



CORRESPONDENCE

Letter to the Editor regarding: “History of dermatology: the study of skin diseases over the centuries”^{☆,☆☆}



Dear Editor,

We passionately studied the article named “History of dermatology: the study of skin diseases over the centuries”.¹ In our view, this is an outstanding manuscript that will be acclaimed by scholars and readers.

This article reviews and inquires about skin diseases over the centuries. This is a comprehensive study with very detailed and useful tips in which the authors have reviewed various works. However, it also has an important drawback as the authors did not refer to the medical tradition of skin diseases in medieval Islamic countries. The medieval medicine in the Islamic world, which began with the movement to translate Greek, Iranian, and Indian works, could flourish by the arrival of individuals such as Rhazes, Haly Abbas and Avicenna.^{2,3} Each of the important physicians of the era allocated chapter(s) of their works to types, causes, symptoms, and treatment of skin, hair, and nail diseases, including psoriasis, warts, vitiligo, smallpox, blemishes, and leprosy. Avicenna’s *The Canon of Medicine* and Rhazes’s *Al-Hawi* were examples of many works with detailed discussions in separate chapters.^{4–6} For instance, Avicenna allocated separate chapters of the *Canon of Medicine* to skin diseases, hair diseases, and skin color diseases. Furthermore, he considered a chapter in this book for makeup in which he described nail diseases and issues relating to makeup and beauty, as well as fitness in detail.^{5,6}

DOI of original article:

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.abd.2020.09.006>

[☆] How to cite this article: Mirzaei MR, Ghazi-Sha’rbafe J, Mohammadinasab R. Letter to the Editor regarding: “History of dermatology: the study of skin diseases over the centuries”. *An Bras Dermatol.* 2021;96:648–9.

^{☆☆} Study conducted at the Department of History of Medicine, School of Traditional Medicine, Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, Iran.

We hope that this explanation has been able to show the course of the history of medicine in the Middle Ages, its importance, and also to fill the gap in the article.

Financial support

None declared.

Authors’ contributions

Mohammad Reza Mirzaei: Approval of the final version of the manuscript; design and planning of the study; drafting and editing of the manuscript.

Javad Ghazi-Sha’rbafe: Approval of the final version of the manuscript; design and planning of the study; drafting and editing of the manuscript.

Reza Mohammadinasab: Approval of the final version of the manuscript; design and planning of the study; drafting and editing of the manuscript.

Conflicts of interest

None declared.

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Received 12 May 2021; accepted 9 June 2021
Available online 21 July 2021

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.abd.2021.06.001>

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Earliest details of dermatology by Ayurveda

Dear Editor,

I read the article entitled “History of dermatology: the study of skin diseases over the centuries”,¹ which is, astonishingly, the earliest descriptions of skin and its disorders detailed in the Ancient Indian Vedic texts, especially in Ayurvedic treatises have been unfound.^{2,3} Ayurveda, the Science of life, is the first treatise that contains numerous evidence of the origin of dermatology. *Sushruta* mentions seven layers of skin with a specific thickness and also dermatological disorders affecting each layer.⁴ (Table 1). The layers of *twak* are, *Avabhasini*, *Lohita*, *Shweta*, *Tamra*, *Vedini*, *Rohini*, and *Mamsadhara*.^{5,6}

Ayurveda designates Dermatological disorders as *Kushta*. *Kushta*, is the term assigned to the skin disorders in Ayurvedic texts, it includes various forms of pathologies of the integument system. The etiological factors for skin

disorders are classified as physical, physiological, hereditary, and psychological,⁷ and there is one more segment of etiology which basically talks about sinful acts of an individual resulting in the development of pathological manifestation in the skin, the veracity of this cause has yet not been researched. Grossly, the disorders are grouped into two as *Mahakushta* (Skin disorders with a major imbalance of dosha or bodily humor with a deeper level of pathological invasion) and *Kshudra kushta* (skin disorders with less degree of vitiation of *dosha*).^{8,9} The dreaded skin ailment, Leprosy, its etiopathogenesis, complications, and treatment modalities are described in detail in *Sushruta's* treatise.¹⁰ Descriptions of Leprosy can be traced from all the ancient manuscripts of Vedic and post Vedic era, and numerous indigenous treatment modalities and certain other treatment modalities of religious and spiritual importance are also been described.¹¹ Plenty of Ayurvedic practitioners are successfully treating skin disorders by adhering to the principles of Ayurveda as obtained through texts.

Table 1 Seven layers of skin with specific thickness.

Sl. n ^o	Layers of <i>Twak</i> (Skin)	Diseases affecting the layer
1	<i>Avabhasini</i>	<i>Sidhma</i> (Pityriasis Vesicular), <i>Padmakantaka</i> (Papilloma)
2	<i>Lohita</i>	<i>Tilakalaka</i> (Non elevated Mole), <i>Nyaccha</i> (Naevi), <i>Vyanga</i> (Freckle)
3	<i>Shweta</i>	<i>Ajagallika</i> (Molluscum Contagiosum), <i>Charmadala</i> (Atopic dermatitis), <i>Mashaka</i> (Raised Mole)
4	<i>Tamra</i>	<i>Kilasa kushta</i> (A form of Leucoderma)
5	<i>Vedini</i>	<i>Kushta</i> (Leprosy and other serious skin disorders), <i>Visarpa</i> (Erysipelas)
6	<i>Rohini</i>	<i>Granthi</i> (Cyst), <i>Apachi</i> (Cervical Lymphadenitis), <i>Arbuda</i> (Neoplasm), <i>Shleepada</i> (Elephantiasis), <i>Galaganda</i> (Goitre)
7	<i>Mamsadhara</i>	<i>Bhagadara</i> (Fistula), <i>Vidradhi</i> (Abscess)

[☆] How to cite this article: Rashmi TM, Sathish HS. Earliest details of dermatology by Ayurveda. An Bras Dermatol. 2021;96:649–50.

^{☆☆} Study conducted at the TMAE'S Ayurvedic Medical College, Shimoga, Karnataka, India.