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Clinical Evaluation of *Virechana Karma* in *Ekakushta* with Special Reference to Psoriasis: A Single Case Study

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Abstract

Background: Psoriasis is a chronic, immune-mediated inflammatory skin disorder characterized by erythematous, scaly plaques with recurrent exacerbations. In Ayurveda, psoriasis closely resembles *Ekakushta*, one of the *Kshudra Kushta*, predominantly involving vitiation of *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha* with *Rakta* and *Twak Dushti. Virechana Karma*, one of the *Panchakarma* procedures, is considered the principal treatment for *Pitta-Rakta* predominant disorders and *Kushta.*

Objective: To evaluate the efficacy of *Virechana Karma* in the management of *Ekakushta* (Psoriasis).

Methods: A 35-year-old male diagnosed with chronic plaque psoriasis was treated with classical *Virechana Karma* following *Poorva Karma* including *Deepana-Pachana, Snehapana*, and *Abhyanga-Swedana*. Assessment was carried out before and after treatment using the Psoriasis Area Severity Index (PASI), itching score, scaling score, erythema score, and *Ayurvedic* clinical features.

Results: Significant improvement was observed in erythema, scaling, itching, plaque thickness, and PASI score after *Virechana Karma*. No adverse effects were reported.

Conclusion: *Virechana Karma* proved effective in reducing the clinical manifestations of psoriasis (*Ekakushta*) and improving the patient's quality of life. Larger clinical studies are recommended to validate these findings.

Keywords: *Ekakushta*, Psoriasis, *Virechana Karma, Panchakarma, Ayurveda, Kushta*.

Introduction

Psoriasis is a chronic autoimmune inflammatory skin disease affecting approximately 2–3% of the global population. It is characterized by hyper proliferation of keratinocytes leading to erythematous plaques covered with silvery-white scales. Although several modern therapeutic options are available, recurrence is common and prolonged treatment is often associated with adverse effects.

Ayurveda describes skin disorders under the broad heading of *Kushta.* Among them, *Ekakushta* shows remarkable resemblance to plaque psoriasis based on symptoms such as:

- *Aswedanam* (absence of sweating)
- *Mahavastu* (extensive lesions)
- *Matsyashakalopama* (fish-scale-like appearance)

According to *Ayurvedic* principles, *Ekakushta* results from the vitiation of *Tridosha* with predominance of *Vata* and *Kapha* affecting *Twak, Rakta, Mamsa*, and *Lasika.*

Among *Panchakarma* therapies, *Virechana Karma* is regarded as the best purification therapy for *Pitta-Rakta* disorders and *Kushta*. By eliminating vitiated *Doshas* through the lower gastrointestinal tract, *Virechana* restores *Doshic* balance and interrupts disease progression.

This study evaluates the role of *Virechana Karma* in a patient suffering from psoriasis.

Materials and Methods

Study Design

Single case study.

Patient Information

- **Age:** 35 years
- **Gender:** Male
- **Occupation:** Office employee
- **Chief Complaint:**
  - Red scaly lesions over elbows, knees, scalp, and back for three years
  - Severe itching
  - Dryness
  - Scaling
  - Occasional burning sensation

History

Patient had recurrent episodes despite topical corticosteroids.
No history of diabetes or hypertension.
No family history of psoriasis.

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Clinical Findings
General Examination
- **Pulse:** 78/min
- **Blood Pressure:** 120/80 mmHg
- **Temperature:** Afebrile

Systemic Examination
Within normal limits.

***Ayurvedic* Assessment**
- ***Prakriti:*** *Vata-Kapha*
- ***Vikriti:*** *Vata-Kapha* predominance
- ***Agni:*** *Mandagni*
- ***Koshtha:*** *Madhyama*
- ***Sara:*** *Madhyama*

Diagnostic Criteria
Clinical diagnosis of plaque psoriasis.
Ayurvedic diagnosis: *Ekakushta*

Intervention
Poorva Karma
Deepana-Pachana
Trikatu Churna 3 g twice daily for 3 days.

Snehapana
*Mahatikta Ghrit*a administered in increasing doses for 5 days until *Samyak Snigdha Lakshanas* appeared.
Abhyanga
Sarvanga Abhyanga using *Tila Taila.*
Swedana
Bashpa Sweda for three consecutive days.

Pradhana Karma
Virechana
Drug used:
- *Trivrit Avaleha* 80 g with warm water.

Patient attained 18 *Vegas*, indicating *Samyaka Virechana*.

Paschat Karma
Samsarjana Krama for five days according to classical guidelines.

***Shamana* Medicines**
- *Arogyavardhini Vati*
- *Mahamanjishthadi Kwatha*
- *Gandhak Rasayana*

Duration: One month.

Outcome Measures
Primary outcomes:
- PASI Score
- Itching score
- Scaling score
- Erythema score

Secondary Outcomes:
- Improvement in sleep
- Improvement in quality of life
- Reduction in recurrence

Results

Parameter	Before Treatment	After Treatment
PASI Score	14.6	5.2
Itching	Severe	Mild
Scaling	Severe	Mild
Erythema	Moderate	Mild
Plaque Thickness	Moderate	Minimal
Burning	Present	Absent

Approximately 65–70% clinical improvement was observed.
Photographic comparison also demonstrated marked reduction in lesions.
No adverse events were noted.

Discussion
Ekakushta is predominantly a *Vata-Kapha* disorder associated with *Rakta Dushti.* The accumulation of *Doshas* in Twak, Rakta, Mamsa, and *Lasika* results in characteristic lesions resembling psoriasis.
Virechana Karma directly expels vitiated *Pitta* and *Rakta*-associated Doshas through the gastrointestinal tract. Classical texts recommend Shodhana as the principal treatment for *Kushta* because merely suppressing symptoms cannot prevent recurrence.
Deepana-Pachana improved *Agni* and digested *Ama* before purification. *Snehapana* mobilized accumulated *Doshas* from peripheral tissues toward the *Kostha. Abhyanga* and *Swedana* facilitated *Dosha* liquefaction and movement. *Virechana* eliminated the accumulated *Doshas,* thereby restoring physiological balance.
The observed reduction in itching, erythema, scaling, and plaque thickness may be attributed to:
- Elimination of vitiated *Doshas*
- Correction of *Agni*
- Improvement of *Rakta Shuddhi*
- Reduction in inflammatory mediators
- Restoration of skin metabolism

The addition of *Shamana* medicines further stabilized the therapeutic response and minimized recurrence.
The findings support classical *Ayurvedic* principles advocating *Shodhana* therapy in chronic skin diseases.

Conclusion
Virechana Karma demonstrated significant therapeutic efficacy in the management of psoriasis (*Ekakushta)*. Improvement was observed in both subjective and objective parameters without adverse effects. This case supports the role of *Panchakarma*, particularly *Virechana,* as an effective therapeutic intervention in chronic psoriasis. Further randomized controlled clinical trials with larger sample sizes are required to establish stronger evidence.

Limitations
- Single case study.
- Short follow-up period.
- No histopathological evaluation.
- Long-term recurrence was not assessed.

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