

Validation of Psoriasis (Kalanjaha padai) in Siddha literature –A Review

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Abstract : *The Siddha system is a traditional medicine with unique medical philosophy that has its origin in South India.. This medical system has evolved into well documented medical science by way of keen observation and experimentation. Skin diseases have been greatly addressed in Siddha literature and a wide variety has been classified under the broad subject of Kutta Noigal. The word Kuttam is named as a common word of chronic skin lesions of various origins. Psoriasis is a psychosocial disorder that is commonly called as kalanjaha padai in recent Siddha literature. Upon profound analysis of ancient Siddha literature in the major category Kutta Noigal, Virbothaga Kuttam has most of its signs and symptoms in correlation with the modern medical terminology of Psoriasis. Hence this Literature Analysis was performed to validate the Siddha aspects on the etiopathogenesis, diagnosis and line of treatment of this disorder.*

Key words : *Siddha, Psoriasis, Kalanjaha padai, Virbothaga Kuttam, Skin diseases, Traditional medicine*

Introduction

Psoriasis is a considerable psychosocial chronic disease ranging in severity from a few scattered red plaques to involvement of the entire body. This immune mediated inflammatory disease has a major impact on worsening the quality of life of the affected individual [1, 2]. Psoriasis is also associated with other complications such as cardiovascular disease, psoriatic arthritis, and depressive illness [3]. The morphology of Psoriasis is highly variable from small tear shaped guttate psoriasis, pustular psoriasis, erythrodermic psoriasis which may be localized or rapidly

progressing in nature. Sometimes Psoriasis may be symptomatic with intense pruritis and burning [4] .

Psoriasis in Siddha

Though Siddha literature classifies 18 types of skin disease by saint Yugi, Kalanjaha padai is the terminology given in Siddha literature for the clinical entity Psoriasis. The most common etiological factor for *kuttam* is regarded as *Kannam (Agasthiyar paripooranam-400)* which can be correlated with the genetic causes of Psoriasis. Saint yugi in his text *Yugi muni 800* describes the psychosocial factors, lifestyle, behaviours and stress to be the inducing causes for *Kalanjaha padai*. According to *Yugi vaithya chinthamani-800* the factors such as excessive exposure to sunlight, exposure to cold, excessive sleep, unbridled sexual indulgence have been regarded as the causative factors of this disease. According to *Dhanvanthri Vaidyam*, imbalanced and irregular intake of dietary habits has been indicated as the cause of this disorder. Since Psoriasis is considered to be an immune mediated disease, these factors may probably alter the immune mechanism of the body (*Iyarkai vanmai*) thereby prone the individual to *Kalanjaha padai*.

Though no clear cut definition is available about the term Kalanjaha padai(Psoriasis) in Siddha texts, Upon analyzing the 18 types of Kuttams, *Virbothaga kuttam* was had the similar description of signs and symptoms that can be correlated with the clinical features of Psoriasis.

“Pithumaiyai sareeramengum thinavundaagum

Poruvediyai thikkena theekozhunthu pola

Methumai yaai vatteriyum nalla paambin

Vishapadam pol thaditthu verupumaagum

Kathumaiyaai tholellaam thadipundaagum

Kathumaiyaai migasoriyum sivappu maagum

Kanatha virpodagamaana kuttanthaaney"

Thukamodu sanjalalum migavundaagum

S.No	Symptoms of Virbothaga kuttam	Analogy with symptoms of Psoriasis
1.	<i>Pithumaiyai sareeramengum thinavundaagum</i>	<i>Symptoms of intense pruritis.[6](itch n infl)</i>
2.	<i>Poruvediyai thikken theekozhunthu pola</i>	<i>Symptoms of burning, stinging and inflammation.[7] (itch n infl)</i>
3.	<i>Methumai yaai vatteriyum nalla paambin Vishapadam pol thaditthu verupumaagum</i>	<i>Well circumscribed , circular, red papules or plaques with grey or silvery white scale.[4]</i>
4.	<i>Kathumaiyaai migasoriyum sivappu maagum</i>	<i>Generalised exfoliative erythroderma [4]</i>
5.	<i>Thukamodu sanjalalum migavundaagum</i>	<i>Psychological stress and worry [8,9]</i>
6.	<i>Kathumaiyaai tholellaam thadipundaagum</i>	<i>Erythematous macules or papules that extend peripherally [4]</i>

In this poem sage Yugi describes the pattern of erythematous lesions with plaques of silvery scales compared with that of viper's skin. Presence of itch all over the body and the lesions are described to be extensive and associated with anxiety and despair. Saint yugi describes the Psoriatic arthritis as Kalanjaga vatham in his poem as follows;

"Maathamaang kaal kaiyil Kurangirendum

Varuthu santhu murukkiye kudainthu nonthu

Naathamaa nadai thaalum thaaan kodaamal

Nalinthumey mudamaana karadukatti

Sethamaan sadanthaanu miga veruthu

Thinavodu sirangumaai setpamagi

Kaathamai arusiyodu mayakkamaagum

Karuthiya kaalanjagamam vathamaamey"

The above poem describes the signs and symptoms of Psoriatic arthritis in which all the joints and the spine may be involved with features of inflammation and deformity posing difficulty in walking [5].

Humoral theory for Psoriasis

The philosophy of Siddha system revolves around the three pillars of Siddha humoral science Vatham, piotham and Kabam. According to Siddha humoral concept "Vatham allaathu meni kedaathu"Vatham is the force that is responsible for all diseases pertaining to the skin. Skin diseases

can be grouped commonly under the Kutta Noigal in Siddha. Therefore alteration in Vatha Humour would result in further vitiation of Kabam and Pitham humours with consequential symptoms of Virbothaga kuttam (Psoriasis) such as burning, stinging and inflammation, Well circumscribed , circular, red papules or plaques with grey or silvery white scale, exfoliative erythroderma including anxiety and despair.

According to Siddha, the structural components of the body are composed of seven types of materials called Udal thathus or Udal kattugal. The transformation manifests through the constant chain of events whereby the tissues are constantly regenerating and nourish the immune system. The formation of thathus is through food substance and the basic element from which other thathus are generated is known as Saaram (Chyle). In Kalanjaha padai, among the seven Physical constituents (Ual Kattugal - Saaram(Chyle) , Senneer (Blood), Oon(Muscle), Kozhuppu(Fat), Enbu (Bone), Moolai (Marrow, Nerves), Sukkilam/ suronitham (Reproductive tissue), Saaram is affected resulting in tiredness. Senneer is affected causing paleness and bleeding of skin, Oon is affected resulting in weakness of senses and Enbu is affected causing pain in the Joints [10]

Siddha diagnostis approach for Psoriasis

Diagnostic methods in Siddha Medicine are very unique and solely depend on the clinical acumen of the physician. It can be broadly classified into the three types namely 1. Poriyaal arithal (Understanding by five organs of perception nose,

tongue, eyes, skin and ears. Pulanaal arithal (Understanding by the sense objects smell, taste, vision, somatic sense and sound).3. Vinaathal (Interrogation).

Besides, there is a diagnostic method called as Envagai thervu (Eight fold examination) in which Naa (Tongue), Niram (Colour), Mozhi (Speech), Vizhi (eyes), Malam (Stool), Moothiram (Urine), Sparisam (Touch), Naadi (Pulse) of the patients play an important role in arriving at the diagnosis. In Kalanjaha padai the white coating of the tongue can be noticed due to habitual constipation. The skin colour may be erythematous with ivory scales and light pin point bleeding on removing the scales can be noticed. Anxious speech, burning sensation of eyes may be seen. Faeces may be constipated due to altered Vatha humour. In neerkuri (Examination of urine) may be coloured urine and scanty micturition may be seen. On touching the affected skin dryness, roughening and scaling may be noted. On diagnosing through pulse (Nadi) in Kalnjaha padai Vatha kabam and Pitha Kabam may be felt on keen observation.

Line of treatment in Siddha

In accordance with Siddha system the basic principles are to be followed before starting the specific drug therapy. Therefore in order to pacify the vitiated vatham, purgation therapy with suitable medicine is advised. In addition to it, internal and external medicaments with dietary restrictions and lifestyle modifications are to be followed. Siddha system also follows a holistic approach in treating both body and mind. Therefore several special non-drug therapeutics like pranayama and asanas like sarvangasana and savasana can be followed as rejuvenative therapy and to relieve the anxiety.

Gandhaga mezhu was found to yield promising results when used as internal medicine. External medications like Vetpalai thylam (777 oil), Nanguneri Ennai can be applied for effective treatment after cleaning the affected area with warm water.

Conclusion

Though Psoriasis is regarded as a chronic immune mediated inflammatory disease with unknown or complicated etiology in contemporary medicine, the Siddha system of medicine provides comprehensive information in terms of the subtle changes in humoral phenomenon and the symptoms thereof. This article therefore provides the basic information about the Siddha literature evidences of Psoriasis, its correlation with Virbothaga kuttam and also a way out.

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