

# HISTORICAL REVIEW OF VICHARCHIKA AS PER AYURVEDIC CLASSICS

R.KUMARASWAMY\* P.K.J.P. SUBHAKTA\*\*

## ABSTRACT

Vicharchika which is one of the common skin diseases, is most prevalent among masses whether rural or Urban. A critical peep with regard to this into the various Ayurvedic Classics reveals that, the various kushtha rogas (including Vicharchika) were known to ancients of remote antiquity. Though all Ayurvedic classics have described eighteen varieties of Kushthas dividing into two main groups viz. Mahakushthas and Kshudra Kushthas, but they differ in nomenclature, order, description, doshas involved and prognosis etc.

In Ayurveda all skin disorders have been classified mainly into two groups viz. Mahakushthas and Kshudra Kushthas, Vicharchika has been described under Kshudra Kushthas (Cha.Nid.Chap.5.shloka.4),<sup>1</sup> Vicharchika, which is one of the common skin diseases is most prevalent among masses both rural and urban. It is most baneful, obstinate and highly troublesome disease. A critical peep with regard to this into the Ayurvedic classics is sufficient enough to denote that the various Kushtharogas (including Vicharchika) were known to ancients of remote antiquity.

In Ayurveda "Kushtha" is defined as "Kushnateeti Kushtham" the disease which destroys the effected part of the body (skin) is called Kushtha (Cha.Chi.Chap.7, Shloka.3).<sup>1</sup> Being a variety of Kushtha, Vicharchika also destroys affected part of the skin. The word Kushtha is derived from the root Kusha means that which comes out from the inner part of the body to the outer part. (Ayu, Vya.Vig. 2nd part, P.No. 249, Chap. 13)<sup>5</sup>. When the three vitiated

doshas provoke the four body elements (viz. Twak, Mamsa, Rakta & Ambu) and if this derangement of the seven dravyas not cured a disease is formed inside the body manifests itself on the skin and, which is called "Kushtham" (Mad.Nid.Chap.49)<sup>4</sup>.

According to Sushruta uncured Kushtha roga is the most painful and most troublesome of all diseases because it causes constant trouble. (Sus.Nid.Chap. V Shlokas 23-44).<sup>2</sup> Kushtharogas are said to be infectious except the Shvitra (Leukoderma) that is why Shvitra has not been included in the varieties of Kushtharoga (Cha.Chi. P.No. 248).<sup>1</sup>

### Classification:

"Ayurvedic classics have given the number of Kushthas as eighteen out of which, seven are called Mahakushthas and the remaining eleven as Kshudrakushthas. All the Kushtharogas are described elaborately in Ayurveda. There seems some differences of opinion among different authorities of Ayurveda with regard to nomenclature and order in each group as shown in the table No. I & II.

\* Research Officer (Ay), Indian Institute of History of Medicine, OMC Building, Putlibowli, Hyderabad, 500 195.

\*\* Asst. Research Officer (Ay), Indian Institute of History of Medicine OMC Building Putlibowli, Hyderabad, (India)

**TABLE NO. I**  
**MAHA KUSHTHAS ACCORDING TO BRIHATTRAYEE**

CHARAKA SAMHITA		SUSHRUTA SAMHITA		ASHTANGA HRIDAYA	
S.No.	Name	S.No.	Name	S.No.	Name
1.	Kapala Kushtha	4.	Kapala Kushtha	1.	Kapala Kushtha
2.	Udumbar Kushtha	2.	Udumbara Kushtha	2.	Udumbara Kushtha
3.	Mandala Kushtha	---	---	3.	Mandala Kushtha
4.	Rishya Jihwa Kushtha	3.	Rishya Jihwa Kushtha	7.	Rishya Jihwa Kushth
5.	Pundarika Kushtha	6.	Pundarika Kushtha	5.	Pundarika Kushtha
6.	Sidhma Kushtha	---	---	---	---
7.	Kakanaka Kushtha	5.	Kakanaka Kushtha	6.	Kakanaka Kushtha
		1.	Aruna Kushtha	---	---
		7.	Dadru Kushtha	4.	Dadru Kushtha

**TABLE NO. II**  
**KSHUDRA KUSHTHAS ACCORDING TO BRIHATTRAYEE**

CHARAKA SAMHITA		SUSHRUTA SAMHITA		ASHTANGA HRIDAYA	
S.No.	Name	S.No.	Name	S.No.	Name
1.	Eka Kushtha	3.	Eka Kushtha	3.	Eka Kushtha
2.	Charma Kushtha	---	---	2.	Charma Kushtha
3.	Kitibha Kushtha	9.	Kitibha Kushtha	4.	Kitibha Kushtha
4.	Vipadika Kushtha	---	---	7.	Vipadika Kushtha
5.	Alasaka Kushtha	---	---	6.	Alasaka Kushtha
6.	Dadru Kushtha	---	---	---	---
7.	Charmadala Kushtha	4.	Charmadala Kushtha	11.	Charmadala Kushtha
8.	Pama Kushtha	10.	Pama Kushtha	10.	Pama Kushtha
9.	Visphotaka Kushtha	---	---	9.	Visphotaka Kushtha
10.	Shataru Kushtha	---	---	8.	Shataru Kushtha
11.	Vicharchika Kushtha	8.	Vicharchika Kushtha	1.	Vicharchika Kushtha
		1.	Sthularushka Kushtha	---	---
		2.	Mahakushtha	---	---
		5.	Visarpa Kushtha	---	---
		6.	Parisarpa Kushtha	---	---
		7.	Sidhma Kushtha	5.	Sidhma Kushtha
		11.	Rakasa Kushtha	---	---

Coming to the order of diseases Charaka mentioned Vicharchika in last number of Kshudra Kusthas (Cha-Chi.Chap.7, Shloka.13)<sup>1</sup> and it was followed by Madhavakara (Mad.Nid. Chap. -49 Shloka 17).<sup>4</sup> But in Sushruta it is mentioned at 8th number (Sus. Nid.Chap.49, Shlokas 4-6)<sup>2</sup>, whereas Vagbhata mentioned, Vicharchika first in order of Kshudra kushtha group (Ash.Hri. Nid.Chap.14, Shloka 7)<sup>3</sup>.

According to Ayurvedic classics Vicharchika can be classified into two varieties.

1. Shushka (Dry) Vicharchika.
2. Ardra (Wet) Vicharchika.

#### Signs And Symptoms :

According to Charaka the skin in

Vicharchika is profusely weeping with dark eruptions, and itching (Cha.Chi. Chap.7, Shloka 25).<sup>1</sup> But Sushruta explains that when in the hands and feet etc. linear rough lesions with intense itching and pain starts, the malady is named Vicharchika. But when the same itching burning and pain experienced in the feet alone it is termed as Vipadika (Sus.Nid.Chap.5. Shlokas 9-11).<sup>2</sup> There is no antagonism regarding signs and - symptoms. But there are some differences of opinion among Brihatrayee regarding ascribed doshas to the Maha Kushtas and Kshudra Kushtas respectively, as shown in the following two tables.

**TABLE NO. III**  
**ASCRIBED DOSHAS TO THE MAHAKUSHTHAS ACCORDING**  
**TO BRIHATRAYEE**

S.No.	NAME OF THE KUSHTHAS	CHARAKA SAMHITA	SUSHRUTA SAMHITA	ASHTANGA HRIDAYA
1.	Kapala Kushtha	Vata	Pitta	Vata
2.	Audumbara Kushtha	Pitta	Pitta	Pitta
3.	Mandala Kushtha	Kapha	--	Kapha
4.	Rishyajihwa Kushtha	Vatapitta	Pitta	Vatapitta
5.	Pundarika Kushtha	Kapha Pitta	Kapha	Kaphapitta
6.	Sidhma Kushtha	Vatakapha	--	--
7.	Kakanaka Kushtha	Tridosha	Pitta	Tridosha
8.	Aruna Kushtha	--	Vata	--
9.	Dadru Kushtha	--	Kapha	Kaphapitta.

**TABLE IV**  
**ASCRIBED DOSHAS TO THE KSHUDRA KUSHTHAS ACCORDING TO BRIHATTRAYEE**

S.No.	NAME OF THE KUSHTHAS	CHARAKA SAMHITA	SUSHRUTĀ SAMHITA	ASHTANGA HRIDAYA
1.	Eka Kushtha	Vata Kapha	Kapha	Vata Kapha
2.	Charma Kushtha	Vata Kapha	--	Vata Kapha
3.	Kitibha Kushtha	Vata Kapha	Pitta	Vata Kapha
4.	Vipadika Kushtha	Vata Kapha	--	Vata Kapha
5.	Alasaka Kushtha	Vata Kapha	--	Vata Kapha
6.	Dadru Kushtha	Pitta Kapha	--	--
7.	Charmadala Kushtha	Pitta Kapha	Pitta	Kapha Pitta
8.	Pama Kushtha	Pitta Kapha	Pitta	Kapha Pitta
9.	Visphotaka Kushtha	Pitta Kapha	--	Kapha Pitta
10.	Shataru Kushtha	Pitta Kapha	--	Kapha Pitta
11.	Vicharchika Kushtha	Kapha	Pitta	Kapha
12.	Sthularushka Kushtha	--	Kapha	--
13.	Maha Kushtha	--	Kapha	--
14.	Visarpa Kushtha	--	Pitta	--
15.	Parisarpa Kushtha	--	Vata	--
16.	Sidhma Kushtha	--	Kapha	Vata Kapha
17.	Rasaka Kushtha	--	Kapha	--

### **Aetiology and Pathogenesis:**

In Ayurveda there is no specific aetiology for Vicharchika but given as a whole for all the Kushtharogas, causative factors of Kushtha according to Charaka and Sushruta in brief are as follows:

Sudden changes from cold to heat or heat to cold without observing the rules of gradual change, similarly sudden change from samtarpana (rich dieting) to Apatarpana (less dieting or fasting), continuous and excessive use of honey, treacle, fish etc. or grief beyond the limits, excessive taking of shali rice horsegram, black gram etc, are the factors of Kushtha which tend to derange

and aggravate the fundamental principle of Vayu in a person. The aggravated Vayu in combination with the agitated Pitta and Kapha, enters into siras (the vessels or ducts), which are transversely spread over the surface of the body. Thus the aggravated morbid Vayu deposits the pitta and kapha on the skin through the medium of their channels and then vitiates the four body elements and spreads them over the entire surface of the body. So the Kushtha or skin disease is produced (Cha.Chi.Chap.7, Shloka 10).<sup>1</sup>

Thus the causative factors of the Kushtha consists of seven dravyas i.e. (three doshas and skin, muscle, blood

and body-fluid), these seven dravyas being the cause eventually culminate into the pathological entity of Kushtha. This is corroborated in Charaka Samhita (Cha.Nid.Chap.5, Shloka.3).<sup>1</sup> In Charaka Samhita emphasis is laid on explaining general pathology in which derangement of the four dhatus is mentioned. But Sushruta has given detailed pathology in the following manner. According to Sushruta causative factors of the Kushtha which tend to derange and aggravate the fundamental principle of Vayu in a person. The enraged or aggravated Vayu, in combination with the agitated Pitta and Kapha, enters into the vessels or ducts (sira), which transversely spread over the surface of the body. Thus the enraged Vayu deposits the Pitta and Kapha on the skin through the medium of their channels and spreads them over the entire surface of the body. The regions of the skin in which the aforesaid morbid diatheses are deposited, become marked with circular rings or patches. The morbid diatheses (doshas), thus lodged in the skin, continue to aggravate, and having been neglected at the outset, tend to enter into the deeper tissues and thus contaminate the fundamental principles (Dhatus) of the body (Sus.Nid. Chap.5. Shloka 42)<sup>2</sup>.

On the same line as Charaka and Sushruta have enunciated causation pathology and presentation of Kushtha rogas, Vagbhata has described it concisely but clearly in the following manner: defective food, misconduct, incompatible diet, killing the virtuous, use of money or material acquired through theft the sinful acts of this life or of past life cause provocation of dosha which get vitiated. The vitiated doshas reach Tiryagat siras

and hence pass to the skin, the body-fluid, the blood and the muscular tissue and make them deranged and weakened, they pass on to the external surface of the patients body causing discoloration of the skin and produce Kushtha. If it is neglected at this stage after some period it tears the body, reaches all the dhatus and spreads there and gets them causing Atisveda (perspiration), Adhikasrava (discharges), Dushtavrana (gangrene) and penetration of minute parasites of terrible nature which eat up the hair, the skin, the ligaments the arteries and the cartilages etc. one by one (Ash.Nid. Chap.5 -Shloka 1-3).<sup>3</sup>

### **Prognostic Consideration of Kushthas:**

A tender plant can be cut down by small efforts but requires big efforts when grown big. Similarly a disease in its early stage is easily cured. When it gets in advanced stage requires great efforts for, and if not, it can even take the form of an incurable one.

According to Charaka the weak patient of Kushtharoga having all the symptoms along with complications of thirst, burning, absence of food digesting agni, infected with parasites is to be avoided by a wise physician. If the patient suffers from Kushtha roga with deranged Vata and Kapha or from one of the doshas he will be easily cured. But Kushtha with deranged Kapha Pitta and Vatapitta are difficult to cure. (Cha.Nid, Chap.5., Shloka 11.)<sup>1</sup>

According to Sushruta the patient who has full control over his sense organs and the disease touches only skin, blood or flesh it is curable. If the disease reaches Medodhatu (adipose tissue) it becomes yapyra (symptomatic relief so

long as treatment continues), other varieties are incurable (Sus.Nid, Chap., 5, Shloka 22-29).<sup>2</sup>

According to Madhavakara the curable Kushthas are those which are located in the skin, blood or flesh and in which Vata and Kapha are deranged together. Yapya are those located in Medodhatu or dual doshas (Vatakapha or Kaphapitta etc.) and those located in the bone or bone-marrow are incurable diseases to be avoided by the physicians (Mad.Nid.Chap., 49, Shloka 31 & 32).<sup>4</sup>

Finally, Vagbhata has summarised

the facts about prognosis of Kushtharoga more clearly that the physician should not treat the cases of Kushtharoga where all the three doshas are provoked or having Arishta symptoms and where infection has penetrated to the Bone, Bone - marrow and the Shukradhatu where infection has reached medas is yapya and where one of the provoked dual doshas contain pitta they are all difficult to treat. Curable skin diseases are those in which only one dosha or Kapha and Vata are provoked and cause kushta. (Ash.Hri. Nid. Chap.,14, Shloka 30-34).<sup>3</sup>.

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सारांश

## आयुर्वेदिक संहिताओं के अनुसार विचर्चिका की ऐतिहासिक दृष्टिकोण से समीक्षा

- आर.कुमारस्वामी  
पी.के.जे.पी. सुभक्ता

विचर्चिका रोग क्षुद्र कुष्ठों में से एक है । सामान्यतया अधिक संख्या में लोग चाहे वे ग्राम्य हों या नगरीय इस रोग से पीडित हैं । आयुर्वेदिक संहिताओं के अनुसार विचर्चिका सहित कुष्ठरोगों का ज्ञान आयुर्वेद के आचार्यों को प्राचीन काल से था । यद्यपि सभी संहिताओं में अठारह प्रकार के कुष्ठ रोगों का वर्णन मिलता है फिर भी उनके नामों, क्रम, वर्णन, दोषों की प्रधानता इत्यादि के संबंध में मतभिन्नता पाई जाती है ।