

# Therapeutic Utility of Rhus Toxicodendron in Dermatology, with an Evidence Based Case Report

**Dr. Ambala Sriharitha**

Associate Professor, Dept of Homoeopathic Materia Medica, MNR Homoeopathic Medical College, Fasalwadi, Sangareddy, Telangana State - 502285

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## ABSTRACT

Skin diseases are one of the major cosmetic issues in modern world, and contribute 1.79% global burden of disease worldwide. They are more prevalent and has increased over the past few decades which contribute a significant burden on health-care systems across the world. Although mortality rate due to skin diseases is low, they contribute to significant disability, and effects quality of life of a person. Homoeopathy has immense scope in skin complaints, from simple injury to auto immune skin diseases. Rhus tox is one of the important remedies for many skin affections, and major remedy in day-to-day clinical practice. This article contains therapeutic utility of Rhus tox in various skin complaints and an evidence-based case report which is treated with Rhus tox.

**Keywords:** Homoeopathy, Rhus toxicodendron, herpes simplex.

## INTRODUCTION

Rhus toxicodendron also called as “poison ivy”, a small shrub, native of North America, Canada & Georgia, belongs to Anacardiaceae family. Fresh leaves gathered at sunset just before flowering time are used for preparation of tincture and potencies. It was introduced into Homoeopathic practice by Hahnemann in 1816.

**Doctrine of signature:** The active principle of Rhus tox is Rhoitannic acid and Volatile substance known as Toxicodendric acid, which is given off from the plant in greatest amount after the sun goes down i.e., at

night, in damp or cloudy weather and in months of June and July. Absence of sunlight together with dampness favours the exhalation of toxicodendric acid, so there is aggravation for Rhustox patients at night, and in damp weather.

**Toxicological proving:** J.H.Clark, gives in his book “Dictionary of Practical Materia Medica” that, Actual contact with the plant is not necessary in order to produce its effect, and he also gives an example for this– “on one sultry day in June a young lady drove a croquet ball across a lawn to a clump of Poison Ivy that grew beside it. Knowing her susceptibility she reached under the plant and drew out the ball without touching a leaf. During the evening of the same day her face began to itch and burn, and in the night it swelled so that the eyes were not merely closed, the lashes even disappeared in the swelling. It took nearly two weeks for her to recover”.

**Affinity:** It affects powerfully the skin, mucous membranes and fibrous tissues. It has infallible cures with regards to dermatology.

**Therapeutic utility of Rhustox in skin complaints:** Rhustox is most commonly used remedy in day-to-day clinical practice for Vesicles, herpes; urticaria; pemphigus; erysipelas; vesicular suppurative forms. The characteristic eruption of Rhustox is “ERYSEPELAS VESICULAR” type. The vesicles may be small or large and may

become pustular. Based on these types of eruptions, we can utilize it in cases of all vesicular and pustular diseases like herpes simplex or herpes zoster, pemphigus, chicken pox, small pox, etc. Because of its tendency to produce nettle rash eruptions, we can use it in any kind of inflammation attended with redness, like insect bite scarlet fever, urticaria and cellulitis.

### Therapeutics:

1. Useful in Gangrenous ulcers → resulting from small vesicles, with violent fever.
2. ERYSEPELAS → begins in the ankle, and moves gradually up the leg, running up in the deeper tissues, no fever.
3. INFLAMATION, CARBUNCLES & ABSCESS → Cellulitis and infections. In the beginning stage of carbuncle, when pains are intense, and affected parts are dark red; if given early may abort whole trouble. Bluish, gangrenous carbuncles. Wen of many years' duration cured with Rhustox, which caused erysipelas at same time. Will often abort a beginning suppurative process near the rectum. Abscess: axillary, parotid. Panaritium. Burning or cold sensation in ulcers.
4. STYES → on lower lid.
5. HERPES INFECTIONS → Erysipelatous swelling of head and face with vesicles drying up and forming itching scabs. Burning and neuralgic pains after herpes zoster. Herpetic eruptions alternate with dysentery and pains in chest.
6. ECZEMA → of entire hairy scalp, causing loss of hair. Burning, & tendency to formation of scales. If face is attacked by eczema there is oedema of loose cellular tissue about eyelids. The more they scratch the greater the urgency to scratch; eczema, Itching < by sweating.
7. ORBITAL CELLULITIS → rapid in onset and course, very destructive. Swollen, red, oedematous. Pustular inflammations. Photophobia with profuse flow of yellow pus. Profuse gush of hot, scalding tears upon opening lids. Eye painful on turning it or pressing, can hardly move it, as in acute retrobulbar neuritis.
8. SUPPURATIVE IRITIS → of rheumatic origin, after exposure to cold and dampness.
9. FEVER-BLISTER → around mouth and chin. Corners of mouth ulcerated.
10. URTICARIA → Skin red, swollen; intense itching. Urticaria during heat, and also in cold air. The cold fresh air is not tolerated; it makes the skin painful. Itching & burning and smarting, feeling as if pierced with hot needles. Itching > by Hot water. Burning after scratching.
11. PEMPHIGUS → each bulla with a red areola.
12. SMALLPOX → eruption sinks and turns livid; & typhoid symptoms.
13. Warts → especially on hands and fingers; large jagged, often pedunculated, exuding moisture and bleeding readily.
14. Corns → on feet, with burning sensation, and pain as of excoriation.

### CASE REPORT

A female patient of aged 18 yrs., student, on 27.12.2022, came to OPD with the following complaint - Redness in and around right eye.

**History of presenting complaints:** patient sat under some tree, and had conversation with friends for some time and left that place. After reaching hostel she felt itching, redness and slight burning of right eye.

**On examination-** there is swelling of right upper eye lid with redness.

**Provisional diagnosis:** insect bite?

**First prescription, 27.12.2022:** She visited Homoeopathic OPD on same day, Apis 200 was prescribed as it looked like insect bite.

**Second prescription, 28.12.2022:** Apis did no good, and the redness gradually increased, and spread all around eye. Very tiny vesicles are seen on observation. On this visit, she received a dose of Sulphur 200.

**Third prescription 29.12.2022:** no improvement in her complaints. She has intense burning, and redness, felt better after bathing with warm water.

Case retaken and diagnosis was made as Herpes infection. Following totality was made after retaking case.

Acute totality formed according to bogers approach:	Reportorial sheet-																																																																						
Eruptions- erysipelas, vesicular Herpetic eruptions Edematous swelling of right upper eye lid redness Burning > warm water	<p>This analysis contains 79 remedies and 4 symptoms. Intensity is considered</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>1</th> <th>2</th> <th>3</th> <th>4</th> <th>5</th> <th>6</th> <th>7</th> <th>8</th> <th>9</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Sum of symptoms (scorddeg)</td> <td>4</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>9</td> <td>6</td> <td>6</td> <td>5</td> <td>4</td> <td>4</td> <td>3</td> <td>5</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>01. EYE-ERUPTIONS - Lids - herpes</td> <td>1</td> <td>10</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>02. EYE-SWELLING - Lids - edematous</td> <td>1</td> <td>35</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>03. EYE-SWELLING - Lids - Upper lids - right</td> <td>1</td> <td>19</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>04. SKIN-ERYSIPELAS - vesicular</td> <td>1</td> <td>38</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Sum of symptoms (scorddeg)	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2		9	6	6	5	4	4	3	5	4	01. EYE-ERUPTIONS - Lids - herpes	1	10								02. EYE-SWELLING - Lids - edematous	1	35								03. EYE-SWELLING - Lids - Upper lids - right	1	19								04. SKIN-ERYSIPELAS - vesicular	1	38							
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Based on above symptoms, Rhustox 200, 2 doses were prescribed on 29.12.2022, followed by Saclac for a week.

upper eye lid, redness, burning ameliorated by warmth applications. As the symptoms indicating clearly Rhustox, so it was prescribed, however, Synthesis repertory was also used as a tool to search remedies which are in the top list. Potency selected was 200 based on moderate susceptibility. Patient recovered within a week, without recurrence till date.

### DISCUSSION

Patient in 3<sup>rd</sup> visit could able to give symptoms which helped in formation of acute totality. Symptoms taken are – erysepelar vesicular type eruptions, herpetic eruptions, Edematous swelling of right

### Prognosis pictures:



### CONCLUSION

Homoeopathy has huge scope in various dermatological conditions, and cure is possible in safest, quick and cost-effective manner, without complications. Each drug was proved and reproved in most accurate way, which is showing its efficacy even today and every day at clinical practice.

### Declaration by Authors

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