

Review Article

Establishment of Ekakushtha as Psoriasis

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Abstract:

Psoriasis is a genetically determined immune-mediated inflammatory disease, which is pointed out in the WHO's recent Global Report on Psoriasis that there are many unmet research gaps in psoriasis addressing various aspects such as epidemiology, etiology, association with co morbidities, treatment and ways to improve healthcare services. It has been recommended that therapeutic researches should focus on options which can be applicable globally, on a large scale. On supporting to this issues, the scholars of Ayurveda also undertaken researches on finding etiological factors, developing scale for diagnosis and efficacious therapies for the same. However at present in researches psoriasis is correlated with Kitibha, Eka Kushtha, Sidhma, Ruksha Vicarchika and Vata type of Kushtha. This article discuss with the aim of understanding psoriasis with the different varieties of Kushtha, which aids future researches in this area.

Keywords: Kitibha, Psoriasis, Eka Kushtha

Introduction:

Psoriasis is a major problem among the society because of its ugly appearance which may disturb personal, familiar and social life of the patient. It is characterized by round, reddish, erythematous patches covered with dry, adherent silvery scales.

In Ayurveda psoriasis as such is not described but has been included in 18 types of skin diseases described under generalized heading of Kushtha. The perusal of the skin diseases described as Kushthashows that these diseases are non pus forming chronic skin diseases. However, in NidanaSthanaCharaka mentions pus formation particularly in Maha-Kushtha but that may be due to the later on secondary infection. These skin diseases are clinically seem to be poorly understood by a large number of Ayurveda practitioners, hence general trend is to diagnose the skin disease in modern term and put some Ayurveda term. This point may be clearer by the example of psoriasis, which according to some scholars is Kitibh, while other considers as Sidhma, some as DadruKushtha and some as Eka-kushtha. Therefore, this article is aimed to review the literature for all these terms, discuss the views and decide the appropriate Ayurveda terminology for psoriasis.

Kitibha vs Psoriasis:

In Hindi translation of MadhavaNidana by ShriSudarshanShastri published in sixties of twenty Century, Kitibha is designated as psoriasis, so the Ayurveda teachers started teaching Kitibha as psoriasis (MadhavaNidana Second volume page 160).

According to Charaka (CharakaChikitsa 7:22) Kilibha is blackish brown in color and rough like a scar (Kana). According to Chakrapani Kana means scar and Kina Sparsha is rough on touch. According to Sushruta the lesion of Kitibha is circular, blackish in color, thick (Ghana), oily (Snigdha) and wet (Sravi)-(SushrutaNidana 5:14)

1. It is obvious from the foregoing description of Kitibha, it is clear that all the authorities are agree on one point that its color is blackish but psoriasis is characterized by erythema.
2. Sushruta mentions Kitibha as oily and wet which is not in case of psoriasis.
3. Hence description of Kitibha does not resemble with that of psoriasis.

Sidhma vs Psoriasis:

As mentioned above some scholars correlated psoriasis with Sidhma. It is because Sidhma is rough and reddish in color.

Sidhma lesions in the periphery are fissured and thin and in the centre are smooth having white and red shade. They appear in large number with little pain, itching, burning sensation and pus and serous discharge(CharakaNidana 5:8).Lesions when rubbed, it gives rise to dust of small particles resembling with the flower of Alabu (LagenariasicerariaStandl) andgenerally located in the chest (CharakaChikitsa 7:19). Sushruta also mentions that it occurs in the chest (SushrutaNidana 5:14).

As psoriasis can occur in any part of the body and commonly found on the elbows, knees, scalp, and back. Therefore psoriasis can be correlated with Sidhma.

Dadru vs Psoriasis:

Dadru is well correlated with ring worm lesions on skin and is of two types wet and dry. As psoriasis is always dry therefore correlation of Dadru with psoriasis is not fair.

Eka Kushtha vs Psoriasis

Professor Gurdipsingh suggested Ekakushthaas psoriasis which is now accepted by most of the Ayurveda scholars of various parts of the country. But still some scholars use Kitibha for psoriasistherefore the detailed analysis of this aspect is needed.

Ekakushtha is characterized (CharakaChikitsa 7:21) as follow:

(1) **Asvedanam**: Asvedanam means no perspiration occurs from the lesion. The experiments were carried out by subjecting the patients to all body VashpaSveda and it was observed that in the psoriatic lesions no sweat occurs while in all other parts of the skin it is sweating.

(2) **Mahavastum** (Extensive location): Chakrapani explains Maha-Vastu as Mahavastum means that it spreads widely. Psoriasis is also spread all over the body and some scholars even believe that the

uninvolved skin of psoriasis is also abnormal, so the whole of the skin in psoriasis is deranged thus Mahavastum.

(3) Matsya Shakalam (Resembles with Skin of Fish):

Matshyashakalopamameans the lesions of Eka-Kushtha (Figure-1) resembles with the skin of fish (Figure-2). According to Bhavaprakasha, in Ekakushtha, skin lesions are Chakrakara (rounded) and Abhraka-Patra-Sama.Abhraka means mica, Patra indicates whitish layers, thus it means whitish silvery leaves resembling with mica layers are present in Eka-Kushtha. In other words it explains the scaly nature and the hyperkeratinisation, which occurs in the epidermis of the patient of psoriasis.

On the basis of the above observations that in the lesions of psoriasis are sweat-less (Asvedanam), wide spread (Mahavastu), resembles with skin of fish (MatsyaSakalam) and having whitish mica layer like scales, it can be said that Ayurveda description of Eka-Kushtha resembles with that of psoriaais. Therefore Eka-Kushtha is an appropriate term for psoriasis.

Conclusion:

Psoriasis is considered as a one type of Kushtha. Previous research scholars of Ayurveda have tried to correlate it with Ekakushtha, Kitibha and Sidhma. However due to the symptoms of Ekakushtha like Asvedanam, Mahavastum, Matshyashakalopama and Abhrakapatrasama, it seems to be more nearer to psoriasis. Matshyashakalopama explains the scaly nature and the hyperkeratinisation, which is occurring in the epidermis. According to Bhavaprakasha, in Ekakushtha, skin lesions are Chakrakara (rounded) and Abhrakapatrasama i.e. silvery like mica. These clinical features indicate the similarity between Ekakushtha and Psoriasis.

Figure-1
Psoriatic Lesion



Figure-2
Skin of the Fish



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