

## ROLE OF VIRUDDHA AHARA IN EMERGING SKIN DISORDERS: AN AYURVEDIC AND CONTEMPORARY REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Viruddha Ahara (incompatible diet) is a fundamental concept described in Ayurveda referring to unsuitable dietary combinations and incompatible dietary habits that adversely affect physiological functions. Classical Ayurvedic literature identifies Viruddha Ahara as a major etiological factor for Kushta (skin disorders). In modern times, the prevalence of chronic inflammatory and allergic skin disorders has increased significantly due to unhealthy dietary habits, processed food consumption, and altered lifestyles.

**Objective:** To critically review the role of Viruddha Ahara in the etiopathogenesis of emerging skin disorders from Ayurvedic and modern scientific perspectives. **Methods:** Classical Ayurvedic texts including Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya were reviewed along with published articles indexed in PubMed, AYUSH portals, and peer-

reviewed journals related to Viruddha Ahara and dermatological disorders. **Results:** Repeated intake of incompatible food combinations leads to Agnimandya, Ama formation, Dosha aggravation, Rakta Dushti, and subsequent manifestation of skin disorders. Modern scientific evidence suggests that incompatible dietary habits contribute to chronic inflammation, oxidative stress, immune dysregulation, gut microbiota imbalance, and hypersensitivity reactions that may precipitate dermatological diseases such as psoriasis, eczema, acne vulgaris, urticaria, and vitiligo. **Conclusion:** Viruddha Ahara plays a significant role in the pathogenesis of emerging skin disorders. Avoidance of incompatible dietary practices and

adoption of Ayurvedic dietary principles may serve as effective preventive and therapeutic strategies for chronic skin diseases.

**KEYWORDS:** Viruddha Ahara; Kushta; Skin Disorders; Incompatible Diet; Psoriasis; Dermatology.

## INTRODUCTION

Skin diseases are among the most common health concerns worldwide and significantly impair physical, psychological, and social well-being. The incidence of chronic inflammatory and allergic skin diseases such as psoriasis, eczema, urticaria, acne vulgaris, vitiligo, and atopic dermatitis has risen remarkably due to changing dietary habits, sedentary lifestyle, environmental pollution, stress, and excessive consumption of processed foods.

Ayurveda emphasizes the importance of Ahara (diet) in maintaining health and preventing diseases. Ahara is considered one of the three pillars of life (Trayopastambha), and improper dietary habits are regarded as important causative factors for disease manifestation. Among the various dietary etiologies described in Ayurveda, Viruddha Ahara occupies a unique and clinically significant position.

The term Viruddha Ahara refers to incompatible dietary substances, combinations, processing methods, quantity, timing, and dietary habits that disturb Doshas and impair tissue metabolism. Acharya Charaka described Viruddha Ahara as substances that dislodge Doshas without eliminating them from the body and thereby become harmful to health. Continuous consumption of incompatible food is particularly implicated in Kushta Roga (skin disorders).

The contemporary understanding of dermatological disorders also highlights the significant role of dietary habits, gut-skin interactions, inflammation, oxidative stress, and immune dysfunction in disease pathogenesis. Therefore, the Ayurvedic concept of Viruddha Ahara appears highly relevant in the modern era.

This review aims to explore the role of Viruddha Ahara in emerging skin disorders from classical Ayurvedic and modern biomedical perspectives.

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES

### AIM

To review the role of Viruddha Ahara in the causation and progression of emerging skin disorders.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To describe the concept and classification of Viruddha Ahara.
2. To analyze the Ayurvedic pathogenesis of skin disorders caused by Viruddha Ahara.
3. To correlate Ayurvedic concepts with contemporary biomedical understanding.
4. To highlight preventive and therapeutic approaches based on Ayurvedic dietary principles.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This review article is based on a comprehensive literary study conducted using classical Ayurvedic texts including Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya. Relevant data were collected from peer-reviewed journals, PubMed-indexed articles, AYUSH databases, Google Scholar, and contemporary dermatological literature.

Keywords used for literature search included “Viruddha Ahara,” “Kushta,” “Skin Disorders,” “Psoriasis,” “Ayurveda and Dermatology,” “Gut-Skin Axis,” and “Incompatible Diet.”

### Concept of Viruddha Ahara

The word “Viruddha” means opposite, contradictory, or incompatible, while “Ahara” denotes food or dietary intake. Thus, Viruddha Ahara refers to dietary substances or habits that are incompatible with the body and produce harmful effects.

### According to Charaka Samhita

“विरुद्धमवि चाहारं विद्यात् विषगरोमिम्।”

(Ch.Su.26/85)

Meaning: Incompatible food acts similarly to poison when consumed regularly.

Ayurveda explains that incompatible dietary practices disturb Doshas, impair Agni, generate Ama, and affect tissue metabolism.

### **Types of Viruddha Ahara**

Ayurveda describes eighteen types of Viruddha Ahara:

1. Desha Viruddha – incompatibility according to geographical habitat
2. Kala Viruddha – incompatibility according to season or time
3. Agni Viruddha – incompatibility according to digestive capacity
4. Matra Viruddha – incompatibility due to quantity
5. Satmya Viruddha – incompatibility due to habituation
6. Dosha Viruddha – aggravation of Doshas
7. Samskara Viruddha – incompatibility due to improper processing
8. Virya Viruddha – incompatibility due to contradictory potency
9. Samyoga Viruddha – incompatible food combinations
10. Krama Viruddha – improper sequence of food intake
11. Parihara Viruddha – improper post-dietary regimen
12. Avastha Viruddha – incompatibility according to physical condition
13. Upachara Viruddha – incompatibility in therapeutic procedures
14. Paka Viruddha – incompatibility due to improper cooking
15. Hridaya Viruddha – psychologically disliked food
16. Sampat Viruddha – poor quality food
17. Vidhi Viruddha – improper dietary rules
18. Veerya Viruddha – contradictory thermal potency

### **Viruddha Ahara and Skin Disorders**

Ayurveda classifies skin diseases under Kushta Roga, which broadly includes both major and minor dermatological disorders. The primary pathological involvement occurs in Twak (skin), Rakta (blood), Mamsa (muscle tissue), and Lasika (lymphatic tissue). Viruddha Ahara is considered one of the principal causative factors for skin diseases because it initiates Dosha Dushti and Rakta Dushti.

### **Common Skin Disorders Associated with Viruddha Ahara**

- Psoriasis
- Eczema
- Acne vulgaris
- Urticaria
- Vitiligo

- Atopic dermatitis
- Allergic dermatitis
- Rosacea
- Fungal infections

### **Ayurvedic Pathogenesis of Skin Disorders Due to Viruddha Ahara**

The Samprapti (pathogenesis) can be explained in the following stages:

#### **1. Agnimandya**

Continuous intake of incompatible food weakens digestive fire leading to incomplete digestion.

#### **2. Ama Formation**

Impaired digestion results in formation of Ama, a toxic metabolic by-product.

#### **3. Dosha Prakopa**

Viruddha Ahara predominantly aggravates Pitta and Kapha Doshas.

#### **4. Srotorodha**

Ama and aggravated Doshas obstruct microchannels (Srotas).

#### **5. Rakta Dushti**

Contamination of Rakta Dhatu causes inflammatory and allergic manifestations.

#### **6. Localization in Twak**

The pathological process localizes in skin tissues causing Kushta.

### **Modern Scientific Correlation**

The concept of Viruddha Ahara may be correlated with modern understanding of dietary-induced inflammation and immune dysregulation.

#### **Gut-Skin Axis**

Unhealthy dietary practices alter gut microbiota and increase intestinal permeability, leading to systemic inflammation affecting the skin.

#### **Oxidative Stress**

Processed foods and reheated oils generate free radicals contributing to chronic inflammatory skin diseases.

**Immune Dysregulation**

Food incompatibilities may induce hypersensitivity reactions and autoimmune alterations.

**Advanced Glycation End Products (AGEs)**

Repeatedly heated foods produce AGEs that promote inflammation and accelerate skin aging.

**Chronic Inflammation**

High glycemic diets, excessive dairy products, processed foods, and food additives may activate inflammatory pathways associated with psoriasis and acne.

**Viruddha Ahara in Specific Skin****Disorders Psoriasis**

Psoriasis is a chronic inflammatory autoimmune disease characterized by erythematous scaly plaques. Ayurveda correlates it with Eka Kushta. Viruddha Ahara aggravates Kapha and Pitta leading to chronic inflammation and hyperproliferation of skin cells.

**Acne Vulgaris**

Excessive intake of oily, spicy, fried, and processed foods aggravates Pitta and Kapha Doshas contributing to acne formation.

**Urticaria**

Sheetapitta described in Ayurveda resembles urticaria. Incompatible foods may trigger allergic and histamine-mediated reactions.

**Vitiligo**

Milk combined with fish and sour substances is classically considered responsible for Shwitra due to Rakta Dushti and autoimmune mechanisms.

**Atopic Dermatitis**

Food allergens and chronic inflammatory dietary habits contribute to eczema and atopic dermatitis.

**Common Examples of Viruddha Ahara in Daily Life Incompatible Combination Possible Effects**

Milk with fish Allergic and skin disorders Milk with sour fruits Digestive impairment Heated honey Toxicity-like effects Equal quantity of honey and ghee Metabolic disturbance

Reheated oils Oxidative stress Curd at night Kapha aggravation Fast food and carbonated drinks Ama formation Excess fermented food Pitta aggravation.

### **Prevention and Management Avoidance of Viruddha Ahara**

Avoidance of incompatible food combinations is the primary preventive measure.

### **Maintenance of Agni**

Deepana and Pachana therapies help maintain digestive strength.

### **Pathya Ahara**

- Freshly prepared meals
- Seasonal fruits and vegetables
- Balanced diet according to Prakriti
- Proper meal timings
- Adequate hydration.

### **Lifestyle Modification**

- Adequate sleep
- Stress management
- Regular physical activity
- Yoga and meditation
- Ritucharya and Dinacharya adherence

### **Ayurvedic Therapeutics Shodhana Chikitsa**

- Vamana
- Virechana
- Raktamokshana

### **Shamana Chikitsa**

Use of herbal formulations with anti-inflammatory and blood-purifying properties.

## **DISCUSSION**

Viruddha Ahara is an important yet often neglected etiological factor in chronic skin diseases. Ayurveda provides a detailed explanation regarding the harmful effects of incompatible dietary habits on Doshas, Agni, Dhatus, and Srotas. The Ayurvedic concept of Ama formation and Rakta Dushti correlates with modern concepts of chronic inflammation, oxidative stress,

immune dysregulation, and gut microbiota imbalance.

Recent biomedical research increasingly supports the role of diet in inflammatory and autoimmune skin diseases. Consumption of processed foods, high glycemic diets, excessive dairy products, and chemically preserved foods contributes to systemic inflammation and dermatological disorders. The preventive approach emphasized in Ayurveda through dietary regulation, proper food combinations, and maintenance of digestive health offers a holistic strategy for managing emerging skin disorders.

## CONCLUSION

Viruddha Ahara plays a crucial role in the etiopathogenesis of emerging skin disorders according to Ayurveda. Continuous intake of incompatible food combinations disturbs Agni, generates Ama, vitiates Doshas, and contaminates Rakta Dhatu, ultimately leading to dermatological manifestations. Modern scientific evidence also supports the association between unhealthy dietary practices, chronic inflammation, immune dysfunction, and skin diseases. Therefore, awareness regarding compatible dietary habits and implementation of Ayurvedic dietary principles may significantly contribute to prevention and management of chronic skin disorders.

Further clinical and experimental studies are required to validate the concept of Viruddha Ahara scientifically and establish evidence-based integrative dermatological approaches.

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