



PAMA (Scabies): An ayurvedic literature review

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ABSTRACT

Skin diseases are being considered as a major health problem in children, as it leads to discomfort and significant morbidity among them. The skin is often a marker of underlying systemic disorders and many hereditary syndromes. *Scabies* is a common skin infestation of tiny mites called "*Sarcoptes scabiei*". It is very contagious and usually spreads through skin-to-skin contact with someone who is already infected. Infants and children are therefore particularly liable to infection from close physical contact with older children and adults at home and at school. In Ayurvedic classics, various skin disorders have been described under the heading of *Kushtha*. *Pama Kushtha* is being a *Kshudra Kushtha* has *Pitta-Kapha* dominance and it is characterized by extreme itchy eruptions of white, reddish or black in color. On the basis of symptomatology of *Pama Kushtha* described by the *Acharyas*; one can correlate this with *Scabies*. The best way to prevent the spread of the *Scabies* mites is to maintain personal hygiene and avoid direct, prolonged skin-to-skin contact with the infested person.

Keywords: *Scabies, Pama Kushtha, Kshudra Kushtha, Pitta-Kapha* dominance.

INTRODUCTION


Skin diseases are being considered as a major health problem in children, as it leads to discomfort and significant morbidity among them. Nearly one-third of the pediatric outpatient visits involve a dermatology complaint. In addition to the wide variety of primary skin disorders seen during childhood, the skin is often a marker of underlying systemic disorders and many hereditary syndromes.^[1]

Factors like socioeconomic status, environmental conditions, dietary habits, climate, hygiene, cultural factors, genetic factors and education status of parents influence the presence of skin diseases in children in India.

Scabies is a common skin infestation of tiny mites called "*sarcoptes scabiei*".^[2] The mites burrow into the top layer of human skin to lay their eggs, causing small itchy bumps. The symptoms of scabies occur 2-6 weeks after the infection, since it

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takes some more time before the mite can penetrate the skin & reproduce.^[1]

Clinical Symptoms include “*Intense itching*” that can worse at night or skin lesion include linear or S-shaped burrows with black dots at the leading edge. The burrows or tracks typically appear in fold of skin. Though almost any part of the body may involve but most often found; around the waist, around male genital area, inner elbows, around the breasts, in the armpits, navel, inside of the wrists, on the knees, between the fingers, but the commonest sites in infants & young children are: head, face, scalp, neck, soles of the feet, and palms of the hands. Due to hypersensitivity reaction to the mites and their products, intensely pruritic papular or papular-vesicular rash develops; there is secondary excoriations, eczematous areas, pustules and crusting as a consequence of itching, rubbing and secondary infection.^[3]

Transmission: It is contagious and usually spreads through skin-to-skin contact with someone who is already infected. It spreads most easily in crowded conditions and those with a lot of close contact-among families, in childcare centers, nursing homes. Infants and children are therefore particularly liable to infection from close physical contact with older children and adults at home and at school.^[4]

Objective: To study the literature review of *Pama* through Ayurveda.

AYURVEDIC REVIEW OF PAMA (SCABIES):

According to Ayurveda, a disease that tears or pulls out and destroy the beauty of the body and any type of skin disorders have been described under the heading of *Kushtha*. All *Acharyas* have described eighteen types of *Kushtha*, and among them, seven considered as *Maha Kushtha* and eleven as *Kshudra Kushtha* but the nomenclature is different. *Pama Kushtha* is described under *Kshudra Kushtha* with its involvement of *Tridosha* which can be evident by observing its sign and symptoms, on the basis of symptomatology of we can correlate this disease with *Scabies*.

Pama is being a *Kshudra Kushtha* has *Pitta-Kapha* dominance and it is characterized by extreme itchy eruptions of white, reddish or black in color. When the disease is left untreated, the *Twacha*, *Mamsa*, *Rakta*, *Lasika* will be putrefied and will starting dissolving and create complications and spreads all over the body. Separate *nidanas*, *poorvaroopa* and *samprati*, for *Pama Kushtha* or even any other kinds of *Kushtha* have not been enlisted. The *Samanaya nidaan* of *Kushtha* has to be taken as *hetu* for *Pama* also.

Etiology (Nidana)^[5]: The constant use of mutually incompatible eats and drinks. Unctuous and heavy articles of diet. Excessive use of salt, or acid articles or of black gram, raddish pasted particles, *Til*, *Dugdha* and *Guda*. The suppression of generated urge of defecation, urine etc., indulgence in exercise or exposure to heat after a surfeit meal, Irregular indulgence in cold or hot food or fasting or over-eating. Using of cold water suddenly after being afflicted with heat, fatigue or fear. Indulgence in pre-digestion meals, wrongful administration of five purificatory procedures (*Panchakarma*), Habitual use of grains, curd or fish. Sexual intercourse after intake of *sneha* or emesis; or frequently eating meats of domestic, marshy and aquatic animals with milk; or taking dip in water after having been heated by fire (or Sun) or suppressing vomiting.

Etiopathogenesis: *Acharya Charaka & Acharya Shushruta* describes *Doshajas Hetus* leads to aggravation of *Tridosha* basically *Pitta* and *Kapha* which reaches the obliquely moving channels further aggravates and scatters them all around towards the external passage, wherever scattered *Dosha* moves patches appear thus *Dosha* started in skin further increases and if not treated, goes inwards vitiating *Dhatus*.

Premonitory Symptoms (PoorvaRoop):^[5]

Anesthesia, hyperhidrosis, anidrosis, discoloration, eruption of rashes, horripilation, pruritus, pricking pain, fatigue, exhaustion, excessive pain, rapid formation and chronicity of ulcers, burning sensation, numbness over the limbs.

Samprapti Ghataka:^[6]

Dosha: *Pitta, Kapha*

Dushya: *Twak, Rakta, Mamsa, Ambu,*

Srotasa: *Raktavaha*

Srotodushti: *Samga*

Adhishthana: *Twak, Mamsa*

Rogamarga: *Bahya*

Swabhav: *Chirkari*

Clinical Symptoms (Lakshana) of Pama Kushtha:

Symptoms as per *Acharya Sushruta*: Intense itching, tiny burrow, filled with fluid/pus, oozing blisters with discomfort, sometimes with pain, symptoms most often found on the buttocks, genital areas, beltline & knee, inter-digital areas of palms, inner elbow, inside the wrists, axillae soles of the feet, flexor surface of extremities.^[7]

Symptoms as per *Acharya Charaka*: Whitish-grayish, flesh colored raised bump or black burrow, intense itching on rashes/burrows.^[8]

Management (Chikitsa): Ayurveda has described 'Samshodhana' (Bio-purification), 'Samshamana' (Pacification) and 'NidanParivarjana' (Avoiding causative factors) as main therapy for many diseases including skin disorders.

Samshodhana: Acharya Shuruta and Yogratnakar has explained *Vamana* (Emesis) to be done every 15 days, *Virechana* (Purgation) once in a month, *Nasya* every three days and *Raktamokshana* (Bloodletting) once in six months to be done.^[9]

Acharya Charaka described *Samshodhana* to be done repeatedly in regular intervals in every skin disorders, so that toxins are removed from body without vitiation of *Vata* and *Dosha-Dhatu samya* can be formed for proper nourishment.^[10]

Shamshamana: The palliative therapy is in form of drugs and diets may not be effective unless the body channels are properly cleansed and toxic materials are eliminated. *Samshodhana* is believed to purify or cleanse all the body tissues and bring about the harmony of bio-humors to obtain long-lasting beneficial effects. Drugs used for palliative therapy for *Kushtha* should be *Tikta* and *Kashaya Rasa* predominant.

Decoctions made from *Neem*, *Triphala*, *Khadira*, *Saptaparna*, *Daruhaldi* are said to be effective in *Kushtha*.

Local Applications: Acharya Charaka has described use of *Karanja*, *Sarso*, *Ingudi*, *Khadir* oil or medicated ghee made from *Khadira*, *Neem* and *Patola* are effective in pacification of *Kushtha*.

Shirish lepa, *Aragvada lepa*, *Chitrakadi lepa*, *Mamsyadi lepa* and *Kshar prayog* is also mentioned.

NidanParivarjana: The diet rich in *Amla*, *Lavana* and *Katu Rasa*, milk, curd, jaggery, heavy diet and diet which aggravated *Kapha Dosha* should be avoided.

Acharya Shushruta has described role of *Ayaskruti* (*Loharasayan*) in *Kushtha*. *Rasayan Chikitsa* also plays major role in *Kushtha* for regeneration of skin.

Prevention & control: The best way to prevent the spread of the Scabies mites is to avoid direct, prolonged skin-to-skin contact with the infested person. All household members & other potentially exposed persons should be treated at the same time to prevent possible re-exposure & re-infestation. Bedding, clothing & towels used by infested persons or their close contacts within 3 days before treatment should be decontaminated by washing in hot water & sun dried, gently ironed or by sealing in a plastic bag for 72 hours.

(Scabies mites generally do not survive more than 2 to 3 days away from human skin).

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