

CASE STUDY

Efficacy of Ayurvedic Treatment in *Vipadika* (Cracked Heels): A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Background: In *Ayurveda*, most skin disorders are classified under *Kushta*. *Vipadika*, a type of *Kshudra Kushta*, is clinically characterized by *Teevra Vedana* (severe pain) and *Sphutanam* (cracks), predominantly affecting the palms and soles. It shares clinical similarity with palmoplantar psoriasis. **Objective:** To assess the clinical efficacy of Ayurvedic therapies—*Raktamokshana* and *Shamana Aushadhi*—in managing *Vipadika*. **Methodology:** A 68-year-old male patient with a 6-month history of painful, cracked heels, scaling, itching, and intermittent bleeding was treated using a combined regimen of *Raktamokshana*, internal medicines (*Laghu Malini Vasant*, *Anantmool*, *Raktaangi*, *Shatavari*), and topical applications (*Paaddari Malhar*, *Arka Taila*). **Results:** The patient showed notable improvement within 3 weeks, with marked reduction in fissuring, bleeding, itching, and pain. No adverse events were observed. **Conclusion:** A combination of *Shodhana* (*Raktamokshana*) and *Shamana* therapy offers a safe and effective approach in managing *Vipadika*.

Key Words *Ayurveda*, *Vipadika*, *Cracked heels*, *Raktamokshana*, *Shamana Aushadhi*, *Paaddari Malham*

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INTRODUCTION

Cracked heels—though often dismissed as a minor cosmetic concern—can be surprisingly debilitating. What begins as dryness and discomfort can evolve into deep fissures, bleeding, and severe pain, impairing daily activities like walking and standing. In elderly patients especially, these symptoms may linger or worsen, diminishing quality of life and self-esteem. In *Ayurveda*, such symptoms are not viewed in isolation but as part of a deeper systemic

imbalance. The condition is well described under the term *Vipadika*, one of the *Kshudra Kushta* (minor skin disorders). Classical texts like the *Ashtanga Hridaya* and *Charaka Samhita* describe *Vipadika* as a disorder marked by *Teevra Vedana* (intense pain), *Sphutanam* (cracks), and *Kandu* (itching), predominantly affecting the soles and palms¹. What makes *Vipadika* especially interesting from an *Ayurvedic* perspective is its multifactorial origin. Improper diet (*Ahara*), excessive physical exertion (*Vihara*), seasonal influences, and faulty lifestyle choices can lead to

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the vitiation of Vata and Kapha doshas. This, in turn, affects the *Rasa*, *Rakta*, and *Maamsa Dhatus* and eventually manifests externally as painful, cracked skin. While modern dermatology often approaches cracked heels with topical emollients or corticosteroids—offering temporary relief—*Ayurveda* takes a more comprehensive view. It emphasizes root-cause treatment through *Shodhana* (bio-purification) and *Shamana* (palliative care), ensuring deeper healing and long-term management without side effects. This case study explores the *Ayurvedic* management of a chronic *Vipadika* case using a tailored combination of *Raktamokshana* (bloodletting), internal herbal formulations, and medicated topical applications. The patient, a 68-year-old man with six months of persistent symptoms, showed significant improvement within a few weeks—highlighting the relevance of classical *Ayurvedic* approaches in managing modern chronic skin disorders.

Patient Information

A 68-year-old male presented to the OPD on 04/03/2023 with a 6-month history of dryness, scaling, itching, fissures, pain, and bleeding in both soles. There was no significant family or systemic history.

Table 1 Chief complaints

Symptom	Duration
Severe pain in soles	6 months
Cracking of both soles	6 months
Difficulty in walking	5 months
Burning sensation in soles	5 months
Bleeding after exertion	3 months
Occasional swelling in feet	3 months

Table 2 *Nidana Panchaka*

Component	Description
<i>Nidana</i> (Etiological)	<i>Atichankramana</i> (excessive walking), <i>Katu-Amla Rasa</i> dominant diet, <i>Ruksha Ahara-Vihara</i> (dry

Clinical Findings

Examination

Trividha Pareeksha:

दर्शनप्रश्नसंस्पर्शैः परीक्षा त्रिविधा स्मृता¹
(Ch.Chi.25/22)²

- *Darshana*: Dryness, scaling, irregular cracked skin over both soles.
- *Prashna*: Pain during walking, burning sensation.
- *Sparshana*: Cold to touch.

Ashtavidha Pareeksha:

- *Naadi*: *Vata-Kapha*
- *Jivha*: *Saam++*
- *Druk, Shabda, Aakruti, Mala, Mutra:*
Prakrit

- *Sparsha*: *Sheeta*

Dashavidha Pareeksha:

- *Prakruti*: *Kapha-Pitta*
- *Vikruti*: *Rasavaha, Raktavaha, Maamsavaha*
- *Samhanana*: *Uttam*
- *Satva*: *Madhyam*
- *Vyayamashakti*: *Avara*
- *Vaya*: *Vriddhavastha*

Diagnostic Assessment

Ayurvedic Diagnosis: *Vipadika (Vata-Kaphaja Kshudra Kushta)*³ based on classical signs of fissures, pain, itching, and bleeding localized to soles. As per *Sushruta Samhita*, *Vipadika* is caused by excessive walking and dryness, leading to cracks and pain in the soles.

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factors)	food and lifestyle), <i>Adhyashana</i> (frequent eating), <i>Viruddhahara</i> (incompatible food), <i>Ati Mamsa Sevanam</i> (excessive meat intake) ⁴
Purvarupa (Prodromal symptoms)	<i>Kandu</i> (itching)
Rupa (Clinical features)	<i>Paadtala Sphutanam</i> (cracks in soles), <i>Teevra Vedana</i> (intense pain), <i>Kandu</i> (itching), <i>Raktasrava</i> (bleeding), <i>Twak Rukshata</i> (dryness), <i>Daha</i> (burning sensation)
Upashaya (Relieving factors)	Application of <i>Snigdha</i> (unctuous) and <i>Sheeta</i> (cooling) substances, rest, internal and external <i>Shamana Aushadhi</i>
Samprapti (Pathogenesis)	<i>Agnimandya</i> → <i>Rasa Dushti</i> → <i>Rakta Dushti</i> → <i>Vata-Kapha</i> vitiation → <i>Twakgat Sthanasamshraya</i> (localization in skin) → <i>Vipadika</i> manifestation

Therapeutic Intervention and Timeline

Table 3 Internal Medications (1 month)

Medicine	Dose	Anupana	Duration
<i>Laghu Malini Vasant</i>	1 tab BD	Ghee + Sugar	30 days
<i>Anantmool + Raktaangi + Shatavari</i>	15g + 15g + 10g (powder)	Warm water (TID)	30 days

Table 4 External Applications

Medicine	Use	Duration
<i>Paaddari Malhar</i>	Local application	Daily
<i>Arka Taila</i>	Local application	Daily

Table 5 Mode of Action of Internal and External Medicines Used in the Management of Vipadika

S.No.	Medicine	Contents	Mode of Action
1	<i>Laghu Malini Vasant</i>	Purified Mercury (<i>Parada</i>), Sulphur (<i>Gandhaka</i>), Mica (<i>Abhraka</i>), Pearl (<i>Mukta</i>), Gold <i>Bhasma</i> , Aloe vera juice (<i>Kumari swarasa</i>), etc.	Acts on <i>Jatharagni</i> and <i>Rasadhatvagni</i> to correct <i>Agnimandya</i> . Indicated in <i>Pitta</i> and <i>Rakta Dushti</i> . Supports detoxification and improves immunity ⁶ .
2	<i>Anantmool</i> (Hemidesmus indicus)	Root powder	<i>Tridoshaghna</i> , especially effective in <i>Rakta</i> and <i>Pitta</i> vitiation. Acts as a blood purifier and anti-inflammatory agent ⁵ .
3	<i>Raktaangi (Manjishtha)</i>	<i>Rubia cordifolia</i> root	Known for its <i>Raktashodhak</i> (blood-purifying), <i>Shothahara</i> (anti-inflammatory), and <i>Vrana ropaka</i> (wound healing) properties. Helpful in <i>Kustha</i> and <i>Raktavikara</i> ⁶ .
4	<i>Shatavari</i> (<i>Asparagus racemosus</i>)	Root powder	<i>Rasayana</i> , <i>Raktapittahara</i> , immunomodulatory, anti-ulcer, and cooling. Balances <i>Vata</i> and <i>Pitta</i> , and improves healing ⁷ .
5	<i>Paaddari Malhar</i>	<i>Tila Taila</i> , <i>Shuddha Sphatika</i> , <i>Shorea robusta</i> resin	Local <i>Shamana</i> formulation effective in reducing pain, dryness, and burning. Promotes crack healing in <i>Paadtala</i> region.
6	<i>Arka Taila</i>	Decoction of <i>Arka Patra</i> (<i>Calotropis gigantea</i>), <i>Haridra Kalka</i> (<i>Curcuma longa</i>) prepared in oil	Topical application indicated in <i>Kushta</i> , <i>Pama</i> , <i>Vicharchika</i> . Has anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial, and skin rejuvenating action ⁸ .

Outcome and Follow-Up

Table 6 Observation table:

Clinical Feature	Before Treatment	After Treatment	Follow-Up (15 Days)
Scaling	+++++	++	-
Fissures	++++	++	-
Itching	+++	+	++
Pain	+++	+	-
Bleeding	+++	-	-

Timeline:

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Figure 1 Start of Treatment: 04/03/2023



Figure 2 After 1st follow up



Figure 3 Follow-up: 05/05/2023

The patient showed significant clinical improvement with no recurrence reported during follow-up.

Discussion

Vipadika, one of the *Kshudra Kushtha* described in *Ayurveda*, is more than just a cosmetic problem—it is a chronic condition that can significantly impact daily life. Characterized by excessive dryness, deep cracks, pain, and occasional bleeding on the soles (and sometimes

palms), it often affects mobility and even confidence, especially in elderly individuals.

In this case, the patient's lifestyle and dietary habits, such as excessive walking (*Atichankramana*), frequent consumption of spicy and sour foods (*Katu-Amla Ahara*), and incompatible food combinations (*Viruddhahara*), were all consistent with classical *Nidanas* (causative factors) of *Vipadika*. These led to the vitiation of *Vata* and *Rakta*, which play a central role in the condition's pathology. According to *Ayurvedic* principles, when *Rakta* is involved in a skin condition, *Shodhana* (cleansing therapy) is crucial. In this case, *Raktamokshana* (bloodletting), specifically *Siravyadha* done two *Angulas* above *Kshipra Marma*, proved to be a turning point. Not only did it reduce local inflammation and improve circulation, but the patient also experienced rapid relief from pain, burning, and bleeding—clearly showing its therapeutic value⁹.

Once the cleansing phase was complete, internal herbal formulations were introduced to restore balance and prevent recurrence. *Laghu Malini Vasant* helped ignite the impaired digestive fire (*Agnimandya*) and correct *Rasa Dhatu Dushti*. Herbs like *Anantmool*, *Raktaangi (Manjishtha)*, and *Shatavari* supported the healing process by purifying the blood, reducing inflammation, and nourishing the tissues⁵⁻⁷. Topical applications also played an important role. *Paaddari Malhar* and *Arka Taila* provided local relief by moisturizing the skin, promoting healing, and preventing infections. These formulations are rooted in

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classical *Ayurvedic* wisdom and supported by modern pharmacological evidence. Unlike standard treatments for cracked heels, which often focus on short-term relief through moisturizers or steroid creams, this *Ayurvedic* protocol addressed both the root cause (*Dosha-Dushya Sammurchhana*) and the local symptoms. This integrative, layered approach ensured not just symptom relief but long-term resolution without side effects or recurrence.

CONCLUSION

This case clearly demonstrates how *Ayurvedic* treatment—when applied systematically and with individualized care—can offer lasting relief in *Vipadika*. The combination of *Raktamokshana*, internal herbal remedies, and external applications worked in harmony to detoxify, heal, and rejuvenate the affected tissues. For, chronic skin conditions like cracked heels, especially in older adults, such a holistic approach offers a safe, affordable, and effective alternative to conventional therapies. Early intervention using *Raktamokshana* can not only ease suffering but also prevent the need for prolonged treatment. To further establish the efficacy of this approach, larger clinical studies and comparative trials with modern treatments would be valuable. Nonetheless, this case adds to the growing body of evidence that *Ayurveda* offers powerful, natural solutions to complex chronic conditions when properly applied.

Patient Perspective

The patient reported satisfaction with the treatment, particularly the rapid improvement in pain and mobility, and appreciated the holistic care approach.

Declaration of competing interest: No

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