

Ayurvedic Management of Stress Induced Itching: A Case Report

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ABSTRACT

Background

Stress induced itching is a sensation of itching triggered by stress, anxiety or by extreme emotional fluctuations associated with GI disturbance. The ayurvedic system has a comprehensive method to manage its root cause by using Shodhana, Shamana and lifestyle changes treatment.

Clinical findings

33-year-old female presented with an 8-month history of recurrent episodes of *Kandu* (itching), *Todavat Vedana* (pricking pain) and *Daha* (burning sensation) over hands, palms, cheeks triggered by stress and anxiety, also associated with symptoms like *Amlapitta* (*Hrullas* (nausea), *Hrutkanthadha* (heartburn and throat burn), *Shirashula* (headache)) and *ama* (*Angamarda* (body ache), *Aalasya* (lethargic), *Gaurav* (heaviness)). After detailed history taking session it showed that the above patient was frequently consuming *Viruddha Ahara* (Imbalanced/Staple diet) with a sedentary lifestyle.

Intervention

Treatment comprised *Mrudu Virechan* with *Avipattikar Churna* for 30 days, followed by *Shaman Chikitsa* including *Rasapachak*, *Bilwadi Gutika* and *Ashwagandha Churna* for 30 days. Local application of *Eladi Taila* was also given to the patient with *Pathya-Apathya*.

Outcome

There was noticeable itching and burning sensation that got significantly reduced by the second week, and by the third week there was complete remission, at one month follow up no recurrence seen either.

Conclusion

This case study shows the efficacy of an Ayurvedic treatment regimen including *Shodhana*, *Shamana* and *Pathya Apathya* in the management of Stress Induced Itching associated with *Amlapitta Ama* and *Rasadushti* offering a treatment protocol for itching triggered by stress and anxiety.

Keywords: Stress Induced Itching, Itching, Stress, *Kandu*, *Urticaria*.

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1.Introduction

Kandu (Itching) is refers to the body's desire to scratch the skin, *Dosha Dushti* imbalance, particularly involving the *Kapha* and *Pitta Dosha* is seen in case of *kandu*. In classical texts *Kandu* is associated with *Kushtha Roga*, which shows vitiation of *Twak* (skin) and *Rakta Dhatu*. *Ama* accumulation, improper diet, lifestyle

factors weakened *Agni* contribute to its development.

The skin act as a protective barrier of the body and a sensory organ which has a capacity to sense the pain, touch and temperature which is also a *Gyanendriya* in *Ayurveda*. In the context of the relation of *Twacha* (skin) and *Manas* (mind), *Acharya Charaka* quotes "*Chetasamvayi*." Many dermatological

conditions with a psychological component have considerable effects on the patient's quality of life.¹

Stress induced itching is now known to be brain-derived, rather than skin-derived as believed earlier. Stress exacerbates itching by increasing the inflammatory mediators. The itch scratch itch cycle is triggered by neurotransmitters like dopamine, also opiates which makes act of scratching feel satisfying but it also keeps the cycle going.² The prevalence of itching is approximately 8–9% in the general population, whereas in up to 30% of chronic cases there is an element of Stress induced cause. Emotional stress can trigger conditions like urticaria, and make them worse, as depression/ emotional fluctuation/ anxiety increases, so does the severity. Current treatments may offer only transient relief from symptoms, while not solving the underlying causes of the problem.

This case study is about a 33year old woman who was suffering from Stress

induced itching, associated with *Amlapitta* and *Ama*. Patient was managed with the ayurvedic treatment regimen.

2. Case Report

2.1 Patients

Information:

Chief Complaints:

A 33 years old female came with an 8 month history of recurring itching episode, to the outpatient department of Agadatantra of Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed To Be University College of Ayurved & Hospital, Pune

Since that, patient was suffering from *Kandu* (Itching), Along with this, episodes of *Todavat Vedana* (pricking pain) and *Daha* (Burning sensation) in the both arms and legs, appearing recurrently after stress or anxiety episodes.

Complaints associated:

In the last few months, episodes of anxiety with breathlessness and shivering has been noticed. With the presence of *Amlapitta Lakshanas* like *Hrullas* (nausea), *Hrutkanthadha* (burning in heart & throat) and *Shirashula* (headache). In addition to this, the presence of *Ama Lakshanas* has become noticeable, in the form of *Angamarda* (body pain), *Aalasya* (laziness) and *Gaurav* (sense of heaviness).

History of Present Illness:

The patient was well before 8 months. Symptoms appeared abruptly during repeated stressful episodes, lasting 15-30min to 2hours, and then disappeared spontaneously. The episodes occurred with increasing frequency, causing psychological distress and disturbed, which affected the overall quality of life.

Previous allopathic oral and topical, medications provided minimal relief of symptoms.

present; no scaling or vesicles were noted. The affected areas were hands and legs.

DIETARY HISTORY:

- Frequent *Virruddha Ahara* consumption.
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Irregular food consumption habit
- High stress levels and anxiety episodes
- Daily consumption of curd with south Indian or fermented food

Past History : No Any
Family: Non contributory

Personal History:

Parameters	
Age	33 years
Sex	Female
Occupation	Housewife
<i>Bala</i> (strength)	<i>Madhyama</i> (moderate)
Appetite	Good
Addiction	none
<i>Mala</i> (Bowel habit)	<i>Malavrodha</i>
<i>Nidra</i> (Sleep)	<i>Asamyak</i>
<i>Prakriti</i>	<i>Vata pitta</i>
Blood pressure	110/70 mm Hg

Ashtavidh Pariksha Findings

Physical Examination:

General examination revealed no visible skin lesions at the time of consultation (symptoms were episodic). Slight erythema was

2.3 Timeline

<i>Nadi</i>	<i>Vata Pitta</i> Dominant
<i>Mala</i>	<i>Malavrodha</i> (Constipated)
<i>Mutra</i>	<i>Samyaga</i> (Normal Frequency and Colour)
<i>Jivha</i>	<i>Alpa Saam</i>
<i>Shabda</i>	<i>Spashta</i> (Normal)
<i>Sparsha</i>	<i>Khar</i> (Rough Dry)
<i>Drik</i>	<i>Prakrit</i> (Normal vision)
<i>Akruti</i>	<i>Madhyama</i> (Moderately Nourished)

SN	TIME	EVENT
1.	8 months before	Onset of symptoms following stressful events
2.	Day 0	Clinical evaluation, Diagnosis of Stress induced itching caused due to stress, <i>Viruddha Ahara</i> with <i>Amlapitta</i> and <i>Ama</i>
3.	Day 1	<i>Ayurvedic</i> treatment initiated
4.	Week 1	Completion of first week of <i>Ayurvedic</i> treatment
5.	Week 2	Marked reduction in symptoms like decreased itching, burning sensation, anxiety episodes.

6.	Week 3	Complete remission of symptoms
7.	Week 4	Sustained remission; treatment completed
8.	1 month follow up	No recurrence; stable clinical status

2.4 Diagnostic Assessment

The diagnosis of Stress induced itching (*Kandu*) associated with *Amlapitta* and *Ama* was established based on the clinical presentation. The characteristic symptoms included *Kandu*(itching), *Todavat Vedana* (Pricking pain), and *Daha* (burning sensation), all of which showed a clear temporal association with episodes of stress and anxiety. the presence of *Amlapitta* and *Ama Lakshanas* further added the diagnosis, along with history of *Viruddha Ahara* consumption and an irregular lifestyle. Importantly, there was an absence of primary dermatological lesions. Previous treatment with conventional medications had failed, reinforcing the Stress induced and systemic nature of the condition.

Differential Diagnosis:

Condition	Present symptoms	Absent symptoms	Conclusion
<i>Kushtha</i>	<i>Kandu, Daha</i>	Primary skin lesions, chronicity	Less likely
<i>Sheetapitta</i> (urticaria)	Episodic nature, stress trigger	Wheals, raised lesions	Less likely
<i>Vicharchika</i> (eczema)	Itching, burning	Vesicles, discharge, scaling	Excluded

Stress Induced itching	Episodic symptoms triggered by anxiety and stress, GI symptoms, no primary lesions	-	Most consistent
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Itching Severity Assessment (UAS7 Scale)

Score	Description	Baseline status
0	None	-
1	Mild (present but not troublesome)	-
2	Moderate (troublesome but does not interfere with sleep)	-
3	Severe (interferes with daily activity and sleep)	Present at baseline

Baseline itching score: 03(Severe)

2.5 Therapeutic Intervention

Treatment was designed to address *Samprapti* (pathogenesis) involving *Ama* Formation, *Pitta-Kapha* vitiation and *dushti* associated with *Manas Udvega*

Shodhana Chikitsa at periodic times (Purification Therapy):

Procedure	Drug	Dose	Anupana	Duration
<i>Mrudu Virechana</i>	<i>Avipattikar Churna</i> (Baidyanath, Batch: WD250387A)	10 g at bedtime	Luke warm water	15 days

Shaman Chikitsa (pacification therapy):

Medicine	Dose	Frequency	Time	Anupana	Duration
<i>Rasapachak Vati</i> (Shree Dhoota papeshwar, Batch: RP2025042)	250mg	Twice daily	Before meals	Lukewarm water	30days
<i>Bilwadi Gutika</i> (vaidyaratnam oushadhalaya, Batch: 25C0264)	500mg	Twice daily	After meals	Lukewarm water	30days
<i>Ashwagandha</i> (Baidyanath, Batch: ASH2025027)	3gm	Once daily	At bedtime	Lukewarm water	30days

Lakshanik Chikitsa:

Medicine	Application	Duration
<i>Eladi taila</i> (Kottakkal Arya Vaidya Sala, Batch: 222199)	Local application on affected site	30days

- Concurrent medications:** None
- Pathya-Apathya (dietary and lifestyle modifications):**
- Pathya (Recommended):**
- Ahara* (diet):
- Green leafy vegetables
 - Fresh seasonal fruits
 - Warm, freshly cooked meals

- Adequate water intake
- Vihara*(regimen);
- Minimum 8 hours of sleep daily
 - Regular yoga practice (shavasana)
 - Pranayama (Anuloma-viloma)

Apathya

Ahara(diet)

- Junk food and fast food
- South Indian (fermented food)
- Regular Curd (especially at night) consumption
- Excessive salty and spicy food
- Ice cream, cold beverages

Vihara(regimen);

- *Divaswapna*(daytime sleep)
- *Ratrijagarana* (night awakening)
- Excessive cold exposure (air conditioning)
- Stressful activities

2.6 follow up and outcomes

Assessment method:

The patient's clinical condition was assessed through weekly telephonic follow up and maintenance of a patient diary documenting medication intake, dietary compliance and symptom episodes. Tolerability was evaluated through direct questioning regarding any discomfort, gastrointestinal disturbances, or adverse effects during follow-up visits

Outcome assessment:

Clinical assessment

Complete remission of symptoms was achieved by week 3, with sustained improvement at 1 month follow up

Patient assessed outcomes

The patient reported improvement in

Parameter	Baseline	Week1	Week2	Week3	Week4	1 month follow up
<i>Kandu</i>	3	2	1	0	0	0
<i>Todavat Vedana</i>	Severe	Moderate	Mild	None	None	None
<i>Daha</i>	Severe	Moderate	Mild	None	None	None
Anxiety episodes	Frequent	Reduced	Minimal	None	None	None
<i>Hrullas</i>	Present	Reduced	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent
<i>Hrutk anthadaha</i>	Present	Reduced	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent
Sleep quality	Poor	Improved	Good	Good	Good	Good
UAS7 score	3	2	1	0	0	0

quality of life, resolution of sleep disturbances, and absence of anxiety episodes.

Adherence: 100% compliance with medications; 80% compliance with dietary modifications

Tolerability: well, tolerated; no complaints of gastrointestinal discomfort or other adverse effects

Adverse events: none reported during treatment or follow up period

3. Results

The patient demonstrated progressive improvement throughout the treatment course

Week1	Initiation of <i>Mrudu Virechana</i> resulted in improved bowel habits and reduction in <i>Ama Lakshanas</i> , therefore proper <i>Rasadhatu</i> formation
Week 2	Marked decrease in frequency and intensity of itching episodes; burning sensation reduced from severe to mild; anxiety episodes significantly reduced
Week3	Complete remission of <i>Kandu</i> , <i>Todavat Vedana</i> , <i>Daha</i> ; resolution of <i>Amlapitta</i> symptoms.
Week4	Sustained remission with improved overall well-being
1-month follow up	No recurrence, patient maintained lifestyle modifications

Pruritic severity score improved from 3 at baseline to 0 by week, maintained at follow-up

4. Discussion

This case shows successful management of stress induced pruritus/itching through an ayurvedic approach addressing multiple aspects of pathogenesis.

Samprapti:

The condition involved *Nidana Sevan* including *Viruddha Ahara*, *Vishamashana* and certain manasik nidana. These factors led to Agnimandya with subsequent *Ama* formation and Vitiating *Pitta* and *Kapha*, *Ama* causes and *Twak Dushti* manifesting *Kandu*, *Daha*, *Todavat Vedana*. Concurrent *Amlapitta* due to above *Hetus* with *Pitta Prakopa* in *Annavaha Strotas*. Anxiety triggers stress induced perpetuated the cycle through *Manovaha Strotas* involvement.

Treatment selection:

Weekly Mrudu Virechana (Avipattikar Churna): *Mrudu Virechana* eliminates the vitiated *Pitta* from *Koshtha* and shows effects in *Amlapitta* by its *Deepan Pachana* and *Rechana*(laxative) properties. It improves *Agni* by maintaining regular bowels moments and improves digestion, Appetite and prevents constipation. Many skin conditions specifically related to *Pitta Kapha* imbalance can be treated through regular *Shodhana*(detoxification). It helps to treat skin diseases by removing toxins through body with the help of *Mrudu Virechana*. Regular *Mrudu Virechan* can help to reduce stress anxiety and irritability, promoting calm and balance mind.³

Rasapachaka: It plays important role in wellbeing of mental health, when *Rasa* is well formed and circulated efficiently through the *Rasavaha Strotas*, it provides proper nourishment to the body and mind. Any kind of disturbance in the body leads to imbalance like Anxiety, emotional instability, thus maintaining *Rasasara* is important that's why *Rasapachak* plays important role in Stress Induced Itching it acts as a *Deepan Pachan of Rasa* and addressing *Ama*, improves *Agni* and provides adequate nourishment to the *Mana* and body which is fundamental to treating the root cause⁴

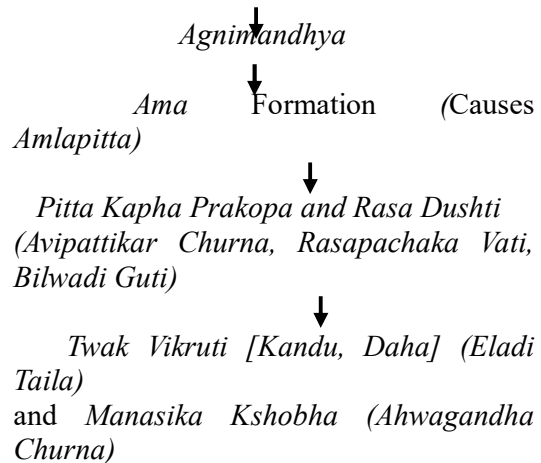
Bilwadi Gutika – It provides *Grahi* and *Deepan* properties, one of the causes of itching is *Viruddha Ahara*, few food combinations are believed to produce *Ama* which causes *Strotoband* (clogs body's microchannels), which leads to *Agnimandya* and disrupts the balance of *Doshas*, *Ama* behaves like external toxins *Dushi Visha* or *Gara Visha* causing hypersensitivity to the skin, to counter this anti toxic formulations are recommended. Among them, *Bilwadi Gutika* is well known for its detoxification⁵

Ashwagandha: It reduces stress induced symptoms with anxiolytic effects. It acts as a *Medhya Rasayana*. Its *Vata Shaman* property complemented the treatment of pricking pain in the present study.⁶

Eladi Taila: The *Viruddha Ahara* effect has been considered as like effects of *Visha* or *Gara Visha*. Hence *Vishghna Karma* of *Eladi Taila*. along with *Vaat-Kaphanashan* and *Kothanashan* can be precisely attributed in the alleviation of the clinical condition of *kandu*

Mode of Action:

Nidana Sevana (Viruddha Ahara, Stress (Chinta))



Strengths:

- Holistic approach addressing *Shodhana*, *Shamana*, and *Pathya-Apathya*
- Treatment of root cause (*Ama*, *Amlapitta*) rather than symptomatic management
- Integration of psychological component through *Ashwagandha*
- Complete remission achieved within 3 weeks
- Sustained benefit at 1-month follow-up
- No adverse effects observed during study period.

Limitations:

- Single case report limits generalizability
- Short follow-up period of 1 month; longer observation needed to assess sustained remission
- Lack of objective biomarkers for *Ama* and *Amlapitta* assessment

- Placebo effect cannot be ruled out

5. Conclusion

This case report presents a 33-year-old female with chronic Stress induced itching of 8 months duration, associated with *Amlapitta* and *Ama*, successfully managed through Integrated *Ayurvedic* intervention. Treatment comprising *Mrudu Virechana* with *Avipattikar Churna* (15 days), *Shamana Chikitsa* with *Raspachak*, *Bilwadi Gutika*, and *Ashwagandha* (30 days), and external application of *Eladi Taila*, combined with *Pathya-Apathya*, achieved complete remission by week 3 with sustained benefit at 1-month Follow-up. No adverse effects were noted. The key finding is that addressing the underlying *Ama* formation, *Agnimandya*, and *Amlapitta*, along with psychological factors, provides an effective resolution of stress-induced pruritic. This case supports the *Ayurvedic* principles of *Nidana Parivarjana* (avoiding causative factors) and *Samprapti Vighatana* (breaking pathogenesis) for sustainable outcomes in psychosomatic dermatological conditions.

6. Patient's Perspective

For eight months, I suffered from sudden itching and burning on my hands and face that would come without warning, especially when I was stressed, she said. It affected my sleep and made me anxious about when the next episode would happen. I tried many medicines, but nothing helped for long. After starting ayurvedic treatment, we observed a gradual improvement. By the third week, the itching had completely stopped. The doctor explained how my diet and lifestyle contributed to my problem, which helped me understand and make the necessary changes. I feel much better now; my digestion has improved, and I no longer experience distressing episodes. I am grateful for this treatment approach that addressed not just my skin problem but my overall health.

7. Declaration of Patients Consent

The authors confirm that they acquired a patient consent form in which the patient granted permission for the publication of

this case, including the accompanying clinical Details, in this journal. The patient acknowledges that her name and initials would not be disclosed, and sincere attempts were made to safeguard her identity. However, Complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

8. Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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