



Ayurvedic Perspectives and Scientific Correlations in the Treatment of Shvitra: A Comprehensive Review

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Abstract

Commonly referred to as Vitiligo, medically, *Shvitras* another skin disorder that occurs as a result of loss of pigmentation in some areas of the skin which causes areas in our body to turn white. Such condition is neither healthy nor it may play a profound effect to the psychology of the patient based on its outer manifestations. The ancient Indian medical service is Ayurveda, which provides the comprehensive solution to the management of *Shvitra* therapy and bases its approach on complaisance and nature healing. The present article describes *Shvitra* in the Ayurvedic perspective as well as the current science perspective and expounds the etiology, pathophysiology, and methods of treatment. Based on ancient Ayurvedic literature and modern biomedical evidence, the current paper aims at extrapolating the benefits of integrative practice in treatment of *Shvitra*.

Keywords: *Shvitra*, Vitiligo, Leucoderma, *Bakuchi*, *Khadira*

Introduction

Vitiligo as it is more commonly known as *shvitra* is the depigmentary disorder affecting about 1 % of the world population [1]. The other major feature of this disease is that the melanocytes and the skin colouring cells are destroyed making the skin have white spots. It is not life-threatening, but it is a crucial factor of psychological effect on the basis of cosmetic appearance [2]. Ayurveda is one of the ancient ideas of medicine and, thus, has a superb and invaluable solution package as far as the management of *Shvitra* is concerned and a great amount of focus is paid to the restoration that is to balance in the body by dietary provisions, lifestyle antecedents and the treatment that is to be performed with the help of herbs [3]. The current paper explains the Ayurvedic-inspired methods of management of *Shvitra* and compares them to the current scientific persistence.

Ayurvedic Perspective on Shvitra

Etiology and Pathogenesis

As Ayurveda says *Shvitra* is a TridoshajaVyadhi, this means that *Shvitra* is the result of imbalance of all three doshas: Vata, Pitta, and Kapha [4]. Ayurvedic concept shows that the pathology is caused by the defective normal functioning of the Metabolic Processes of the body and in specific that are under the supervision of Pitta Dosha in the body because it is mainly the Pitta Dosha that regulates skin color and metabolism [5]. Heritable factors, stress, improper food and Ama (toxin accumulation in the body) are the fundamental causative elements; thus, their combined effects will result in the presence of white patches on the skin [6].

Symptoms and Diagnosis

In Ayurvedic literature *Shvitra* is articulated in terms of symptomatology i.e. asymptomatic white or hypopigmented patches, variable in size and shape and, therefore, can be present anywhere in the body [7]. A diagnosis in Ayurveda is performed by assessing the patient with minute detail of Prakriti, Vikriti and other aspects like diet, lifestyle and mental state of the patient [8].

Management Strategies in Ayurveda

1. Shodhana (Purification Therapy)

Shodhana therapy is specific in order to open up the already accumulated toxins internally. The processes known to be detoxifying the body and restoring the balance of doshas are the comparatively Vamana or therapeutic emesis, Virechana or therapeutic purgation, and Raktamokshana or bloodletting [9]. They have the reputation of cleaning blood and other bodily tissue and therefore eliminate the source of *Shvitra* [10].

2. Shamana (Palliative Therapy)

Herbal preparations and nutrition are applicable in Shamana therapy in reducing the aggravated dose. Herb such as *Bakuchi* (*Psoralea corylifolia*), *Neem* (*Azadirachta indica*), and *Khadira* (*Acacia catechu*) are used in their property of promoting skin pigmentation and also in detoxification [11]. Herbal pastes and oil used to activate the melanocyte and the skin repigmentation include *Bakuchi* oil [12].

3. Rasayana (Rejuvenation Therapy)

The Rasayana therapy is concerned with the toning and the rejuvenation of the immune system of the body. This has to do with herbs and formulas that boost the strength of the body and makes it more enduring to health issues. ChyawanprashRasayana is a distinguished Ayurvedic product that is typically recommended mainly because of its stated immunomodulatory and anti-oxidant effects [12].

4. Dietary and Lifestyle Modifications

Ayurveda has underlined the role of healthy way of living and food in the control of Shvitra. It is recommended that patients give up foods that increase Doshas, which include spicy food, sour food, and fermented food [14]. Rather it is advised to consume a diet full of fresh vegetables and fruits, whole grains and legumes. It is also advised to practice yoga and meditation frequently to improve the stress management and mental health [15].

Correlation with Modern Science

Pathophysiology of Vitiligo

Modern medicine defines vitiligo as an autoimmune disease whereby the immune system destroys melanocytes concluding the destruction of melanocytes [16]. Genetic makeup, oxidative stress and environmental factors have been considered as major factors involved in the development or pathogenesis of Vitiligo [17]. A typical white patch can easily be observed by people affected by the disease because of the loss of melanocytes.

Modern Treatment Modalities

1. Pharmacotherapy

In the management of vitiligo, corticosteroids and immunomodulators have been widely applied to decrease the level of inflammation and balance immunological reaction [18]. Other than topical corticosteroids, the calcineurin inhibitors (calcineurin inhibitors) like tacrolimus and pimecrolimus are commonly employed as steroid-sparing agents [19].

2. Phototherapy

NB-UVB photochemotherapy involves phototherapy which is vastly used in the stimulation of melanocyte proliferation and migration. This therapy has re-pigmented Vitiligo patches re-pigmentation, to the best of the best as already reported [20]. Alternative is excimer laser therapy in which the specified UVB light is irradiated to the involved areas that favor repigmentation [21].

3. Surgical Interventions

Melanocyte transplantation and skin grafting are also used as surgical procedures among stable vitiligo patients who do not respond to medical treatment [22]. The method entails the grafting of normal patches of the skin to depigmented areas thus re-establishing pigmentation [23].

Integrative Approaches

Therefore, there can be a combination of the principles of Ayurveda with any contemporary treatment approach and this can give a wholistic control of *Shvitra*. Ayurvedic detoxification and immune-enhancing treatment measures will complement each other with immunomodulatory and anti-inflammatory effects of contemporary pharmacotherapy. The current practice of both phototherapy as well as herbal use in Ayurveda must be complemented in accordance therefore should produce a suitable response of which involves melanocyte functionality followed by improvement in terms of re-pigmentation.

Case Studies and Clinical Evidence

To check the efficacy of Ayurvedic treatment in the treatment of vitiligo, various clinical studies have been carried out. Another important research by Pandya et al. in 2014 demonstrated that the use of Bakuchi oil alone or in association with NB-UVB greatly contributed to re-pigmentation among Vitiligo patients [24]. In another study by Parab et al. in 2017, it was revealed that the quality of life was enhanced when Ayurvedic formulations were used and reduced pigmentations were observed, besides the traditional therapies [25]. This is glaring evidence on the possible advantages that can or may be realised by integrative remedies on managing vitiligo.

Conclusion

Shvitra or as it is also known as Vitiligo, is a heterogeneity disorder that is difficult to manage due to chronicity and psychological symptoms. Ayurveda tackles it in a more holistic manner through a combination of detoxification, change of food habits, herbal treatments and lifestyle and diet change. Modern science introduces other supplementary planes to this autoimmune process with vitiligo and makes it possible to conduct more developed treatment, e.g., pharmacotherapy and phototherapy. An extensive and efficient plan of the management of Shvitra regarding somatic and psychological aspects of the disease can be thematized through such integration. Additional research and clinical trials are required to understand the potential of integrative therapeutic practices in full and come up with standard guidelines and procedures to implement the method.

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