

Management of Acne Vulgaris: An Ayurvedic Approach

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Abstract

Mukhadushika is one of the commonest diseases noticed in day today clinical practice, characterized by *Shalmali kantaka vata* (thorn like) eruptions on the face. It is seen more as a cosmetic point of view than a medical one. In *Samhitas* it finds its place under the heading of *Kshudra rogas* which are considered as minor diseases. But in exceptional cases like *Mukhadushika*, these can produce a marked cosmetic disability and gives rise to much mental distress. On the basis of clinical features it can be compared with Acne vulgaris, a chronic inflammatory condition of the pilosebaceous follicles on the face. It is characterized by the development of comedones (Black heads), papules, pustules and cysts which may resolve to leave pitted scars. Modern medicine has failed at some or more extent to complete eradication of this disease. The classics have mainly mentioned the *shodhana Chikitsa* like *virechana*, *vamana*, *nasya* and *Lepa* for this disease. Clinical observation has shown the effect of *sadyovirechana* and *Arjunatwak lepa* in the management of *Mukhadushika*. A case report of 22-year old female who presented with red, tender acne over the cheeks, chin and chest associated with severe pain and burning sensation has been presented here.

Keywords: *Mukhadushika*; *Arjunatwaklepa*; *Sadyovirechana*; Acne Vulgaris.

Introduction

Skin is one of the important tissues in the human body. It covers the body and protects the deeper tissues. Apart from all these, skin is an asset where regards the cosmetic values is concerned. Among many diseases concerned with cosmetic values Acne vulgaris is one of the most common skin diseases we come across in day today practice. According to the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) study, acne vulgaris affects ~85% of young adults aged 12–25 years [1]. It is a chronic inflammatory disorder in adolescents consists of the pilosebaceous follicles, characterized by comedones, papules, pustules, cysts, nodules and often scars, chiefly on face, neck etc [2]. The mainstays of pharmacologic treatment of acne in modern science includes Topical retinoids, antibiotics, antiseborrheic medications,

antiandrogen medications and hormonal treatments but these produce a large number of side effects, like local irritation, erythema, dryness, drug resistance etc.

Mukhadushika is a common disease known to us since from *Acharya Sushruta*'s period. It is considered as one of the *kshudraroga*, [3] occurs due to vitiation of *Vata*, *Kapha* and *Rakta* having *Shalmali kanthaka* like eruption on face [4]. The line of treatment for *Mukhadushika* is of two types *shodhana chikitsa* and *shamana chikitsa* [5]. *Shodhana chikitsa* includes *Vamana*, *Nasya* and *Shiravedha*. The *Shamana chikitsa* includes various types of *Lepa* and *Prulepa*. Over all *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Nasya*, *Shiravedha* and *lepa* will be beneficial along with internal medication in the treatment of *Mukhadushika*. As per *Charakapida* is *raktapradoshajaroga* (hematological disorder) and belong to *bahyarogamarga* [6]. *Bahyarogamarga* is in direct contact to the external stimulus and also the line of treatment for *Bahyarogamarga* diseases is *shamana/shodhana chikitsa*, *raktamokshana* and *bahiparimarjana chikitsa*. *Virechana* is one of most important therapy for skin disorder. It is a specific modality for the elimination of *Pitta dosha* but it is also effective on *Vata & Kapha Dosha* as well as *Rakta*. And one of the vitiated *dosha* in this disease is *Rakta*. Property of *Rakta* is analogous to *Pitta dosha*, there for *Virechana* is also effective in *Rakta javikara* [7]. Hence,

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the management preferred was *shodhana* (*Virechana karma*) and *bahiparimarjana chikitsa* (*Arjunatwak* and *Madhu lepa*)[8].

Case Report

A case report of 22-year old female suffering from grade 2 acne vulgaris, from 2 years presented with red, tender acne over the cheeks, chin and chest associated with severe pain and burning sensation in the lesions. On local examination papulo- pustular lesions were seen on cheeks, chin and chest of the patient. There were polymorphic eruptions with comedones, papules and pustules.

Past history

The patient was apparently normal 2 years back. Then she gradually developed acne on face. Initially there were small papules then after some time developed into pustular form. The patient was taken to allopathic treatment for few courses, but of no use. Then patient approached to Ayurvedic doctor.

Follow Up: The patient was advised to follow up for once in a month for 3 months.

Results

On 3rd day *niramalakshanas* were seen in patient by increased appetite and clear normal bowels. On 6th day after *sadyovirechana* with *trivrutalehya*, patient had 8 vegas. After *samsarjana karma*

arjunatwak + *madhulepa* was started from 8th day, daily in the morning for 30-40 minutes. On 15th day the *shotha*, *shula* and *daha* was completely reduced. *Pidikaraktima* (Redness of acnes) was also reduced to 80%. On 30th day complete remission of *pidikas* was there with mild scar over one or two pimples. (Image - 3) No side effects were seen.

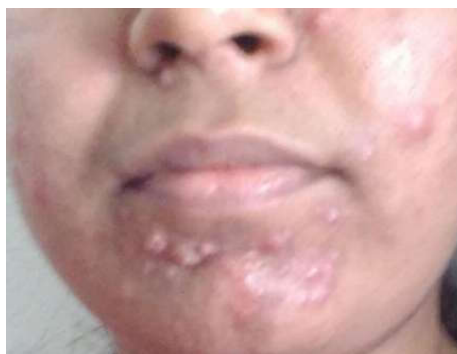


Image 1: Before treatment



Image 2: Before treatment

Table 1:

S.No	Signs and symptoms	Clinical findings in patient (Image - 01 and 02)
01	<i>Pidikasanakhya</i> (numbers of acnes)	10-15
02	<i>Pidikaghanata</i> (Area of acnes)	Moderateghanata over chin & less ghanata over cheeks
03	<i>Pidikaraktima</i> (Redness of acnes)	Moderate
04	<i>Shotha, shula and daha</i>	Moderate to severe
05	Area involved	Both cheeks, chin and chest
06	<i>Medogarbha</i> - 2-3 <i>pidikas</i>	1-2 over left side of cheek and chin

Table 2: Procedures administered to the patient

SI No	Name of the treatment	Medicines used	No of days
01	Ama pachana and Deepana	<i>Chitrakadioti</i> 2 tabs two times per day before food	1 st to 3 rd day
02	Snehapana	<i>Go-grita</i> -Patient was advised to take plenty of <i>go-grita</i> (about 5-6 tsps) with meals for 2 days	3 rd to 4 th day
03	<i>Sarvanga Abhyangaf/by Bashpa Sweda</i>	<i>Murchita Tila taila</i>	5 th day
04	<i>Sadyovirechana</i>	<i>Trivrutalehya</i> - 15gms	6 th day
05	<i>Samsarjanakarma</i>	-	6 th -8 th day
06	<i>Mukhalepa</i>	<i>Arjuna twak + Madhu lepa</i>	For 30 days
07	Do's and Don'ts are advised to patient.		



Image 3: After Treatment

Discussion

Mukhadushika is a condition in which, when *vata*, *kapha* and *rakta doshas* gets vitiated and takes shelter in *mukhapradesha* (face) causes *shalmali kantak avatpidikas* over face. Two types of *Chikitsa* are explained in the management of *Mukhadushika*, the *shodhana chikitsa* and the *shamana chikitsa*. In *shodhanachikitsa* therapies like *Vamana*, *Nasya*, *JalaukaAvacharana* and *Shiravedha* are explained. The *shamanachikitsa* includes various types of *Lepa* and oral medications. Out of these listed treatments *lepa* with *Arjuna twak* and *Madhu* has a vital role to play as this procedure is performed directly on the affected part. *Acharya Charaka* says that, depending on the location and *dushya* (tissue element vitiated by *Vata* and *Kapha*) each patient should be given specific therapies [9]. Hence *shodhana* in the form of *Sadyo virechana* was selected, as this procedure helps to remove vitiated doshas from the body smoothly and pacifying the *doshas*. In Ayurvedic texts *Acharya Charaka* has explained *Upavasa*, *Virechana*, and *Raktastravaas* treatment modalities in *Raktaja* and *Pittajavikara*. There are many studies [10] has been done where *Virechana* shows significant effect on management of different skin diseases.

The *samprapti* of acne can be understood as, because of various etiological factors vitiation of *vata* and *kapha dosha* takes place. These vitiated *doshas* further vitiates *rakta dhatu*, which in turn leads to vitiation of *medodhatu*. Because of *medodhatudusti* excessive *sweda* is formed, which gets deposited in *romakupa* and produces *swedavahasrotodusti*. Thus to do *samprapti vighatameva chikitsa*, *virechana* is one of the best treatment as the drug used in this therapy absorbs very quickly due to *vyavayiguna*, *vikasiguna* does the *dhatushithilata*, *ushnaguna* liquefies the *doshasangha*, *teekshnaguna* does the *chedana* of *dosha*, due to *sukshmaguna* reaches the micro channels and breaks up the *grathitdoshas* and brings to *kostha*. Due to dominance of *prithvi* and *jalamahabhutas* and

adhobhagahara prabhava of drug the vitiated *doshas* comes to *kostha* and then expel through *gudamarga*.

Arjuna twak and Madhu Lepa: In this Yoga, *Arjuna twak churna* is mixed with *madhu* and applied. *Acharya Charaka* has classified *Arjuna* drug under the heading of *kashayaskandha* and *Udarda prashamana Varga* [11]. *Arjuna* is mainly having *Kashaya rasa* which acts a *spitta shamaka*, *raktaprasadaka* and *twakprasadaka*, does the *shamana* of vitiated *doshas*. *Prasadana* property of *sheetaveerya* helps to purify the accumulated *doshas*, brings normalcy of skin contour. The Flavonoids and Tannins present in *Arjuna* have the Anti-Inflammatory activity and antibacterial property, helps to combat the root cause. Honey has antibacterial and anti inflammatory properties that aids not only in removal of root cause but also increases skin elasticity makes the skin glowing. Thus *vrana shodhaka*, *vrana ropaka* and *rakta shodhaka* properties of *madhu* give an ad on effect to the *Arjuna twak lepa*.

Conclusion

As per the available treatment modalities of *Mukhadushika*, the local treatment like *lepa* and *sadyovirechana* are the best, taking into the consideration its convenience, easy adoptability, cost-effectiveness and curative results. This effectiveness of *shodhana* and *shamanachikitsa* can be attributed to the *raktashodhaka*, *twakprasadaka* and *varnyakara* properties of *lepa* and *doshanirharana* action of *sadyovirechana*.

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