



An Integrated Approach of Treating Psoriasis with Specific Attention to Virechana Karma

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ABSTRACT: Psoriasis, a chronic autoimmune skin disorder, poses a significant challenge for those affected, manifesting as red, scaly plaques primarily found on the elbows, knees, scalp, and trunk, thereby impacting both the physical and psychological well-being of patients. While conventional modern medicine mainly offers symptomatic relief through medications like immunosuppressants and topical treatments, the condition often exhibits a tendency to relapse. In contrast, Ayurveda, known for its holistic healing approach, presents a distinctive perspective on managing psoriasis in the long term. This traditional system of medicine offers a ray of hope through therapies such as Virechana Chikitsa, a form of therapeutic purgation aimed at balancing the body's internal processes.

Here, we discuss Ayurvedic treatment for a 32-year-old female patient with plaque psoriasis who had erythematous plaques all over her body, including the anterior surface of the legs, right forearm, and neck region. The therapy approach followed Ayurvedic samprapti (pathophysiology), and the patient recovered entirely without experiencing any unpleasant consequences. The value of a nutritious food as a health promoter is also reaffirmed. Photographic evidence was recorded with the patient's agreement during further treatment and regular follow-ups.

Through exploring the Ayurvedic viewpoint on psoriasis, this article delves into the potential efficacy of Virechana therapy and its positive impact on individuals grappling with this challenging skin condition.

KEYWORDS: Psoriasis, Ayurveda, Virechana Chikitsa.

INTRODUCTION

Psoriasis affects approximately 2–3% of the global population. It is a chronic, multisystem inflammatory disease predominantly involving the skin and joints not only affect physical health but also have a profound emotional and psychosocial impact on patients by disrupting social functioning and interpersonal relationships. The pathogenesis of psoriasis is complex and multifactorial, with genetic associations and dysregulated inflammation playing key roles in its development. The disease manifests in various clinical

types, with chronic plaque psoriasis being the most common, affecting a significant percentage of patients. This type of psoriasis presents as distinct, symmetrical, erythematous plaques with silvery scales, usually found on the scalp, trunk, buttocks, and extremities, although it can appear on any part of the body. It is essential to understand the characteristics and manifestations of psoriasis to provide effective management and support to individuals living with this condition. The interplay of genetic predispositions and inflammatory processes underscores the need for a comprehensive approach to treating psoriasis that considers both physical and emotional aspects of the disease. By recognizing the impact of psoriasis on a patient's overall well-being, healthcare providers can offer holistic care that addresses not only the physical symptoms but also the emotional and social challenges that accompany the condition.

In the current medical system, there is no effective treatment for psoriasis. Nonetheless, psoriasis is being effectively managed by the Ayurvedic medical system. The parasol of Kushta is used in Ayurveda to characterize all skin conditions. Numerous forms of psoriasis can be linked to certain ailments listed in the Samhitas. Since Kushta is recorded in the Vedic period, Ekakushta is also mentioned in practically all Ayurvedic classics from that era, such as Brihatrayi and Laghutrayi, as well as in all subsequent writings. Vata and Kapha doshas predominate in Ekakushta¹, which is listed under Kshudrakushta in all Ayurvedic texts.

Eka Kushta is a Kshudra Kushta with features like²:

- **Asvedanam** (absence of sweating),
- **Matsyashakalopamam** (scaling like fish scales),
- **Mahavastu** (widespread lesions).

These symptoms correlate well with modern descriptions of psoriasis.

Etiology and Pathophysiology in Ayurveda³

According to Ayurvedic texts, the root cause of Kushta lies in the vitiation of Doshas—primarily Vata and Kapha, sometimes associated with Pitta, along with Rakta Dushti (vitiation of blood).

Contributing factors include:

- Consumption of incompatible foods (Viruddha Ahara)
- Vega dharana (Suppression of natural urges) especially Chardi
- Excessive intake of seafood, dairy, and fermented foods
- Mental stress and suppression of natural urges
- Poor hygiene and lack of seasonal detox

Karmaja Hetu, Doshaja, and Nidana Sevana

↓

Tridosha Prakopa

↓

Tvak, Rakta, Mamsa, and Lasika Shaithilyata

↓

Further vitiation of Doshas happens when vitiated Vata enters Tiryaka Sira. At the location of Dhatu Shaithilyata

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Dosha and Dushya Samurchhana

↓

Kushta

CASE STUDY

Patient Details:

- **Name:** Mrs. S, Female, Age 32
- **Occupation:** Homemaker
- **Chief Complaint:** Red, itchy, and scaly patches on hands, scalp, and trunk since December 2024.
- **History:** Recurrent flare-ups; mild relief with corticosteroid creams
- **Associated Complaints:** Burning sensation, Severe itching all over the body. Constipation, anxiety, and disturbed sleep
- **Ayurvedic Diagnosis:** Eka Kushta (Vata-Kapha dominant)

Treatment Protocol

Patient was treated with following Samanoushadis on her first visit on 8-2-2025

Rx;

1. Trivrit lehya as a Nitya virechana dravya – 10g daily @ bed time with hot water.
2. Sarivadyasava 20ml BD to counteract vitiated pitta and rakta.
3. Psorol kashaya (MANPHAR ayurvedic drugs patent) & Patoladi kashaya 20ml each with hot water on empty stomach at 7am as they are best drug of choice for Tvak vikaras.
4. Nalpamaradi taila for external application to counteract itching.

1st follow up was on 28-2-2025

Remarks –

1. The patient's itching and burning sensations significantly decreased.
2. After explaining thorough instruction regarding the process and obtaining consent, the patient began Virechana Karma the next day.
3. Virechana karma was started on 1-3-2025

1. Poorva Karma (Preparatory Phase)

a. Dipana-Pachana: 1 to 3rd March

To improve digestion and reduce Ama, the patient was given:

- Trikatu Churna – 3g twice with warm water before food.

b. Snehapana (Internal Oleation): 4 to 8th March

- Panchatiktaka Ghrita – increasing dose for 5 days until signs of proper oleation (Samyak Snigdha Lakshana) appeared

c. Abhyanga and Swedana: 9 to 11th March

- Full-body massage with Nalpamaradi taila and 777 oil (Dr. JRK patent medicine) followed by Hot water bath as sudation.

2. Pradhana Karma (Main Procedure)

Virechana Chikitsa (Purgation Therapy):

- **Date of Virechana:** 12th March
- **Medicine Administered:** 250mg of Icchabhediya rasa +50ml of Eranda taila with hot water
- Patient was advised to sip only Hot water.
- **Outcome:** 21 bouts of purgation; signs of Samyak Virechana were noted—lightness of body, clarity of sense organs, improvement in skin condition.

Observations during the procedure –

1. Virechana dravya is administered at 8am and patient observed first vega at 9 am followed by 21 vegas. Patient attained Pravara suddhi.
2. At 20 and 21st vega patient observed slight bleeding (Jivadana). Patient was advised to sip cold water; after a while no vega is observed.
3. After the completion of vegas patient was coherent, her agni was up and was feeling light after the procedure.

3. Paschat Karma (Post-procedure Care) - 13th to 17th March

- **Samsarjana Krama:** Gradual reintroduction of diet from liquid gruels to semi-solid and then normal food over 5 days

Follow-up and Outcome

Follow up after Virechana karma is on 18-3-2025.

1. The patient arrived for a check-up. Following the procedure, very positive outcomes were noted.
2. The number of scaly lesions was nearly decreased.
3. There was no burning or itching sensation felt.
4. On the same day patient was advised following medications
5. **Shamana Chikitsa (Pacification Therapy):**
 - Amritabhallataka lehya 2tsp @ 9am after breakfast.
 - Panchatikta guggulu 2 tablets along Mahamanjishtadi kadha 20ml before breakfast at 7am.
 - Guduchi churna + Tab. Arogyavardhini vati + Tab. Gandhaka rasayana. Mixture of this medicine is advised 2g with hot water after food both morning and evening.
 - Napamaradi taila & 777 oil for external application.

3rd follow up is on 15-4-2025

- On the follow up patient had maximum reduction in symptoms.
- Sleeps is improved.
- Appetite was improved.
- Itching and scaly lesions are reduced to maximum.
- No burning sensation is seen.

DISCUSSION

Ekakushta, a particular type of skin condition characterized by symptoms such as Mahavastu, Asvedanam, Matsyashakalopamam, and Krishna-Aruna Varnata⁴, shares similarities with plaque psoriasis. It is crucial to note that effective treatment for Ekakushta typically involves a combination of thorough cleansing (Samshodana) and pacifying therapies (Samshamana), emphasizing the significant role of both approaches in managing this skin disorder. In Ayurvedic philosophy, Shodhana, or purification, holds immense importance in treating skin diseases like Kushta. Neglecting internal cleansing through Shodhana procedures while solely focusing on external remedies may not have expected results in the chronic skin condition. Thus, a holistic approach that includes both internal detoxification and external therapies is essential for effectively addressing Ekakushta and ensuring long-term relief from its symptoms.

For Snehapana, Panchatikta gritha was administered which is main drug of choice in all the skin conditions. It is dominated by Tikta (bitter) rasa herbs like Nimba, Patola, Guduchi, etc., which help purify blood (Rakta shodhana) and pacify Pitta and Kapha doshas, the main culprits in psoriasis. Tikta taste enhances Agni (digestive fire) and reduces Ama (toxins) that aggravate skin conditions.

Followed by Abhyanga was done with Nalpamaradi taila and 777 oil. Because of the special ability of its constituents to both tone and soothe dry, itchy skin, 777 oil and Nalpamaradi Taila are chosen for external application in this case trial. Taila products naturally have the ability to restore the skin's vitiated Vata-Kapha balance, which is a key factor in skin disorders that manifest as dryness, irritation, exfoliation, and other symptoms. These oils are a first choice for external use in a variety of skin conditions because all of their constituents naturally balance the Pitta and Kapha Doshas.

Virechana performed with Ichhabhedhiya rasa and Eranda taila. The Virechana process effectively removed vitiated Pitta and Kapha, thereby detoxifying the body at the systemic level. According to Ayurveda, unless the root doshic imbalance and toxins are expelled, complete healing cannot occur. This is where Panchakarma, especially Virechana, becomes crucial in chronic skin diseases like psoriasis.

As Sahamaoushadhi Psorol kashaya (MANPHAR ayurvedic drugs patent) which contains Manjishta, Patola, Triphala, Usira, Guduchi, Rakta chandana as important ingredients act as Raktadushtihara, helps in pacifying the vitiated Pitta and Vata doshas. Other oral medications such as Sarivadyasava, Manjishtadi kadha, Guduchi churna + Tab. Arogyavardhini vati + Tab. Gandhaka rasayana which are Raktashodhaka, Kandughna, Visha hara, Pitta dosha hara and Vatanulomana in action.

In the current case, the impressive results observed are attributed to the holistic approach taken, which encompasses the use of various Ayurvedic medications, adherence to a prescribed diet plan known as pathya sevana, and consistent monitoring and support provided by the patient in follow-up sessions.

CONCLUSION

This case vividly demonstrates the transformative potential inherent in Ayurvedic therapies, with a particular focus on the exceptional benefits of Virechana Chikitsa in offering a comprehensive approach to the management of psoriasis. In contrast to the predominant approach in modern medicine that often involves merely treating symptoms, Ayurveda distinguishes itself by delving deep into the root causes of conditions such as psoriasis, centering its treatment strategies around processes of detoxification, restoration of internal balance, and the implementation of personalized lifestyle adjustments. The integrative nature of Ayurveda in addressing chronic skin disorders like psoriasis through a combination of ancient wisdom and modern understanding is a testament to its efficacy and enduring significance in the realm of healthcare. By emphasizing holistic healing methodologies and aiming to address both the physical manifestations and underlying imbalances, Ayurveda stands as a beacon of hope for individuals seeking sustainable relief and long-term well-being. Through these integrated approaches that prioritize safety, long-lasting effectiveness, and overall health improvement, Ayurvedic practices have proven invaluable as a complement to traditional Western medicine in the comprehensive care and management of chronic skin conditions, showcasing a nuanced and progressive approach to healthcare that resonates with increasing numbers of individuals looking for alternative and complementary treatment options that prioritize their health and well-being.

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Here I am attaching the before and after treatment photos



I. Before treatment



II. After Virechana



III. follow up after 2 months of oral medication post virechana