

# Ayurveda management of Shwitra with special reference to vitiligo - A Case Report

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**Abstract**—Vitiligo is a common autoimmune pigmentary disorder with significant socio-medical implications. It is characterized by the development of white patches on the skin due to the destruction or dysfunction of melanocytes. In *Ayurveda*, this condition can be correlated with *Shvitra*. Owing to the limitations and side effects associated with conventional therapies, there is a growing interest in exploring safe and effective treatments from alternative systems of medicine. *Ayurveda* offers a comprehensive approach to managing such autoimmune skin disorders. This case study presents the *Ayurvedic* management of a chronic case of vitiligo, which showed notable improvement with the administration of bakuchi powder, mandooka parani panchang powder, tulsi patra powder, vidanga powder, kauncha powder and external application of bakuchi oil.

**Index Terms**—Autoimmune, Vitiligo, bakuchi, mandooka parani, tulsi, vidanga, kauncha, bakuchi oil, Shvitra, Skin diseases, *Ayurveda*.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Vitiligo is a chronic, disfiguring skin disorder associated with systemic autoimmune processes. It is characterized by localized, idiopathic, progressive hypopigmented or depigmented patches on the skin<sup>1</sup>. The global prevalence of vitiligo is approximately 1%, with regional incidence rates ranging from 0.1% to over 8.8%.<sup>2</sup> In *Ayurveda*, vitiligo can be correlated with *Shvitra*, a *Kshudra Kushta* (minor skin disease), due to its similar clinical features. These include non-exudative white, reddish, or coppery-red patches, along with roughness, dryness, itching, burning sensation, and discoloration or loss of hair over the affected areas. While the exact etiology of vitiligo is often unknown, environmental triggers may induce melanocyte dysfunction (melanocytosis), leading to melanocyte destruction and the development of white patches on the skin<sup>3</sup>. Contemporary medical

management primarily involves PUVA therapy (Psoralen + Ultraviolet A exposure) and corticosteroids. However, these treatments are associated with adverse effects such as skin cancer, photo aging, ultraviolet burns, and gastrointestinal disturbances like nausea<sup>4</sup>. As a result, there is a growing interest in traditional and alternative systems of medicine that offer safer, less complicated, and cost-effective solutions. *Ayurveda* provides a holistic approach to chronic autoimmune conditions like vitiligo through various internal medications, dietary modifications, and psychological support<sup>5</sup>. This paper presents a case of a 16-year-old female patient suffering from chronic vitiligo, who was successfully managed with *Ayurvedic Shamana Chikitsa* (palliative therapy), dietary restrictions, and psychological counseling.

## II. CASE REPORT

### Patient Profile

A 16-year-old female presented with a history of white patches on the left forearm associated with mild itching. The condition had been gradually progressive over the past seven years. The disease appeared to be in the active phase, with the gradual appearance of new spots.

### History

**Family History:** No positive history of similar skin conditions in first-degree relatives.

### Personal History:

No history of autoimmune disorders such as atopic dermatitis, psoriasis, or asthma.

No history of trauma, surgery, major psychological illness, endocrinal disorder (e.g., diabetes), or psychiatric treatment.

Menarche occurred 3 years ago.

History of allopathic treatment for 5 years, including corticosteroids, multivitamins, PUVA therapy, and various topical applications.

Initial improvement was noted during the early phase of allopathic treatment; however, there was no significant progress in the past three years.

#### Presentation at NIA Jaipur

The patient visited the OPD of the Department of *Dravyaguna Vigyana*, National Institute of *Ayurveda*, Jaipur on 10-02-2024 seeking *Ayurveda* management.

#### Clinical Findings:

white patch measuring approximately 9×3 cm on the posterior region of the left forearm.

The patch was asymmetrical, well-defined, whitish, coalescent with adjacent spots, and without scaling.

Based on classical *Ayurveda assessment*, the patient was diagnosed with *Switra* (vitiligo/leukoderma).

#### Diet and Lifestyle Assessment

##### *Ahara* (Diet):

Regular intake of milk with salty meals, including bakery items, junk food, and incompatible food combinations like milk with fermented/salty foods.

These dietary habits were discontinued as part of the treatment protocol.

#### Vihara (Lifestyle):

Regular day sleep of approximately 2.5 hours, beginning about 30 minutes after meals.

Mental stress in the form of anxiety and depression was also reported. Proper psychological counseling was administered.<sup>6</sup>

#### Treatment Protocol (*Ayurveda*):

Internal Medication (Twice daily after meals with plain water):

*Bakuchi* powder – 1 gm

*Mandookaparni panchang* powder– 0.5 gm

*Tulsi patra* powder– 125 mg

*Vidanga* powder – 250 mg

*Kauntha* powder – 0.5 gm

#### External Application:

*Bakuchi Taila* applied locally over the affected area.

#### Follow-Up and Outcome

After three months, the patient showed complete relief, with the disappearance of the white patches. This case highlights the efficacy of *Ayurvedic* treatment, including internal medications, topical applications, dietary and lifestyle modifications, and psychological counseling, in managing *Switra* (vitiligo). Remarkable improvement was observed within three months of treatment, emphasizing the potential of holistic *Ayurveda* management in chronic dermatological disorders.

#### Clinical images:



Before treatment



After treatment (3 months)



- ✓ Pacifies *Kapha* & *Pitta*
- ✓ Stimulates *Bhrajaka* *Pitta*
- ✓ Removes *Srotas* blockage (*Lekhaneeya*, *Ushna*)
- ✓ Enhances Melanin via Psoralen (photosensitizer)
- ✓ Rejuvenates skin & clears *Krimi*

↓  
Restoration of *Varna* (Normal Pigmentation)

↓  
*Samprapti* *Vighatana* (Breakdown)

#### Modern Correlation

Psoralen in *Bakuchi* enhances melanin synthesis upon exposure to UV light (PUVA-like effect).

Has antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and antibacterial effects.

Stimulates melanocyte proliferation and migration to depigmented areas.

### III.RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### 1. *Bakuchi* (*Psoralea corylifolia*)<sup>7</sup>

Relevance in *Shwitra*: One of the most potent and widely used herbs in *Ayurveda* for *Shwitra* due to its *Kusthaghna* and *Krimighna* properties, especially beneficial in *Shweta Kustha* (leukoderma/vitiligo).

*Rasa*: *Katu*, *Tikta*

*Guna*: *Laghu*, *Ruksha*, *Tikshna*

*Veerya*: *Ushna*

*Vipaka*: *Katu*

*Karma*:

*Kusthaghna* (anti-leukodermic)

*Krimighna* (antimicrobial)

*Shodhana* (detoxifier)

*Tvachya* (beneficial for skin)

*Raktashodhaka* (blood purifier)

*Varnya* (enhances complexion)

Contains psoralen<sup>8</sup>, used in modern PUVA therapy for vitiligo.

#### 2. *Mandooka Parni* (*Centella asiatica*)<sup>9</sup>

Relevance in *Shwitra*: Promotes wound healing, pigmentation, and cellular regeneration; supports nervous and immune function.

*Rasa*: *Tikta*, *Kashaya*

*Guna*: *Laghu*, *Snigdha*

*Veerya*: *Sheeta*

*Vipaka*: *Madhura*

*Karma*:

*Rasayana* (rejuvenative)

*Medhya* (nootropic)

*Tvachya* (skin enhancer)

*Tridoshaghna* (especially pacifies *Pitta* and *Rakta*)

*Shothahara* (anti-inflammatory)

Helps in cellular regeneration, beneficial for skin discoloration and improving *Rakta Dhatu* quality.

#### 3. *Tulsi* (*Ocimum sanctum*)<sup>10</sup>

Relevance in *Shwitra*: Acts on the immune system, supports detoxification, helps balance *Pitta* and *Kapha*, improves skin texture and resistance.

*Rasa*: *Katu*, *Tikta*

*Guna*: *Laghu*, *Ruksha*

*Veerya*: *Ushna*

*Vipaka*: *Katu*

*Karma*:

*Krimighna* (antiparasitic)

*Kusthaghna* (skin disease alleviator)

*Raktashodhaka* (blood purifier)

*Tvachya*

*Amapachaka* (digests toxins)

Immunomodulator (modern perspective)

#### 4. *Vidanga* (*Embelia ribes*)<sup>11</sup>

Relevance in *Shwitra*: Excellent *Krimighna* (anti-microbial), useful where *Krimi* is a causative factor in skin discoloration or autoimmune response.

*Rasa*: *Katu*, *Kashaya*

*Guna*: *Laghu*, *Ruksha*, *Tikshna*

*Veerya*: *Ushna*

*Vipaka*: *Katu*

*Karma*:

*Krimighna*

*Kusthaghna*

*Deepana*, *Pachana*

*Raktashodhaka*

*Twachya*

Antioxidant and immune-balancing (modern)

#### 5. *Kaunch* (*Mucuna pruriens*)<sup>12</sup>

Relevance in *Shwitra*: Nourishes *Dhatus*, particularly *Rakta* and *Mamsa*, rejuvenates and supports melanocyte function through *Rasayana* and *Balya* action.

*Rasa*: *Madhura*, *Tikta*, *Kashaya*

*Guna*: *Guru*, *Snigdha*

*Veerya*: *Ushna*

*Vipaka*: *Madhura*

*Karma*:

*Balya* (strength-promoting)

*Rasayana*

*Vrishya* (aphrodisiac – indirectly supports tissue regeneration)

*Kusthaghna*

*Rakta vardhaka* (promotes blood quality)

Contains L-DOPA (precursor to melanin), useful in stimulating pigmentation.

So, it can be considered that this oil and oral medicines by the above-mentioned properties, breaks down the *Samprapti* (pathogenesis) of the disease shwitra(vitiligo)and improves the diseased condition.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The patient suffering from chronic active Vitiligo was treated with *Ayurveda* management. Diet restriction and psychological counselling was also a necessary part of the treatment. This treatment protocol should be clinically evaluated on large number of patients to confirm their efficacy.

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