

CORRELATION BETWEEN DUSYA VISA, KUSTHA, AND THE ROLE OF RAKTAMOKSANA IN AYURVEDIC TEXTS

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ABSTRACT

Kuṣṭha comprises a broad spectrum of dermatological disorders described in Ayurveda, involving tridoṣa vitiation along with impairment of rakta, tvak, māṃsa, and lasikā. Among these, rakta duṣṭi plays a major role in disease manifestation. The concept of dūṣya viṣa, representing endogenous toxic metabolites formed due to agnimandya and āma formation, provides an important explanation for chronic inflammatory pathology. These toxic metabolites accumulate within tissues and contribute to the development and persistence of skin disorders. Raktamokṣaṇa, one of the principal śodhana therapies, is specifically indicated in rakta-pradoṣaja vikāras and kuṣṭha. Classical Ayurvedic texts describe various methods of raktamokṣaṇa including sirāvyadha, jalaukāvacaṛaṇa, prachchhāna, and alābu karma. Among these, jalaukāvacaṛaṇa is considered especially beneficial in pitta-rakta dominant

conditions due to its gentle and targeted action. This article explores the relationship between dūṣya viṣa, rakta duṣṭi, and kuṣṭha, while correlating Ayurvedic concepts with modern inflammatory and immunological mechanisms. The therapeutic role of raktamokṣaṇa is also discussed from both classical and contemporary perspectives.^[1,7]

KEYWORDS: Kuṣṭha, Dūṣya Viṣa, Rakta Duṣṭi, Raktamokṣaṇa, Jalaukāvacaṛaṇa, Ayurveda.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda describes skin disorders under the broad heading of kuṣṭha, encompassing both acute and chronic dermatological conditions. The pathogenesis of kuṣṭha involves simultaneous vitiation of tridoṣa along with dūṣyas such as tvak, rakta, māṃsa, and lasikā. Among these, rakta is considered particularly important because of its close relationship with pitta doṣa and its role in maintaining normal skin physiology. Vitiation of rakta results in discoloration, inflammation, burning sensation, suppuration, and chronic skin lesions.^[1,2]

The concept of dūṣya viṣa represents internally generated toxic metabolites arising from impaired digestion and metabolism. Agnimandya leads to formation of āma, which subsequently interacts with body tissues and transforms into dūṣya viṣa. This process creates a toxic internal environment that predisposes individuals to chronic diseases including kuṣṭha.^[3]

Raktamokṣaṇa is one of the important śodhana procedures described in Ayurveda for eliminating vitiated blood and restoring physiological balance. Classical texts particularly recommend it in rakta-pradoṣaja vikāras and inflammatory skin disorders.^[4]

Concept of Dūṣya Viṣa

The term dūṣya viṣa refers to endogenous toxic substances generated within the body due to impaired digestion and faulty metabolism. According to Ayurvedic principles, improper digestion produces āma, a toxic, sticky, and biologically harmful substance. When āma circulates through rasa and rakta dhātu and interacts with body tissues, it transforms into dūṣya viṣa. Unlike external poisons, dūṣya viṣa develops gradually and contributes to chronic pathological states.^[3]

Pathogenesis of Dūṣya Viṣa

The sequential process of dūṣya viṣa formation can be summarized as follows:

1. Agnimandya causing impaired digestion
2. Formation of āma doṣa
3. Circulation of āma through rasa and rakta
4. Interaction of āma with dhātus
5. Conversion into dūṣya viṣa
6. Localization in susceptible tissues such as tvak and rakta.^[3]

This sequence ultimately establishes a pathological environment favourable for disease manifestation and chronicity.^[3]

Kuṣṭha: Ayurvedic Perspective

Kuṣṭha is extensively described in Ayurvedic classics as a tridoṣaja disorder predominantly involving rakta and tvak. It is broadly classified into mahākuṣṭha and kṣudra kuṣṭha depending on severity and clinical presentation.^[1]

Nidāna (Etiological Factors)

The major causative factors responsible for kuṣṭha include:

- Viruddhāhāra (incompatible diet)
- Excessive intake of guru, snigdha, and abhishyandi foods
- Suppression of natural urges
- Improper lifestyle practices
- Mental and environmental stressors

These factors disturb doṣic equilibrium and initiate the pathological cascade leading to kuṣṭha.^[1,2]

Samprāpti (Pathogenesis)

The vitiated doṣas combine with āma and dūṣya viṣa and localize in rakta and tvak. This process results in:

- Varṇa vikṛti (discoloration)
- Pidikā (skin lesions)
- Kandu (itching)
- Śoṭha (inflammation)
- Chronic skin pathology

Rakta acts as the predominant dūṣya in kuṣṭha, and rakta duṣṭi becomes a key pathogenic event.^[2]

Role of Rakta in Kuṣṭha

Rakta is considered the seat of pitta and is closely associated with skin nourishment and complexion. Vitiating of rakta leads to inflammatory skin manifestations including redness, burning sensation, suppuration, and chronic lesions. The interaction of doṣa and dūṣya viṣa with rakta creates a persistent pathological state that sustains kuṣṭha.^[2,4]

From an Ayurvedic perspective, rakta duṣṭi not only contributes to disease manifestation but also perpetuates recurrence and chronicity. Hence, therapies aimed at rakta śodhana are considered essential in the management of kuṣṭha.^[4]

Raktamokṣaṇa: Therapeutic Perspective

Raktamokṣaṇa is one of the important śodhana therapies aimed at eliminating vitiated blood from the body. It is particularly indicated in diseases involving rakta duṣṭi and pitta predominance.^[4]

Types of Raktamokṣaṇa

Classical Ayurvedic texts describe various methods of raktamokṣaṇa:

- Sirāvyadha (venesection)
- Jalaukāvacaraṇa (leech therapy)
- Alābu karma (cupping)
- Prachchhāna (scarification)

Among these procedures, jalaukāvacaraṇa is considered the most gentle and suitable method for delicate patients such as children, elderly individuals, women, and debilitated persons.^[4,5]

Jalaukāvacaraṇa in Ayurveda

Suśruta describes jalaukāvacaraṇa as the preferred therapy in pitta-rakta dominant disorders associated with inflammation, burning sensation, congestion, and tenderness.^[2,5]

Types of Jalauka

- A. Savisha jalauka (toxic leeches)
- B. Nirvisha jalauka (non-toxic therapeutic leeches)

Procedure

The procedure involves:

1. Selection of healthy active leeches
2. Cleansing of the affected site
3. Application of leeches over diseased areas
4. Allowing the leech to suck vitiated blood until spontaneous detachment
5. Post-procedure wound care using haridrā, ghr̥ta, or suitable dressing measures

Ayurvedic Mode of Action

Jalaukāvacharaṇa acts through multiple mechanisms:

- Selective removal of duṣṭa rakta
- Reduction of dāha, śoṭha, and kandu
- Viśahara (detoxifying action)
- Improvement of local circulation
- Restoration of rakta prasādana.

Ayurvedic texts state that leeches initially suck only vitiated blood, thereby making the procedure targeted and efficient.^[5]

Integrated Mechanism of Raktamokṣaṇa

The therapeutic effects of raktamokṣaṇa may be understood through both Ayurvedic and modern perspectives. The procedure contributes to:

- Elimination of vitiated rakta
- Removal of dūṣya viṣa and āma
- Reduction of inflammatory mediators
- Improvement in local microcirculation
- Restoration of tissue metabolism

Classical texts emphasize the role of raktamokṣaṇa in pitta-dominant kuṣṭha, rakta duṣṭi conditions, and chronic inflammatory skin diseases.^[4,5]

Modern Correlation

Several Ayurvedic concepts can be correlated with modern biomedical understanding:

Ayurvedic Concept	Modern Correlation
Āma	Metabolic toxins, endotoxins, AGEs
Dūṣya Viṣa	Oxidative stress and inflammatory mediators
Rakta Duṣṭi	Immune dysregulation and cytokine imbalance
Kuṣṭha	Chronic inflammatory dermatoses such as psoriasis, eczema, and vitiligo
Raktamokṣaṇa	Detoxification, anti-inflammatory intervention, and microcirculatory correction

This integrative interpretation suggests that metabolic dysfunction initiates toxin accumulation, leading to inflammatory cascade and tissue pathology. Raktamokṣaṇa acts at the circulatory and inflammatory interface, thereby interrupting disease progression.^[3,6,7]

Jalaukāvacaṛaṇa additionally demonstrates anti-inflammatory, anticoagulant, analgesic, and vasodilatory effects because of bioactive substances such as hirudin and bdellins present in leech saliva.^[6]

DISCUSSION

The theory of dūṣya viṣa offers a comprehensive explanation for chronic inflammatory and autoimmune-like skin disorders described under kuṣṭha. Agnimandya initiates āma formation, which ultimately transforms into dūṣya viṣa and vitiates rakta and tvak. This process closely resembles the modern understanding of metabolic dysfunction, immune dysregulation, oxidative stress, and chronic inflammation.^[3]

The role of raktamokṣaṇa becomes highly significant in this context because it directly targets rakta duṣṭi and helps eliminate pathological factors from circulation. Jalaukāvacaṛaṇa additionally demonstrates anti-inflammatory, analgesic, anticoagulant, and vasodilatory effects due to bioactive substances present in leech saliva, such as hirudin and bdellins.^[6]

Thus, the Ayurvedic approach to kuṣṭha management emphasizes both systemic metabolic correction and local detoxification. The combination of śodhana therapies, dietary regulation, and lifestyle modifications provides a holistic framework for management of chronic dermatological disorders.^[1,7]

CONCLUSION

The integration of dūṣya viṣa theory with rakta duṣṭi provides a comprehensive understanding of kuṣṭha pathogenesis in Ayurveda. Agnimandya and āma formation initiate a cascade that ultimately leads to tissue toxicity and chronic skin disease. Raktamokṣaṇa emerges as a rational therapeutic intervention aimed at eliminating vitiated rakta, reducing inflammatory burden, and restoring physiological balance. Among the various methods of raktamokṣaṇa, jalaukāvacaṛaṇa holds particular importance in pitta-rakta dominant skin disorders due to its gentle and targeted action. Correlation with modern inflammatory and immunological concepts further supports the clinical relevance of these classical Ayurvedic principles in integrative dermatology.^[3]

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