

Chicken Pox In Children And Its Ayurvedic Perspective

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Abstract

Background:

Chicken pox, caused by the varicella-zoster virus (VZV), is a common pediatric illness with high transmissibility. While conventional medicine offers effective symptomatic and preventive interventions, Ayurveda provides a holistic approach with a focus on strengthening immunity and managing symptoms through herbal formulations and lifestyle modifications.

Objective:

To review the clinical features and management of chicken pox in children from a modern biomedical perspective and explore its corresponding understanding and treatment in Ayurvedic literature.

Methods:

This review was conducted through a structured narrative approach. Articles were sourced from databases such as PubMed, Scopus, AYUSH Research Portal, and classical Ayurvedic texts. Studies focusing on pediatric chicken pox and Ayurvedic descriptions of Masurika were included.

Results:

Modern medicine treats chicken pox primarily with symptomatic therapy and antiviral drugs. Ayurveda identifies a similar condition under Masurika, treated with herbal remedies like Neem (*Azadirachta indica*), Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*), and Haridra (*Curcuma longa*), alongside purificatory therapies and dietary guidance.

Conclusion:

An integrative approach drawing from both modern and Ayurvedic practices may enhance recovery and reduce complications in pediatric chicken pox. Rigorous clinical studies are required to substantiate Ayurvedic treatments for wider clinical acceptance.

Keywords: Chicken Pox, Varicella, Ayurveda, Masurika, Pediatrics, Herbal Medicine, Immune Modulation

Introduction

Chicken pox is an acute, self-limiting infectious disease caused by the varicella-zoster virus (VZV), typically affecting children below the age of 10 years. Despite vaccination efforts, outbreaks still occur, especially in developing regions.⁽¹⁾ Clinical features include fever, malaise, and a characteristic vesicular rash.

Ayurveda, India's ancient medical system, describes a condition known as Masurika, which closely resembles chicken pox in symptomatology. The Ayurvedic approach is systemic, targeting both symptom relief and immune restoration through natural formulations, Shodhana (purificatory) and Shamana (palliative) therapies.⁽²⁾

This review aims to narratively explore the biomedical and Ayurvedic perspectives on chicken pox in children, offering a comparative and integrative insight.

Methods

A structured narrative review was conducted. Peer-reviewed articles, clinical guidelines, and Ayurvedic classical texts were consulted. Sources included:

Databases: PubMed, AYUSH Research Portal, Scopus
Keywords used: "Chicken pox in children", "Varicella", "Masurika", "Ayurveda and chicken pox", "Ayurvedic treatment for viral fever"

Inclusion Criteria:

- ◆ Articles published from 2000–2025
- ◆ Pediatric focus
- ◆ Relevance to chicken pox or Masurika
- ◆ Articles in English or Sanskrit

Exclusion Criteria:

- ◆ Non-peer-reviewed sources
- ◆ Adult-only studies
- ◆ Unrelated Ayurvedic conditions

Clinical Overview of Chicken Pox**Etiology and Transmission**

VZV is a double-stranded DNA virus of the Herpesviridae family. Transmission occurs via airborne droplets or direct contact with vesicular fluid.⁽³⁾ The incubation period is typically 10–21 days.⁽⁴⁾

Clinical Features

Children present with mild fever, malaise, and successive crops of itchy, vesicular rashes distributed across the trunk, face, and extremities. Lesions progress from macules to vesicles and crusts.⁽¹⁾

Management

Treatment is usually supportive—antipyretics, hydration, and antihistamines. Acyclovir is administered in high-risk or immunocompromised children.⁽⁵⁾ Vaccination remains the cornerstone of prevention and has significantly reduced morbidity.⁽⁶⁾

Ayurvedic Perspective: Masurika**Ayurvedic Nosology**

Chicken pox is closely correlated with Masurika, a Kushta (skin disease) characterized by febrile eruptions and boils. It is caused by the vitiation of Pitta and Kapha doshas, often due to poor hygiene, dietary imbalances, and seasonal factors.⁽⁷⁾

Symptom Correlation

Classical symptoms of Masurika include:

- ◆ Jwara (fever)
- ◆ Kandu (itching)
- ◆ Pidika (pustular eruptions)
- ◆ Daaha (burning sensation)⁽⁸⁾

These align with the clinical features of varicella.

Ayurvedic Management**Shamana Chikitsa (Palliative Therapy)**

- ◆ Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*): Immunomodulator and antipyretic⁽⁹⁾
- ◆ Neem (*Azadirachta indica*): Antiviral, antipruritic⁽¹⁰⁾
- ◆ Haridra (*Curcuma longa*): Anti-inflammatory, wound healing⁽¹¹⁾

Shodhana Chikitsa (Detoxification)

In recurrent or chronic presentations, Panchakarma procedures like Virechana (purgation) are recommended to eliminate toxins and restore doshic balance.⁽²⁾

There are 5 types of *masurika*:

	Nature of Eruption	Other Constitutional Symptoms
1) VatajMasurika	- Black or crimson in color, rough - Very painful	- Pain in joints - Dryness of palate, lip and tongue
2) PittajMasurika	- Red, yellowish or white eruption - White severe burning sensation and pain - Forming pus quickly	- Ulceration of mouth - High grade fever
3) KaphajMasurika	- eruption are white, soft, bigger, in size - Itching and slightly painful	- Headache - Feeling of heaviness in body - Stuper
4) SannipatikMasurika	- Eruption are blue in colour - Depressed in center - Highly painful, Pus forming	- Obstruction in throat.

Rasayana (Rejuvenation)

Herbal tonics like Chyawanprash and Amalaki Rasayana enhance immunity (Ojas) and support recovery.⁽¹²⁾

External Applications

Topical pastes of Neem, Sandalwood, and Manjishtha are applied to relieve itching and promote healing.⁽¹⁰⁾

Dietary Guidelines

- ◆ Light, digestible foods (Laghu Bhojana)
- ◆ Avoidance of spicy, oily, and fermented foods
- ◆ Emphasis on hydration and herbal decoctions (Kashayams)⁽⁷⁾

Comparative Overview

Parameter	Modern	Medicine Ayurveda
Cause	Varicella-zoster virus	Vitiated Pitta and Kapha
Diagnosis	Clinical, sometimes PCR	Symptom-based (Lakshana Pariksha)
Treatment	Antipyretics, antivirals, vaccine	Herbal palliatives, Panchakarma
Immunity Boost	Vaccination	Rasayana therapy
Prevention Varicella	vaccine	Hygiene, seasonal regimens (Ritucharya)

Discussion

The holistic management strategies in Ayurveda for Masurika offer symptomatic relief while aiming at long-term immune modulation. Herbs like Guduchi and Neem possess antiviral and immunostimulant properties, and modern pharmacological studies have begun to validate these effects [9,10].

Although modern medicine offers effective acute management and prevention via vaccines, integration of Ayurvedic principles may reduce symptom severity and hasten recovery, especially in mild to moderate pediatric cases. However, controlled clinical trials are needed to validate safety and efficacy in pediatric populations.

Conclusion

Chicken pox remains a relevant pediatric infection despite vaccination coverage. Ayurveda offers a complementary approach through detoxification, immune modulation, and dietary guidance. Future interdisciplinary research is warranted to create integrative treatment models combining evidence-based practices from both systems.

Source of Support: Nil

Conflict of Interest: Nil

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