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PSORIASIS & ITS MANAGEMENT THROUGH YOGA

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ABSTRACT

The yoga is the traditional art based on extremely subtle science that of body, psyche and spirit. It has its holistic as well as spiritual importance in human life. It is not merely tool for making diseased free body but also it helps to know about one self's reality. Ayurveda accept the psychosomatic aspect of the disease. As the ayurvedic treatment approach to the disease with *dravyabhoot* & *adravyabhoot* treatment module, the yogic treatment prefers the last one. The concept of psychosomatic management of disease is practised since long but in different ways. The yoga practice also helpful in the management of many chronic disease conditions like psoriasis as it corrects both psychosomatic aspect more efficiently. The various yoga *mudras* & *asanas* help to correct the underlined abnormal pathology of skin disease like psoriasis. The present study explores that yogic practice help to improve the psoriasis management effectively.

KEYWORDS: Yoga, Mudra, psoriasis, skin.

INTRODUCTION

The yoga is the traditional art based on extremely subtle science that of body, psyche and spirit. It has its holistic as well as spiritual importance in human life. It is not merely tool for making diseased free body but also it helps to know about oneself from his reality. Ayurveda accept the psychosomatic aspect of the disease. As the ayurvedic treatment approach to the disease with *dravyabhoot* & *adravyabhoot* ¹treatment module, the yogic treatment prefers the last one. The *stavavajaya chikitsa* ² comes under *adravyabhoot chikitsa*. It helps the psychosomatic aspect of treatment that boosts the recovery.

In considering the skin in health and disease condition, the first point is to realize that the skin is a distinct body organ. An organ is defined as a group of cells clustered together in order to fulfil a specific physiological function. Secondly, the health of the skin cannot be considered in isolation from the rest of the body. The skin is also supposed to have direct effect of internal and external environment of the body. It means healthy skin is intimately related to diet, the state of mind, the digestive processes, the liver and bloodstream.

The restoration of skin health through yoga is directed primarily at influencing the digestive and circulatory functions of the body. The skin eruptions reflect a more widespread eliminative, circulatory or metabolic problem. If skin health is to be restored then it must be first corrected. It is not sufficient to suppress skin related symptoms with drugs and creams which give only temporary relief but no lasting cure. So it is the need of the time that any diseased condition must be treated with no recurrence phenomena.

Nowadays yoga becomes popular because of its efficacy in the management of various psychosomatic acute and chronic disorders³. The skin disease is one of the major problems among the society due to various triggering factors in day today life so it is the need of the time that disease management should be done with help of yogic practice⁴ so that the psychosomatic concept of disease management can be prove efficiently. The psychosomatic management of the disease enhance the overall effect of therapy to serve the man kind in better way.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES-

The aims of the study are

- 1- To elaborate the scientific evaluation of yogic practice in the management of skin diseases like psoriasis.
- 2- To explore the psychosomatic approach in the skin disease management.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Available sources of classical text of modern and Ayurveda were thoroughly analysed to support the fact & also relevant articles, books, research papers on internet were seen accordingly.

DISCUSSION

Skin is the complex structure. It reflects the aura of vitality and good health to the world like a mirror. Our skin that upholds the engrossing illusion of our existence appears every individual separate from one another. It is also a medium for the sense of touch. It is absolutely essential for most transcendental sensual experiences, both pleasurable and painful. Touch is the medium through which many emotions, energies and human feelings are communicated. Apart from the subtle aspects of the sense of hearing, we could say that touch is surely the most expressive of the sense modalities.

As the skin is an index of good health so it reflects the physical and mental satisfaction of the individual⁵. It can be said that our physical differences and personal characteristics are very much the attributes of the skin. A healthy person has a glowing & radiant complexion⁶, while a sick person looks as pale and devoid of *prana*. Medical examination commences with simply by looking at the patient, assessing his complexion. In light skinned races diagnosis can be made on

the basis of skin appearance. As relation of liver and blood diseases are reflected in a jaundiced skin, pallor reflects shock, anaemia or blood loss, a blue countenance, termed cyanosis, occurs in heart failure and respiratory defects. A red face occurs in valvular heart disease and alcoholism, and a sallow or grey complexion often accompanies kidney disease or cancer.

In various skin problems like psoriasis, alter the normal complexion & physiology of the skin which in turn leads to manifestation of different skin diseases. In ayurvedic texts the various skin disorders described under the name of *kustha*⁷. These *nidan* includes *aaharaj* like *virudha aahar sevan* (consumption of unwholesome food articles together), faulty dietary habits & *viharaj nidan* like *vega vidharana*, Exercise after having meal, brisk and excessive walking after meal, immediate exposure of hot and cold substances, *acharaja nidana* like Behavioral misconduct, antisocial activities, sinful act and other punishable activities⁸. These factors bring about psychogenic stress which is of prime importance in the pathogenesis of Psoriasis. It comes under *Kustha Roga* mentioned in Ayurveda, which have *Paap Karma* as a *Nidana* so its management holds both psychosomatic approaches to treat the diseased condition⁹.

Psoriasis-

This skin disorder like psoriasis is a nuisance in the life of those who suffer from it. It is an autoimmune disease of the skin that occurs when the immune system sends out faulty signs that speed up the growth cycle of skin cells. This process is considered similar to the healing of wounds. When a normal wound heals, the growth of the skin cycle stops, but for psoriasis patients, once this process is triggered, skin cells are stimulated and continue to grow. This usually does not stop until the cycle is interrupted with treatment. The main trigger for psoriasis is stress¹⁰. If the stressor is not removed, some of the immediate responses decrease in intensity. Sympathetic activity declines but maintains a level of constant readiness. Adrenaline levels remain high which depresses the body's immune responses. Chronic (long-term) stress leads to a depletion of the body's resources and a reduction in the effectiveness of the immune system. Like eczema, the cause of psoriasis is also linked to family genetics.

There are many triggering factor for psoriasis. Internal and external factors can be triggering factor for inflamed symptoms of skin¹¹. As previously said, environmental factors are the main external causes. Internal factors are allergic reactions to food, poor functioning liver, and a weak immune system, besides stress. Common food allergies for most patients include eggs, dairy, wheat products (gluten), shellfish, and corn. Sluggish liver function plays a significant role as the liver is largest cleansing organ in the body¹². Therefore, if the liver is not cleansing the body correctly or enough, the unfiltered toxins must then be released from the skin,

the largest organ in our bodies¹³. Also, a delicate immune system is powerless against allergens and cannot defend the body from skin irritations that occur in such patients.

Yoga helps to cure psoriasis-

According to Yoga, psoriasis is due to increase in toxin level in body and stress. With increase in stress level, inflammation increases and this disease spread from one part of the skin to another¹⁴.

From a yogic point of view, the symptoms can be perceived as a physical dysfunction of various chakras in the body. Psoriasis occurs due to imbalances of the root (*Muladhara*) chakra and solar plexus (*Manipura*) chakra. *Muladhara* chakra governs survival, vitality, and mental stability. Stress contributes as a main causative factor in psoriasis. Therefore stress is the biggest cause of imbalance of *Muladhara*. *Manipura* chakra physically governs the liver and digestion. So when the liver is weak, one knows that their solar plexus chakra is also out of balance leading to increase symptoms. Yoga therapy corrects the Pathophysiology of both chakras with holistic approach¹⁵.

As per Yoga Therapy the treatment has many folds which require continuous dedication and efforts. It suggests pranayama, asana, nutrition, shatkarma, and meditation as promising recommendations. It has many folds to improve both psycho-somatic aspect of the disease condition.

1-Pranayama- Bhastrika pranayama, Bahya pranayama, Anulom Vilom pranayama, Agnisaar pranayama, Bhramari pranayama, Udgeet pranayama, Kapalbhathi and Nadi Shodhi should be practiced for 15 minutes. Kapalbhathi pranayama removes toxins from the respiratory system and Nadi Shodhi pranayama increases the oxygen levels in the lungs tremendously which help in cleaning the nerves. Both these pranayamas also reduce stress.

2-Asana- The various postures that improve the endocrine system, massage thyroid and parathyroid glands. Such asanas include Sarvangasana, Halasana, Shighmukhasana, Janusirsasana.

3-Nutrition- Food which mainly balance Pitta Dosha is to be consumed. The easily digestible light food stuff can be consumed and some food stuffs to avoid are: eggs, milk, wheat products, tomatoes, eggplants, overly sweet, overly spicy, corn, and shellfish. Flaxseed (atashi) oil taken orally or applied externally often increases symptoms of psoriasis.

4-Shatkarma- Vaman Dhouti is one of the yogic cleansing methods of shatkarma. It balances Pitta by relieving the stomach of gird symptoms like heart burn and acid reflux.

5-Meditation- of all the remedies provided by Yoga Therapy, there is nothing more powerful than meditation to reduce stress. Stress is one of the critical factors that aggravate disease condition.

Yoga Mudras for healthy Skin¹⁶

The proper Yoga Mudra helps a person to achieve better health and mental condition through proper and regular practice. Yoga Mudra is a special form of gesture, often done with hands, to symbolise a closing up or a seal. Yogic Mudras can be denoted as tool to use the energy in a better manner in a specific direction. It has a tremendous effect on posture and thought process. It is an easy process of exhaling and inhaling and can be done sitting in Sukasana, which is a comfortable cross legged sitting posture.

There are different mudras to regulate the body energy to different channels as per condition and need. These can be used to treat certain diseased condition to restore the body energy to cure the disease. As the stress plays an important role in skin disease so the physical and mental balance is mandatory with detoxification process.

Apana mudra(energy mudra)-with each hand, place the thumb, middle finger and ring finger together-extended the other fingers. This Mudra helps in removing the toxins from the body. This mudra has a balancing effect on the mind which is largely dependent upon a well functioning liver. It gives us patience, serenity, confidence, inner balance and harmony.

Varun mudra/Jal-vardhak mudra can be done anytime at anyplace. For this mudra, one should join little finger tip with thumb tip and press the thumb gently by keeping remaining fingers straight. Sitting cross legged pose is the best pose to do this mudra but you can also do it in any pose. One should also take care that not to pressurize the nails tips as it can cause dryness to the skin. Varun mudra balances the water content in the body and thereby cures all the problems caused by decreased level of water element. Practicing Varun Mudra increases softness and glow of the skin as well as decreases dryness of the body. It also helps to purify blood, prevent the sign of aging, relieve dehydration & stomach infection, release constipation, activate kidney malfunctioning, relax muscles cramp as well as prevent gastroenteritis pains & muscle shrinkage.

General yogic practice for skin health¹⁷- there are some common yogic practice which help to keep skin healthy. Specific modification can be done in individual cases, if necessary under skilled guidance.

1. **Surya Namaskara**- it is group of twelve asana in certain sequence of inhalation & exhalation that exercise every part of the body with proper chanting of surya mantra. It is with proper posture & extension that helps total body sweating, while facing the newly

rising sun. One should do it according to his body capacity. The sweat should be allowed to dry on the body while resting in Shavasana. The breathing should be done through nostrils only.

It provides proper pure oxygen exchange to the body through lungs improving blood circulation and immunity. It also allows the proper sun exposure to the body to form vitamin D. it also helps both physical and mental detoxification the body.

2. **Asanas**- the different asana has there peculiar specification. Some of which are¹⁸
 - (i)**Tadasana** allows focusing on deep, rhythmic breathing - drawing oxygen into and out of the body releases harmful toxins and keeps vital organ more efficiently.
 - (ii)**Uttanasana**- It purifies the blood efficiently. Blood is switching against gravity directions. It helps clearing everything out because forward-bending poses fight against gravity by turning the head toward the ground, instead of toward the sky. Blood flows into the face faster, bringing with it oxygen and other helpful nutrients that fight free radicals, encourage skin cell renewal, and give the visage a rosy glow. Uttanasana is the easiest of the forward bends; those who practice yoga regularly can also try Parvatasana and the hip-opening Balasana.
 - (iii) **Utkatasana** make the heart beat faster, increasing the circulation of blood flow throughout the body and prompting the skin to sweat out impurities.
 - (iv)**Sarvangasana**- the shoulder stand position of the body helps to regulate the blood circulation against the gravitational force improving the heart pumping capacity to the distal organs.
3. **Bharadvaja's Twist** - twisting positions are great for digestive health, which is important for moving toxic properties out of the organs. It provides external & internal massage to the organ by improving blood circulation with sufficient nourishment.
4. **Viparita Karani** - Inversions such as Headstand and Shoulder stand position increase blood flow to the face. They also require clear focus, regular breathing, and a great deal of endurance - all of which help to clean out the body. Viparita Karani is a less challenging version of Shoulderstand that supposedly aids everything from digestion to insomnia.
5. **To improve the digestive process & liver secretion**- Wind-Relieving Posture (**Pavanamuktasana** - Apanasana), Kneeling Pose (**Vajrasana**), Bow Pose (**Dhanurasana**)

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the yogic management can improve the condition in better way to correct the diseased condition. It is the need of the time that these holistic approaches of the treatment can enhance the effect of the therapy.

Irregular life style such as unhygienic personal and surroundings, day time sleeping, irregular diet habit, stressful life & other chronic diseases with following depression, unhappiness, frustration, and underlying psychosomatic issues & Also subsequent build up of toxins are the root cause of various skin eruptions like psoriasis.

Skin diseases such as psoriasis are found to be directly related to significant digestive disturbance with various underlying psychosomatic causes. From a yogic perspective one has to correct and control over improper aahara and vihar, which correct the poor stimulation of the circulatory and excretory systems. When these health issues are methodically identified and treated with yogic practice, the skin problems like psoriasis improve efficiently.

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