

## Ayurvedic Management of Shwitra (Vitiligo) - A Case Study

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Skin is the outer most covering of the body and is the largest organ of integumentary system. In human being, skin pigmentation (affected by melanin) varies among population and skin type can range from dry to non-dry and from oily to non-oily. In Ayurveda Bhrajak Pitta is responsible for Prabha. Any impairment in Bhrajak Pitta and Vata cause skin diseases. All skin diseases come under Kushta and Shwitra is one of them. Like other types of Kushta, Shwitra is caused due to vitiation of Tridoshas and Dhatus like Ras, Rakta, Mamsa and Meda.[1] In Modern system of medicine similar disease is described as Vitiligo. Vitiligo is a chronic auto immune disorder that causes white lesions on skin. This happens when melanocytes are destroyed causing the skin to turn milky white colour.

**Keywords:** Shwitra, Kushta, Vitiligo, Ayurveda, Skin disorder, Skin Pigmentation

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## Introduction

In *Ayurveda* all the skin diseases are categorised under the *Kushta*. *Shwitra* is also one of them. The description of *Shwitra* is available since Vedic literature.

*Kushta* is included in *Astha Maha Gada* in *Ayurveda*. [2] Other names for it include *Kilasa*, *Daruna*, *Aruna*, and *Shweta Kushta*. *Bhrajak Pitta* which is situated in the skin is responsible for *Chaya* and *Prabha* of *Twaka*. [3] The Kashyap Samhita states that *Shwitra* is "*Shweta Bhava Michanti Switram*," which translates to "white reflection". [4]

According to *Sushrut Samhita*, *Acharya Sushrut* called *Shwitra* as *Kilasa* '*Twagtam Eva Aprisravi*' means there is involvement of skin and is *Aprisravi* i.e., non exudative. *Acharya Charak*, mentioned various causes of *Shwitra* that is *Viruddha Aahar Sewana*, *Papkarma* etc. [5]

In Modern system of medicine similar disease is described as vitiligo. Vitiligo is an autoimmune disease. Normally, the immune system work throughout our body to fight off and defend our body. But in people with autoimmune disease, the immune cells attack the body's own healthy tissues. In vitiligo melanocytes are attacked and destroyed causing the skin to turn milky white colour. Treatment of vitiligo in modern system of medicine is topical cream contain corticosteroids, some type of radiations etc.

The psychological damage caused by vitiligo has been shown in numerous research. Vitiligo has a detrimental effect on patients' self-esteem, according to the groundbreaking study by Porter *et al.* (1979). According to the authors, people with higher self-esteem fared better with the illness than those with lower self-esteem. The detrimental effects of vitiligo on patients' self-esteem and quality of life (QoL) have been repeatedly documented in later international research. Isolation, stigmatization, low self-esteem, melancholy, and self-consciousness are all brought on by vitiligo. [6]

The *Ayurvedic* approach to autoimmune disease treatment focuses on balancing the *Tridoshas* and boost immunity. The treatment given like *Bakuchi churna*, *Br Manjisthadi Kwath* etc. are well known for the treatment of *Shwitra* and given in our classical books.

## Objective of study

To assess the efficacy of *Ayurvedic* treatment in *Shwitra* as mentioned in classical *Ayurvedic* texts.

## Case Report

A 52 year old patient [Female] OPD reg no. 76660 residing in Palam has visited in Kayachikitsa OPD in Chaudhary Brahm Prakash Ayurved Charak Sansthan on 20/09/2022 presented with multiple whitish discoloured patches on face. The lesions were varied in shape, no discharge or itching present over it.

### History of present illness

Patient was asymptomatic 2.5 years ago but she gradually got some blackish discolouration on her face which she ignored and gradually white lesion appears on her face she took ayurvedic medication from local pharmacist but didn't get relief. After few months, she noted that size of lesion was gradually rising & she also observed multiple white patches on her face. With these complaints, she came in Kayachikitsa OPD of CBPACS.

### History of past illness

1. History of hypothyroidism (since 35 years): patient is on modern medication (100mcg Thyroxine-10D)
2. No history of above skin complaints before 2.5 years
3. No history of DM/HTN/ or other systemic disorder.

### Family history

According to patient, her mother and maternal grandmother also have *Shwitra* (Vitiligo)

### Personal history

- Bowel - 1 time/day Normal
- Bladder - 4-5 times/day, 1time - night
- Sleep - Normal
- Diet - Non-Vegetarian
- Occupation - Teacher
- Addiction - Nil
- Appetite - Good intake
- Allergies - Not any

## General Examination

- Pallor - Absent
- Icterus - Absent
- Cyanosis - Absent
- Clubbing - Absent
- BP - 130/80mmhg
- Pulse - 78bpm

## Asthavidha Pariksa

- Nadi - 78 bpm (*Pitta Vataj*)
- Mala - Clear 1 time/day (*Nirama*)
- Mutra - 4-5 times/day, 1 time/night
- Jihwa - Clear
- Sabda - Spasta
- Sparsha - Samsheetushna
- Drika - Prakrit
- Akriti - Prakritik

## Local Examination

- Site of lesion - Both side on face
- Distribution - Symmetrical
- Character of lesion - white coloured grouped and diffused lesion
- Itching - Absent
- Inflammation - Absent
- Discharge - Absent
- Sensation - Present

## Samprapti Ghatak

- Dosha - Tridosha
- Dushya - Ras, Rakta, Mamsa, Meda
- Adhithana - Twak
- Srotodushti - Sanga
- Rogmarga - Bahya

# Materials and Methods

## Assessment criteria

**Subjective criteria:** Patient was observed for improvement in hypo-pigmented patches and improvement in general condition.

## Grading Assessment[7]

Score	0	1	2	3
Number of patches depending on % of area involved	Absent	1-29%	30-69%	70-100%
Colour	Normal	>50% filling with normal density	<50% of filling with pinkish discolouration	White patches
Itching	Absent	Mild	Moderate	Severe
Hypopigmentation patches	Absent	Solitary	Segmental	Generalised

**Objective criteria:** Improvement calculated on basis of VASI scoring method.

*Chikitsa Vivaran – Shaman Chikitsa* was given to patient for 15 months as follows.

SN	Treatment	Dose and Anupana	Days
1.	Bakuchi Churna Panchnimba Churna Praval Pishti Guduchi Satva	30g 30g 10g 10g Mix all of them and take half tsf TDS with water	15 months
2.	Arogyavardhini Vati	500 mg with water	15 months
3.	Br. Manjisthadi Kwatha	40ml	15 months
4.	Tab. Pigmento	2BD with water	15 months

## Results

VASI score formula :  $\sum \text{All body sites [ Hand units ]} * [\text{Residual Depigmentation}] [8]$

One hand unit, which encompasses palm plus volar surface of all digits, is approx. 1% of total BSA and used as a guide to estimate baseline % of vitiligo involvement in each body region.

Body is divided into 5 regions : Hands, upper extremities (excluding hands), trunk, lower extremities (excluding feet), feet.

## Extent of residual depigmentation

100%	Depigmentation, no pigment
90%	Specks of pigment are present
75%	Depigmented area exceeds pigmented area
50%	Depigmented area and pigmented area are equal
25%	Pigmented area exceeds the depigmentation area
10%	Only specks of depigmentation

VASI score calculation done as below :

Before treatment

**VASI :**  $\sum \text{All body sites [Hand units]} * [\text{Residual Depigmentation}]$

$$= 3 \times 0.75$$

$$= 2.25$$

After treatment

**VASI** :  $\Sigma$  All body sites [Hand units] \* [Residual Depigmentation]

$$= 2 \times 0.9$$

$$= 1.8$$

Criteria	Score (BT)	Score (AT)
Number of patches	1	1
Colour	2	1
Itching	0	0
Hypo - pigmented patch	2	1



**Before Treatment**



**After Treatment**

## Discussion

The progression of vitiligo is rapid, so the management should be taken in proper time to arrest the pathogenesis.

*Bakuchi Churna* contains constituents like psoralen, isopsoralen, bakuchiol, bavchinin, and corylin, all of which possess antioxidant attributes. These constituents not only stimulate melanocytes for the synthesis of melanin but also exert an immune modulatory influence.

It is administered in conjunction with a blend of therapeutic agents, such as blood purifying (*Raktashodhak*), *Kapha-Pitta* alleviating (*Kapha-Pittahar*), and rejuvenating (*Rasayana*) drugs. This combination includes *Praval Pishti*, *Giloy Satv*, *Panchnimba Churna*.

*Panchnimba Churna* contains *Nimba Panchanga* and is used for all types of skin diseases like *Kushta*, *Visarpa*, etc.

*Br. Manjisthadi Kwath* contains herbs exhibiting a range of properties, including *Varnya* (improving complexion), *Kapha Pittashamak* (balancing *Kapha* and *Pitta Doshas*), *Shothahar* (reducing oedema), *Kushtaghna* (treating skin diseases), and *Vranropak* (wound healing).

Most of these substances possess *Tridoshaghna* (alleviating all three *Doshas*) or *Kapha Pittahara* (mitigating *Kapha* and *Pitta Doshas*) characteristics due to their inherent qualities of having *Tikta* (bitter), *Katu* (pungent), *Kashaya* (astringent) taste, *Laghu* (light), *Ruksha* (rough) properties, and *Ushna Veerya* (hot potency), with a *Katu Vipaka* (pungent post-digestive effect).

*Arogyavardhini Vati* is having *Rakta Dhustihara* (blood purifier), *Kusthahara* (alleviates skin diseases), *Srotovishodhana* (cleansing channels of body) and *Piita Dosh Hara* properties and it improves digestion and metabolic activities.

Tab. Pigmento - *Bakuchi* is the main ingredient. This tablet has multiple actions in vitiligo melanogenic, immune modulator, Anti-inflammatory, and Antioxidant.

## Conclusion

The incidence of vitiligo is increasing due to faulty lifestyle, so identifying and eliminating multifactorial agents associated with the disease based on *Ayurvedic* principles is essential.

Regaining of pigmentation can be achieved in most of patients by following *Ayurvedic* treatment protocol as mentioned in *Shwitra Chikitsa*.

*Shamana Chikitsa* helps to remove the cause of disease by eliminating aggravated *Doshas* in body, through resulting in overall improvement w.r.t. number of lesions, size of lesions, regaining of normal skin pigmentation.

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