



# Efficacy of Edagajadi Lepa in Vicharchika (Eczema): A Diagnostic Analytical Review

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## Abstract

In the present era skin ailments are becoming major hazard for mental diseases more than physical harm as skin distributes the cosmetic harmony. Dermatological problems contribute to about 30% of all the out-patient visits. Low socioeconomic conditions, poor standards of hygiene, malnutrition, overcrowding and abuse of over the counter cosmetics contribute to the occurrence of skin ailments. In *Ayurvedic Dermatology Kushtha* has been taken as the supreme word for all the skin diseases in *Ayurveda*. It covers up all the skin manifestation under 18 types of *Kushtha* which is further classified as "*Maha Kushtha*" and "*Kshudra Kushtha*". *Vicharchika* is one of the serious problems of mankind even in the highly advanced era of sophisticated treatment, which has been classified under *Kshudra Kushtha*. It is characterized by skin eruptions with dark colouration, itching and profuse discharge. The clinical condition of *Vicharchika* can be correlated to Eczema. *Ayurveda* describes a multitude of treatment modalities for skin diseases. One of them is the topical use of medicaments over the skin for topical absorption which allows faster absorption and better management of skin diseases.

**Keywords:** *Vicharchika; Edagajadi Lepa; Bahirparimarjan Chikitsa*

## Introduction

In *Ayurveda* all skin ailments are described under broad heading *Kushtha*. *Kushtha* is one of the *Ashtamahagada* [1] which affects *Twak, Rakta, Mamsa, Lasika* and *Tridosha* which makes them difficult to treat. Different *Acharyas* classified *Kushtha* broadly into *Maha Kushtha* and *Kshudra Kushtha*. *Vicharchika* is one among the *Kshudra Kushtha* indicating the low intensity of vitiation of the doshas while its inclusion in *Sadhya Kushtha* highlights the prognosis [2]. In the contemporary view of *Vicharchika* it can be correlated to Eczema. The prevalence of Eczema is estimated to be 15-20% in children, 1-3% in adults and the incidence has increased by 2-3-fold during the past decades in the industrialized countries. In India the point prevalence of Eczema is 6.75%. Effective therapeutic agents in contemporary medicine are

limited in number. It consists of antihistamine pills, oral and topical corticosteroids, topical immunomodulators and phototherapy by UV and UVB rays. These drugs can give only symptomatic relief and cannot completely cure the diseases and have long-term toxic side effects. So now a day whole world is turning towards *Ayurveda* for safe and complete cure of diseases. *Ayurveda* offers a rich treasure of therapies both for internal and external use in skin ailments. In *Ayurveda* treatment of diseases is of 3 types:

- *Antahparimarjan*
- *Bahirparimarjana*
- *Shastrapranidhana*

Out of these *Lepa Kalpana* is included in *Bahirparimarjana Chikitsa*.

For topical application in *Vicharchika* the *Lepa* is very common and found to be highly efficacious in skin disorders as it is easy to use and imparts long lasting effect. It controls *Doshas* at localized level and offers instant relief as skin provides large surface area so that the maximum amount of drug reaches to the site of action. A simple formula of *Edagajadi Lepa* comprising of Eight easily available drug is mentioned in *Chakradatta* is effective in *Vicharchika* and *Dadru* which is very common in prevalent population [3].

## Disease Review

According to *Acharya Charaka* *Vicharchika* is characterised by skin manifestation having the *Lakshanas Kandu, Pidika, Shyava Varna* and *Bahu Srava* with predominance *Kaph Dosha* [2] According to *Acharya Sushruta* skin is dry with severe itching and marked linings are present in *Vicharchika* with the predominance of *Pitta Dosha* [4]. *Acharya Madhava, Vagbhata* and *Bhavamishra* have described almost same definitions as *Acharya Charaka*.

According to the World Allergy Organization Eczema is an inflammatory, chronically relapsing, non-contagious and extremely pruritic skin disease. The common symptoms involved in eczema are erythema, induration, papulation, oedema, excoriations and lichenification. Specific *Samprapti* of *Vicharchika* are not mentioned in *Samhitas*, hence *Samprapti* of *Kushtha* can be accepted as *Samprapti* of *Vicharchika*. All types of *Kushtha* develops due to the vitiation of *Tridoshas*, after *Nidan Sevan* it leads to *Doshyadushti*, so *Tvaka, Rakta, Mamsa, Ambu* becomes weak then this complex of seven *Dushya* i.e., *Tridosha, Tvaka, Rakta, Mamsa, Lasika* (*Saptko Dravya Sangraha*) leads to manifestation of *Kushtha* [5].

## Bahirparimarjana Chikitsa: Lepa Kalpana

The procedure or medications which make use of the contact with the skin as in form of *Abhyanga, Sveda, Lepa, Pradeha, Parisheka, Unmardana* etc and bring about the alleviation of the ailment at the level of the skin are combinedly called as *Bahirparimarjana Chikitsa*. The formulations that are prepared by grinding of *Adra Dravyas* (wet ingredients) or by *Shuska Dravyas* with addition of liquid media for topical use are known as *Lepa*. *Alepa, Lipta, Lepana* are the synonyms of *Lepa*. Wherever the treatment of *Kushtha* has been described in texts of *Ayurveda*, description of *Lepa Kalpana* has also been done without any exception.

*Acharya Charak* has mentioned about *Lepa Kalpana* in a *Sutra Sthana "Aragvadhya Adhyaya"*. Whereas *Lepa Kalpana* is described in *Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya* and *Shrangdhar Samhita* also.

*Bhrajaka Pitta, Saman, Vyana Vayu* and *Sleshaka Kapha* plays important role in absorption and metabolism of *Lepa*. *Bhrajaka Pitta* metabolizes the active principles of drugs that have been applied over the skin with the support of *saman* and *Vyan Vayu*.

According to the *Acharya Sushruta* there are three types of *Lepa Kalpana* [6]

- *Pralepa*
- *Pradeha*
- *Alepa*

*Alepa* is suitable for *Vicharchika* as per the symptoms of diseases. *Alepa* poses the property of pacifying and restoring *Rakta* and *Pitta* to their normal condition.

According to *Sharangdhara*, there are three types of *Lepa* classified according to their *Karma* [7]

- *Doshaghna* (anti *Doshika*)
- *Vishghna* (anti-poisonous)
- *Varnya* (for healthy and glowing skin)
- *Doshaghna Lepa* can be used for *Vicharchika*.

## Lepa Pramana

*Acharya Sushruta* mentioned *Pramana* of *Lepa* should be as "*Mahishadracharmotsedha*" (newly flared skin of buffalo). The thickness of buffalo's skin may be considered as 2.8 to 3.2 mm.

*Sharangdhara* specifies the thickness of *Doshaghna* as  $\frac{3}{4}$  *Angula* i.e., 0.48cm approx.

## Duration

A *Lepa* act to treat the disease as long as it contains humidity whereas harms the skin when it gets dry.

## Procedure

*Edagaja (Chakramarda) Beeja, Tila, Sarshapa, Magdhika (Pippali), Saindhava Lavana, Bida Lavana, Sauvarchala Lavana* are taken in equal quantities and made into fine powder and kept in *Dadhimastu* for three days and the same applied cures *Vicharchika, Dadru, Kushtha* [8].

The quantity of *Lepa* is based on the size of the lesion. The *Edagajadi Lepa* is applied to lesion in the following manner:

1. Cleaning the lesion with sterile swabs dipped in clean warm and the area was allowed to dry up.
2. Apply *Edagajadi Lepa* over the skin lesion with the help of spatula in the direction of hair root and not to extend it over the normal skin. The thickness of *Lepa* was that of *Adra Mahish Charma*.

3. Allow the *Lepa* to dry up after which the area was moistened with and cleaned it with warm water and mopped up with dry sterile gauze.
4. Then dressed the area with plain gauze to avoid exposure to dust etc.

### Probable Mode of Action of *Edagajadi Lepa*

Most of the drug in *Edagajadi Lepa* is *Katu*, *Tikta Ras Pradhana*, *Katu Vipaka* and *Ushna Virya* which helps in pacification of *Kapha*. It synergistically to bring about *Srotoshodhan* and establish a *Niramavastha*. This in turn aids in absorption of the active constituents of the *Lepa* by the orifices of the *Siras* (*Siramukhas*).

- **Edagaja/ Chakramarda:** It is said to act best in sour media. So, the *Lepa* prepared by soaking the constituent drugs in *Dadhi Mastu*. Chrysophanic acid present in *Edagaja* is indispensable in treatment of skin disorders.
- **Sarshapa:** The sulphur content present in *Sarshapa* act as *Kushthaghna*.
- **Kustha:** By its *Kapha Vatashamak* action it brings about *Kushthaghna*, *Kandughna* and *Varnya* action.
- **Magadhika/Pippali:** Due to *Yogavahi Guna* it promotes the action of the other drugs.
- **Saindhava, Bida** and **Sauvarchala Lavana** bring about drying of the lesion thereby reducing the *Srava*. It cleanses the skin and opens up clogged pores and removes dead cells from the skin.

Apart from the *Trilavanas*, all the drugs have *Ushna Virya* which may bring about a local increase in the tissue metabolism, thereby increasing the blood flow and defense factors. These may bring about a reduction in the clinical features. The *Kshara Guna* present in *Tila*, *Pippali* and the *Trilavanas* may bring about an exfoliative action on the dead tissue on the epidermis of the skin. The powdered are soaked in *Dadhimastu*/whey which is rich proteins and immune boosting factors, thus providing to be a local booster of immunity. Thus, the action of the constituent drugs of *Edagajadi Lepa* may get fortified by being soaked in *Dadhi Mastu*. Each of the drugs complementing one another by their pharmacological action may bring about a synergetic action in relieving the clinical features of *Vicharchika*.

### Route of Administration of Drug

Absorption is defined as the passage of a drug from its site of administration into the plasma. It must therefore be considered for all routes of administration except for intravenous route.

### Cutaneous Administration

In clinical practice, cutaneous administration is used

mainly when local effect on the skin is required (example – topically applied steroids) appreciable absorption may nonetheless occur and lead to systemic effects [9]. High concentrations are attained at the desired site without exposing the rest of the body. Drug is applied as ointment, cream, lotion, paste, powder, dressing etc highly lipid soluble drugs can be applied over the skin for slow and prolonged absorption [10].

### Discussion

Even after the greater advancement in Dermatology, the disease continues to be a challenge in *Ayurveda* general line of treatment of *Kushtha* includes *Shodhana* and *Shaman* therapy. But to give earlier relief for the localized symptoms / discomfort, *Sthanika Chikitsa* such as *Lepa* is very beneficial.

All types of *Kushtha* are *Tridoshaja* in origin. *Vicharchika* has *Kapha* predominance attributed by *Acharya Charaka* with the symptoms of *Kandu*, *Pidika*, *Shyava Varna* and *Bahusrava*. This indicates initial or acute stage of *Eczema*. *Acharya Sushruta* stated *Vicharchika* as dominance of *Pitta Dosh* with the symptoms like *Raji*, *Atikandu*, *Arati*, *Rukshata* that indicates chronic or later stage. This explanation suggests different stage of *Vicharchika*. *Acharya Vagbhata* mention specific type of discharge like *Lasikadhya*. *Indu* explained it with *Jalapraya* i.e. watery discharge [11]. *Acharya Kashyapa* has mentioned *Vrana*, *Vedana* and *Paka* as a specific feature of *Vicharchika* [12]. *Acharya Bhela* has mentioned *Shyavava Rakta Varna* as variety, *Praklinna Srava* and through *Mamsenopachitata* as characteristic feature of *Vicharchika* [13]. *Twaka*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Lasika* are *Dushya* of *Vicharchika*. *Rasavaha*, *Raktvaha*, *Mamsavaha* and *Swedvaha Srotasa* vitiated and *Kha Vaigunya* occurs in them [14].

When *Lepa* is applied over the surface of skin opposite to the direction of hairs on it, through a proper base, the active principles of the ingredients of *Lepa* are released into that base. After that this combination enters the *Romkupa* and further gets absorbed through the *Swedvahi Srotas* and *Siramukha* it does the cutaneous biotransformation and which will pacify the *Doshas* and leads to breaking of *Samprapti* [15,16].

### Conclusion

Skin being the outermost covering of the body serves as an important component in terms of protective as well as cosmetic purpose. *Lepa Kalpana* is an excellent scientific method of introducing the active principles of drugs to the target cells for a quick and effective healing process. These drugs are herbal drugs which is very simple, safe, economic, no side effect and good efficacy drugs in medium dose. Hence

it can be employed in the case of *Vicharchika*. *Ayurveda* can definitely prove to be a boon in the proper and effective management of this kind of skin ailments in today's time.

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