

AYURVEDIC APPROACH TO MANAGING PSYCHOSOMATIC DISORDERS IN THE MODERN ERA

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ABSTRACT:

Modern lifestyles have given rise to a significant increase in psychosomatic disorders (Manodaihika Vikara). Health and disease are viewed in the context of the holistic concept of "Sarirendriya Sattvatma Samyoga," where the intertwining of the physical, sensory, mental, and spiritual dimensions is integral to our well-being. Consequently, it can be argued that almost all health conditions have a psychosomatic component. In addressing these issues, the ancient practices of Yoga, Sadvritta, Aachar Rasayana, Medhya Rasayana, and other traditional health measures offer promising avenues for both prevention and treatment of stress and psychosomatic disorders. Ayurveda presents a comprehensive approach to tackle psychosomatic problems effectively in our daily lives. Psychosomatic disorders typically originate from psychological factors, with their physical symptoms being a direct outcome. Conditions like Peptic Ulcer, Ulcerative Colitis, Essential Hypertension, Ischemic Heart Disease, Bronchial Asthma, Diabetes Mellitus, and Rheumatoid Arthritis are illustrative of such disorders. Environmental preservation, encompassing both the physical and psychosocial dimensions, plays a crucial role in preventing psychosomatic diseases in society. Additionally, personality transformation through practices like Yoga can be a powerful tool in managing these ailments.

Keywords: Mansika, Psychic; Sharirika; Somatic; Manodaihika; Psychosomatic; Vyadhi, Diseases; Treatment.

INTRODUCTION:

Psychosomatic is made up of two words - psyche (mind) and soma (body). A psychosomatic disorder is a disease which involves both mind and body. Some physical diseases are thought to be particularly prone to being made worse by mental conditions such as stress and anxiety. A psychosomatic ailment, also referred to as a psycho-physiological condition, fundamentally arises from stress-related factors [1]. This term, "psychosomatic," is used because the primary origin of such a condition is rooted in one's mental and emotional state, with the observable effects primarily manifesting in the physical body. In somatic diseases, the psychological aspect cannot be neglected; similarly, in psychological diseases, the organic (somatic) factors are given due consideration. Manasikabhava (psychic factors) plays an important role in the etiopathogenesis and symptomatology of psychic and psychosomatic disease conditions. Psychic factors like Kama (lust), Krodha (anger), Shoka (grief), Bhaya (fear), Irshya (envy), etc., within physiological limits, can be defined as Manasika-bhava. When these cross physiological limits, they are termed Manasika-vikara or psychic disorders. Moreover, the body and mind are interdependent. In the current landscape of medical practice, a substantial portion of patients grapple with psychosomatic disorders such as Irritable Bowel Syndrome, Diabetes Mellitus, Hypertension, Bronchial Asthma, Ulcerative Colitis, Rheumatoid Arthritis, and more [2]. The primary driving force behind this phenomenon is the evolving lifestyle, insatiable desires, moral decay, and the ever-increasing challenges that individuals face in various aspects of life. Previous somatological and psychological approaches have often fallen short, leading scientists to shift their perspective toward what is now referred to as 'Psyche in Soma.' Psychosomatic disorders are characterized by the substantial influence of mental factors in the initiation, manifestation, or resolution of physical illnesses [3].

AIM:

To compile the psychosomatic disorders and management methods mentioned in Ayurvedic literature.

THE PSYCHOSOMATIC PERSPECTIVE IN AYURVEDA:

The historical backdrop of psychosomatic issues dates back to the origins of Ayurveda, coinciding with the development of human civilization. In Ayurveda, the concepts of 'Manas' (mind) and 'Sharira' (body) are perceived as distinct entities, not in a way that suggests separation, but rather in recognition of the intricate amalgamation of the mind, soul, and body within an individual. From a technical standpoint, Ayurvedic theory cannot be characterized as

dualistic [4]. This is primarily due to the soul being an integral part of the multifaceted human organism, and secondly, Ayurveda emphasizes integration rather than distinct existence. The intricate interplay of these three factors constitutes the human organism. For practical purposes, Ayurveda defines 'Manas' (psyche) and 'Sharira' (soma) as separate entities, each with its own doshas (humors), and it distinctly outlines their characteristics. 'Sharirik' (physical) and 'Manasika' (mental) doshas exert mutual influence on one another. Ayurvedic practitioners have embraced a psychosomatic approach that places significant emphasis on the harmonious integration of the mental and physical aspects. In the realm of somatic diseases, the psychological dimension cannot be disregarded, just as in cases of psychological disorders, due consideration is given to the organic (somatic) aspects. Ayurveda provides a wealth of evidence that firmly establishes its fundamentally psychosomatic approach to disease[5].

Ayurvedic literature is replete with examples illustrating the profound impact of somatic disorders on an individual's mental well-being. For instance, an increase in Vatika humors can lead to insomnia, elevated Pitta may result in fainting (murchha), and heightened Kapha can lead to drowsiness and excessive sleep (Tandra and Nidra). Conversely, there are several somatic diseases where both physical and mental symptoms are observed concurrently. The concept of Pitta, as it appears, exhibits a psychophysiological perspective. This form of Pitta may represent a substance or a complex of substances essential for certain higher mental faculties and emotional states [6].

Emotions such as anger, fear, and pleasure, for instance, have distinct effects on the process of healing. Ulcers in individuals who experience fear often exhibit delayed healing. Specifically, Krodha (anger), Bhaya (fear), and Shoka (grief) disrupt Pitta, while anger leads to vitiation of blood. According to Charaka, Kama (lust), Shoka (grief), and Bhaya (fear) provoke Vayu, and anger provokes Pitta. Emotional factors like fear, grief, and anger are known to be causative agents of fevers, and emotions like grief and fear can induce Vataja shiriroga [7].

Numerous somatic diseases are accompanied by descriptions of mental symptoms, and conversely, when discussing mental disorders, somatic characteristics are also noted. Acharya Charaka recognized the occurrence of somatic and psychic disorders coexisting, with one following the other intermittently. These somatic (Sharirika) and psychic (Manasika) disorders are often intricately linked in the long term, manifesting as somatic to somatic, psychic to psychic, somatic to psychic, and psychic to somatic interactions [8]. The commonly recognized

psychosomatic conditions are classified according to the involvement of the organ system, as mentioned in the following table 1.

Table 1: Commonly recognized psychosomatic conditions

Sr. No.	System Involved	Psychosomatic Conditions
1	Gastrointestinal	Peptic ulcer, Grahani (irritable bowel syndrome), Vibandh (constipation), Bhayaj and Shokaj Atisar (Nervous Diarrohoea), Bhuktadwasha (Anorexia nervosa)
2	Cardiovascular	Uccharaktachap (hypertension), Hridayaroga (coronary diseases & cerebrovascular disorders), Myocardial infarction, Angina pectoris
3	Respiratory	Tamak swasa (bronchial Asthma)
4	Skin Disorders	Anurjata (urticaria), Ekkustha (psoriasis)
5	Muscular Disorders	Amavata (rheumatoid arthritis)
6	Endocrine	Hyperthyroidism, Madhumeha (DM)
7	Mental Disorders	Unmad (psychosis), Apsamar (epilepsy), Mada (psychogenesis), Murrcha (fainting), Anidra (insomnia)
8	Urogenital	Amenorrhea, Menorrhagia, Dysmenorrhea, Premenstrual tension, Menopausal disorders, Premature ejaculation
9	Vasomotor	Migrane and other types of headache
10	Child Psychosomatic Disorders	Chronic Abdominal pain, Enuresis, Appetite problems

MANAGEMENT OF PSYCHOSOMATIC DISORDERS:

Therapeutic approaches can be categorized into three distinct types [9]:

1. Daivavyapashraya (Spiritual Therapy): Includes chanting mantras, wearing protective talismans, utilizing gemstones, making sacred offerings, adhering to scriptural guidelines, performing acts of atonement, fasting, reciting auspicious hymns, and reverence to deities.
2. Yuktivyapashraya (Rational Therapy): Involves the administration of medicinal drugs and the implementation of suitable dietary regimens to address ailments.

3. Sattvavajaya (Psychotherapy): Focuses on redirecting the mind away from detrimental influences and embracing Aachara Rasayana, a regimen of righteous conduct and lifestyle for mental well-being.

Medhya Rasayanas: Renowned for their capacity to promote overall well-being and possess notable anti-anxiety properties. These include [10]:

- Sankhpushpi (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*)
- Yashthimadhu (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*)
- Giloya (*Tinospora cordifolia*)
- Mandukparni (*Centella asiatica*)
- Brahmi (*Bacopa monnieri*)
- Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*)

Yoga Therapies: Practices such as Yogasanas and pranayama techniques, including Anulom-Viloma and Kapalbhathi, offer substantial advantages for both mental and physical well-being [11].

Aachara Rasayana: Guidelines for personal, social, and spiritual well-being, including ethical conduct, dietary practices, and mindfulness [12, 13].

Panchakarma Therapies: Therapeutic emesis (Vamana), purgation (Virechana), medicated enemas (Vasti), and bloodletting (Rakta Mokshana) [14-16].

DISCUSSION:

The ancient Ayurvedic Acharyas meticulously integrated psychological factors alongside physical, dietary, nutritional, and behavioral aspects in their classical texts. These factors underscore the psychosomatic nature of Ayurvedic disease management.

CONCLUSION:

Ayurveda offers a comprehensive array of treatments designed to preserve health and facilitate recovery. These include Rasayana therapy, ethical practices (Achara Rasayana), and preventive measures for maintaining a balanced lifestyle and mental well-being.

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