

A COMPREHENSIVE AYURVEDIC APPROACH TO VISARPA TREATMENT – A SINGLE CASE STUDY

Dr. Anita Choudhary¹, Dr. Vidyashree Ashok Ghanti^{1*} and Dr. Shakuntala S. P.²

¹Second Year PG Scholar, Dept of Panchakarma, Government Ayurveda Medical College, Bengaluru.

²Second Year PG Scholar, Dept of Panchakarma, Government Ayurveda Medical College, Bengaluru.

³Assistant Professor, Dept of Panchakarma, Government Ayurveda Medical College, Bengaluru.

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*Corresponding Author

Dr. Vidyashree Ashok
Ghanti

Second Year PG Scholar,
Dept of Panchakarma,
Government Ayurveda
Medical College,
Bengaluru.

ABSTRACT

The skin, largest organ of the body, serves as the first line of defense by providing resistance against external factors. The imbalance of various *Dosha* and *Dhatus* leads to the manifestation of skin disorders. Ayurveda texts describe more than 150 skin-related diseases, which are classified into conditions such as *Visarpa*, *Kustha*, *Shotha* and *Upadamsha* etc. Among them, *Visarpa* is a commonly mentioned disorder that spreads in different directions throughout the body. According to modern medical science, it is associated with the Varicella zoster virus. The disease presents with symptoms like burning sensation (*Daha*), fever (*Jwara*), swelling (*Anunnatashopha*) and pain (*Vedana*). **Material and Methods:** This case reports shows the successful treatment of *Visarpa*. Here presenting a case of 55-year, male with sudden onset of severe burning sensation and vesicles on an erythematous base over the right side of the chest, along with pricking pain for the past 1 week. Clinically the patient was diagnosed as *Visarpa* (Herpes Zoster). As *Pitta Dosha* and *Rakta Dhātu* vitiation

was noticed, managed by *Shamanoushadhi* and *Lepa*. Assessment was done based on symptoms of *Visarpa* before and after treatment. **Conclusion:** The combined use of oral medicines, diet and external application provides a comprehensive and effective approach to managing *Visarpa*. This holistic treatment helps in restoring balance, alleviate symptoms and

provide long-term healing.

KEYWORDS: *Visarpa*, Varicella zoster, *Shamanoushadhi*, *Lepa*.

INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda, the term *Twacha* originates from the word "*Tvak*," which means "to cover or protect". It serves as the body's first line of defense, shielding it from various external influences. According to Ayurveda texts, skin disorders arise due to an imbalance of the *Tridosha* and *Dhatus*. *Visarpa* is a common skin disorder mentioned in Ayurveda, characterized by the spreading of disease in various directions across the body. It is a painful skin disease that immediately draws a physician's attention due to its characteristic symptoms. It manifests as localized rashes and blisters, spreading with intense pain. It is one such disease explained in detail apart from *Kushtha Roga* by every *Acharyas*. *Acharya Charaka* defines *Visarpa* as '*Vividham sarpati yato visarpah*'^[1] (which manifests and spread rapidly in the body in all direction likening its movement to that of a snake).

Herpes zoster is commonly known as Shingles, a viral infection that results from the reactivation of the varicella- zoster virus, which remains dormant in nerve ganglia after a previous Varicella infection commonly chickenpox. The immune system typically suppresses the virus, but when immunity weakens, the virus can reactivate, leading to shingles. The incidence of herpes zoster ranges from 1.2 to 3.4 per 1000 persons per year among younger healthy individuals while incidence is 3.9 to 11.8 per 1000 persons per year among patients older than 65 years. There is no seasonal variation seen with herpes zoster.^[2] Shingles presents with painful, blistering rashes that follow specific nerve pathways, most commonly affecting the lumbar and cervical regions. Factors such as stress, immunosuppressive medications, chronic diseases and malignancies can trigger the reactivation of the virus. Unlike chickenpox, shingles is not highly contagious, but individuals who have never had chickenpox can contract the varicella-zoster virus through direct contact with fluid from the blisters. In response to the infection, the body produces antibodies and T-cell responses that help control the virus and limit its spread. Some patients continue to experience severe pain even after the rash resolves, a condition known as postherpetic neuralgia. While herpes simplex, cytomegalovirus, Epstein-Barr virus and other human herpesviruses can co-occur with shingles, their presence varies among patients. Preventative measures, such as vaccination, help boost immunity and significantly reduce the risk of developing shingles in older adults.^[3] *Visarpa* presents with symptoms such as *Daha*, *Jwara*, *Anunnatashopha* and *Vedana*.

Considered as *Pitta pradhana vyadhi*, due to more *drava* and *sara guna* of *Pitta* which spreads easily all over the body. Undertaking the *Dosha*, site and severity of disease, different treatment modality like has been explained.

CASE REPORT

Chief complaints

Severe burning sensation and the appearance of vesicles on the right side of the chest for the past week.

Associated complaints

Pricking-type pain and serious discharge for the past week.

History of present illness

A 55-year-old male patient was apparently healthy until a week ago when he suddenly developed a burning sensation on the right side of his chest, which he initially ignored. After three days, red vesicles appeared, accompanied by pricking-type pain. For which he took allopathic medicine for 4 days but did not experience any relief. Consequently, he visited the OPD of Panchakarma at Government Ayurveda Medical College and Hospital, Bengaluru, for further treatment.

Past History

K/C/O Hypertension since 10 years under regular oral medication N/K/C/O Diabetes Mellitus.

Family history

Nothing specific.

Personal history: Shown in table no.01.

Table 1: Showing subject's personal history.

Name: xyz	Bowel: Regular
Age: 55 years	Appetite: Good
Marital status: Married	Habits: None
Occupation: Railway employ	Height: 162cm
Diet: Mixed	Weight: 65kg

Table 2: Showing Ashta sthana pareeksha.

<i>Nadi</i>	<i>Prakruta, 74bpm</i>
<i>Mutra</i>	<i>Prakruta</i> 3-4times/day 1-2 times/night
<i>Mala</i>	<i>Prakruta</i> 1 time/day
<i>Jihwa</i>	<i>Alipta</i>
<i>Shabda</i>	<i>Prakruta</i>
<i>Sparsha</i>	<i>Prakruta</i>
<i>Drik</i>	<i>Prakruta</i>
<i>Akriti</i>	<i>Madhyama</i>

Table 3: Showing Dashavidha pareeksha.

<i>Prakriti: Vata pitta</i>	<i>Satmya: Sarva rasa</i>
<i>Vikriti: Pitta rakta</i>	<i>Ahara shakti: Madhyama</i>
<i>Sara: Madhyama</i>	<i>Vyayama shakti: Madhyama</i>
<i>Samhanana: Madhyama</i>	<i>Vaya: Madhyama (55 years)</i>
<i>Satva: Madhyama</i>	<i>Pramana: Ht- 162cm Wt- 65kg</i>

Systemic examination

Central nervous system: Higher mental functions intact, no abnormality detected

Cardiovascular system: S1 S2 heard, no abnormality detected Respiratory system: NVBS

heard, no abnormality detected Gastrointestinal system: P/A- soft, non-tender Integumentary system.

Table 4: Showing Integumentary system.

Site- Right side of the chest
Skin texture- Soft
Lesions- Multiple vesicle present
Discharge- Serous discharge present
Colour- Reddish discolouration
Lichenification- Absent
Edema-Absent
Secondary infections- Absent
Triggers factors- Nothing specific
Impact on daily life- Sleep disturbances and difficulty in concentrating due to itching and burning sensation.

Table 5: Showing Nidana panchaka.

<i>Nidana</i>	<i>Atikatu, lavana sevana, dadhi sevana, Divaswapna</i>
<i>Purvaroop</i>	<i>Daha</i>
<i>Roopa</i>	<i>Atidaha and pidaka over Dakshina bhaga of ura pradesha</i>
<i>Upashaya</i>	<i>Sheeta lepa</i>

<i>Anupashaya</i>	Nothing specific
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Table 6: Showing Samprapti ghataka.

<i>Dosha</i>	<i>Pitta pradhana Tridosha</i>	<i>Udbhavasthana</i>	<i>Adhoamashaya</i>
<i>Dushya</i>	<i>Rakta, Lasika, Twak and Mamsa</i>	<i>Sancharasthana</i>	<i>Sarvashareera</i>
<i>Agni</i>	<i>Jatharagni, Dhatvagni</i>	<i>Vyaktasthana</i>	<i>Dakshinabhaga of Uras</i>
<i>Agnidushti</i>	<i>Mandagni</i>	<i>Adhishtana</i>	<i>Vedini layer of Twak</i>
<i>Srotas</i>	<i>Rasavaha, Raktavaha, Mamsavaha and Ambuvaha</i>	<i>Rogamarga</i>	<i>Bahya</i>
<i>Srotodushti</i>	<i>Sanga</i>	<i>Sadhyasadhyata</i>	<i>Yapya</i>

Table 7: Showing Treatment protocol adopted.

<i>Yoga</i>	ROA	Dose	<i>Aushadha sevana kala</i>	<i>Anupana</i>	Duration
<i>Kamadugha rasa</i>	Oral	1 TID	After food	Luke warm water	20 days
Tab.Grab	Oral	1 BD	After food	Luke warm water	20 days
<i>Pittarechaka kwatha</i>	Oral	10ml BD	Before food	Luke warm water	20 days
<i>Manjishta+ Yashthimadhu</i> with rose water	External application	Twice a day	-	-	20 days

Table 8: Showing assessment before and after treatment.

Assessment criteria	Before treatment	After treatment
Burning sensation	Grade 3	Grade 1
Appearance of vesicles	Grade 2	Grade 1
Pricking-type pain	Grade 2	Grade 0
Serous discharge	Grade 2	Grade 0

S.No.	Subjective parameters	Grade 0	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
1.	Burning sensation	No Burning sensation	Mild, rarely present	Moderate, disturbing attention	Severe, disturbing sleep
2.	Appearance of vesicles	No vesicles	Small, isolated vesicles with clear fluid, minimal redness	Multiple vesicles clustered together with increased redness	Large, confluent vesicle with intense redness and severe inflammation
3.	Pricking-type pain	No pain	Slight pricking pain, tolerable	Noticeable pricking pain, uncomfortable	Intense pricking pain, sharp and possibly distressing
4.	Serous discharge	No discharge	Mild, occasional	Moderate, after itching	Severe, without itching making clothes wet



Before treatment After treatment

DISCUSSION

The treatment of *Visarpa* mainly aims at normalizing vitiated particular *Dosha*. *Sheetavirya Dravya prayoga* in *Pittaja visarpa*, *Ruksha guna Dravya* in *Kaphaja visarpa* and *Sneha pradhana Dravya* in *Vataja visarpa*.^[4] In this disease, treatment emphasis given are internal medications along with external applications to pacify the *Pittadosha*. A 55-year-old male patient presented with burning sensation and the appearance of vesicles on the right side of the chest for the past week. Associated with pricking-type pain and serious discharge. He was treated with *Kamadugha Rasa* (250 mg, plain) thrice daily after meals with luke warm water, tablet Grab twice daily after food, *Pittarechaka Kashaya* (10 ml) twice daily before food and *Manjishta+Yashthimadhu* with rose water for topical application along with diet. After 20 days, a significant reduction in lesion size and severity was observed, with further improvement noted by leaving only minimal scarring without inflammatory signs.

Kamadugha rasa: It is widely prescribed for the management of the *Pitta*-predominant disorders. It contains *Amalaki swarasa*, *Guduchi satva* and *Swarna gairika* treated with *Goghrita*.^[5] On the basis of its composition, it is a safe *Kharaliya rasayana*. A variety of hydrolysable tannins present in *Amalaki* have demonstrated its antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory and immune-regulating activities. An in vitro study demonstrated the free radical scavenging activities of *Amalaki* extract for the cellular defense which explains its antimicrobial and antiviral activities. Phytoconstituents such as saponins, alkaloids, phytosterols, and triterpenoids present in *Guduchi* extract demonstrate virucidal effects and explain its antiherpetic properties. *Swarna gairika* is clinically reported as metabolism modulator and antioxidant and can act as an iron supplement. With its diverse pharmacological properties, *Kamadudha Rasa* functions as an immunomodulator, antioxidant and antiviral agent. This formulation is particularly beneficial for managing herpes zoster infections due to its antiviral and immune- strengthening effects.

Tablet Grab: It is a proprietary medicine having ingredients such as *Triphala guggulu*, *Vranapahari rasa*, *Gandhaka rasayana*, *Arogyavardhini rasa*, *Guduchi* and *Manjishtha*. Helps as *Kandugha* and *Vrana ropaka*. Grab offers anti-microbial and anti-inflammatory property which helps in infectious diseases.

Pittarechaka Kashaya: It is also a proprietary medicine with contents such as *Patolakaturohinyadi qwatha churna*, *Kiratatikta*, *Karanja*, *Bhumyalaki*, *Arjuna*, *Ajamoda*, *Aragvadha* and *Pippali*. Mainly useful in all kind of *Pittaja vikara*.

Lepa: Topical applications of *Sheeta* and *Ruksha lepa* are beneficial in *Visarpa*.^[6] *Manjishta* and *Yashtimadhu* acts as *Vrana Ropana* and *Pittahara*. *Lepa* helps as *Pittashamaka*, *Raktaprasadaka* and *Vrana ropaka*.

Pathya-apathya: Advised to avoid day sleep, exposure to sunrays-heat-breeze, anger, excessive *lavana*, *ushna*, *vidahi ahara*, *dadhi* and pickle. Advised to take light, easily digestible and wholesome food (*karavellaka*, *patola* and green leafy vegetables are specified to take). This helps in maintaining balance in *Tridosha*.

CONCLUSION

Visarpa is a rapidly spreading acute condition characterized by erythematous, pustular and glandular lesions, which can be localized or generalized. This condition primarily affects *Rakta*, *Lasika*, *Twak* and *Mamsa* leading to the development of swollen and inflamed areas with a serpentine nature, accompanied by burning sensation and pain. As in *Charaka Samhita* it has explained that *Tiktha Rasa dravyas* to be given for the 1st line of treatment^[7], the formulations which are *Tikta- Kashaya Rasa Pradhana*, *Sheeta veerya* acts as *Pitta Shamaka*. Such *Shamanoushadhi* along with proper diet in *Visarpa* helps in balancing *Doshas*, reducing inflammation and promoting skin healing, ensures effective relief and prevents complications, emphasizing the importance of timely diagnosis and treatment.

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