


**Review Article**
**EFFICACY OF VIRECHANA KARMA IN THE MANAGEMENT OF ACNE VULGARIS**
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**ABSTRACT**

A healthy and clear facial impression plays the important part for the development of the personality. Since ages, Acne vulgaris has always been one of the most burning problem of the adolescents. It affects the most prominent part of our body, the face. Among the multifactorial etiology of acne hormonal imbalance and infections are most important. Acne is a cutaneous pleomorphic disorder of the pilosebaceous unit involving abnormalities in sebum production and is characterized by both inflammatory (papules, pustules and nodules) and non-inflammatory (comedones, open and closed) lesions. Propionibacterium acnes is responsible for the development of acne vulgaris. Acne Vulgaris can be correlated with *Mukhadushika* or *Yuvanpidika* on the basis of similarity in the etiopathogenesis, symptoms, treatment and complication. In Ayurveda it is the *Shalmali* thorn like eruptions on the face of adolescent due to vitiation of *Kapha*, *Vata* and *Shonita*. Allopathic treatment includes treatment for all forms of acne as topical retinoids and benzoyl peroxide, oral antibiotics, steroids etc. But these causes serious adverse effects. So it is necessary to find out effective and safe treatment for Acne Vulgaris. Ayurveda is for it which plays important role through its principles i.e. *Shodhana*, *Shamana* and *Nidanparivarjana*. As described by various *Acharya* the *Shodhanachikitsa* includes *Vamana*, *Virechana* and *Shiravedha*. Among *Shodhana*, *Virechana* process is the safe and effective treatment, providing long lasting result for better life of patient.

**KEYWORDS:** Acne vulgaris, *Mukhdooshika*, *Yuvanpidika*, *Virechana karma*.

**INTRODUCTION**

Acne is a common chronic inflammatory condition of skin with significant cutaneous and psychological disease burden.<sup>[1]</sup> Acne affects both males and females, although males tend to have more with onset of puberty. According to the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) study, acne vulgaris effects ~85% of young adults with age group ranging from 12–25 years. In India, research studies have reported acne in 50.6% of boys and 38.13% of girls in the age group of 12-17 years.<sup>[2]</sup> Acne consistently represents the top three most prevalent skin conditions in the general population, as found in large studies within the developed and developing countries.<sup>[3]</sup> In 2010, acne was estimated to affect 650 million people globally making it the 8<sup>th</sup> most common disease worldwide.<sup>[4]</sup> Acne Vulgaris is a chronic inflammatory condition of the pilosebaceous units, characterized by the formation of comedones, erythematic papules and pustules, less frequently nodules or cysts too.<sup>[5]</sup> Chiefly occur on cheeks, chin, nose, forehead and upper trunk. It occurs due to colonization of microbial flora (*p. acne*) and imbalance status of androgen like hormones. Excessive sweating, constipation, and stress are also considered as the

aggravating factors. In Ayurvediya Samhitas, Acne Vulgaris can be correlated with *Mukhadushika* or *Yuvanpidika* on the basis of similarity in the etiopathogenesis, symptoms, treatment and complication. Acne is referred as *Yuvanpidika* (which means the eruptions of *Pidika* at youth age) in Ayurveda. There is a brief description available about *Yuvan pidika*. In all *Samhitas Kapha*, *Vata* and *Raktadushti* is considered as causative factor of the disease. The *Shaalmali*, thorn like hard painful eruption, impregnated with *Meda* are found on the face of adolescent are called as *Yuvan pidika*. It is also called as *Mukhdushika* as *Pidika* destroys the beauty of face.<sup>[6]</sup> To treat, modern medical science suggests hormonal therapy, antibiotics, and some surgical or para-surgical measures. As these measures have certain limitations and many adverse effects so alternatives are being searched for significant relief. *Virechana* procedure is specific for *Pitta Dosha*, or *Pitta Samsarga Doshas*. The purgative drugs remove the excess *Pitta* from the *Guda Marga*. Thus helps in the *Sampraptivighatana* of *Yauvana pidika*.

**Pathogenesis:** It is a skin condition that occurs due to the clogging of oil glands of the skin.<sup>[7]</sup> There are

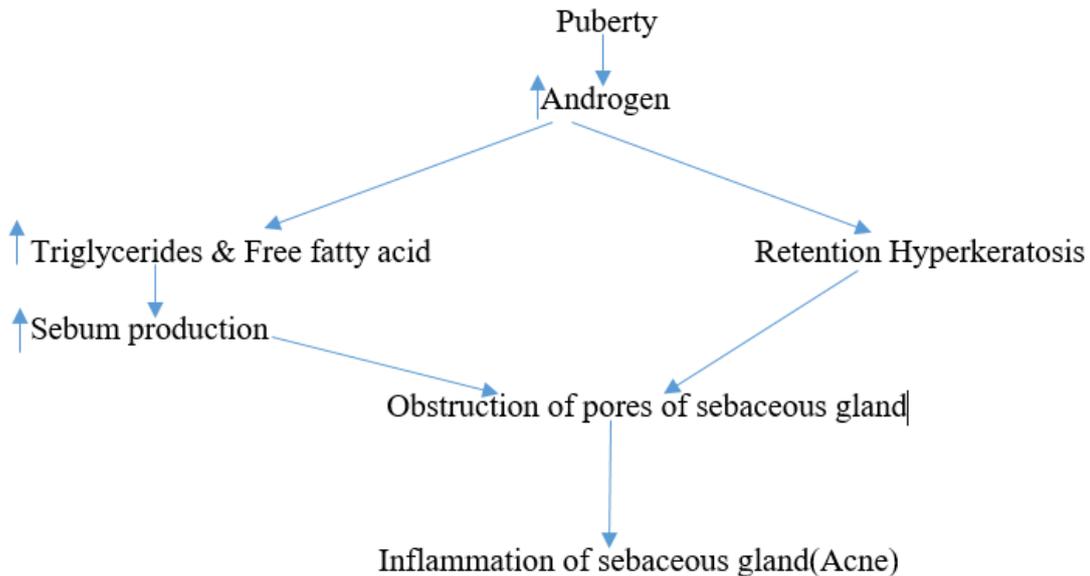
four major factors involved in the disease production which are continued as:

1) Increased sebum production

2) Cornification of pilo-sebaceous duct

3) Microbial involvement

4) Production of inflammation



### Pathogenesis (*Samprapti*) of Acne vulgaris as per Ayurveda

In *Ayurvediya Samhitas*, there is a brief description available regarding the disease *Mukhdushika*, It is described under the heading of *Kshudra Rogas* and not as an independent disease. It is called as *Kshudra* because of their lesser severity. According to *Sushruta Samhita Nidana Sthana*, painful eruptions like thorn of *Shalmali*, impregnated with *Meda* are found on the face of adolescent are called as *Mukhdushika* or *Yuvanpidika*. In other *Samhitas* of Ayurveda like *Ashtanga Hridaya* and *Ashtanga Samgraha* there is description about *Mukhdushika* is almost similar.<sup>[8]</sup> According to the description of various *Samhitas*, the probable *Samprapti* of the disease as- due to the indulgence of the aetiological factors *Kapha*, *Vata* and *Rakta Dushti*, there will be vitiation of *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha* which gradually vitiates *Rasaraktaadi Dhaatus*. It may cause abnormality in *Dhaatvaagni* (mainly *Medoagni*) resulting into excessive *Sweda* production (as *Swedamala* of *Medodhatu*), which obstructs the hair follicle (as *Meda* and *Lomakoopa* are the root of *Swedvaha Srotas*). Thus here *Sanga* type of *Srotodushti* takes place and its manifestation is *Mukhdushika*.

### Purvarupa

No *Purvarupa* of *Mukhdushika* is mentioned in *Ayurvediya Samhitas*.

### Rupa

The *Purvarupa* of the disease *Yuvanpidika* is not available in almost all the *Ayurvediya Samhitas* but the *Rupavstha* of the disease is explained by all

the *Acharyas*. According to *Acharya Sushruta*, the *Pidika* resembles like *Kantaka* of *Shalmali* tree. It is due to deranged condition of *Kapha*, *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Rakta* are called as *Yuvanpidika*.<sup>[9]</sup> Detailed description regarding signs and symptoms of the *Yuvan pidika* in *Ashtanga Hridaya*. According to *Vagabhat* signs and symptoms are following (a- e).<sup>[10]</sup>

**a) *Shalmali Kantakakara Pitika*:** The eruption on face which looks like conical shape resembles with *Shalmali Kanta* is called as *Yuvan Pidika*.

**b) *Saruja*:** The eruptions are painful. The severity may vary from mild to severe.

**c) *Ghana*:** The word *Ghana* means solid, hard or indurated. The eruption is hard and thick. According to *Kalyanakaraka* the *Pidika* is due to vitiated *Kapha*.

**d) *Medogarbha*:** The eruption is filled with the *Meda*. It occurs due to obstruction of the *Medogranthi*.

**e) *Yuna Mukhe*:** This disease usually effects in adults. This word shows the site of origin of *Pidika* and time of occurrence of the disease i.e. Disease occurs in young adults and effects the face.

**f) Associated Symptoms:** It includes

1) *Vedana*- due to *Vata* 2) *Kandu*- due to *Kapha*

3) *Daha*- due to *Pitta* 4) *Srava*- due to *Kapha*

### AIM AND OBJECTIVES

To evaluate efficacy of *Virechana karma* in the management of Acne Vulgaris.

### Management

**Line of treatment:** Ayurvediya management mainly comprises of the following:

**1) Removal of causes (*Nidanparivarjana*)**

**II) Samshodhana Chikitsa**<sup>[11,12,13]</sup>

- 1. Vamana Karma:** According to Acharya Sushruta in *Yuvaan pidika*, particular emesis is beneficial.
- 2. Virechana Karma:** It is indicated especially to subside *Pitta Dosh* or *Pitta Sansargaja Dosh*.
- 3. Nasya Karma:** Acharya Vagbhatta has also described this process *Mukhdushika*.
- 4. Shiravedha:** The involvement of the *doshas* in *Yuvana pidika* is *Kapha*, *Vata* and *Rakta*. To get rid from these vitiated *Doshas*, *Raktamokshana* is one of the best lines of treatment explained in our classics.

**III) Shamana Chikitsa****Virechan Karma**

*Mukhdooshika* is caused due to vitiation of *Kapha*, *Vata* and *Rakta Dosh*. Acharya Charaka has highlighted the role of *Panchakarma* therapy by stating that the disease treated by *Shodhana* will never recur in due course of time. These *Shodhana* probably may lead to certain endogenous changes in the body responsible for the alleviation of Acne pathological process. Hence *Sanshodhana (Virechan)* therapy seems to be line of treatment. Among all the *Shodhana karma* first preference is given to *Virechana* by the physicians because of its broad spectrum applicability and simplicity with least possibility of complications; *Virechana* not only helps in eliminating *Doshas* from the body but it has also preventive as well as promotive aspects. Among *Shodhanas*, *Virechana* is best for the diseases of *Pitta* and *Rakta Pradoshajavikara* and some extent of *Kapha*, which are main *Dosha* of *Mukhdooshika*. According to these lines of treatment, *Virechana* was firstly administered to the patients as a *Shodhana* measure.

**DISCUSSION**

Face is the index and mirror of the body. According to Ayurveda among the 56 *Upaanga*, face is one of the most important. In this era of competition everyone wants to look beautiful, even a small spot on face especially in younger generation causes stress. Unfortunately skin is affected by certain anomaly like *Yuvanapidika*, which not only affects the physical appearance but also affect the self-esteem of a person. The disease *Yauvana pidika* occurs due to vitiation of *Kapha*, *Vata*, and *Rakta*. *Swabhava* (natural status) has also been considered as one of the causative factors.<sup>[14]</sup> Though the *Tarunyaavastha* (adolescent period) is the age for *Shukrapradurbhava* (manifestation of *Shukra Dhatu*) and *Sharangadhara* has mentioned *Vaktre Snigdhatta* (unctuousness on face) and *Pidika* (boil) formation on face as *Mala* (waste product) of *Shukra Dhatu*.<sup>[15]</sup> So, development of the acne in this age is obvious. *Charaka* has described second half of *Balyaavastha*

as *Vivardhamanaavastha* (growing period) for all *Dhatu* and *Anavasthita Chittatva* (unstable mind).<sup>[16]</sup>

This indicates a specific phase of life cycle, where *Dhatu* maturation is going on and for the same, and secretion of various growth hormones definitely took place. Imbalanced hormonal levels play a key role in development of various diseases. Individuals, who are dominant with *Kapha*, *Pitta*, *Prakriti* are more prone to this condition. Due to intake of *Apathya Aaharvihara* accumulation of *Ama* occurs leading to vitiation of *Rasvahi* and *Raktavahi Srotasa*. By the concept of "*Twakmamsaashritmraktam*", vitiation of *Rakta* leads to appearance of symptoms on *Twak* and *Mamsa*. *Kapha*, *Pitta*, *Rasa* and *Rakta* are the involved *Dosha* and *Dushya* in this condition. Hence, the medications are required which check this pathogenesis. *Virechana Karma* indicated especially to subside *Pitta Dosh* or *Pitta Sansargaja Dosh*. The purgative drugs expel the excess *Pitta* from the *Guda Marga*. Property of *Rakta* is analogous to *Pitta Dosh*, there for *Virechana* is also effective in *Raktaja Vikara*.<sup>[17]</sup> *Virechana* act as *Sarvadehic shodhanakarma*.<sup>[18]</sup> Also Sushrut has mentioned *Virechana karma* in skin disorder in *Kushtha prakarana*.<sup>[19]</sup>

**Brief explanation of Virechana Karma**<sup>[20]</sup>

All Acharya's have common opinion regarding the importance of *Shodhana* in the management of different diseases. *Virechana* act as *Srotoshodhaka*, *Agnideepaka* and *Vata-anulomaka*.

<b>Karma</b>	<b>Mode of Action</b>
<i>Deepan</i>	Enhances appetite and it pacifies vitiated <i>Vatadosha</i>
<i>Snehapana, Abhyanga &amp; Swedana</i>	Expels vitiated <i>Doshas</i> from <i>Shakha</i> to <i>Koshta</i> . By virtue of its property, <i>Ghrita</i> is <i>Pitta-Shamak</i> and <i>Agni-Deepak</i>
<i>Virechana Karma</i>	It is targeted to expel increased <i>Pitta Dosh</i> out of the body i.e. <i>Srotoshodhana</i> . As we know that <i>Rakta</i> is said to be <i>Pitta Sadharmi</i> so it will pacify vitiated <i>Pitta</i> as well as vitiated <i>Rakta</i>
<i>Sansarjanakrama</i>	Due to <i>Shodhana (Virechana)</i> procedure <i>Mandagni</i> develops therefore <i>Sansarjanakrama</i> maintain <i>Agni</i> balance or equilibrium

**CONCLUSION**

As we see the prevalence rate is increasing, so there is scope for new researches and study. Due to its chronicity and relapsing nature it is difficult to manage, so there is a need to find a promising management for Acne Vulgaris in modern sciences. In

Ayurveda *Virechana* is a method, which is much safer, less complicated and an almost painless procedure as compared to others. Thus, it is recommended for Acne management and now it is widely used as *Shodhana* therapy in routine. In addition to the acceptability and popularity, the *Virechan Karma*, is considered the best treatment for morbid and increased *Pitta* and *Kapha Dosh* and it is more useful in eradicating the diseases originated from the vitiated *Pitta*. *Virechana* can provide a safe and economic remedy for this common ailment.

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