

AYURVEDIC APPROACH IN FUNGAL INFECTIONS OF SKIN**¹Vd. Sadhana R. Lunawat and ²Vd. Narayan R. Sabu**

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ABSTRACT

Skin is a sensory organ with touch, pain, temperature, pressure as its subjects. It is most affected by fungal infections. According to modern science the fungal infections caused by dermatophytes are called as dermatophytosis while Tinea refers to worm in Latin. Tinea or Ringworm infection presents with of the circular skin lesions with elevated edges. In Ayurveda, skin fungal infections are known as 'badru' which are described under kshudraroga. In these there is kapha domination with superadded raktadushti and severe itching is indicative of the presence of kaphaja kleda in Rakta dhathu.

KEYWORDS: Dermatophytes, Dermatophytosis, Tinea, Kshudraroga, Rakta dhathu.

INTRODUCTION

Tinea or Ringworm infections are group of highly contagious segmented fungal infections, characterized by circular lesions which are usually having sharp margins with raised edges and single lesion. Even though multiple plaques may also found they remain discrete or become conrescent. The diagnosis may vary based on site of manifestation.

Ayurveda states that the skin has seven layers and these layers get their nutrition from muscles below, also that skin is a secondary tissue product of the blood and is said to reflect the qualities of the blood and the body's plasma tissue, hence the common saying 'glowing skin is a result of healthy plasma and blood'.

As per Ayurveda vitiation in three doshas, aggravation of pitta and kapha causes fungal skin disorders. The skin disorders explained by Acharyas under kushtaroga are of two types – Mahakushta and kshudraroga also known as ‘Dadrucushta’.

CAUSES

The factors that increase the risk of fungal infections include antibiotics or steroid therapy, diabetes, obesity, immune-compromised system, moist skin, damaged skin surfaces like a cut or graze etc. Furthermore the following also contribute to the fungal infections -

1. Poor nutrition – leading to poor immunity.
2. Excessive sweating, Hot and humid climate – leading to moist skin.
3. Chronic diseases – leading to compromised immunity
4. Poor hygiene and living conditions.

According to Ayurveda

1. Virudhashan – Intake of wrong food combinations like sour curd and milk together, sea food and milk together makes skin prone for infections.
2. Vishamasan – Heavy food intake or eating speedily also causes fungal diseases because of kapha and pitta dushti.
3. Adhyashan – Excessive food intake also contribute to the same
4. Kledakar Ahar – Food habits increasing kapha and pitta like – oily food, junk food and fermented foods are also responsible.

Symptoms

1. Lesions are circular, itchy, scaly and clear in centre and may occur on any exposed area.
2. Excessive Itching with Burning sensation is present.
3. Ringworm sometimes infects the inner and upper part of thigh.
4. Dryness, rigidity and discoloration of nails may be seen.
5. Itchy lesions in axilla and breast area in females are presented.
6. In dadru – Raised patches with itching and small reddish papules are seen.
7. Color is similar to Atasi pushpa and itching persist for a long times.

Samprapti

- Over indulgence in nidana tridoshas leads to vitiation of vata while vitiated pitta and kapha through triyak gami siras, twak, mamsa, Rakta Ambu drushti causes dadru.

Types of fungal infection

Depending upon the site of affliction the lesions are named as below –

1. Scalp – Tinea Capitis – also known as scalp ringworm
2. Body – Tinea Corporis
3. Whole body surface – Tinea Corporis
4. Neck – Tinea Versicolor
5. Groin region – Tinea Cruris
6. In hair – Tinea Barbae

Tinea Capitis – is a superficial fungal infection, (dermatophytosis) of the scalp. The clinical presentation is typically single or multiple patches of hair loss, sometimes with a ‘black dot’ pattern (often with broken hair), that may be accompanied by inflammation, scaling, pustules, and itching. It is uncommon in adults but is predominantly seen in pre-pubertal children more often boys than girls.

Tinea Cruris – is a fungal infection of the groin region in any sex, though more often seen in males it causes itching or a burning sensation in the groin area, thigh skin folds, or anus. It may involve the inner thighs and genital areas, as well as extending back to the perineum and perianal areas. Affected areas may appear red, tan, or brown, with flaking, rippling, peeling, or cracking skin.

Tinea Corporis – (also known as ringworm) is a superficial fungal infection (dermatophytosis) of the arms and legs, especially on glabrous skin, however, it may occur on any part of the body. It may have a variety of appearances; most easily identifiable are the enlarging raised red rings with a central area of clearing (ringworm). Classic features of tinea corporis include,

- The edge of the rash appears elevated and is scaly to touch.
- Sometimes the skin surrounding the rash may be dry and flaky.
- Almost invariably, there will be hair loss in the areas of the infection.

Tinea Barbae – (also known as Ringworm of the beard) It is one of the cause of folliculitis.

In Ayurveda Acharya Charak, Sushrut and Vagbhata described these all types as Dadru. The symptoms are as follows –

- Raised patches with itching and small reddish papules.

- Color similar to Atasi pushpa as described by Sushrut.
- Itching persist for a long time.

Disease Profile

- Dosha – Kapha
- Dooshya – Rakta
- Uthana Vyadhi Avastha – Above fungal infections generally have superficial samprapti.

Tinea Versicolor – Tinea versicolor in Ayurveda is described as sidhma and presents following features -

- White or coppery red in color
- Scales appear on stretching
- Resemble the fruit of Alabu
- Dry out side and moist inside
- Commonly appears on chest region.
- Well defined hypopigmented or hyper pigmented brownish macules and patches, covered with barely visible, powdery, thin, scales, appear commonly on chest, upper central trunk and neck.

Treatment

In ayurvedic classics there is an elaborate treatment for kushta roga. (Dadru) while modern drugs are providing short relief and recurrence of disease is more common. Ayurvedic medicine gives a long time relief and decrease the incidence of recurrence of disease. Basic Treatment Principle in Dadru is.

- Krimihara chikitsa
- Kaphahara and kledahara chikitsa
- Twak sara vardhana

As Dadru is one of the types of kushtha, first of all in badhudosha avastha panchakarma is more beneficial.

- 1) Vaman – In Dadru because of kapha dominance there is kledadhikhya in dhatus and it causes severe itching, so vaman treatment is necessary for removal of vicrut kapha. It can be done with panchatikta kwath or yastimadhu kwath because both are kaphaghna and kandughna while Mahatikta grit is best for snehpana.

- 2) Virechan – followed by vaman, virechan removes drava-gunas of pitta which helps to increase kteda dhatugat kleda.

Internal medications

- 1) Arogyavardhini – It is one of the best medicines for all types of kushta. It contains mainly Nimba and kutki, having potential to go upto mansa and Rakta dhatu and remove the dhatugat kleda.
- 2) Gandhak Rasayan – Gandhak is mainly used in dadrukushta because it has best kapha removal properties as described by Rasatarangini and so it helps to cure itching.
- 3) Haridrakhandha – It contains, Haridra, Turmeric or Curcuma Longa which has best anti-inflammatory, anti-allergic and antibacterial action.
- 4) Krumikuthar Rasa – Krumighna Chikitsa also plays an important role in curing fungal infection.
- 5) Bhunimbadi kwath, Aragwadhati kashay, Patol katurohinyadi kashay, Mahamanjistadi kashay are other medicines that can be used.

External Application – Herbal medicines

- 1) Chakramarda – it is one of the best drug for fungal infections
 - It is known as dadrughna, prapunnad
 - Latin name is cassiadora
 - It contains katu rasa, vipaka and Ushna virya
 - Its seeds are used with curd or lemon juice for external Application
- 2) Gandhak in combination with tankan and lemon juice for Local application (by Ras tanangini)
 - Durvadilepa – As explained by Charak it contains Durva, Haritaki, Saindhava and Chakramard
- 3) Prapunnadi Udavartan contains Chakramard bhij, Amalaki, Sarjaras and Snuhikshir

Haridra, Neemba, Karanja, Aragwadha, Kushta, Khadir are the other drugs that can be used. Yastimadhu Manjishta Sariva have proved beneficial whenever there is Pitta dominancy. These drugs are also useful in dadrukushtha

Ghrit/oils useful in Dadru

- 1) Mahatiktaka Ghrit – It is useful for both as internal medicines and for external Application

2) Laghu maxichyadi tail – for external Application

Neembo tail, Karanja tail, Tuvarak tail, Kshar tail, Chakramard tail have also proven to be beneficial.

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