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Case Study

AYURVEDIC MANAGEMENT OF SCLERODERMA

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ABSTRACT

Twakgata Vata is a *Vata nanatmaja vikara* where *Vata* get localized in *Twak* (skin), it produces stiffness and pain in skin due to loss of nourishment. Ayurveda adopts a holistic approach in management of disease, where *Hetu vipareeta* and *Vyadhi vipareeta*, both aspects of line of treatment are considered for treating a medical condition scleroderma, being identified as an autoimmune pathology affecting the skin, internal organ which is associated with symmetrical thickening and tightening of the skin as a symptom. Incorporating the *Dosha-Dushya* principles of *Vyadhi*, such conditions could be managed on line of treatment of *Vata* dominant *Uttana vatarakta* associated with *Twakgata vata*, where *Vata dosha* vitiation primarily at the level of *Rasa-rakta* and *Mamsa dhatus*. Ayurveda has its own understanding of *Vyadhi, Shamana* and *Shodhana*, are incorporated in management of symptoms. Hence, utilizing the same principles being adopted in the treatment of *Vatarakta* and *Twakgata vata*, a remarkable decrease in the severity of symptoms could be achieved. **Aim and Objective:** The aim of this study was to access the efficacy of Ayurvedic management of *Shamana* and *Shodhana Chikitsa* in *Twakgata vata*. **Material and Methods:** It is a single case study, in which 65-year-old female was diagnosed with *Twakgata* since 2 months, approached to Ayurvedic hospital and was treated with line of treatment of *Vatavyadhi* for consecutive months. **Result:** Significant improvement in stiffness and pain in upper and lower extremities with better quality of life was observed.

INTRODUCTION

Systemic sclerosis is a chronic multisystem disease of connective tissue affecting the skin, musculoskeletal systems internal organs (e.g. gastrointestinal tract, lungs, heart and kidneys) and vasculature. Scleroderma literally means hard skin and the hallmark of systemic sclerosis is thickening and hardening of the skin (scleroderma) due to skin fibrosis [1]. It can be localized or systemic it can affect skin, blood vessels, muscles and internal organs. More common in women (4:1 ratio). Typically appears between ages 30-50. Genetic and environmental triggers may play a role (e.g., silica exposure).

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Prognosis varies on subtype and organ involvement; localized scleroderma has a better prognosis than diffuse. Lung, heart, or kidney involvement worsens outlook. Early detection and management improve outcomes. In the context of Ayurvedic medicines, Scleroderma is understood as *Twakgata vata*. In Classical texts, describes[2] *"Ruksata sphutanam twaci rujo nganam ca jayate I Stambhah sparsasahatvam ca yada vayuh tvagasritah II"* Symptoms of *Twakgata* include- dryness, cracking of skin, pain, stiffness, and intolerance to touch. We know *Vata vyadhi* are fulminate in nature but early diagnosis can prevent from further damage caused by stopping previous pathology with various measures which are having opposite *Guna*. *Sansarga* of other *Dosha* and *Dhatu* leads to involvement of *Shodhana* and *Shaman Chikitsa Snehana* therapy, *Bahya* and *Abhyantar* are well known for its treatment in *Vata-vyadhi. Shastika Shali Pinda sweda* has unique combination of *Snehana*, *Svedana* and *Brimhana guna* and *Vata* is having opposite guna's.

Case Report

A 65-year-old female patient was apparently healthy before 2 months. Presented with chief complaints of pain and tightening of skin of upper and lower extremities. She was unable to stand and sit properly since 2 months, after her dengue fever history she was not able to do her routine work due to stiffness in muscle of upper limb. She took allopathic medicines for this problem from clinic for 2 months but did not get any benefit and she visited NIA for further treatment.

General Examination- On general examination, BP, pulse, height, wt. is normal, pallor/ icterus/cyanosis/clubbing-absent, lymphadenopathy-non-palpable, edema-absent.	**Respiratory-** On respiratory examination B/L chest is clear, no added sound.	**CVS-** On CVS examination S1, S2 normal, murmur absent.	**CNS-** On CNS examination-Lower limb is normal-Motor system (nutrition, tone, power, incoordination, reflex), and sensory system. upper limb-motor system is impaired, nutrition- muscles weakness present which become hard & inelastic. tone- hypotonic, power grade 3 sensory system is normal.

Personal History

Appetite- normal, sleep-disturbed, bowel habit constipated, 1 time/day, micturition-normal, diet-vegetarian, addiction-tobacco chewing.

History of Past Illness

No H/o-HTN/ DM/ TB/ COPD/ typhoid fever/ mumps/ orchitis/ allergy to specific allergen/ renal failure/ hepatic dysfunction, no h/o any surgery.

Ayurvedic Examination

***Astavidha Pareeksha*:** *Nadi*-78/min, *Mootra Prakrita, Mala-Saama, Jihwa*- Coated, *Shabda Prakrita, Sparsha-Samanya, Drik-Prakrita, Akriti Prakruta*.

***Dashavidha Rogi Pariksha*:** *Prakriti: Vata pittaja, Vikriti: Dosha-Vata, Pitta, Dushya: Rasa, Shukra, Sara Samhanana-Pramana-Satmya-Satva:Madhyama*.

Possible Causative Factors: *Alpa Rooksha Aahara, Lavana-Amla-Katu-Kshara Ahara, Klinna-Sushka-Ahara, Dadhi-Shukta, Kulattha, Viruddhahara (Krishara* and *Dugdha), Matsya Mamsa, Nitya Mudga Sevana, Krodha, Ratri Jagarana And Ati-Sahasjanya Karma* are the causative factors elicited as per the history given by the patient.[3]

Prodromal Symptoms: *Swedo-na-va* (decreased sweating even on a hot sunny day), *Karshnyam* (blackening of skin), *Sadana* (generalized weakness), *Janu-jangha-uru-kati-amsa-hasta-pada-anga-sandhishu nistoda* (various painful areas), *Kandu* (intching all over the body), *Vaivarnayam* (discolouration) (blackening), *Twak-rookshata* (dryness of skin), *Sphutita* (blisters) were elicited.[4]

Summary of Outcomes: Physician Outcome Scale

Outcome Parameters	Metrics	Before	During	After
Twak-Asthi Sankocha	H/M/L/Ab	H	M	L
Twak-Parushyam	H/M/L/Ab	M	M	L
Twak-Kandu	H/M/L/Ab	M	L	L
Twak-Karshnayam	H/M/L/Ab	M	M	L
Kshudha-hani	H/M/L/Ab	H	M	L
Nidrahani	H/M/L/Ab	M	M	M
Sphota	H/M/L/Ab	M	L	Ab
Shwayathu (Shotha)	H/M/L/An	H	L	L

(H=High/ M=Medium/ L=Low/ A=Absent)

Summary of Outcomes: Patient Outcome Scale

Presenting Complaints	Before Treatment	After Treatment
Stretching of skin	1	3
Blackening of skin	2	3
Tightening of skin	2	4
Loss of appetite	2	5
Sleeplessness	2	5

Poor (1); Fair (2); Good (3); Very Good (4); Excellent (5)

Therapeutic Intervention

Date	Oral Medicine	Dose	Time
27/03/2025	*Rasna Saptaka Kwath*	40 ML	Two times empty stomach
	Giloy gana vati	250 MG	Two times after meal
	Shilajitwadi lauha	500 MG	Two times after meal
	Sukumar Ghrita	10 ML	Two times empty stomach
	Bala ashwagandhadi Taila for local application		
5/5/2025	Continue the same treatment		
19/05/2025	Continue the same treatment		
31/05/2025	Continue the same treatment		

Date	Oral Medicine	Dose	Time
21/06/2025	1) *Rasna Saptaka Kwath* 2) *Giloy Gana Vati* 3) *Shilajitwadi Lauha* 4) *Ekangvir Ras-* *Madhuyasti Churna* *Ajmodadi Churna* *Godantil Churna* *Praval Pisti* Advise *Bala Ashwagandhadi Taila* for local application	40 ML (BD) 250 MG (BD) 500 MG (BD) 125 MG 2 GM 3 GM (BD) 500 MG 250 MG	Empty Stomach After Meal After Meal Before Meal
05/07/2025	Continue the same treatment		
19/07/2025	Continue the same treatment+ 5)*Panchtikta guggulu ghrita* Advise *Gandha Taila* for local application	10 ML (BD)	Before Meal

Chikitsa or the treatment in Ayurveda is based mainly on three principles i.e., *Yuktivyapashraya, Daivavyapashraya* and *Sattwavajaya* [5]. Where predominantly *Yuktivyapashraya Chikitsa* was adopted following *Anatah-parimarjana* (internal medicine) and *Bahih-parimarjana* (external medication) *Chikitsa*. Considering *Vatarakta and Vata-Vyadhi* spectrum, following treatment principles were adopted. *Vatarakta Chikitsa (Virechana*, *Basti, Avidahi seka-abhyanga; Bahya-aalepa; Parisheka; Upanaha*)[6] and *Vatavyadhi Chikitsa-Abhyanga, Basti, Anuwasana basti* for *Sarvanga Vata*; *Sweda-Abhyana-Avagaha* for *Twaggata Vata* [7].

Diagnostic Assessment: Before and After Treatment

	28/3/25	19/5/25
CBC Hb	12.8 g/dl	12.3 g/dl
LFT Bilirubin Direct Indirect	 0.127 mg/dl 0.24 mg/dl	 0.075 mg/dl 0.12 mg/dl
SGOT SGPT	18.8 U/L 4.5U/L	19.8 U/L 5.1 U/L
Total Protein Albumin	7.26 g/dl 4.17 g/dl	7.17 g/dl 4.25 g/dl
Globulin	3.09 g/dl	2.92 g/dl
Alkaline Phosphatasc	60 U/L	63 U/L
Total Cholesterol	235 mg/dl	215 mg/dl
Calcium	10.36 mg/dl	9.9 mg/dl

Figure 1: Before Treatment Photos

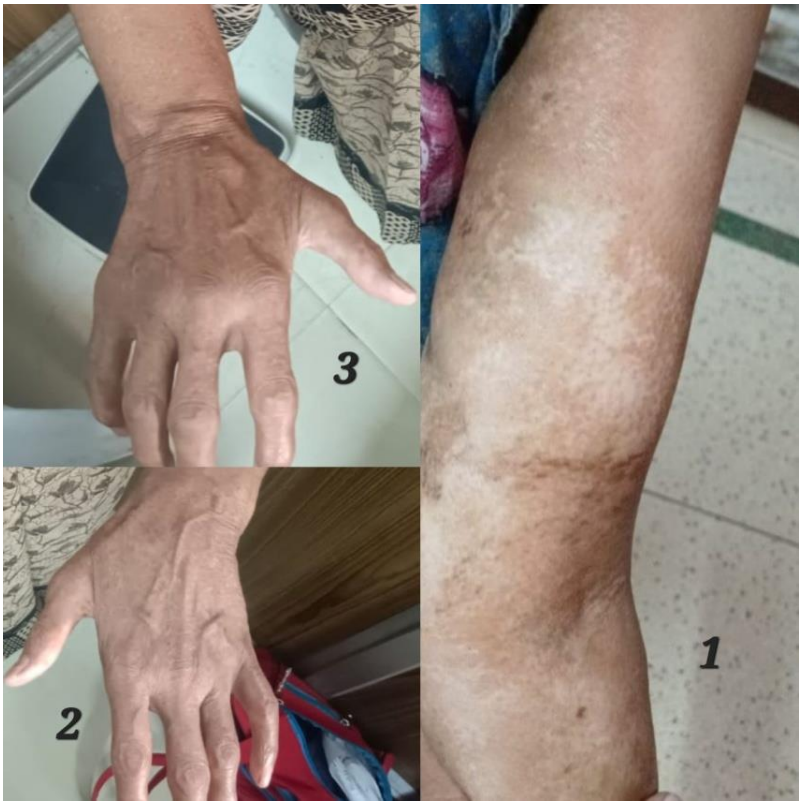
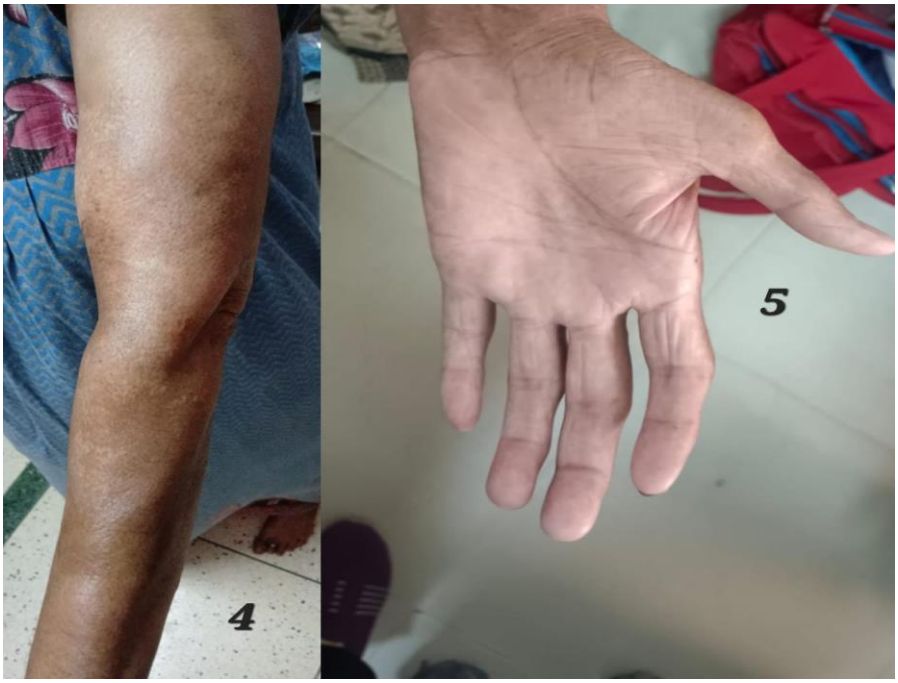


Figure 2: After Treatment Photos



DISCUSSION

In *Rasna Saptaka Kwath* most ingredients *(Rasna, devadaru, Sunthi, Guduci)* pacify *Vata* and *Kapha dosha* and helps in reducing stiffness, heaviness and pain in joints. *Punarnava* and *Gokshura* reduce *Sotha* (swelling, edema) in joints and muscles *Rasna* and *Devadaru* act as *Vedanasthapana dravya* by restoring joint mobility. *Ekangvir rasa* along with *Madhuyasti churna Ajmodadi churna* and *Praval pisti* prevents stiffness and pain due to aggravated *Vata*, provides *Shotha hara* (anti-inflammatory) and *Daha hara* (cooling) effects. When administered together, the formulation acts as *Vata-pitta-shamaka Agnideepaka, Balya* and *Vedana sthapaka*. In Classical texts, *Ghrita* act as the best *Snehana dravya* for skin and penetrates deep into tissues *(Sukshma guna)* and carries the potency of added drugs *(Yogavahi),* enhancing their action at skin and dhatu level. *Sukumar Ghrita* and *Panchtikta guggulu Ghrita* acts as a medium to deliver *Vata-Pitta hara* action being *Sheeta virya,* relieves dryness, cracking and stiffness of skin. *Giloy ganavati* effective as *Tridosha-shamaka* action and *Rasayana* properties. *Shilajitwadi lauha* combines the-*Rasayana* and *Yogavati* property of *Silajatu* with *Raktavardhaka* (hematinic) property of *Lauha Bhasma*, helpful in *Dhatu-ksaya* conditions. Local application of *Bala ashwagandhadi Taila* and *Gandha Taila* maintains elasticity, softness and provides *Dhatu poshana* (nourishment). Daily 14 days treatment as *Shastika Shali Pinda Sweda* worked due to Ushna guna to stimulate the sympathetic nervous system and perform vasodilation. Due to *Sara* and *Sukshma guna* of *Swedan dravya*, Lina *dosh* are liquefied and came out through micropores of the skin. And regular exercise improves muscle tone, power, and gets improved patient's condition.[8]

Shastika Shali Pinda Sweda comes under *Snigdha Sankar Swed*. It decreases stiffness due to massage and heat applied over the area, Nutrients of *Shastika Shali* get absorbed and give strength to the muscles, sweat pores open and flow out various metabolic wastes, Increased blood flow promotes relaxation process and increasing range of movement, toxins remove from the body by inducing sweat. If oleation and sudation could soften dried timber, then definitely helpful in muscle spasm condition in a patient.

Stretching, blackening and tightening of skin, loss of appetite; the major complaints of patient were reduced significantly and were reported by both patient and physician. Furthermore, on follow up date after one month, the major complaints of the patient were reduced remarkably and the complaint of sleeplessness was also resolved. The induration and tightening of skin were further improved, hence improving the total wellbeing and status of health of the patient. Moreover, patient had significant reduction in stress level along with increased quality of life.

Vatarakta and *Vata vyadhi* spectrum deals with some of the serious health issues involving the systemic aliments, bones-joints and connective tissue disorders, auto-immune disorders and degenerative disorders. Scleroderma, having an auto-immune involvement, does not have a treatment available in the modern medicine that halt or reverse the fibrotic

changes that underlies the disease. While in the modern medicine, treatment of the disease targets at management of digital ulcers, Reynaud's phenomenon, GIT complications, hypertension or the joint involvement associated with the disease, using Calcium channel blockers, anti-reflux, agents, ACE inhibitors, NSAIDs or methotrexate like drugs [9].

CONCLUSION

Twakgata is characterized by skin sensation issues like *Rukshata* (dryness of skin), *Supti* (numbness, loss of touch sensation), *Stambha* (stiffness or tightness of skin), *Toda* (pricking pain), *Vivarnata* (discoloration) reduced perception of touch, cold, and pressure with difficulty in fine motor activities due to sensory impairment. It can be concluded that ayurvedic interventions in *Twakgata vata*, are highly effective with a significant decrease in the symptoms, alongside the improved quality and wellbeing of the patient. Further, no adverse effects of the treatment were reported.

Consent of Patient

The written informed consent has been taken from patient for treatment as well as publication purpose, without disclosure of the identity, solely meant for the medical education and learning.

Limitation of Study

Being an autoimmune pathology, a sure treatment modality for scleroderma is still to be formulated. Moreover, as this is a single case study, so the same treatment protocol should be validated by a large sample size with randomized clinical trial.

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