

Understanding Vicharchika through Ayurveda Concepts: A Review with Special Reference to Eczema

¹Dr. HP Joshi, Associate Professor, Department of Ras Shastra & Bhaishajya Kalpana, Government Ayurveda College, Jaipur

²Dr. Jagdish Prasad Bairwa, Associate Professor, Department of Rog Nidan, Government Ayurveda College, Jaipur

³Dr. Monika Sharma, Associate Professor, Department of Agad Tantra, Government Ayurveda College, Jaipur

Corresponding Author: Dr. HP Joshi, Associate Professor, Department of Ras Shastra & Bhaishajya Kalpana, Government Ayurveda College, Jaipur

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Abstract

Introduction: Eczema is one of the common skin problems that can cause itching, rashes, dry patches, and infection. It is a subtype of dermatitis, which is a group of conditions that can cause skin irritation or inflammation. The most common type is atopic dermatitis, often known as atopic eczema. In Ayurveda, eczema is called "Vicharchika" and is characterized by intense itching, blisters, boils, changes in skin tone, dry or rough skin, and discharge. Vicharchika is a condition marked by varying-sized skin lesions, severe itching, inflammation, and occasionally bleeding. It is incredibly upsetting and can cause malformation since it impacts a person's physical appearance. Vicharchika can happen to anyone at any age, however it is most frequently seen in young children due to occupational exposure, environmental factors and mental stress.

Unquestionably, a polluted environment, a stressful lifestyle, emotional illnesses, repressing natural cravings, junk food, irregular eating patterns, using chemicals in makeup, and suppressing them are all significant contributors to the current expansion of Vicharchika.

Material & Methods: Information on Vicharchika (Eczema) was gathered from the Laghutrayi, the Brihatrayi and its commentaries, and other Ayurvedic texts.

Result: Every Acharya says that Rakta pradoshaja vikara and Kustha tridoshaja. Raktapradoshaja vikara is named such because it mentions the vitiation of Rakta and Pitta in all Kustharoga. One of the chronic skin conditions under Kshudra kustha that is described in all Ayurvedic scriptures is Vicharchika.

Conclusion: Both Kustha and Kshudra are wide concepts with specific management principles in Ayurveda; within the current definition of Vicharchika, it can be categorized as eczema; both treatments require long courses of suppressive and symptomatic (topical and systemic) treatment.

Keywords: Vicharchika, Eczema, Kustha, Kshudra Roga.

Introduction

The skin, the largest organ in the body, is a reflection of the body and the mind and a unique person's physical, mental, and psychological conditions. Skin protects and covers the body, but it also aids in excretion and metabolism.¹ The Kushtha branch of Ayurveda treats all skin disorders; this area of medicine is frequently called "Ayurvedic dermatology." Kushtha is among the Ashtamahagada as well. It is categorized as a kind of sadhya kushtha and kshudra kushtha by all acharyas. The signs of Kandu, Srava, Pidika, and Shyavavarna are what define it. It also falls under the kapha-dominant Rakta pradoshaja Vikara. Given that all Kustha have tridoshaja origins, Vicharchika can be explained similarly, with Kapha being accountable for Kandu, Pitta for Srava, and Shyava signifying the existence of Vata. Various Acharyas indicated distinct dominance in Vicharchika, namely Kapha, Pitta, and Vata-pitta Pradhana, despite its Tridosha origin. This suggests certain symptom complexes as well. The clinical presentation of vicharchika is similar to eczema in modern dermatology. Due to a variety of causes, including a fast-paced lifestyle, frequent use of chemical additives, industrial and occupational risks, and others, eczema and other skin illnesses are common, especially in developing countries. Skin diseases lead to more social disabilities because of the social stigma associated

with them, the dread of touching, and the loss of their attractiveness and personalities. Eczema, another name for atopic dermatitis, is characterized by dry, itchy skin and patches of erythema and scaling that are not well defined. The following symptoms are present in both the acute and chronic phases: pruritus, erythema, oedema, papules, vesicles, and seeping; scaling, dryness, hyperpigmented and lichenified (thickened) regions, and excoriations (scratch marks).² It indicates that environmental or inherited factors have a considerable impact on the presentation of Vicharchika. In order to cure the root cause of Vicharchika, Ayurveda removes vitiated dosha and restores the balance between dosha and dhatu.

Conceptual Study

- **Eczema**

Severe itching, redness, oozing, and scaly rashes are the hallmarks of eczema, an inflammatory, non-contagious skin disorder. Blisters and skin colour changes are possible side effects of these uncomfortable symptoms. Eczema fluctuates throughout time. Exposure to several factors, including dust mites and pet dander, can exacerbate the condition, which causes extremely dry and sensitive skin.³

- **Vicharchika**

According to Ayurveda, Vicharchika is Rakta Pradoshaja Vikara, involving three Doshas, with Kapha being the dominant Dosha. Despite being Kshudra Kushtha, it has a chronic course and a propensity for aggravations. From an allopathic perspective, vicharchika and eczema can be connected. Eczema is a type of dermatitis, or inflammation of the upper layers of the skin.⁴

• **Etymology of the Word Vicharchika**

The word Vicharchika is derived from sanskrit origin “charch adhyane” by using the prefix “Vee” to it. The word adhyane has two syllables “Adhi” which means “above” and “ayane” means to spread out.

• **Nidana of Vicharchika⁵**

The etiological factors of vicharchika differ amongst authors because, according to Sushruta, Pitta is the dominant dosha, while Charka and Vagbhatta acknowledge Kapha's dominance. However, Charka states that no single dosha can ever cause a kushtha. Eighteen different types of kushthas are produced by sapta dravyas sangraha (Vata, Pitta, Kapha and Twak, Rakta, Mamsa, and Ambu). As a result, the nidanas of vicharchika can be divided into three groups:

1. Aharaj 2. Viharaj 3. Acharaj

➤ **Aaharaj Nidana**

- ✓ Intake of Chilchim fish with milk
- ✓ Intake of Mulaka and Lasuna with milk
- ✓ Use of Mulaka with Guda
- ✓ Excessive use of alcohol with milk
- ✓ Intake of food mostly containing Yavaka,Uddalaka along with Ksheera, Dadhi and Takra,Kola,Kulatha, Masha,Atasi,Kusumbha and Sneha
- ✓ Continuous intake of Gramya, Audaka and Anupa Mamsa with milk
- ✓ Use of fish, citrus and milk together
- ✓ Excessive use of Navanna, Dadhi, Matsya, Amla, Lavana, Tila,Milk,Guda.
- ✓ Intake of food during indigestion
- ✓ Asatmaya Ahara

➤ **Viharaja Nidana**

- ✓ Physical exercise, sunbath after intake of heavy meal.
 - ✓ Sexual intercourse after indigestion, after Snehapaan and Vaman.
 - ✓ Sudden changes from cold to heat or heat to cold without judiciously following the rules of gradual changes.
 - ✓ Suppression of the urges of emesis.
 - ✓ Adharniya Vega Vidharan.
 - ✓ Panchakarma Apcharana like improper administration of Snehapan therapy.
- **Achara Nidana**
- ✓ Acts insulting Brahmans, teachers and other respectable persons
 - ✓ Indulgence in sinful activities
 - ✓ Use of money or material acquired by unfaired means.

• **Etiology of Eczema**

Eczema sufferers have a defective barrier that leads to a number of issues. For the best possible skin hydration, the cells that comprise our skin are crucial. People who have eczema frequently have dry skin because their skin barrier is compromised. Skin that is dry can result from water evaporating from the skin more readily. Additionally, eczema sufferers are more prone to infection. Because of the malfunction, harmful substances can permeate the skin more easily. Fragrances and allergens tend to aggravate the skin of people with atopic dermatitis, who also tend to have a distorted inflammatory immune response.⁶

• **Purvarupa of Vicharchika**

Although the text does not provide an illustration of the premonitory sign and symptoms of vicharchika, since it is one of the kshudra kushtha roga, one can interpret the premonitory syndrome of the kushtha vyadhi as

vicharchika's symptoms. They are called paridaha/Daha, pariharsha, gaurava, shwayathu, visarpana, asweda,

swedadhikya, atislakshnata, vaivarnyata, toda, suptata, and ushmayana.

• **Rupa of Vicharchika**^{7,8,9,10,11}

The following Table provides a summary of the indications and symptoms of Vicharchika as reported by various Acharyas.

Table 1: Rupa of Vicharchika

S. No.	Rupa	CS	SS	AH	AS	BS	KS	MN	BP
1.	Kandu	+	+	+	+			+	+
2.	Pidika	+		+	+			+	+
3.	Shyava	+		+	+			+	+
4.	Srava	+		+	+	+	+	+	+
5.	Raji		+			+			
6.	Ruja		+				+		
7.	Rukshata		+						
8.	Rakta					+	+		
9.	Praklina					+			
10.	Vrana						+		
11.	Paka						+		

• **Symptoms of Eczema**

- A red rash or red patches of skin, especially inside the folds of the elbows and knees
- Itching
- Dry skin, which can crack and possibly bleed
- The location of eczema may change with age. In infants and young children, eczema is usually located on the cheeks, outside of the elbows and on the knees. In older children and adults, eczema is typically on the hands and feet, the arms and on the back of knees. Symptoms can be painful, including blisters, and the skin may change color. The itch associated with eczema can be severe, often interrupting sleep. Scratching of the skin may lead to an infection. Infants with eczema may rub against bedding or other things to relieve the itch.¹²

• **Samprapti of Vicharchika**

There is no specific description of the samprapti of vicharchika in the classics. However, as it's a variant of kushtha, it's important to take into account its common samprapti. According to Acharya Charak, the Kustha nidana samprapti is as follows.¹³ The four dushyas (twak, mansa, rakta, and lasika) thin out or lose their tone when all three doshas are simultaneously aroused by the numerous causal causes described in the Kushta Nidana. These four insane dushyas are where the provoked doshas end up. They get vitiated as a result, which leads to the development of kushtha, or skin illness. According to Acharya Charak and Vagbhatta kapha pradhan tridosha get vitiated whereas.¹⁴ According to Charaka Samhita, Tridosha becomes vitiated concurrently and generates shaithilya in the Twak,

Rakta, Mamsa, and Ambu as a result of different Nidana Kustha Roga's Lakshanotpatti to vitiate them.¹⁵
 Sevana. Next, Tridosha sits in Shithila Dhatu and uses

Flow Chart 1: Samprapti of Vicharchika



Table 2: Samprapti Ghataka of Vicharchika

Component	Involvement
Dosha	Kapha Pradhana Tridosha (Kapha-Pitta-Vata)
Dushya	Twak, Rakta, Mamsa, Lasika
Agni	Jatharagni & Dhatvagni Mandya

Ama	Present
Srotas	Rasavaha, Raktavaha, Mamsavaha
Srotodushti	Sanga and Vimargagamana
Udbhava Sthana	Amashaya
Adhisthana	Twak
Vyakta Sthana	Skin
Roga Marga	Bahya Roga Marga
Swabhava	Chirakari (Chronic and Recurrent)

• **Management**

- The Chikitsa Sutra of Vicharchika is not specifically described in any of the Samhitas. Because Vicharchika always involves more than one Dosha, the Chikitsa will change according to whether or not specific symptoms are present. Treatment should begin with the symptom that is the most severe. While there are comprehensive treatments for all Doshas in the Charaka Samhita, there are none that are especially for Vicharchika.
- The general line of treatment said that since Tridosha is the cause of all kushtha, treatment should be administered based on the dosha preponderance. Kushtha therapy can be broadly categorized into three main management approaches:
 - ✓ Shodhana -Bahi Parimarjan, Antaha Parimarjan, Shastra Pranidhana
 - ✓ Shamana
 - ✓ NidanaParivarjana
- Shodhana Chikitsa
- ✓ It is Tridoshaja Vyadhi, Kushtha. As a result, treating significant dosha should come before treating anubandha. Shodhan Karma gave advice while Dosha was strong. Ghrita and Vamana are suggested for Kushthas that are Vata or Kapha dominant,

respectively, while Karma and Raktamokshan should be performed for Pitta dominance.

- ✓ One must complete Rakatamokshan once every six months. One dose of virechana is recommended each month. Vamana should be taken once every fifteen days.
- ✓ Snehana- According to Acharya Vagbhata, Kushtha Rogi ought to receive Snehapan during the Purvarupa stage. The explanation of Snehapan dosage is based on each person's ability to process Sneha within a given amount of time. Charaka advice Madhyama Matra.
- ✓ Swedana - Swedana is given by Nadi Sweda or Vaspa Sweda for very short period before Shodhana. This liquefies the Doshas.
- ✓ Basti- Both the types Basti are contraindicated in the general indications but depending upon the situations it can be done.
- ✓ Raktamokshana- Vicharchika, or dry eczema, is classified as Pitta Pradhana Kshudra Kushtha by Acharya Sushruta. The best treatment for Pitta Pradhana Kushtha is Jalaukavacharana.
- ✓ Virechana Karma Ideal for skin conditions involving Pitta and Rakta According to Acharya Charaka, safed Nishoth, Danti root, and triphala should be

used for Virechana. The recurrence of the disorders was reduced by using Kostha Shuddhi.

- ✓ Vamana Karma - Pitta and Kapha excess effectively treated. Acharya Charaka said that if Kushtha impacted the upper body, the patient should undergo Vamana by using Madanphala, Mulathi, and Parora leaf along with Neem juice.
- ✓ Nasya - Saindhava, Danti, Maricha, Pippali, and other medications that work well against Krimi, Kushtha, and Kapha Prakopaja Vikara are recommended for use with Nasya.
- ✓ Dhumpana is indicated in Kushtha, Krimi and Kilasa.
- ✓ Lepa- Lepa are anti-Kushtha topical treatments that work well for illnesses. Guduchi, Turmeric, Amla and Shatavari are frequently used to cure Vicharchika. Bhavprakash refers to this plant as kushthaghana, and its medicated oil is one of the most basic skin-disinfecting and healing remedies.

➤ **Shamana Chikitsa**

- ✓ Single drugs: Haridra, Nimba, Amalki, Khadir, Nimb, Patola, Daruharidra, Kasisa, Musta, Lodhra, Sarjrasa, Vidanga, Manahshila, Hartala, Karaveera etc.
- ✓ Specific Preparation for Vicharchika Pathya Churna, Visha Tailam, Durvadh Tailam, Ekvinshati Guguglu, Panchnimb Churna, Edagajadi Lepa, Grihdhumadi Lepa, Aragwadhadi Kwatha, Udaybhaskar Ras, Ras Manikya, Amritankur Loha, Marichadi Taila, Vicharchikari Taila, Neeli Ghrita, Khadir Kwatha, Haridradi Taila, Arka Taila, Lghu And Maha Marichyadi Taila, Ras Manikya, Shadbindu Taila, Vicharchikahar Lepa, Vidangadi Churna, Karanja Taila And Kashmaryadi Lepa etc are specific preparations mentioned in ayurvedic texts.

Table 3: Medicines Used in Vicharchika

Medicine	Dose	Karma (Therapeutic Action)
Arogyavardhini Vati	250–500 mg twice daily	Deepana, Pachana, Kledahara, Kushtaghna, Raktashodhaka
Gandhak Rasayana	250–500 mg twice daily	Kushtaghna, Kandughna, Rasayana, Krimighna
Panchatikta Ghrita Guggulu	500 mg–1 g twice daily	Tridosahara, Kushtaghna, Shothahara, Vranaropana
Kaishore Guggulu	500 mg–1 g twice daily	Raktaprasadana, Shothahara, Vataraktahara, Kushtaghna
Haridra Khanda	3–6 g twice daily	Kandughna, Kaphahara, Vishaghna, Raktashodhaka
Mahamanjisthadi Kwatha	15–30 ml twice daily	Raktashodhaka, Varnya, Kushtaghna, Shothahara
Nimbadi Kwatha	15–30 ml twice daily	Kushtaghna, Kandughna, Pittahara, Raktaprasadana
Khadirarishta	15–30 ml twice daily after meals	Kushtaghna, Raktashodhaka, Kandughna, Kledahara
Mahatikta Ghrita	5–10 g daily	Pittahara, Raktashodhaka, Twak Prasadana, Rasayana

Nimba Churna	3–5 g twice daily	Kushtaghna, Kandughna, Krimighna, Raktashodhaka
Patolakaturohinyadi Kashaya	15–30 ml twice daily	Pittahara, Raktashodhaka, Kushtaghna
Triphala Churna	3–6 g at bedtime	Anulomana, Raktaprasadana, Ama Pachana
Guduchi Satva	500 mg–1 g twice daily	Rasayana, Tridosahara, Raktashodhaka, Dahahara
Khadira Ghana Vati	1–2 tablets twice daily	Kushtaghna, Kandughna, Raktashodhaka
Manjisthadi Ghana Vati	1–2 tablets twice daily	Raktaprasadana, Varnya, Shothahara

Nidana Parivarjana

✓ The term "Nidana Parivarjana" refers to avoiding causative elements. This limits the vitiation of Doshas, hence halting the future advancement of the disease. Since Viruddha Ahara and Mithya Ahara Vihara are mentioned as the primary etiological elements of Kushtha, one should stay away from them.

Discussion

It falls within the category of eczema under the current definition of Vicharchika. We can classify it as eczema based on the modern definition of Vicharchika. Atopic dermatitis, another name for eczema, is a common chronic skin disorder that, if left untreated, can result in recurring infections and a reduced quality of life. This exercise not only discusses the diagnosis and treatment of eczema but also emphasizes the need of interprofessional teams in enhancing patient outcomes. Eczema patients experience a malfunctioning barrier that causes multiple issues. Proper skin hydration is dependent on the cells that make up our skin. Because of the breakdown of the skin barrier, eczema is often accompanied by dry skin. Dehydrated skin might lose more water more quickly. Additionally, eczema patients have a higher risk of illness. This problem facilitates the

penetration of harmful chemicals via the skin. Atopic dermatitis patients frequently have skin that is sensitive to allergens and smells, as well as an immune response that is highly inflammatory. Atopic dermatitis affects 2-10% of adults and 15-30% of children at some point in their life. Most people with eczema have a chronic, relapsing course of the disease marked by intermittent flare-ups and remissions. Consequently, it's still difficult to manage the symptoms of persistent eczema. Sixty percent of patients start showing symptoms in the first year of life. Acharya Charaka considered Vicharchika to be a Kapha dominating disease since Raji, Arti, and Saruksha are chronic or later stages of the disease, but Kandu, Shyava, Pidika, and Bahusrava are acute. The disease is primarily caused by three factors: Ahita, Viruddha, and Mithya ahara. As a result of their vitiation of Jatharagni, Ama and Amavisha are created. Vicharchika is a major disease among the ailments affecting the Rasavaha, Raktavaha, Mamsavaha, and Swedvaha Srotas because of its larger and extensive prevalence, chronicity, and acute phase development to grave condition. Two varieties of Srotodusti, known as "Sanga" and "Vimarga-gamana" of Dosha from Kostha to Shakha, are observed in this disease. Amavisha

combines with Dhatus and Doshas to form the "Sanga," which is the location of the Kha-vaigunya. One of the skin conditions that Charaka describes is eczema, for which Vicharchika is thought to be the closest name. These two methods necessitate a protracted course of therapy consisting of systemic and topical (suppressive) drugs. In addition to Pathya and Apathya (diet), the suggested treatment plan for Vicharchika includes these two herbs. Purification (Panchkarma), as the traditional text clearly explains. It suggests that skin disorders, including eczema, can be successfully and well-tolerated treated with Ayurvedic care.

Conclusion

All acharyas describe Vicharchika as a Kshudra-Kushtha and Sadhya Kushtha. They also describe Rakta pradoshaja vikara as being of three doshas, with kapha dominating. However, Kushtha is a member of Ashta Mahagada. Thus, it is challenging to treat. Fast food, irregular eating patterns, giving in to natural cravings, using chemicals in cosmetics and other products, living in a polluted environment, experiencing stress, and emotional disturbances all contribute significantly to the development of Vicharchika these days. Santarpaka Nidana overconsumption is the cause of Amautpatti and a major factor in the development of Vicharchika. In addition to Pathya and Apathya (diet), the suggested treatment plan for Vicharchika includes these two herbs. It suggests that treating skin problems, including eczema, with Ayurvedic therapy will be effective.

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