



Case Study

MANAGEMENT OF SHWITRA (VITILIGO) THROUGH AYURVEDA

Rani Khandelwal^{1*}, Chandraprabha Sharma¹, Harish Kumar Singhal², Dinesh Kumar Rai³

¹PG Scholar, ²Professor & HOD, ³Associate Professor, PG Department of Kaumarbhritya, Postgraduate Institute of Ayurveda, Dr. S R. Rajasthan Ayurved University, Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India.

Article info

Article History:

Received: 17-04-2024

Accepted: 13-05-2024

Published: 10-06-2024

KEYWORDS:

Shwitra, Vitiligo, Bakuchi, Psoralea corylifolia, Khadira Acacia Catechu.

ABSTRACT

A condition of acquired macular depigmentation called vitiligo is linked to melanocyte degeneration, caused by the autoimmune destruction of melanocytes cells. This vitiligo can be correlated to *Shwitra* in Ayurveda because of the disease's resemblance in appearance. In the Ayurveda classics especially *Charaka Samhita*, *Shwitra* has been mentioned under the heading of *Kushta Roga Chikitsa*. **Methodology:** The present case report is of 11 years old female child, came with complaints of whitish discolored patches on the almost all over body, effectively treated with *Shamana* and *Shodhana Chikitsa*. **Result:** Patient showed encouraging result after *Shodhana Chikitsa*, where subjective criteria evaluated using scoring method and objective criteria evaluated using VASI scoring method. **Discussion:** Patient was treated with *Shamana Aushadis* and *Shodhana*, where white discolored patches turned to pinkish, and after that the patches turned into normal skin color. Subject was observed with 95% improvement in subjective criteria & VASI scoring improved from 19.85 to 3.2. **Conclusion:** The present case study validated the efficacy of Ayurveda medicine in treating *Shwitra*.

INTRODUCTION

"Vitiligo" is a skin illness which is correlated with *Shwitra* or *Shweta-Kushtha* [1]. Skin is the main site of *Bhrajaka Pitta* and *Vata*. Skin disorders might be caused by an imbalance in both [2]. *Shwitra* is distinct from other skin conditions in that all skin tissue (*Twak*) functions normally, while the skin tissue (*Twak Vaivarnyata*) becomes discoloured and does not discharge (*Aparisarav Stravi*) [3,4]. According to *Acharya Vagbhata* it is caused by the three *Dosha's Vata, Pitta* and *Kapha*. There are three different types of *Shwitra* stated in *Dhatus*, depending on where it is found and what the color and texture of skin. When it is in *Rakta Dhātu*, it is dry and red in color, this type of *Shwitra* called *Vataja Shwitra*; when it is in *Mans Dhātu*, it is coppery in color and with burning sensation and loss of hairs, this type of *Shwitra* is called *Pittaj Shwitra*; when it is in *Medo Dhātu*, it is white in color and with itching sensation, this type of *Shwitra* is called *Kaphaja Shwitra* [5].

The aetiology of vitiligo is the subject of several hypotheses. Autoimmune, genetic, psychological, endocrine, chemical contact, and unfavourable medication interactions are the primary causes [6,7]. In Ayurveda, the true causes which are regarded as *Nidana* include dishonesty, ungraciousness, disdain for the gods, insulting the preceptors, wicked activities, transgressions from previous lifetimes, and consumption of contradictory foods [8]. Vitiligo affects 50% of all patients before the age of 18, and 25% show depigmentation before the age of 8 years [9]. Patches of hypopigmentation arise as a result of focal melanocyte loss. It is believed to be caused by the autoimmune destruction of melanocytes by cells. Frequently symmetrical, generalized vitiligo affects the hands, wrists, feet, knees, neck, as well as the skin around bodily orifices [10].

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To evaluate the efficacy of Ayurvedic treatment protocol in *Shwitra*.

Brief History of Patient

The present case report was of 11 years old female child, came with complaints of white discoloration over her scalp, first with minor irritation and a very little lesion. The patient was unconcerned about it and ignored it, but her sister saw more white

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Quick Response Code	
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patches on both legs, upper limbs, trunk and around eyes after two month. Presented with severe itching, dryness, and the color of the patches were white. After that patient's parents took her to get a suitable and effective management to the OPD of Kaumarbhritya in Sanjeevani Ayurved Hospital. There she was diagnosed with *Shwitra* and given Ayurveda treatment protocol. There was no associated symptoms present.

Past History: There was a history of above skin complaints before 1 year. However, no history of DM/other systemic disorders.

Family History

Nothing significant; all other family members are reportedly in good health.

Personal History: She was a school going child of vegetarian Hindu family. She had loss of appetite with severely constipated bowel with normal micturition. She had history of sound sleep. There was no history to allergy to any medicine or food.

History of Previous Treatment: There was no history of any medication prior to attend the OPD.

Dietary Habits: Her *Agni* was *Vishama* and take 1-2 times food in 24 hrs.

- Commonly consumed food – Homemade food
- Agni status – *Vishama Agni*
- Present appetite- Good

Family history- No family history of *Shwitra* was found.

Dashvidha Pariksha: Her *Prakriti* (physical constitution) was *Pitta-Kaphaja*, *Twaksara* (having good quality skin), *Madhayama Samhanana* (medium body built), *Sama Pramana* (proportionate body structures), *Madhyam Satva* (medium psyche) with *Vishmagni* (disturbed *Agni*), *Avara Vyayama Shakti* (weak physical capacity) and of *Bala Vaya* (childhood period). She presented *Vikrati* in *Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa, Meda* with *Daurblaya* (weakness).

Anthropometric Measurement: The height of patient was 140cm while weight was 28 kilogram.

Rupa (clinical findings)

Table 1: Depicting the Findings on her Skin

Site of Lesions	Face, trunk and limbs (upper and lower)
Lesion	Epidermal
Distribution	Generalized, symmetrical, non-segmental and bilateral
Character of lesion	Macule
Number of lesions	Multiple lesions
Color	White
Arrangement	Segmental, diffused
Itching	Present
Severity	Severe
Superficial sensation on lesion	Normal sensation
Inflammation	Absent
Swelling	Absent
Discharge	Absent

Samprapti Ghatak

- *Dosha - Tridosha*
- *Dushya - Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa, Meda*
- *Ama - Jatargni Janya Ama*
- *Agni - Jatargnimandhya, Dhatwagnimandhya*
- *Srotas - Rasavaha, Raktavaha, Mamsavaha & Medovaha*
- *Srotodusti Prakara - Sanga*
- *Rogamarga - Bahya*
- *Udbhava Sthana - Amashaya*

- *Vyakta Sthana - Twacha*
- *Roga Swabhava - Chirakari*
- *Sadhyasadyata - Yasya*

Ayurveda treatment protocol

- *Deepana Pachana*
- *Snehapana*
- *Abhyanga and Swedana*
- *Virechana*
- *Shamana Aushadha*

Table 2: Sodhana Karma advised to the patient

1 st Sodhana	2 nd Sodhana
<i>Sneha Pana (Panchtikta Ghrita)</i> 7 Sept. – 13 Sept. 1 st day 20ml Increase 10ml everyday Maximum 80ml	<i>Sneha Pana (Panchtikta Ghrita)</i> 19 Dec. – 25 Dec. 1 st day 20ml Increase 20ml everyday Maximum 140ml
<i>Virechana yoga</i> given on 16 Sept.	<i>Virechana - Abhyadi Modaka</i> given on 28/11/ 23
No. of Vegas- 16	No. of Vegas - 18
<i>Madhyama Shuddhi</i>	<i>Madhyama Shuddhi</i>
<i>Sansarjan karma</i> for 5 days	<i>Sansarjan karma</i> for 5 days

(Note: Internal Medication was stopped during *Shodhana Chikitsa*)**Table 3: Showing details of Shamana Chikitsa**

Date	Management	Improvement
16/7/2023	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Before meal (compound mixture of) <i>Shudhha Gandhak</i> – 200mg <i>Praval pishti</i> – 200mg <i>Arogyvardhini Vati</i> – 200mg <i>Swarnamakshik</i> – 200mg <i>Panchtikta ghrit guggullu</i> – 200mg <i>Bakuchi churna</i>- 2gm <i>Manjistha churna</i> – 1gm TDS with <i>Madhu</i> After meal <i>Khadirarishta</i> – 3 tsp <i>Sarivadyasava</i> – 3 tsp With equal amount of water – BD Before Meal <i>Panchtikta Ghrita</i>-1.5 tsp with lukewarm milk <i>Shashilekha vati</i> 2 tab BD Local Application <i>Leukoskin</i> Lotion – BD After half an hour, expose the area to the mild sunlight for 10-20 mins At night <i>Panchsakar Churna</i> – 1 tsp <i>Isabgol churna</i> – ½ tsp with lukewarm water 	White patches on all over body (around eyes, trunk, upper limbs, lower limbs), itching decreases
11/8/2023	CST	White patches become reddish in colour, mild itching present.
18/9/2023	CST	Granulation starts in white patches and becoming pink reddish in colour, no itching.
3/10/2023	CST	Pigmentation start in white patches in form of black spots, no itching.
29/12/2023	CST with local application of <i>Bakuchi Taila</i> + <i>Madhuyashti Churna</i> + <i>Balsudha</i>	Area of white patches decreases. Repigmentation spots started to develop over face, scalp, trunk, upper extremities and thighs, no itching.
3/2/2024	CST	Clear skin appearance in some area, only specks of white spot remain in some body area, no itching.

RESULTS

VASI Score before treatment

$VASI = \Sigma \{Hand\ units\} \times \{Residual\ Depigmentation\}$

Table 4: Showing result of VASI Score in Various body parts

Body parts	Before treatment	After treatment
Face & neck	1x.25	0
Upper extremity	6x 0.5	2x0.1
Trunk (front)	8x 0.5	4x0.25
Trunk (Back)	8x 0.75	2x0.25
lower extremity	8 x 0.75	4x0.25
Feet	2x 0.25	2x0.25
hand	1x 0.1	0
Total VASI Score	19.85	3.2

Table 5: Results showing changes before and after the treatment

Criteria's	Score	
	Before treatment	After treatment
Color of Patch	3 [White (<i>Shweta</i>)]	0 (Normal skin colour in some body area, lightening of white patches in some body area)
Size of Patches	2, 3 (5 to 15 cm, more than 15 cm)	0,1 (Absent of patch, less than 5 cm)
No. of black dot in observed patch	0 (Non- appearance of black spot)	3 (Appearance of more than 10 black spot)

Before Treatment

After treatment



Figure No. 1(a) Before Treatment



Figure No. 1(b) After Treatment



Figure No. 2 (a) Before Treatment



Figure No. 2(b) After Treatment



Figure No. 3(a) Before Treatment



Figure No. 3 (b) After Treatment



Figure No. 4 (b) Before Treatment



Figure No. 4 (b) After Treatment



Figure No. 5 (a) Before Treatment



Figure No. 5 (b) After Treatment

DISCUSSION

Shwitra can be managed very well in Ayurveda. Ayurvedic treatment for vitiligo focuses on balancing the *Doshas*, purifying the blood, and rejuvenating the skin to promote pigmentation. If treatment can be

initiated in early stages, we can observe satisfactory results. In this case patient presents with whitish discolored patches on face, trunk and limbs after 1 month of treatment white patches turned to pinkish

with inflammation and then after 1 month of treatment white patches turned into pinkish without inflammation, and after 39 days of treatment Gradual filling of depigmented area with normal skin color. The total improvement is evaluated as per VASI score. Completely absent of white patches in some area and lightening of white patches.

Panchakarma treatments like *Virechana* used to detoxify the body and balance the *Doshas*. *Virechana*, also known as therapeutic purgation, is the procedure by which diseased humour is eliminated using the *Adhobhaga*. It lowers the body's morbid *Doshas*, especially *Pitta*, to *Pakvashaya*. Properties like *Ushna*, *Tikshna*, *Sukshma*, *Vyavayi*, and *Vikasi* are present in the medicine *Virechana*. After being absorbed, *Virya* causes *Virechana Yoga* to go via the *Hridaya*, *Dhamani*, and finally the macro and micro channels of the body. By *Dhatu Shaithilya Karma*, *Vikasi Guna* causes the bond to relax and loosen, whereas *Vyavayi Guna* provides fast absorption. *Ushna Guna* liquifies (*Vishayndana*) *Dosha Sanghata*. The purpose of *Tikshna Guna* is to micro formally broken the *Dosha* and *Mala*. *Sukshma Guna* causes it to enter micro channels where it breaks down endogenous poisons before being expelled^[11].

All ingredients of *Shashilekha Vati* are *Kapha Vatashamaka* by virtue of their *Katu Tikta Rasa*, *Katu Vipaka* and *Ushna Virya*. All of these contents specifically act as *Kushtaghna* by their *Prabhava*. *Gandhaka* and *Bakuchi* being *Katu Tikta Rasa*, *Katu Vipaka* and *Ushna Virya* act as *Aamapachaka* by *Agni Deepana*. *Tamra* scrapes out the stucked *Aam*, in various *Strotas*. It also acts as *Vatashamaka* by *Madhura Vipaka*. *Parada* has an ability to reach all *Sukshmatikushta Strotas*. All these factors contribute for *Agnivardhana* and hence proper functioning of *Pachaka Pitta*. Thus good quality of *Ahara Rasa* is produced which intern helps further *Dhatu* to achieve the expected *Nirama Avastha*. Due to which, functioning of *Rakta Dhatvagni* gets regulated, proper *Rakta Prasadana* is done. It helps remake and *Bhrajaka Pitta* to function properly and giving rise to a normal color and luster to skin respectively. *Shashilekha Vati* enters to all minute *Strotas* and it acts on all *Dosha, Dhatu* by properties of *Sukshma, Tikshna Guna* and *Ushna Virya*. Thus, it does *Deepana, Pachana* and acts as *Tvachya, Varnya*, and *Shvitraghna*^[12].

Panchatikta Ghrita Guggulu has been mentioned in *Bhaishiyaratnavali Kushtha Rogadhikara*. The main contents of this drug are *Panchatikta Gana Dravyas*, ghee and *Guggulu*. So probable mode of action of *Panchatikta Ghrita Guggulu* can be said as all contents are having *Tikta Rasa, Laghu* and *Ruksha Guna*, so it acts as anti-itching property, *Kleda* and *Vikrut Meda Upashoshana, Vrana Shodhaka*. It mainly acts on body wastes (*Kleda*), fat (*Meda*), *Lasika*

(*plasma*), *Rakta* (blood), *Pitta, Sweda* (sweat) and *Shleshma*^[13].

The ingredients of *Arogyavardhini Vati* are *Shuddha Parada* (herbal purified mercury), *Shuddha Gandhak* (herbal purified sulphur), *Loha Bhasma* (ash prepared from iron), *Abhraka Bhasma* (purified and processed mica), *Tamra Bhasma* (ash prepared from copper), *Triphala* (*Haritaki, Vibhitaki, Amalaki*), *Shilajatu* (mineral pitch), *Guggulu* (gum resin), *Chitrak Moola, Katuki*, Juice extract of *Neemba* leaf. It promotes balance and maintains the liver functions as well as healthy digestive system. It does the *Shoshana* of different excess *Snigdha Dravyas* present in body. It also does the *Pachana* of *Drava* and *Kleda* and does the *Rakta Vardhana*.

The Main components of *Khadirarishta* are *Khadira* extract (*Acacia Catechu*). *Khadir* extract is used as an immune-modulatory, purify blood, astringent, bactericidal, refrigerant and antiphogistic^[14]. *Bakuchi Churna* comprise psoralen, isopsoralen, bakuchiol, bavchinin, bavachin and corylin that have antioxidant homes, assist in Stimulates melanocytes for Melanin synthesis, immuno-modulatory impact and inhibitory towards antigen precipitated granulation^[15].

Main contents of *Gandhaka Rasayana* are *Shudha-Gandhak* (sulphur) and it has several potential uses for skin health. *Gandhaka-Rasayana* is *Rakta Shodhaka, Twachya* and useful in skin condition (*Kushtaghna*).

Praval Pishti, a magical powdered formulation of coral is hallowed with *Madhura, Amla* and *Kashaya Rasa* and shows *Laghu* and *Snigdha Guna*. It inherently portrays *Sheeta Virya* and *Madhura Vipaka*. It pacifies all the three *Doshas*, mainly *Kapha- Pitta Doshas*.

Sun Exposure Therapy: Controlled exposure to sunlight or UV light therapy is sometimes recommended in Ayurveda to stimulate melanin production in the affected areas. *Bakuchi* oil is Ayurvedic medicinal oil prepared from the dried fruits of *P. corylifolia*, and sesame oil for treatment of vitiligo in Ayurveda. Photosensitizing agents involves *Bakuchi* (*Psoralea corylifolia*) contain psoralen to stimulate melanocytes when exposed to ultraviolet light exposure. The treatment consists of the oil application and sunlight exposure to the affected areas of the skin. The major secondary metabolite of *P. corylifolia* is the furanocoumarin, psoralen. Psoralen stimulates repigmentation by sensitizing the skin to ultraviolet light.

CONCLUSION

The prevalence of vitiligo is rising as a result of unhealthy lifestyle choices, thus it's critical to discover and eradicate the disease's multifactorial causes. Following the Ayurvedic treatment protocol outlined in *Shwitra Chikitsa* can help most individuals regain their

pigmentation. *Shwitra* is a condition characterized by cosmetic impairment that has a significant influence on the mind and body. By producing an overall improvement in terms of the number and size of lesions as well as the restoration of normal skin pigmentation, Ayurvedic treatment protocol helps to eradicate the disease's underlying cause and avoids a recurrence.

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Cite this article as:

Rani Khandelwal, Chandraprabha Sharma, Harish Kumar Singhal, Dinesh Kumar Rai. Management of Shwitra (Vitiligo) Through Ayurveda. International Journal of Ayurveda and Pharma Research. 2024;12(5):32-38.

<https://doi.org/10.47070/ijapr.v12i5.3186>

Source of support: Nil, Conflict of interest: None Declared

*Address for correspondence

Dr. Rani Khandelwal

PG Scholar

PG Department of Kaumarbhritya

Postgraduate Institute of Ayurveda

Dr. SR Rajasthan Ayurved

University, Jodhpur, Rajasthan

Email:

khandelwalrani529@gmail.com

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