

A Case Study of Ayurvedic Treatment of Vitiligo (Shwitra) in Child

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ABSTRACT

The skin is the largest and most visible organ of the human body, playing a vital role in overall health. Any anomalies in the skin can create both physical and psychological problems for an individual, primarily due to cosmetic concerns. Unfortunately, in some societies, particularly those with limited knowledge, certain skin conditions like leucoderma are mistakenly considered infectious, making it extremely challenging for affected individuals to integrate into society. In *Ayurvedic* classics, *Shwitra* is recognized as a type of *Kushtha*, a skin disorder caused by the vitiation of the three *Doshas* (*Tridosha*) and the imbalance of tissues like blood (*Rakta*), muscle (*Mamsa*), and fat (*Meda*). *Shwitra* can be correlated with Vitiligo or leucoderma, characterized by white patches on the skin resulting from partial or complete loss of skin pigmentation, leading to cosmetic imbalance. Vitiligo is an autoimmune disease that may be associated with other autoimmune conditions, such as pernicious anaemia, Addison's disease, and diabetes mellitus. This disease results in the destruction of melanocytes, causing depigmentation. A 13-year-old male patient presented with a white patch on his right thigh, which he had been experiencing for two years. He underwent *Shaman Chikitsa* treatment for four months, and the results were assessed based on changes in the size of the patch and photographic evidence. Before initiating the study, informed written consent was secured from the patient's legal guardian, ensuring compliance with ethical standards and regulatory requirements. Follow-up assessments were conducted at one-month intervals, and after three months, significant improvement was observed in the patch's size and colour. This study highlights a novel perspective on treating *Shwitra Kushtha*, offering a cost-effective and safe treatment approach. Furthermore, this research demonstrates a new dimension in treating *Shwitra* in young patients and provides a foundation for conducting statistically significant studies in the future.

KEY WORDS: Shwitra, Vitiligo, Bakuchi, Kshudra Kushtha, Melanocytes, Hypo-Pigmentation

INTRODUCTION

The skin, being the largest human organ, is highly susceptible to various disorders due to its size and external location. In *Ayurvedic* medicine, skin diseases are categorized under "*Kushtha Roga*," which is

further divided into *Maha Kushtha* and *Kshudra Kushtha*. The etiology of *Kushtha* involves the vitiation of three *Doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*) and four *Dushya* (*Twak*, *Mamsa*, *Rakta*, and *Lasika*) by various factors.

Shwitra, a type of *Kshudra Kushtha*, is characterized by white discoloration patches on the skin, earning its name from the Sanskrit word "*Shweta*," meaning white. This condition is described in various Ayurvedic classics, including the *Brihatrayees* and *Laghutrayees*. Unlike other *Kushtha* diseases, *Shwitra* primarily affects the skin's appearance; causing cosmetic concerns that can disrupt a patient's psychological well-being. The primary causes of *Shwitra* include *Virudhahar-sevana* (consumption of incompatible foods) and *Papakarma* (bad deeds). This condition involves the imbalance of all three *Doshas* and affects the *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, and *Meda Dhatus*. *Shwitra* is particularly associated with *Bhrajaka Pitta*, which plays a crucial role in maintaining skin colour. In modern medicine, *Shwitra's* characteristics resemble those of *Vitiligo*, a condition where skin colour loss occurs due to the destruction of melanocytes. *Vitiligo* affects both sexes equally, with a worldwide prevalence of 1%. India has a higher incidence rate, estimated between 3-4%. Treatment options in modern medicine include topical corticosteroids, skin grafting, and plastic surgery, which can be costly. In contrast, *Ayurvedic* medicine offers a more holistic approach, focusing on eliminating the causes of *Dosha* imbalance through *Pathya Sevana*. This approach combines local applications with oral medications to break the cycle of *Dosha-Dushya Sammurchana*, providing a more natural and cost-effective treatment option for *Shwitra*.

CASE REPORT-

A 13-year-old male child came with complaints of white patch over the right thigh since 2 years. The patch was small initially and is gradually increasing in size and when selected for treatment size approximately had a dimension of 10x8 cm. Lesion is free from itching or burning sensation. Patient has taken treatment from contemporary medical science in the form of steroids and other ointments with no any improvement since last 1 year. According to the patient's parents, the pregnancy progressed normally, and the child was delivered in a hospital without any reported complications or noticeable congenital abnormalities at birth. 1) Past History: No history of any major illness. 2) Family History: Nothing significant, all the family members are said to be healthy. 3) Skin Examination of the patients was conducted -one large patch on right thigh with bright white colour of patch with surrounding normal pigmented area. The sensation for cold and hot substance in the patch is normal without itching or burning sensation. Routine blood investigations were done and were found normal. General condition of patient was fair, vitals are normal. Local and systemic examinations reveal that no physical abnormality detected. Personal history is normal with BP- 120/80 mmHg and PR- 70/min.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Patient was treated in the outpatient department of Rachana Sharir (Skin Care Unit) at Govt. Dhanwantari Ayurveda Medical College & Hospital, Ujjain (M.P.) in between 16/03/2023 to 15/07/2023 and OPD registration number of the patient is 9987. Medicine was administered in two forms along with diet regimen and lifestyle modifications..

1. Oral administration of *Arogyawardhini vati* 2 tablets with hot water before food twice a day for 3 months to attain the optimum levels of *Deepana* and *Pachana* and *Dhatu pachak* effect and oral administration of *Aimil Leukoskin* drops -30 Drops twice for 3 months after meal with a cup of

2. normal water.
3. External application of *Bakuchi tail* mixed with Vaseline in required quantity as external application over the lesion everyday followed by exposure to the sunlight for about 30mins for 3 months daily at morning. And use of external application of *Charaka Pharma's* Pigmento ointment in mid day one time.
4. Proper advice regarding life style modifications and diet has been given.



Image showing marked improvement in the hypo pigmented patch present on right thigh.

DISCUSSION

After the initiation of the treatment no significant changes were observed by the patient (first follow up). 8th day onwards patient noticed slight colour change in the lesion with skin slightly turning in to pinkish. In subsequent days there is formation of small blebs with eruption with slight burning sensation and itching. May be due to the rough use of *Bakuchi oil*, Patient reported with blebs on second follow up. Sunlight exposure of the patient was reinsured and precaution during application of *Bakuchi oil* has been recalled to the patient. Patient was slightly disturbed due to appearance of blebs with burning sensation. Patient was reassured with proper counselling. Third week onwards blebs get dried up replacing the dark skin over the hypo pigmented area. Same results continued till next month and hypo pigmented area was completely replaced by normal skin by 2 months. There are no undue adverse effects during the treatment period.

CONCLUSION

Although *Shwitra*, categorized as a *Kashtasadhya Vyadhi*, is a chronic condition requiring prolonged treatment, it can be effectively managed and significantly improved through a multi-faceted approach. This comprehensive strategy incorporates:

1. *Shodhana* (Purification): Eliminating toxins and impurities from the body through procedures like *Panchakarma* as per need.
2. *Shamana* (Palliation): Implementing measures to alleviate symptoms and prevent disease progression.

3. External application of oils and *Lepas*: Utilizing topical treatments to soothe and nourish the affected skin.

In developing this personalized treatment plan, consideration must be given to various factors, including:

1. *Rugna* (Patient): The individual's unique characteristics, needs, and responses.
2. *Bala* (Strength): The patient's physical and mental resilience.
3. *Vyadhi Bala* (Disease Strength): The severity and progression of the condition.
4. *Dosha* (Constitutional imbalance): The underlying imbalances of Vata, Pitta, and Kapha.
5. *Dushya* (Affected tissues): The specific tissues and systems impacted by the disease.
6. *Desha* (Geographical location): Environmental and regional factors influencing the patient's health.
7. *Prakriti* (Individual constitution): The patient's innate physical and mental characteristics.
8. *Kala* (Time): Temporal considerations, including the timing of treatment and the patient's age.

By carefully evaluating these factors and tailoring treatment accordingly, healthcare practitioners can develop an effective management plan for *Shwitra*, promoting better improvement and enhanced quality of life for patients.

Arogyawardhani vati (*Rogadhikar of Kushtha*) contains *kutki* (*Yakrit uttejaka*) as its main ingredient along with *Tamra Bhasm*, LUKOSKIN DROPS is a proved medicine for Vitiligo and the direct topical application of *Psoralea corylifolia* (*Bakuchi*) oil, as well as key ingredient in PIGMENTO OINTMENT, triggers the activation of melanocytes, specialized cells responsible for producing melanin, the primary skin pigment. This stimulation enhances melanin synthesis, promoting skin pigmentation.

Additionally, the formulation incorporates several herbs with distinct benefits:

Acorus calamus (*Vacha*), *Cassia tora* (*Chakramarda*), and *Melia azadirachta* (*Nimba*) exhibit antifungal properties, providing protection against fungal infections.

Tephrosia purpurea (*Sharpunkha*) demonstrates immunomodulatory effects, influencing both cell-mediated and humoral immunity. This helps regulate and balance the immune system, promoting overall skin health.

The administration of above treatment protocol along with proper *Pathya-Apathya Sevana* leads to benefit in the hypo-pigmented patch in the right thigh of the child in 3 months of the treatment cycle as described above.

Pathyapathya of Shwitra (Kushtha)

1. **Pathya Ahara-** Purana dhanya, Laghu anna, Yava, Mudga, Amalaki, Tikta Shaka, Ghrita, Triphalanimbayukta anna and ghrita, Tikta rasa pradhan dravya, Tamrajala, Khadirajala.
2. **Apathya Ahara-** Guru anna, Amla-Katu Lavana rasa, Matsya, Anupa pashu paksi mamsa, Dadhi, Dugdha, Madhu, Mulaka, Guda, Viruddhahara, Mithyahara.
3. **Pathya Vihara-** Abhyangam, Lepa, Snanam, Pranayam,
4. **Apathya Vihara-** Divaswapna, Chardivega nigraha, Ratrijagarana, Deva-guru ninda, Excess krodha, *shoka* and stress & Strain

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