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Review Article

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Literature review on the Siddha treatment for Karappan (Eczema)

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Abstract

Eczema is a chronic skin condition affecting between 5% to 20% of the total world population. This condition is named as KARAPPAN in siddha system medicine. It often seen to be a minor problem but research suggest that it can cause considerable disruption to the lives of the individual and involves significant cost for the family and health care systems. This review article carries the various internal and external medications for KARAPPAN which was mentioned in our classical siddha text.

Keywords: Eczema, Karappan, Siddha medicine.

Introduction

Siddha, a traditional healing science of India is an age old holistic medicine which emphasizes the maintenance of relaxed mind and body harmony and insists to keep pace with the laws of nature. In siddha system besides herbs, metals and mineral drugs are used as medicines. All the medicines have their own way of preparation and prescribed with specific dosage and with specific anupaanams and thunaimarunthu in this system.

Modern concept

Dermatitis and Eczema are a common problem all over the world. Their incidence is 2 – 3 % of medical problem seen in practice. In the practice of dermatology, the first step is to establish the clinical diagnosis of dermatitis and eczema. Then decide the clinic morphological pattern, viz. Contact, Atopic, Neurodermatitis, Gravitational, Endogenous or Seborrhoeic. The final and most important step to make an etiological diagnosis that is establish in the

role of the different causes or cause responsible for the dermatitis

Eczema is a non – contagious inflammation of the skin, characterized by erythema, scaling, edema, vesiculation and oozing. The term Eczema is a Greek word. The whole word implies “Boil out”. It is characterized by superficial inflammatory edema of the epidermis associated with vesicle formation. Itching varies from mild to severe paroxysm which may even interfere with work and sleep¹.

Eczema is a general term encompassing various inflamed skin condition. One of the most common forms of Eczema is Atopic dermatitis. Approximately 10 – 20 % of the world population is affected by this chronic, relapsing and very itchy rash at the some point during childhood. Fortunately, many children with the Eczema find that the disease clears and often disappears with age. In general, Atopic dermatitis will come and go, often based on external factors.

Although its cause is unknown, the condition appears to be an abnormal response of body's immune system.

In people with Eczema, the inflammatory response to irritating substances overacts, causing itching and scratching. Eczema is non – contagious and like many diseases, currently cannot be cured. However, for most patients the condition may be managed well with treatment and avoidance of triggers.

Although Eczema may look different from person to person, it is most often characterized by dry, red, extremely itchy patches on the skin. Eczema is sometimes referred to as “the itch that rashes” since the itch, when scratched, results in the appearance of the rash². Eczema can occur on just about any part of the body; however, in infants, eczema typically occurs on forehead, cheeks, legs, forearms, scalp and neck. In children and adults Eczema typically occurs on the face, neck and the insides of the elbows, knees and ankles. In some people, Eczema may “bubble up” and ooze. In others, the condition may appear more scaly, dry and red. Chronic scratching causes the skin to take on a leathery texture because the skin thickens (lichenification)

Pathogenesis

The pathways leading to an eczematous reaction are likely to be common on all subtypes and to involve similar inflammatory mediators (prostaglandins, leukotrienes and cytokines). Helper T cells, sometimes activated by superantigens from *staphylococcus aureus*, predominate in the inflammatory infiltrate. One current view is that epidermal cytokines help to produce spongiosis and that their secretion by keratinocytes can be elicited by T lymphocytes, irritants, bacterial products and other stimuli³.

Causes

Many substance have been identified as itch triggers in patients with Eczema, and triggers are not the same for every person. Many times it is difficult to identify the exact trigger that causes a flare-up. For some, it seems that rough or coarse materials coming into contact with skin causes itchiness. For others feeling too hot and/or sweating will cause an outbreak.

1. Soaps
2. Detergents
3. Disinfectants
4. Contact with juices from fresh fruits and meats

5. Dust mites
6. Animal saliva
7. Danders
8. Stress

Who gets Eczema?

Eczema occurs in both children and adults, but usually appears during infancy. Although there is no known cause for the disease, it often affects people with a family history of allergies. Those who are genetically predisposed and then exposed to environmental triggers may develop Eczema. Many people who have Eczema also suffer from Allergic Rhinitis and Asthma or have family members who do. It occurs common in between 5 and 15 years of age. Some will have the disease throughout their life.

Types of Eczema³

Several types of Eczema exist, and sometimes a person develops more than one type the links below take you to more information about common type of Eczema.

1. Atopic Dermatitis
2. Contact Dermatitis
3. Dyshidrotic Dermatitis
4. Hand Dermatitis
5. Neuro Dermatitis
6. Nummular Dermatitis
7. Occupational Dermatitis
8. Seborrheic Dermatitis
9. Stasis Dermatitis

Signs and Symptoms

1. Extremely itchy patches of skin – In Infants, these patches tend to develop on the scalp and face, especially on the cheeks. Teens and young adults are more likely to see patches on their hands and feet. Other common sites for these patches are the bends of elbow, backs of knees, ankles, wrist, face, neck and upper chest. The patches may not always appear in these areas ; They can occur anywhere on the skin including around the eyes and on the eyelids.

2. Redness, swelling, cracking, the “weeping” of clear fluid, crusting and scaling.
3. Patches may bubble up and ooze or be scaly, dry and red.
4. Lichenification.

Siddha concept

In siddha system of medicine Eczema is typically known as KARAPPAN. In the book which was written by Yugi muni, there was a detailed explanation of karappan and also he described that it is an unique skin disorder and it is different from leprosy.

The symptoms of Eczema mentioned by the siddhars was kuru, thimir, punn, thadippu and also they said that there is an scaly patches and changes in the body's natural skin color⁴.

Causes⁴

Yugi muni written in his book that it is non – contagious and it is related to poison ivy and Psycosomatic. This disease can be initiated and aggravated by certain food items and is known as KARAPPAN PANDANGAL. They are

- Solam
- Kambu
- Varagu
- Vaalai kaai
- Paagal
- Kelittri meen

Types⁴

1. Vaatha karappan
2. Pitha karappan
3. Sethuma karappan
4. Kanda karappaan
5. Varatchi karappan
6. Thimirvaatha karappan

7. Kabaala karappan

Karappan in children⁵

Karappan also affect the children in the age group between 1 – 3 years. The signs, symptoms and causes are as same as adults. Types of Karappan that affected children are given below,

1. Vali karappan
2. Azhal karappan
3. Aiya karappan
4. Ari karappan
5. Oothu karappan
6. Soolai karappan
7. Vedi karappan
8. Mandai karappan
9. Pori karappan
10. Sattai karappan
11. Odu karappan
12. Karungarappan
13. Sengarappan
14. Kolli karappan
15. Dhoda karappan
16. Vaalai karappan
17. Varal karappan
18. Veengu karappan

Siddha medicines for Karappan

The various Siddha medicines for above mentioned types of karappan are given below. The table (Tables 1,2,3) given below deals with the internal and external medications and formulations for karappan.

Table.1: Common medicines for karappan in adults.

S.No	Medicine	Internal/ External	Dose	Adjuvant
1.	Amukkara chooranam ⁶	Internal	1 gm	Honey
2.	Vellerugu chooranam ⁶	Internal	1 gm	Palm jaggery
3.	Karudankilangu chooranam ⁶	Internal	1 gm	Honey
4.	Palladhagi ⁷	Internal	½ - 1 Varagan	-
5.	Meganatha thayilam ⁸	Internal	Muttai karandi alavu	-
6.	Amurthathi kuligai ⁸	Internal	Kundri alavu	Milk
7.	Gowri sinthamani chendooram ⁸	Internal	Kundri alavu	Thirikadugu chooranam
8.	Thaambira chendooram ⁸	Internal	½ - 1 Kundri alavu	Honey
9.	Nandhi mai ⁸	Internal	Thettran vithai alavu	Palm jaggery
10.	Karungoli chooranam ⁴	Internal	15 Nel edai	Honey
11.	Karungungiliya chooranam ⁴	Internal	15 Nel edai	Milk
12.	Sivappu yennai ⁴	External	-	-
13.	Karappan thayilam ⁸	External (for bath)	-	-

Table.2: Specific Medicines for special types of karappan in children⁵.

S.No	Types	Medicine	Internal/External	Dose
1.	Vali karappan	Maavilanga yennai	Internal	1 kaasu alavu
2.	Azhal karappan	Kundri yennai	Internal	1 kaasu alavu
3.	Aiya karappan	Nannari yennai	Internal	1 kaasu alavu
4.	Ari karappan	Vasanapathiri yennai	Internal	160 ml
5.	Oothu karappan	Agathi yennai	Internal	60 ml
6.	Soolai karappan	Pungan verpattai yennai	External	-
7.	Vedi karappan	Sangan kuppi yennai	Internal	160 ml
8.	Mandai karappan	Velai yennai	Internal	1 kaasu alavu
9.	Pori karappan	Pungam yennai	Internal	160 ml
10.	Sattai karappan	Sangankuppi yennai	Internal	160 ml
11.	Odu karappan	Peru marunthu pattayathi vethu	External	Fomentation
12.	Karungarappan	Kanjangorai nei	Internal	Utchi karandi alavu
13.	Sengarappan	Poovarasu nei	Internal	Siru karandi alavu
14.	Dhoda karappan	Thirugu kalli yennai	Internal	60 ml
15.	Vaalai karappan	Neermulli nei	Internal	160ml
16.	Sevvapu karappan	Vizhangu maathirai	Internal	1 tablet
17.	Kiranthi karappan	Poovarasu yennai	Internal	160ml

Table.3: Common medicines for karappan in Children⁵.

S.No	Medicine	Internal/External	Dose
1.	Eerulli yennai	Internal	160 ml
2.	Siru serupadai yennai	Internal	Utchi karandi alavu
3.	Pungam poo yennai	Internal	Utchi karandi alavu
4.	Karaisalai yennai	Internal	½ - 1 Utchi karandi alavu
5.	Sirukurinjan yennai	Internal	160 ml
6.	Saaranai kudineer	Internal	80 ml
7.	Boothakarappan pattai yennai	External	-
8.	Milagu yennai	External	-
9.	Vidathaari yennai	External	-

Other formulations and foods for Karappan

1. Pungan vithai nei (internal)⁹
2. Aadutheendapaalai ilai charu (internal)⁹
3. Nilavembu kudineer + Lemon juice (internal)⁹
4. Sambangoli kari (internal)¹⁰
5. Vellaattu vennai (internal)¹⁰
6. Vanga kalimbu (external)⁴

Conclusion

As we conclude the above mentioned drugs and formulations are very effective in the treatment of karappan (Eczema). The main draw back in the prognosis of Eczema is the repetition of the disease according to any aggravating factors such as food, climate, external factor etc... Thus the ultimate goal of the siddha medicine is to fulfill this draw back and cure the disease. In future, the clinical trial will be done with these medicines.

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