

Switrahara Dravyas (Drugs Acting On Leucoderma) Of Bhavaprakash Nighantu

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Abstract:

Skin is the outermost part of human body, which covers and protects the internal organs from injurious effect of environment and the harmful organisms. It also provides complexion and lustre to the body. Loss of skin colour can affect any part of the body like mouth hair and eyes. In Acharya Charaka explains skin as sense organ. It is more noticeable in people with darker complexion. Switra is a disease mentioned in Ayurveda which is characterised by appearance of white patches in the body. Acharyas have told various drugs for the treatment of *Switra*. Leucoderma or Vitiligo is the condition mentioned by modern science in which the pigment producing cells melanocytes die or stop functioning. Globally it accounts for 1% of the people and in some population it can be up to 2-3%. Those affected may develop social stigma and later experience depression and similar mood swings. This is an attempt to sort out and analyse the Switrahara dravyas mentioned by Acharya Bhavaprakash in Bhavaprakasha nighantu.

Keywords: Switra, Skin Bhavaprakash Nighantu.

Introduction:

Skin is an important outer most part of body, it is among the five sense organ. Psychological condition is also reflexed on skin. Vitiligo (Leukoderma) is a pigmentation disorder with complex causes. The number size and shape of individual lesions vary widely. Frequently the initial regions appear over exposed areas viz., dorsal surface of hands, elbow, neck, face and feet occasionally body folds such as axillary sub mammary folds, groins and lips or genitalia may be the first sight for lesions to appear.¹The emergence of white patches can be brought on by a variety of impulses. Many people report that their vitiligo first appeared following a stressful event, such as an accident, job loss, death of a family member, severe sunburn, or serious illness.

There are mainly three theories about the underlying mechanism of vitiligo, which are as follows: (i) the first theory states that nerve endings in the skin release a chemical that is toxic to the melanocytes; (ii) the second theory states that the melanocytes simply self-destruct; and (iii) the third theory is that vitiligo is a type of autoimmune disease in which the immune system targets the body's own cells and tissues.

Vitiligo is due to stoppage of melanin formation by the melanocyte and present as asymptomatic de-pigmented macules anywhere on the body including mucus membrane of lips and genitalia. There is a marked reduction or even absence of melanocyte and melanin in epidermis. Histo-chemically there is lack of DOPA- positive Melanocyte in the basal layer of epidermis. In some patient of vitiligo lesions spread very fast. Such types of lesions are frequently associated with other diseases like hyper and hypo Thyroidism, Pernicious anaemia, Diabetes mellitus. Such lesions are believed to be caused by auto immune mechanism where an auto-antibodies destroy the melanocyte resulting in depigmentation.²

Switra is mentioned as one among the *Raktapradoshaja vikaraas* by Acharya Charaka.³ Again we can have the reference of switra in *Virudhaahara* concept⁴. The nidanas for Switra is divided into Aharaja and Viharaja.

Causes for the morbid increase of the doṣas are multiple. They include the following: indulgence in incompatible eatables and drinks, intake of eatables that are very watery, fatty, or hard to digest: suppression of the urges of vomiting etc. The doṣas could be vitiated also due to heavy physical exercises and too much of exposure to heat immediately after taking eatables. The act of immersing in cold water soon after exposure to sunlight, hard work causing fatigue and incidents of fear; use of uncooked eatables and over-eating, improper methods of administering the five purificatory therapies (emesis, purgation and the like), use of fresh grains, fish could vitiate doshas. Moreover, doshas could be vitiated also by taking eatables that are very salty and sour, black gram, radish; dry or powdery eatables, sesame, milk and jaggery; over-indulging in sexual intercourse, sleeping during day though suffering from indigestion. They could be vitiated also by showing disrespect to gods, teachers, committing several other kinds of sinful acts. Such factors derange the skin (tvak), blood (rakta), muscular tissue (māmsa), body fluids (ambu) and generate leprosy and identical skin diseases (kustha). Thus, seven and eleven kinds of kustha are produced by the group of the three doshas and four dhatus.⁵

In case of śvitra first of all purgation should be given; after proper unction (internally and externally) juice of malapū (kākodumbarikā) with jaggery should be given, as per strength and be exposed to sun-heat. This process should be continued for three months during this period to quench thirst he should be given Khadir (*Acacia catechu*) Linn.

Materials and methods:

Bhavaprakash Nighantu written by Acharya Bhavamishra explained 426 drugs out of which 14 drugare Switrahara.⁷

Sl.No	Sanskrit name	Drug	Rasa	Virya	Vipaka	References
1.	Rasna	<i>Pluchelalaceolata</i> C. B.	Tikta	Ushna	Katu	B.P.N.1.154
2.	Bhallataka	<i>Semicarpus anacardium.</i> (Linn)	Kashaya, Madhura	Ushna	Madhura	B.P.N.1.232
3.	Kapoor kachari	<i>Hedychium spicalum</i> (Ham.Ex Smith)	Katu Tikta	Anushna	-	B.P.N.2.100
4.	Ashwagandha	<i>Withaniasomnifera</i> (Dunal_)	Tikta, Kashaya	Ushna	-	B.P.N.3.190
5.	Kakanasa	<i>Pentatropismicrophylla</i> (Linn.	Kashaya, Katu	Ushna	Katu	B.P.N.4..249
6.	Moulsari /Bakul	<i>Mimusopselangi</i> Lin n	Kashaya	Seeta	-	B.P.N.4.35
7.	Kakodumbar	<i>Ficus hispida</i> (Linn)	Kashaya	Sita	-	B.P.N.5.10
8.	Shishapa	<i>Dalbergia sisco</i> (Roxb.)	Katu, Tikta, Kashaya	Ushna	-	B.P.N.5.24
9.	Khadir	<i>Acacia catechu</i> (Wild)	Tikta, Kashaya	Sita	Katu	B.P.N.5.32
10.	Hingot	<i>Balanites roxburghi</i> (Planch)	Tikta	Ushna	Katu	B.P.N.5.41
11.	Tinish	<i>Ougeniadalbergioldes</i> Benth	Kashaya		-	B.P.N.5.76
12.	Sphatika	Alum	Kashaya	Ushna	-	B.P.N.7.142
13.	Kasis	Iron sulphate	Amla	Ushna	-	B.P.N.7.153
14.	Srotonjan	Galena, Lead Sulphide	Kashay	Ushna	-	B.P.N.7.138

Discussion:

Here out of 426 drugs mentioned by Acharya Bhavamishra 14 Drugs are *switrahara*. When these drugs screened on the basis of *Rasa*, *Veerya*, *Vipaka* further conclusion comes that, 6 drugs are *Tikta rasa*, 6 drugs are *kashaya* rasa only one drug is of *Amla Rasa*. *Tikta* and *Kashaya* rasa are mainly acting on skin. *Tikta Rasa* is basically *sukshma* and *mridu* gunatmaka, so it acts as *Raktaprasadan*, *Mamsaprasadan* and *Dahaprashaman*. Due to *sukshma* and *vishadaguna* it penetrates at micro level and cleanses *Kleda* (Aam). *Kashaya Rasa* *Prithvi* and *Vayu Mahabhoot* Predominant *Dravyasareruksha* and *Sita guna*. It absorbs *kleda*, and due to *Guru gunadravyas* does poshan of vitiated dhatu. One of the hetu is psychological hetu we can see some drugs are acting on mental condition of patient like Hingot. *Bakuchi* which is most widely practised in *Switrais* not mentioned by Acharya Bhavamishra.

Conclusion:

Most commonly practised drug is Bakuchi which is not mentioned by Acharya Bhavamishra in the treatment of Switra. There should be proper clinical researches based on the drugs mentioned by Acharya. The drug of choice in the treatment of Switra can be increased by using switrahara drugs from Bhavaprakasha.

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