Ayurveda Aspects on Vitiligo and its Management through Classical Approaches of Ayurveda

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Abstract:
Two types of Kushta are described in Ayurveda classics, Mahakushta and Kshudrakushta. Further Mahakushta is subdivided into 7 and Kshudrakushta into 11 types. Shwitra is disease manifested through skin can be co-related with Vitiligo (leukoderma), is a pigmentation disorder with complex causes and as per modern aspect. Imbalance of Vata and Bhrajaka pitta resides in skin mainly leads skin disease including vitiligo which possess symptom of Twak vaivarnyata. Switra also described as Shwetakushta and categorizes as Kushta rogas, which mainly involves vitiation of Doshas along with disturbance of Rakta, Mamsa and Medhas Dhatus. Ayurveda described several ways to treat vitiligo including utilization of Shodhana karma and herbal medicines. Various types of Lepa, Ghrita, Avaleha, Tail, Asava-Arista and Vati are mentioned in Ayurveda texts to treat Shwitra. Present article described Ayurveda perspectives on vitiligo and its management through ancient approaches.

Keywords: Vitiligo, Shwitra, Rakta, Mamsa, Lepa, Ghrita

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INTRODUCTION:
Two types of *Kushta* are described in Ayurveda classics, *Mahakushta* and *Kshudrakushta*. Further *Mahakushta* is subdivided into 7 and *Kshudrakushta* into 11 types[1] and total 18 types of *Kushthas* described in Chikitsasthana.[2]

Vitiligo is disease of skin which described as *Shwitra* in Ayurveda and involves improper distribution of melanin beneath the skin surface. Hereditary, environmental factor, medicines, drug abuse, side effects of radiation or chemotherapy, etc., are major causes of skin diseases. *Viruddhahara, Chardivegadharana, Atibhojana, Atyamla*, intake of *Lavana, Madhura* and *Katu Rasa Ahara, Matsyabhadhakshana* and *Papakarma*, etc. are major causes of vitiligo [3,5].

Ayurveda described three types of *Switra* as described in Figure 1, *Daruna* is condition in which *Doshas* vitiates *Rakta dhatu* and red color patches will appear on skin. *Aruna* is another type of *Switra* in which *Doshas* vitiates *Mamsa dhatu* and coppery color patches occurs on skin while *Kilasa* is condition of *Switra* in which *Medho dhatu* get vitiates with *Doshas* and white color patches occurs on skin.[6]

Ayurveda advocates various therapeutic options for treating *Switra* like; *Shodana chikitsa* (*Vamana, Virechana* and *Rakta mokshana*), *Shamana Chikitsa* (oral and external medications) and strict dietary restrictions along with lifestyle modifications and *Yoga* [7].

![Figure 1: Various types of Shwitra](image)

**Modern science described vitiligo** as condition of de-pigmentation of skin which not only causes physical distress but also leads psychological distress and social isolation. The disease involves gradual loss of pigment (melanin) from the dermal layers and appearance of white patches. Area of hands, neck, back and wrists are mainly affected by such types of condition. White or pale colored patch small in size mainly appears on skin and enlarges in due course of time. Small areas of body such as lips, face, scalp, legs, palms, soles and fingers, etc. also get affected [8]. Ayurveda described
involvement of three *Doshas; Vata, Pitta and Kapha doshas* in vitiligo as follows:

- **Vataja shwitra** posses *Ruksha* and red-black color patches.
- **Pittaja shwitra** possess coppery or lotus-like color along with symptoms of *Daha* and loss of hair.
- **Kaphaja shwitra** possess hard and white color patches with symptom of itching.

As mentioned above disturbance of *Rakta, Mansa* and *Meda Dhatus* mainly associated with vitiation of *Vaata, Pitta* and *Kapha Dosha* in vitiligo. [9,10]

**Samprapti:**

The process with the vitiation of Doshas, due to specific Nidana and which lead to the full-fledged manifestation of the disease after the Dosha- Dushya Sammurchana is called Samprapti. Its very essential and useful for the physician to understand the specific features of a disease, with a special reference to Dosha, Agni etc.[11]

Etiological factors affect *Doshas; Vata, Pitta* and *Kapha* which aggravates in skin, *Rakta* and *Mamsa*. Involvement of *Rasa* and *Raktha* leads major symptoms of vitiligo. As per severity of disease it is believed that **Vataja Shwitra** is difficult to cure while **Pittaja Shwitra** is more difficult to treat and **Kaphaja Shwitra** is considered impossible to treat. [12]

**Chikitsa:**[13,14,15,16]

*Shodhana* karma suggested as purification measure to eliminate morbid Dosha along with herbal medications. Oil massage and local application of herbal *Lepa* provides symptomatic relief. *Kwatha of Malayu, Asana, Priyangu, Satapuspa and Ambhasa* advocated for curing disease pathogenesis. *Ankollakadi, Avalgijadi, Bakucyadi, Balyadi, Bhallatakadi, Bhringarajadi, Gandhakadi, GunjaGunjaphaladi, Manasiladi, Marichadi, Pathyadi Lepa, Putikadi Lepa, Patrakadi Lepa, Triphaladi Lepa* and *Talakadi Lepa*, etc. advised for therapeutic action in vitiligo. Similarly compounds formulations such as *Bakuchi prayoga, Bhadrodumbarikadi yoga*, *Bakuchi bija yoga, Kakodumbarika kasaya*, *Dhatryadi kwata* and *Khadiradi Kashayam*, etc. prescribed for relieving disease manifestation.

**Churna for Vitiligo:**

- **Bakucyadya Curna,**
- **Khadira saradi Curna**
- **Pancanimba Curna**

**Herbalized Ghee for Vitiligo:**

- **Jatyadi Ghrita**
Apathya (unwholesome food and habits) for Vitiligo:[18]

- Viruddhahara and Guru ahara
- Vidahiahara
- Vishtambhiahara
- Kanda-Moola
- Amla–katu-lavanarasa
- Kritaghnata

Snana: Siddharthakasnana, Triphala Siddhajala, Dhavadigomutrapariṣeka etc.

DISCUSSION:

Shwitra is skin disease can be correlated with vitiligo as per the theory of modern science. It is a depigmenting skin disorder that causes regions of skin to lose colour. Vitiation of Doshas, Rakta, Mamsa and Medhas Dhatus mainly involves in disease pathogenesis. Improper distribution of melanin beneath the skin surface produces patches over the skin. Viruddhahara, Atibhojana, Atyamla, Chardivegadharana, intake of Lavana, Madhura and Katu Rasa Ahara and Papakarma, etc. are considered as triggering factors of disease. It affects persons of various ages, ethnic groups, and skin types, accounting for around 0.5 percent to 1% of the global population. Tridoshas vitiation occurs in connection with Twakchagat Pitta Dosha and Rasa-Rakta-mamasa – Udaka
Dhatu due to Atisevan of Asamyak Aahar Vihar. Shwitra-Kushtha, or Vitiligo, is the outcome of extensive vitiation at the Rasa and Rakta levels. Vata Pradhan Shwitra is difficult to treat, Pitta Pradhan Shwitra is much more difficult to treat, and Kapha Pradhan Shwitra is incurable. Lesions on the palm, sole, genitalia, and lips are also incurable. However, lesions caused by burns that are non-matted, recently formed, thin, and have black hair are treatable. Ayurveda described several ways to treat vitiligo including Shodhana and Shamhana therapies. Virechana is the greatest Shodhana Karma according to Dosha-Dushya for relieving Aam. Virechan with Psoralia Corylifolia (Bakuchi) and Euphobia Neriifolia herbal decoction (Snuhi), Bakuchyadi Churna, Khadirasaradi Churna, etc. can be utilised for Shamana therapy. Throughout the days of treatment patient should follow Pathyakar Aahar-Vihaar and Yoga practices.

CONCLUSION:
Ayurveda described different approach for the treatment of Vitiligo including purification measures i.e., Shodhan Chikitsa is utmost essential alongwith Kusthahar medicines. Ayurveda described several internal medicines as well as topical drugs for reliving symptoms of vitiligo. Various types of Lepa, Ghrita, Avaleha, Tail, Asava-Arista and Vati are mentioned in Ayurveda to treat vitiligo (Shwitra) this treatment ultimately reduce the comorbidity among the patient living with the condition like Vitiligo.

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