

The Prime Role of Preventive Approach of Ayurveda in Autoimmune Disorder with Special Reference to Vitiligo

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Abstract

Vitiligo is a skin disease with unknown etiology and has unpredictability on the extent and rate of spread. It is considered an autoimmune disorder that destroys melanocytes in the skin characterized by depigmentation or hypopigmented patches. Vitiligo patients feel distressed and suffer social stigma as it has a significant impact on the quality of life of patients. Treatment available in contemporary medicine has its limitations and side-effects. Hence, maintenance of health and prevention of disease is of utmost importance. *Ayurveda* has incorporated this condition into broad terms of *Shwitra*, which is described under the heading of *Kushta*. *Ayurveda* states the causes of *Shwitra* may be *Chhardivegadharan*, *Atisewan* of *Amla-Katu-Ushna-Lavan Aaharsewana*, *Virrudha Ahar* and *Atimatra Bhojan* along with *Navanna Sewana* and *Dadhi Sewana*. Hence, a multidisciplinary approach is needed to treat such conditions with lifestyle medications and dietary interventions. *Ayurveda* has a holistic and scientific method in health management. It emphasizes much more on diet and regimen, along with medicines. *Ayurveda* deals with *Pathya -Vyavastha* in a very scientific way. Here an attempt has been made to compile the knowledge of ancient holistic science to throw light upon the concept of *Ayurveda* regarding the modification of lifestyle and the preventive measures effective concerning Vitiligo which will be a subject of benefit to humankind along with the awareness of the fact that the judicious use of food and healthy lifestyle interventions are the real medicines for health, so early responses are necessary for better results.

Keywords: *Shwitra, Autoimmune Disorder, Vitiligo.*

Introduction

Vitiligo is a dermatological disorder with unknown etiology in which skin loses its color in blotches and develops white patches causing cosmetic imbalance,

mainly leading to asocial stigma. It is considered an autoimmune disorder that destroys the melanocytes of the skin. The factors responsible for the healthy skin color are hemoglobin, carotenoids and melanin pigments. It is an autoimmune disease in which due to the insufficiency or complete absence of melanin in the skin, hypopigmentation occurs along with the autoimmune destruction of melanocytes in the epidermis resulting in the progression of the disease with hypo-pigmented areas. Though the exact cause is unknown, factors like stress trigger the illness, including the increased levels of catecholamines and neuropeptides^[1].

Need of the current era: The numbers of patients suffering from Vitiligo are not only affected physically but also suffer from social stigma and are psychologically

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under stress. However, it affects approximately about 0.5% to 2% of the worldwide population, with an overall prevalence of about 1%. It appears to be equally in men and women. The extent and rate of spread is unpredictable^[2].

The present-day lifestyle has a high impact on the disease condition. It affects the quality of life of an individual as it leaves behind cosmetic disfigurement. The treatment modalities for Vitiligo in conventional medicine involve topical and systemic steroids, topical and systemic PUVA, which brings forth side effects such as phototoxicity, hyperpigmentation and solar elastosis. Other safer alternatives are highly expensive and thus have limitations to use.

Aim and Objective: Considering this scenario & considering its increasing incidence & prevalence rate due to the current stressful lifestyle, it is necessary to focus on a healthy, stress-free lifestyle. Therefore, the prime of this paper is to throw light upon the concept of *Ayurveda* regarding lifestyle modification and preventive measures practical concerning Vitiligo, which will be a subject of benefit for humanity.

Material and Method

Textual references are compiled from the *Ayurvedic* texts and *Samhitas*, modern texts, journals and websites.

Observations and Results

- **Concept of Vitiligo with Ayurveda perspective:** In *Ayurveda*, Vitiligo can be correlated with a group of a skin disorder i.e., *Shwitra*. *Acharya Kashyapa* defines *Shwitra* as *Shweta Bhava* Micchanti^[3]. As per *Acharya Sushruta*, it means a reflection of white color. and mentioned it as *Kilas* instead of *Shwitra*^[4].
- **Role of Nidana Parivarjana in prevention & management of Vitiligo:** The ancient classical texts have mentioned the etiological factors of *Shwitra* as that of *Kushta*. The treatment of *Shwitra* needs a holistic approach which involves *Nidan Parivarjan*, which means avoidance of the etiological factors. It has been given prime importance behind the success of many treatments in *Ayurveda*. The basic principle-‘ prevention is better than cure’ is the first step in the management of *Shwitra*. Therefore, the first step is to avoid the *Nidana*. Various *Hetu* related to *Ahara & Vihara* depicted in *Ayurvedic* literature in *Shwitra Nidana* are mentioned in table no. 1^[5,6,7].

Acharya Charaka has mentioned some specific causes which might cover the idiopathic aspects such as-*Vachamsi Asatyani* (telling lies), *Krutaghnabhava* (un-grateful), *Suranam Ninda* (abusing gods), *Guru-Gharshanam* (abusing and disrespecting the teachers and elders), *Papakriya* (being involved in sinful acts), *Purvakruta Karma* (sins done in a previous birth) and *Virodhi Anna* (incompatible foods). The current faulty lifestyle compromises all of these *Hetu*, which are highly essential to avoid the occurrence of *Shwitra*.^[8]

- **Role of lifestyle in the prevention & management of Vitiligo:** *Ayurveda* ensures the lifestyle that depicts the bundle of behavioral and mental aspects of well-being. If anyone follows a healthy diet and lifestyle, no medicine is required to tackle the disease. The controlled diet itself works as a medicine. On the contrary, if someone is not following such diet & lifestyle, no medication will work because improper diet and lifestyle are the prime cause of diseases. In the present era, man has less time to cook and eat food and has replaced it with fast food, which is considered *Mithya Ahar* in *Ayurveda*, a significant cause of disease formation.

The prevention & treatment of Vitiligo needs a holistic and scientific approach that emphasizes diet and regimens and medicines. *Ayurveda* deals with *Pathya Vyavastha* (planning of food) in a very scientific way. Even healthy lifestyle interventions have gained scientific evidence in the treatment of diseases that seem to be as effective as medications and are considered safe without side effects.

- **Importance of Pathya Apathya:** The chief foundation upon which an individual is raised depends on *Ahara* and *Vihara*. *Ayurveda* focuses on diet and regimen as leading causes for diseases. In our *Ayurveda Samhitas*, the phenomenon is implied to *Pathya-Apathya* in terms of *Ahar* and *Vihara*. Once the treatment is adopted, it becomes essential to utilize the dietary rules for efficient results. *Ayurveda* mentions about *Pathya- Apathya* regarding *Ahar* and *Vihar*, which are suitable to the mind and body when followed appropriately. These measures help in correcting the morbid conditions of the *Dhatus* and bringing them to a hemostatic state. Hence *Dhatu Samyata* is established and the disease can be cured, avoiding further complications. *Pathya-Apathya Ahara & Viharas* applicable for *Shwitra*^[9] have compiled in table no. 1 & 2.

Table No. 1: Samanya & Vishishta Nidana of Shwitra

S.N.	Samanya Nidan	C.S	S.S	A.S
A	Aharaj Nidana			
1	Haviprashana	+	-	-
2	Intake of <i>Drava, Snigdha, Guru Ahara</i>	+	-	-
3	Mithya Ahara	-	+	+
4	Ahitashana	-	+	-
5	Asatmya Bhojana	-	+	-
6	Navanna Atisewana	+	-	-
7	Dadhi Atisewana	+	-	-
8	Matsya Atisewana	+	-	-
9	Lavana, Amla, Atisewana	+	-	-
10	Virrudha Ahara	+	+	+
11	Intake of <i>Gramya, Anupa, Audak Mamsa</i> along with milk	-	+	-
12	Intake of <i>Mulak</i> with milk	-	+	-
13	Intake of <i>Guda</i> with milk	+	-	-
14	Intake of <i>Madya, Amla Dravya</i> with milk	+	-	-
15	Intake of <i>Matsya, Nimba</i> along with milk	+	-	-
B	Viharaja Nidana			
1	Chhardi Nigraha	+	+	-
2	Vegavarodha	+	+	-
3	Sheetoshna Vyatyasa	+	-	-
4	<i>Sheetambu Snana</i> after <i>Atapa Sewana</i>	+	-	-
5	Mithya Vihara	-	+	+
6	Diwaswapna	+	-	-
7	Ratrijagarana	-	-	-
8	<i>Vyavaya</i> after <i>Vidahi Ahara Sevana</i>	-	-	-
9	Dharma, Shrama, Bhayartanam Dritam Sheetambu Sewana	+	-	-
10	<i>Vyavaya</i> in <i>Ajeerna</i>	+	-	-
C	Anya Nidana			
1	Vipram Gurun Gharshayatam	+	-	-
2	Papakarma	+	+	+
3	Brahamana, Stree, Sajjana Vadha	-	+	-
4	Purvakrita Karma	-	+	-
5	<i>Sadhu Ninda</i> and <i>Vadha</i>	-	-	+
6	Go-Hatya	-	-	-
D	Chikitsa Sambandhinidana			
1	Snehashchaticharato	+	-	-
2	Santarpana–Apatarpana Vyatyaya	+	-	-
3	Panchakarma Apacharinam	+	-	-
4	<i>Snehapeetasya, Vantasya Va Vyayama</i> and <i>Gramyadharm Sevana</i>	-	+	-
5	Snehadeenam Ayatharambha	-	+	-

*C.S- Charak Samhita, S.S.-Sushrut Samhita, A.H.- Ashtang Hridaya

S.N.	Specific causes of <i>Shwitra</i>	C.S	S.S.	A.S
1	<i>Vachamsatathyani Kritagnabhava</i> or <i>Sinful Deeds Related to Vak and Manas</i>	+	-	-
2	Sura Ninda	+	-	-
3	Gurugharshana	+	-	-
4	Papakriya	+	-	-
5	Poorvakrita Karma	+	-	-
6	Virodhi Anna	+	-	-

*C.S- Charak Samhita, S.S.-Sushrut Samhita, A.H.- AshtangHridaya

Table No. 2: *PathyaAhara–Vihara* in *Shwitra*

S.N.	Pathya Ahara–Vihara	C.S	S.S.	A.S
A	PathyaAhara			
1	Shashtikashali	+	+	+
2	Yava	-	+	+
3	Godhuma	-	-	+
4	Shyamaka	-	-	+
5	Koradusha	-	-	+
6	Uddalak	+	-	-
7	Mudga	-	+	+
8	Adhak	-	+	-
9	Masoor	+	+	+
10	Nimbapatra	-	+	+
11	Arushkara	-	-	+
12	Priyangu	-	-	+
13	Mandooka Parni	+	-	+
14	Khadira Kashaya Pana	+	-	+
15	Patola	-	+	+
16	Brihati Phala	-	+	-
17	Chakramarda	-	+	-
18	Meshashrunji	-	+	-
19	Koshataki	-	+	-
20	Tila	-	+	-
21	Punarnava	-	+	-
22	Go, Khara, Ushtra, Ashwa Mootra	+	+	-
23	Sarpi	+	-	+

S.N.	Pathya Ahara–Vihara	C.S	S.S.	A.S
24	Tikta Shaka	+	-	-
25	Bhallataka	+	-	-
26	Triphala	-	-	+
27	Jangala Mamsa	-	+	-
B	Pathya Vihara			
1	KhadiraJalaParisheka	+	-	-
2	Virechana	+	-	-
3	Aragvadhadi Kashaya, Udwartana	+	+	-
4	KhadirodakAvagaha	-	-	+
5	VajrakTailabhyanga	-	-	+
6	Vrata	-	-	+
7	Yama	-	-	+
8	Dwija, Sura Pooja	-	-	+
C	Seasonal regimen (Regular Shodhana)			
1	Vaman	Given at every 15 th day		
2	Virechan	At every 1 month		
3	AvapidanNasya	At every 3 rd day		
4	Raktamokshan	At every 6 months		
5	Yogic practices	Daily		

*C.S- Charak Samhita, S.S.-Sushrut Samhita, A.H.- Ashtang Hridaya

Table No. 3: Apathya Ahara–Vihara in Shwitra

S .N.	Apathya Ahara–Vihara	C.S	S.S.	A.S.
A	Apathya Ahara			
1	Guru anna	+	+	-
2	Drava anna	-	+	-
3	Guda	+	+	+
4	Dadhi	+	+	+
5	Dugdha	+	+	+
6	Matsya	-	+	-
7	Masha	-	+	+
8	Tila	+	+	-
9	Navanna	-	+	-
10	Anoopa Mamsa	+	-	+
11	Maricha	-	-	-
12	Amla, Lavana Ras	-	-	+
B	Apathyavihara			

S.N.	Apathya Ahara-Vihara	C.S	S.S.	A.S.
1	Papa Karma Sinful Acts	+	+	-
2	Diva Nidra Sleeping During Day Time	+	+	-
3	Virrudhashana	+	+	-
4	Vyayama Physical Exercises	-	+	-
5	Vegavarodha	-	+	-
6	Vyavaya	-	+	-

*C.S- Charak Samhita, S.S.-Sushrut Samhita, A.S.- Ashtang Sangraha

Discussion

The healthy lifestyle and dietetics are to be followed to create a balance by restoring a uniformity in the skin tone, texture & color.

➤ Avoidance of Ahara Nidana

- **Viruddhaahara:** Certain diet and wrong combination, which interrupts the tissues' metabolism and has different properties, is referred to as *Viruddha Anna* or an incompatible diet. The food in the false conjunction with wrong processing and being consumed in the incorrect quantity at the wrong time is *Virrudha*^[10].
- **Guru, Snigdha, Drava Ahara:** It includes *Santarpanjanya, Krimikara Ahara*. Theguna of *guru Ahara Dravya* are opposite to that of *Agni*. Hence it is *Agnihrasakara* according to *Hrasahetu Vishesh Siddhanta*^[11].
- **Kshira:** Acts as *Viruddha Ahara* with various combinations like fish^[12].
- **Kulattha:** *Ushna, Amlapaki*, causes *Kapha-Pitta* aggravation^[13].
- **Matsya:** *Bahudoshkara*, vitiates *Rakta*^[14].
- **Mulak:** Riped *Mulak* is *KatuVipaki, Ushna Virya, Tridoshkara, Guru*, and *Abhishyandi*^[15].

➤ Avoidance of Vihara Nidana

Papakarma^[16]: Behavioural misconduct, anti-social activities, sinful activities bring about psychogenic stress, which is important in pathogenesis as the stress triggered Vitisigo include the increased levels of catecholamines and neuropeptides.

- **Yogic practices (therapy):** Vitisigo is a condition in which the body status reaches a stage called

autoimmunity where the melanocytes get in the arena of dormancy or become dead. Yoga detoxifies body and mind and copes up with the condition of autoimmunity, thereby maintaining healthy melanocytes.

Ayurveda has a different approach to the understanding and treatment of *Shwitra*, which requires further researches. However, lifestyle modification and healthy dietetics can contribute significant benefits to the patients of Vitisigo. Thus, the holistic approach of *Ayurveda* for treatment, including its lifestyle prescriptions, is pooled to the mainstream of world medicine today. It can bring a transformation in the quality of health care for the suffering of humanity all over the world.

Conclusion

In today's lifestyle of hurry and worry, stress is increasing day by day. Modern medicines are suitable for short term treatment but have their limitations. It is the need of an hour to have researched and advance the physical and psychosocial aspects of Vitisigo.

Ayurveda is practiced in daily life; it fulfills both the preventive as well as curative aspects. In *Ayurveda*, the treatment is highly emphasized to achieve *Dhatu Samyata*. It can be concluded that by avoiding the use of incompatible diet, faulty lifestyle, and *Pathya Ahar Vihar* and *Shodhan Chikitsa*, mainly *Vaman & Mridu Virechan*, it can be managed along with this *Achaara Rasayan* and *Sadvritta Palan* which have high relevance in modern society.

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