

AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE OF *EKAKUSHTHA* CORRELATION WITH PSORIASIS
AND MAJOR TREATMENT APPROACHESDr. Ashutosh Satish Gupta*¹, Prof. Vd. Rakesh Sharma²¹Ph.D. Scholar, Kayachikitsa Dept., Lt. SRC Ayurved College, Chikhali, Dist-Buldana, Maharashtra, India.²Ph.D. Guide, Kayachikitsa Dept., Guru Ravidas Ayurved University, Hoshiarpur, Punjab, India.

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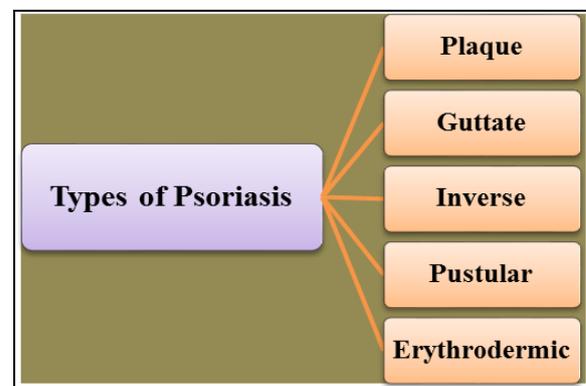
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ABSTRACT

According to Ayurveda, the science of life, health is viewed from a holistic and individual perspective, determined by assessing a person's *Dosha* and *Prakriti*. This individualization allows for the effective management and care of people with chronic illness, including dermatological disorders. One such common chronic, noninfectious, and multifactorial inflammatory skin disease is psoriasis, a condition characterized by hyperproliferation of keratinocytes and rapid epidermal turnover, making it one of the most common skin disorders present worldwide. Within the classical texts of Ayurveda, most skin disorders are classified as *Kushtha Roga* and psoriasis closely resembles *Ekakushtha*. Upon reviewing the classical Ayurveda texts and the modern medical literature, significant similarities exist between the *Ekakushtha* and psoriasis. In psoriasis, modern therapeutic management relies on the use of immunosuppressive medications, which may have serious side effects; in contrast, the principles and formulations outlined in Ayurveda for *Ekakushtha* provide a more natural and comprehensive approach to long-term management. This article emphasizes Ayurvedic perspective of *Ekakushtha* correlation with psoriasis and their major treatment approaches.

KEYWORDS: Skin, *Kushtha*, *Dosha*, Hyperproliferation, *Twak*.**INTRODUCTION**

The disease psoriasis is a chronic, non-contagious, autoimmune and inflammatory disorder of the skin characterized by abnormal keratinization of epidermal cells causing red, itchy, dry patches covered with silver scales that develop on the body in well-defined areas. The most common spots for these patches are on the elbows and knees and scalp. Psoriasis is thought to develop due to multiple factors including genetics; certain genes in the Human Leukocyte Antigen complex are commonly associated with the disease and certain immune system mechanisms that involve T cells. The medical science also described different types of psoriasis as mentioned in **Figure 1**.^[1, 2]

**Figure 1: Various Types of Psoriasis.**

Based on Ayurvedic principles, like much of the human body, skin is believed to be affected by three primary biological forces *Kapha*, *Pitta* and *Vata*. According to Ayurvedic philosophy, a *Kushtha* is therefore a type of

disease that alters the natural appearance of the skin. There are seven types of *Mahakushtha* and eleven types of *Kshudra Kushtha*. *Kushtha* is also included in what are called the *Ashta Mahagada*. The improper use and consumption of *Mithya Ahara*, *Vihara* and *Karma* vitiate the *Tridosha* and thus the function of *Twak*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa* and *Lasika*, resulting in the manifestation of *Kushtha*.^[3, 4]

According to Classical Ayurvedic texts, *Ekakushtha* has unique aspects to diagnose it which includes dark or blackish-red discoloration of the skin. Commonly known etiological factors associated with this condition include incompatible foods consumed together; sudden exposure to extreme temperature changes; excessive amounts of particular foods like fish and milk consumed together; excessive amounts of heavy and oily foods; overeating; eating while upset; suppressing natural urges; excessive amount of oleation, and indulging in excessive amounts of sexual activity or physical exertion immediately after eating a large meal; and, in addition to the above-causing factors, psychological factors including fear, sadness, and stress. All of these leading to enflaming the *Dosha* system and causing a state of imbalance in the normal functioning of the *Twak*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, and *Lasika* leading to creating *Kushtha*. As per scientific background *Ekakushtha* can be compared with psoriasis and their correlation explained here in subsequent section.^[2-4]

Correlation between *Ekakushtha* and Psoriasis

The clinical presentation and chronic nature of psoriasis and *Ekakushtha* have very similar characteristics; however, the two conditions arise from different philosophical models of disease. In modern medicine, psoriasis is defined as an autoimmune inflammatory skin disorder characterized by non-infectious, chronic hyperproliferation of keratin-producing cells and is demonstrated as well-demarcated erythematous plaques covered with silvery scales, affecting commonly the extensor surfaces and scalp of persons. The course of psoriasis is a cycling between a stage of flaring and a stage of being inactive, and is due to genetic predisposition of the individual, response to the environmental factors and skin injury, etc.^[5, 6]

Ayurvedic medicine also characterized *Ekakushtha* which is also known for fish-scale-like lesions, discolouration, dryness, inability to sweat in the area of involvement, and is a chronic skin disease that has a cyclical pattern of exacerbation/remission; along with seasonal variations of exacerbation; based on all above descriptions of psoriasis. Ayurveda denotes that the pathology of psoriasis is caused by a derangement of *Tridosha*, caused by *Mithya Ahara*, *Vihara* and *Karma*.^[7, 8]

The conditions created by *Twak*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa* and *Lasika* lead to the formation of *Kushtha*. From the point of view of pathology, the hyperproliferation of epidermal

cells that occurs in psoriasis can be understood comparatively through Ayurveda as being the result of the accumulation of Aggravated *Doshas* and their respective *Dushyami* leading to a structural and functional derangement of the skin.^[8]

Modern medicine principally uses immune-suppressants, with their associated adverse effects, for symptomatic management of this condition. Ayurveda, in contrast, employs a holistic individualized approach based on the assessment of *Dosha* and *Prakriti*, as well as the correction of *Nidana* (causal factors) and a proper understanding of *Samprapti* (pathogenesis) to help manage chronic psoriasis. Therefore, although there is disparity in theoretical bases, the comparative analysis shows that there is a considerable relationship between psoriasis and *Ekakushtha*.

Comparison of Management approaches

There are conceptual differences and therapeutic similarities of the management of *Ekakushtha* according to Ayurveda with Psoriasis in modern medical practice. These therapeutic similarities can be observed in relation to the use of external, systemic and light-based therapy. *Bahirparimarjan Chikitsa* or external therapy is used in Ayurveda to treat *Ekakushtha*. External therapy includes the application of *Lepas* such as *Karanjadi Lepa* and *Jivantyadi Lepa*, which help to reduce scaling, discolouration, inflammation, and other local symptoms. Medicated oils such as *Kanaksheeri Taila* and Oleation therapy alleviates dryness and pacifies aggravation of the *Doshas*. The symptoms of a skin disease can be alleviated through *Siddharthaka Snana*. The application of the *Lepa* and some of the Oleation therapy is followed by a little sun exposure and this is similar to using phototherapy, in that *Aatap Sevan* enhances the efficacy of the *Lepa*.^[7, 8]

Topical management of psoriasis in modern medical practice primarily focuses on managing the symptoms associated with the disease and controlling inflammation. Topically applying Emollients is used to reduce scaling and dryness. Vitamin D analogues play an important role in regulating the proliferation of keratinocytes. Additionally, topical corticosteroids are frequently used in modern medical therapy to achieve their anti-inflammatory, anti-proliferative and immunosuppressive effects. Phototherapy is an important medical therapy in managing psoriasis as it reduces the rate of epidermal hyper-proliferation.^[1, 9]

Ayurveda emphasis on internal management includes *Antahparimarjan Chikitsa*, which incorporates *Shodhana Chikitsa* methods as determined by the level of vitiation of each individual *Dosha*. *Rasayana Chikitsa* and *Shamana Chikitsa* used to enhance the level of health by repairing pathology while preventing recurrence.^[8, 10]

Modern systemic treatment typically relies on classes of medications that work by suppressing the immune

system or inducing changes in the immune system. First line agents for chronic plaque psoriasis currently include methotrexate and for moderate to severe disease include cyclosporine and biologic agents such as infliximab.^[2, 9]

Differences in treatment methods, modern medicine currently treats split as primarily an effort focused on controlling and suppressing symptoms and immune-mediated inflammatory disease processes; whereas treatments in Ayurveda utilize both a systemic approach to include detoxification, pacification of *Doshas*, anti-aging therapy and restoration of health through dietary and lifestyle management.^[9, 10]

CONCLUSION

In Ayurvedic texts, psoriasis, also known as *Kshudra roga* classified among chronic diseases. It appears as well-defined areas of dry, red or pink skin that may or not have silver scales on them; it can also show wide variability in terms of how frequently it appears and how severe it can become. Psoriasis is a lifelong skin disease due to autoimmune processes. The most common manifestation of psoriasis is red patches with scale. These scales are made up of skin cells and associated with abnormal keratinocyte growth. This translates into a concordance in the clinical characteristics shared by *Ekakushtha*. The clinical symptoms seen in both psoriasis and *Ekakushtha* also have a common pattern of dryness, scales, discolouration, chronic and recurring flare-ups. The goal of modern medicine in the management of psoriasis is primarily to provide comfort through symptomatic relief and to suppress the overactive immune system either by topical medications, systemic medications, or phototherapy. The Ayurveda uses treatments such as *Nidana Parivarjana*, *Shodhana*, *Shamana*, *Rasayana* therapy and lifestyle modification in order to correct the underlying imbalance of *Dosha* associated with pathogenesis of *Ekakushtha*.

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