

STRESS- A PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDER AND ITS MANAGEMENT IN AYURVEDA - A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Physical imbalances can disturb mental state while mental illness leads to disruption of body functions. In addition, intake of unhealthy diet, smoking, drinking and addiction of drugs, rampant in today society also results in different kinds of psychological stresses. In *Ayurveda* many reference of Manas and treatment of Manovikara was available which would be easy to understand and rewarding in the field of treatment, it can be achieved by describing the definition of Manas, its functions, qualities, concept of Manas, classification of mental disorders, treatment, prevention and method of examination of mental illness and other important aspects. Psychiatry in *Ayurveda* integrates mind, body and soul. The mind-body connection is very important in *Ayurveda*. Health is a state of complete physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. (WHO) Healthy balance of the mind and body is given utmost importance in *Ayurveda*. This balance is hampered today by the change in life style of man, which is causing a lot of stress. Concepts of *Ayurveda*, meditation, *yoga*, physical exercises and a balanced diet may play an important role in relieving stress effectively. It is like rejuvenation and cleanup process on all levels, physical, mental and emotional. *Ayurveda* is highlighted as a holistic system with its concern for prevention and promotion of stress and mental health.

KEYWORDS: Manas Roga, Stress, Psychology/Psychiatry, Ayurvedic management

INTRODUCTION

Thousands of years before modern science provided scientific evidence for the mind-body connection; the sages of India developed Ayurveda, which continues to be one of the worlds most sophisticated and powerful mind-body health systems. More than a mere system of treating illness, Ayurveda is the science of life. It offers a

body of wisdom designed to help people stay vibrant and healthy while realizing their full human potential¹.

Stress is defined as “a state of psychological and physiological imbalance resulting from the disparity between situational demand and the individual’s ability and motivation to meet those needs.”

Stress can be positive or negative: Stress is good when the situation offers an opportunity to a person to gain something. It acts as a motivator for peak performance. Stress is negative when a person faces social, physical, organizational and emotional problems.

In the mental disorder / psychological disorder personality and its type A&B is caused by stress: The 'Type A' people:

- They feel guilty while relaxing
- They get irritated by minor mistakes of self and others
- They feel impatient and dislike waiting
- They also multitask and prefer to do several things at one time

The 'Type B' people are exactly opposite and hence are less affected by stress due to the above factors.

Technological advancements, industrialization and excessive urbanization in 21st century have given rise to situation which produced dangerous emotional strain and stress. One is bound to face various kinds of challenges in present era because of different kinds of occupational, social, and environmental stress in addition to ordinary demands imposed by the process of living. All this results in stress, which reflects itself in the form of anxiety, anger, and fear. In addition intake of unhealthy diet, smoking, drinking and addiction of drugs, rampant in today's society also results in different kinds of psychological stresses. It is important to note that the most important lifestyle related diseases like Diabetes mellitus, Hypertension, Coronary artery disease (CAD), Thrombo-embolism, Cerebrovascular accidents (CVA's) etc. have been included under the umbrella of

psychosomatic disorders as stress and psychosocial factors are important as causative, precipitative or exacerbative factors in this disorders.

Ayurveda describes three categories of etiological factors for all manasika vikars.

1. Asatmyendriyarthasamyoga,
2. Pragyaparadha
3. Parinama.

A thorough examination of the nature of these three etiological factors would indicate that this is an excellent classification of stress factors which are responsible for stress and all types of manasika vikars. According to Ayurveda, for all types of mental disorders, Alpasatva (weak mind), Manovaha strotas (channels conveying manas), Manodosha; Rajasa, Tamasa and Tridosha are said to be responsible². Manasa Vikara resulting from emotional disturbance due to dearrangement of Rajo and Tamo dosa are treated with psycho-behavioural therapy (Satvavajaya chikitsa).

AYURVEDIC REVIEW - MANAS

The word Manas is derived from Sanskrit root, "Mana jnane" which is taken in the meaning of 'to think', 'to analyse', 'to anticipate' etc³. The 'Manas' (mind) is an important component of life entity, classically termed as Ayu, which also contains other three components as described by Charaka viz, Sharira (physical body), Indriya (sensory apparatus) and Atma (soul)⁴.

Manovaha strotas has not been separately mentioned in Charaka Samhita. It is however stated that the entire sentient body represents the habitat of the manas and therefore all strotases of the body should be considered as the manovaha strotases⁵.

Chakrapani states that manas is located in Hridaya⁶.

There are three qualities of mind viz. Satva, Rajas and Tamas⁷.

Satva – It is the quality of intelligence, Virtue and goodness and creates harmony, balance and stability. It is light and luminous in nature, It possesses an inward and upward motion and brings about the awakening of the soul. Satva provides happiness and contentment. It is the Principle of clarity, wideness and peace.

Rajas – It is the quality of change, activity and turbulence. It introduces the disequilibrium that upsets an existing balance. Rajas are stimulating and provide pleasure, owing to its unbalanced nature it quickly results in pain and suffering.

Tamas – It is the quality of dullness and sluggishness and heavy or obstructing in its action. It has depressed mood, lack of faith in god, lack of good conducts, intellectual lacking, ignorance, dishonesty, not attending to duties and sleepiness.

When these three remain in equilibrium state leads to mental well-being. When this state of equilibrium is disturbed i.e. when Rajas and Tamas Doshas are increased or reduction in the qualities of satva guna leads to development of Manas vikaras. Such disorders according to Ayurveda are minor. But when the somatic Doshas viz, Vata, Pitta, and Kapha are involved in the process of pathogenesis, the disease produced as a result of such interaction are considered as major one. At this level there is usually marked alteration of Dhi, Dhriti and Smriti⁸.

Etiological Factors of Manas Roga⁹:
Etiological factors can be classified into:

i) The basic three fold causes—unwholesome contact of Kala, Buddhi and Artha i.e. Prajnaparadha, Asatmendriyarthasamyoga and Parinama.

ii) Sadvritta apalana.

iii) Vegavarodha and vegodharana.

iv) Purvajanmakrita karma.

v) Prakriti viparyaya

In Ayurveda the evolutionary process of life is a complex phenomenon and accordingly the concept of disease especially the mental illness is also highly complex. Mind, body and soul influence each other. However grossly there are two types of disease Sharirika (Somatic) and Manasika (Psychic) according to the location of disease. When psychic or somatic disease becomes chronic due to their intensity, they may get combined with each other. Such combination rarely occurs when the disease is manifested only for a short period.

Chakrapani¹⁰ further interprets and elaborates their context and strongly postulates the psychosomatic concept of Ayurveda. Ayurveda described this view (based on Charak and Chakrapani) in following ways:

1. Sharirika vyadhi affects to the Sharirika vyadhi.

2. Manasika vyadhi affects to the Manasika vyadhi.

3. Manasika vyadhi affects to the Sharirika vyadhi.

4. Sharirika vyadhi affects to the Manasika vyadhi.

A psychosomatic disease results from continued stressful state. Such environmental factors include physical as well as psychosocial stimuli. Thus the pathogenesis of a psychosomatic disease

passes through four describable phases also described by the author earlier elsewhere,

1. Pure psychic phase,
2. Psychoneurotic phase,
3. Psychosomatic phase
4. Advanced organic phase¹¹.

The Susruta's concept of Sat-kriyakala has also been recently studied by the author and his associates in the context of Psychosomatic diseases¹². In the light of the nature of biological response one may include the Six Kriyakalas within the above mentioned four phases of Psychosomatic disease as per following scheme.

1. Psychic phase - Sanchaya
2. Psychoneurotic phase - Prakopa and Prasara
3. Psychosomatic phase - Sthana Samsraya and Vyakti
4. Advanced organic phase - Bhedavastha

This concept of psychosomatic interrelationship is described extensively in relation to physiological, psychological and phenomenal aspect of disease. *Charaka* has described the samprapti of manas roga in very systematic way. Accordingly the etiological factors primarily vitiate Raja and Tama (Manas Doshas), which affect Hridaya (the seat of intellect or brain) of an Alpa sattva person and causes Manovaha Srotodusti (vitiates psychic centre .i. e. emotion etc) and give rise to different Manas Roga¹³.

Nidana Seven = Vitiating of Dosas = 1. Manas + Psychic Personality 2. Sharira Dosha = Hridaya (Seat of intellect) = Manovaha Srotodusti = **Manas Vyadhi** (Mental disorder)

Components of Samprapti of Manas Roga are as follows:

A. Dosha

Manasika—Raja and Tama

Saririka—Tridosha, predominantly Vata

B. Dushya

Manas (Emotions)

Buddhi (Intellect or decision) Sangya Jnana (Orientation and responsiveness)

Smriti (Memory)

Bhakti (Devotion)

Shila (Habit, Temperaments etc.)

Chesta (Psychomotor activity)

Achara (conducts)

C. Adhithana

Hridaya (Buddhi or brain)

Manovaha Srotas

D. Srotas-

Apasmara-Samjnavaha Srotas, Rasavaha Srotas

Unmada—Manovaha srotas, Rasavaha Srotas

Atatwabhinivesha- Manovaha Srotas, Buddhivaha Srotas

Stress's relation with Mental Illness

Primary psychological conditions caused purely by mental disorders are kama (lust), krodha (anger), lobh (greed), moha (delusion), irshya (jealousy), mana (pride), mada (euphoria), shoka (sorrow, grief), chinta (anxiety), udvega (neurosis), bhaya (fear), harsha (happiness)¹⁴. The psychiatric conditions caused by a combination of physical and mental (psycho-physical) disorders are unmada (psychosis), apasmara (convulsive disorder), apatantraka (hysteria), atattvabhinvesha (obsession), bhrama (illusion, vertigo), tandra (drowsiness), klama (neurasthenia), mada-murchha-sanyasa (loss of sensory perception leading to coma), madatyaya (alcoholism), gadodvega (hypochondriasis).

Charaka in his treatise *Charaka Samhita*, describes eight essential psychological factors that are negatively affected in various ways in all psychiatric disorders. The psychopathological condition is a function of these factors, which are manas (mind), buddhi, smriti (memory), sajnajnana (orientation and responsiveness), bhakti (devotion), shila (habits), cheshta (psychomotor activity) and achara (conduct)¹⁵. Compared to other major ayurvedic texts like *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridayam*, *Charaka Samhita* gives more emphasis to the view of life as a self-aware field of pure consciousness and natural intelligence where the knower and the known are one. Ayurveda is very effective for stress management and to encourage body and soul to achieve composure of the mind.

MODERN REVIEW

A Psychosomatic disease is also known as psychophysiological disease and is essentially a disorder of stress. It is termed psychosomatic because the initial cause of such a disease centres on the psyche and the manifestations are obviously somatic. In recent years, the incidence of Psychosomatic diseases has shown a tremendous increase throughout the world, especially in western wealthy society, where most of the infectious and nutritional causes of ill health have been completely eradicated, but the psychosomatic disorders are emerging as a greater and growing challenge before the medical profession. It is at this stage that attention has been drawn to Ayurveda and Yoga for their utilization in promotive, preventive and curative care of Psychosomatic ill health.

Stress's relation with lifestyle diseases

Stress is basic elements of various human diseases and mental illness. Stress is a term that refers to the sum of the physical, mental, and emotional strains or tensions on a person. Stress is the wear and tear our mind and body experiences as we attempt to cope with our continually changing environment. Stress is also called as anxiety, tension etc. Stress has been defined as the non-specific response of the body to any demand made on it, which can be psychologically defined as a perceptual phenomenon arising from a comparison between the demand on the person and his ability to cope. An imbalance between the two gives rise to stress and to the stress response. The stress can arise from a multitude of sources and can be categorized as those in the environment including work environment (occupational), social environment on one hand and those within the individual on the other. In relation to the work environment, the individual may be suffering from work over load in the form of unrealistic deadlines, long hours as a feeling that the job is beyond his competence. Relationship with colleagues and superiors may be strained. Social environment seem to play a major part in determining the way in which we cope with negatives events. It may include partners, relatives, friends, and acquaintances¹⁶.

Stressor (Etiological agent): A stressor is defined as a stimulus or event that provokes a stress response in an organism. Stressors can be categorized as acute or chronic, and as external or internal to the organism¹⁷. Psychosocial stressor is defined as "any life event or life change that may be associated

temporally (and perhaps causally) with the onset, occurrence, or exacerbation [worsening] of a mental disorder. Feelings of stress in humans result from interactions between persons and their environment that are perceived as straining or exceeding their adaptive capacities and threatening their well-being. The element of perception indicates that human stress responses reflect differences in personality as well as differences in physical strength or health¹⁸.

Causes of Stress

Stress is a physical, mental, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension. Stresses can be external (from the environment, psychological or social situations) or internal (illness, or from a medical procedure). Stress can initiate the 'fight or flight' response, a complex reaction of neurologic and endocrinologic systems. One significant source of stress in modern life is the cumulative effect of various toxic waste products in the environment. Our personality, behavior, and lifestyle all have important influences on our stress level. Much stress occurs through emotions such as aggression, impatience, anger, anxiety, and fear, all of which kindle the body's stress responses. Eating an unhealthy diet, smoking, drinking, and taking drugs can also contribute further to physical strain. Stress may be generated through work overload and under load, at home and workplace, within relationships, as a result of internal emotional conflict, frustration, lack of group cohesiveness, lack of social support, through environment, diet, ill-health, and financial insecurity as well as through major life events such as marriage death, divorce etc. Man facing number problems in the modern

society, these problems thrown the man in to mental stress. Mental stress causes the number of psychosomatic disorder like hypertension, migraine and severe headache etc¹⁹. Stress can cause or influence the course of many medical conditions including psychological conditions such as depression and anxiety. Medical problems can include poor healing, irritable bowel syndrome, high blood pressure, poorly controlled diabetes and many other conditions.

Area of the body affected by the stress :
Brain and nerves, Muscles and joints, Heart, Stomach, Pancreas, Intestines, Reproductive system.

Signs of Mental Health as per Ayurveda

Good memory

Taking the right food at the right time

Awareness of one's responsibilities

Awareness of the self and beyond self

Maintaining cleanliness and hygiene

Doing things with enthusiasm

Cleverness and discrimination

Being brave

Perseverance

Maintaining cheerfulness irrespective of the situation

Fearlessness in facing situations

Sharp intellectual functioning

Self-sufficiency

Following a good value system

Ability to proceed steadfastly against all odds²⁰.

MANAGEMENT IN AYURVEDA

*Nidanaparivarjana*²¹ (Avoidance of Causal Factors):

This is very important and foremost principle of treatment of any disease.

(a) Sadvritta palan

(b) Samyak vega dharana and udirana
(c) Wholesome contact of Kala, Buddhi and indriyarthas

(d) Following the Ahara visheshayatana.

The pancha karma measures used are External Snehana and Internal Snehapana followed by Vamana, Virechana, Vasti, Nasya, Shirodhara, Shiro Vasti, Thalam, Thalapothechil. Complete purification of body and mind with panchakarma treatment procedure like Nasya, Shirodhara, Shirobasti, Vasti and many others balance all the three doshas and help to stabilize the thought process for better mental strength.

The psychosomatic disease is a preventable problem. Necessary environmental correction and personality training by practice of Yoga and similar other measures may prevent the psychosomatic disease to a large extent. Environmental preservation both in its physical and psychosocial dimension is essential for prevention of psychosomatic disease in a given society. '**Yogo moksha pravartakah**' i.e. by the practice of yoga one can attain the state of Moksha (salvation). Process of increasing satva and decreasing Raja and Tama leading to Karma Kshaya (loss of deeds) is the way of attaining Moksha²².

Naisthiki Chikitsa: These terms refers of absolute eradication of miseries attained by the elimination of desires (Upadha), which are root cause of all miseries. Elimination of desired lead to the eradication of all miseries²³.

Svastha Vrtta and Sadvrtta are essential for preventing such problems in an individual. Environmental correction and psychosomatic therapy including psychotherapy i.e. Satvavajaya, use of

psychotropic drugs and Medhya Rasayana therapy for curtailing the source of continued stress in these individuals²⁴.

Satvavajaya chikitsa²⁵:

Sattavajaya chikitsa is aimed at the control or restrain of the mind. Charaka defines it as a method of restraining the mind from unwholesome arthas. This permits occupational, behavioral therapies as well.

According to Charaka, the best approach to achieve the goal of satvavajaya chikitsa as mentioned earlier is through jnanam (knowledge), vijnanam (analytical thinking), dhairya, (courage), smrti (memory), and samadhi (concentration)²⁵.

Mental disorders are mainly caused by kama (excessive desire) soka (grief), bhaya (fear) krodha (anger), harsa (delight), irsyas (jealousy), moha (agreed) should be countered by inducing the opposite passion in order to neutralize the causative ones.

Psycho therapy²⁶

Such as (a) Assurance. (b) Replacement of emotion (c) Regulation of thought process (d) Retraining of Ideas (e) Channelization of presumptions (f) Correlation of objective and ideals (g) Proper guidance and advice for taking decisions (h) Proper control of patience (i) Fear therapy or psycho shock therapy.

Lifestyle modification therapy²⁷

The purpose of lifestyle modification therapy is to help patients change behaviour that contribute to stress and initiate new dietary and physical activity & behaviours needed to change lifestyle. Behaviour therapy for lifestyle should involve:

i) Developing specific and realistic goals that can be easily measured e.g. walking for 20 minutes.

ii) Developing a reasonable plan for reaching these goals and prevent relapse.

iii) Making incremental changes rather than large changes, so patients can have successful experiences that can be used as a foundation for additional lifestyle alterations.

The above goals for the treatment of these disorders usually include the following components-

- Self monitoring
- Self monitoring records
- Problem solving
- Contingency management
- Stimulus control
- Stress management
- Social support
- Cognitive restructuring

Relaxation techniques²⁸

Relaxation is a means of getting free from stress. Stress is supposed to be a major causal factor of mental illness. Various types of relaxation procedures have been devised.

i) Jacobson's progressive relaxation technique – is a type of therapy that focuses on tightening and relaxing specific muscle groups in sequence. It is also known as progressive relaxation therapy.

ii) Yoga

iii) Autohypnosis

iv) Transcendental meditation

v) Bio-feed back

vi) Individual psychotherapy

Yogic relaxation techniques²⁹

i) Asanas (Physical postures) – Vajrasana, Padmasana, Savasana

ii) Pranayama (Breath control)

Nadi shodhana & Ujjayi pranayama

iii) Yoga nidra (Technique of yogic relaxation)

iv) Dhyana (Meditation)

Yoga Nidra³⁰

Yoga nidra is a systematic method of inducing complete physical, mental and emotional relaxation which has been derived from Tantric classics. It is practiced into following four phases

- Samkalpa (Resolution)
- Rotation of consciousness
- Awareness of Breath
- Feelings of sensation
- Visualization

It has been found extremely effective technique for the prevention and management of hypertension, Diabetes Mellitus, Coronary Artery Disease and other lifestyle disorders and is being practiced in the various clinical set ups with fruitful results.

Besides the use of Sadvrta and Yoga, Ayurveda also describes a special class of promotive agents called Medhya Rasayanas claimed to promote mental health. Medhya Rasayanas also possess considerable degree of anti-anxiety effect besides their classical mental health promoting role such as Sankhapushpi (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*), Brahmi (*Bacopa monniera*), Mandukaparni (*Hydrocotyle asiatica*), Asvagandha (*Withania somnifera*) etc. Most of these drugs give the significant anti-anxiety and adaptogenic i.e. anti-stress effect³¹.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Rapid changes in globalizing world associated with urbanization in the new millennium have resulted in newer type of stressors. Negative lifestyle factors reduce the ability to cope with these adverse stresses. Most common negative factors that are becoming part of modern lifestyle are-

drugs and alcohol, overwork, poor diet including excess caffeine or sugar, lack of exercise, poor sleep and lack of leisure time as well as fun and recreational activities. Physical illness resulting from unhealthy life style are –Ischemic heart disease, Diabetes mellitus ,Hypertension, Acid peptic disease, Obesity, Alcoholic liver disease etc. The effect of stress over these diseases can be taken care by variety of relaxation and stress reduction activities. They include Life style modification therapy such as Meditation – Yoga asana, Pranayama, Prayer, Listening to music, Looking at pleasant scenes or art, body scan exercises etc.

These exercises need to be practiced regularly to be effective. Yoga Nidra is a very useful procedure for taking care of the variety of stressors. It effectively can be enhanced by combining it with life style modification techniques. Ayurveda can be an important remedy for stress and can offer stress relief. It provides a combination of benefits such as Panchakarma, Medhya Rasayana, Satvavajaya chsikitsa and follows Sadvritta, Dincharya etc. Yoga and Pranayama can have great benefits in stress and mental health.

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