic factors) of Vicharchika:**

| <i>Dosha</i>   | <i>Tridosha</i>   |
|--|---|
| <i>Dusya</i> (tissues / cells involved)              | <i>Twaka</i> (skin), <i>Rakta</i> (blood), <i>Mamsa</i> (muscles) and <i>Lasika</i> (watery contents of the body) |
| <i>Srotasa</i> (systems involved)                    | <i>Rasavaha</i> , <i>Raktavaha</i> , <i>Mamsavaha</i>   |
| <i>Srotodushti</i> (mode of system involvement)      | <i>Atipravriti</i> (Excessive flow)   |
| <i>Adisthana</i> (place where the disease expressed) | <i>Twaka</i> (4th layer & 5 <sup>th</sup> layer)  |
| <i>Udabhava sthana</i> (origin place)                | <i>Amapakvashaya</i> (stomach and intestines)   |
| <i>Sanchar Sthana</i> (circulating place)            | <i>Sarva Shareer</i> (Whole body)   |
| <i>Roga marga</i> (specific route)                   | <i>Bahya</i> (External)   |
| <i>Sadhyasadyata</i> (Prognosis)                     | <i>Krichasadhaya</i> (Difficult to Treat)   |

**Chikitsa (Treatment) Of Vicharchika**

To cure the disease is the ultimate aim of the physician and the crucial step in *Chikitsa* (treatment) is *Nidan Parivarjan* (Avoidance of disease causing and aggravating factors), *Vighatana* (breaking the pathogenesis of disease) of *Dosha Dushya Samurchana* to attain the *Doshik* equilibrium in the body. Though *Vicharchika*, a type of *Kshudra Kushtha* (minor diseases), is a *Bahudosha* (severe aggravated *doshas*) condition and treatment of *Vicharchika* is considered to be the same as of *Kushtha* (skin diseases). Depending on the *Dosha* involvement in *Vata Pradhana Kushtha*, *Ghrutpana* (internal oleation) is indicated, in *Kapha Pradhana Kushtha Vaman* (emesis) is best and in *Pitta Pradhana Kushtha*, *Virechan* (Purgation) is indicated. After *Shodhan Raktamokshana* (bloodletting) is best treatment for *Twak* (skin) *Vikara*. *Vaman* (emesis) may be administered once in fortnight (15 days), *Virechan* (Purgation) once in month (30 days), *Nasya* (nasal therapy) may be done once in three days and *Raktamokshana* (bloodletting) once in six months<sup>14</sup>. *Shamana Chikitsa* (Pacification therapy) is indicated after purification of body and it pacifies the remnant *Dosha*, normalizes and maintains the levels of all the three *Dosha*. Therefore, in *Vicharchika* repeated

*Shodhan* (Purification) is the most relevant line of treatment followed by *Shamana* (Pacification) and *Rasayana* (Rejuvenation) therapy.

**Pathya-Apathya (Wholesome-Unwholesome)**

The root cause of any disease is *Nidan Sevan* (causative factors responsible for occurrence of disease) which leads to pathological changes in the body and disease develops, so to break down the pathogenesis of the disease *Nidan Parivarjana* (Avoidance of disease causing and aggravating factors) is of utmost importance and *Pathya-Apathya* (Wholesome-Unwholesome) plays crucial role to fight against the dreadful disease *Vicharchika* (Eczema). Few important *Pathya* (Wholesome) are *Laghu Anna* (Light diet), *Tikta Shaka* (bitter vegetables), *Nimbha* (*Margosa Tree*), *Patola* (*Trichosanthes dioica*), *Triphala*, *Purana Dhanya* (Old cereals), *Jangala Mansa*, (meat of animals of arid), *Mudaga* (Green gram), *Parvara*, *Ghruta* (i.e ketogenoc diet), *Bhallatak* (*Semecarpus anacardium*) and *Parisheka* (affusion sudation) *Avagaha* (Tub bath) of *Khadir* (*Acacia catechu*) and conversely *Guru Anna* (Heavy diet), *Dugdha* (Milk), *Dadhi* (Curd), *Amla Rasa* (Sour in essence), *Guda* (Jaggery), *Tila* (*sesame*), *Anupa Mansa* (flesh of animals of marshy places), *Matsya* (fish) are considered as *Apathya* (Unwholesome)<sup>15</sup>.

## DISCUSSION

*Vicharchika* (Eczema) is a chronic skin disease, the prognosis of which varies from individual to individual and with the time it causes depression, anxiety and negatively impacts the quality of life. As a young tree is cut with a little effort but the fully grown requires more effort, likewise, the newly diagnosed disease is cured easily while the advanced disease becomes incurable. Thus, it can be well understood that *Vicharchika* (Eczema) becomes difficult to manage if not diagnosed and treated in early stage. The disease is very painful and causes uncontrollable itching and that leads to social isolation and the sufferer loses the confidence to stand in the society. Hence this disease should be treated in acute or prodromal condition and the promising line of treatment in *Ayurveda* is to expel out the vitiated *Doshas* through *Panchakarma* therapy followed by *Shamana Chikitsa* (Treatment) Although *Aahar* (appropriate diet to pacify the *Doshas*), *Vihar* (Life style), *Sadvrit* (Code of good conduct) are also of utmost importance in fighting with the disease. Various studies had shown *Shodhan Chikitsa*, *Shaman Chikitsa* (Pacification-Purification therapy) and *Pathya Sevan* (Intake of wholesome food) to be very effective in alleviating the disease and thus, improving the quality of life of the affected individual. It is the need of the hour to publicize the available beneficial modes of dermatological treatments to provide appropriate care to the sufferers.

## CONCLUSION

Skin is the barrier between us and the outer environment, it reflects the health status of the individual. The holistic approach (i.e *Aahar*, *Vihar*, *Nidan Parivarjan*, *Aushadh* and purificatory methods of *Panchakarma*) of *Ayurveda* offers an opportunity for patients of *Vicharchika* (Eczema) to get rid of the dreadful disease which has physical and psychological impact on the life of suffering

individual. *Nidan Parivarjana* i.e avoid disease causing factors, avoid use of local alkaline soaps which can cause dryness and may trigger itching, so in this condition moisturizer gives relief and use of *Siddha Ghrita* (Medicated ghee), *Taila* (Oil) also gives relief like coconut or mustard oil. For proper management of *Kshudra Kushtha* (Minor skin diseases), *Ayurved* plays very important role, oral as well as topical treatment gives best results and one of the important things is to follow *Pathya-Apathaya* (Wholesome-Unwholesome) regimen. *Panchakarma* is the best and effective treatment for skin disorders like Eczema, psoriasis, vitiligo etc. *Vicharchika* (eczema), a complex pathological entity effects the quality of life of a person and complete awareness about the disease will help the sufferer to lead a healthy life.

**Acknowledgement- Nil**

**Conflict of Interest: Nil**

**Financial Support- Nil**

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