

# AN AYURVEDIC APPROACH TO KUSHTHA

\*Dr. Pooja Soni, \*\*Dr. Rita Singh, #Dr Sanjay Srivastava

\*M.D. Scholar, \*\*Reader, #<sup>3</sup>Professor & HOD, Department of Roga Nidan evum Vikriti Vigyan, Pt. Khushilal Sharma Government Ayurveda Institute, Bhopal, M.P. India

## ABSTRACT

Healthy skin depicts the personality of an individual. Nowadays, skin disorders are very common. Kushtha is one of the most chronic disorders described in Ayurveda. Ayurveda described a wide range of etiological factors for dermatological disorders. Due to various causes e.g. consumption of unhealthy food, lifestyle modification, environmental pollution, stress skin problems are increasing day by day. Therefore, more than a cosmetic nuisance the skin disorders lead to embarrassing situation which impair the quality of life. Skin, one of the five Gyanendriya, is an important organ of communication with the external world. Skin reflects the internal health of an individual. Majority of the dermatological disorders have been under the umbrella of Kushtha. The Charaka Samhita clearly mentioned that, the etiopathogenesis involves the Sapta Dravya (seven factors), Vata, Pitta, Kapha, Tvaka, Rakta, Mamsa, Ambu (lasika), which are responsible for manifestation of a wide range of dermatological disorders.

Ayurveda is the Science and art of healing that deals with all aspects of an individual. According to Acharya Sushruta all type of Kushtha are associated with Vata, Pitta, Kapha and Krimi, it is only due to predominance that causation of one of the Dosha is indicated. Skin diseases are caused by taking incompatible and unsuitable food, eating during indigestion, suppression of urges, faulty use of unction etc. Therefore, modification of these lifestyle related factors are very important for the management of dermatological disorders. The foremost objective of Ayurveda is to prevent and cure the diseases.

**Keywords:** Kushtha, Etiological-factor, Symptom, Saptadravya.

## INTRODUCTION

The science of Ayurveda is based on the principle of Tridosha (Vata, Pitta and Kapha) which are responsible for health and disease. Skin is given due importance since time immemorial owing to the aesthetic value conferred upon skin, complexion and beauty by the society.<sup>1</sup> The skin not only protects the body but also performs many excretory and metabolic functions. It is also the seat of complexion, which maintains beauty and personality. The incidence of skin diseases is increasing day by day and a very large proportion of population suffers from skin diseases. Skin is a mirror to an individual's health.

Kushtha is defined as "Kushnateeti Kushtham" the disease which destroys the affected part of the body (skin) is called Kushtha.<sup>2</sup> It is characterized by discoloration, loss of touch sensation, appearance of rashes, excessive or no perspiration etc.<sup>3</sup> With passing the time, the disease develops deformity and makes the entire body ugly. Tridosha (Vata, Pitta & Kapha)

and four Dhatus (Tvaka, Rakta, Mamsa & Ambu) are seven causative factors responsible for the manifestation of Kushtha.<sup>4</sup>

## CAUSATIVE FACTORS OF KUSHTHA:

- Intake of mutually contradictory food and drinks, consumption of liquid, unctuous and heavy food.
- Suppression of urges like vomiting etc.
- Practicing of physical exercise in excessive heat or after taking very heavy meal.
- Improper implementation of prescribed order in relation to cold, heat, fasting and diet.
- Use of cold water immediately after exposure to the scorching sun, exertion or exposure to frightening situation.
- Intake of uncooked food, intake of food before the previous meal is digested.

- Transgression of the procedure of *Pancha Karma*.
- Excessive intake of food preparations of freshly harvested grains, curd, fish, salt and sour substances.
- Excessive intake of *Tila*, Milk and Jaggery.
- Sleep during day time.
- Indulging in mischievous acts like insulting *Brahmins*, Teachers, Elders and other respected persons, along with sinful and heinous activities.<sup>5</sup>
- Indulging in physical exercise and coition after intake of *Sneha* or *Vamana Karma*.
- Regular consumption of domestic, marshy and aquatic animal's meat with milk.
- Sudden suppression of vomiting bouts.
- As per *Sushruta Samhita*, If one dies with *Kushtha* it follows in re-birth too.<sup>6</sup>

#### SAMPRAPTI OF KUSHTHA:

Due to consumption of *Nidana Tridosha* become agitated and brings loosens *Dhatu* (*Twak, Rakta, Mamsa and Ambu*). Thus the vitiated *Dosha* gets accommodated in these tissues, bring morbidity in *Twagadi Dhatus* leading to manifestation of *Kushtha*. These taken together, constitute the seven fold pathogenic substance (*sapta-dravya*) of *Kushtha*.<sup>7</sup>

Due to adaptation of etiological factors resulting in continuous involvement of localised *Dosha* for a prolonged period simultaneously involving *Twak (Rasdhatu), Rakta, Mamsa and Ambu* leading to their *Sammurchhana* at a particular site resulting into the development of 18 types of *Kushtha*. Three *Dosha* and four *Dhatus* are considered as seven fold substances and these act as a original causative factors. *Kushtha* manifest by involving all the three *Doshas* and it never manifest by involving only one *Dosha*. *Dosha* brings laxity in the four *Dhatus*, which favours the development of *Kushtha*.<sup>8</sup>

In the pathogenesis of all varieties of *Kushtha*, there is an involvement of *Vata, Pitta, Shlesma* and *Krimi*.<sup>9</sup>

#### PREMONITORY SIGN AND SYMPTOMS OF KUSHTHA:

- Loss of touch sensation (anesthesia)
- Excessive or absence of perspiration

- Discoloration and elevated patches in the skin
- Horripilation itching, pricking pain, physical exhaustion and mental fatigue
- Excessive pain in the ulcerated parts
- Quick appearance and continued persistence of these ulcers
- Burning sensation and numbness of limbs.<sup>10</sup>
- Spread of wound to other body parts
- Blackish discolouration of the blood.<sup>11</sup>

#### GENERAL SYMPTOMS OF KUSHTHA:<sup>12</sup>

##### SYMPTOMS DUE TO PREDOMINANCE OF VATA:

- Constriction in skin
- Loss of sensation
- Sweating
- Swelling
- Cracking
- Shortening of extremities
- Loss of voice

##### SYMPTOMS DUE TO PREDOMINANCE OF PITTA:

- Suppuration
- Bursting
- Falling off of fingers
- Breaking of ear and nose
- Redness of eye
- Appearance of *Krimi* over *Kushtha* lesion

##### SYMPTOMS DUE TO PREDOMINANCE OF KAPHA:

- Itching
- Discolouration
- Swelling
- Exudation
- Heaviness

#### CLASSIFICATION OF KUSHTHA:

In *Charaka Samhita* – 18

In *Sushruta Samhita* – *Maha Kushtha* (07) + *Kshudra Kushtha* (11) = 18

Term *Maha Kushtha* and *Kshudra Kushtha* coined in *Sushruta Samhita*.

**MAHA KUSHTHA:** (*Sushruta Samhita*)

- ✓ *Kapala (Pitta)*
- ✓ *Udumbara (Pitta)*
- ✓ *Aruna (Vata)*
- ✓ *Rishyajihva (Pitta)*
- ✓ *Pundarika (Kapha)*
- ✓ *Dadru (Kapha)*
- ✓ *Kakanaka (Pitta)*

**KSHUDRA KUSHTHA:**

- ✓ *Ekakushtha (Kapha)*
- ✓ *Sthularushka (Kapha)*
- ✓ *Kitibha (Pitta)*
- ✓ *Mahakushtha (Kapha)*
- ✓ *Visarpa (Pitta)*
- ✓ *Parisarpa (Vata)*
- ✓ *Charmadala (Pitta)*
- ✓ *Pama (Pitta)*
- ✓ *Sidhma (Kapha)*
- ✓ *Raksa (Kapha)*
- ✓ *Vicharchika (Pitta)*

**MAHA KUSHTHA:** (*Charaka Samhita*)

- ✓ *Kapala (Vata)*
- ✓ *Audumbara (Pitta)*
- ✓ *Mandala (Kapha)*
- ✓ *Rishyajihva (Vata-Pitta)*
- ✓ *Pundarika (Pitta-Kapha)*
- ✓ *Sidhma (Kapha-Vata)*
- ✓ *Kakanaka (Tridosha)*

**KSHUDRA KUSHTHA:**

- ✓ *Ekakushtha (Vata-Kapha)*
- ✓ *Charmakushtha (Vata-Kapha)*
- ✓ *Kitibha (Vata-Kapha)*
- ✓ *Vipadika (Vata-Kapha)*
- ✓ *Alasaka (Vata-Kapha)*
- ✓ *Dadru (Pitta-Kapha)*
- ✓ *Charmadala (Pitta-Kapha)*
- ✓ *Pama (Pitta-Kapha)*
- ✓ *Visphotaka (Pitta-Kapha)*
- ✓ *Sataru (Pitta-Kapha)*
- ✓ *Vicharchika (Kapha)*

**DHATUGATA KUSHTHA:**<sup>13</sup>

- I. **RASA DHATUGATA KUSHTHA:**  
Loss of touch sensation, perspiration, mild itching, discoloration and roughness.
- II. **RAKTA DHATUGATA KUSHTHA:**  
Numbness in skin, horripilation, sweating, itching, formation of pus having bad smell.
- III. **MAMSA DHATUGATA KUSHTHA:**  
Thickness of skin, dryness of mouth, roughness of the skin, appearance of skin eruptions, pricking and bursting pain and stability.
- IV. **MEDA DHATUGATA KUSHTHA:**  
Bad smell and accumulation of dirt over body, pus formation, manifestation of *krimi* in the wounds, mutilation of body parts.
- V. **ASTHI-MAJJAGATA KUSHTHA:**  
Deformity of nose, reddish discoloration of eyes, appearance of *krimi* in the wounds and loss of voice.
- VI. **SHUKRA DHATUGATA KUSHTHA:**  
Shortening of extremities, limited motion, splitting of body parts, gradual spreading of wounds and all above symptoms.<sup>11</sup>

**SADHYASADHYATA:**<sup>14</sup>

**ASADHYA KUSHTHA-** *Tridoshas*, and all the sign and symptoms of *Kushtha* are present.

-The patient who is weak

-The patient who is suffering from morbid thirst and burning sensation

-The patient who have no digestive power

-The patient having maggots in the patches of *Kushtha*.

**AKRACHCHHA KUSHTHA-** *Vata-Kapha* predominance and *ek-Doshas Kushtha*

**KRACHCHHHA SADHYA KUSHTHA-** Two *Doshas* viz. *Kapha-Pitta* or *Vata-Pitta* predominance *Kushtha*.<sup>12</sup>

**KUSHTHA IS AN INFECTIOUS DISEASE:**

*Acharya Sushruta* has also coated *Kushtha* as infectious disease along with *Jwar*, *Shosha*

and *Abhishyand* and more chronic disease described in *Ayurvedic* text.

- patient Constant close intimacy with the
- Touching the patient offently
- Inhaling expired air of the patient
- Eating together
- Sleeping and sitting together
- Wearing dress, garlands and unguents used by patient.<sup>13</sup>

#### LINE OF TREATMENT:

In *Charaka Samhita* has described, if patient suffering from *Kushtha* dominated by *Vata* should first be administered ghee internaly, if *Kushtha* dominated by *Kapha* should first be administered *vaman* and if *Kushtha* dominated by *Pitaa* should first be administered by *raktamokshana* and *virechana*.<sup>14</sup>

In *Sushruta Samhita* has described, when premonitory symptoms appear, evacuation from both ways (by *vamana* and *virechana*) should be used.<sup>15</sup>

#### PATHYA AND APATHYA FOR KUSHTHA<sup>15</sup>

The patient suffering from *Kushtha* should take following type of diet:

- Light and wholesome food
- Vegetables having bitter taste
- Food preparations and medicated ghee prepared by boiling with *Bhallataka*, *Triphala* and *Nimba*
- Old cereals
- Meat of animals inhabiting arid land and preparation of *Mudga* mixed *Patola*.

Intake of heavy and sour food, milk, curd, meat of animals inhabiting Marshy land, fish, jaggery and *tila* is prohibited in patients of *Kushtha*.<sup>16</sup>

#### DISCUSSION:

It is the need of hour for every human being to be aware of the causes of occurrence of diseases. For the manifestation of *Kushtha* many factors are mentioned in our text which are being practised by us unknowingly such as salt with milk, fish with milk etc. *Kushtha* is a disease in which vitiation of all

*Dosha* and four *Dushya* viz. *Twaka*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa* and *Ambu*, takes place which is ultimately reflected in skin by hampering its normal appearance. The major etiological factors constitute intake of mutually contradictory diets, suppression of urges, indulging in day sleep etc. which vitiated *Dosha* and brings morbidity in *Twagadi Dhatus*.

*Kushtha* can be corrected by implementation of *Ghratapana*, *Vrechana*, *Raktamokshan*, *Vamana*, application of *Lepa* and *Siddharthaka Snana*, *Pathya Ahara* and *Vihara* etc. This will bring the normalcy of *Dosha* and *Dhatus* thus helps in bringing changes in skin and will ultimately are the disease.

#### CONCLUSION:

Skin is an important organ of communication with the external world and seat of *Sparshendriya*. *Kushtha* is one of the oldest known diseases to mankind,<sup>16</sup> it is described as one of the most chronic disease in *Ayurvedic* text. In the present era, faulty dietary habit, stress and suppression of urges are the major factors responsible for the manifestation of a wide range of dermatological disorders.

Sevenfold pathogenic substance of *Kushtha* viz. *Tridosha* & *Twak*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa* and *Lasika* are responsible for development of *Kushtha*. So to keep our body free from diseases we should try to maintain the equilibrium the *Tridosha* and *Saptadhatus* by following *Dincharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Shodhan* and *Shaman* procedure.

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