

A Conceptual Review Study of Twacha Sharir

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Abstract

Ayurveda is an ancient ocean of knowledge, which deals with maintenance of healthy position and prevention of diseased condition of Body. It elaborates knowledge through several branches like Rachana sharir, Kriya sharir, Rasashastra Bhaishajyakalpana, Dravyaguna etc. Acharya Sushruta has mentioned five sensory organs and Sparshanendriya is one of them and it is located at twacha (Skin). It is the largest sense organ and it gives sensation of touch, pain, pressure and temperature etc. It is commonly known as First line of defence. Its knowledge is essential to know about diagnosis, pathogenesis and for giving treatment. It is must to gather information about skin. There is detailed information regarding twacha in Ayurveda. So present study is an attempt to study conceptually about twacha sharir.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Rachana, Twacha, sprashanendriya.

Introduction :

The skin is not simply a barrier separating a body's internal and external environment, it is also the vehicle for the biological and social communication to the external world. Any type of change in skin may indicate homeostatic imbalance in the body. Therefore before going to diagnosis and treatment of skin disease, it is essential to know the significant value of skin i.e. Rachana Sharira, Kriya Sharira and Bhruna Vijnana (Embryology). In Ayurveda the word 'Twacha' or 'Charma' is used for skin.¹ Twacha is derived from "Tvac – Samvarne" dhatu meaning the covering of the body. Acharya Charaka described Twacha as a Matrjabhava (Maternal

factors), which is one of the six Bhavas essential in the development of Foetus.² The present study entitled – "A conceptual review study of Twacha sharir" gives detailed insight about twacha.

Aims –

To study in detail Twacha.

Objective:

To take various references related to Twacha from various Ayurvedic Samhitas.

Material and Methods:

1. Compilation of different reference form texts, dictionary and Samhita related to topic.
2. Explore and elaborate the concept of Lifestyle disorders by referring books, papers, samhita etc.
3. Exploring Twacha.

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Review of Literature:**Formation of twacha:**

Acharya Sushruta has described process of formation of Twacha in the developing foetus. He states that after fertilization of ovum, twacha develops like a cream on a surface of milk. Acharya Vagbhata describes the formation of Twacha due to Paka of Rakta Dhatu by Rakta Dhatvagni in the developing foetus. After paka, it dries up to form Twacha just like the deposition of cream on milk over the surface of boiled milk.³

Synonyms of Twacha:

The third angle from which twacha could be examined is through Paryaaya vachana, the study of synonyms. Some of the Sanskrit synonyms for the term twacha are,

- Charma: a basonym for twacha, probably cognate to derma of Greek; implying the dynamic nature of skin.
- Sparshadhi sthana: the substratum for the sense of touch.
- Tanu: the thin and the stretched out (from the root tan-to stretch, as in the familiar term

Tension” from the cognate Latin root tenses, tender “ to stretch”)The term also implies what is subtle and beautiful, as in the word “tanu madhyama” meaning a small waistline of a beautiful damsel.

- Asrukdhara: the bearer of blood meaning blood flows through skin.
- Twag: skin (as in the term twag mamsa skin and flesh). This also indicates the movements of skin in the form of pulsatility and responsiveness.

Panchabhautikatwa of Tvak :

Acharya Charaka says that all the organs are the modification of Panchamahabhuta, so the Rachana and Kriya of these organs have been organized according to their Panchabhautica constitution. Twacha has been counted in Parthiva and Vayu dominant organs.⁴ As Acharya Caraka says each and every Dravya is Panchabhautica, so according to that the Pancabhautica constitution of Twacha can be understood as follows.

Mahabhuta	Effect/ Reason
Prithvi	Twacha has been considered as the updhātu of Mamsadhātu that shows it is stable.
Jala	Due to the presence of Jala Mahabhuta, Tvak is snigdha and firm.
Agni	Tvaka has the specific Varna and lustre Which are due to the Agni Mahabhuta.
Vayu	Twacha is the Adhithana of Sparshendriya. Hence Vayu Mahabhuta is also there.
Akasha	Presence of some micro channels of Sweda are indicative of the presence of Akasha Mahabhuta.

Layers of the Twacha :

The Twacha has seven layers, but there are some difference of opinion regarding the number of layers in skin between the ancient scholars like,

- a) Acharya Caraka describes six layers of skin but while elaborating these layers he has named only two layers the rest four layers have been described in terms of the diseases.

Layer	Name
1. Prathama	It is Udakadhara which is considered as Bahya – Tvak
2. Dvitiya	It is Asrgdhara
3. Tritiya	It is Sidhma, Kilasa, Sambhavadhithana.
4. Chaturtha	It is Dadru, Kustha, Sambhavadhithana.
5. Panchami	It is Alaji, Vidradhi, Sambhavadhithana
6. Shashthi	If this layer is injured then the individual gets Tembling and enters in to the darkness.

- b) Acharya Susruta has described seven layers of skin along with the specific names. He has also mentioned the thickness of each layer. Along with the diseases, which are prone to that layer.⁵

Name	Thickness	Diseases
Avabhasini	1/18 of Vreehi (0.05 to 0.06 mm)	Sidhma, Padmakantaka
Lohita	1/16 of Vreehi (0.06 to 0.07 mm)	Tilakalaka , Nyach, Vyanga
Shweta	1/12 of Vreehi (0.08 to 0.09 mm)	Carmadala, Masaka, Ajagallika
Tamra	1/8 of Vreehi (0.12 to 0.15 mm)	Kilasa, Kushtha
Vedini	1/5 of Vreehi (0.20 to 0.30 mm)	Kushtha, Visarpa
Rohini	1 Vreehi (1 to 1.1 mm)	Granthi, Arbuda, Apachi, Shleepada , Galaganda
Mamsadhara	2 Vreehi (2 to 2.1 mm)	Bhagandara, Vidradhi, Arsha

- c) Acharya Vagbhata has described seven layers of skin similar to Acharya Sushruta. He has not given any detail description. Commentator Arundatta and Hemadri have named them according to Acharya Sushruta.

Ancient term	Modern term	Types of skin
Avabhasini	Stratum corneum	Epidermis
Lohita	Stratum Lucidum	Epidermis
Shweta	Stratum Granulosum	Epidermis
Tamra	Malpighian layer	Epidermis
Vedini	Papillary layer	Dermis
Rohini	Reticular layer	Dermis
Mamsadhara	Subcutaneous tissue and Muscular layer	Dermis

So, it is essential to check its relation with Dosha, Dhatu and Mala like basic structural and functional units of the body.

Twacha and Tridosha :

There are three Doshas in our body. They are situated in specific places, which have been described in texts. According to that Twacha has been mentioned as one of the sites of Vata and Pitta Dosha.⁶

- (a) Twacha and Vata Dosa : Acharya Charaka has described Twacha as a Sparsanendriya adhithana.⁷ Sparsh i.e. Touch sense is the subject of sparshanendriya which is performed by Vata Dosha.
- (b) Twacha and Pitta Dosa : Bhrajaka Pitta is one of the type of Pitta which is located in skin. Bhrajaka Pitta is also called as Bhrajakagni, which is also situated in Twacha and forms the lusture of the skin.

Acharya Charaka has not specified the types of Pitta but he has said that the production of normal and abnormal colour of skin is belongs to the Pitta Dosha. Commentator Chakrapani comments on that and says that the regulation of body heat and variations in colour of the body are the functions of the Bhrajaka Pitta.

Acharya Sushruta describes it as a Bhrajakagni and it enables the digestion and utilization of substances used through Abhyanga, Parisheka and Alepana, Avagahana etc. It indicates the glow of one's natural complexion. Acharya Vagbhata

observes that Bhrajaka Pitta is situated in the skin. It imparts the lustre and radiance of the skin. Acharya Bhela says that Bhrajaka Pitta is responsible for the manifestation of the specific Characteristics in the body like, it creates the various Prabha of head, hand, feet, side, back etc. Bhrajaka Pitta also brightens the Prabha.

- (c) Twacha and Kapha Dosha : The snigdhatta shlakshnata, Mruduta, Shitata, prasanata and snighdhavarnata are the attributes to the presence of Kapha Dosha. Ropana Karma i.e. self-heading process is also one of the work protect by Kapha Dosha.

Twacha and Sapta Dhatu:

- a) Twacha and Rasa Dhatu : At several places Twacha has been used, as a synonyms of Rasa Dhatu like Tvaksara Purusa etc. In context of Kushtha Roga, Acharya Sushruta has mentioned that in early stages Kushtha is situated only in the Twacha. Dalhana comments on it and says that Twachashrita i.e. Rasashrita Kushtha.⁸ Chakrapani has described the six layers of skin first amongst them is Udakadhara its main work is to maintain the water content of the body. Rasa Dhatu is also Jala Mahabhuta Pradhana in Panchabhautica constitution. So one can consider the relation between Rasa Dhatu and Twacha.
- b) Twacha and Rakta Dhatu: Acharya Sushruta has described the functions of Rakta Dhatu as

Varna Prasadana. i.e. It imparts the colour of skin, Mamsa Pusti i.e. Nourishes the Mamsa Dhatu in the body.⁹ Rakta Dhatu is also responsible for the proper conduction of tactile sensation of skin.

c) Twacha and Mamsa Dhatu : Twacha is closely connected with Mamsa Dhatu because it is a Upadhatu of Mamsa Dhatu. So for the development and Nourishment of Mamsa Dhatu is concerned Twacha is very important factor.

Twacha and Trimala:

Mala (Annamala), Mutra and Sweda are the main three malas in the outcome of sara kitta vibhajana process during Dhatvagnivyapara. The kitta part is excreted out from the body. The Sweda is the mala of Meda Dhatu, which is excreted out from the Svedavahi Srotas of Twacha. Sweda maintains the Lustre and Humidity of skin.¹⁰ According to Ayurveda Nails and Hairs are the Mala of the Asthidhatu and Tvakgata Sneha is the Mala of Majjadhatu.

From the above facts it is easy to understand the relation between Twacha and Dosha Dhatu and Mala the basic units of the body.

Discussion and Conclusion:

- Sparshanendriya is one of the most important sense organs. It is located at skin; It can be correlated with twacha as per Ayurveda.
- It is formed as deposition on cream on the surface of milk when it is boiled.
- Charma, Tanu, Asrugdhara, sparshadhi sthana are synonyms of Twacha.
- It has six layers as per Acharya Charaka and seven layers as per Acharya Sushruta & Vagbhata.
- It has predominance of parthiva and vayu mahabhuta.
- It is the main site of Vata and Pitta dosha.

- It has relation with Rasa, Rakta and Mamsa dhatu.
- Sweda mala maintains lustre and humidity of skin.

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