

Exploring Ayurvedic Interventions in the Management of Atopic Dermatitis – Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Atopic dermatitis (AD) is a chronic inflammatory skin disorder characterized by intense itching, redness, and recurrent flare-ups. This condition arises from a combination of genetic factors, immune dysregulation, and environmental triggers, leading to a compromised skin barrier and an exaggerated immune response. Ayurvedic medicine offers a holistic approach to managing AD by focusing on balancing the three doshas—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha—and addressing the underlying toxins (*Ama*) that exacerbate the condition. In this case study, a 36-year-old female with chronic eczematous lesions and associated symptoms of disturbed sleep, anxiety, and constipation was treated with a combination of internal and external Ayurvedic therapies. Key treatments included *Avipattikar Churna*, *Khadirarishta*, *Gandhak Rasayana*, *Mahatiktak Ghrita*, *Laghumanjishthadi Kadha*, *Panchatikta Ghrita Guggulu*, and *Raktamokshana* (bloodletting). The therapeutic interventions targeted detoxification, immune modulation, and skin healing. Post-treatment, significant improvements were noted in the reduction of scaly patches, lichenification, itching, and skin discoloration. Bloodletting plays a crucial role in purifying the blood, reducing inflammation, and improving skin healing by balancing Pitta and Kapha doshas. This integrative approach, combining modern and traditional Ayurvedic therapies, offered long-term relief from AD symptoms and addressed both the physical and emotional aspects of the condition.

Keywords: *Inflammatory, eczematous lesions, lichenification, Raktamokshana*

1. INTRODUCTION

Atopic dermatitis (AD), commonly known as eczema, is a chronic inflammatory skin disorder that affects millions worldwide, manifesting as dry, itchy, and inflamed skin. As the body's largest organ, the skin serves as a crucial barrier, protecting against environmental aggressors and preventing moisture loss. In individuals with atopic dermatitis, this barrier is compromised due to a combination of genetic predisposition, immune dysregulation, and environmental triggers. The result is increased transepidermal water loss, making the skin more susceptible to allergens, irritants, and infections. Recurrent flare-ups can lead to thickened, scaly skin, pigmentation changes, and intense discomfort, severely impacting quality of life.(1) From a dermatological perspective, the pathophysiology of AD involves a disruption in the balance between the skin's structural proteins, such as filaggrin, and the immune system. A deficiency in filaggrin impairs the skin's ability to retain moisture, resulting in dryness and microfissures that allow allergens and pathogens to penetrate easily. This triggers an exaggerated immune response, leading to inflammation and the characteristic symptoms of redness, itching, and swelling. AD is also frequently associated with other atopic conditions such as asthma, allergic rhinitis, and food allergies, indicating a broader atopic march driven by immune dysregulation.(2) In Ayurveda, atopic dermatitis aligns closely with a condition

known as *Vicharchika*, a type of *Kustha* (skin disease) described in classical texts. According to Ayurvedic principles, the health of the skin is a reflection of the internal balance of the three doshas — *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*. In AD, it is primarily the disturbance of *Pitta dosha* that leads to inflammation, heat, and redness, while *Vata dosha* aggravation contributes to dryness, scaling, and itching. In some cases, *Kapha dosha* imbalance results in the formation of thick, oozing lesions and sluggish healing.(3) The root cause of this imbalance often lies in improper diet and lifestyle, leading to the accumulation of toxins (*Ama*) in the body. Irregular eating habits, consumption of excessively spicy or fried foods, stress, and environmental factors like seasonal changes can aggravate the doshas, triggering flare-ups. Poor digestion and a weakened digestive fire (*Agni*) further exacerbate the condition by allowing undigested toxins to accumulate in the tissues, disrupting the body's natural detoxification processes.(4) Ayurvedic management of atopic dermatitis focuses on a holistic approach that addresses both internal and external factors. Internal purification therapies such as *Panchakarma* aim to detoxify the body, while herbal formulations like *Neem* (*Azadirachta indica*), *Manjistha* (*Rubia cordifolia*), and *Haridra* (*Curcuma longa*) are used to cleanse the blood and reduce inflammation. External applications of medicated oils, such as *Kumkumadi taila* or *Eladi oil*, help soothe irritated skin, restore moisture, and promote healing. Dietary modifications are also crucial, with an emphasis on cooling foods, proper hydration, and avoiding known dietary triggers. Stress management through practices like yoga and meditation is encouraged to maintain emotional balance and reduce flare-ups.(5) Modern dermatological treatments, including emollients, corticosteroids, antihistamines, and biologics, offer symptom relief, but integrating Ayurvedic principles can provide a complementary pathway toward long-term healing. This integrative approach not only addresses the symptoms but also focuses on correcting the underlying imbalances, offering a path to holistic well-being.(6)

This article aims to delve into the complexities of atopic dermatitis, bridging the gap between contemporary dermatological insights and traditional Ayurvedic wisdom. By understanding the intricate relationship between skin health, immune function, and internal balance, we can explore diverse pathways for managing and alleviating this challenging condition.

Present Complaints :

A 36-year-old female patient presented with an eczematous skin lesion on her left leg, persisting for the past 6 to 7 months. Additionally, she has been experiencing disturbed sleep and irritability over the last 1 to 2 months.

Case study :

A 36-year-old female patient presented with a history of eczematous skin eruptions for the past 6 to 7 months, affecting different parts of her body. She also reported experiencing disturbed sleep, anxiety, and irritability over the last few months. Initially, she sought allopathic treatment from a dermatologist, using various ointments and medications for about 1 to 2 months. Although she experienced slight relief for a week or two, the dermatitis flared up even more severely afterward, prompting her family to pursue Ayurvedic treatment.

The most affected area was the mediolateral aspect of her left leg, where severe itching led to eczematous eruptions. Smaller lesions also appeared on both forearms and the pinnae of her ears, persisting for the past 6 to 7 months. Scratching caused the affected areas to become excoriated, oozing a thin, sticky, glutinous discharge. Her symptoms worsened at night but improved when she wrapped the affected areas for warmth.

Emotionally, she felt overwhelmed and tearful when alone, often experiencing low moods and a lack of motivation. She reported difficulty concentrating, forgetfulness, and a sense of indecisiveness, frequently feeling tense and anxious. Consolation from others provided some relief. Her sleep was disturbed by restlessness and racing thoughts. Additionally, she struggled with constipation, passing dry, hard stools. The combined physical and emotional distress left her feeling drained and unwell.

Personal History:

- **Diet:** Mixed, three times a day.
- **Sleep:** Disturbed, averaging 5 to 6 hours per night.
- **Appetite:** Good.
- **Bowel Movements:** Once daily, hard in consistency.
- **Micturition:** 5 to 6 times per day.
- **Habits:** Consumes 2 to 3 cups of tea per day.

Past Medical History:

- No significant past medical history.

On Examination:

- **Blood Pressure (BP):** 110/60 mmHg

- **Pulse Rate:** 78 beats per minute
- **Respiratory Rate (RR):** 18 breaths per minute
- **Random Blood Sugar (RBS):** 100 mg/dl
- **Height:** 156 cm
- **Weight:** 65 kg

Past Medical History: The patient previously tried medications from other systems of medicine but did not experience any relief. Consequently, she sought treatment at our hospital.

Skin Examination (Left Leg):

- **Scaly Patches:** Present (++)
- **Lichenification:** Present (+++)
- **Itching:** Severe (++) , worsens with sweating.
- **White Demographism:** Present (+).

Samprapthi Ghataka (Pathogenesis):

- **Dosha:** Primarily Pitta (heat, inflammation) with Kapha (moisture) and Vata (dryness) involvement.
- **Dushya** (Affected Tissues):
 - Twak (Skin), Rakta (Blood), Mamsa (Muscles), and Lasika (Lymph).
- **Srotas** (Affected Channels):
 - Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa, and Udakavaha (fluid channels).
- **Agni** (Digestive Fire): Weak Jatharagni and Dhatwagni Mandya lead to toxin buildup.
- **Sroto Dushti:** Obstruction (Sanga) and irregular flow (Vimargagamana) in channels.
- **Udbhava Sthana** (Origin): Amashaya (Stomach) due to poor digestion.
- **Sanchara Sthana** (Spread): Tiryaga Sira (oblique channels).
- **Vyakta Sthana** (Manifestation): Twak (Skin), visible eruptions.
- **Rogamarga** (Disease Pathway): Bahya (external manifestation on the skin).
- **Swabhava:** Chirkari (chronic condition, prone to recurrence).

Diagnosis: Atopic dermatitis, diagnosed based on **Hanifin & Rajka's Criteria**. The assessment was conducted using the **Eczema Area and Severity Index (EASI) Score**.

Treatment Methodology: The patient was thoroughly informed about the treatment plan before its commencement, and consent was obtained for both the treatment and participation in the research. The process was conducted in accordance with the **CARE guidelines**.

Therapeutic Intervention -

Sr. No.	Treatment	Dose	Duration
1.	Mrudu virechana with Avipattikar churna	5 gm HS	4 months
2.	Khadirarishta	5 ml TDS	4 months
3.	Gandhak rasayana	2 tablets BD	4 months
4.	Mahatiktak ghrita	10 ml BD	4 months
5.	Laghumanjishthadi Kadha	5 ml TDS	4 months
6.	Panchatikta Ghrita Guggulu	1 tab BD	4 months
7.	Mahatiktak Ghrita	Local application BD	4 months

8.	Raktamokshana	Every 15 days	3 months
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Observations and Results:

Parameters	Before treatment	After treatment
Scaly patches	++	+
Lichenification	+++	Absent
Shyama varna	+++	+
Itching	++	Absent
White demographism	+	Absent

**2. DISCUSSION**

Atopic dermatitis is a chronic or recurrent hypersensitive skin condition characterized primarily by intense itching. In this case, the patient experiences severe itching accompanied by skin exfoliation. A lowered itch threshold leads to heightened cutaneous reactivity in response to stimuli, resulting in a vicious itch-scratch-itch cycle. The persistent itching provokes scratching, which further inflames the skin, intensifying the sensation of itchiness and worsening flare-ups. (7)

In Ayurveda, this condition aligns with *Vicharchika*, as described in the *Sushrut Samhita*. Given the chronic nature of the disease and the manifestation of symptoms indicating *Sannipathika dosha kopa* — the simultaneous vitiation of *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha doshas* — the treatment approach focused on balancing all three humours. The selection of medicines prioritized those with *Dosha-shamana* (humour-pacifying) and *Vyadhi-harana* (disease-alleviating) properties. Specific emphasis was placed on drugs with *Kandu-hara* (anti-pruritic), *Kushtahara* (skin lesion-alleviating), *Rakta-shodhaka* (blood-purifying), and *Krimihara* (anthelmintic) actions. Additionally, internal medicines and external procedures traditionally used for skin disorders were administered. *Raktamokshana* (bloodletting) played a crucial role in reducing localized infection and purifying the blood, aiding in symptom relief and overall healing. (8)

Avipattikar Churna may help manage atopic dermatitis by balancing *Pitta dosha*, reducing internal inflammation, and improving digestion through its unique blend of herbs. Key ingredients like *Amla* (*Emblica officinalis*) and *Haritaki*

(*Terminalia chebula*) act as antioxidants and detoxifiers, helping to clear toxins (*ama*) that can trigger skin flare-ups. *Yashtimadhu* (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) has potent anti-inflammatory and soothing properties, reducing skin irritation and redness. *Trikatu* (a combination of *Pippali* (*Piper longum*), *Maricha* (*Piper nigrum*), and *Shunthi* (*Zingiber officinale*)) enhances digestion and metabolic processes, preventing toxin buildup. Additionally, *Guduchi* (*Tinospora cordifolia*) modulates immune responses and promotes overall skin health. By addressing digestive imbalances and reducing inflammation, *Avipattikar Churna* provides a holistic approach to alleviating symptoms of atopic dermatitis.(5,9,10)

Khadirarishta works as a potent blood purifier and detoxifier, addressing the root cause of atopic dermatitis by eliminating toxins (*ama*) and pacifying *Pitta dosha*. The primary ingredient, *Khadira* (*Acacia catechu*), has strong anti-inflammatory and anti-allergic properties that help reduce skin inflammation, itching, and recurrent flare-ups. Supporting herbs like *Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula*) aid in digestion and detoxification, while *Daruharidra* (*Berberis aristata*) offers antimicrobial action, preventing secondary infections and promoting overall skin health. (11)

Gandhak Rasayana is renowned for its antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and rejuvenating properties, making it highly effective in managing atopic dermatitis. The key ingredient, *Gandhak* (*Purified Sulfur*), acts as a natural detoxifier, clearing toxins from the body and enhancing immune function. It reduces skin irritation, soothes itching, and prevents infections by creating an unfavorable environment for microbial growth. Additionally, it supports tissue repair and strengthens the skin barrier, reducing the frequency and intensity of flare-ups. (12)

Mahatiktak Ghrita is a medicated ghee formulation that deeply detoxifies and pacifies aggravated *Pitta* and *Kapha doshas*, which are often involved in atopic dermatitis. The combination of *Neem* (*Azadirachta indica*), *Patola* (*Trichosanthes dioica*), and *Guduchi* (*Tinospora cordifolia*) delivers potent anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and immunomodulatory effects. This formulation reduces itching, soothes inflamed skin, and promotes tissue regeneration, making it particularly beneficial for chronic and severe skin conditions.(5,13)

Laghumanjishthadi Kadha works by purifying the blood, reducing inflammation, and enhancing circulation, thereby addressing the root causes of atopic dermatitis. The star ingredient, *Manjishtha* (*Rubia cordifolia*), is a powerful blood cleanser and anti-inflammatory agent that clears toxins and reduces skin discoloration. *Neem* (*Azadirachta indica*) provides antimicrobial action, preventing secondary infections, while *Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula*) supports digestion and detoxification, ensuring toxins do not accumulate and manifest as skin disorders.(14,15)

Panchatikta Ghrita Guggulu combines five bitter herbs (*Panchatikta*) to reduce inflammation, detoxify the body, and balance immune responses, offering a holistic approach to atopic dermatitis management. Ingredients like *Neem* (*Azadirachta indica*) and *Vasa* (*Adhatoda vasica*) calm inflamed skin and fight infections, while *Guggulu* (*Commiphora wightii*) aids in reducing chronic inflammation and promoting tissue healing. This formulation works by cleansing the system and supporting long-term skin health, reducing the recurrence of symptoms.(16)

Mahatiktak Ghrita, with its deeply penetrating medicated ghee base, delivers a powerful anti-inflammatory and detoxifying effect, helping to pacify *Pitta* and *Kapha doshas* in atopic dermatitis. Key ingredients like *Neem* (*Azadirachta indica*) and *Guduchi* (*Tinospora cordifolia*) offer antimicrobial, immunomodulatory, and tissue-repairing properties, reducing itching, redness, and inflammation. It strengthens the skin's resilience against allergens and infections while promoting overall detoxification and rejuvenation. *Mahatiktak ghrita* externally for atopic dermatitis to soothe inflammation, reduce itching, and promote skin healing. Its ghee base allows deep penetration into the skin, carrying the active herbal ingredients directly to the affected tissues. Key components like *Neem* (*Azadirachta indica*) and *Guduchi* (*Tinospora cordifolia*) offer potent anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and wound-healing properties, helping to calm flare-ups and prevent secondary infections.(17)

Raktamokshana (Blood letting):

Bloodletting (*Raktamokshana*) in atopic dermatitis works by reducing inflammation, detoxifying the blood, and balancing aggravated *Pitta* and *Kapha doshas*, which are often responsible for skin disorders. It helps remove toxins and inflammatory mediators, alleviating symptoms like itching, redness, and swelling. The procedure improves local circulation, ensuring better oxygen and nutrient supply to the affected tissues, promoting faster healing. Additionally, bloodletting modulates the immune response and reduces histamine levels, breaking the vicious itch-scratch cycle. By purifying the blood and balancing internal disharmony, it provides long-term relief from chronic flare-ups and supports overall skin health.(18,19)

Conclusion:- After the 4 months of Ayurvedic treatment Patient showed significant improvement in the clinical symptoms of Atopic dermatitis.

Conflict of interest:- No any

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