

A Critical Review of *Mukhadushika* in Classical Literature with Special Reference to *Acne Vulgaris*.

ABSTRACT

Background: *Mukhadushika*, described under *KshudraRoga* by *Acharya Sushruta*, is a common dermatological condition in Ayurveda, also known as *Yuvanpidika* due to its occurrence during adolescence. It is characterized by *ShalmaliKantaka*-like (thorn-like) eruptions on the face. In modern dermatology, it closely resembles *Acne vulgaris*, which affects approximately 79–95% of adolescents and has become a major concern due to its rising prevalence associated with stress, pollution, hormonal imbalance, and unhealthy lifestyle practices.

Methods: A conceptual review was conducted based on classical Ayurvedic texts and relevant modern dermatological literature.

Results: According to *Ayurveda*, *Mukhadushika* occurs due to the vitiation of *Kapha* and *Vata* *Dosha* along with *Rakta Dushti*. The involvement of *Meda Dhatu* leads to the formation of *Pidika* (eruptive lesions). Clinically, these lesions resemble papules and pustules seen in *Acne vulgaris*. Modern science explains acne as a disorder of the pilosebaceous unit involving follicular hyperkeratinization, increased sebum production, and ductal blockage, resulting in inflammatory lesions and possible scarring.

Conclusion: *Mukhadushika* shows a strong correlation with *Acne vulgaris* in terms of clinical presentation and pathogenesis. Ayurveda offers a holistic management approach through *Shodhana Chikitsa* and *Shamana Chikitsa*, which helps in eliminating vitiated *Doshas*, preventing recurrence, and improving overall skin health.

Keywords: *Mukhadushika*, *Yuvanpidika*, *Acne vulgaris*, *KshudraRoga*, *ShodhanaChikitsa*, *ShamanaChikitsa*

Introduction: -The skin is the largest organ of the human body and functions as a sensory organ as well as the primary protective barrier safeguarding internal structures. Changes in skin colour may reflect disturbances in the body's homeostasis ^[1]. According to Ayurveda, the

skin is not merely an external covering but is also considered a *Gyanendriya*, specifically known as *Sparshendriya*, which is distributed throughout the body and closely associated with the mind (*Mana*). In Ayurvedic texts, thorn-like eruptions on the face resembling *Shalmali Kantaka*, occurring due to the vitiation of *Kapha*, *Vata*, and *Rakta* in adolescents, are termed *Mukhadushika*^[2]. Since these lesions commonly appear during youth (*Yuva*) and resemble small pustules or boils (*Pidika*), they are also referred to as *Yuvan Pidika*. As the condition adversely affects facial appearance, it is named *Mukhadushika*. *Acharya Sushruta* has classified *Mukhadushika* under *KshudraRoga*^[3].

Acne has often been described as the bane of youth, and while it is sometimes considered merely a cosmetic concern, it can lead to profound and lasting emotional and psychological consequences. Acne predominantly affects the skin of the face and back. *Acne vulgaris* is a self-limiting condition commonly seen in adolescents and young adults, though 10–20% of individuals may continue to experience it into adulthood. It is one of the most prevalent dermatological disorders during adolescence and is defined as a chronic inflammatory condition of the pilosebaceous units. Clinically, it presents with comedones, papules, pustules, and less frequently nodules. The condition is characterized by both open and closed comedones, papules, pustules, cysts, nodules, and scarring. Open comedones appear as blackheads due to external environmental factors, while closed comedones manifest as whiteheads, usually resulting from internal factors. Although acne can occur at any age, it predominantly affects teenagers^[4,5]. Thus, from a modern medical perspective, *acne vulgaris* closely corresponds to *Mukhadushika* in both its symptoms and pathology.

Keywords: *Mukhadushika*, *Yuvanpidika*, *Acne vulgaris*, *KshudraRoga*, *ShodhanaChikitsa*, *ShamanaChikitsa*

Aim: - This article aims to review and analyse the description of the symptoms and pathophysiology (*Samprapti*) of *Mukhadushika* as documented in various Ayurveda *Samhitas*.

Material and Methods: -

According to *SushrutSamhita*^[6]

शात्मलीकण्टकप्रख्याः कफमारुतशोणितैः ।

जायन्तेपिडकायूनांवक्तेयामुखदूषिकाः । ३८ ।। (su. Nidan)

Due to the vitiation of *Kapha*, *Vata*, and *Rakta*, thorn-like eruptions resembling the thorns of the silk cotton tree (*Semal*) appear on the face of young individuals. These eruptions are known as *Mukhaduṣika*.

According to *AshtangaHridayam*^[7]

शात्मलीकण्टकाकाराःपिटिकाःसरुजोधनाः।
मेदोगर्भमुखेयूनांताभ्यांचमुखद्वषिका॥ (As. Hridayam)

During the early period of youth in young men and women, multiple eruptions appear densely on the face. These eruptions resemble the thorns present on the trunk of the *Semal* tree sharp at the tip and broader at the base. They are slightly painful, arise due to vitiation of *Meda* (fat tissue), and are caused by *Kapha* and *Vata*. This condition is known as *Mukhaduṣika*. ॥5॥

According to *AshtangaSangraha*^[8]

शात्मलीकण्टकाकाराःपिटिकाःसरुमोधनाः।
मेदोगर्भमुखेयूनांताभ्यांचमुखद्वषिका॥ (As. Sangraha)

Due to *Kapha* and *Vayu*, in adult individuals, eruptions appear on the facespecifically over the cheeks, forehead, nose, and chin. These eruptions resemble the thorns of the *Semal* tree, are slightly painful, dense and compact, and are filled with *Meda* (fat/sebaceous material). This condition is known as *Mukhaduṣika*.

According to *Madhav Nidan*^[9]

शात्मलीकण्टकप्रख्याः कफमारुतरक्तजाः।
युवानपिडका यूनां विज्ञेया मुखद्वषिकाः ॥३३॥ madhavnidan

Eruptions resembling the thorns of the *Semal* tree that occur on the face of young individuals due to *Kapha*, *Vayu*, and *Rakta* are called *Yuvanapidika* or *Mukhaduṣika*. ॥33॥

According to *BhavparkashSamhita*^[10]

शास्मलीकण्टकमस्याःकफमारुतरफजाः।
जायन्तेपिडकापूरुमाशेयास्तामुखद्वषिकाः ॥

(bhavparkashmadhyam khanda)

The eruptions that appear on the face of individuals, resembling the thorns of the *Semal* tree, and arising due to the vitiation of *Kapha*, *Vayu*, and *Rakta*, are known as *Yuvanapidika* or *Mukhaduṣika*. These eruptions naturally occur on the faces of young men, and therefore they are also called *Yuvanapidika*. ॥11॥

According to *Bhaishajyaratnavali Samhita*^[11]

Due to the vitiation of *Kapha*, *Vayu*, and *Rakta*, young men and women develop eruptions on the face especially over the cheeks which resemble the thorns of the Semal tree and are filled with pus. These eruptions are called *Mukhaduṣika*. (भैषज्यरत्नावली)

According To *Vangsen Samhita*^[12]

शात्मलीहण्टकप्रख्याः कफमारुतशोणितैः ।

जायन्तेपिटकायूनांविज्ञेयामुखदूषिकाः ॥३९॥ (vangsenchp. 32)

Due to the aggravation of *Kapha*, *Vata*, and *Rakta*, eruptions resembling the thorns of the Semal tree appear on the face during adolescence. In common language, these are known as acne (pimples). ॥39॥

According To *Yogaratanagar Samhita*^[13]

शात्मलीहण्टकप्रख्याः कफमारुतरक्तजाः ।

जायन्तेपिटिकायूनांविशेषासुखदूषिकाः ॥ (योगरत्नागर)

Eruptions resembling the thorns of the Semal tree, caused by the aggravation of *Kapha*, *Vayu*, and *Rakta*, which spoil the facial beauty of young men, are known as *Mukhaduṣika* or *Yauvanapiṭika*.

Nidana	▪ Kalaja: Factors related to adolescence and seasonal variations. ▪ Aharaja: Excess intake of spicy, oily, heavy, fried, and sticky food articles. ▪ Viharaja: Improper lifestyle habits such as daytime sleeping, staying awake at night, excessive exposure to sunlight, and suppression of natural urges. ▪ Manasika: Psychological factors including stress, anger, fear, and emotional imbalance.
Purvarupa	▪ Itching (<i>Kandu</i>) ▪ Pain (<i>Vedana</i>) ▪ Swelling (<i>Shotha</i>) ▪ Discoloration of skin (<i>Vaivarnya</i>)
Rupa	▪ Pidika: Eruptive lesions ▪ Saruja: Painful eruptions ▪ Ghana: Hard and thickened lesions ▪ Medogarbhha: Comedone-like lesions filled with fatty material

	▪ Shalmali Kantaka Prakhya: Thorn-like eruptions resembling the spines of the silk cotton tree ▪ Commonly distributed over cheeks, chin, nose, and forehead
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Samprati- Vitiating of *Kapha*, *Vata*, *Rakta*, and *Pitta* leads to obstruction of the body channels (*Srotas*), resulting in inflammation and the formation of follicular lesions. The involvement of *Meda Dhatu* further contributes to lesion development, comparable to sebum accumulation in acne vulgaris.

Nidana

Kapha, Vata, Rakta Prakopaka

later involvement of *Shukradhatvagni*

Excess of *ShukradhatuMala*

VaktrasnigdhatuMukhadushika (Pitika)

2. According to *Ashtanga Sangraha* & *Ashtanga Hridaya* the *Samprapti* of *Mukhadushika* ^[14]

Nidana sevana

Kapha, Vata, Rakta, Meda Prakaopa

Rasa-Raktadi Dhatvagni Vaishamya

(Mainly *Medo Dhatvagni* *Vaishamya*)

Excess *Sweda Utpatti* as *Mala*

(*Swedana* is *Mala* of *Meda*)

Meda Sanga in *Romakoopa*

Mukhadushika

146 **Samprapti Ghataka**

- 147 • **Dosha:** *Kapha, Vata, Rakta*
- 148 • **Dushya:** *Rasa, Rakta, Meda, Shukra*
- 149 • **Srotas:** *Rasavaha, Raktavaha, Svedavaha*
- 150 • **Agni:** *JatharagniMandya* (impaired digestive fire)
- 151 • **Roga Marga:** *BahyaRoga Marga* (external pathway affecting the skin)

152 **Management of Mukhadushika in Ayurveda:** The foremost step in treatment is
153 *NidanaParivarjana* elimination of causative factors such as improper diet, excessive oily and
154 spicy food, stress, irregular lifestyle, and poor skin hygiene.

155 Ayurveda explains two main modalities of treatment for *MukhadushikaShodhanaChikitsa*
156 (purification therapy) and *ShamanaChikitsa* (palliative therapy).

157 **1. Shodhana Chikitsa:** - *Shodhana* aims to eliminate the vitiated *Doshas* (mainly *Kapha*,
158 *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Rakta*) from the body through *Panchakarma* procedures. It is especially
159 advised in chronic or severe cases.

- 160 • *Vamana* – Therapeutic emesis to expel aggravated *Kapha*.
- 161 • *Virechana* – Purgation therapy to purify *Pitta* and vitiated *Rakta*.
- 162 • *Nasya* – *Nasal* administration of medicines beneficial in diseases of the face and head region.
- 163 • *Raktamokshana* (*Siravedha*) – Bloodletting therapy indicated when *RaktaDushti* is
164 predominant.

165 **2. Shamana Chikitsa:** -*ShamanaChikitsa* helps pacify the aggravated *Doshas* and improve
166 skin health through internal medications and external applications.

167 **A)InternalMedications:** - Drugs possessing *Kapha-Vatashamaka*, *Raktashodhaka* (blood-
168 purifying), and anti-inflammatory properties are commonly prescribed, such as:*Haridra*,
169 *Manjistha*, *Nimba*, *Guduchi*, *Sariva*, *Lodhra*, *Daruharidra*, *Khadira*, *Methika*, and *Vacha*.

170 These herbs help in detoxification, reducing inflammation, controlling excessive oil
171 secretion, and preventing recurrence.

B) External Applications (Lepa): - Topical herbal formulations are applied over the affected area to reduce swelling, pain, discoloration, and scarring. Commonly mentioned *Lepas* include:

- *Yashtimadhvadi Lepa*
- *Lodhradi Lepa*
- *Masuradi Lepa*
- *Shalmalikantakadi Lepa*
- *Jatiphaladi Lepa*
- *Marichyadi Lepa*

➤ Different classical *Acharyas* have described specific treatment approaches for *Mukhadushika*:

- *Sushruta – Vamana and Lepana*^[15]
- *Ashtanga Hridaya – Lepana, Vamana, Nasya, Shiravedha*^[16]
- *Bhavaprakasha – Lepa, Vamana, Abhyanga*^[17]
- *YogaRatnakara– Shiravedha, Pralepa, Abhyanga*^[18]
- *SarangadharaSamhita – Lepa*^[19]
- *BhaishajyaRatnavali – Shiravedha, Pralepa, Abhyanga*^[20]
- *Chakradatta–Lepa*^[21]

Result: Classical Ayurvedic literature describes *Mukhadushika* (*Yuvanpidika*) as a common facial disorder of youth caused mainly by *Kapha*, *Vata*, and *Rakta dushti*, with involvement of *Meda*. It presents as painful, thick, thorn-like eruptions over the face, especially the cheeks, forehead, nose, and chin. The reviewed features closely correlate with acne vulgaris of modern medicine. The disease develops due to improper diet, lifestyle, stress, and adolescent changes, leading to *dosha* vitiation, *srotas* obstruction, and lesion formation. Ayurvedic management is based on *Nidana Parivarjana*, *Shodhana*, and *Shamana Chikitsa*, including *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Nasya*, *Raktamokshana*, internal herbs, and *topical Lepa*.

Discussion: -*Mukhadusika*, also known as *Yuvanapidika*, is a classical dermatological condition described under *KṣudraRoga* in Ayurvedic texts such as *Sushruta Samhita*,

199 *Ashtanga Hridaya, Ashtanga Sangraha, Madhava Nidana, Bhavaprakash, Yoga Ratnakara,*
200 *Vangsen Samhita, and Bhaisajya Ratnavali.* It is characterized by thorn-like eruptions
201 resembling *Salmali Kanṭaka*, primarily involving vitiation of *Kapha, Vata*, and *Rakta* along
202 with *MedaDhatu*. Clinically, it corresponds to Acne vulgaris, including comedones, papules,
203 pustules, and nodules. The involvement of *Meda* and *Sweda* with obstruction of *Romakupa*
204 closely correlates with blockage of pilosebaceous units due to excess sebum and keratin.

205 Classical etiological factors include *Ahara*, *Vihara*, *Kalaja*, and *Manasika* influences such
206 as *guru* and *snigdhaahara*, day sleep, night awakening, and stress, which are comparable to
207 modern acne triggers like hormonal imbalance, unhealthy diet, lifestyle irregularities, and
208 environmental factors. The *Samprapti* involves *Kapha-Vata-Rakta* vitiation,
209 *Medodhatvagnidysfunction*, and *Srotorodha*, leading to inflammatory lesions, closely
210 resembling follicular hyperkeratinization, sebum overproduction, microbial activity, and
211 inflammation in acne pathogenesis.

212 Management is holistic, involving *Shodhana* (*Vamana, Virechana, Nasya, Raktamokshana*)
213 for detoxification and *Shamana* therapy for symptom control, including internal medications
214 and external *Lepas*, which help reduce inflammation, purify blood, and improve skin health
215 while preventing recurrence.

216 **Conclusion:** -*Mukhaduṣika* or *Yuvanapidika* is a well-defined dermatological condition in
217 Ayurveda that closely correlates with Acne vulgaris in modern medicine, both in clinical
218 presentation and pathogenesis. Classical Ayurvedic texts provide a detailed description of its
219 *Nidana, Rupa, Samprapti*, and *Chikitsa*, emphasizing the role of *Kapha, Vata, Rakta*, and
220 *Meda* in disease manifestation. The striking similarity between Ayurvedic concepts such as
221 *Medogarbhapiḍika, Romakupa Sanga*, and modern understanding of pilosebaceous
222 dysfunction highlights the scientific depth of Ayurveda.

223 Early intervention through *NidanaParivarjana, Sodhana*, and *ShamanaChikitsa* not only
224 helps in controlling active lesions but also prevents complications such as scarring and
225 psychological distress. Unlike purely symptomatic modern treatments, Ayurveda offers a
226 rootcauseoriented, holistic approach, addressing dietary, lifestyle, mental, and systemic
227 factors.

228 Thus, Ayurvedic management of *Mukhadusika* provides a safe, effective, and sustainable
229 alternative or complementary approach to modern acne treatment. Integrating classical

230 Ayurvedic principles with contemporary dermatological understanding can open new avenues
231 for comprehensive acne management and improved quality of life in affected individuals.

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