

CASE STUDY

Scalp Psoriasis in Ayurveda Outshining Role of Jugular Raktamokshana Chikitsa along with Shaman Chikitsa in Ekakustha W.S.R To Scalp Psoriasis – A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Scalp psoriasis is a chronic, autoimmune skin condition characterized by red, scaly patches, inflammation, and itching on the scalp. Conventional treatments often focus on symptom management through topical corticosteroids, phototherapy, and systemic medications, which may carry side effects or provide only temporary relief. In contrast, Ayurveda, the traditional Indian system of medicine, offers a holistic approach to managing scalp psoriasis by addressing its root causes and promoting systemic balance. According to Ayurvedic principles, scalp psoriasis is primarily considered a manifestation of Ekakushta, a type of Kushta Roga (skin disorder), which arises due to an imbalance in the Vata and Kapha doshas, along with vitiation of Rakta (blood) and Twij (skin). Poor dietary habits, stress, improper lifestyle, and weakened digestive fire (Agni) are common causative factors. Ayurvedic treatment involves detoxification, dosha pacification, and rejuvenation using herbal formulations and lifestyle modifications. Panchakarma, the Ayurvedic system of bio-purificatory therapies, plays a vital role in the management of scalp psoriasis. Procedures such as Virechana (purgation), Basti (medicated enema), and Raktamokshana (bloodletting) are employed to eliminate toxins and restore doshic balance. Shirodhara (pouring medicated oil on the forehead) and Takradhara (medicated buttermilk therapy) have proven beneficial for relieving stress and scalp symptoms. Herbal oils like Neem, Karanja, and Manjistha-based preparations are commonly used for external application. Clinical evidence and case studies suggest that Ayurvedic and Panchakarma therapies not only reduce the severity of symptoms but also help in preventing recurrence by strengthening immunity and improving overall well-being. This integrative, individualized approach offers a promising alternative to conventional treatments, aligning with the growing global demand for holistic and natural therapies in chronic skin diseases. [10][11]

Keywords: Scalp Psoriasis, Ekakustha, Raktamokshana, Shodhana, Shaman, Aushadhi

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INTRODUCTION

Psoriasis is a chronic, autoimmune skin disorder that affects millions of people worldwide. It is characterized by the rapid proliferation of skin cells, leading to the buildup of thick, silvery scales and itchy, dry, red patches that can be painful and emotionally distressing. While the condition is non-contagious, its visible appearance and recurrent nature often result in significant psychological and social challenges for those affected. Psoriasis can occur on various parts of the body, including the scalp, elbows, knees, back, and even nails, with severity ranging from mild, localized patches to widespread, severe eruptions. In modern medical science, psoriasis is primarily managed through topical corticosteroids, vitamin D analogs, systemic immunosuppressants, and phototherapy. Although these treatments may provide temporary relief and help manage flare-ups, they often do not address the root cause of the disease. Moreover, long-term use of such treatments may lead to side effects and dependency, prompting many individuals to explore alternative and holistic approaches for lasting relief. Ayurveda, the ancient

Indian system of medicine with a history spanning thousands of years, offers a unique and comprehensive approach to understanding and treating psoriasis. In Ayurvedic texts, psoriasis is generally classified under Kushtha Roga, more specifically as Eka-Kushtha or Kitibha, based on its symptoms and pathogenesis. According to Ayurveda, the disease arises due to an imbalance in the three fundamental bodily energies or Doshas—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha—particularly the vitiation of Vata and Kapha, along with the impairment of Rakta Dhatu (blood tissue), and improper digestion leading to the accumulation of Ama (toxins) in the body. The Ayurvedic treatment of psoriasis focuses on a holistic strategy that addresses the root cause of the disease rather than merely suppressing its symptoms. The treatment protocol typically includes internal detoxification therapies such as Panchakarma, blood purification (Raktamokshana), herbal formulations, dietary modifications (Pathya-Apathya), and external applications like medicated oils and pastes. Lifestyle changes, stress reduction, and mental well-being are also emphasized, as stress is often recognized as a significant trigger for flare-ups. This article delves into the Ayurvedic perspective on psoriasis, exploring its causes, classification, and most importantly, the various traditional treatment methods that aim to restore harmony between the body, mind, and spirit. Through personalized and natural interventions, Ayurveda seeks to provide not only symptomatic relief but also long-term healing and improved quality of life for those suffering from psoriasis. [10][11]

Case Report - A 52-year-old female patient visited OPD & came to Shree Sanidhya Panchakarma and Ayurvediya Chikitsalaya, Vadodara, Gujarat with the complaints of,

- Severe Itching on the scalp region,
- Scaling,
- Gas,Acidity,
- Nausea,
- Constipation

History

Patient was completely healthy before 3 months, after that he started complaining of Severe Itching on the scalp region, Scaling, gas, acidity, constipation. After that he underwent to allopathy medicines and tried all antihistamines and corticosteroids but couldn't find any relief. No any family history was present regarding urticaria or any skin disorders.

Personal history: No history of HTN / DM / Thyroid dysfunction / any other allergic illness

Family history: Not any significant

Physical Examination

Blood Pressure-142/88 mmhg.

Pulse rate-74 beats/min

Respiratory rate-16/min

Temperature-98.6° C

Bowel- Irregular (Once in two days)

Appetite-Decreased (Less intake of food)

Micturition-3-4 times a day

Sleep-altered

Ashtasthana Pariksha

Nadi (Pulse) – *pitta Pradhana kapha*

Mala (Stool) - *Asamyak*

Mutra (Urine) - *Alpa pravritti*

Jihva (Tongue) - *Lipta*

Shabda (Speech) -

Prakrita Sparsha (Tactilation) - *Ushna*

Druk (Eyes) -

Prakruta Akriti (Anthropometry) – *Madhyama*

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Medications

1- Khadirarista - 3Tsp thrice a day

2- Panchatikta Ghrita Guggulu Tab 2-2-2 [3][4]

3- Bruhat Daruharidra Khanda Churna - 2Tsp Thrice a day [5][6][7][8][9]

4- Erandbhrista Haritaki Tab – 2 Tab at Night with warm water

5- Divsora Oil – 2 times in a day For External Application

Panchakarma procedure

1- Raktamokshana Procedure (60ml) on jugular Vein. [10][11]

Treatment Underwent

Table 1: Internal Medicines

Sr.No	Name of Medicine	Dose	Time	Anupana	No of Days
1	Panchatikta Ghrita Guggulu	2 Tab	3 Times After Food	Ushnodak	15
2	Bruhat Daruharidra Khanda Churna	2 Tsp	3 Times After Food	Ushnodak	15
3	Khadirarista	3Tsp	3 Times After Food	-	15
4	Erandbhrista Haritaki	2 Tab	At Night	Ushnodak	15
5	Divsora Oil	For LA (Local Application)	2 times in a day	-	15

Table 2: Panchakarma procedures given to patient

Sr.No	Procedure	Date	No of Days
1	Raktamokshana Procedure (60ml) on Jugular Vein.	25-07-2023	1

RESULT

In Scalp Psoriasis, the predominant Dosha involvement is typically that of Kapha and Vata, along with the vitiation of Rakta Dhatu and often Pitta Anubandhatva (associated Pitta involvement). The etiological factors (Nidana) include improper dietary habits such as consumption of incompatible, heavy, oily, and junk foods, excessive intake of fermented or non-vegetarian items, and faulty lifestyle practices like day sleep (Divaswapa), suppression of natural urges, and chronic stress—all of which lead to Agni Mandya (low digestive fire), formation of Ama, and disturbance in Tridosha homeostasis. Due to accumulation of Ama and vitiated Kapha, Strotavarodha (obstruction in microchannels) occurs, especially in Rasa and Rakta Vaha Srotas, leading to improper nourishment of Twak (skin), and production of dry, scaly lesions. Vata contributes to dryness (Rookshata) and flaking, while Kapha causes thick scaling and itching. Pitta, when associated, manifests as inflammation, redness, and burning sensations. According to Acharya Charaka, such Kushta (skin disorders) must be addressed through Shodhana (purification), Shamana (palliative), and Bahya Chikitsa (external therapies). Classical texts have described the use of drugs from the Kushtaghna Mahakashaya group, which are Tikta-Katu Rasa, Ushna-Virya, and possess Lekhana and Shodhana properties. These qualities help to pacify Kapha, normalize Vata, and remove Avarodha, thereby improving tissue metabolism (Dhatu Agni) and promoting healthy skin regeneration. Pancha Karma procedures like Virechana (purgation) and Raktamokshana (bloodletting) are often indicated in chronic and stubborn cases. These therapies eliminate the morbid Doshas and purify the blood. Takra Dhara and Shirovasti with medicated buttermilk or herbal oils like Jatamansi Taila, Brahmi Taila, or Durvadi Taila are widely used for scalp involvement. These not only reduce itching and scaling but also provide a calming effect on the nervous system, reducing stress-related exacerbations. Formulations like Panchatikta Ghrita Guggulu, Arogya Vardhini Vati, and Mahamanjishtadi Kwath are internally prescribed to purify blood, reduce inflammation, and support liver function which is often implicated in skin disorders. External lepas (pastes) like Haridra, Manjishtha, Neem, and Aloe vera are useful due to their Kusthaghna, Shothahara, and Rakta Prasadaka actions. From a modern perspective, the pathophysiology of scalp psoriasis involves an autoimmune process with hyperproliferation of keratinocytes and inflammation. The Ayurvedic concept of Ama and Rakta Dushti can be correlated with immune dysfunction and toxin accumulation, while Srotorodha mimics microvascular and cellular changes seen in psoriatic plaques. The inflammatory features like redness, scaling, and itching are comparable to Pitta-Kapha predominance and the chronicity denotes Vata dominance. Thus, the Ayurvedic approach addresses the condition through a multifaceted strategy—detoxification, dosha pacification, tissue rejuvenation, and stress management—offering a holistic and sustainable management for scalp psoriasis. [3][4] [10][11].

Table 3: Overall Result of Treatment

Symptoms	Before Treatment	After Treatment
Severe Itching on the scalp region	4	1
Scaling	4	1
Nausea	4	1
Constipation	4	1
Gas, Acidity	4	2

*Note-Gradation According to Dr.MS Baghel Developing guidelines for clinical research.

Table 4: Samprapti Ghatak

Samprapti Ghatak	Details
Dosha	Vata, Kapha (<i>Pitta Anubandha</i> in some cases)
Dushya	Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa
Type (Samprapti)	<i>Sanga</i> (obstructive type) with <i>Avarana</i> (Pitta covered by Kapha)
Adhishthana	<i>Twak</i> (skin), <i>Loma-koopa</i> (hair follicles), <i>Shira</i> (scalp)
Srotas Involved	<i>Rasavaha, Raktavaha, Mamsavaha</i> Srotas
Agni	<i>Jatharagni Mandya, Dhatvagni Dushti</i> (Rasa and Rakta Dhatus)
Marga	<i>Abhyantara</i> (internal route) with <i>Bahya Lakshanas</i> (external manifestations)

ACTION OF MEDICINES IN SCALP PSORIASIS (ACCORDING TO AYURVEDA)

Khadirarishta

Khadirarishta is widely recognized in Ayurveda for its potent Rakta Shodhaka (blood purifying) action. Scalp psoriasis involves Rakta Dushti and Ama formation, contributing to inflammation and scaling. The detoxifying herbs in Khadirarishta help in cleansing the blood and reducing the burden of accumulated toxins (Ama) that aggravate the Doshas, particularly Pitta and Kapha. Its bitter and astringent taste aids in skin repair and minimizes flare-ups. However, due to the presence of jaggery, diabetic patients should use this under medical supervision, as it may influence blood sugar levels. [2]

Panchatikta Ghrita Guggulu

This classical formulation is especially indicated in chronic skin disorders like psoriasis. It contains five bitter herbs (*Tikta Dravyas*) that pacify all three vitiated *Doshas*, especially *Pitta* and *Kapha*. The *Ghrita* (ghee) acts as a carrier to penetrate deep tissues and pacify *Vata*. Its *Shothahara* (anti-inflammatory) and *Kusthaghna* (anti-skin disease) properties help in reducing itching, redness, dryness, and scaling of the scalp. It also supports tissue regeneration by nourishing the *Dhatus* and improving *Dhatvagni* (tissue-level metabolism).

Bruhat Daruharidra Khanda Churna

The key herb *Daruharidra* (*Berberis aristata*) in this formulation is known for its potent anti-inflammatory, anti-psoriatic, and antioxidant properties. It helps in reducing erythema, scaling, and itching due to its *Raktaprasadaka* and *Shothahara* effects. Berberine, its active compound, is also beneficial in modulating the immune response, which is crucial in autoimmune conditions like scalp psoriasis. Additionally, this formulation aids in *Medohara* (fat metabolism), supporting the overall systemic balance needed in chronic inflammatory conditions.

Erandabhrishta Haritaki Tablet

Chronic constipation (*Koshthabaddhata*) is considered a contributing factor in many skin diseases, including psoriasis, due to the buildup of toxins (*Ama*). *Erandabhrishta Haritaki* helps regulate bowel movements, thereby ensuring *Koshtha Shuddhi* (cleansing of the gut). This prevents the further vitiation of *Rakta Dhātu* and supports the efficacy of other medications. It acts as a gentle purgative with *Vatanulomana* property, crucial in balancing *Vata*, which contributes to dryness and scaling on the scalp.



Figure 1: Before and After treatment.

CONCLUSION

Scalp psoriasis, a chronic and often relapsing autoimmune skin disorder, can be effectively managed through the holistic principles of Ayurveda. The foundation of Ayurvedic pathology lies in the imbalance of Tridoshas and the accumulation of Ama (toxins), which disrupt the equilibrium of Dhatus and Malas, eventually manifesting as skin diseases. Despite the body's natural excretory mechanisms, residual toxins can accumulate in deeper tissues, leading to chronic conditions such as psoriasis. This case highlights that the combined approach of Shodhana Chikitsa (purificatory therapy), especially Raktamokshana (bloodletting), along with Shamana Chikitsa (palliative management), plays a crucial role in breaking the pathogenesis and restoring balance. The use of specific Ayurvedic formulations, lifestyle modifications, and detox procedures not only alleviated the symptoms but also showed significant improvement in scalp lesions and reduced recurrence. Thus, Ayurvedic management, when applied correctly and consistently, offers a comprehensive, individualized, and natural treatment pathway. Popularising Ayurveda for chronic skin conditions like scalp psoriasis could greatly reduce dependency on chemical-based interventions, lower recurrence rates, and promote long-term health and wellness. [10][11]

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