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Comprehensive Scrutinization and Categorization of Skin Diseases in the Ayurvedic Classics

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ABSTRACT

Dermatology and cosmetology are the leading branches of the medical science, because the prevalence of skin diseases and cosmetic problems is very high and is of serious concern in the society. In Ayurvedic classics skin diseases have been mainly described under the heading of kushthanidan and chikitsa, where eighteen types of kushth have been described but this is not the only description of skin diseases in Ayurveda. Various types of skin diseases as well as individual features of skin diseases have been mentioned at various places in Ayurvedic texts.

KEYWORDS

Skin diseases, Scrutinization and Categorization, Ayurvedic classics



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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a holistic approach to health and is designed to help people live long and healthy. Nowadays, whole world is gradually turning towards *ayurveda* for safe and complete cure of diseases. Especially in the field of skin problems *ayurveda* can contribute remarkably. Amongst all body organs, skin is more easily inspected or more exposed to infection, disease and injury. Because of its visibility, skin reflects our emotions and some aspects of normal physiology.

Skin acts as a waterproof, insulating shield, guarding the body against extremes of temperature, damaging sunlight and harmful chemicals. Skin is one of the five 'Gyanindriyas' as described in *Ayurvedic* texts (*ch.su.8/8*). It is responsible for 'Sparsh Gyan' or touch sensation; therefore it plays a great role in physical and mental well being of any individual.

Different types of dermatological problems as well as individual features of skin diseases have been mentioned in *ayurvedia*. For example – *Kshudraroga* in *Sushrut Samhita*, *pramehpidika* in *Charak Samhita*, *vran- shotha*, *vidradhi*, *arbudha* and *granthi* have been described at various places.

The present work has been aimed to scrutinize all the *ayurvedic* classics for the description of skin diseases and to categorize available description of various skin diseases in *ayurveda*.

Hence the present study entitled "Comprehensive Scrutinization and

Categorization of skin diseases in the *Ayurvedic* classics" has been undertaken with following aims & objectives.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Enlisting of skin disease/ dermatological features mentioned at various places in *Ayurvedic* classics and their equivalence with modern dermatological description.
2. To categorize the skin diseases and dermatological features mentioned in *Ayurvedic* classics.

Plan of Study:

1. Different classical texts will be scrutinized to explore the description of skin diseases.
2. All the skin diseases as well as dermatological features mentioned at various places in *Ayurvedic* texts will be categorized.

Scrutinization of skin diseases in Ayurvedic classics:-

There is no separate and independent description of dermatology as a branch in *Ayurveda*. Even then scattered but sufficient material is available in the chapters of *Kushtha*, *KshudraRogas*, *PramehaPidika*, *Vidradhi*, *Arbuda*, *Granthi*, *Visarpa* etc. and all these *twakrogas* can be identified as according to their pain, colour, shape, effect, name and treatment. In the present work has been aimed to scrutinize all the *ayurvedic* classics for the



description of *twakrogas* and to categorize available description of various *twakrogas* in *ayurveda*.

Table 1 Skin diseases in Ayurvedic classics

| Sr.No | Name of Samhitas | Name of Chapters |
|-------|--|--|
| 1. | <i>Charaka Samhita</i> ¹ | <i>Kushtha, Pramehapidika, Kotha</i> , Significant features of skin diseases like– <i>Kandu, sphutita, twakrukshata, paarushya, vaivarnya, suptata, paridaha, kharata, prabha etc.</i> |
| 2. | <i>Sushruta Samhita</i> ² | <i>Sopha, vidradhi, arbuda, visarpa, granthi, upadansa, shlipada, apache, 44 types of Kshudraroga, vrana, sadyovrana and shukadosha.</i> |
| 3. | <i>Astanga Sangraha and Astanga Hridaya</i> ³ | Nine types of <i>granthi</i> and 36 types of <i>Kshudrarogas</i> (28 types are similar to <i>Sushruta</i>). Some additional <i>Kshudrarogas</i> are:- <i>viddha, gardabhi, gandhapitika, rajika, irivellika, lancchanna, utkotha&kotha.</i> |
| 4. | <i>Madhava Nidana</i> ⁴ | 42 types of <i>Kshudrarogas, Shitapitta, udarda, kotha, visphota, masurika&balarogas</i> having skin manifestations |
| 5. | <i>Sharangdhar</i> ⁵ | 60 types of <i>Kshudraroga</i> (34 types are similar to <i>Vagbhata</i>). Some additional <i>Kshudrarogas</i> are:- <i>Vyanga – 4 types, Visphota – 8 types and Masurika– 14 types</i> |

| | | |
|----|----------------------------------|---|
| 6. | <i>Kashyapa</i> ⁶ | Features of <i>jantudansha</i> (insect bite) in children. |
| 7. | <i>Bhavaprakash</i> ⁷ | 43 types of <i>Kshudrarogas, Firangaroga.</i> |

Categorization of *Twakroga* Mentioned in Classical texts on the basis of Modern Dermatological nomenclature:-

We have scrutinized the various skin diseases as well as individual features of skin diseases mentioned in various *Ayurvedic* classics and tried to categorize them according to classification made in modern dermatological texts on the basis of similarity of features described in *Ayurvedic* as well as modern dermatological texts.

(1) Mahakushtha:-

1. *Kapala* (Borderline Leprosy)
2. *Audumber* (Histoid Leprosy)
3. *Mandala* (Tuberculoid Leprosy)
4. *Rishyajihva* (Borderline-Lepromatous Leprosy)
5. *Pundarika* (Borderline Tuberculoid Leprosy)
6. *Kakanaka* (Lepromatous Leprosy)

(2) Diseases of the Hair and Scalp:-

1. *Khalitya* (Diffuse Hair Fall)
2. *Palitya* (Canitis)
3. *Indralupta* (Alopecia areata)⁸
4. *Darunaka* (Pityriasis Capitis)
5. *Arunshika* (Seborrheic dermatitis)

(3) Diseases of the Nails:-

1. *Chippa* (Paronychia)



2. *Kunakha*(T.Unguium)

(4) Diseases of the Sweat Glands:-

1. *Rajika*(Miliaria)
2. *Agnirohini*(Hidradenitissuppurativa)
3. *Aswedan*(Anhidrosis)
4. *Atiswedan*(Hyperhidrosis)

(5) Diseases of the Sebaceous Glands:-

1. *Anusayi*(Acne conglobata)
2. *Indravaddha*(Rosacea)
3. *Mukhadusika*(Acne vulgaris)

(6) Diseases due to Fungal Infection:-

1. *Dadru*(TineaCorporis)
2. *Alasa*(TineaPedis)
3. *Vrishanakachhu*(TineaCruris/
Intertrigo)

(7) Diseases due to Virus Infection:-

1. *Ajagallika*(MolluscumContagiosum)
2. *Pasanagardabha*(Mumps)
3. *Kaksha*(Herpes zoster)⁹
4. *Masurika*(Chicken pox)
5. *Charmakila*(Verruca Vulgaris)
6. *Revatigraha*(Chicken pox)

(8) Diseases due to Bacterial Infection:-

1. *Andhalaji*(Folliculitis)
2. *Vivrata*(PyodermaGangrenosum)
3. *Valmik*(Scrofuloderma)
4. *Sharkararbuda*(Mycetoma)
5. *Gandhapitika*(Axillary boil)
6. *Shataru*(Carbuncle)

(9) Pigmentary disorders:-

(a) Hypopigmentation:-

1. *Kilasa/Switra*(Vitiligo)

2. *Kikkisa*(Striae)

(b) Hyperpigmentation:-

1. *Vyanga*(Chloasma)
2. *Tilakalaka*(Freckles)

(10) Bullous disorders:-

1. *Visphota*(Pemphigus vulgaris)
2. *Charmadala*(Bullous Pemphigoid)

(11) Type of Eczema:-

1. *Vicharchika*(Dry eczema)
2. *Ahiputana*(Napkin rashes)
3. *Pansika*(Seborrheic dermatitis)
4. *Shukadosha*(Contact dermatitis)
5. *Mukhamandika*(Atopic dermatitis)
6. *Raksa*(Wet eczema)

(12) Type of Vrana:-

1. *Sadyovrana*(Wound)
 - a. *Chhinna*(Incised wound)
 - b. *Bhinna*(Ruptured wound)
 - c. *Viddha*(Punctured wound)
 - d. *Kshata*(Lacerated wound)
 - e. *Picchita*(Crushed wound)
 - f. *Ghrishta*(Abrasion)
2. *Vidradhi*(Abscess)

(13) Sexually Transmitted Diseases:-

1. *Firanga*(Syphilis)¹⁰
2. *Upadansha*(Chancroid)

(14) Pramehapidika(Diabetic Carbuncles)

(15) Nevi and Skin Tumors:-

1. *Arbuda*(Tumor)
2. *Granthi*(Cyst)
3. *Jatumani*(Hemangioma)
4. *Kacchapika*(Neurofibromatosis)



5. *Nayachha*(Mongolian spots)
6. *Lancchana*(Congenital Nevus)
7. *Masaka*(Melanocytic Nevi / Mole)
8. *Nilika*(Acquired nevomelanocytic nevi)

(16) Significant features of skin diseases:-

1. *Parusha*(Coarse skin)
2. *Sphutita*(Fissured skin)
3. *Twakrukshata*(Dry skin)
4. *Paarushya*(Coarseness of skin)
5. *Vaivarnya*(Discolouration of skin)
6. *Suptata*(Numbness)
7. *Paridaha*(Burning sensation)
8. *Kharata*(Roughness)
9. *Kandu*(Itching)
10. *Pinjaratva* (Brown Colouration of hair)
11. *Prabha*(Luster)

(17) Disorders due to Arthropods:-

1. *Paama*(Scabies)

(18) Miscellaneous skin disorders:-

1. *Shotha*(Oedema)
2. *Visarpa*(Erysipelas)
3. *Ekakushtha*(Ichthyosis Vulgaris)
4. *Charmakhya*(Lichen planus/ LSC)
5. *Kitibha*(Psoriasis)
6. *Vipadika*(Tylosis)
7. *Parisarpa*(Erysipelas)
8. *Apachi*(Scrofuloderma)
9. *Shlipada*(Elephantiasis)
10. *Jaalgardabha*(Erythema Multiforme)

11. *Vidarika*(Inguinal/Axillary lymphadenopathy)
12. *Kadar* (Corn / Callosity)
13. *Jantudansha*(Insect bite)
14. *Udarda*(Cold urticaria)
15. *Shitapitta*(Cold urticaria)
16. *Kotha*(Urticaria)
17. *Gardabhi*(Granuloma Annulare)
18. *Paadadarika*(Planter Hyperkeratosis)
19. *Akaalvalay*(Early ageing/ Wrinkling)
20. *Alasaka*(PrurigoNodularis)¹¹
21. *Padminikantaka*(Phrynoderma)

DISCUSSION

Skin is the outer most covering of the body, more ever; it is also an *Adhithana* of *Sparshanendriya* and *Upadhatu* of *Mamsa*, which originates from *matrujabhava*.

Skin diseases were found in the form of blemishes of skin since the time immemorial. Various ancient texts mentioned skin diseases in general. In *Ayurvedic* classics skin diseases have been mainly described under the heading of *kushthaNidan* and *Chikitsa*, where eighteen types of *Kushth* have been described but this is not the only description of skin diseases in *Ayurveda*. Hence in the present study it has been tried to find out the scope of dermatology as a specialized branch in *Ayurveda*. I have tried to scrutinize and



categorize available description of various skin diseases in all the *Ayurvedic* classics.

CONCLUSION

In the present study it has been concluded that there is a vast scope of studying of dermatology as a branch as per *Ayurvedic* classics. Innumerable types of skin diseases can be enlisted and studied under the various chapters of *Kushtha*, *Kshudrarogas*, *Vidradhi*, *Arbud*, *Pramehapidika*, *Granthi* etc.

So we can also categories the various minor and major skin ailments under the various chapters as are classified in modern dermatological texts.



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