



Review Article

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BAHYA PRAYOGA IN KUSHTA CHIKITSA: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Skin is the body's largest organ, which acts as a protective barrier and is also responsible for temperature regulation and sensation. Skin disease is a common disorder which affects all ages, from infants to the elderly and causes harm in different ways. Kushta is the broad term used for skin disorders in Ayurvedic literature. Many types of bahya prayoga (external applications and procedures) have been mentioned in Ayurveda to treat various skin disorders. It can be used as a sole or adjuvant therapy for many disorders. Bahya prayoga in multiple forms like pradeha, pralepa, prakshalana, and parisheka can be used. In this study, different bahya prayoga explained in Kushta chikitsa are reviewed.

Keywords: Kushta, Bahya prayoga, pradeha, pralepa, parisheka.

INTRODUCTION

Skin is the largest organ of the body. The primary function of the skin is protection. It protects the body from external factors such as bacteria, chemicals, and temperature. Other essential functions are body temperature regulation and tactile sensation. The three main layers of the skin are the epidermis, dermis and hypodermis. In Ayurveda, the word TWAK is the synonym for the skin. The term twak is derived from the word 'twach samvarane', which means covering¹. According to Acharya Charaka, twacha is the mula of mamsavaha srotas² and upadhatu of mamsadhatu³. Acharya Sushruta and Acharya Charaka have described different layers of twak according to their functions and diseases related to those layers. Twak is the base of tactile perception because of the prevalence of Vayu mahabhoota; hence sparshanendriya encircles the entire body. It also offers various varna and chhaya of the body⁴.

Kushta is a broad term used for various kinds of skin disorders. According to Shabdakalpadruma, Kushta means which causes despise and contemptible⁵. Acharya Vagbhata has defined the Kushta roga as that which causes vaivarnya and dushti to the twacha⁶. Kushta roga can be classified into 7 Maha Kushta and 11 Kshudra Kushta. Vitiating of tridoshas and twak, rakta, mamsa and lasika is responsible for the manifestation of Kushta roga.

Among trividha chikitsa bahirparimarjana chikitsa is also one. The main area of bahirparimarjana chikitsa is twacha and the treatment like abhyanga, swedana, pradeha, parisheka, unmardana etc. according to disease are known as bahirparimarjana chikitsa⁷. Bahirparimarjana chikitsa plays a vital role in Kushta chikitsa. It can be given as sole therapy or adjuvant therapy.

Lepa

Different herbal drugs taken in powder form and triturated with different liquid media to form a paste and applied externally are

known as lepa. According to Acharya Sushruta, lepa is of three types⁸:

1. Pralepa: Lepa, prepared from sheeta veerya dravyas, is thin. It is used in Pittaja vyadhi.
2. Pradeha: Lepa, prepared from ushna or sheeta veerya dravyas, is thick in nature. It is used in Kaphaja vyadhi.
3. Lepa: it is a mixture of both pralepa and pradeha.

Kushta chikitsa explains that after shodhana and raktamokshana, Kushtahara lepa is to be applied⁹. It is also specifically explained that pradeha should be applied after gharshana⁹. Some of the Kushtahara lepas are: Chitrakadi lepa, Edagajadi lepa, Karaveeradi lepa, Sidhmahara lepa, Kushtadi lepa, Trapwadi lepa etc.

Gharshana

Gharshana karma is rubbing or abrading the superficial skin with dry powder or mechanical material. Acharya Charaka has explained that gharshana karma should be done in Kushta, which are stabdha, sputa, aswedana and kandula. In these conditions, gharshana should be done with kurcha shastra, Danti, Trivritta, Karaveera, Karanja, Kutaja or patra of Jati, Arka or Nimbi or with shastra or Samudraphena or gomaya⁹. Acharya Charaka has explained that before applying lepa, gharshana should be done. By removing the superficial dead skin, the penetration of drugs is increased, and lepa will affect more quickly and effectively¹⁰.

Parisheka / Prakshalana

Parisheka is constantly pouring medicated liquid from a certain height all over the body or only to the afflicted part. It is also known as kaya seka or dhaara. Prakshalana is washing the afflicted region with medicated liquid. Due to the rooksha guna of kashaya used for prakshalana and parisheka, kledata will be reduced, which is present in most Pitta Kaphaja Kushta.

Some of the Kushtahara yogas used for parisheka and prakshalana are aragwadhadi kashaya, asanadi kashaya, mahamanjishtadi kashaya, Triphala kashaya etc. Takra dhaara can also be done in vata kapha pradhana Kushta.

Snana

Snana or bathing is the daily regimen to remove mala and sweda from the body. Snana helps alleviate nidra, daaha, shrama, sweda, kandu, trishna and mala. It is also rakta prasadana in nature and does agni deepana¹¹.

Siddhartaka snana is a unique formulation explained by Acharya Charaka in Kushta chikitsa. Ingredients include Musta, Madana, Triphala, Karanja, Aragwadha, Kalinga, Darvi and Saptaparna. Water which is boiled with these ingredients should be used for bath. By this Kushta nashana karya will be siddha so, known as siddhartaka snana¹³.

Similarly, other snana dravyas which can be used in Kushta chikitsa are vasa and Triphala kwatha, Khadira kwatha or kwatha, which is prepared with Brihati, Sevyā, Patola, Sariva, Katukarohini, Khadirasara, Aragwadha, Arjuna, Rohitaka, Lodhra, Kutaja, Dhava, Nimbi, Saptachada and Karaveera¹³.

Abhyanga

Abhyanga is the application of any sneha dravyas all over the body. Abhyanga makes the body mridu, controls Vata and Kapha, and does poshana to dhatus; it also provides good varna and bala to the body¹⁴. Some of the formulations which can be used for abhyanga in Kushta are: Kanakakshiri taila, Shweta Karaveeradya taila, Tiktekshwadi taila, Kushtadya taila, Vipadikahara ghrīta or taila, Mahavajraka taila, Mahakhadira ghrīta, Nalpamaradi taila, Eladi kera taila etc.

DISCUSSION

Mode of action of lepa: Lepa should be applied against the follicular hair direction; this facilitates the quicker absorption of the drugs through romakupa (hair roots), swedavahini (sweat glands) and siramukha (blood capillaries)⁸. While one of Bhrajaka Pitta's primary functions is to manifest the colour and complexion of the twak, it is also supposed to digest the substance of medications given to the skin (skin). The actions of Samanvayu, which Vyana Vayu assists, are crucial to metabolism. The "Strotomaya Purush" idea, according to which the entire human body is porous, is also promoted by Ayurveda. Due to gravity and the weight of the drug, when the medication is applied as lepa or pradeha, the tiny particles of the material penetrate the twak. The penetration and absorption of the medications put on the twak would be significantly aided by the upashoshana property of Vayu (Vyana and Samana in particular). Following absorption in the twak, the medications would begin to function on the body following their virya (active principle) and occasionally following their prabhava.

Mode of action of gharshana: Gharshana karma produces epidermal and dermal changes through superficial wounding. Part of the superficial epidermis, including stratum corneum, surface debris, oil and dirt, are removed immediately. The resultant superficial wound is then allowed to heal by secondary intention with partial re-epithelialization and remodelling of dermal collagen. The following mechanisms, in combination, are responsible for ultimate results.

- Mechanical disruption of stratum corneum
- Partial epithelialization and stimulation of epidermal cell turnover (production of new cells).

- Vasodilation of dermal blood vessels and dermal oedema.
- Stimulation and remodelling of dermal collagen.¹⁰

Mode of action of abhyanga: When the medicated oil is applied, the total quantity of a substance forced into the hair follicles and glands increases. Massaging also forces some material into the stratum corneum without molecular dispersion and diffusion through the barrier. By this explanation, we can say that massaging the skin with some oil may help absorb it through skin layers¹⁵.

Mode of action of snana / parisheka / prakshalana: Parisheka, snana, and prakshalana help to increase local blood circulation. Local deranged doshas are brought to normalcy. Parisheka might have helped the active principles to enter the twakgata dhamanis, which are connected to romakupa and swedavaha srotas there, by absorbing and transferring to the deeper layers with the help of Bhrajaka pitta¹⁶.

CONCLUSION

Bahirparimarjana chikitsa plays a crucial role in Kushta chikitsa. Depending on the disease condition and dosha involved, proper selection of the mode of application should be done and treated accordingly. Arunadutta, the commentator of Ashtanga Hridaya, has described the Bhrajaka Pitta and its functions like deepana and pachana. The substances applied on the skin by abhyanga, lepana and parisheka are being absorbed and assimilated by the Bhrajaka Pitta. Thus abhyanga, parisheka etc., do their action properly only after being digested by Bhrajaka Pitta, as no substance can act appropriately without digestion.

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