AYUBHA JOURNAL BY AYURVED BHARATI
A Monthly peer-reviewed journal by Ayurved Bharati
ISSN – 3048-8621
www.ayubha.com

A Review article on Kushtha Chikitsa According to Acharya Charaka

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AyuBha Journal by Ayurved Bharati, eISSN 3048-8621 | Published: 30-09-2024

Keywords: Academic Research, Vol. 01, Issue 03, September 2024

Vol.01, Issue-03, September 2024

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Abstract

Kushtha, as detailed in the ancient Ayurvedic text *Charaka Samhita*, represents a comprehensive term encompassing various skin disorders. Acharya Charaka provides an in-depth analysis of Kushtha, including its etiology, classification, clinical features, and treatment modalities. This article aims to elucidate the Ayurvedic perspective of Kushtha as described by Charaka, correlating it with modern dermatological understanding. By integrating traditional wisdom with contemporary science, we seek to enhance the comprehension of skin diseases and explore holistic approaches to management.

Introduction

Skin diseases have been a significant concern throughout human history, affecting quality of life and social interactions. In Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine, skin disorders are collectively referred to as *Kushtha* . The term “Kushtha” is derived from the Sanskrit root “ku,” meaning “bad,” and “stha,” meaning “to stay,” indicating conditions that are stubborn and difficult to cure.

Acharya Charaka, one of the principal contributors to Ayurvedic literature, offers a detailed exposition of Kushtha in the *Chikitsa Sthana* (treatment section) of the *Charaka Samhita*. He describes various types of Kushtha, their causes, symptoms, and therapeutic approaches. Understanding these concepts is crucial for practitioners and scholars aiming to integrate Ayurvedic principles with modern dermatology.

In modern medicine, skin diseases encompass a wide array of conditions, ranging from infections and inflammatory disorders to autoimmune and genetic diseases. Conditions like psoriasis, eczema, vitiligo, and dermatitis share similarities with the descriptions of Kushtha in Ayurvedic texts.

This article explores the Ayurvedic concept of Kushtha as presented by Acharya Charaka, providing a detailed analysis and correlating it with contemporary medical knowledge. Through this synthesis, we aim to highlight the relevance of Ayurvedic insights in the modern context and promote a holistic approach to skin health.

Etiology (Nidana) of Kushtha

Ayurvedic Perspective

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Acharya Charaka identifies multiple causative factors for Kushtha, emphasizing the role of improper diet and lifestyle in the vitiation of the three doshas—*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*. The primary etiological factors include:

1. **Dietary Factors:**
    - **Consumption of Incompatible Foods (Viruddha Ahara):**
        - Intake of foods that are mutually antagonistic or incompatible.
        - Examples include fish with milk, sour fruits with milk, or reheated foods.
    - **Excessive Intake of Certain Foods:**
        - Overconsumption of oily (*Snigdha*), heavy (*Guru*), and liquid (*Drava*) foods.
        - Excessive intake of new grains (*Navanna*), curd (*Dadhi*), fish (*Matsya*), salt (*Lavana*), sour (*Amla*), and sweet substances like milk (*Kshira*) and sugarcane products (*Guda*).
    - **Indulgence in Heavy and Indigestible Foods:**
        - Foods that are difficult to digest, leading to the accumulation of toxins (*Ama*).
2. **Lifestyle Factors:**
    - **Suppression of Natural Urges (Vega Dharana):**
        - Suppressing urges like vomiting, defecation, urination, sneezing, and others disrupts the normal functioning of doshas.
    - **Improper Physical Activities:**
        - Excessive physical exertion (*Vyayama*), especially after heavy meals.
        - Exposure to extreme temperatures without proper acclimatization.
        - Sudden immersion in cold water after overheating.
    - **Sleep Disturbances:**
        - Daytime sleep (*Divaswapna*), especially after meals.
        - Irregular sleep patterns disrupting the body's natural rhythms.
    - **Psychological Factors:**
        - Disrespecting elders and teachers.
        - Engaging in sinful or unethical activities.
        - Mental stress and emotional disturbances.
3. **Physiological Factors:**
    - **Improper Management of Panchakarma:**
        - Undertaking detoxification therapies without proper preparation or aftercare.
        - Neglecting the prescribed dietary and lifestyle regimen post-therapy.

Pathogenesis (Samprapti)

The development of Kushtha involves the following pathological sequence:

1. **Dosha Vitiation:**
    - The above factors lead to the aggravation of Vata, Pitta, and Kapha doshas.
    - In Kushtha, all three doshas are involved, though the dominance of a particular dosha varies in different types.
2. **Dushya Involvement:**
    - The vitiated doshas contaminate the *Dhatus* (body tissues) and *Upadhatus* (secondary tissues), particularly:

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- **Twak (Skin)**
- **Rakta (Blood)**
- **Mamsa (Muscle Tissue)**
- **Ambu (Body Fluids)**

- This leads to the impairment of skin health and appearance.

3. **Srotodushti (Channel Obstruction):**
   - The aggravated doshas obstruct the micro-channels (*Srotas*) responsible for nourishing the skin.
   - This results in the manifestation of various skin lesions.

Modern Correlation

In contemporary medicine, skin diseases can result from:

1. **Genetic Predisposition:**
   - Certain skin conditions like psoriasis and eczema have hereditary links.
2. **Immune System Dysfunction:**
   - Autoimmune disorders where the body's immune system attacks its own tissues, such as vitiligo and lupus.
3. **Environmental Factors:**
   - Exposure to allergens, irritants, and toxins leading to dermatitis.
4. **Lifestyle Factors:**
   - Poor dietary habits contributing to nutritional deficiencies affecting skin health.
   - Stress and psychological factors exacerbating skin conditions.
5. **Infectious Agents:**
   - Bacterial, viral, fungal, and parasitic infections causing skin diseases.

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Classification of Kushtha

Acharya Charaka classifies Kushtha into two broad categories:

1. **Mahakushtha (Major Skin Diseases):** Seven types
2. **Kshudrakushtha (Minor Skin Diseases):** Eleven types

Mahakushtha (Major Skin Diseases)

1. **Kapala Kushtha:**
   - **Features:**
     - Blackish or reddish lesions resembling broken clay pots.
     - Rough, dry, thin skin with severe pricking pain (*Toda*).
     - Uneven surface with discoloration.
2. **Audumbara Kushtha:**
   - **Features:**
     - Lesions resembling the fruit of the *Udumbara* (cluster fig tree).
     - Redness, burning sensation, itching, and yellowish hair.
     - Predominant in the chest region.

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3. **Mandala Kushtha:**
    - **Features:**
        - Circular patches that are white or red.
        - Thick, immobile, and moist lesions with elevated edges.
        - Lesions tend to coalesce.
4. **Rishya Jihva Kushtha:**
    - **Features:**
        - Lesions resembling the tongue of a deer.
        - Rough, hard, reddish borders with a bluish center.
        - Severe pain and stiffness.
5. **Pundarika Kushtha:**
    - **Features:**
        - Lesions resembling lotus petals.
        - White with red borders, elevated, and associated with burning sensation.
6. **Sidhma Kushtha:**
    - **Features:**
        - Thin, white, or copper-colored scales resembling the flowers of *Alabu* (bottle gourd).
        - When scratched, fine scales come off like talc.
        - Predominantly affects the chest region.
7. **Kakana Kushtha:**
    - **Features:**
        - Lesions similar to *Kakanantika* flowers.
        - Severe pain, blackish coloration.
        - Tridoshaja (involvement of all three doshas) and considered incurable.

Kshudrakushtha (Minor Skin Diseases)

1. **Eka Kushtha:**
    - **Features:**
        - Thick, scaly lesions resembling fish scales.
        - Absence of sweating.
        - Affected area becomes numb.
2. **Charmakhya Kushtha:**
    - **Features:**
        - Thickening of the skin resembling elephant skin.
        - Rough, hard patches.
3. **Kitima Kushtha:**
    - **Features:**
        - Blackish, rough, hard lesions.
        - Resembles termite mounds.
4. **Vipadika:**
    - **Features:**
        - Cracks and fissures on the palms and soles.
        - Severe pain.

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5. **Alasaka:**
    - **Features:**
        - Swelling with itching and redness.
        - Formation of nodules with discharge.
6. **Dadru:**
    - **Features:**
        - Ring-shaped lesions with raised edges.
        - Severe itching, redness, and blisters.
7. **Charmadala:**
    - **Features:**
        - Red, itchy patches with blisters.
        - Painful to touch.
8. **Pama:**
    - **Features:**
        - Small papules that are white, red, or blackish.
        - Severe itching.
9. **Visphotaka:**
    - **Features:**
        - Formation of vesicles or blisters.
        - Thin skin prone to rupture.
10. **Shataru:**
    - **Features:**
        - Multiple ulcers with redness and pain.
        - Burning sensation.
11. **Vicharchika:**
    - **Features:**
        - Oozing eczema with thick discharge.
        - Severe itching and blackish discoloration.

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Dosha Predominance in Kushtha

- **Vata Predominant Kushtha:**
    - Kapala, Mandala
- **Pitta Predominant Kushtha:**
    - Audumbara
- **Kapha Predominant Kushtha:**
    - Eka Kushtha, Charmakhya
- **Tridoshaja Kushtha:**
    - Kakana Kushtha
- **Mixed Dosha Involvement:**
    - Rishya Jihva, Pundarika, Sidhma

Modern Correlation

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The Ayurvedic classifications of Kushtha can be correlated with various modern dermatological conditions:

- **Psoriasis:** Resembles Eka Kushtha with thick, scaly lesions and absence of sweating.
- **Eczema/Dermatitis:** Similar to Vicharchika with oozing, itching, and thickened skin.
- **Vitiligo (Shvitra):** Characterized by white patches due to depigmentation, corresponding to some types of Kushtha.
- **Leprosy (Kushta in some contexts):** Chronic infection leading to skin lesions, numbness, and deformities.

Clinical Features (Lakshana) of Kushtha

General Symptoms

- Loss of sensation or altered touch perception (*Sparshajnatva*).
- Excessive sweating or dryness.
- Discoloration of the skin.
- Elevation or depression of skin lesions.
- Itching (*Kandu*), pricking pain (*Toda*), and burning sensation (*Daha*).
- Weakness, fatigue, and general malaise.

Specific Features Based on Dosha Predominance

1. **Vataja Kushtha:**
    - **Symptoms:**
        - Dryness and roughness of the skin.
        - Severe pain and pricking sensations.
        - Dark discoloration (bluish or blackish).
        - Cracking and scaling of the skin.
2. **Pittaja Kushtha:**
    - **Symptoms:**
        - Redness and inflammation.
        - Burning sensation and warmth.
        - Oozing of pus or serous fluid.
        - Foul smell from lesions.
3. **Kaphaja Kushtha:**
    - **Symptoms:**
        - Thickening and heaviness of the skin.
        - Pale or white discoloration.
        - Itching and numbness.
        - Oily or greasy skin.
4. **Tridoshaja Kushtha:**
    - **Symptoms:**
        - Combination of symptoms from all three doshas.
        - Severe and complex manifestations.
        - Difficult to treat.

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Modern Correlation

- **Vata Predominant Symptoms:**
  - Seen in conditions like ichthyosis and xerosis, where skin becomes dry, rough, and scaly.
- **Pitta Predominant Symptoms:**
  - Reflect inflammatory skin conditions like eczema, dermatitis, and cellulitis.
- **Kapha Predominant Symptoms:**
  - Observed in diseases like lepromatous leprosy, where skin thickens and becomes numb.

Prognosis (Sadhya-Asadhya) of Kushtha

Factors Influencing Prognosis

- **Curable (Sadhya) Kushtha:**
  - Recent onset with mild symptoms.
  - Single dosha involvement.
  - Lesions located superficially.
  - Patient with good vitality and adherence to treatment.
- **Difficult to Cure (Krichra Sadhya) Kushtha:**
  - Involvement of two doshas.
  - Chronic conditions with moderate symptoms.
  - Lesions covering a significant body area.
- **Incurable (Asadhya) Kushtha:**
  - Tridoshaja Kushtha with severe symptoms.
  - Deep-seated lesions with systemic involvement.
  - Patients with poor strength and multiple complications.

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Signs of Poor Prognosis

- Lesions with numbness and loss of sensation.
- Involvement of vital tissues like blood (*Rakta*) and muscles (*Mamsa*).
- Long-standing disease resistant to treatment.
- Lesions with extensive discoloration and deformities.

Modern Correlation

- **Favorable Prognosis:**
  - Acute skin conditions responding well to treatment.
  - Conditions like contact dermatitis with identifiable triggers.
- **Unfavorable Prognosis:**
  - Chronic autoimmune diseases like psoriasis and vitiligo with limited treatment options.
  - Advanced leprosy with nerve involvement and deformities.

Treatments for Kushtha Mentioned in the Given Shlokas

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Kushtha, as described in the ancient Ayurvedic text *Charaka Samhita*, encompasses a wide range of skin diseases. The given shlokas from the *Kushtha Chikitsa* chapter detail various treatments for Kushtha, focusing on purification therapies, herbal formulations, dietary recommendations, external applications, and lifestyle modifications. Below is a comprehensive summary of these treatments, organized for clarity.

1. Purification Therapies (Shodhana Chikitsa)

A. Vamana (Therapeutic Emesis)

- **Purpose:** To eliminate excess Kapha dosha from the body.
- **Indications:** Kapha-dominant Kushtha, especially when lesions are located in the upper body.
- **Method:**
    - Administered using decoctions and preparations made from specific herbs.
- **Herbal Ingredients:**
    - **Kutaja Phala** (Holarrhena antidysenterica)
    - **Madana Phala** (Randia dumetorum)
    - **Madhuka** (Licorice root)
    - **Patola** (Trichosanthes dioica)
    - **Nimba** (Neem)
- **Shloka References:**
    - **Verse 39:**
        - *"vātōttarēṣu sarpirvamanaṁ ślēṣmōttarēṣu kuṣṭhēṣu..."*
    - **Verse 43:**
        - *"dōṣōtkliṣṭē hṛdayē vāmyaḥ kuṣṭhēṣu cōrdhvabhāgēṣu..."*

B. Virechana (Therapeutic Purgation)

- **Purpose:** To eliminate excess Pitta dosha and purify the blood (*Rakta*).
- **Indications:** Pitta-dominant Kushtha and when blood is involved.
- **Herbal Ingredients:**
    - **Trivrit** (Operculina turpethum)
    - **Danti** (Baliospermum montanum)
    - **Triphala** (Combination of Haritaki, Bibhitaki, Amalaki)
- **Shloka References:**
    - **Verse 39:**
        - *"pittōttarēṣu mōkṣō raktasya virēcanaṁ cāgrē..."*
    - **Verse 44:**
        - *"kuṣṭhēṣu trivṛtā dantī triphalā ca virēcanē śastā..."*

C. Raktamokshana (Bloodletting)

- **Purpose:** To remove vitiated blood and toxins.
- **Indications:** Severe cases with deep-seated toxins, chronic lesions, and when blood is significantly vitiated.
- **Methods:**
    - **Siravyadha (Venesection):** Opening veins to let out impure blood.

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- **Jalaukavacharana (Leech Therapy):** Using leeches to draw out blood.
- **Shringa and Alabu (Horn and Gourd Methods):** Applying vacuum devices to draw blood.

- **Shloka References:**
  - **Verse 40:**
    - *"pracchanamalpē kuṣṭhē mahati ca śastaṁ sirāvyadhanam..."*
  - **Verses 51-52:**
    - *"svinnōtsannaṁ vilikhēt kuṣṭhaṁ tīkṣṇēna śastrēṇa..."*
    - *"pracchitamalpaṁ kuṣṭhaṁ virēcayēdvā jalaukōbhiḥ..."*

D. Basti (Medicated Enema Therapy)

- **Purpose:** To pacify Vata dosha and cleanse the colon.
- **Indications:** Vata-dominant Kushtha.
- **Types:**
  - **Anuvasana Basti:** Oil-based enema.
  - **Niruha Basti:** Decoction-based enema.
- **Herbal Ingredients for Decoction:**
  - **Darvi (Daruharidra)**
  - **Brihati (Solanum indicum)**
  - **Sevya**
  - **Patola**
  - **Picumarda**
  - **Madana**
  - **Kritamala**
  - **Kalinga**
  - **Yava (Barley)**
  - **Musta (Cyperus rotundus)**
- **Shloka References:**
  - **Verse 46:**
    - *"dārvībṛhatīsēvyaiḥ paṭōlapicumardamadanakṛtamālaiḥ..."*
  - **Verse 47:**
    - *"vātōlbaṇaṁ viriktaṁ nirūḍhamanuvāsanārhamālakṣya..."*

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2. Herbal Formulations

A. Internal Medications

1. Decoctions and Powders

- **Ingredients:**
  - **Daruharidra** (Berberis aristata)
  - **Rasanjana** (Extract of Berberis aristata)
  - **Haritaki** (Terminalia chebula)
  - **Trikatu** (Pippali, Maricha, Shunthi)

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- **Triphala**
- **Neem**
- **Patola**
- **Katurohini**
- **Trivrit**
- **Brahmi**

- **Benefits:**
  - Alleviate dosha imbalances.
  - Purify blood and skin tissues.
- **Shloka References:**
  - **Verses 61-64:**
    - *"dārvī rasāñjanaṁ vā gōmūtrēṇa prabādhatē kuṣṭham..."*
    - *"mūlaṁ paṭōlasya tathā gavākṣyāḥ pṛthak palāṁśaṁ..."*
    - *"kuṣṭhāni śōphaṁ grahaṇīpradōṣamarśāṁsi kṛcchrāṇi..."*

2. Medicated Ghees (Ghrita)

- **Formulations:**
  - **Tikta Ghrita:** Prepared with bitter herbs.
  - **Khadira Ghrita:** Using *Acacia catechu*.
  - **Nimba Ghrita:** Using Neem leaves.
  - **Darvi Ghrita:** Using Daruharidra.
  - **Patola Ghrita:** Using Patola leaves.
- **Benefits:**
  - Pacify Pitta and Rakta doshas.
  - Nourish skin tissues and enhance complexion.
- **Shloka References:**
  - **Verse 135:**
    - *"khadiraghṛtaṁ nimbaghṛtaṁ dārvīghṛtamuttamaṁ paṭōlaghṛtam..."*

B. Asavas and Arishtas (Fermented Preparations)

1. Madhvasava

- **Ingredients:**
  - Decoction of **Khadira** (Acacia catechu)
  - Honey
  - Other herbs like **Triphala**, **Maricha**, **Patra**, **Kanaka**
- **Benefits:**
  - Effective in treating Kushtha and related skin disorders.
- **Shloka References:**
  - **Verses 73-75:**
    - *"khadirasuradārusāraṁ śrapayitvā tadrasēna tōyārthaḥ..."*

2. Kanakabindvarishta

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- **Ingredients:**
  - **Khadira** decoction
  - **Triphala**
  - **Trikatu**
  - **Vidanga**
  - **Turmeric**
  - **Sandalwood**
- **Benefits:**
  - Cures major skin diseases, anemia, and improves complexion.
- **Shloka References:**
  - **Verses 76-79:**
    - *"khadirakaṣāyadrōṇaṁ kumbhē ghṛtabhāvitē samāvāpya..."*

3. Triphalasava

- **Ingredients:**
  - **Triphala**
  - **Chitraka**
  - **Jaggery**
  - **Additional herbs like **Danti**, **Varanga**, **Madhu**
- **Benefits:**
  - Cures Kushtha and related disorders.
- **Shloka References:**
  - **Verse 81:**
    - *"triphalāsavaśca gauḍaḥ sacitrakaḥ kuṣṭharōgavinihantā..."*

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3. Dietary Recommendations (Pathya Ahara)

A. Recommended Foods

- **Light and Easily Digestible Foods:**
  - **Old Grains:** Aged rice (*Purana Shali*).
  - **Green Gram (Mudga):** Especially with **Patola**.
- **Bitter Vegetables (Tikta Shaka):**
  - Helps pacify Pitta and Kapha doshas.
- **Meat of Animals from Arid Regions (Jangala Mamsa):**
  - Lean meats that are light and digestible.
- **Foods Prepared with Specific Herbs:**
  - **Bhallataka** (Marking nut)
  - **Triphala**
  - **Neem**
  - **Ghee**

B. Foods to Avoid

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- **Heavy and Indigestible Foods:**
  - New grains (*Navanna*), fresh harvests.
- **Dairy Products:**
  - Curd (*Dadhi*), sour milk, excessive dairy.
- **Seafood:**
  - Fish and aquatic animals.
- **Sweet and Oily Foods:**
  - Sugarcane products (*Guda*), sesame seeds.
- **Shloka References:**
  - **Verses 82-83:**
    - *"laghūni cānnāni hitāni vidyāt kuṣṭhēṣu śākani ca tiktakāni..."*
    - *"purāṇadhānyānyatha jāṅgalāni māṁsāni mudgāśca paṭōlayuktāḥ..."*

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4. External Applications (Lepa and Pralepa)

A. Herbal Pastes and Ointments

- **Purpose:** To treat skin lesions externally, reduce symptoms like itching, scaling, and discoloration.
- **Ingredients:**
  - **Ela (Cardamom)**
  - **Kushta (Saussurea lappa)**
  - **Daruharidra (Berberis aristata)**
  - **Shatapushpa (Anethum sowa)**
  - **Chitraka (Plumbago zeylanica)**
  - **Vidanga (Embelia ribes)**
  - **Rasanjana**
  - **Haritaki (Terminalia chebula)**
- **Preparation and Application:**
  - The herbs are powdered and mixed to form a paste.
  - Applied directly to the affected skin areas.
- **Shloka References:**
  - **Verse 84:**
    - *"ēlā kuṣṭhaṁ dārvī śatapuṣpā citrakō viḍaṅgaśca..."*

B. Specific Lepas for Different Kushtha Types

- **Formulations for Conditions like Sidhma (Psoriasis-like Lesions):**
  - **Ingredients:** Chitraka, Ela, Bimbi, Vrishaka, Trivrit, Arka, Ginger.
  - **Preparation:** Powders soaked in **Palasha Kshara** for eight days.
- **Shloka References:**
  - **Verses 85-86:**
    - *"citrakamēlāṁ bimbīṁ vr̥ṣakaṁ trivr̥darkanāgarakam..."*
    - *"kṣārēṇa gavāṁ mūtrasrutēna tēnāsya maṇḍalānyāśu..."*

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C. Siddharthaka Snana (Medicated Bath)

- **Purpose:** Purification, alleviation of skin disorders, and enhancing complexion.
- **Ingredients:**
  - **Musta** (Cyperus rotundus)
  - **Madana** (Emetic nut)
  - **Triphala**
  - **Karanja**
  - **Aragvadha**
  - **Kalinga**
  - **Yava (Barley)**
  - **Daruharidra**
  - **Saptaparna**
- **Benefits:**
  - Acts as an emetic, purgative, and cleanser.
  - Reduces skin disorders, swelling, and anemia.
- **Shloka References:**
  - **Verses 91-92:**
    - *"mustaṁ madanaṁ triphalā karañja āragvadhakaliṅgayavāḥ..."*
    - *"tvagdōṣakuṣṭhaśōphaprabādhanaḥ pāṇḍurōgaghnaḥ..."*

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5. Lifestyle Modifications (Pathya Vyavahara)

A. Ethical Conduct and Mental Health

- **Emphasis on:**
  - Respecting elders and teachers.
  - Avoiding sinful or unethical activities.
  - Managing stress and emotional disturbances.
- **Shloka References:**
  - **Verse 8:**
    - *"viprān gurūn dharṣayatāṁ pāpaṁ karma ca kurvatām..."*

B. Avoidance of Causative Factors

- **Recommendations:**
  - Avoid suppressing natural urges.
  - Refrain from consuming incompatible foods.
  - Follow proper regimens post-purification therapies.
- **Shloka References:**
  - **Verses 4-6:**
    - *"virōdhīnyannapānāni dravasnigdhagurūṇi ca..."*

C. Physical Activity and Rest

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- **Guidelines:**
  - Engage in regular, moderate exercise.
  - Avoid excessive physical exertion.
  - Maintain proper sleep patterns; avoid daytime sleep.

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6. Specific Procedures and External Therapies

A. Swedana (Sudation Therapy)

- **Purpose:** To prepare the body by opening pores and facilitating the elimination of toxins.
- **Methods:**
  - Using warm poultices (*Pottali*) with meat of animals from marshy and aquatic regions.
  - Steam therapy using devices like **Prastara** (stone slab) and **Pranadi** (tube).
- **Shloka References:**
  - **Verses 50-51:**
    - *"sthirakaṭhinamaṇḍalānāṁ svinnānāṁ prastarapraṇāḍībhiḥ..."*
    - *"ānūpavārijānāṁ māṁsānāṁ pōṭṭalaiḥ sukhōṣṇaiśca..."*

B. Pracchana (Pricking) and Lekhana (Scraping)

- **Purpose:** To remove toxins localized in the skin.
- **Methods:**
  - Scraping elevated lesions with sharp instruments.
  - Pricking small lesions to let out vitiated blood.
- **Shloka References:**
  - **Verses 51-52:**
    - *"svinnōtsannaṁ vilikhēt kuṣṭhaṁ tīkṣṇēna śastrēṇa..."*
    - *"pracchitamalpaṁ kuṣṭhaṁ virēcayēdvā jalaukōbhiḥ..."*

C. Kshara Application (Alkali Therapy)

- **Purpose:** To treat lesions where surgical instruments are unsuitable.
- **Indications:** Lesions causing loss of tactile sensation or those that are hard and chronic.
- **Method:**
  - Applying **Kshara** (alkaline substances) to the affected area.
- **Shloka References:**
  - **Verse 54:**
    - *"yēṣu na śastraṁ kramatē sparśēndriyanāśanāni yāni syuḥ..."*

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7. Use of Cow Urine (Gomutra) and Mineral Preparations

A. Cow Urine (Gomutra)

- **Purpose:** Used both internally and externally for its purifying properties.

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- **Applications:**
  - As a solvent for herbal preparations.
  - In external applications for cleansing lesions.
- **Shloka References:**
  - **Verses 61, 157:**
    - *“dārvī rasāñjanaṁ vā gōmūtrēṇa prabādhatē kuṣṭham...”*
    - *“mūtraṁ nimbaviḍaṅgē snānaṁ pānaṁ pradēhaśca...”*

B. Mineral Preparations

- **Ingredients:**
  - **Shilajatu** (Mineral pitch)
  - **Gandhaka** (Sulphur)
  - **Makshika** (Copper pyrite)
- **Benefits:**
  - Enhance the efficacy of treatments.
  - Used in combination with herbs to treat stubborn skin conditions.
- **Shloka References:**
  - **Verses 70-72:**
    - *“saptadaśakuṣṭhaghātī mākṣikadhātuśca mūtrēṇa...”*
    - *“vajraśilājatusahitaṁ sahitaṁ vā yōgarājēna...”*

8. Treatments for Specific Conditions

A. Sidhma (Psoriasis-like Lesions)

- **External Applications:**
  - Pastes made from **Chitraka**, **Ela**, **Bimbi**, **Vrishaka**, **Trivrit**, **Arka**, and **Ginger**.
- **Shloka References:**
  - **Verses 85-86:**
    - *“citrakamēlāṁ bimbīṁ vṛṣakaṁ trivṛdarkanāgarakam...”*

B. Vicharchika (Eczema-like Conditions)

- **Treatments:**
  - Bloodletting and purgation.
  - Application of cooling pastes and medicated ghees.
- **Herbal Ingredients:**
  - **Manjishtha**, **Haridra**, **Neem**, **Patola**.
- **Shloka References:**
  - **Verses 135-139:**
    - *“khadiraghṛtaṁ nimbaghṛtaṁ dārvīghṛtamuttamaṁ paṭōlaghṛtam...”*

C. Kilasa (Vitiligo)

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ISSN – 3048-8621
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- **Treatments:**
  - Specific purgation therapies.
  - External applications to stimulate pigmentation.
- **Herbal Ingredients:**
  - **Bakuchi** (Psoralea corylifolia)
  - **Karanja** (Pongamia pinnata)
- **Shloka References:**
  - **Verses 162-170:**
    - *"taṁ pītvā susnigdhō yathābalaṁ sūryapādasantāpam..."*
    - *"kadalīkṣārayutaṁ vā kharāsthi dagdhaṁ gavāṁ rudhirayuktam..."*

Treatment Conclusion

The treatments for Kushtha mentioned in the given shlokas emphasize a holistic approach, integrating internal purification, herbal medications, dietary regulations, external applications, and lifestyle modifications. The therapies are tailored based on the predominance of doshas and the specific type of skin disease. By adhering to these classical Ayurvedic guidelines, practitioners aim to restore doshic balance, detoxify the body, and promote healthy skin.

Modern Correlation

Management of skin diseases in modern medicine includes:

1. **Pharmacotherapy:**
   - **Topical Treatments:**
     - Corticosteroids, antifungals, antibacterials.
   - **Systemic Medications:**
     - Antibiotics, immunosuppressants, biologic agents.
2. **Phototherapy:**
   - Use of ultraviolet light for conditions like psoriasis and vitiligo.
3. **Surgical Interventions:**
   - **Excision:** Removal of lesions.
   - **Skin Grafting:** For extensive skin loss.
4. **Lifestyle and Dietary Modifications:**
   - Nutritional support with vitamins and minerals.
   - Stress management techniques.
5. **Patient Education:**
   - Informing patients about triggers and preventive measures.
   - Encouraging adherence to treatment regimens.

Modern dermatology recognizes the importance of holistic management in skin diseases:

1. **Integrative Approaches:**
   - Combining conventional treatments with alternative therapies.
2. **Emphasis on Lifestyle:**
   - Diet and stress play significant roles in conditions like psoriasis and eczema.

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3. **Psychodermatology:**
    - Addressing psychological aspects of skin diseases.
4. **Nutritional Support:**
    - Importance of vitamins (A, D, E) and minerals (zinc, selenium) in skin health.

Conclusion

Kushtha, as described by Acharya Charaka, encompasses a wide range of skin diseases characterized by complex etiologies and diverse clinical manifestations. The Ayurvedic approach to understanding and managing these conditions emphasizes the balance of doshas, purification of the body, and the use of specific herbal remedies.

The correlation with modern dermatology reveals similarities in the recognition of environmental, dietary, and lifestyle factors contributing to skin diseases. Integrating Ayurvedic principles with contemporary medical practices offers a comprehensive framework for treating skin conditions, addressing not only the physical symptoms but also the underlying imbalances.

By embracing holistic care and personalized treatment strategies, healthcare providers can enhance patient outcomes and promote overall skin health.

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