

**NON-PHARMACOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT OF PSYCHOSOMATIC DISORDERS:
AN AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE**

Satyapal Singh*

Research Scholar, Department of Kayachikitsa, Faculty of Ayurveda, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India.

***Correspondence for Author: Satyapal Singh**

Research Scholar, Department of Kayachikitsa, faculty of Ayurveda, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India.

Article Received on 05/09/2015

Article Revised on 25/09/2015

Article Accepted on 15/10/2015

ABSTRACT

Optimal health conceived in Ayurveda is perfect harmony of body, mind and soul i.e. a psychosomatic approach of health. Ayurveda emphasizes equally on promotion of physical and mental health for prevention as well as for management of a disease. Ayurveda described two fold management of disorders which is Dravyabhoot Chikitsa (pharmacological management) and Adravabhoot Chikitsa (non-pharmacological management). The non-pharmacological management of psychosomatic disorders include Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa (divine therapy), Satvavajaya Chikitsa (psycho-behavioral therapy), Pathyapathya (do's & don'ts regarding diet and behavioral conducts), non-pharmacological Rasayana (rejuvenative measures) like Achara Rasayana & others and Yoga therapy.

KEYWORDS: Psychosomatic disorders, Stress, Immunomodulation, Non-pharmacological Rasayana, Code of conducts.

INTRODUCTION

According to the Ayurveda, health is a state of physical, physiological, metabolic, psychological and spiritual well being.^[1] The pathological state or disease in Ayurveda is defined as a state of disturbance of homeostasis in Dosha, Dhatu, Mala, Agni, Indriya and Manas resulting in physical and psychological discomfort. Therefore, health and the disease have been defined in Ayurveda to have a psychosomatic approach.

Satva (psyche/mind), Atma (soul) and Sharira (body) are the three pillars of life as per the view point of Ayurveda. Proper functioning and co-ordination of these three is responsible for the psychosomatic health and longevity. The entity which establishes the contact between the body and soul and regulates the function of different Indriyas (sense organs) is defined as Satva. It is responsible for presence or absence of knowledge and works at three level i.e. perception (cognitive or sensory), stimulation or initiation (conation or motor reflex) and discussion and determination. Default at any level is responsible for the manifestation of the disorders termed as psychosomatic disorders. Modified from.^[2]

The fast growing incidence of psychosomatic diseases and the increasing scientific knowledge on their etio-pathogenesis in recent years had led to the emergence of

psychosomatic medicine as a major specialty in modern system of medicine.

Different approaches as described in Ayurveda such as diagnostic approach, principle of drug action, dosage forms, different pharmacological as well as non-pharmacological approaches in the prevention and management for a wide range of disorders, therapeutic and personalized approaches towards lifestyle modification or recommendation and management of different disorders are highly appreciated since antiquity and are now evolving concepts of pharmaco-epidemiology and pharmaco-genomics of modern medical science.

OVERVIEW OF NON-PHARMACOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Ayurveda described the two fold management of disorders which is Dravyabhoot Chikitsa (pharmacological management) and Adravabhoot Chikitsa (non-pharmacological management). The non-pharmacological management of psychosomatic disorders include Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa, Satvavajaya Chikitsa, Pathyapathya (do's & don'ts regarding diet and behavioral conducts), non-pharmacological Rasayana like Achara Rasayana & others and Yoga therapy.

Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa include chanting mantras, Aushadhi and Mani Dhaaran (spiritual use of herbs and gems), Mangal Karma (propitiatory), Bali (offering oblations), Homa, Prayashchita (ceremonial penances), Upavasa (fasting), Swastyayana (rituals for social well being) etc. All these ritual activities directly or indirectly exert a positive impact on the mind (Manas) and therefore, cause reduction in stress, reduction & abolition of negative thoughts like suicidal ideations etc in the patients of various psychosomatic disorders. Modified from.^[3]

These activities also strengthen the mind (Manas/Satva) which helps in

- Reduction in frequency of social withdrawal.
- Increases frequencies of social activities/participation in social programs.
- Thus helps in accommodation with society.

Sattvavajaya in principles is a Psycho-behavioral therapy. The author of foremost classic on internal medicine, Charaka Samhita defines it as 'Sattvavajaya Punah Ahitebhyo Arthebhyo Manognigrah'. Means a method of restraining or withdrawal of the mind from unwholesome objects (Arthas).^[4]

Thus, the term Sattvavajaya implies to that modality which is therapeutic for mental or emotional stresses and disturbances. This is secured best by restraining the mind from desire for unwholesome objects, directing it towards wholesome objects and the cultivation of Gyana, Vigyana, Dhairya, Smriti and Samadhi. All these measures help in developing control over the Manas or mind, which is usually unstable.^[5]

Ayurveda described Ahara (diet), Nidra (sleep) and Brahmacharya (celibacy) as the basic three sub-pillars of life (Tryopastambha), since these are very important for promotion of psychosomatic health as well as for prevention and management of various psychosomatic disorders. Ayurveda also suggested to follow some discipline related to lifestyle and food intake like, avoid suppression of natural urges at meal, avoid any type of mental stress at meal and ever take food after proper digestion of previous meal i.e. on empty stomach, etc. to promote physical and mental health. Adaptation according to the changes is the key for survival, thus the knowledge of Ritucharya (seasonal regimen/regimen for seasonal variations) is also very important for the management of psychosomatic disorders.^[6]

Ayurveda offers some code of good conducts under the heading of Sadvratta and Achara Rasayana and other non-pharmacological Rasayana. The conducts under Sadvratta and Achara Rasayana include limited sexual relations, early sleeping and awakening, avoid excess exertion, avoid suppression of natural urges, regime of bathing, keeping skin clean, keep mercy on others, telling truth, avoid alcoholism, be soft hearted, always use cleaned and washed cloths, try to be in a steady

mental state i.e. avoid height of emotions, try to avoid to memorize if being insulted by anyone, keep patience, etc.^[7,8]

These are the principles of good codes and conducts for day to day implementation along with wholesome food habits. Sadvratta and Achara Rasayan directly or indirectly promote physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. Since, it is well acknowledged that the altered immunity and psychosocial stress plays a major role in the etio-pathogenesis of a wide range of psychosomatic disorders, therefore, one should follow these principles of Sadvratta and Achara Rasayan in order to boost the immune system or for immunomodulation and to impede the negative effects of psychosocial stress.^[9]

In this way Ayurveda offers, Pathyapathya (do's & don'ts regarding diet and behavioral conducts), Dincharya (daily regimen), Ritucharya (seasonal regimen), regular use of Adravya Rasayana (non-pharmacological rejuvenative measures) and sadvratta as preventive measures to achieve the balanced status of body, mind and consciousness and as therapeutics for a wide range of psychosomatic disorders. Regular use of rejuvenative measures (pharmacological as well as non-pharmacological) is reputed to promote physical as well as mental health, improve defence mechanism and enhance longevity.

DISCUSSION

The principles and practice of Rasayana (pharmacological as well as non-pharmacological) in Ayurveda is based on the principle of promotion of psychosomatic health by reducing the psychosocial stress and via the process of immunomodulation. Non-pharmacological Rasayanas as described in Ayurveda boost immunity and help to keep the body and mind in the best of its health. It is a multi-angled approach, taking care of body, mind and spirit thus affecting total wellbeing of an individual. In this way Rasayanas modulate immunity and reduce the psychosocial stress and therefore, help in the management of a wide range of psychosomatic disorders since the psychosocial stress and altered immunity are major factors involved in the etio-pathogenesis of various psychosomatic disorders. Modified from.^[10]

Ahara, Nidra & Brahmacharya are considered as Tryopastambha (three sub-pillars) of life. These three factors play an important role in the promotion of positive psychosomatic health and longevity. Therefore, these are important milestones for prevention as well as management for a wide range of psychosomatic disorders.

Ayurveda employs holistic and personalized approach to the health. The holistic, integrative and systematic approach of Ayurveda is a pivotal attribute which involve the Satva (mind/psyche), Atma (soul) and

Sharira (body). When we consider the human biological system as a whole, the Ayurvedic preventive and therapeutic approaches to the prevention and management of diseases aim at homeostasis of mind, body and soul.

The Manas (psyche/mind) is regulating component of the body and largely influenced by socio-cultural factors. Acharya Patanjali propounded the Yogic practices or Ashtanga Yoga for controlling over Manas and promotion of psychosomatic health. The scope of Yoga, Sadvratta, Rasayana and similar other ancient positive health measures in the prevention and treatment of stress and psychosomatic disorders may be fruitfully explored.

The whole range of Sadvratta, Achara Rasayana and Yoga described in the Ayurvedic classics is designed to foster a healthy life style for better living to everyone as a promotive and preventive health care and also for the management of a diseased individual. Normal circadian rhythms (daily and seasonal) are very important in day to day life for promotion of positive health. Sadvratta and Achara Rasayana include not only mental faculties but also discipline related with general hygiene, ritual activities, food consumption, sexual relation and exercise. Therefore, Application of this positive lifestyle promotes psychosomatic health and thus also helps in the management of a wide range of psychosomatic disorders.^[11]

Thoughts, feelings and behaviors affect our health and well-being. Recognition of the importance of these influences on health and disease is consistent with evolving conceptions of mind and body and represents a significant change in medicine and the life sciences.

CONCLUSION

In the present era the incidence of psychosomatic disorders are continuously increasing due to disturbed lifestyle and faulty food habits. The major etio-pathogenetic factors involved for the manifestation of psychosomatic disorders are altered immunity and psychosocial stress. The whole range of non-pharmacological management including Daiv-vyapashraya Chikitsa, Satvavajya Chikitsa, Sadvratta, Achara Rasayana and different discipline of eating etc. aimed at promotion of psychosomatic health and immunomodulation. Therefore, the non-pharmacological strategies as described in Ayurveda provide efficient and cost effective management for psychosomatic disorders.

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