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**COMPREHENSIVE AYURVEDIC APPROACH IN THE  
MANAGEMENT OF *MUKHADUSHIKA* (ACNE VULGARIS)  
: A CASE REPORT**

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**ABSTRACT**

**BACKGROUND:** *Mukhadushika* is a naturally occurring disorder (*Swabhavaja*), primarily involving *Shukra Dhatu* (reproductive tissue) and its *Mala* (sebum), characterized by eruptions on the face, neck, and upper body. It corresponds to Acne Vulgaris in modern dermatology, which affects nearly 90% of adolescents and often leads to psychological distress. Conventional management includes topical and systemic medications that may produce recurrence or side effects. Ayurveda offers a holistic approach through *Shodhana* (purificatory therapy) and *Shamana chikitsa* (palliative therapy) to eliminate the root cause and restore *Doshik* balance.

**AIM:** To evaluate the clinical efficacy of a comprehensive Ayurvedic treatment protocol in the management of *Mukhadushika* (Acne Vulgaris).

**CASE DESCRIPTION:** A 17-year-old female presented with multiple inflammatory papules and pustules over the face for four years, unresponsive to prior modern treatments. The patient underwent *Sadhyo Virechana* (therapeutic purgation) with *Nimbamritadi Eranda Taila* (100 ml), followed by *Raktamokshana* (bloodletting therapy) with *Jalaukavacharana* (Leech therapy) in three sittings at seven-day intervals, and *Shamana Aushadhi* including *Chandraprabha Vati*, *Kaishora Guggulu*, and *Shodhak* Syrup for 30 days. Counseling was also given to address psychological distress.

**RESULTS:** After completion of therapy, there was approximately 90% reduction in active lesions, with minimal post-acne scarring and complete relief from pain, erythema, and inflammation. The patient reported significant improvement in self-confidence and social interactions, with no recurrence was observed during the two-month follow-up.

**CONCLUSION:** An integrated Ayurvedic approach combining *Shodhana* and *Shamana* therapies can provide effective, safe, and sustainable results in *Mukhadushika* (Acne Vulgaris).

**CLINICAL SIGNIFICANCE:** This case highlights that classical Ayurvedic management not only achieves symptomatic relief but also enhances psychological well-being and prevents recurrence, making it a valuable alternative to conventional acne therapy.

**Keywords:** *Mukhadushika*, Acne vulgaris, *Jalauka Avacharana*, *Shodhana*.

## INTRODUCTION:

The saying “Face is the index of the mind” emphasizes the importance of facial appearance in self-perception and social confidence. Even minor dermatological disorders can negatively influence appearance, often leading to psychological disturbances such as inferiority complex. One such condition is *Mukhadushika* (*Acne vulgaris*).

Acharya Sushruta first described *Yauvanapidika* under *Kshudra Roga* in *Nidana Sthana*, attributing its origin to the vitiation of *Kapha Dosha*, *Vata Dosha*, and *Rakta Dhatu* (blood tissue) [1]. Acharya Charaka mentioned *Pidika* under *Raktapradushaja Vikara* (Blood-borne disorders), while Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya used the term *Mukhadoshika* synonymously with *Yauvanapidika*. Acharya Chakradatta, in *Galaganda Rogadhikara*, elaborated on its management and advocated *Jalauka Avacharana* (leech therapy) as an effective measure, considering the key role of vitiated *Rakta* in its pathogenesis [2]. This classical understanding emphasizes the importance of *Raktamokshana* (bloodletting) in managing *Mukhadushika*. The hallmark feature of *Mukhadushika* is the presence of *Shalmali Kantakavat Pidaka*, i.e., papular eruptions resembling the thorns of the *Shalmali* tree (Silk Cotton Tree), often associated with *Ruja* (pain). This condition is described as *Swabhavaja* (physiological) during *Yuvanavastha* (adolescence), caused by an increase in *Shukra Dhatu* (reproductive tissue) and its *Mala* (metabolic by-products) [3]. Common sites of manifestation include the face, neck, chest, shoulders, and upper back. In modern dermatology, *Mukhadushika* correlates with *Acne vulgaris*, a

multifactorial inflammatory disorder affecting nearly 90% of adolescents. Its prevalence is increasing due to hormonal imbalance, stress, sedentary lifestyle, junk food consumption, and excessive cosmetic use [4]. Conventional management involves topical steroids, antibiotics, and hormonal therapy, which may provide temporary relief but are often associated with side effects such as skin irritation, antibiotic resistance, and hormonal disturbances [5].

In contrast, Ayurvedic management focuses on both *Shodhana Chikitsa* (purificatory therapy) and *Shamana Chikitsa* (palliative therapy) to correct underlying *Dosha* imbalance, purify *Rakta Dhatu*, and restore normal skin function.

Despite several studies on acne management, few have explored *Jalauka Avacharana* (leech therapy) as a minimally invasive *Raktamokshana* method in *Mukhadushika*. Therefore, this case report highlights the effectiveness of an Ayurvedic comprehensive approach, integrating *Shodhana* and *Shamana* therapies in the management of *Mukhadushika* (*Acne vulgaris*).

## CASE PRESENTATION

A single case study was conducted on a 17-year-old female (OPD No. 2314272) who presented with facial pimples persisting for the past four years. The lesions initially appeared on the cheeks and gradually spread to the forehead and chin. Some pimples were larger, associated with pain and occasional discharge. The patient reported a habit of frequently touching the lesions.

She had previously consulted a dermatologist and received modern treatment, which provided temporary relief, but the condition recurred after

discontinuation. Due to persistent facial acne, the patient developed low self-esteem and began avoiding social interactions and college attendance. Hence, she approached BVVS Ayurved Medical College & Hospital, Bagalkot, for Ayurvedic management.

### Medical, Family & Psychosocial History

The patient had no significant past medical history and no known hereditary or genetic conditions.

Family history was non-contributory.

No history of allergies or chronic systemic illness was reported.

Psychosocially, the patient experienced moderate impact on self-esteem and social confidence due to persistent facial lesions.

### Relevant Past Interventions and

#### Outcomes

The patient previously used topical over-the-counter anti-acne creams and home remedies, which provided only temporary relief with no significant long-term improvement.

No prior Ayurvedic treatments or systemic medications were taken before visiting our OPD.

Hence, the case was considered suitable for Ayurvedic interventions involving *Raktaprasadana* and *Shodhana*-oriented therapies.

**Personal history:** The patient consumed a mixed diet, with a preference for spicy and pungent food. Sleep was adequate, and no addictions were reported. Vitals were within normal limits.

**Menstrual history:** Menstrual cycle: 4 Days / month, regular

### Systemic Examinations:

CNS: Conscious, well oriented to time, place & person. CVS: S1 S2 heard, no murmurs.

RS: AEBE, No added sounds. PA: Soft, Non tender

### Local Examination Inspection

**Site** – Facial region involving both cheeks, forehead, and chin Type of lesion:

Papule – Present

Pustular nodule Present

Comedones - open

Comedones Size - 2-3mm

Discharge – Present (some pimples over cheek region – pale yellow (pus))

### Clinical Examination (*Ashtavidha* and *Dashavidha Pariksha*):

**Ashtavidha Pariksha:** *Nadi* was *Pitta-Vata* predominant, *Mala* and *Mutra* were normal, *Jihva* showed mild coating, *Shabda* and *Drik* were normal, *Sparsha* revealed slight warmth over the lesions, and *Akruti* was moderate.

**Dashavidha Pariksha:** Patient was found to have *Madhyama Prakruti*, *Manda Agni*, *Madhyama Sara*, *Madhyama Samhanana*, *Madhyama Pramana*, *Madhyama Satmya*, *Madhyama Satva*, *Madhyama Ahara Shakti*, *Madhyama Vyayama Shakti*, and *Madhyama Vaya*.

### Palpation

Tenderness: Present

### Investigations

Hemoglobin percentage (Hb%), Random Blood Sugar (RBS) were within normal limits. Rapid Plasma Reagin (RPR) and Hepatitis B surface Antigen (HBsAg) tests were non-reactive.

### Diagnosis

#### ● Ayurvedic Diagnosis:

*Mukhadushika* (a *Kshudra Roga* involving vitiation of *Kapha* and *Vata Dosha* along with *Rakta Dushti*). NAMC Code (National AYUSH Morbidity Code): AYU-DER-014 – *Mukhadushika*

#### ● Modern Diagnosis:

Acne Vulgaris — a chronic inflammatory disease of the pilosebaceous unit characterized by comedones, papules, pustules, nodules, and occasional cyst formation. (ICD-11 Code: ED90.0)

- **Informed Consent:** Written informed consent was obtained from the patient for publication of this case report and images.

**Table 1: Treatment Schedule**

Date / Day	Treatment	Medicine	Dose & Anupana	Site	Duration
30-03-2024 to 01-04-2024 (Day 1–3)	<i>Deepana–Pacana</i>	<i>Agnitundi Vati</i>	250 mg – 1 tablet twice daily (after food) with <i>Ushṇa Jala</i> (lukewarm water orally)	—	3 days
02-04-2024 (Day 4)	<i>Sadhyo Virechana</i>	<i>Nimbamṛtadi Eraṇḍa Taila</i>	100 ml early morning on empty stomach with lukewarm water orally	—	1 day
06-04-2024, 13-04-2024, 20-04-2024 (Days 7, 14, 21)	<i>Raktamokṣaṇa</i>	<i>Jalauka Avacharaṇa</i> (Leech therapy)	—	<b>Site:</b> Both cheeks (over inflamed lesions) <b>Number of Jalauka:</b> 2 per sitting	3 sittings (gap of 7 days)
30-03-2024 to 30-04-2024 (Day 1–30)	<i>Shamana Aushadhi</i>	1. <i>Chandraprabha Vati</i> 2. <i>Kaishora Guggulu</i> 3. <i>Shodhak Syrup</i>	1. 500 mg – 1 tab thrice daily after food with lukewarm water 2. 500 mg – 1 tab thrice daily after food with lukewarm water 3. 10 ml thrice daily after food	—	30 days

After *Deepana* (appetizer) and *Pachana* (digestive) for three days with *Agnitundi Vati*

[6] (1 tablet twice daily with warm water before food), *Sadhyo Virechana* was administered using *Nimbamritadi Eranda Taila* [7] (100 ml), which resulted in eight *vegās* (purgations). After observing *Vishrama Kala* for two days, *Shamana Aushadhis* were started: Tab. *Chandraprabha Vati* [8] (500 mg. 01 tablet thrice daily), Tab. *Kaishora Guggulu* [9] (500 mg. 01 tablet thrice daily), and Syrup *Shodhak* [10] (10 ml thrice daily), advised to continue for one month.

*Jalauka Avacharana* (leech therapy) was performed in three sittings at intervals of seven days, using two *Jalaukas* per sitting. Site: Both cheeks, applied over inflamed lesions.

#### **Jalouka Avacharana**

**Materials Used:** *Jalauka* (*Hirudo medicinalis*), surgical gloves, kidney tray, dressing material, vessel.

#### **Purva Karma (Pre-procedure)**

*Jalauka* were kept in a vessel containing turmeric water prepared with *Haridra* (*Curcuma longa* Linn) for cleansing and activation (Figure 1).

#### **Pradhana Karma (Main procedure)**

The *Jalauka* were applied over the affected facial area and covered with moist gauze to maintain adherence (Figure 2).

After approximately 40 minutes, the leeches naturally detached once their bloodletting activity was complete.

#### **Pashchat Karma (Post-procedure)**

The site was cleaned and a pressure dressing was applied. The patient was observed for one hour and advised to avoid washing the face for 24 hours.

The leech was made to expel ingested blood by applying a small amount of turmeric at its mouth and gently stroking it from tail to head (Figure 3).

**Dietary regimen (Pathya–Apathya)** was advised.

#### **Pathyapathya [11]**

##### **Pathya (Wholesome diet and lifestyle)**

*Ahara:* *Shashtikashali* (*Shashtika* rice), *Mudga* (Green gram), *Patola patra* (Pointed gourd leaves), *Jangala mamsa* (Meat of animals living in arid land).

*Vihara:* *Udvaartana* (Herbal powder massage), *Abhyanga* (Oil massage), *Pranayama*

(Yogic breathing exercises).

##### **Apathya (Unwholesome diet and lifestyle)**

*Ahara:* *Pitta* and *Rakta* vitiating *Ahara* (Hot, spicy, sour, and oily foods), *Drava* (Excessively liquid foods), *Guru* (Heavy to digest foods), *Vidahi* (Foods causing burning sensation), *Vishtambhi Ahara* (Constipating foods), consumption of *Masha* (Black gram), *Tila* (Sesame seeds), *Anupa mamsa* (Meat of aquatic or marshy animals), oily food items, fermented food, and fast foods.

*Vihara:* *Diwaswapna* (Daytime sleep), *Ati Vyayama* (Excessive physical exertion), *Veganirodha* (Suppression of natural urges).



[Figure 1]  
*Purva Karma*



[Figure 2]  
*Pradhana Karma*



[Figure 3]  
*Pashchat Karma*

### OBSERVATION:

Gradual improvement was observed following *Jalaukavacarana* therapy. After the first sitting, inflammatory lesions such as papules and pustules began to reduce noticeably. Further improvement occurred

after the second sitting, and by the third sitting, most lesions had subsided with visible healing. On follow-up after six months, the patient remained free from new eruptions, showing only minimal post-acne scarring (Figures 4–7).



1<sup>st</sup> sitting (Day 7th)  
[Figure 4]



2<sup>nd</sup> sitting (Day 14th)  
[Figure 5]



3<sup>rd</sup> sitting (Day 21st)  
[Figure 6]



Follow up after six months  
[Figure 7]

### DISCUSSION:

*Mukhadushika*, described in Ayurvedic texts, closely correlates with acne vulgaris—an inflammatory disorder of the pilosebaceous unit affecting nearly 90% of adolescents [12]. Classical management emphasizes *Shodhana* (purificatory) and *Shamana* (palliative) therapies to eliminate vitiated *Doshas* and restore systemic balance, offering a holistic approach beyond symptomatic relief.

#### Probable mode of action of *Virechana*:

*Virechana*, a purgative therapy, is preferred due to its wide therapeutic

applicability. It not only facilitates the elimination of vitiated *Doshas* from the body but also provides preventive and promotive health benefits. The combined approach of *Shodhana* (purificatory) and *Shamana* (palliative) therapy is considered more effective in the management of this condition. In the case of *Mukhdushika*, which is primarily associated with *Pitta*, *Rakta Pradosha*, and to some extent *Kapha* imbalance, *Virechana* therapy is considered the most suitable treatment option [13]. *Sadhyovirechana* was advised based on *Roga* and *Rogibala* with

*Nimbamruta Eranda taila.*

**Probable mode of action of Nimbamruta Eranda taila:**

*Nimbamrutadi Eranda Taila* is a classical Ayurvedic formulation mentioned in and is specifically indicated in the management of *Kushtha Roga* (skin disorders). This medicated oil is known for its *Anulomana* (mild purgative) property, which helps in expelling morbid *Doshas* through the gastrointestinal tract, thereby supporting systemic detoxification. Due to the predominance of *Tikta Rasa* (bitter taste), it exhibits a specific affinity towards the *Twak* (skin), aiding in the purification of *Rakta Dhatu* and alleviating skin-related conditions<sup>[14]</sup>. The key ingredients of this formulation include *Nimba* (*Azadirachta indica* A. Juss.), *Amrutha* (*Tinospora cordifolia* (Willd.) Miers), *Manjishta* (*Rubia cordifolia* L.), and *Rasna* (*Alpinia calcarata* Roscoe), all processed in a base of *Eranda Taila* (castor oil). These herbs collectively exhibit *Raktashodhaka* (blood-purifying), *Kandughna* (anti-pruritic), *Shothahara* (anti-inflammatory), and *Rasayana* (rejuvenative) properties. The use of *Eranda Taila* as a base enhances the formulation's ability to pacify *Vata* and *Kapha Doshas*, while promoting bowel regularity.<sup>[7]</sup> Thus, *Nimbamrutadi Eranda Taila* serves as a holistic remedy in skin disorders, offering both internal purification and external therapeutic benefits.

**Probable mode of action of Jalauka Avacharana:**

*Jalaukavacharana* (Leech therapy), a type of *Raktamokshana*, not only facilitates the removal of vitiated blood but also delivers biologically active compounds into the

affected area. *Jalauka* secrete substances such as Hirudin and Calin, which act as anticoagulants, reduce inflammation, and enhance sluggish wound healing, thereby aiding in the management of chronic and inflammatory condition.<sup>[15]</sup>

In Ayurveda, *Pitta Dosha* has a functional association with *Rakta Dhatu*, described as *Ashraya–Ashrayi Sambandha* (mutual coexistence). Therefore, when both *Pitta* and *Rakta* are vitiated, as seen in many skin disorders, *Raktamokshana* becomes a rational therapeutic intervention to restore balance.

Acharya Sushruta describes *Mukhadushika* as a type of *Kushtha* under *Kshudra Roga*. In the management of *Kushtha Roga*, periodic *Raktamokshana*, along with *Shodhana* therapies such as *Vamana* (emesis) and *Virechana* (purgation), has been emphasized to eliminate the root cause and purify the blood.

Thus, *Raktamokshana* using *Jalaukavacharana* offers a dual advantage draining vitiated blood and delivering therapeutic enzymes making it a valuable modality in the holistic management of *Mukhadushika* and other *Pitta-Rakta Dushti* based skin disorders<sup>[16]</sup>.

**Probable mode of action of Chandraprabha Vati:**

The word *Chandraprabha* is derived from *Chandra* meaning moon and *Prabha* meaning luster thus, the name implies that which imparts a moon-like radiance. True to its name, *Chandraprabha Vati* is a classical Ayurvedic formulation known for imparting vitality and glow, and is considered a potent *Rasayana*<sup>[17]</sup>. It contains a wide range of herbs and minerals including *Guggulu* (*Commiphora*

*mukul* Hook. ex Stocks), *Shilajit* (*Asphaltum punjabianum*), *Sharkara* (*Saccharum officinarum* Linn.), *Karpooora* (*Cinnamomum camphora* (L.) J. Presl), *Ativisha* (*Aconitum heterophyllum* Wall. ex Royle), *Haridra* (*Curcuma longa* Linn.), *Vacha* (*Acorus calamus* Linn.), *Musta* (*Cyperus rotundus* Linn.), *Amalaki* (*Emblica officinalis* Gaertn.), *Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula* Retz.), *Bibhitaki* (*Terminalia bellirica* (Gaertn.) Roxb.), *Chavya* (*Piper chaba* Hunter), *Bhunimba* (*Andrographis paniculata* (Burm.f.) Wall. ex Nees), *Vidanga* (*Embelia ribes* Burm.f.), and *Devadaru* (*Cedrus deodara* (Roxb. ex D. Don) G. Don). These ingredients collectively possess *Balya* (strength-promoting), *Tridosha Shamaka* (Dosha-balancing), and *Rasayana* (rejuvenative) properties. *Chandraprabha Vati* also acts as a *Yogavahi* (catalytic agent), meaning it enhances the effectiveness of other drugs when used in combination. Owing to its broad spectrum of action, it is often referred to as *Sarva Roga Pranashini*, meaning it helps in curing all types of diseases. It is commonly used in the management of metabolic imbalances, skin diseases [8].

#### Probable mode of action of *Kaishora Guggulu*:

*Kaishora Guggulu* is a classical Ayurvedic formulation composed of ingredients such as *Guggulu* (*Commiphora mukul* (Hook. ex Stocks) Engl.), *Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula* Retz.), *Amalaki* (*Emblica officinalis* L.), *Maricha* (*Piper nigrum* L.), *Pippali* (*Piper longum* L.), *Vidanga* (*Embelia ribes* F.), *Danti* (*Baliospermum montanum* (Willd.) Mull. Arg.), and *Nishotha* (*Operculina*

*turpethum* (L.) *Silva Manso*). This formulation is known for its potent antiallergic, antibacterial, and blood-purifying properties [9]. *Kaishora Guggulu* acts as a natural blood cleanser and helps in the elimination of toxins from the body. It supports healthy skin and is considered a *Rasayana*, promoting overall vitality and delaying signs of aging. Due to its detoxifying and rejuvenating effects, it serves as a valuable dietary herbal supplement, especially in the management of skin diseases, inflammatory conditions, and other disorders involving vitiated *Pitta* and *Rakta* [18].

#### Probable mode of action of *Shodhak Syrup*:

This formulation contains key ingredients such as *Neem* (*Azadirachta indica* A. Juss.) *Shodhak Syrup* is formulated primarily for cleansing the blood and improving skin health. Key ingredients include *Manjisthadi Kashaya* (100 mg per 10 ml) and *Pancha Nimba Churna* (750 mg per 10 ml), which are traditionally used in skin disorders such as acne vulgaris, eczema, and urticaria. These ingredients help reduce microbial activity, enhance skin detoxification, and regulate underlying systemic disturbances, including gut-skin axis dysfunction. [10].

#### Patient Perspective:

Following the treatment, the patient was found to be completely free from pimples, with only minimal residual scarring and no signs of recurrence. Notably, there was a marked improvement in her psychological well-being. Before treatment, she exhibited low self-confidence and hesitated to attend college due to the appearance of her skin. After undergoing the comprehensive Ayurvedic

management, her confidence levels significantly increased, and she resumed her regular academic and social activities without hesitation.

#### CONCLUSION:

*Jalauka* (leech therapy), a time-honored method of *Raktamokshana* described in *Ayurveda*, offers a safe, natural, and effective approach in the management of *Mukhadushika* (acne vulgaris). Beyond its classical therapeutic use, *Jalauka* also plays a significant role in cosmetic enhancement by reducing inflammation, promoting skin healing, and minimizing scarring. Its ability to pacify vitiated *Rakta* and *Pitta doshas*, along with the antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties of leech saliva, makes it a valuable tool in managing recurrent acne. Thus, *Jalauka* therapy can be rightfully considered a cosmeto-therapeutic modality that also fulfills aesthetic needs.

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