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AN ĀYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE ON MUKHADŪṢIKĀ LEPA: CLASSICAL REFERENCES AND APPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

In Āyurvedā text, Mukhadūṣikā is classified as a Kṣudraroga (minor disease), characterised by eruptions resembling the thorns of the Śālmalī tree.[1] This condition is considered analogous to Acne Vulgaris in modern science, a chronic inflammatory skin disorder affecting the pilosebaceous unit. Acne Vulgaris is known for causing various non –inflammatory and inflammatory lesions, which can lead to significant scarring.

Traditional Āyurvedā therapies, particularly topical applications known as Lepa have been highly valued in the management of mukhadūṣikā [2]. Numerous formulations of these medicinal pastes are described in ancient texts, specifically within the Kṣudraroga Cikitsā adhyāya of classical Saṁhitā. This review systematically compiles and analyses the therapeutic combinations used in these traditional Āyurvedā topical applications for the treatment of Mukhadūṣikā. By doing so, it seeks to explore the potential of these historical formulations for modern dermatological research.

KEY WORDS:*Mukhadūṣikā, Tāruṇyapiṭikā, yuvanapīḍakā, Acne, Acne Vulgaris, Lep, lepa Cikitsā, Kṣudraroga.*

INTRODUCTION

शाल्मलीकण्टकप्रख्याः कफमारुतशोणितैः |
जायन्ते यूनां वक्त्रे या मुखदूषिकाः ||[3]

Mukhadūṣikā is synonym of Tāruṇyapiṭikā. Ācārya has explained about Mukhadūṣikā in the *kṣudraroga*. Along with Ācārya suśrutaa, different ācāryas like Bhāvaprakāśa, Mādhava, Vāgbhaṭaa have explained that the eruptions like śālmalī thorn on face during adulthood caused by *kapha, vaata, and rakta* are known as Mukhadūṣikā or *yuvanapīḍakā*.[3]

In Aāyurvedā texts, "Mukhadūṣikā" is described under the *kṣudraroga* Adhyāya categorized as a Saṁtarpaṇajanya vyādhī. Various Ācārya have outlined the Cikitsā for Mukhadūṣikā, which includes Śodhana, *śamana*, and *lepa* Cikitsā. Topical application can be prescribed according to the types of Mukhadūṣikā, or acne.

Acne presents in various forms, broadly categorized as inflammatory and non-inflammatory. Non-inflammatory acne includes whiteheads and blackheads, while inflammatory acne encompasses papules, pustules, nodules, and cysts. Symptoms can range from mild, non-inflammatory bumps to severe, painful, and potentially scarring lesions.

According to *Āyurvedā*, Mukhadūṣikā is classified into Vātaja, Pittaja, kaphaja, and Raktaja types. *Avasthānurūpa* Cikitsā, or Cikitsā *siddhaamta*, plays an important role in treating Mukhadūṣikā. According to the types and stage of Mukhadūṣikā, various *kalpa* (formulations) are described in *Āyurvedā* texts, with *lepa* being one of the *bāhya upakrama* (external applications) mentioned in the Cikitsā Sūtra.

Face is the mirror of our body and mind; hence peoples are more concern about face to present era. Acne vulgaris or Acne usually affects the young people at an age when they are most sensitive to any disfigurement.

The prevalence of Acne is very high. It affects 80% of adolescents [4]. Acne manifests because of today's world, people are increasingly focused on their facial appearance, recognizing it as a key indicator of both physical and mental well-being. Acne, or acne vulgaris, is a widespread skin condition that primarily affects young people. This is a particularly sensitive time in their lives, making them highly susceptible to the emotional distress caused by any noticeable disfigurement.
The prevalence of acne is exceptionally high, with around 80% of teenagers experiencing it. [4] Its manifestation is closely linked to the normal hormonal fluctuations of puberty, making it a common concern for youth. Without proper treatment, acne can result in a range of challenging complications, such as permanent scarring (including pustules**,** nodules**,** cysts**,** and keloids), and can even contribute to severe psychological distress**,** including depression.

AIM AND OBJECTIVE

Aim – compressive overview of Mukhadūṣikā *lepa* from Āyurvedā text.

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Objective – 1. To study pathophysiology and *cikitsaa siddhaa.mta* of Mukhadūṣikā,
2. To study mode of action of *lepa*.
3. Compile mukhadūṣikā *lepa according* to types

MATERIAL

Material related Mukhadūṣikā and Acne Vulgaris is collected from Āyurvedā text and text book of modern medicine respectively. The available commentaries of Āyurvedā Saṁhitās have also referred to collect relevant matter. The index, non-index medical journals has also referred to collect information of relevant topic.

In Aetiology of Mukhadūṣikā mentioned in Āyurvedā text short description is available about the disease, "Mukhadūṣikā". All the Saṁhitās have pointed out *kapha*, *vāta* and *rakta* as the causative factors of the disease, while *bhāvaprakāśa* mentioned due to svabhāva. According to *Śāraṁgadhara* Saṁhitā *Vakrasnigdhatā* and *Piḍikā have* been mentioned as Śukradhātumala.[5]

In Normal Skin

1. The oil gland releases sebum (oil).
2. It travels up the hair, out of the pore, and on to skin.
3. Sebum helps keeps skin lubricated.

In Acne

1. There is disturbance in this lubrication process.
2. Here follicles produce too much oil.
3. Dead skin cells accumulate in pores.
4. Bacteria build up in pores.

Saṁprāptī *Ghaṭaka of* Mukhadūṣikā

- *Doṣa* - *Vāta, Kapha*
- *Duśya* - *Rakta, Meda* (*Śukra* according to *Bhāvaprakāśa)*
- *Sthānasaṁśraya* - *Tvacā, Meda*
- *Srotasa – Raktavaha*
- *Vyādhimārga – Bāhya*
- *Vyādhīsvabhāva* - *Saṁtarpaṇajanya*, *Kaṣṭasādhya*

Treatment protocol explained in text that

कुर्यात शोणितरोगेषु रक्तपित्तहरी क्रिया। विरेक उपवासे च स्त्रावणं शोणितस्य च ।।
यौवन पिटिकान्यच्छ नीलिका व्यङ्गशर्कराः। सिरावेधैः प्रलेपश्च जयेदभ्यनैस्तथा ।।

यो. र. चि.[6]

Chikista sidhant for Mukhadūṣikā described in text is *Kapha Vātaghna, Raktaśodhana, Raktaprasādana, Medoghna Cikitsā along* with *Paṁcakarma* treatment *Vamana, Raktamokṣaṇa* adviced in Mukhadūṣikā. *Bāhya Upakrama* which is also an important part of treatment i.e. *Lepa*.

Mode of Action *Lepa* [7] [8] [9]



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Primarily the openings of hair follicles provide a pathway for substance to enter. *Svedavaha srotasa* also serve as channels for absorption, then on through the superficial layers, the active components enter the local micro circulation and eventually the systemic circulation. *Bhrājaka Pitta* which is in the skin, is said to be responsible for metabolizing (*Pācana*) and processing substance applied externally, facilitating their absorption and action. [6]

LEPA ACCODING TO TYPES OF MUKHADŪṢIKĀ (ACNE)

- **Black Heads /White Heades (Vātaja Mukhadūṣikā)**

1. *Bharjita Masūra*, grounded with *Dugdha*, mixed with *Ghṛta* and *Madhū* to form a paste.
2. *Nārikela śuktī, Vaṭapatra*[10]
3. *Tuṣarahita yava cūrṇa, Yaṣṭimadhu, Lodhra*

Vāta Doṣa is dominace seen in black heads and white heads type of acne. The gharṣaṇa karma is expected from *lepa dravya*. Vitiated d*oṣa* can obstruct the *lomakūpa* [pilosebaseous unit]. The ingredients of lepa work to clear these obstructions, allowing for proper sebum flow and preventing comedone formation. The ingredients that are slightly unctuous or moisturising, which helps to pacify the dryness and roughness.

- **Pustules Papules (*Raktaja/Pittaj* Mukhadūṣikā*)***

1. *Raktacaṁdana, Maṁjīstā, Lodhra, Kusta, Priyaṁgu, Vaṭāṁkura, Masūra*[10]
2. *Badara Bīja Majjā, Guḍa, Madhū*
3. *Śveta Musalī, Ajā Dugdha, Madhū*
4. *Śālmalī Kaṁṭaka* grounded with *Dugdha*

Pitta doṣa dominance seen in papule and pustular type of acne. *Lepa dravya* and formulation mentioned a *Śīta Vīrya* [cooling potency] to counteract the heat and burning sensation. *Pitta* and *rakta* have close relationship. Aggravated *Pitta* often vitiates *Rakta Dhātū, leading* to inflammatory conditons.so here choose *Rakta śodhana* properties *dravya* help to cleanse the blood, removing toxins (*Āma*) that contributes to acne formation and aggravation. *kaṣāya rasa dravya* like *Lodhra* helps to dry out excessive oiliness reduce secretions, and promoting the healing of lesions. It also helps in toning the skin.

- **Nodular Acne, Cystic Acne (*Kaphaja* Mukhadūṣikā)**

1. *Vacā, Lodhra, Sarṣapa, Saiṁdhava* [2]
2. *Dhānyaka, Vacā, Lodhra, Kuṣṭa*
3. *Jīraka, Śahājīraka, Kṛṣṇatīla, Sarṣapa* grounded with *Dugdha* to form paste
4. *Jaṁbū, Āmra Patra Dadhī, Haridrā, Dārū Haridrā, Nava Guḍa* [10]
5. *Śveta Sarṣapa, Haridrā, Dāruharidrā, Maṁjīstā, Gairīk* mixed with *Ghṛta* and *Dugdha*
6. *Jātīphala, Caṁdana, Marīca* [10]
7. *Śālmalī Kaṁṭaka, Lodhra, Vacā, Gaṁdhaka*

In *Kaphaja* Mukhadūṣikā *laghu, rukṣa, uṣṇa* Properties along with tikta*, kaṭū* and *kaṣāya rasa dravya* help to counteract the kapha *doṣa*. *Pramāthī dravya* like *Vacaa* clear the obstruction caused by *kapha* and *vikṛta meda.*

DISCUSSION

In Ayurveda, *Mukhadūṣikā* is described under *Kṣudraroga*. It primarily involves the *Vāta* and *Kapha doṣas*, with the *duṣyas* being *Rakta*, *Meda*, and *Śukra*. According to *Bhāvaprakāśa*, the condition manifests due to *sthānasaṁśraya* (localization of the doṣas) in the *tvacā* (skin), and involves the *Meda* and *Raktavaha srotasas*. It is considered a *bāhyamārga* (external pathway) disorder, arising from *saṁtarpaṇajanya* (excessive nourishment), and is classified as a *kaṣṭasādhya vyādhi* (difficult to treat disease). All these *saṁprāpti ghaṭakas* are observed in *Mukhadūṣikā*.

The *Cikitsā Sidhānta* (principles of treatment) for *Mukhadūṣikā*, as described in Ayurvedic texts, includes *Kapha-Vātaghna Cikitsā*, *Raktaśodhana* (blood purification), *Raktaprasādana* (blood nourishment and clarification), and *Medoghna Cikitsā* (treatment to reduce excess fat). *Pañcakarma* therapies such as *Vamana* (therapeutic emesis) and *Raktamokṣaṇa* (bloodletting) are specifically advised in the management of *Mukhadūṣikā*. [10] In addition, *Bāhya Upakrama* (external therapies) play a significant role, with *Lepa* (topical applications) being especially important. The application of *Lepa* not only helps in reducing the existing lesions but also enhances *Mukhakāntī* (the complexion and radiance of the face).

CONCLUSION

Mukhadūṣikā can be managed through both *Śodhana* and *Śamana Cikitsā*. The treatment principles include *Kapha-Vātaghna Cikitsā*, *Raktaśodhana*, *Raktaprasādana*, and *Medoghna Cikitsā*. Among the *Bāhya Upakrama* , *Lepa* is particularly emphasized in classical texts. It is effective in alleviating the inflammation, swelling, redness, and pain associated with *Doṣānubandha* in *Mukhadūṣikā*.

In *Vātaja Mukhadūṣikā*, *Yavādi Lepa* is beneficial for clearing obstructions in the channels. For *Pittaja* or *Raktaja* types, *Badarakolamajādi*, *Vaṭapatrādī*, and *Śālmalīkaṇṭaka Lepa* are effective in reducing inflammation. In *Kaphaja Mukhadūṣikā*, formulations like *Kāliyākaḍī Lepa*, *Lodhrādī Lepa*, *Jātīphala Lepa*, and *Rākṣoghna Lepa* help remove obstructions caused by *Kapha* and *Vikṛta Meda* (vitiated fat tissue).[11]

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