



# EFFICACY OF ARKA KSHARA IN THE MANAGEMENT OF VICHARCHIKA W.S.R. TO ECZEMA.

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## **Abstract :**

Vicharchika is one of the skin disorders mentioned in Kshudra kushta of ayurveda. It is many a times correlated to eczema in contemporary science characterised by recurrent skin rashes and exacerbations. It is a kapha pradhana tridosha janya vyadhi. Prevalance rate and need to address this issue is increasing day by day especially in elderly people as it also hampers the psycho social health of the patient. As this turns chronic, it undergoes lichenification, characterised by thickening and scaling with hyperpigmentation. Management of eczema is mostly done through corticosteroids and emollients in contemporary science. Many find relief, but recurrence is also very common. Though Ayurveda in this field especially have shown a remarkable difference by offering various kind of treatments both internally and externally through shodhana, shamana, they are time taking and more explorations could be done for immediate relief. One such drug, Arka kshara is observed for its efficiency as external application in this case and the results are remarkable.

## **IndexTerms –**

Eczema, vicharchika, Ayurveda, Skin, Arkapatra

## **INTRODUCTION**

Eczema is a common chronic, relapsing skin condition marked by itching, impaired function of the epidermal barrier, and immunoglobulin E (IgE)-mediated sensitivity to allergens in the environment and in food<sup>1</sup>. There are 3 classical stages of eczema: infantile, childhood, and adulthood. Infantile forms of acute inflammation with exudation are frequent, with a tendency towards face and extensor involvement. Age-related increases in prevalence of chronic inflammation with lichenification and scale, which frequently affects flexural areas<sup>2</sup>. Topical corticosteroids (TCS) and topical calcineurin inhibitors (TCI) are the two anti-inflammatory medications used most frequently to treat eczema. For the past few decades, topical corticosteroids have been the treatment of choice for AD. In ayurveda, this can be correlated symptomatically and pathologically to vicharchika which is explained in all bruhatrayi in charaka chikitsa 7<sup>th</sup> chapter, Sushruta chikitsa 5<sup>th</sup> chapter, Ashtanga hridaya nidana 14<sup>th</sup> chapter, characterized by shyava varna, atikandu, ruja and atisrava<sup>3</sup>. Chikitsa is explained through various shodana and shamana oushadhi including various external applications. One of those drugs is arka patra kshara explained by acharya charaka. Yogaratnakara also explains arka taila as an external application in kushta<sup>4</sup>. So based on these references current case was studied on the efficacy of arka patra kshara alone external on vicharchika.

## PATIENT INFORMATION

A 62 years female Pt is a k/c/o HTN since 25 years [under Amlo 5 mg OD] and was diagnosed of eczema in bilateral lower limbs 8 years back by dermatologist through allopathic science and was on conservative medicines [steroids & antibiotics] for more than 4 years. There was improvement, but the complaints were frequently relapsing. Then parallelly she started ayurvedic consultation and is on oral medicines since 4 years. However she found no prominent improvement and complaints were aggravating past few months disturbing her sleep and daily routine activities. Currently she came with the complaints of swelling in bilateral lower limbs associated with lichenification, watery discharge, with severe itching, pain and burning sensation. Reluctant to oral medicines she came for further consultation.

## CLINICAL FINDINGS

Patients history was noted. Apart from hypertension there were no any associated disorders. History revealed she eats non vegetarian food along with curd, daily morning intake of lemon juice. Occupationally she is a homemaker but spends lot of time in water through gardening and cleaning works. There was no significant family history and surgical history. Clinical examination was performed. Baseline findings were noted. Vitals were within normal limits.

BASELINE FINDINGS	Severity
Kandu	Very seviere itching which disturbs sleep and other daily routine
Daha	severe disturbing sleep
Vaivarnya	Blackish discolouration
Sraava	Excessive oozing making clothes wet
Rukshata	leading to crack formation
Raaji	severe lichenification
Ruja	severe pain disturbing sleep
Shotha	present in > 75% of area

Treatment was done only with external medication (Application of arka kshara). As patient was reluctant no internal medicines were given.

## TIMELINE OF THE CASE

Health events	Timeline
Complaints started	March 2014
Diagnosed as Eczema and started treatmet	April 2014
Started Ayurvedic treatment paralelly	June 2018
Came for consultation	August 2022

## DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENTS

Assessment and efficacy of the drug were studied through ayurvedic parameters in the terms of kandu, ruja, daha, vaivarnya, srava, rukshata, raji. These were classified into grades with scores and the improvement was noted after every application.

Assessments	Gradings
<b><u>Raji (thickening of skin)</u></b>	0 – No thickening of skin 1 – Thickening of skin but no criss-cross marking 2 – Thickening with criss-cross marking 3 – Severe lichenification
<b><u>Rukshata (dryness)</u></b>	0 – No line on scrubbing with nail dryness 1 – Faint line on scrubbing by nails 2 – Lining and even words can be written by nail 3 – Excessive <i>Rukshata</i> leading to <i>Kandu</i>

	4 – <i>Rukshata</i> leading to crack formation
<b><u>Srava (oozing)</u></b>	0 – No discharge 1 – Occasional discharge after itching 2 – Occasional oozing without itching 3 – Excessive oozing making clothes wet
<b><u>Vaivarnya (discoloration)</u></b>	0 – Nearly normal skin color 1 – Brownish-red discoloration 2 – Blackish-red discoloration 3 – Blackish discoloration
<b><u>Daha (burning)</u></b>	0 – No burning sensation 1 – Mild type of burning sensation 2 – Moderate burning sensation 3 – Burning present continuously (severe) and even disturbing sleep
<b><u>Ruja (pain)</u></b>	0 – No pain 1 – Mild pain 2 – Moderate pain 3 – Severe pain
<b><u>KANDU :</u></b>	0- No itching 1- Mild/occasional itching 2- Moderate frequent itching 3- severe frequent itching 4- very severe itching which disturbs sleep and routine

### THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTION


Condition was diagnosed as vicharchika in ayurveda based on the presentation and is advised of arka patra kshara application externally once a day. The application was left and only washed off with plain water before another application.

### PREPARATION OF KSHARA

Rakta arka patra(.....) were collected. Leaves were wiped with a clean cloth and are dried up completely. Dried up leaves were kept in earthen pot and were burnt to ash. Precautions were taken that ash was completely burnt and no water came in contact. After the ash cools down, it is collected and stored in a glass jar.

### FOLLOWUP AND OUTCOMES

She was observed for changes after every application.

<b>FOLLOWUP</b>	<b>OBSERVATIONS</b>	<b>PICTURE</b>
After First application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Few of the Thick rough scaly patches fell off in the morning.</li> <li>Edema – present</li> <li>Oozing was present</li> <li>Pain [30% decreased]</li> <li>Itching [40% decreased]</li> <li>Burning[40%decreased]</li> <li>Disturbed sleep</li> </ul>	



		
After second application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edema – 70% reduced</li> <li>• Oozing was present</li> <li>• Pain [60% reduced]</li> <li>• Itching [70% reduced]</li> <li>• Burning [70% reduced]</li> <li>• Pt was able to sleep</li> </ul>	
After third application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edema – 20 % present</li> <li>• Oozing – Absent</li> <li>• Pain [90% reduced ]</li> <li>• Itching [90% reduced]</li> <li>• Burning [90% reduced]</li> <li>• Pt was happy</li> </ul>	 

### PROGNOSIS OF PATIENT

Patient found drastic improvement with every application and was able to sleep, relieved of clinical symptoms only after 3 days.

ASSESSMENTS	BEFORE TREATMENT	AFTER TREATMENT
<b>Kandu [itching]</b>	4/4 -severe	1/4- occasional
<b>Ruja [pain]</b>	3/3 - severe	1/3- mild
<b>Daha [ burning sensation]</b>	3/3 – continuous	1/3 - mild
<b>Vaivarnya [discoloration]</b>	3/3 – Black	2/3 – Black +reddish
<b>Srava [ discharge]</b>	3/3 – make clothes wet	0/3 – No discharge
<b>Rukshata [dryness]</b>	4/4 – rukshata with cracks	2/4 – lines can be drawn by nail
<b>Raji [lines/thickening of skin]</b>	3/3- severe lichenification	1/3 - moderate lichenification
<b>Shotha [edema]</b>	4/4- >75% area	1/4 – 20% edema persisting
<b>SCORE</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>8</b>

Though Arka kshara showed significant improvement in symptoms, it was not easy for the patient to apply it for 3 days because of its teekshnata. It increases burning immediately after applying and is not easy to wash. Black colour of kshara doesn't leave. So she was advised to apply it by mixing with coconut oil later on if she is unable to bear. However she applied it plainly for 3 days and washed only with plain water. No soap/ detergent/ surfactants were used.

## DISCUSSION

Vicharchika is a type of kshudra kushta explained in brihatrayis caused by tridosha dooshana especially of kapha dosha. Samprapti of vicharchika starts with nidana sevan through vidudha ahara vihara which was prominently seen in this patient. She was said to be consuming non vegetarian food followed by curd and milk products consistently. Tridosha dooshana produced by this causes further dooshana of twak, rakta, mamsa, lasika producing kandu, shaya varnata, and adhika srava like lakshanas<sup>5</sup>. In allopathic science this pathology is explained<sup>6</sup> due to the widening of intercellular spaces within keratinocytes, leading to infiltration and accumulation fluids in intra epidermal vessels generating epidermal acanthosis, hyperkeratosis, hypergranulosis and fibrosis of papillary dermis.

Conservative treatments include topical steroids, anti histamines and moisturizers<sup>7</sup>. In ayurveda, Arka is explained as shodana dravya as both vamaka and virechaka. According to Dhanvantari Nighantu<sup>8</sup> because of its katutikta rasa, laghu sara snigdha, ushna veerya, katu vipaka, and bhedana Deepana karma, and krimighna, vishoghna, vranahara, vatahrit, shopha, shvasahara properties arka is one among the excellent drug of choice in kushta. Bhava prakasha also explains rakta arka pushpa in this regard as Madhura, krimighna and kushta hara. So based on all these the arka patra were selected and kshara was prepared as said above and was given for the application to patient. Results were seen remarkable with grading score reducing from 27 to 8 just with three applications.

## CONCLUSION

As eczema is a chronic disease and its recurrences are very common, therefore, it was thought desirable to evaluate the role of the single drugs, in vicharchika. Though several shodhana and shamana oushadhis are in practice, controlling vicharchika more effectively would radically improve patients quality of life. Arka patra kshara has provided significant results on itching, oozing, burning sensation, eruptions, discoloration, pain and inflammation proving its efficacy as an avasthika chikitsa & also to check the progression of vicharchika within short period of time. So the report concludes Arka kshara is safe and cost-effective treatment for Vicharchika.

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