

A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL VIEW INTO THE CONCEPT OF YUVANA PIDAKA: ACNE VULGARIS

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Article Received on
21 February 2024,

Revised on 12 March 2024,
Accepted on 02 April 2024

DOI: 10.20959/wjpr20247-31856



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ABSTRACT

In the present age, the physical appearance creates the first impression. For an individual to feel confident and have high self-esteem, keeping oneself well-groomed becomes necessary. Having a thorough skin-care and face-care routine becomes a part and parcel of such grooming regimes. One of such conditions which hamper the beauty of the face is *Youvana-pidaka* as described in *Ayurveda* which rises in the period of *Youvana Avastha* (Adolescent years). It presents with the symptoms such as swelling, pain, redness, itching etc. caused due to vitiation of *Kapha, Vata, Rakta Dosha*. *Youvana Pidaka* can be correlated to Acne Vulgaris as explained in the contemporary science. It is a chronic inflammatory condition of the pilosebaceous follicles affecting 85% of teenagers and thus causing a great harm to psycho-social development of youth, especially in present era. Thus, an attempt has been made to explain cause, symptoms, pathology and management of *Youvana*

Pidaka in *Ayurvedic* perspective.

KEYWORDS: *Youvana Pidaka; Mukha-dooshika; Tarunya pidaka; Acne; Beauty; Mukha-dushika.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The paradox of today's society is that, at one end when the life style of the society is going down the hill, at the same time, people have become more and more cautious about their physique and beauty. The grooming industry and cosmetic hub have disrupted the market like never before. Not only among the females, but even the male population are making a sincere attempt to invest time and energy in the skin routine. The urge and desire to look better and beautiful is increasing day by day. A well-groomed healthy physique and a beautiful face not only makes the person attractive and pleasant to look at, but also renders the individual with a sense of confidence and free from the social stigma and low self-esteem, he may otherwise feel.

According to *Ayurveda*, there are 56 *Upanga* and face is one among them.^[1] One such condition is that of '*Youvana Pidaka*', that can be correlated to Acne Vulgaris which hinders the beauty of the face, of an individual. *Tarunya pidaka* is explained under *Kshudrarogas* by *Acharya Sushruta*^[2] as a *Pidaka* that appears in *Tarunya Avastha* predominated by *Kapha*, *Vata* and *Rakta Dushti* and resemble like the *Kantaka* of *Shalmali Vruksha*. The same explanation is given in *Madhava Nidana*^[3] and *Yogaratanakara*.^[4] It goes with the synonyms: '*Youvana-pidaka*', i.e., the *Pidakas* that appear in the *Youvana-avastha* and '*Mukhadooshika*'^[5] a condition that does *Dooshana* of *Mukha* or that which hampers the beauty of the *Mukha*. *Charaka Samhita*^[6] mentions *Youvana Pidaka* in *Bahya Rogamarga*, indicating the involvement of the *Dhatu*s. As we study further, we find a unique reference in *Sharangadhara Samhita*^[7] which mentions *Pidaka* as the *Mala* of *Shukra Dhatu* and its *Deepika Teeka* clarifies it as *Pidakas* that appear in *Youvana-avastha*.

When we go through the literature of the contemporary science, Acne Vulgaris is described as: an inflammatory condition of the pilosebaceous units. The permissive factor for the expression of the disease in adolescence is the increase in sebum production by sebaceous glands during and after puberty. Small cysts, called comedones, form in hair follicles due to blockage of the follicular orifice by retention of keratinous material and sebum, leading to this condition.^[8] One of the reasons for the shoot in the sebaceous activity during the span of puberty, is the increase in testosterone levels, as this enhances the secretory activity of sebaceous glands; thus, excess secretion of sebum leads to development of acne on the face.^[9]

Acne Vulgaris affects more than 85% of adolescents and two-third of adults aged 18 years and older.^[10] It was also recorded in 54% of women and 40% of men over 25 years of age.

Various systems of medicine opt for a conservative approach including a range of therapies which may otherwise lead to remission and side-effects thus leading to the limitation in the treatment. Hence, medicine that is safer, better and do not lead to remission is always sought for.

2. Disease literature review

2.1. Vyutpatti (Etymology)

The term '*Youvana Pidaka*' is composed with two *Sanskrita* words *Youvana* and *Pidaka*.

1. ***Youvana*:** The word *Youvana* is derived from the root of '*Yu dhatu*' by using '*Kanin Pratyaya*' with it. The word *Youvana* is used to denote a person who is young or an adolescent.
2. ***Pidaka*:** The word is derived from the root of '*Peed Dhatu*' by using "*Dvul + Tap Pratyaya*" with it. "*Peed*" *Dhatu* is used in the sense of pain. The meaning of *Pidaka* is a painful eruption.

Youvana Pidaka = *Youvana* + *Pidaka*. The term *Youvana* represents the adolescence and *Pidaka* is that which occurs due to vitiation of *Pitta* in *Twak* and *Rakta* and gives *Peeda*.

2.2. Definition

"*Shalmali-Kantaka Prakhyaa Kapha-maruta-shonita, Jayante Pidika Yunaam Vaktre Yaa Mukhdushika*^[2]" (Su.Ni.13)

According to *Acharya Sushruta*, the eruption on the face that look similar to *Shalmali-kanthaka*, i.e., the thorn of *Bombax Ceiba* tree, caused in the adolescence age is called *Youvana-pidaka*. *Mukha-dooshika* another synonym used for this condition.

Synonyms of *Youvana Pidaka* in different languages

- *Sanskrita* - *Yuvana Pidaka*, *Youvana Pitaka*, *Mukha-Dushika*, *Tarunya Pidaka*
- *Hindi* – *Yuvana pidaka*, *Keel*, *Muhanse*
- *English* - Pimples
- *Latin* - *Acne*, *Acne Vulgaris*
- *Gujarati* - *Khila*
- *Punjabi* - *Keel*
- *Kannada* – *Modave*
- *Telugu* – *Motimalu*

- **In *charaka samhita*:** Acharya Charaka in the context of *Eka-doshiya Shotha*, in detail describes about the inflammatory and non-inflammatory swellings. Acharya mentions *Pidaka* in *Tri-shothiya Adhyaya*^[11] and has described that *Pidaka* occurs due to predominance of *Pitta* in *Twak* and *Rakta*.
- **In *sushruta samhita***^[2]: Acharya Sushruta describes the condition as *Mukha-dooshika* under the 44 types of *Kshudra Roga*.
- **Acharya *vagbhata*:** The condition is described in both, *Ashtanga Sangraha* as well as *Ashtanga Hridaya* under 36 types of *Kshudra Roga* in *Uttar Sthana* and mentions the condition has a *Medo-garbha*.
- ***Madhava nidana***^[3]: Acharya Madhava has followed the view of Acharya Sushruta and named as *Youvana Pidaka*. It is described under *Kshudra Roga*.
- ***Yogaratanakara***^[4]: The author of *Yogaratanakara* too has followed the view of Acharya Sushruta.
- ***Sharangdhara samhita***^[7]: *Sharangadhara Samhita* mentions *Pidaka* and *Twak-snigdhatva* as the *Mala* of *Shukra Dhatu* and its *Deepika Teeka* clarifies it as *Pidakas* that appear in *Youvana-avastha*.
- ***Bhava prakasha***^[12]: *Bhava Prakasha* has also described the condition due to predominance of *Kapha*, *Vata* and *Rakta* under *Kshudra Roga*. According to him it occurs in both males and females.

2.3. *Nidana* of *youvana pidaka*

The knowledge of *Nidana* is very useful in the treatment of any disease as well as its prevention. There is no specific description about etiological factors of the condition, *Youvana Pidaka*. Acharya Sushruta and Acharya Vagbhata have mentioned *Kapha*, *Vata* and *Rakta* as the causative factors of *Youvana Pidaka*. In *Sharangadhara Samhita*, *Vaktra-snigdhatva* is mentioned as the causative factor whereas, Acharya Bhavamishra mentions *Svabhava* as the *Nidana*.

Thus, the *Nidana* (Causes) are those which cause vitiation of *Kapha*, *Vata* and *Rakta*, few of which can be summarized grossly

- *Aharaja- Katu, Guru, Madhura, Ati-snigdha, Dugdha, Drava, Vidahi, Tikсна, Lavana, Madya, Masha, Tila, Taila, Ajirna Bhojanam, Adhyasana.*
- *Viharaja- Diwa-swapna, Vega-dharana, Jagarana, Nidra Viparyaya, Upavasa, exposure to dust, unhygienic practices for the face liking not washing the face at suitable intervals of time.*
- *Kalaja-The Vata and Kapha are vitiated by Sheeta Kala and Rakta Dhatu is vitiated by Ushana Kala, Vasanta, Grisma, Svabhava.*
- *Vayaja- Mostly occurs in Tarunya or Yuva Avastha.*
- *Manasika Nidana- Krodha, Ati-shoka, Chinta, Kshobha, Santapa causes Pitta and Vata Prakopa.*

2.4. Rupa of youvana pidaka

The *Poorvaroopa* occurs in the *Sthana-samshraya Avastha*,^[13] when *Dosha-Dushya Sammurchhana* occurs. As, *Youvana Pidaka* is described under *Kshudra Roga*, there is no description of *Poorvaroopa* of *Youvana Pidaka* in Classical *Ayurvedic* literature.

Acharya Sushruta describes *Tarunya Pidaka* under *Kshudrarogas* as a *Pidaka* that appears in *Tarunya Avastha* predominated by *Kapha, Vata* and *Rakta Dushti* and resemble like the *Kantaka* of *Shalmali Vruksha* (Thorns of the Bombax tree). *Acharya Madhava* and *Yogaratanakara* are of the same opinion.

Acharya Charaka mentions *Youvana Pidaka* in *Bahya Rogamarga*, indicating the involvement of the *Dhatu*s.

In *Ashtanga Hridaya*^[14] *Acharya Vagbhata* has described signs and symptoms as follows

- *Shalmali Kantakakaara Pitika*: The *Pitika* resembles like conical eruption similar to *Shalmali Kantaka*.
- *Saruja*: Painful in nature.
- *Ghana*: *Ghana* means solid, hard or indurated.
- *Medo-garbha*: Eruption is filled with the *Medas* or thick fluid.
- *Yuna-mukhe*: Appears on the face of the people who are adolescent.

2.5. Samprapti of youvana pidaka

As *Youvana Pidaka* is mentioned under the *Kshudra Roga*, there is no direct reference of the *Samprapti* of the condition. Yet the *Samprapti*, can be understood as.

A variety of *Aharaja*, *Viharaja* and *Acharaja* *Nidana* leading to the *Dushti* of *Kapha*, *Vata* and *Rakta*. These *Nidana* further take *Ashraya* in *Twak* leading to the formation of *Youvana* *Pidaka*. *Acharya Charaka* mentions the vitiation of *Doshas* in *Rakta* and *Twak* leading to formation of *Pidaka* on the face. Further, if there is vitiation of *Medas* leading to *Swedavaha* *Sroto-dushti*, this will result into *Sanga Samprapti* which will further lead to *Medo-garbhatva* of the *Pidaka*.

Further, *Acharya Sharangadhara* gives a unique insight relating to the condition that, *Pidaka* and *Twak-snidghatva* are the *Mala* of *Shukra-dhatu* and the *Deepika Teeka* further elaborates it as *Youvana* *Pidaka*, suggesting that these *Pidaka* appear in *Youvana* *Avastha*. A similar patho-physiology is found in the contemporary science, as it explains that the permissive factor for the expression of the disease in adolescence is the increase in sebum production by sebaceous glands during and after puberty. Small cysts, called comedones, form in hair follicles due to blockage of the follicular orifice by retention of keratinous material and sebum, leading to this condition. One of the reasons for the shoot in the sebaceous activity during the span of puberty, is the increase in testosterone levels, as this enhances the secretory activity of sebaceous glands; thus, excess secretion of sebum leads to development of acne on the face.

2.5.1. *Samprapti ghataka*

- *Dosha* - *Kapha*, *Vata*, *Rakta*
- *Dushya* - *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Shukra*
- *Srotas* – *Rasavaha*, *Raktavaha*, *Medovaha*, *Swedavaha* and *Shukravaha*
- *Srotodusti* – *Sanga*, *Ati-pravrutti*
- *Mala* – *Sweda*, *Twak-sneha*
- *Agni* - *Manda*
- *Vyakta-sthana* – *Twak* (face)
- *Udbhava-stana* – *Amashaya*
- *Roga-marga* - *Bahya Marga*

2.6. Modern perspective

According to the literature of the contemporary science, *Acne Vulgaris* is an inflammatory condition of the pilosebaceous units. The permissive factor for the expression of the disease in adolescence is the increase in sebum production by sebaceous glands during and after

puberty. Small cysts, called comedones, form in hair follicles due to blockage of the follicular orifice by retention of keratinous material and sebum, leading to this condition. One of the reasons for the shoot in the sebaceous activity during the span of puberty, is the increase in testosterone levels, as this enhances the secretory activity of sebaceous glands; thus, excess secretion of sebum leads to development of acne on the face. A similar concept is mentioned in *Sharangadhara Samhita*. Acharya Sharangadhara mentions *Youvana Pidaka* as the *Mala* of *Shukra Dhatu* and *Shukra Dhatu* manifests in the age of puberty. Hence, *Youvana Pidaka* manifests in puberty.

Further when we explore the concept in depth, the condition of *Acne Vulgaris* can be divided into macules, papules and pustules. The stage of macules evident by lesions that are not much elevated or painful may or may not be associated with erythema. This can be understood as *Ama-avastha* of *Youvana Pidaka*. The next one being *Pachyamana Avastha* where the *Pidaka* is filled with *Medo-garbhata*, here the lesions can be called as papules or pustules have pus or serous filled pockets associated with pain and erythema. The next stage is marked by breaking out of the pustule, discharge or can also be marked by subsiding of the lesion and reduction in erythema and pain.

2.7. Chikitsa of youvana pidaka

The basic treatment protocols as per *Ayurveda* can be broadly classified as *Shodhana Chikitsa* and *Shamana Chikitsa*.

Hence, the treatment of *Youvana Pidaka* can be understood on the basis of these two as:

2.7.1. Samshodhana chikitsa

- **Vamana^[15,18] (Emesis):** *Vamana* is a therapy described in *Ayurveda* in conditions related to *Kapha* or *Kapha Samsarga* type of vitiation. The includes induction of emesis through medicated emetics. According to Acharya Sushruta, *Vamana* is particularly been advised as it is beneficial in *Youvana Pidaka* “*Youvane Pidikaswesh Visheshaat Chardanam Hitam^[15]*” (*Su.Chi.20/37*). Acharya Vagbhata and Acharya Chakrapani are also of the same opinion.
- **Virechana (Purgation):** *Virechana* is specifically indicated for *Pitta Dosa* or *Pitta Samsarga Doshas*. Here, *Purgation* is induced through medicated purgatives. Acharya Charaka has indicated this therapy for all types of skin disorders “*Vatottareshu Sarpih Vamanam Shleshmotreshu Kustheshu, Pittottareshu Moksho Raktasya Virechanam Cha*

Agre^[16]” (Cha.Cha.7/39). Acharya Vagbhata^[17] mentions Virechana Therapy as the best treatment for diseases caused due to aggravated *Pitta Dosha*.

- **Nasya (Errhine):** Nasya is therapy indicated in the *Urdhvajatrugata Roga*. The medicine is installed through the nasal route. Acharya Vagbhata has indicated Nasya in *Youvana Pidaka*.^[18]
- **Raktamokshana (Blood-letting Therapy):** This therapy is indicated in conditions caused due to vitiated blood. Acharya Vagbhata^[18] has indicated Raktamokshana in *Youvana Pidaka*.

2.6.2. Samshamana chikitsa

As *Youvana Pidaka* is a *Twak-roga*, external applications and local treatment do have beneficiary impact in reducing the local symptoms such as burning, itching and swelling over the Acne. However, not much of internal medications are explained in the context of *Youvana Pidaka*, yet, internal medications aimed at reducing the vitiations of *Kapha*, *Vata* and *Rakta* along with the local applications help in reducing the condition. Various *Lepa* and *Pradeha* have been explained in this context.

Some of the lepa described the *ayurvedic* texts are

- Paste of *Vacha*, *Rodhra*, *Saindhava* mixed with *Sarsapa*.^[15]
- Paste of *Dhanyaka*, *Vacha*, *Lodhra* and *Kushta*.^[15]
- Paste of *Lodhra*, *Dhanyaka* and *Vacha*.^[18]

2.6.3. Involvement of shukra Dhatu and Its relevance in chikitsa

Another approach that can be taken is by using the context of Sharangadhara Samhita. Hence, drugs which are Shukra-doshahara and Shukra-shodhaka can be administered.

3. CONCLUSION

As the quote goes, “face is the index of beauty”, the present times requires effort to be made to enhance and maintain the beauty of the face. When we further study in depth, the opinion of Acharya Sharangadhara appears to be parallel to the explanation of the contemporary science in which the testosterone hormone surges during the puberty and is also described as one of the causes for rise in the incidence of Acne Vulgaris. Puberty being the vulnerable age period when the little minds are more sensitive, condition such as this, leads to lower self-

confidence and inferiority complex, affecting their mental well-being on one hand, while on the other hand, severe cases of Acne Vulgaris sometimes lead to painful pustules, erythema as well as permanent scar marks on the face and therefore hampering the skin quality and appearance of the face for life. Hence, a thorough multi-dimensional assessment and analysis of the causative factors is needed followed by the treatment.

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