Management of Dermatitis using Purim, a Polyherbal Formulation

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Dermatitis is an inflammatory skin disorder seen at all ages. Many a times, this co-exists with a history of respiratory allergy and/or a family history of atopic disease.

In clinical trials conducted earlier with Purim, it was seen that symptoms started reducing from the second week and were significantly reduced at the end of the fourth week. Most of the patients were relieved of symptoms of itching, scaling and oozing. Curcuma longa and Andrographis paniculata, herbs used in Purim, possess immunomodulatory and hepatoprotective properties. Various studies have shown that Curcuma longa possesses strong antioxidant activity. Azadirachta indica possesses potent immunopotentiating activity. Andrographis paniculata possesses anti-inflammatory property. Eclipta alba possesses potent hepatoprotective activity, the mechanism of action being the regulation of the levels of hepatic microsomal drug metabolizing enzymes. Tinospora cordifolia possesses immunomodulatory activity. The synergistic action of these multiple herbs promotes rapid healing of lesions in dermatitis, and removes various toxins and allergens from the body.

MATERIAL AND METHODS
The clinical trial was conducted at Kilpauk Medical College Hospital, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India, in patients with dermatitis. Thirty two patients in the age group of 18-70 years, with 19 male and 13 female patients, were administered Purim tablets at a dose of 2 tablets, twice daily for 8 weeks. The severity of dermatitis was graded on a 0-10 symptom sign score. The duration of dermatitis ranged from 6 months to 5 years. The patients included had a family history of dermatitis and eczema. Two patients gave a history of acute onset and in 30 patients, onset of dermatitis was gradual. Dermatitis was localized over the hands and feet in 21 patients, and 3 patients had scattered areas of dermatitis. The lesions of dermatitis included 30 patients with papules and 2 patients with urticaria. No other medications were permitted during the treatment period. The patients were followed up after 1st, 2nd, 4th, 6th and 8th weeks.

RESULTS
Thirty two patients completed the 8-week treatment period. The response to treatment in the clinical trial was very encouraging. On day zero, the mean symptom score (± SD) was 6.321 ± 1.951. After treatment, the symptom score reduced gradually i.e., after 1st, 2nd, 4th, 6th and 8th weeks, it was 4.594 ± 1.881, 4.063 ± 1.931, 3.531 ± 1.967, 2.844 ± 1.743 and 2.125 ± 1.561 respectively. One-way ANOVA (non-parametric) showed results, which are statistically significant.
DISCUSSION
The pathogenesis of cutaneous pruritus is not well understood. Pruritus and scratching can be exacerbated by allergens, reduced humidity, excessive sweating, and irritants such as wool, acrylic, soaps and detergents. Thus, atopic skin is usually associated with a lowered threshold of responsiveness to irritants.

Different types of skin lesions characterize the various stages of dermatitis viz., acute, subacute and chronic dermatitis. The skin distribution pattern changes with age. During infancy and early childhood, dermatitis is usually more acute and mostly involves the face, scalp and extensor surface of the extremities. In adolescents and adults, the skin becomes lichenified and lesions occur mainly in the flexural folds of the extremities.

Improvements were attained in most of the symptoms such as pruritus, inflammation, oozing and scaling. The overall symptom score started reducing from the 1st week onwards, and at the end of 2 weeks, it reduced by 37.78%. At the end of 4 weeks, it reduced by 45.93% and by 6 weeks, it further reduced by 56.45%. There was complete absence of symptoms at the end of the study, which was 67.46% while the remaining symptoms were only marginal. The patients also reported that due to the alleviation of the symptoms, the patients attained improvement in mood symptoms, such as anxiety, depression and stress. This formulation could have boosted the immune system thereby bringing down the symptoms of dermatitis. It could have normalized the IgE levels in the body and acted against the T-cell deregulation in the body.

REFERENCES