

COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF KUSHTHA: AYURVEDIC INSIGHTS AND THERAPEUTIC APPROACHES USING KUSHTHAGHNA MAHAKASHAYA

Surajsing Gumansing Pardeshi*

Associate Professor, Department of Kriya Sharir, Anand Ayurved College, Vaijapur, Dist. Ch. Sambhajinagar, Maharashtra - 423701.

Article Received on
14 August 2024,

Revised on 04 Sept. 2024,
Accepted on 24 Sept. 2024

DOI: 10.20959/wjpr202419-33978



*Corresponding Author

Dr. Surajsing Gumansing
Pardeshi

Associate Professor,
Department of Kriya Sharir,
Anand Ayurved College,
Vaijapur, Dist. Ch.
Sambhajinagar, Maharashtra
– 423701.

ABSTRACT

In Ayurveda, "*Kushtha*" encompasses a broad range of skin disorders characterized by skin malformation, discoloration, and loss of integrity. These conditions are classified into two primary categories: *Mahakushtha* and *Kshudra Kushtha*. Each type of *Kushtha* involves an imbalance in the three *doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*), and the manifestation of the condition depends on the predominant *dosha*. The pathogenesis also involves vitiation of four *Dushyas* (*Tvaka*, *Mamasa*, *Shonita*, and *Laseeka*). The "*Kushthaghna Mahakashaya*," mentioned in the classical Ayurvedic text *Charaka Samhita*, prescribes ten herbal remedies for the management of these conditions. This review aims to elaborate on the types, causes, and treatment of *Kushtha*, highlighting the therapeutic role of the ten drugs under the "*Kushthaghna Mahakashaya*."

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, *Kushtha*, *Kushthaghna Mahakashaya*, Skin diseases in Ayurveda.

INTRODUCTION

The skin is not only the body's largest organ but also its first line of defense against environmental insults. It plays a critical role in physical and psychological health, serving as a sensory organ ("*Sparsha Gyan*") that significantly influences a person's well-being. In Ayurveda, all skin disorders are referred to collectively as "*Kushtha*." These conditions can cause profound physical, social, and economic burdens due to their chronic nature and visible manifestations.^[1]

Historical perspective of *kushtha* in ayurveda

The term "*Kushtha*" is derived from the root word "*Kush*," meaning to decompose or destroy, reflecting the destructive nature of these diseases on the skin. *Acharya Sushruta* classified skin diseases as *Aupsargika Roga* (Contagious disorders), and they are considered a form of *Raktaja Vikara* (Blood-borne disorders).^[2]

Etiology (*Nidana*) of *kushtha*^[3]

According to the *Charaka Samhita*, the primary causes of *Kushtha* are associated with dietary habits, lifestyle choices, and improper bodily practices.

Key etiological factors include

1. Improper Food Combinations (*Viruddha Anna*): Consuming incompatible food combinations like milk with fish or excessive intake of heavy and greasy foods (*Snigdha Guru Pana*) can aggravate the *doshas*.
2. Suppression of Natural Urges: Deliberately suppressing natural bodily urges, such as vomiting or urination, can lead to vitiation of *doshas*.
3. Excessive Physical Activity: Engaging in strenuous physical activities immediately after a meal or in extreme weather conditions contributes to the imbalance of *doshas*.
4. Improper Use of *Panchakarma* Therapies: Misuse or overuse of detoxification therapies like *Vamana* (emesis) or *Virechana* (purgation) without proper indication can worsen the condition.
5. Uncontrolled Consumption of Certain Foods: Overconsumption of salty, sour, or heavy foods (e.g., fish, curd, newly harvested grains) can increase *Kapha* and *Pitta*, contributing to skin disorders.

Pathogenesis (*Samprapti*) of *kushtha*^[4]

The pathogenesis of *Kushtha* involves a complex interaction between the three *doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*) and the four *Dushyas* (skin, muscle, blood, lymph). All skin diseases result from the simultaneous vitiation of these elements:

- *Vata dosha*: Causes dryness, roughness, and scaling of the skin.
- *Pitta dosha*: Leads to inflammation, redness, and burning sensations.
- *Kapha dosha*: Results in thickening, oozing, and swelling of the skin.

The interplay of these *doshas* affects various tissues (*Dhatus*) such as *Rasa* (plasma), *Rakta* (blood), *Mansa* (muscle), and *Lasika* (lymph), leading to different manifestations of *Kushtha*.

The imbalance causes blockage in the micro-channels (*Srotas*), leading to impaired circulation and nutrient supply to the skin.

Premonitory Signs and Symptoms (*Poorva Roopa*) of *Kushtha*^[5]

Before the full manifestation of *Kushtha*, certain premonitory signs are observed:

- Loss of Touch Sensation (*Sparsajnatva*): Reduced tactile sensitivity around the affected area.
- Excessive or Lack of Sweating (*Ati Sweda* or *alpa sweda*): Abnormal perspiration or dry skin.
- Stinging Pain (*Toda*), Fatigue (*Shrama*), and Lethargy (*Klama*): Generalized symptoms indicating systemic involvement.
- Discoloration and Elevated Skin Patches (*Kotha*): Presence of raised and discolored patches that may become painful or ulcerated over time.

Types of *kushtha*^[6]

Kushtha is divided into two major categories based on the severity and involvement of *doshas*:

A. *Mahakushtha* (Major skin diseases)

These are severe skin conditions involving deep tissue penetration and significant *dosha* involvement:

1. *Kapala Kushtha*
2. *Audumbara Kushtha*
3. *Mandala Kushtha*
4. *Rishyajihva Kushtha*
5. *Pundarika Kushtha*
6. *Sidhma Kushtha*
7. *Kakanaka Kushtha*.

B. *Kshudra kushtha* (Minor skin diseases)

These involve superficial layers of the skin with mild symptoms:

1. *Ekakushtha*
2. *Kitibha*
3. *Charmadala*
4. *Pama*
5. *Vicharchika*

6. *Charmakhya*
7. *Vipadika*
8. *Alasaka*
9. *Dadru*
10. *Visphotaka*
11. *Shataru*

Treatment approaches for *kushtha*^[7]

Treatment of *Kushtha* is based on the type of *dosha* involved. *Ayurvedic* texts emphasize balancing the vitiated doshas through internal and external therapies:

1. Internal therapies

- Herbal *Ghee* (*Sneha*): Administered to patients with *Vata*-dominant *Kushtha* to lubricate and nourish tissues.
- *Vamana* (Emetic therapy): Used for conditions dominated by *Kapha* to expel excess mucus.
- *Virechana* (Purgation therapy): Effective for *Pitta*-dominant skin conditions to remove excess heat and toxins from the body.

2. External therapies

- *Lepa* (Herbal pastes): Application of medicated pastes to the affected area to soothe inflammation and promote healing.
- *Raktamokshana* (Bloodletting): A procedure to remove impure blood, especially useful in *Pitta* and *Rakta*-related skin disorders.

3. General *panchakarma* procedures

- Regular detoxification therapies, such as *Vamana*, *Virechana*, and *Nasya* (nasal administration), help in managing chronic skin conditions. *Raktamokshana* is recommended twice a year to prevent the accumulation of toxins.

Kushthaghna mahakashaya – The herbal group for skin disorders

Kushthaghna Mahakashaya consists of ten herbs specifically effective in treating various skin disorders:

1. *Khadir* (*Acacia catechu*):^[8] Known for its potent antimicrobial and astringent properties, *Khadir* is used to treat various skin diseases and disorders related to impurities in blood.
2. *Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula*):^[9] Acts as a *Tridosha Shamaka* (balancer of all three

doshas) and is effective in reducing skin inflammation and purifying blood.

3. *Amalaki* (*Emblica officinalis*):^[10] Rich in Vitamin C and antioxidants, it helps in regenerating skin cells and enhancing immunity.
4. *Haridra* (*Curcuma longa*):^[11] Commonly known as turmeric, it has anti-inflammatory and antiseptic properties that help in wound healing and skin regeneration.
5. *Arushkara* (*Semecarpus anacardium*):^[12] Used for conditions like vitiligo and psoriasis, owing to its immunomodulatory effects.
6. *Saptaparna* (*Alstonia scholaris*):^[13] Effective against skin infections due to its antimicrobial properties.
7. *Aragwadh* (*Cassia fistula*):^[14] Used for its laxative and anti-inflammatory effects in treating skin eruptions.
8. *Karveer* (*Nerium indicum*):^[15] Beneficial in treating skin conditions with thickened lesions due to its keratolytic properties.
9. *Vidanga* (*Embelia ribes*):^[16] Known for its antiparasitic and antifungal properties, useful in conditions like ringworm and other fungal infections.
10. *Jatipatra* (*Jasminum officinale*):^[17] Used traditionally to heal wounds and treat inflammatory skin conditions.

DISCUSSION

Ayurvedic texts categorize all skin diseases under *Kushtha*, which is further divided into *Mahakushtha* and *Kshudra Kushtha*. The classification depends on the extent of *dosha* involvement, clinical symptoms, and the chronicity of the disease. The therapeutic approach focuses on the predominant *dosha*, and treatments are tailored accordingly. The "*Kushthaghna Mahakashaya*" group of herbs has been shown to have significant benefits in managing these disorders by balancing doshas, purifying the blood, and promoting tissue regeneration.^[18]

CONCLUSION

Kushtha, a chronic and challenging condition, requires a comprehensive approach for management. The Ayurvedic formulation "*Kushthaghna Mahakashaya*" provides an effective treatment option due to its diverse pharmacological actions, including immunomodulation, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant properties. This herbal group offers a unique solution for treating various skin disorders by targeting the root cause and balancing the *tridoshas*.

REFERENCES

1. Agrawal A, Kushwaha AK. A Review on Kushthaghna Mahakashaya. International Research Journal of Ayurveda & Yoga [Internet], 2022; 05(11): 52–62. Available from: IRJAY.
2. Acharya YT, Agnivesha C. Sootraa sthana, Chawkambha Sanskrit Sansthan, P.B no.1139, K.37/16, Gopal mandir lane, Varanasi(UP), reprint, 2004; 33, 4: 8, 13-14.
3. Acharya YT, Agnivesha C. Sootraa sthana, Chawkambha Sanskrit Sansthan, P.B no.1139, K.37/16, Gopal mandir lane, Varanasi(UP), reprint, 2004; 32, 4: 8, 13-14.
4. Acharya YT, Agnivesha C. Sootraa sthana, Chawkambha Sanskrit Sansthan, P.B no.1139, K.37/16, Gopal mandir lane, Varanasi(UP), reprint, 2004; 33, 4: 8, 13-14.
5. Acharya YT, Agnivesha C. Sootraa sthana, Chawkambha Sanskrit Sansthan, P.B no.1139, K.37/16, Gopal mandir lane, Varanasi(UP), reprint, 2004; 33, 4: 8, 13-14.
6. Acharya YT, Agnivesha C. Sootraa sthana, Chawkambha Sanskrit Sansthan, P.B no.1139, K.37/16, Gopal mandir lane, Varanasi(UP), reprint, 2004; 35, 4: 8, 13-14.
7. Acharya YT, Agnivesha C. Sootraa sthana, Chawkambha Sanskrit Sansthan, P.B no.1139, K.37/16, Gopal mandir lane, Varanasi(UP), reprint, 2004; 35, 4: 8, 13-14.
8. Sharma P.V., Dravyaguna vijnana, Delhi, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, 2006; 2: 159-161.
9. Sharma P.V., Dravyaguna vijnana, Delhi, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, 2006; 2: 753-755.
10. Sharma P.V., Dravyaguna vijnana, Delhi, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, 2006; 2: 758-760.
11. Sharma P.V., Dravyaguna vijnana, Delhi, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, 2006; 2: 162-164.
12. Sharma P.V., Dravyaguna vijnana, Delhi, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, 2006; 2: 166-170.
13. Sharma P.V., Dravyaguna vijnana, Delhi, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, 2006; 2: 702-704.
14. Sharma P.V., Dravyaguna vijnana, Delhi, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, 2006; 2: 170-173.
15. Sharma P.V., Dravyaguna vijnana Delhi, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, 2006; 2: 211-213.
16. Sharma P.V., Dravyaguna vijnana, Delhi, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, 2006; 2: 503-506.

17. Sharma P. V., Dravyaguna vijnana Delhi, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, 2006; 2: 78-180.
18. Singh S. Phytopharmacological overview on Kusthagna Mahakashaya. World Journal Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Science, 2014; (4): 306–33.