



AYURVEDIC CASE STUDY: HOLISTIC APPROACH TO THE MANAGEMENT OF RECURRENT ACNE VULGARIS

POOJARI PG¹ AND KEERTAN MS^{2*}

- 1:** Assistant Professor, Department of Roga Nidana Vikruti Vigyana, KLE Shri BMK Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya, Belagavi, Karnataka, India
- 2:** Professor, Department of Roga Nidana Vikruti Vigyana, KLE Shri BMK Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya, Belagavi, Karnataka, India

*Corresponding Author: Dr. Keertan MS; E Mail: keertanms@gmail.com

Received 10th Dec. 2024; Revised 25th Dec. 2024; Accepted 26th Jan. 2025; Available online 15th March 2025

<https://doi.org/10.31032/IJBPAS/2025/14.3.1028>

ABSTRACT

Background: The evolving lifestyle patterns and heightened environmental stressors have become key drivers in the rising prevalence of various health conditions, with acne vulgaris standing out as a notably troubling concern. Recurrent acne vulgaris is an inflammatory skin condition associated with significant physical and psychological distress. In Ayurveda, it is often described as Shalmali thorn-like eruptions on the face due to vitiation of *Kapha*, *Vata*, and *Rakta* under the heading of *Mukhadushika* or *Yuvana Pidaka*. While modern dermatological treatments such as chemical peels and topical medications may provide temporary relief, they often fail to address the root causes, leading to frequent relapses. Ayurveda offers a comprehensive approach to managing acne by focusing on restoring balance in the body through personalized dietary, lifestyle, and therapeutic interventions.

Case Report: This case study discusses the recurrent nature of acne vulgaris in a 28-year-old female and explores the root causes through an Ayurvedic lens. It highlights the interplay of lifestyle, dietary habits, mental stress, and environmental factors contributing to the condition's persistence and emphasizes the importance of holistic management in Ayurveda.

Result: Significant improvements were observed in both subjective and objective parameters of the patient's condition.

Conclusion: This article emphasizes the effectiveness of Ayurvedic therapies such as *Shodhana* (detoxification), *Shamana* (pacification), and lifestyle modifications. The integration of herbal formulations, dietary corrections, and stress management demonstrates the potential for sustainable and holistic healing. A personalized approach to the principles of Ayurveda can more effectively address the signs, symptoms, and complications of acne vulgaris

Keywords: Acne Vulgaris, *Mukhadushika*, *Shamana*, Lifestyle Modification

INTRODUCTION:

Acne vulgaris is a prevalent dermatological condition marked by the chronic or recurrent formation of papules, pustules, or nodules on the face, neck, trunk, and proximal upper extremities [1]. It typically reaches its peak severity during late adolescence and can persist into the third decade of life and beyond, especially in females [2]. The primary etiological factor in the development of acne vulgaris is an overproduction of sebum by the sebaceous glands. The condition predominantly affects the face (99%), followed by the back (60%) and chest (15%). In younger patients, non-inflammatory lesions, such as comedones, typically precede the appearance of inflammatory lesions. Superficial lesions primarily consist of papules and pustules, while deeper lesions may present as deep pustules and nodules [3]. Four major factors are involved in the pathogenesis: 1. Increased sebum production 2. Hypercornification of the pilosebaceous duct 3. Microbial flora 4. Inflammation [4]. The face, often regarded as a reflection of the mind, can be significantly affected by

even minor ailments, leading to aesthetic concerns that may result in permanent disfigurement and psychological distress. This is exemplified by *Mukhadushika*, an affliction first documented by Acharya Sushruta in the *Nidanasthana* as part of *Kshudra Roga*, [5] caused by the imbalance of *Kapha Dosha*, *Vata Dosha*, and *Rakta Dhātu*. Acharya Charaka further described *Pidika* under *Raktapradoshaja Vikara* [6], while Yogaratnakara included it within the category of *Kshudra Roga* [7], recognizing its widespread impact on health and appearance. Adult-onset acne is on the rise, affecting individuals of all ages due to factors like hormonal imbalances, food sensitivities, stress, poor diets, and nutrient deficiencies, challenging the traditional view that acne is confined to puberty [8]. While modern dermatological treatments such as chemical peels, topical medications, and oral antibiotics can provide temporary relief, they often fail to address the root causes of acne, leading to frequent recurrences. In contrast, Ayurveda offers a comprehensive, individualized approach to

managing acne by restoring balance in the body through tailored dietary, lifestyle, and therapeutic interventions. Acne is primarily influenced by imbalances in *Rakta*, *Kapha*, and *Vata*, and Ayurvedic treatments focus on two key modalities: *Shodhana Chikitsa* (purification) and *Shamana Chikitsa* (pacifying medicines). Acknowledging that not all patients prefer or are suitable for *Shodhana* treatments, a systematic combination of *Shamana* therapy and *Nidana Parivarjana* (removal of causative factors) was recommended. This approach has been found to be highly effective in addressing the root causes of acne, ensuring long-term relief and skin health.

Case history:

A 28-year-old unmarried female presented at the outpatient department (OPD) in June 2024 with complaints of recurrent eruptions on her face, primarily on the bilateral cheeks. Her condition began in January 2024, with red to pink, thorn-like eruptions that initially responded to dermatological interventions. She had undergone two comedonal extractions and three chemical peel treatments within two months. Despite these procedures, her symptoms persisted, and recurrence was noted. In March 2024, she was treated with antibiotic ointments by a general physician, which exacerbated the condition. The eruptions grew larger, transformed into painful pustules, and caused severe itching.

Washing her face with water aggravated the pain, and exposure to dust and sunlight intensified the itching. Pustules frequently ruptured, leaving colorless discharge and post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation (dark spots). Despite three months of further medication, she experienced no relief, prompting her visit to our OPD in June. A detailed history revealed several lifestyle and dietary irregularities contributing to her condition:

- **Lifestyle Factors:** Irregular sleep patterns and working hours, travelling often, Constant exposure to dust and sunlight, Lack of a consistent skincare routine; improper layering of multiple products.
- **Dietary Patterns:** Skipping breakfast regularly, Frequent consumption of incompatible food combinations such as curd and fish (five times a week), spicy food, consumption of junk food, Low water intake.
- **Mental Health:** Tendency to become tense over minor issues, indicating chronic mental stress.

Personal history – It revealed that the patient is on a mixed diet and has a reduced appetite. The patient has a constipated bowel habit, disturbed and irregular sleeping habits, and a normal micturition and menstrual cycle.

There was no found in the past and family history concerned with the present situation.

Treatment plan- The patient was treated on an OPD basis.

Duration- Treatment was carried out for 3 months.

Follow up: After 10 days.

Table 1: General Examination

S.no	Examination	Findings
1.	Pulse rate	80 b/min
2.	Blood pressure	130/80mmHg
3.	Respiratory rate	18/min
4.	Temperature	98.6 F
5.	CVS	S1S2- normal
6.	RS	Air entry bilaterally equal
7.	CNS	Conscious, oriented
8.	P/A	Soft, no tenderness

Table 2: Ashtavidha Pariksha

1.	<i>Nadi</i>	<i>Prakruta</i>
2.	<i>Mutra</i>	<i>Prakruta</i>
3.	<i>Mala</i>	<i>Vibandha</i>
4.	<i>Jihva</i>	<i>Jihvalipta</i>
5.	<i>Shabda</i>	<i>Prakruta</i>
6.	<i>Sparsha</i>	<i>Prakruta</i>
7.	<i>Drik</i>	<i>Prakruta</i>
8.	<i>Akruti</i>	<i>Krusha</i>

Table 3: Dashavidha Pariksha

1.	<i>Prakriti</i>	<i>Pitta Vata</i>
2.	<i>Vikriti</i>	<i>Pitta kapha Vata; Rasa, Rakta, Meda, Sweda</i>
3.	<i>Saara</i>	<i>Madhyama</i>
4.	<i>Samhanana</i>	<i>Madhyama</i>
5.	<i>Pramana</i>	5.3 feet in height 42 kg in weight BMI- 16.4 kg/m ²
6.	<i>Saatmya</i>	<i>Prakruta</i>
7.	<i>Satva</i>	<i>Prakruta</i>
8.	<i>Aahara shakti</i>	<i>Krusha</i>
9.	<i>Vyayama shakti</i>	<i>Madhyama</i>
10.	<i>Vaya</i>	<i>Madhyama</i>

Table 4: Timeline Of Treatment Protocol

Sr. No.	Date	Treatment Drug used	Dose	Duration
1.	14/6/2024	1. Avipatikara Churna	10 grams with lukewarm water after dinner	10 days
		2. Raktashodak Syrup	15ml BD after meals twice daily	10 days
2	24/6/2024	1. Avipatikara Churna	10 grams with lukewarm water after dinner	60 days
		2. Raktashodak Syrup	15ml BD after meals twice daily	60 days

Table 5: Ahara and Vihara advised during treatment

8-8:30am	wake up → brush → wash face with normal water Meditation: Anuloma viloma pranayama
9:30-10:00 am	Breakfast: Neer dosa or besan chilla or green gram chilla or rava dosa or chapathi : 2-3 upma/ seviya- 1-2 cup or Rice gruel+ 1 tsp of ghee – 1 bowl (water content > rice) Medicine as advised
1:30-2pm	Lunch: Rice- 1 cup / Chapati- 1 / dal (tadka + hing) etc curry 1-2cup

	Palya (sabji) / salads Buttermilk- 500ml
5-5:15 pm	Snacks: Seasonal fruits – 1
10-10:30 pm	Dinner: Rice- 1 cup / dal (tadka + hing) 1-2cup / Ganji Palya (sabji) / Medicine as advised
12-12:30pm	Sleep

DO'S	DONT'S
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meditation daily - Water intake – 2-3litres/day - Drink water spi by sip between each bolus of food - Keep separate towels for face - Use umbrella/cap on exposure to sun or dust - Include 1 fruit/day - fish, chicken (curry) , egg - 1 once in a week -Include more of vegetables in diet: spinach , methi, etc leafy vegetable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Eat fry items, fish, chicken fry , oily food, spicy food, curd, fermented food , bakery items -Drink milkshakes. -Dry fruit : Pista , almonds, walnuts, fig etc -Skip breakfast time -Laying in couch / day sleep -Use phone 1 hour before sleep

OBSERVATION AND RESULTS

Assessment of signs and symptoms of the patient regarding acne was done during each follow-up and results were as follows.

Assessment of signs and symptoms of acne vulgaris (*Mukhadushika*) before and after treatment are as follows:

Table 6: Changes in signs and symptoms during each follow-up.

Sr. No.	Follow up Date	Signs and symptoms	
1	1 st Day 14/6/2024	Rubor ++ Tumor ++ Dolor ++ Itching ++	
2.	24/6/2024	Rubor + Tumor + Dolor + Itching +	

3	24/8/2024	Rubor - Tumor - Dolor - Itching - Clear skin +	
---	-----------	--	--

Table 7: Changes in Laboratory Parameters Before and After Treatment

Parameters	Before treatment	After treatment
Haemoglobin	11 g/dl	12.2 g/dl
Total WBC Count	9,000/cumm	6,200/cumm
Neutrophils	55%	49%
Lymphocytes	45%	45%
Eosinophils	8%	6%
Monocytes	2%	2%
Basophils	0%	0%
ESR	22%	12%
Platelet count	4 lakhs/cumm	4.1 lakh / cu.mm
FBS	90 mg/dl	96mg/dl

DISCUSSION:

Mode of action of Avipatikara Churna : is an Ayurvedic formulation primarily used to

balance *Pitta Dosha* and enhance digestion. Its action on *Mukha dushika* (acne) are as follows:

1. Balances <i>Pitta Dosha</i>	- Acne is often aggravated by excessive <i>Pitta</i> in the body, leading to inflammation, redness, and pustule formation. - Avipattikara Churna contains cooling and <i>Pitta</i> -pacifying herbs like <i>Amalaki</i> (<i>Emblca officinalis</i>) and <i>Madhuka</i> (<i>Licorice</i>), which help reduce internal heat and inflammation, directly addressing the inflammatory component of acne
2. <i>Ama Pachana</i> (Detoxification)	- Accumulation of <i>Ama</i> (toxins) due to improper digestion is a key contributor to acne. - Ingredients like <i>Triphala</i> and <i>Vacha</i> (<i>Acorus calamus</i>) in the churna enhance digestive fire (<i>Agni</i>), aiding in the elimination of toxins from the gastrointestinal system. This reduces the toxin burden on the skin - Constipation can lead to toxin accumulation and exacerbate acne. Avipattikara Churna has mild laxative properties, ensuring regular bowel movements and preventing toxin build-up, which may otherwise manifest as skin issues
3. Improves <i>Agni</i>	- <i>Mandagni</i> is often linked to skin disorders like acne. - Avipattikara Churna promotes smooth digestion and prevents acid reflux or hyperacidity, which can exacerbate <i>Pitta Dosha</i> and indirectly worsen acne symptoms. - The liver plays a vital role in detoxification and maintaining blood purity. Ingredients like <i>Nishoth</i> (<i>Operculina turpethum</i>) in the churna support liver function, aiding in the detoxification of <i>Rakta Dhatu</i> (blood tissue), which is essential for clear skin
4. Reduces Inflammation and Itching	By cooling and soothing <i>Pitta</i> , Avipattikara Churna helps reduce the redness, pain, and itching often associated with acne lesions

Thus by addressing the root causes— imbalanced digestion, *Ama* (toxin buildup) and *Pitta Prakopa*, Avipattikara Churna

promotes overall skin health and helps prevent the recurrence of acne.

Mode of action of Raktashodak Syrup :

Raktashodak Syrup is a commonly used Ayurvedic formulation aimed at purifying the blood (*Rakta Shodhana*). It plays a

significant role in managing skin conditions like acne vulgaris by addressing the root causes through its multifaceted actions:

1. <i>Rakta Shodhana</i> (Blood Purification)	- <i>Mukhadushika</i> is often due to <i>Rakta Dushti</i> (vitiated blood), which leads to inflammation and toxin accumulation in the skin. - Raktashodak Syrup contains herbs like <i>Neem</i> (<i>Azadirachta indica</i>), <i>Manjistha</i> (<i>Rubia cordifolia</i>), and <i>Sariva</i> (<i>Hemidesmus indicus</i>) that help detoxify the blood, reduce impurities, and prevent further clogging of skin pores.
2. Anti-Inflammatory & Antimicrobial Properties	- The syrup includes ingredients with anti-inflammatory properties, which help reduce redness, swelling, and irritation associated with acne lesions. - Ingredients like <i>Neem</i> and <i>Haridra</i> (Turmeric) have strong antimicrobial and antibacterial properties, which combat the growth of <i>Propionibacterium acnes</i> and other bacteria causing acne.
3. Regulating Sebum Production	- By balancing <i>Pitta</i> and <i>Kaph a Dosha</i> , the syrup helps regulate excessive oil production, which is a significant contributor to acne formation.
4. <i>Agni Deepana</i> (Enhancing Digestion and Metabolism)	- <i>Mandagni</i> is a key factor in <i>Ama</i> (toxin accumulation). Herbs like <i>Triphala</i> in Raktashodak Syrup improve <i>Agni</i> , aiding in better toxin elimination and reducing the burden on the skin.
5. Healing and Rejuvenation	The syrup promotes wound healing and reduces post-acne hyperpigmentation through herbs like <i>Manjistha</i> and <i>Guduchi</i> (<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i>), which support skin regeneration and maintain a healthy complexion
6. Balancing Hormonal Activity	Acne is often exacerbated by hormonal imbalances, particularly during puberty or stress. Raktashodak Syrup may support hormonal equilibrium by reducing systemic inflammation and oxidative stress.

Mode of action of Ahara Vihara (diet and Lifestyle) :

Mukhadushika is due to vitiated *Rakta Dhatu* (blood tissue), *Kapha* and *Vata Dosha* with *Mandagni* being a core factor. Poor digestion leads to the accumulation of toxins (*Ama*), which are believed to cause the formation of *Pidika* (blemishes or pimples) on the skin. Thus, in conjunction with *Shamana* therapy, *Nidana Parivarjana* plays a pivotal role in the healing process. This is recommended in the form of *Pathya* (beneficial) and *Apathya* (detrimental) dietary and lifestyle modifications, which are crucial for restoring balance and promoting long-term health.

Ahara - Pitta Dosha plays a significant role in acne development, particularly in inflammatory acne. Foods that are spicy, sour, and salty can aggravate *Pitta*, leading

to heat buildup in the body, which may manifest as skin inflammation and acne lesions. Thus, avoiding such foods and *Pitta*-pacifying *Ahara* help maintain balance and reduce flare-ups. In Ayurveda, foods with anti-inflammatory and detoxifying properties are often recommended for acne. Hence incorporating them help in reduce internal inflammation and purify the blood, supporting clearer skin. Adequate hydration plays a crucial role in detoxification. In Ayurveda, *Agni* (digestive fire) needs to be balanced for optimal digestion and absorption of nutrients. Drinking lukewarm or normal water throughout the day can stimulate digestion, flush out toxins, and support the skin’s health. Dairy and High Glycemic Index Foods have been associated with aggravating *Kapha* and *Pitta*,

potentially leading to acne breakouts. Foods with a high glycemic index (such as refined sugars and processed carbohydrates) also contribute to increased insulin and *Pitta* levels, exacerbating acne. Replacing dairy with plant-based alternatives and minimizing processed sugars and white flour can help regulate blood sugar levels and reduce acne flare-ups.

Vihara -In Ayurveda, lifestyle is a crucial determinant of health, particularly in conditions like acne. Chronic stress, inadequate sleep, and exposure to pollutants contribute to *Pitta* imbalances, exacerbating skin issues.^[9] Irregular sleep and stress can aggravate *Vata* and *Pitta* imbalances, leading to acne flare-ups. Adequate, restful sleep (7-8 hours per night) restores natural rhythms and rejuvenates the skin. Practices such as meditation, yoga, and pranayama help reduce *Pitta* accumulation, balance the nervous system, and alleviate stress, promoting clearer skin. Ayurveda emphasizes the importance of a regular routine (Dinacharya) to restore harmony in the body. Following a personalized chart of dietary and lifestyle changes, the patient achieved flawless skin within three months.

CONCLUSION:

Acne vulgaris is a widespread dermatological disorder that affects almost everyone at some stage of life. Characterized by its chronic, relapsing nature, this condition can become

increasingly difficult to manage if not addressed at the right time with appropriate treatment strategies. The present case study underscores the importance of a comprehensive understanding of Pancha Nidana, the Ayurvedic diagnostic approach, which enables the identification of underlying causes and factors contributing to the disease. By strategically selecting the right therapies and following well-defined guidelines, the patient achieved significant and lasting improvement. This case reinforces the value of Ayurvedic principles in managing acne vulgaris, proving that a tailored, holistic approach can deliver remarkable results in restoring skin health and balance.

REFERENCES:

- [1] Thiboutot D, Zaenglein A, Levy ML, Dahl MV. In: Ofori A, editor. Pathogenesis, Clinical Manifestations, and Diagnosis of Acne Vulgaris. Waltham, Massachusetts: UpToDate; 2014.
- [2] Colledge NR, Walker BR, Ralston S, Davidson S. Davidson's Principles and Practice of Medicine. 21st ed. Edinburgh; New York: Churchill Livingstone Elsevier; 2010. p. 1276
- [3] Upadhyay A, Khanal H, Joshi R. Ayurvedic management of acne vulgaris. Journal of Ayurveda. 2021;15(4):317.

- [4] DM Thappa. Essentials in Dermatology. Jaypee Brothers, Medical Publishers Pvt. Limited; 2009.p.180
- [5] Acharya J T, editor, Nibandhasangraha Commentary of Sri Dalhanacharya on Susruta Samhita of Susruta, Nidanasthana; Chapter 13, Verse 39; Varanasi: Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan;2017;
- [6] Acharya Y T, editor, Ayurvedadipika Commentary by Sri Cakrapanidatta on Caraka Samhita of Agnivesa, Sutrasthana; Chapter 28, Verse 11; Varanasi: Chaukhambha Surbharati Prakashan;2016;
- [7] Vaidya Lakshmipati Shastri, edited by Bhisagratna Brahmasankar Sastri, Yogaratnakar with 'vidyotini' Hindi commentary, Edition Reprint 2020, Chaukhamba Prakashana, Varanasi, Uttarardha, Kshudraroga nidan chapter, p.272
- [8] Hussain A, Chudasama H, Yadav S, Pratap Singh B, Yadav CR. Management Of Acne Vulgaris With Ayurvedic Approach – A Case Study. International Ayurvedic Medical Journal. 2023 Jun 21;11(6):1464–71.
- [9] Upadhyay A, Khanal H, Joshi R. Ayurvedic management of acne vulgaris. Journal of Ayurveda. 2021;15(4):317.