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Impact of Viruddha Aahar on Skin Health: An Ayurvedic and Modern Perspective Shingne V.¹, Pradhan R.², Parte M.³, Dhakad R.⁴

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Abstract:

Background- *Ayurveda* has consistently highlighted the vital role of diet (*Aahar*) in maintaining health and preventing disease. **Aahar (diet)** is one of the three fundamental pillars of life, known as **Trayo-Upstambha** (*Aahar*, *Nidra*, and *Brahmacharya*). A balanced and nourishing diet is essential for maintaining health, longevity, and preventing disease. It is rightly said that the correct type of food plays the most crucial role in promoting good health. But in the present era of rush-driven daily life affects the dietary pattern and habits which includes incompatible food combination (*Viruddha Ahara*). *Viruddha Ahara* is a unique concept described in *Ayurveda* i.e., the wrong combination of food which when consumed can cause disturbances in the *dhatus* and its formation, this incompatibility may arise due to differences in qualities, combinations, methods of preparation, location, timing, dosage, or inherent nature. The consumption of incompatible food combinations can interfere with the body's regular physiological activities and metabolic balance, initiating disturbances at the molecular level.

Aim- To understand the role of *Viruddha Aahar* on skin health and relation between them.

Methodology- Collection of references from sources like *Ayurvedic* classics text, Books of modern medicine, journals, articles, research papers, etc.

Result & Conclusion- Consumption of *Viruddha Aahar* can result in *Rakta Dushti*, or the vitiation of blood, in the human body. From a modern scientific standpoint, this effect can be examined through the lens of free radical activity and its impact on cellular function.

Keywords: Viruddha Aahar, Rakta Dushti, Pitta Dosha, Skin.

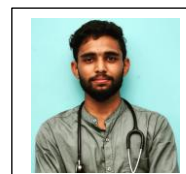
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INTRODUCTION:

Ayurveda, known as the “science of life,” focuses on preserving both physical and mental well-being. According to Ayurvedic principles, a person is considered healthy when there is a balance of the Tridoshas, proper functioning of Agni (digestive fire), normal activity of Dhatus (body tissues) and Malas (waste products), and when the soul (Aatma), senses (Indriya), and mind (Mana) are in a state of contentment ⁽¹⁾.

In Ayurveda, Aahar (diet), Nidra (sleep), and Brahmacharya (celibacy or disciplined living) are regarded as the Trayopastambha, or the three fundamental sub-pillars of life ⁽²⁾. The fact that Aahar is listed first signifies its supreme importance in sustaining and maintaining life. According to Acharya Charaka, Aahar is equated with Prana, the vital force or life breath of living beings. Essential qualities such as complexion, vitality, clarity of voice, longevity, creativity, joy, satisfaction, physical build, strength, and intelligence are all believed to be directly influenced by one's diet ⁽³⁾. Acharya Sushruta similarly emphasizes that attributes like strength, health, skin tone, freshness, and the sharp functioning of sensory organs are all dependent on proper food intake ⁽⁴⁾. This highlights the significance of the quantity of food (Aahar) needed for healthy living. However, the importance of food quality is often overlooked in this context. With significant shifts in modern lifestyles, there has also been a transformation in people's eating patterns. One such widespread and concerning habit today is the frequent consumption of Viruddh Aahar (incompatible food combinations). Both ancient and modern studies have shown that incompatible food habits are a major contributor to skin diseases. In today's modern lifestyle, a lack of awareness about proper dietary practices often leads people to unknowingly adopt unhealthy eating

patterns, which can result in various skin conditions. Therefore, avoiding incompatible foods plays a crucial role in preventing dermatological disorders.

Concept of Viruddh Aahar:

As described in Ayurvedic texts, substances that are incompatible with the body's Dhatus (tissues) act in opposition to them. This incompatibility can arise due to differences in properties, combinations, methods of preparation, place of consumption, timing, dosage, or even their inherent nature or composition ⁽⁵⁾. Disruption in the body's normal physiological functions can occur when appropriate food combinations are not followed. These disturbances often result from improper eating habits such as Samshan (eating while anxious or distracted), Adhyashan (eating before the previous meal is digested), Vishamashan (irregular eating patterns), or the consumption of Viruddh Aahar (incompatible food combinations). Viruddh Aahar can be understood as antagonistic, incompatible, or improperly combined food. In a broader sense, such food can disrupt the digestive process, leading to indigestion or Agnimandya (weakened digestive fire) and formation of Ama.

The term Viruddha literally means "opposite." It implies that certain food combinations may:

- Possess conflicting properties.
- Have opposing actions on body tissues.
- Cause adverse effects when prepared or processed in a specific manner.
- Produce negative outcomes when mixed in particular ratios.
- Lead to harmful effects if consumed at an inappropriate time.

Viruddha Ahara has the potential to cause inflammation at the molecular level. Numerous examples of incompatible food combinations have been detailed in Ayurvedic texts by Acharya Charaka and

Acharya Sushruta. However, many of these traditional examples may not be directly applicable or visible in the context of modern dietary practices. Therefore, it becomes essential to identify new forms of food incompatibilities prevalent in today's daily diet from an Ayurvedic standpoint. These modern incompatible combinations could be harmful, potentially affecting the immune system, cellular metabolism, growth hormone levels, and Dehydroepiandrosterone sulfate (DHEAS) ⁽⁶⁾.

Acharya Charaka has described 18 types of *Viruddha* (incompatibilities), which are detailed below ⁽⁷⁾.

1. Desh Viruddha: Jangal / Maru Bhoomi → Ruksha & Tikshna Dravya. Anoop Desha → Snigdha & Sheetala Dravya.
2. Kaala Viruddha: Consumption of curd during night time.
3. Agni Viruddha: Consumption of meat, black gram etc in the state of food indigestion.
4. Matra Viruddha: Intake of Madhu & Ghrita in equal quantity.
5. Satmaya Viruddha: Advice of milk to lactose intolerance individual.
6. Dosha Viruddh: Vataja Prakriti individual is advice for Vatavardhak Aharaa Vihara.
7. Samskar Viruddha: Eating curd in copper vessel
8. Virya Viruddha: When Sheeta Virya and Ushna Virya substances combined together.
9. Kostha Viruddha:
Kroor Kostha → Taking food in less quantity and laghu Dravya.
Mridu Kostha → Taking food in large quantity or Guru Dravya.
10. Avastha Viruddha: Consumption of dry, rough fried food articles like Jwar, Bajara etc immediately after heavy physical exercise.
11. Krama Viruddha: Taking a bath after a meal.
12. Parihar Viruddha: Ushna Aahar is taken after intake of Varah Mans.

13. Upchara Viruddha: Intake of Sheeta Aahar Aushadhi after Ghrita Sevan.

14. Paka Viruddha: Undercooked food, overcooked or burnt food, Improper cooking materials.

15. Samyoga Viruddha: Consumption of milk with salty food.

16. Hridaya Viruddh: Intake of food against will.

17. Sampad Viruddh: When Rasa in Aahar/Aushadhi is Ajata Rasa, Atikranta Rasa or Vipanna Rasa.

18. Vidhi Viruddh: When the Aahar Vidhi Vidhan is not followed.

The above-mentioned types of *Viruddha* (incompatibilities) can lead to the development of various diseases and disorders, such as Shandhya, Andhya, Visarpa, Dakodar, Visphotaka, Unmada, Bhagandara, Murcha, Mada, Adhmana, Galagraha, Pandu, Aama Visha, Kilasa, Kustha, Grahani Gada, Shotha, Amlapitta, Jwara, Peenasa, Santana Dosha, and in severe cases, may even result in death (Mrityu) ⁽⁸⁾.

Rakta Dhatu is one of the seven essential bodily tissues (Dhatu) in Ayurveda and plays a crucial role in sustaining life, known as 'Jeevana'. It is produced from the preceding tissue, *Rasa Dhatu*, and its waste by-product is *Pitta*.

When one consumes wholesome and nutritious food, it leads to the formation of a pure and healthy *Aahar Rasa*, which in turn contributes to the creation of *Shuddha Rakta* (pure blood). ⁽⁹⁾ Blood is vital for sustaining life and serves multiple functions. It carries oxygen and nutrients from the lungs and digestive system to the body's tissues while simultaneously removing waste products such as carbon dioxide through the lungs. This transportation also helps regulate the pH of body fluids. Other metabolic wastes like lactic acid (from muscles), urea, and ammonia are also expelled through the blood. Additionally, blood plays a key role in

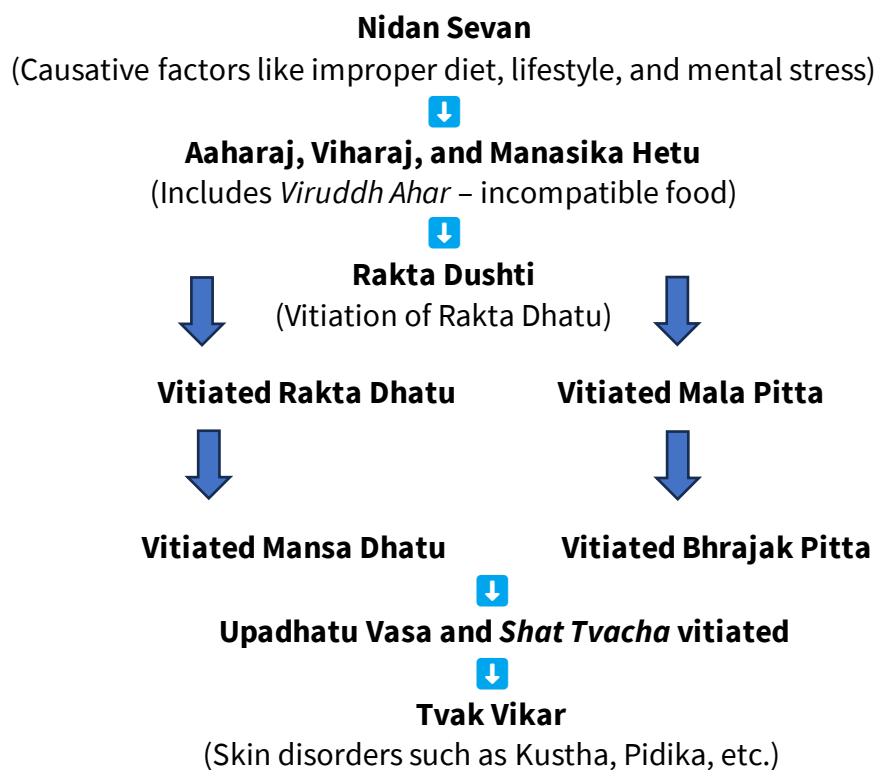
regulating body temperature and supporting the immune system⁽¹⁰⁾.

Several factors can disturb or vitiate Rakta Dhatu, which is a major contributor to the development of numerous diseases—particularly skin-related conditions. These include: *Visarpa* (herpetic eruptions), *Pidika* (pustules), *Kotha* (urticaria), *Charmadala*

(eczema), *Kustha* (skin disorders like leprosy or psoriasis), *Santapa* (burning sensations), *Kandu* (itching), *Vaivarnya* (discoloration of the skin).⁽¹¹⁾

Here is a neatly paraphrased and structured version of Flow Chart 1: Samprapti of Tvak Vikar with respect to Rakta Dushti in a clear format:

Flow Chart: Pathogenesis (Samprapti) of Tvak Vikar Related to Rakta Dushti⁽¹²⁾



Pathophysiology of skin diseases:

According to Ayurveda, the consumption of *Viruddh Aahar* (incompatible foods) can result in the improper formation of *Aahar Rasa* (the primary nutrient fluid). Since *Rakta Dhatu* (blood tissue) is formed from *Rasa Dhatu*, any disturbance in *Rasa* leads to vitiation of *Rakta*. This vitiated *Rakta* then produces its impure by-product, *Pitta*. Among the five types of *Pittas*, *Bhrajaka Pitta* is specifically located in the skin and plays a significant role in skin functions. When disturbed, particularly due to the intake of *Viruddh Aahar*, *Bhrajaka Pitta* may

contribute to the development of various skin disorders.

Modern criteria:

The consumption of *Viruddh Aahar* (incompatible food) may interfere with the body's normal process of digestion and assimilation. As a result, there could be an increase in the production of free radicals, which are normally generated during metabolism. However, excessive free radicals can trigger a chain reaction that damages cellular structures. This imbalance between free radicals and antioxidants—molecules that protect cells by neutralizing free radical can lead to oxidative stress

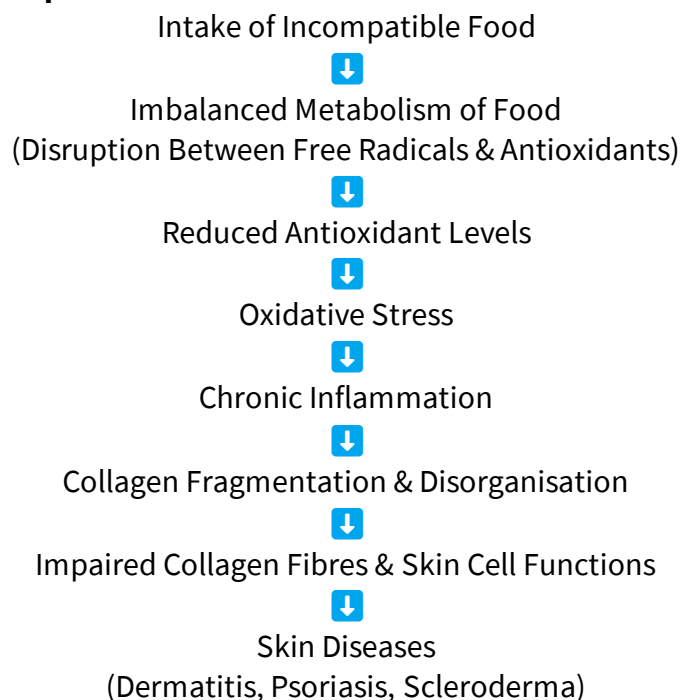
within the cells, ultimately harming their function and integrity.

When the level of oxidants surpasses the capacity of the body's antioxidant defense system, it results in a condition known as oxidative stress. This state can trigger chronic inflammation, which may subsequently lead to the breakdown and disorganization of collagen fibers, as well as impair the normal functioning of skin cells. Such disruptions in skin structure and function can contribute to the development

of various skin disorders, including skin cancer.⁽¹³⁾

Repeated consumption of a combination of *Kadaliphala* (banana) and cow's milk resulted in a statistically significant rise in SGOT and urea levels. Notable changes were also observed in the levels of SGOT, urea, and creatinine, along with alterations in the histological structures of the heart, liver, and spleen. These findings suggest that the banana and milk combination may have mild toxic effects on the body.⁽¹⁴⁾

Flow Chart 2: Modern Aspect of Skin Diseases⁽¹²⁾



DISCUSSION:

Regular consumption of incompatible foods acts like a toxin in the body, leading to the aggravation of all three *Doshas*. To manage disorders arising from such dietary habits, Ayurveda recommends *Shodhana Chikitsa* (purificatory treatments), *Shamana Chikitsa* (palliative measures), along with strict avoidance of incompatible foods. As highlighted by Acharya Charaka, an improper diet can cause the spread of vitiated *Doshas* from the digestive system to other parts of the body, resulting in various

diseases. Therefore, avoiding incompatible foods is essential for maintaining health and preventing disease.

CONCLUSION:

From the above discussion, it is evident that *Viruddha Ahara* plays a significant role in the unhealthy dietary patterns seen today. Such incompatible food combinations can unknowingly contribute to the development of various serious health conditions. Hence, identifying and listing these harmful dietary factors is essential, along with educating

patients to steer clear of them. Additionally, this topic highlights the need for further research in the field of Ayurvedic dietetics to explore and evaluate the impact of various incompatible food combinations.

Consumption of *Viruddha Aahar* can be recognized as one of the contributing factors in the development of skin disorders. Understanding the pathophysiology behind these conditions offers an opportunity to adopt alternative treatment approaches. Management can begin at the initial stage, with the consumption of appropriate and compatible foods. Once the disease manifests, treatment can be targeted at different levels—either at the level of *Doshas* or *Dhatus*, particularly focusing on the vitiation of *Rakta* or *Pitta Dosha*. In conclusion, improving dietary habits and minimizing food incompatibilities can lead to a healthier life, potentially preventing diseases or at least reducing their severity through mindful and balanced nutrition.

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