



## AN AYURVEDIC REVIEW ON VISARPA

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## ABSTRACT

*Visarpa* is one of the skin disorders which is widely explained in *Ayurvedic* classics. It is one of the most common skin ailments suffered by large number of populations worldwide. Unhealthy lifestyle, and not going under shodana many times lead to *visarpa*. According to *Ayurveda* the term *Visarpa* has two parts i.e, *vi* stands for *Vividha* meaning different directions, and *Sarpa* stands for *Sarpana* meaning spreading. Since this ailment spreads upwards or downwards or in all these three directions, it is called *Visarpa*. The clinical features contemplate with Herpes Zoster which is an active transmitting viral disease-causing painful skin rash with blisters in localized areas. So, this *Visarpa* can be managed in *Ayurveda* very effectively on the basis of *Dosha*. The main aim of managing the *Visarpa* by *Nidana Parivarjana* (to rule out the cause of disease and cease that cause) and *Chikitsa* (treatment) based on the *Dosha* will be given so that the root cause of *Visarpa* can be managed and this is one of the diseases if not treated appropriately it will cause death instantaneously.

KEYWORDS : *Visarpa*, *Nidana*, *Dosha*, *Chikitsa*

## INTRODUCTION

Physical appearance is something that is related to psychological stress. Skin is major organ which remains as a presentable material in front of the world which also defines any individuality. *Ayurveda* considers *Rakta dushti* as one of the prime causes of skin diseases<sup>1</sup> There are various types of diseases, some of these get cured even without treatment like *Vyanga* (freckles in the face, etc) and *Tilaka* (black moles). There are others disorders like *Meha* (obstinate urinary diseases including diabetes) and *Gulma* (phantom tumour) which cause death of the patient after long period even if treated appropriately. There is third category of disease which if not treated appropriately cause death instantaneously. *Visarpa* is one such diseases belonging to the third category<sup>2</sup>. *Visarpa* is defined as the one which spreads very quickly in various directions. Swelling which is not too much elevated, quickly spreads all over the body is known as *Visarpa*<sup>3</sup>. It is characterized by the localized painful spread of skin rashes and blisters. *Ayurveda* classics mention that *Visarpa* spreads like a snake and thus it is considered as *Pradhan Vyadhi*. *Visarpa* in modern can be co-related with symptoms of *erysipelas* and *herpes* According to a modern medical study the incidence rate of *herpes zoster* was highest i.e, 56% at 20 – 40 years of age and from lower socio-economic strata<sup>4</sup>. These problems vary from age, locality and season. Among all type of dermatological condition *herpes zoster* gains immediate notice of a doctor due to its severity in localized spread, pain and burning sensation<sup>5</sup>. *Herpes zoster* closely resemble to a condition called *Visarpa* which is described in *Ayurveda*. The treatment should be given based on the *Dosha* and should manage very carefully.

## NIRUKTI

The term *Visarpa* is derived from the root *Srupa* prefixing "vi" as *Visheshana*. *Srupa* suggests the spreading nature of the disease.

## PARIBHASHA

In *Charaka Samhita*, *Visarpa* is defined as "*Vividhamsarpati*", a condition in which the *Sphota* and *Shopha* spread in different directions. *Chakrapani* commenting on that further clarifies that the *Sphota* and *Shopha* of *Visarpa* can spread in different directions, such as *Adha*, *Urdhva* and *Tiryak*<sup>7</sup>.

*Sushruta* explains, it is a condition in which the vitiated *Dosha* take their seat in *Twak*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa Dhatus* and cause *Shopha*, which has tendency to spread all over the body. He also mentions that the nature of *Shopha* is *Vistruta*-broad, *Anunnata*-not much elevated, *Sarvatovisarana*-spreading in different directions<sup>8</sup>.

## PARYAYA

*Parisarpa*, is the one of the synonyms given by *Charaka*<sup>9</sup>

## NIDANA

## Aharaja Nidana

- The excessive and continuous intake of food articles which are predominantly *Amla*, *Lavana* and *Katu Rasas*
- 18 types of *Viruddhaaharas* are explained but only those *Viruddhaaharas* are included which vitiate *Pitta & Rakta Dhātu* predominantly.
- *Mithyaahara* - improper food habits. Continuous indulgence in unwholesome diet will exacerbate any underlying dormant pathology in the *Vikruta Srotas*
- *Madhyas* like *Sura*, *Souveera*, *Vikrutamadya*, *Naveeana Madhya* and *Gorasa* and its *Vikruti* are also considered as the cause of this *Vyadhi*<sup>10</sup>.

## Viharaja Nidana

- *Chardivega* has been given more importance by all the authors.
- *Diwaswapna*, *Ratri Jagarana*, *ativyavaya-vyayama*, also contributes as causative factors for this disease<sup>11</sup>.

## Agantuja

- *Kshata*, *Prapatana*, *Bandana*, *Vishavayu*, and *Agni*<sup>12</sup>.

## Vyadhi

- In some diseases *Visarpa* has been mentioned as a upadrava, for example *Visphota*, *Vatarakta* and *Prameha Pidika*.

## Anyā

- *Ashtanga Hridaya* has recognized *Dantodbheda* as a specific and independent motive factor for *Visarpa*<sup>13</sup>

## PURVA RUPA

The *Poorva Rupa* of *Visarpa* have not been much highlighted by any of the authors of classical *Ayurvedic* literature. *Rakta*

*Mandala Pradurbhava* is the *Poorva Rupa* restricted to the area of affection. The generalized *Poorva Rupas* are *Jwara*, *Daha* etc.<sup>14</sup>

## RUPA

The *Pratyatma Lakshana* of *Visarpa* is the occurrence of *Ekadeshaja Shothas* which are spreading in nature. This *Shotha* is called *Sphota* which is *Agnidagdhavat*<sup>15</sup>. *Arunadatta* considered this *Sphota* as *Pidika*.

The important *Lakshanas* of *Visarpa* can be analysed and understood as follows.

## Sphota

*Pidika* is a variety of *Ekadeshaja Shotha*, this is explained as *Kulattha Sadrusa* and *Agnidagdhvat Sphota*<sup>15</sup>.

## Visarpana

The *Doshas* in *Visarpa* have a characteristic nature of *Visarpana Sheelata* as they have *Ashuprasara Swabhava*.

## Vaivarnya

The *Varna* of *Pidika* and the underneath skin in *Visarpa* depends on the involvement of the *Doshas*.

- *Vataja* = *Shyava*, *Arunavarna Pidikas*<sup>16</sup>
- *Pittaja* = *Tamra*, *Harita*, *Haridra* and *Neela Varna Pidikas*<sup>17</sup>
- *Kaphaja* = *Pandu Varna*<sup>18</sup>.
- In rest of the varieties the colour depends on the combination of the *Dosha*

## Shoola

Various types of pain have been explained in *Visarpa*.

- *Vataja* = *Toda*, *Shoola*, *Udveshtana*, *Vyathaatepeeda*, *Ayama*
- *Pittaja* = *Daha*
- *Vata Pittaja* = severe pain leading to *Nidranasha*

## Srava

The *Klinnata* of *Laseeka*, *Twak*, *Rakta* and *Mamsa* result in the formation of *Srava*.

- *Vataja* = *Tanu*, *Vishada*, *Aruna* and *Shyava*<sup>19</sup>
- *Pittaja* = *Tamra*, *Harita*, *Haridra*, and *Krishna*<sup>20</sup>
- *Kaphaja* = *Shweta*, *Pichhila*, *Tantubaddha*<sup>21</sup>

## Anya Lakshanas

- *Jwara*, *Chardi*, *Atisara*, *Arochaka*, *Avipaka*, *Agnisada*, *Hikka*, *Pralapa*, *Anidra*, *Aarati*, *Pipasa*, *Bhrama*, *Moorcha*, *Atisweda*, *Antar Daha*

## BHEDA

Based on *Dosha* predominancy, according to *Acharya Charaka*<sup>22</sup> - they are 7 types-

1. *Vataja* (Predominant of *Vata*),
2. *Pittaja* (Predominant of *Pitta*),
3. *Kaphaja* (Predominant of *Kapha*),
4. *Sannipataja* (Predominant of all the *Tridosha*),
5. *Vata Pittaja* (Predominant of *Vata* and *Pitta*) also known as *Agni Visarpa*,
6. *Pitta Kaphaja* (Predominant of *Pitta* and *Kapha*) also known as *Kardama Visarpa*
7. *Kapha Vataja* (Predominant of *Kapha* and *Vata*) also known as *Granthi Visarpa*.

## SAMPRAPTI

- *Dosha*: *Tridosha Pitta*, *Kapha*, *Vata*
- *Dushya*: *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Laseeka*
- *Agni*: *Jatharagni* and *Rakta*, *Mamsa Dhatwagni*
- *Ama*: *Tajjanyaama*
- *Udbhava Sthana*: *Amashaya*, *Twacha*
- *Adhithana*: *Twacha* (Vedini layer)
- *Srotas*: *Rasa*, *Raktavaha*
- *Srotodushti Prakara*: *Sanga*
- *Vyadhiprakara*: *Aashukari*

- *Saachara Sthana*: *Tiryaksira*
- *Rogamarga*: *Bahya*, *Abhyantara*
- *Sadhya Sadhyata*: *Eka doshaja* is *Saadhya* and *Agni*, *Granthi* and *Kardama* are *asadhya*

## SADHYASADHYATA

*Sadhya* = *Eka Doshaja Visarpa*, *Dwandaja* if *Anupadrava*, not involved in *Marma Sthanas* and the *Sira*, *Mamsa* do not become *Klinna*.

*Krichra Sadhya* = *Eka Doshaja Visarpas* present with all the symptoms, *Upadrava* and are expressed in *Marma Pradeshas*<sup>24</sup>

*Asadhya* = *Eka Doshaja*, if colour of the body changes to *Anjanavarna*, *Dwandaja*, *Sannipataja*<sup>25</sup>

## CHIKITSA SUTRA

आदावेव विसर्पेषु हितं लङ्घनरूक्षणम्।

रक्तावसेको वमनं विरेकः, स्नेहनं न तु।।१।। (A.H. Chi 18/1)

In the beginning, the patient is given with *Rukshana*, *Langhana*, *Seka* with the *Kwatha* of *Panchavalkala* or *Pradeha* with the *Kalka* (paste) of *Panchavalkala*, *Sira*, *Mokshana*, *Jalaukavacharana*, *Vamana*, *Virechana*.

Various *chikitsa sutra* explained by different *Acharyas*

- *Langhana*, *Lekhana* and *Tikta Rasa Sevana* is explained in *Charaka Samhita*.
- *Shodhana* and *Raktamokshana* are mentioned in *Sushruta Samhita*.
- *Ashtanga Hridaya* mentioned *Langhana*, *Rukshana*, *Raktamokshana*, *Vamana* and *Virechana*
- *Bhavaprakasha* and *Bhaishajya ratnavali* replaces *Langhana* and *Rukshana* from the above *Chikitsa Sutra* with *Lepana* and *Shamana*.
- *Ghritapana* is advised for *Visarpa* in *Basavarajeeyam*.

## DISCUSSION

As the disease origin from its respective *Nidanaja* factors similarly here the excessive and continuous intake of food articles which are predominantly in *Amla*, *Lavana*, *Katu Rasas* have been mentioned as the most important contributing factors for *Visarpa*. *Lavana Rasa Atisevana* leads to *Pitta Prakopaka*, *Raktamvardhana*, *Amla Rasa Atisevana* leads to *Pitta Prakopaka*, does dushana of *Rakta*, *Katu Rasa Atisevana* results in *Shareeratapamupajanayati* and causes different types of *Vataja Shula*. *Madhya*, *Dadhi* being *Amla Vipaka*, *Ushna Viryatmaka* and is not suitable for persons suffering from *Rakta*, *Pitta* and *Kaphaja Vikaras Chardivegavidharana* will lead to the accumulation of the toxins in the body, it will spread in all the *Srotas* and lead to the manifestation of the skin diseases. *Diwaswapna* will lead to an imbalance in the *Kapha*, *Ratrijagarana* leads to an imbalance in the *Vata* and *Pitta Doshas*. The *Nidanakara Dravyas* which predominantly have *Vikasi* & '*Asthira*' *Gunas* causes the vitiation of *Doshas*, gains the nature of *Ashuprasara* and attains *Asthira Avastha*. The external trauma which includes *Shastra Prahara*, *Nakha*, *Dantapeeda* vitiate *Pitta* and *Rakta* immediately. According to *Acharya Vagbhata*, the vitiated *Tridoshas* with the predominance of *Vidahi* properties tend to spread to different parts of the body very rapidly. *Gangadhara* also opines that the nature of spreading is *ashuprasarana* as an effect of *Asthira Guna* of *Doshas*. The vitiated *Doshas* spreads quickly in the body and the does the dushana of *Rakta*, *Twak*, *Mamsa* and *Laseeka*. These factors exacerbate the *Kushta Avastha* and leads to formation of *Sphota* and their bursting is seen in *Visarpa*.

The treatment of *Visarpa* is based on *Doshas* and its site. If the vitiated *Dosha* are located in the *Kapha Sthana*, then *Langhana* and *Vamana* therapies are useful. Such a patient should be

given ingredients having *Tikta Rasa*. If *Dosha* are located in the *Pitta Sthana*, abode of *Pittat* then *Rakta –Mokshana* and *Virechana* therapies should be specially administered to such patients. And if these *Doshas* are located in the *Vata Sthana*, then *Virukshana* therapies should be administered in the beginning. *Visarpa* is *Pitta Pradhana Vyadhi* and if *Jwara* associated then it can be treated with *Virechana* therapy by *Triphala Kwatha*, *Trivrit Churna* and *Ghrita*. If the *Visarpa* is due to vitiation of either of *Kapha* or *Pitta* or both *Kapha* and *Pitta*, then the patient should be given with *Vamana*, by administering any one or in combination the following *Dravyas* - *Madana Phala*, *Madhuka*, *Nimba*, *Vatsaka Phala*. After *Shodhana* of body from inside, removal of morbid *Doshas* from the *Twacha* and *Mamsa* is very necessary. The affected part of the body should be anointed with the *Lepa* of the ingredients having *Snigdha* and *Sheeta Guna*.

## CONCLUSION

*Visarpa* is one of the dangerous diseases having *Dushya* as *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Laseeka* and *Twak* are mainly involved in this condition which leads production of *Vistruta*, *Anunnata Shopha* that has *Sarpana Prakruti* associated with *Daha* and *Vedana*. Treatment modalities such as *Virechana* *Kashaya* provide relief to the symptoms such as *Daha*, *Kandu* and helps in drying of lesions. *Lepa* helps in relieving burning sensation and *Raktamokshana* is helpful in stopping the pathology of disease and its spread. *Visarpa* shows a tendency of relapse thus repeated *Shodhana Chikitsa* is suggested after considering patient's health status and proper *Pathya Apathya*.

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