



Review Article

EFFECT OF HATHA YOGA IN THE MANAGEMENT OF KITIBHA VIS-A-VIS PSORIASIS

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ABSTRACT


Yoga is an ancient way of living that provides physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. Yoga cures many chronic diseases and bring a state of relaxation for overall well-being. In today's scenario diseases start due to a sedentary lifestyle, wrong behavior, negative thoughts and attitudes. All this creates an imbalance in the human body, according to Ayurveda these habits vitiate *Tridosha* that is *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. These three humor of human existence governs bodily function. In Ayurvedic classical text, all the skin diseases have described under the common heading '*Kushtha*'. *Kitibha* is one of the types of *Kushtha* and considered under category of *Kshudra Kushtha* is correlated with Psoriasis due to close resemblance of their clinical features. The mental and physical pain involved in the psoriasis affect the health of patients. The Ayurveda text elaborates the symptoms, causes and diagnosis of vitiated *Dosha* while the Yoga text explains the techniques which purify *Dosha* from the body and provide balance among three *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. These three *Dosha* are essential constitutions of the living being. A balanced functioning of these three *Dosha* in living being considered a healthy individual and disharmony of these three *Dosha* could lead to many chronic illnesses. According to Ayurveda, no disease manifests without the *Vaisamy* of *Dosha*. Yoga provides a holistic approach to managing skin conditions.

INTRODUCTION

According to Ayurveda causes of diseases are due to vitiated *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Malas* in the body. Somatic diseases appear when they decrease or increase compared to their normal values. [1] *Rajas* and *Tamas* are the psychic *Dosha* which, when vitiated cause psychological manifestations. [2] In the current scenario, people are living a sedentary lifestyle, due to an unhealthy regimen most people get sick and suffer from chronic diseases [3] the proper understanding of vitiated *Dosha* according to the disease can be cured and be treated easily. To follow a healthy diet, Yogic

practice could lead to diminished chronic diseases like skin diseases, respiratory diseases, osteoarthritis, etc. *Kitibha Kushtha* is a *Vata kapha* predominant disease. Which is caused by vitiated *Dosha* due to unhealthy lifestyles, genetic, environmental, and unethical behavior. [4]

Psoriasis is a chronic, recurrent, inflammatory, proliferative, genetically determined, autoimmune, metabolic type of disfiguring skin disease that comes under papulosquamous non-communicable disorders. There is proliferation of the cells of the epidermis and dermis of the skin with infiltration of inflammatory cells and deposits in the dermis along with physical disfigurement it affects the mind too. It is a chronic inflammatory disorder characterized by substantial psychiatric comorbidities. [5] Psoriasis provides many challenges including disfiguration of the skin, disability of joints, and associated psychological disorders depression, anxiety, etc. [6]

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Anatomy and Physiology of Skin

The skin which covers the whole body is a complex living structure. [7] Its outermost layers are continually flaking from the body, it is a reflection of good health, and it is like a mirror that shows inner health. Manifestation of the physical body through the skin. The skin is the medium for the sense of touch whether it is pleasurable or painful. It is a part of a protective defense mechanism. It protects the internal organs from heat, UV radiation, infection, and damage. There are three main layers of skin:

1. Epidermis (Outermost Layer)
2. Dermis (Middle Layer)
3. Hypodermis (Inner Layer)

In considering the skin's health and diseases, the first point is to realize that the skin is a specific body organ. [8] It is a cluster of cells that maintains the body's physiological function. It shows how healthy a person is from within. It is a mirror of gut health. The Restoration of skin health through *Yoga* therapy primarily works on the digestive system. A skin problem often manifests due to a weak digestive system that affects metabolism. Which is a must to be cured for the restored skin condition. [9]



Figure 1: Shows the function of the skin

There are two types of disease manifestations as per Ayurveda

1. Endogenous (*Nija*)
2. Exogenous (*Agantuja*)

आगन्तुरन्वेति निजं विकारं निजस्था आगन्तुमपि प्रवृद्धः।

Charak Samhita, Sutrasthana (19/7)

Charak Samhita, Sutrasthana (19/7)

Nija Vyadhi manifests as a result of a disturbance in the balance or equilibrium of somatic *Dosha* these are *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*, while *Agantuja vyadhi* occurs due to external causes like accident, and trauma. There is no involvement in *Dosha* primarily, but later on, *Dosha* is involved in the recovery process. [10] The diseases are broadly classified into two types based on origin viz.

In general, initially, the causes of disease are different but gradually *Dosha* involvement is there in the difference being only as regards the initial cause. Since the involvement of *Dosha* is definite even in *Aganturogas* at some point in time. [11] Though *Dhatu-vaishamy* is present in *Aganturoga* also, it is not usually mentioned as a cause, being relative of lesser importance. [12] When the mind indulges in wrong action, that time one cannot understand what is right or wrong, which leads to committing unnatural and sinful acts. [13] When the mind fails to think right it

Clinical features of *Kushtha* according to vitiated *Dosha* [16]

Table 1: Shows clinical features of *Kushtha*

S.No	<i>Dosha</i> Accumulation	Characteristics
1.	<i>Vata Dosha</i> Accumulation	Rough skin, dry, hard, pricking pain
2.	<i>Pitta Dosha</i> Accumulation	Redness, burning sensation, raised temperature
3.	<i>Kapha Dosha</i> Accumulation	Itching, localized, elevation, white discoloration

leads to mental and emotional disturbance causing the body to release different neurotransmitters, these show disharmony among bodily functions and affect the balance of *Dosha* homeostasis. [14]

Classification of *Kushtha* (skin diseases)

Kushtha is a broad term that denotes all skin diseases in Ayurvedic terminology. *Kushtha* is broadly classified into two types-

- *Maha Kushtha* (major)
- *Kshudra Kushtha* (minor)

Kitibha (Psoriasis) is categorized under *Kshudra Kushtha* which is a *Vata Kapha* predominant skin disease with the typical feature of recurrence in a specific period. It resembles in its manifestation and clinical features with Psoriasis. Many factors are responsible for causing skin diseases including genetic, dietary, lifestyle, and even ethical factors. Acharya Sushruta has mentioned.

सर्वाणि कुष्ठानि सवातानि सपित्तानि सश्लेष्माणि सक्रिमीणि च भवन्ति उत्सन्नतस्तु उत्सन्नतस्तु दोष-ग्रहणमभिभवात्

Sushruta Samhita, Nidan Sthana 5/6

All types of *Kushtha* are associated with *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*, and organisms, it is only due to predominance that causation of one of the *Dosha* is indicated. [15]

Meaning of Hathayoga

Hathayoga is the path of balancing the physical and mental forces of the body. The word 'Hatha' comprises two Sanskrit words, 'Ha' and 'Tha'. *Ha* means sun and *Tha* means moon; this is a representation of two energy systems. Whereas the moon is the mental energy of *Chitta*. It is a subtle energy that is considered mental energy and the sun is considered a Pranic energy. The practice of *Hathayoga* creates balance and unifies the two scattered and fluctuating energies into one energy.

हकारः कीर्तितः सुर्यष्टकारश्चन्द्र उच्यते।

सूर्याचन्द्रमसोर्योगाद् हठयोगो निगद्यते॥

सिद्धसिद्धान्त पद्धति 1/69

There is a great experience of subtle energy of mind and body in the form of *Hathayoga*; the term '*Hathayoga*' is formed by the *Yoga* (union or adjoin) of Hakar & Thakar energies of human body and mind.

Hakar is the representation of Surya while, Thakar is the representation of Chandra. Hakar is the subtle sound of inhaling breath and Thakar is the subtle sound of exhaling breath.

Yogic practices for skin health

As Maharishi Patanjali has given Ashtanga Yoga similarly Maharishi Gheranda elaborates on *Saptanga Yoga*, the seven practices of *Yoga*, one should adopt for purification, firmness, steadiness, patience, lightness, inner perception and non-involvement are the seven *Sadhana* for *Ghatastha* (body).^[17] Here the meaning of *Ghatastha* is mud pot, and Maharishi Gheranda compares the human body to mud pot which needs a Yogic fire for firmness and steadiness.

शोधनं दृढता चैव स्थैर्यं धैर्यं च लाघवम्

प्रत्यक्षं च निर्लिप्तं च घटस्य सप्तसाधनम्

Gheranda Samhita 1/9

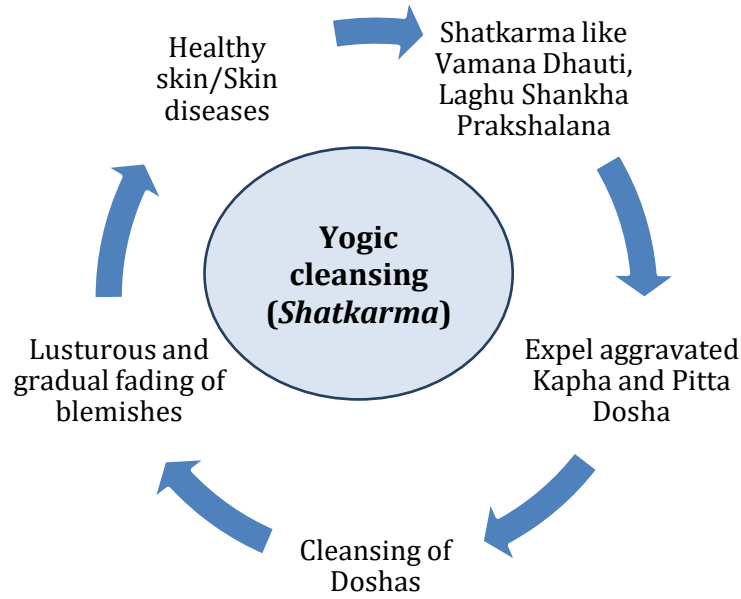


Figure 2: Shows the benefits of Shatkarma

This *Yoga* protocol beneficial in balancing *Dosha* by purifying the *Nadis* (energy channels). As per Ayurveda vitiated *Dosha* is the main cause of skin diseases. In case of Psoriasis psychological manifestations also are very common due to the disfigurement of physical appearances, social stigma and discrimination by the society. *Yoga* practice helps in improving skin condition, provides relaxation to the body and mind.

- 1. Shatkarma:** The state of purification is achieved by *Shatkarma* (six purification techniques) for instance: *Dhauti*, *Basti*, *Kapalbhati*, *Vaman*, *Moolshodhan*, *Laghoo Shankhprakashalana*.
- 2. Asana:** Physical strength and firmness is achieved by the practice of asana. *Pawanmuktasana* part – 1

(anti-rheumatic group). This set of *Asanas* releases all the stress from the joint and body, eliminating blockage from the path of energy channels, and improving coordination, self-awareness, and self-confidence.^[18] *Surya namaskar* practice is also helpful in removing toxins as a form of sweat from the body.^[19] It allows internal organs for proper functioning.

- 3. Mudra:** *Mudra* gives stability and helps in channelize the energy, viz. *Gyan mudra*, *Yoga mudra*, *Mahamudra* etc.
- 4. Pratyahara:** The practice of *Pratyahara* develops the quality of patience, and brings the ability to handle adverse situations. For Instance: *Yoga Nidra*, *Antar Mauna*.

5. **Pranayama:** Lightness achieved by the practice of *Pranayama*. For instance: *Ujjayi, Sheetli, Nadishodhan, Bhastrika*. These *Pranayama* should be practiced empty stomach every morning.

6. **Dhyana:** It is the practice of self-realization, a process of recognizing oneself. [20]

7. **Samadhi:** It is the process of detachment from worldly things.

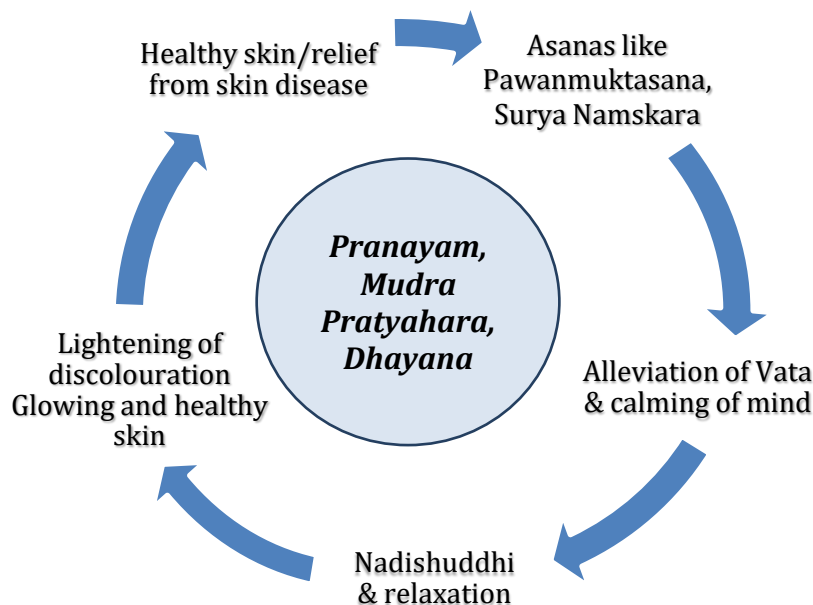


Figure 3: Shows the removal of Doshas through Yoga Practice

Ahara (Diet)

According to Upanishad, having pure and *Sattvic* food develops a pure mind, removes all the impurities from the body.

आहार शुद्धौ सत्त्व-शुद्धिः सत्त्व-शुद्धौ स्मृति ध्रुवा

स्मृतिः लम्बे सर्व ग्रन्थीनां विप्र मोक्षः

छान्दोग्य उपनिषद् 7/26.2

The human body develops by assimilating nutrients from food. Wholesome food is the cause for excellence in health and unwholesome is responsible for disease. The Ayurveda diet plays an important role in managing *Kushtha* (skin diseases). For instance-excessive intake of *Masha* (Black gram), *Mulaka* (radish), *Tila* (Sesame seeds) and Jaggery, oily, high-calorie, fried, and spicy food should be avoided. [21]

DISCUSSION

Causes of skin diseases are vitiation of *Doshas, Dhātu,* and *Malas,* lead skin diseases, *Kitibha Kushtha* (Psoriasis) is the *Vata kapha* predominant disease. Yoga practice pacifies all the impurities of body and mind through the practice of *Shatkarma, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara,* and *Dharana,* helps Expel aggravated *Kapha* and *Pitta Dosha,* Lustrous and gradual fading of blemishes, *Asanas* like *Pawanmuktasana, Surya Namaskar,* alleviation of *Vata* & calming of mind. Non-pharmacological treatments are best for skin disorders. It provides relief without any harm or side effects on the human body. That may improve skin disorders, reduce psychological distress,

and improve the quality of life of the affected individual.

CONCLUSION

As per Ayurveda, there are many causes of skin diseases among them vitiated *Doshas* are the main cause of *Kushtha*. Yoga practices pacify *Vata, Pitta,* and *Kapha doshas* and help in rectifying *Sharirika* (physical) and *Manasika* (mental) *Doshas*. Yoga and Ayurveda both sciences are both interrelated. Ayurveda explains *Dosha* which increases or decreases causing disharmony in bodily function. *Dosha* governs human behaviour through the essential components of the body viz. *Vata, Pitta* and *Kapha*. Such vitiated *Dosha* can cause many chronic illnesses; thus, Yoga and Ayurveda gives the treatment and helps in managing diseases and provides a healthy body and mind.

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