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UNDERSTANDING THE DOSIKA INVOLVEMENT IN PITTAJA KUSTHA: A CLASSICAL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Kustha Roga (skin disorders) is a significant disease category in Ayurveda, involving deep-seated imbalance of the Tridoṣas – Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. Among the various types, Pittaja Kuṣṭha is distinguished by the predominant involvement of Pitta Doṣa, characterized by features such as burning sensation (Daha), reddish-yellow discoloration (Pita-Harita-Nila Varṇa), suppuration (Paka), and oozing (Srava). This article explores the classical Ayurvedic understanding of the doṣika involvement in Pittaja Kustha, focusing on its Nidana (etiological factors), Samprapti (pathogenesis), Lakṣaṇa (clinical features), and Chikitsa (management). A critical examination of the role of Pitta Doṣa, its associated Duṣyas (affected tissues), and its influence on skin pathology offers valuable insights into diagnosis and treatment. The article aims to highlight the holistic and individualized approach of Ayurveda in managing Pittaja Kuṣṭha through both Sodhana (purificatory) and Samana (palliative) therapies, and to explore its relevance in the context of modern inflammatory skin disorders.

KEYWORDS: *Pittaja Kustha, Pitta Doṣa, Doṣa-Duṣya Samurcchana, Ayurvedic Dermatology, Kustha Roga, Classical Ayurveda*

INTRODUCTION

Etymological Derivation of Kustha

कुष् निष्कर्षणे + क्त

The word “Kustha’ is derived from ‘Kus nishkarshane’ + ‘Kta’ which implies ‘to destroy’, ‘to
scrap out’ or to deform, by adding the suffix ‘kta’ which stands for firmness or certainty. Thus
the word Kustha means that which destroys with certainty.

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Nirukti

The term "Pittaja Kustha" is derived from the combination of two Sanskrit words:

Pitta – Refers to one of the three doshas in Ayurveda, representing the fire and water elements. It is responsible for digestion, metabolism, and transformation in the body. It has qualities like Ushna (hot), Tikshna (sharp), Drava (liquid), and Sara (flowing).

Ja – A suffix meaning "born from" or "caused by."

Kustha – कु स्थानात् इति कुष्ठम्

– "Ku" means bad, and "Sthana" means place.

So, Kustha refers to a disease that arises in an impure or deranged state of the body's tissues (especially Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa).

Refers to a group of chronic skin diseases, characterized by discoloration, scaling, itching, and other skin abnormalities.

So, Pittaja Kustha literally means:

"A type of Kustha (skin disease) that is caused by or originates due to the vitiation of Pitta dosha."

According to Ayurveda, Kuṣṭha Roga includes a broad spectrum of long-term skin conditions that are primarily brought on by the vitiation of all three Doṣas, with one Doṣa predominating in each type. Pitta's connection with Rakta Dhatu makes Pittaja Kuṣṭha, which is characterized by Pitta predominance, very severe, resulting in suppurative and inflammatory symptoms. In order to comprehend Pittaja Kuṣṭha's pathology, clinical characteristics, and treatment approaches, this study attempts to examine it via a classical lens.

Skin conditions impact a person's social and psychological well-being in addition to their physical health. Skin illnesses are categorized under Kuṣṭha Roga in Ayurveda, which is a general word that includes a variety of dermatological ailments. Pittaja Kuṣṭha is distinguished from the others by Pitta doṣa's preponderance. This kind of Kuṣṭha is primarily associated with Pitta-related symptoms, such as burning, redness, inflammation, suppuration, and discolouration.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

- To investigate Pittaja Kustha's classical allusions and intellectual underpinnings.
- To comprehend the part Pitta Doṣa plays in Kustha Roga's pathophysiology.
- To investigate Pittaja Kustha's symptoms, indicators, and Dhatu involvement.
- To examine treatment modalities tailored to Pitta vitiation in skin conditions.

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1. Kustha Roga: An Overview
Because of its chronicity, difficulties, and participation of all three Dosas and seven Dhatus, Kustha is considered a maharoga, or major sickness, in Ayurveda. Kuṣṭha has been discussed in great depth by Caraka, Susruta, and other Acaryas.
Types of Kuṣṭha:
- Mahakuṣṭha (major skin diseases) – 7 types
- Kṣhudrakuṣṭha (minor skin diseases) – 11 types[1]
Individual types may manifest with a preponderance of one or two Dosas, despite Kuṣṭha being classified as Tridoṣaja. One such condition that primarily involves Pitta is Pittaja Kuṣṭha.

2. Pittaja Doṣa: Properties and Functions[2]
Pitta Guṇas (Properties):
- Uṣṇa (hot)
- Tikṣṇa (sharp)
- Sara (spreading)
- Drava (liquid)
- Amla (sour)
- Kaṭu (pungent)

Functions of Pitta:[3]
- Digestion and metabolism (Pacana)
- Coloration of skin (Varṇa)
- Intelligence (Medha)
- Vision (Darsana)
- Heat regulation (Uṣṇata)

In skin diseases like Pittaja Kuṣṭha, these properties—especially Uṣṇa and Drava—play a pathological role.

3. Nidana (Etiological Factors) of Pittaja Kuṣṭha[4]
Aharaja Nidana (Dietary causes):
- Excess intake of spicy, sour, salty, fermented food
- Excess alcohol consumption
- Eating during indigestion (ajirṇa)

Viharaja Nidana (Lifestyle causes):
- Excess exposure to heat, sun, and fire
- Excess anger, emotional stress
- Overexertion
- Day sleep, especially after heavy meals

Manasika Nidana (Psychological causes):
- Anger
- Emotional suppression
- Frustration

4. Purvarup[5]
Tvakpaarushyam(Skin roughness)
Akasmaadromaharsha(sudden hair loss)
Kandu(itching)
Svedabaahulyam(
Asvedanaan(excessive sweating)
Vaangapradeshaanaan svapah(sweating of the limbs)
Kshatavisarpana(drowsiness)
Asrjah(bruising)
Krshnata(darkness)

5.Clinical Features (Lakṣaṇani)[6]
- Daha (burning sensation)
- Raga (redness)
- Paka (formation of pus)
- Parisrava(exudation)
- Visra Gandhi(offensive smell)
- Kledas(stickiness)
- Angapatana(sloughing of body parts)

6. Duṣyas (Affected Body Elements)[7]
Main duṣyas:
- Rasa dhatu
- Rakta dhatu
- Tvak (skin)
- Māṃsa dhatu
- Lasika (lymphatic fluid)

7. Samprapti (Pathogenesis) of Pittaja Kuṣṭha[8]
1.Dosa Prakopa (Aggravation)
• Nidana Sevana (intake of Pitta-vitiating diet/lifestyle) → Pitta aggravation.
2. Doṣa Sancaya (Accumulation)
• Pitta increases beyond physiological limits in its Sthana (Amasaya).
3. Dosa Prasara (Spread)
• Aggravated Pitta moves through Raktavaha Srotas.
4. Sthana Samsraya (Localization)
• Pitta localizes in Rakta, Tvak, and Maṃsa Dhatu—the key tissues in skin disorders.
5. Dosa-Dusya Sammurcchana (Interaction of Doṣa with Duṣyas)
• Pitta (Doṣa) binds with Rakta, Tvak, Maṃsa (Duṣyas) → formation of pathological lesions.

6. Vyakti (Manifestation)
• Full clinical expression of Pittaja Kustha with characteristic symptoms: burning, discoloration, suppuration.

Samprapti Ghataka:
- Dosha - Pitta Pradhan Tridosh
- Dushya -Twak, Rakta, Mamsa, Ambu
- Srotasa - Rasavaha Raktavaha, Swedavaha
- Srotodushti - Sanga
- Agni - Jatharagni and Dhatwagnimandya
- Udbhava Sthana - Amashaya and Pakwashaya
- Vyakta Sthana - Twacha
- Adhishsthana - Twak,Mamsa
- Rogamarga - Bahya
- Swabhava - Chirakari

Causative Factors (Nidana Sevan)[9]
↓
Pitta Prakopa (Aggravation in Amasaya)
↓
Doṣa Sancaya → Doṣa Prasara
↓
Movement through Raktavaha Srotas
↓
Sthana Samsraya in Tvak, Rakta, Maṃsa Dhatu
↓
Doṣa-Duṣya Sammurcchana (Pitta + Rakta/Tvak)
↓

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Clinical Manifestation of Pittaja Kuṣṭha (Vyakti):
- Burning
- Red-yellow discoloration
- Suppuration
- Oozing

8. Types of Kuṣṭha Associated with Pitta

Specific types include:
- Rishyajihva
- Kakaṇaka
- Audumbara Kuṣṭha
- Pama
- Kapala[10]
- Kitibha
- Vicharchika
- Visarpa
- Charmadala[11]

9. Updrava[12]
- Discharge,
- Differences in limbs,
- Falls of limbs,
- Thirst,
- Fever,
- Diarrhea,
- Burning,
- Weakness,
- Irritation,
- Consequences,

10. Differential Diagnosis (Modern Correlations)
- Contact dermatitis
- Seborrheic dermatitis
- Psoriasis
- Pemphigus vulgaris
- Vasculitis

11. Cikitsa (Management) of Pittaja Kuṣṭha[13]

1. Nidana Parivarjana
2. Sodhana: Raktamokshana, Virecana, Snehapana
   -Virechana (therapeutic purgation) is the main therapy for Pitta vitiation.
   - Raktamokshana (bloodletting), especially using Jalauka Avacaraṇa (leech therapy), is highly effective.
3. Samana: Tikta rasa dravyas(-Nimba (Azadirachta indica)
   - Patola (Trichosanthes dioica)
   - Guduchi (Tinospora cordifolia)
   - Manjistha (Rubia cordifolia),
   Ghṛta preparations.
4. Rasayana: Amṛta, Satavari, Asvagandha

Yogas Useful in Pittaja Kuṣṭha
- Pathyadi kvatha
- Arogyavardhini vaṭi
- Khadirariṣṭa
- Mahatikta ghṛta

12. Lifestyle & Pathya-Apathya

Pathya:
- Light, cooling, bitter food
- Barley, green gram
- Prefer cooling foods like Shali rice, Madhura rasa fruits
- Follow Dinacharya and Ritucharya with Pitta-palliative regimens

Apathya:
- Avoid spicy, sour, oily, fermented, and hot foods
- Day sleep

DISCUSSION

The core ideas of Doṣa, Dhatu, and Srotas theory in Ayurveda form the basis of the traditional interpretation of Pittaja Kuṣṭha. With a particular emphasis on Pitta Doṣa's central role in etiology and clinical manifestation, this conversation attempts to synthesize the classical accounts with their clinical relevance.

Although Kuṣṭha is a Tridoṣaja Vyadhi, according to Ayurveda, one Doṣa frequently predominates in its different expressions. Pittaja Kuṣṭha, with its Uṣṇa, Tikṣṇa, and Drava Guṇas, depicts the characteristics of exacerbated Pitta Doṣa. These characteristics account for the typical symptoms of inflammation that are frequently seen in this variation, including redness, heat, suppuration, and burning. Pitta's innate affinity for Rakta and the role of Rakta Dhatu as a prime Duṣya support the clinical symptoms that have been noted.

A traditional Ayurvedic method of treating Pittaja Kuṣṭha promotes a comprehensive diagnosis, including internal Doṣika imbalances in addition to outwardly apparent lesions. Pitta Doṣa's preponderance explains the underlying Rakta Dushti (blood vitiation) and metabolic abnormalities in addition to the outwardly apparent inflammatory reactions.

The Pitta-dominant symptoms are similar to inflammatory dermatoses such contact dermatitis, urticaria, pustular acne, or some types of psoriasis when compared to contemporary dermatology. Ayurveda places more emphasis on systemic cleaning, tissue balance restoration, and long-term immunological modulation than current therapies, which mostly concentrate on symptomatic suppression with steroids or antibiotics.

Moreover, understanding the patient's Prakṛti (constitution) allows the physician to prevent future flare-ups by modifying Ahara (diet), Vihara (lifestyle), and Manasa Bhavas (emotional states), offering a truly integrative model of skin health.

CONCLUSION

Despite being a difficult disorder, Pittaja Kuṣṭha can be efficiently addressed if the Doṣika involvement is clearly understood. Classical Ayurvedic texts offer a methodical approach to diagnosis and treatment based on Doṣa-Duṣya Sammurcchana, Nidana, and customized treatment. Long-lasting comfort and healthy skin can be attained by balancing Pitta and cleansing the body with Sodhana and Samana treatments.

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