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MENTAL HEALTH AND ITS  
PREVENTIVE ASPECTS THROUGH  
AYURVEDA AND YOGA**

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## Research Paper

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# Mental Health And Its Preventive Aspects Through Ayurveda And Yoga

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### Declaration

*The Declaration of the authors for publication of Research Paper in Asian Journal of Modern and Ayurvedic Medical Science (ISSN 2279-0772) L V Vithalani <sup>1</sup>, B V Sakharkar <sup>2</sup>, S A Dalvi <sup>3</sup>, V C Kathane <sup>4</sup>, the authors of the research paper entitled Mental Health And Its Preventive Aspects Through Ayurveda And Yoga declare that , We take the responsibility of the content and material of our paper as We ourself have written it and also have read the manuscript of our paper carefully. Also, We hereby give our consent to publish our paper in ajmams , This research paper is our original work and no part of it or it's similar version is published or has been sent for publication anywhere else.We authorise the Editorial Board of the Journal to modify and edit the manuscript. We also give our consent to the publisher of ajmams to own the copyright of our research paper.*

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**ABSTRACT :** As soon as the word 21<sup>st</sup> century is pronounced, a stat picture of continuously moving world stands before our eyes. Life today has become so fast that everybody is just found in hurry with their work. This life style has direct impact on health leading to various mental disorders as stress, depression etc.

Ayurveda is the ancient art of healing that deals with all aspects of a person's life as an entity. The aim of Ayurveda is to create emotional & physical health and to cure diseases. It provides guidance regarding food and lifestyle so that healthy people can stay healthy and persons with health challenges can improve their health. In this age old science, psychological factors have been given equal importance as physiological factors in the etiology of various diseases. The majority of psychiatric disorders are due to stress and mood disturbances. Mostly they are anxiety, depression and often-mixed type. Imbalance of Tridosha and Satva, Rajah, Tamah are the root causes of all mental disturbances.

According to Ayurveda and Yoga, a living creature is composed of soul, mind, and body. The central philosophy is that the mind and body are one and the same, and that physical health can't be achieved without emotional, mental and spiritual health. Both are interrelated. Ayurveda and Yoga together offers a system of natural healing that is very complete both in terms of its treatments and also in its understanding of the human being.



This descriptive study discusses about the role of Doshas in health and mental illness. Also role of practice of yoga and some Ayurvedic principles like Aachar rasayana, Aahara, Dinacharya, in the prevention and cure of psychosomatic disorder has been discussed.

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## INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is science of life. It is a holistic approach of medicine which human scripted and practiced in India since 1500 B.C. It deals not only with body but also with Aatma (soul), manas (psyche) which are necessary for maintenance of physiological and psychological balances.

In any individual, state of Dosha, Dhatu and Mala decides life-style regimen as well as tendency towards particular diseases.

***"Samadoshah samagnishcha, samadhatu malakriyah, prasannatmendriya manah swastha iti abhidhiyate."***

(Shushruta Sutrasthanam 15, 41)

"The one whose 'doshas' are balanced, whose metabolism is balanced, whose tissues and eliminations are normal, and whose senses and mind are centered in the self, is considered healthy and remains full of bliss." This important quotation defining health according to Ayurveda, written thousands of years ago, reveals the natural condition of the mind as a state of happiness. The first half of quotation elaborates about physical fitness while second half defines state of healthy mind which is also an inevitable part of healthy individual. Both physical fitness and mental health are part and parcel of healthy body, depending and influencing each other. If any person is physically ill, he will also suffer from mental disturbances and vice a versa. In today's world, most of the population is victim of 'depression' and stress-related conditions (psycho-somatic

disorders), which can be easily managed by applying simple principles of Ayurveda in our daily life. The three gunas (sattva, rajas, tamas) are connected to tridosha in ayurveda. The ideal state of mind is sattvic, marked by equability. An agitated mind is in the rajasic state, while the lethargic and gloomy mind is in the grips of tamas.

## TRIDOSHA

Dosha can be defined as the factor found in our body which is responsible for:

1. Maintenance of physiological condition (health) in a healthy individual.
2. After their vitiation or in aggravated condition they can cause abnormality by polluting the tissue (Dhatu and Malas) of our body.
3. They are also responsible for the formation or determination of Prakriti which remains unchanged throughout the life.

Doshas are two type, Sharirik (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha) and Mansik (Raja, and Tama). Pitta and Kapha both are non movable itself (Pangu), they are mobilized and regulated by Vata. Due to its important functions this trio is termed as Tristambha in Ayurveda. These are the three main entities on which whole foundation of Ayurveda stands. Without proper knowledge about this trio, neither maintenance of health is possible nor is successful treatment of disease. Out of these trios Vata has dominating property. In normal healthy individual these Tridosha performs various important functions but when



they are vitiated they causes various physical and mental disorders.

### **TRIDOSHA AND ASSOCIATED MENTAL DISTURBANCES**

According to Ayurveda, Vata, Pitta, and Kapha are the three main psychobiological expressions of nature, individually and cosmically.

Vata dosha is more light, dry, dispersing, subtle, cold, mobile, minute and changeable, and therefore is associated with conditions such as worries, anxieties, fears, phobias, terrors, delusions, compulsions, irrelevant talk, monologue or dialogue with self, attention deficit, bi-polar disease, social anxiety and auditory hallucinations. Vata governs all nervous system functions.

Pitta dosha, being hot, sharp, penetrating, sour, intense and spreading is responsible for comparison, control, criticism, jealousy, frustration, obsession, territorialism, anger, rage, violence, suicide, murder and visual hallucinations. Pitta is more associated with digestive and hormonal functions.

Kapha dosha is more cool, slow, heavy, static, inert, smooth, gross, soft and immobile, and is therefore more associated with sadness, melancholia, prolonged crying, stubbornness, dark depression, hiding, hoarding, overeating and kinesthetic hallucinations.

While every person experiences feelings of anxiety, anger and grief at some times of life, ones' philosophies helps support adjustments to the diurnal, seasonal, life and death cycles with wisdom. Personal philosophy is at the root of all life experience, whether sweet or bitter, and is developed through time by a process of self-awareness of these psycho-physiological 'doshas'.

### **MIND BODY RELATION STRESS**

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. 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 health.

### **STRESSOR**

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 organism.

### **CAUSES OF STRESS**

Social, economical, technological and environmental changes are at the root of stress. 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, at home, within relationships, as a result of internal emotional conflict, 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 etc.

### **STRESS AND ITS AFFECTS**

In any type of environmental change our body responds by stimulation. The initial stage of arousal remains the same whether we are faced with a major or minor challenge. But under extreme, prolonged, or persistent pressure the body continues to manufacture extra quantities of stress chemicals, triggering further processes to maintain energy. If arousal continues, the adrenal glands manufacture anti-inflammatory chemicals that simultaneously speed tissue repair while depressing the body's immune defense system. If all these changes continue, the body goes on trying to adapt under increasing strain and pressure. Eventually it breaks down. Exhaustion, variety of illnesses and even death may be the outcome of uninterrupted, excessive stress.

### **MENTAL HEALTH AND MENTAL ILLNESS**

Mental Health is a concept that refers to the psychological and emotional well-being of a person. Being mentally healthy generally means that we are able to use our emotional capabilities to function well in society and go through everyday life with little or no difficulty. Some factors that can affect our mental health are our family

life, social life, and life at work. Having negative experiences in any of the said areas can deteriorate the condition of our mental health.

Mental illnesses, on the other hand, refer to health-related conditions where a person's mood or thinking affects his ability to work well or relate to other people. These can be classified as anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, mood disorders, eating disorders, personality disorders etc. The mental illness causes the numbers of diseases even to the physical body. Different types of modern medicines are available to treat mental illness, but these medicines have different type side effects. Hence today modern society also turns back toward traditional methods of cure of mental health.

### **PREVENTIVE ASPECTS IN AYURVEDA**

Following are the simple principles of Ayurveda which play a key role in prevention and management of mental disorders.

#### **DINACHARYA**

the Ultimate Solution

Beginning the daily habits with awareness, rising with the sun, eliminating waste according to urge, cleaning the body and beginning our personal practice of worship helps recognize our place in the family, community and cosmos. Cumulative benefits help purify the mind, emotions and body day to day. Choosing right foods for our appetite and metabolic needs is a fundamental alignment to show respect toward our body and life. 'Right use of time' means to eat when hungry, rest when fatigued and make time to play for nurturing creativity. If any of these important psychobiological needs is unfulfilled or over fulfilled, imbalance occurs. Circadian rhythms



become disturbed by sleeping late, eating stale foods, having sex at a wrong time such as during the menses, with an inappropriate partner or for inappropriate reasons such as self-indulgence. Misuse of any of the senses leads to imbalance.

## **DIET- AAHARA**

Aahrara (food) is the necessary issue of all the living beings. It is stated that "Praninam Punarmoolamaaharam" – the route of all beings is nothing but food itself. In Ayurvedic classics it is mentioned foremost among the three Upasthambas (Sub pillars) which support the three main Sthambas (Pillars) of the body viz. Tridosha. It shows the credibility of food. Only proper food is not sufficient to be healthy. The time, place, quantity and manner of food intake are also necessary. 'Aahar sambhava Vastu Rogashcha Aahar sambhava' – Food taken in proper manner helps in the proper growth of the body on contrary if taken in improper manner leads to various diseases. The mental factor of a man is reflected by the type of food he takes - "Ahara Shuddhou Satwa Shudhihi". In Bhagavatgeeta also we find the references regarding the three types of food like Satvika, Rajasika and Tamasika.

The ability of your body to maintain adequate reserves of energy against the impact of stress depends to a large extent on a well-balanced and nutritionally sound diet. Foods you eat, and the way you eat it, play a significant role in your total feeling of physical and mental well-being. Eat Satvik food such as cow milk, ghee etc. All of these foods are Satvik, meaning they are pure and convert easily to Ojas. They are ,medhya, supporting the physical brain, and enhancing the coordination of mental functions, such as Dhi, Dhriti and Smriti (learning, retention and recall).

When the mind remains strong, it is able to effortlessly command the senses. Tamasikl food is the opposite in characteristics of Satvik food. Tamasik foods break down the coordination between mind and body and inhibit the experience of pure consciousness. They create darkness rather than light. Tamasik foods include alcohol, garlic, onions, red meat, and packaged foods, which have little life force.

## **RELAX AT MEALS**

The amount of nutrients you absorb from your food is partially determined by your eating habits. If you are tense and eat quickly, your food will not be properly chewed and mixed with saliva. This prevents your body from being able to extract all the necessary nutrients from your food, and adds additional stress on your gastrointestinal tract.

## **SET A MEAL SCHEDULE**

A regular schedule for meal time is generally best for the digestive system. Snacking between meals and eating late at night is harmful for your body. If you need to snack, try fruits, sliced fresh vegetables, nuts, or whole grain crackers.

## **LISTEN TO YOUR APPETITE**

Learn to listen to your body's needs. Many people eat because of boredom, anxiety, or the need for oral gratification. The part of our brain that regulates our appetite is also linked to the control of our emotions. Disordered eating often reflects unbalanced states of emotional distress, such as loneliness or unhappiness.

## **AACHAR RASAYANA**



The term Aachar signifies physical and mental conduct of an individual and it has been termed as Rasayana i.e. a vitalizing agent for the entire span of life. In Rasayanadhya our Acharya has introduced a unique concept of codes and conducts for day to day implementation along with wholesome food habits.

Acharya Rasayana told in the classics has a direct influence in maintaining the mental and spiritual well being. Person has to follow some rules and regulations to maintain both personal and social health. These directly manipulate the mental level of a person and have their role in both health and disease. There is a saying from the Vedic literature that goes, Satyam Bruyat, Priyam Bruyat, which means, "Speak the sweet truth. Speaking truth creates Ojas in the body, the biochemical correlate of bliss and health. Speaking lies, on the other hand, leads to mental disturbances.

## **YOGA**

Yoga is an ancient practice in India used to keep the body flexible and attain spirituality. Yoga is one among those wonderful procedures that bring a perfect blend of physical, mental, intellectual and emotional strength. The most important benefit of Yoga is physical and mental equilibrium. Yoga is the science which integrates self with the universe. It establishes harmony of self with systems of the body as well as the surroundings leading to positive physical and mental changes. This is most desired element of yoga to counteract the emotional problems, anxiety, stress, jealousy etc.

## **DHYAN (MEDITATION)**

Meditation is neither religion nor doctrine, but rather one's own personal process of self-realization. Much of the

studies show that the practice of yoga, meditation can relieve the chronic stress patterns. Regular yoga practice creates mental clarity and calmness, relaxes mind, and sharpens the concentration level. Meditation itself enhances mental health and invigorates improved mood. The path of yoga or the union of the soul (Aatma) with the supreme soul (Parmatma) was described by Patanjali, a great sage, as having pre-requisite steps. When healing ourselves of mental disturbances, first we learn to observe avoidance of negative influences and choosing of uplifting influences, thus generating healthy nervous systems. Afterwards it's a process of purifying and strengthening the body to prepare it for remaining still in meditation. Meditation then leads to the liberation from all sufferings and delusions.

These steps are undertaken in any treatment program of mental illness to help restore the mind to its natural state of happiness. We all encounter challenges on the path of life. Duration to achieve a state of meditation varies from person to person. Through daily meditation practice, spiritual qualities such as forbearance, patience, confidence and self-actualization result through the inexorable law of cause and effect (Karya-karan bhav).

## **CONCLUSION**

In today's lifestyle of hurry worry and hurry, stress is increasing day by day. Modern medicines on the one hand are, no doubt good for short term treatment but having many untoward effects and having their own limitations. Ayurveda and yoga if practiced in daily life has excellent results, preventive as well as curative. In fact Aachar rasayana is of greater relevance in today's highly mobile society than it was when first proposed by our stalwart Acharya.

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