



Description of Kushtha Vyadhi (skin diseases) in Vedakala, Purankala and Samhitakala - A review

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ABSTRACT : Skin is known to us as "the largest organ of the human body". It is made up of multiple layers of epithelial tissues that protect underlying muscles and organs. As the interface with the surroundings, it plays the important functions like protecting against pathogens, insulation and temperature regulation. Skin also helps in synthesis of vitamin D and vitamin B. Skin maintains the beauty and personality of individual.

The study of Indian medical classics reveals that all skin diseases were considered under the heading of "Kushtha". In different Ayurveda Samhita description of Kushtha vyadhi is given. Now a days due to changing dietary habit incidence of skin diseases also increased. So it is need of time to study Ayurveda literature in case of kushtha disease and find preventive majors and treatment for it. In this paper we review literature of Kushtha vyadhi which was described in Veda, puran and Samhita kal of ancient time.

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1. Introduction

In Ayurveda all skin diseases have been described under the umbrella of Kushtha. Skin disorders are one of the major problems of modern scientific era. In modern text skin diseases are mentioned descriptively. Ayurvedic Acharyas also mentioned Kushtha Vyadhi which covers wide range of skin diseases. Detail study of all Samhita is necessary for prevention and treatment of skin diseases; so here we review description of Kushtha Vyadhi found in ancient time of vedakal ,puranakal and Sumhita kal.

Aim: To compile references of Kushtha Vyadhi (Skin diseases) mentioned in Vedakal, Puran kal and different Ayurveda Samhita kal.

Objectives: 1. To study historical review of Kushtha 2. To study review of kushtha in different samhitas (Laghutrayi & Bruhatrayi).

Materials and Methods: For the present study, the primary sources of literature were different Ayurveda Samhitas, Veda, Puran, different Indian philosophies, Dissertations from different Ayurveda universities and research papers.

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Observations (Review of Kushtha)

VEDAKALA¹

Rigveda: There are some examples in Rigveda which shows that Kushtha was prevalent in that period also.

The Charmaroga of Apala was cured by Lord Indra (R.V. 8-91)

Ghosa was suffering from 'Kushtha Roga'. She was disliked by her husband because of her ugly looks due to Kushtha. By administration of proper medication she got cured & accepted by her husband. (R.V. 1-1/7-7)

Yajurveda: Shukla Yajurveda mentioned various medicines having Kushthaghna properties.³ (Y.V. 1-23, 1-4, 1-24, 10 – 13/30, 8-10).

Atharvaveda: As Ayurveda is upveda of Atharvaveda, the various diseases have been described in Atharvaveda. Amongst them Skin has been mentioned as one of the chief site of diseases. Kushtha has been mentioned as 'Kshetriya Roga'. There is description of some herbs like, Nili, Asuri, Shyama, Rama etc. for the treatment of Kushtha. Atharvaveda defines the word "Kushtha" as 'Kutshita Rupavarna'. The most effective drug in the treatment of Kushtha according to Atharvaveda is Trivrut (operculina turpethum). It has advocated a special drug 'Kushtha' for its management (Ath. Ved. 1:2:4). Atharvaveda has recorded the miseries of Doshas which were inflicted by Kushtha 5 (Ath. Ved. 1:117:7). The word Kushtha appears in different places but it again seems to be used for the drug Kushtha. The commentator of Atharvaveda considers Kushtha as one of the localized disease 6 (Ath. Ved. 24). In historical back ground, Kushtha Vyadhi was described in Vedic Period, so the importance of skin diseases is very clear.

Agnipurana: Kushthaghna preparations are mentioned under the heading of "Nana Rogahara Aushadhani" 7 (Ag.Pu. 120/3). There is a reference regarding the internal use of Khadira and external use of Hartala & Manashilain Kustha Vyadhi.

Koutilya Arthashastra: In the chapter on secret means, a number of diseases are mentioned such as Kushtha, Unmaada, Apasmara, Prameha etc.

Mahabharata: It has been mentioned that the person suffering from 'Twakadosha' is not fit to be a king.

Yadnyavalkal smriti: Kushtha is mentioned as 'Paparog' due to its chronicity.

Charaka Samhita²

Acharya Charaka was the first to describe a long range of skin diseases in detail. Acharya Charaka described all the skin diseases with their etiology, pathogenesis and classification under the heading of Kushtha. Acharya Charaka has described 18 types of Kushtha, out of which seven types of Kushtha have been described as a 'Mahakushtha' in detail in Nidana Sthana. In the Chikitsa Sthana 18 Kushthas are classified as 7 Mahakushtha and 11 Kshudrakushtha. Some other references which are related to Kushtha in different Adhyayas (chapter) of Charak Samhita are as follows:

Kushtha is mentioned as the Samanya Hetu of NijaShotha (Ch. Chi.12/5, 6).

Kushtha is considered as a Santarpanjanya Vyadhi (Ch. Su.23/ 6).

It is included as one of the disease caused by Rakta Dhatu Dushti. (Ch.Su.28/11).

Kushtha is noted in Lekhan Yogya & Pachana Yogya Vyadhi (Ch.Chi.25/58,59).

In Kushthaja Vrana Agnikarma is contraindicated. (Ch.Chi. 25/106).

Sushruta Samhita³

Acharya Sushruta also gave 18 types of Kushtha. Apart from Acharya Charaka he mentioned Dadru as Mahakushtha and Siddham as Kshudra Kushtha. In list of Aupasargic Roga (communicable diseases), Sushruta mentioned the name of Kushtha (Su.Ni. 5/32). He was the first to describe hereditary and Krumij (infectious) cause of the Kushtha (Su.Su.5/21-26).

Acharya Sushruta also explained Dhatugat Avastha of Kushtha (Su.Ni. 5/26-31). Treatment of Kushtha is given in 2 chapters that are Kushtha Chikitsa and Mahakushtha Chikitsa. Sushruta mentioned Rasayan drugs in treatment of Kushtha.

Ashtanga Hridaya⁴

Vagbhata has followed Sushruta regarding classification of Mahakushtha & Kshudrakushtha (A.H.Ni. 14/6, 20-30). But Ekakushtha has been mentioned under Kshudra kushtha with same Lakshanas as described by Acharya Charaka (A.H.Ni.14/19, 28).

Kashyapa Samhita:

Kashyapa has given the classification of Kushtha on the basis of its Sadhyata & Asadhyata. There by 9 Kushthas are described as Sadhya while other 9 are Asadhya. Kashyapa mentioned some different Kushtha that are Shvitra, Vishaj Kushtha and Sthularukha. He didn't mention Charmkushtha, Alasaka & Visphotaka.

Harita Samhita:

Kushtha has been described in Trutiya Sthana of Harita Samhita.

Bhela Samhita:

Acharya Bhela has mentioned Dushit Jala (polluted water) as an etiological factor of Kushtha; and described Kushtha Roga in Nidana & Chikitsa Sthana.

SANGRAHA KALA

Madhava Nidana⁵

Madhava has described Nidana Panchaka of Kushtha according to the Acharya Charaka & Vagbhata. While Dhatugatatva, Sadhya-Asadhyata & Sankramakata (contagious) have been described as Sushruta.

Bangasena (1210 AD)⁶

Special causes of Kushtha are mentioned by Bangsen that are:

a) Tila b) Taila c) Kulattha d) Valmika e) Linga Roga f) Mahisha Dugdha, g) Mathita Dadhi

Sharngdhara Samhita (13 AD):

Described Kushtha in Purvakhand.

Sharngdhara mentioned Tamra which is the fourth layer of the skin is the Adhishtana (site) of all types of Kushtha⁷.

Vasavarajiyam (15 AD):

Some other types of Kushtha are described like Prasuti Kushtha, Galat Kushtha etc.

Bhava Prakasha (16 AD):

Classification & nomenclature of Kushtha as Acharya Charaka. The Dhatugatva & Sadhya-Asadhyata are described as Acharya Sushruta⁸.

Yoga Ratnakara (17 AD):

Yoga Ratnakara also described the contagious aspect of Kushtha⁹

Bhaishjya Ratnavali:

Marichyadi Taila and Rasamanikya are mentioned in treatment of Kushtha¹⁰.

Chikitsa Chandrodaya:

Rajeshwar Dutta Shashtri has tried to correlate different skin disorders with different types of Kushtha. He correlated Psoriasis with Kitibha kushtha.

Classification of Kushtha (Skin diseases) According To Different Ayurved samhitas

Table showing classification of Mahakushtha.

No.	Types of Kushtha	Ch.	Su	A.Hr	M.N.	B.P.
1	Kapal	+	+	+	+	+
2	Audumbara	+	+	+	+	+
3	Mandala	+	-	+	+	+
4	Rushyajivha	+	+	+	+	+
5	Pundarik	+	+	+	+	+
6	Sidhmha	+	-	-	+	+
7	Kakanaka	+	+	+	+	+
8	Dadru	-	+	+	-	-
9	Aruna	-	+	-	-	-

Table showing classification of Kshudra Kushtha.

No.	Types of Kshudra Kushtha	Ch.	Su.	A.Hr	B.S.	M.N.	B.P.
1	Ekakushtha	+	+	+	+	+	+
2	Kitibha	+	+	+	+	+	+
3	Charnmadala	+	+	+	-	+	+
4	Pama	+	+	+	+	+	+
5	Vicharchika	+	+	+	+	+	+
6	Charmakhya	+	-	+	+	+	+

7	Vipadika	+	-	+	-	+	+
8	Alasak	+	-	+	-	+	+
9	Dadru	+	-	-	+	+	+
10	Visphotaka	+	-	+	+	+	+
11	Shataru	+	-	+	+	+	+
12	Siddhma	-	+	+	-	-	-
13	Sthularushka	-	+	-	-	-	-
14	Mahakushtha	-	+	-	-	-	-
15	Visarpa	-	+	-	-	-	-
16	Parisarpa	-	+	-	-	-	-
17	Rakasa	-	+	-	-	-	-
18	Shvitra	-	-	-	+	-	-
19	Vishaja	-	-	-	+	-	-
20	Kachhu	-	-	-	-	+	+

Abbreviations: Ch- Charaka smhita, Su- Sushruta samhita, A. Hr. -Ashatang Hridaya, B. S. -Bhel Samhita, M. N. - Madhav Nidana, B.P.- Bhav prakash.

Discussion

From above references it is clear that Kushtha Vyadhi is known to Indian people from ancient period. In Ayurveda skin diseases are mentioned descriptively with Nidana (cause), Samprapti (pathology) and chikitsa (treatment). Kushtha Vyadhi includes most of skin diseases which is mentioned in modern text.

Conclusion

Ayurveda mentioned near about all skin diseases, described under the heading of kushtha. This is treasure of ancient science of life and useful to all researchers who is willing to do research in skin diseases. We can say that skin diseases which is given in today's modern literature was already known to ancient time Acharyas of Veda, Puran and Samhita kal.

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