PREVENTIVE AND THERAPEUTIC MEASURES OF AYURVEDA FOR MENTAL HEALTH CARE

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ABSTRACT
Ayurveda, the ancient system of healthy living offers the holistic approach to mental health care with the integration of mind, body and soul. Mental health is the balanced development of individual’s personality and emotional attitudes, which enables him to live harmoniously with the society. Any type of altered behaviour bothering the victim and the family, interfering the work and job indicates mental illness. Mental illness occurs due to multiple causes, the major ones are heredity, organic conditions, social and environmental factors and these factors influence mental health from the very beginning of life, since conception to old age. Millions of people in the world suffer from stress related problems, mood disorders, mental retardation, dementia, psychosis etc. According to Ayurveda Mental health is brought about as a result of harmony between oneself, with others and that of the environment, and influenced by biological and social factors. Due to vitiation of Raja and Tama mansika doshas, and loss of dhi, dhriti and smriti, the daily routine of mentally ill people get affected, they never feel right towards others and unable to meet the demands of life. Various mental disorders viz. Unnmada (Psychosis), Apasmara (Convulsive disorder), Apatantraka (Hysteria), Atattvabhinivesha (obsession), Gadodvega (Hypochondriasis), Chittodvega (Anxiety) etc. are described in Ayurveda. Daivavyapashraya, Yuktyivapashraya and Satwavajaya are the three major modalities for the treatment of mental disorders. Swasthavritta, an important subject of Ayurveda advocates various healthy lifestyle and codes of conduct like Satvika Ahara-Vihara, Sadvrittta, Dharaniya Vega, Achara Rasayana, Yoga including Meditation etc, for prevention of mental illness and to achieve good mental health.

KEYWORDS: Achara Rasayana, Daivavyapashraya, Sadavritta, Satwavajaya, Yuktyivapashraya.

INTRODUCTION
Mental health is the balanced development of individual’s personality and emotional attitudes, which enable him to live harmoniously with society. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), about 450 million people worldwide are affected by mental, neurological or behavioral problems. People are quite normal to sometimes feel happy or sad, anxious or fearful, forgetful or confused. These are the hills and valleys of emotions in our daily lives. But when a person’s emotions, thoughts or behavior frequently trouble them, or disrupt their lives and those around them, they may be suffering from mental illness. Unfortunately, when mental illness goes untreated the result can be suicide. According to Ayurveda an individual should be healthy in all dimensions viz. physical, mental, intellectual, spiritual etc. Mental health is brought about as a result of harmony between oneself and others and that of
the environment i.e. loka-purusha-samya. Ayurveda considers mind and body as the two pathways for the manifestation of diseases. Mind has in it three constituents or tendencies viz. Satva, rajas and tamas. The latter two are reactive tendencies, which vitiate the mind leading to an emotional imbalance culminating in a psychological imbalance. Likewise three dosha of body namely vata, pitta, and kapha, vitiate and leading to metabolic disturbances, which ultimately culminate in somatic disturbances. The body and mind have a separate set of etiopathological agents and hence all diseases are categorized under two basic groups somatic and psychological. Psyche and soma are always interrelated. They interact and influence each other and jointly venture in a manifestation of a large group of disorders know as psychosomatic disorders. The reason for any unhealthy condition is the toxins created by the accumulated ‘dosha’. The negative feelings are emotional toxins accumulate in the mind. If they are not removed from the body in a specific period of time, they lead to various chronic mental disorders like anxiety, neurosis, depression, insomnia, etc. If these conditions are further ignored, turns into permanent disorders like Unmad, Apasmara, Atatwaabhinivesh, Atpantraka, and other Manas roga under the Manovaha srotas or psyche centre.

Number of People affected globally

According to WHO report 2002, about 450 million people were estimated to be suffered from neuropsychiatric problems. Among them 64,963 with unipolar depressive disorder, 18,469 with alcohol use disorder, 15,686 with schizophrenia, 13,645 bipolar effective disorder, 12,464 with Alzheimer’s and other dementias, 7,067 with epilepsy, 5,830 with drug use disorders, 4,761 with obsessive and compulsive disorder, 1,473 with Parkinson disease etc.

Causes of Mental Illness

Mental illness occurs due to multiple causes in the natural histories of mental disorders. There are many factors of agent, host and environment, as given below:

1. **Organic conditions:** Mental illnesses may have their origin in organic conditions such as cerebral arteriosclerosis, neoplasm, metabolic diseases, neurological diseases, endocrine diseases, chronic diseases, such as tuberculosis, leprosy, epilepsy etc.

2. **Heredity:** Heredity may be important factor in some cases. The children of schizophrenic parent’s are 40times more likely to develop schizophrenia than the children of Healthy parents.

3. **Social causes:** To produce any mental disorder social factors play a big role. These factors are worries, anxiety, emotional stress, tension, frustration, unhappy marriages, broken homes, poverty, industrialisation, urbanisation, change family structure, population mobility, economic insecurity, cruelty, rejection, neglect, and the like. Social environment not determine the individual’s attitude but also provides the support within which mental health is formulated.
4. Other factors: (a). Toxic substances: Carbon disulfide, mercury, tin, lead etc. (B). Psychotropic drugs barbiturates, alcohol. (c). Nutritional factors: Deficiency of thiamine and pyridoxine. (d). Minerals: Deficiency of iodine. (e). Infective agents: Infectious disease during the perinatal prenatal and postnatal period of life may have adverse effect on brain development and integration of mental function (f). Traumatic factors: Road and occupational accident (g). Radiation nervous system is most sensitive to radiation during the period of neural development. These factors are capable to produce abnormal human behaviour.

Ayurveda, the holistic science of life proclaims that physical dosha (Vata, Pitta, Kapha) and psychological dosha (Raja, Tama) are responsible for health and any type of ailments. Mental health is a state of mental, intellectual and spiritual well being. Imbalance state of dosha can affect us mentally, with disturbed emotion and thought, this will usually be reflected on a physical level also and vice versa.

When an individual of alpa satva expose to ayoga atiyoga and mithya-yoga, of kala, buddhi, and indriyarth the samprapati i.e. disease process began to vitiate the srotas or psychic centres, render the victim in a state of sammoha or mental confusion, further leading to altered behaviour. The different sets of behavioural alteration manifested as different kinds of mental illness like UnnmaD (Psychosis), Apasmara (Convulsive disorder), Apatantraka (Hysteria), Atattvabhinivesa (obsession), Gadodvega (Hypochondriasis), etc.

Characteristics of Mentally Healthy Person

A mentally healthy person has three main characteristics:

1. He feels comfortable about himself, that is, he feels reasonably secure and adequate. He neither underestimates nor overestimates his own ability. He accepts his shortcomings. He has self respect.

2. The mentally healthy person feels right towards others. This means that he is able to be interested in others and to love them. He has friendships that are satisfying and lasting. He is able to feel a part of a group without being submerged by it. He is able to like and trust others. He takes responsibility for his neighbours and his fellow-men.

3. The mentally healthy person is able to meet the demands of life. He does something arise the problems as they arise. He is able to think for himself and to take his own decisions. He sets reasonable goals for himself. He shoulders his daily responsibilities. He is not bowled over by his own emotions of fear, anger love, and guilt.

Warning signals of Poor Mental Health

The major warning signals of poor mental health are listed below in form of questionnaire. If the answer to any of these questions definitely ‘yes’, means help is necessary to that individual.

1. Are you always worrying?
2. Are you unable to concentrate because of unrecognised reason?
3. Are you continually unhappy without justified cause?
4. Do you lose your temper easily and often?
5. Are you trouble by regular insomnia?
6. Do you have wide fluctuation in your moods from depression to elation, back to depression, which incapacitate you?
7. Do you continually dislike to be with people?
8. Are you upset if the routine of your life is disturbed?
9. Do your children consistently get on your nerves?
10. Are you browned off and constantly bitter?
11. Are you afraid without real cause?
12. Are you always right and the other person always wrong?
13. Do you have numerous aches and pain for which no doctor can find a physical cause?

**Types of Mental Illness**

1. **Major illness:** Major illness are called psychoses, in this person is insane and out of touch with reality.
   A. Schizophrenia: In this patients live in a dream world of his own.
   B. Manic depressive psychosis: Its symptoms vary from height of excitement to depth of depression.
   C. Paranoia: It is associated with undue and extreme suspicion and progressive tendency to regard the whole world in framework of delusions.

2. **Minor illness**
   A. Neurosis or psychoneurosis.
   B. Personality and character disorder.
   C. Patient is unable to react normally life situations. He is not considred to insane by his associates, but nevertheless exhibits certain peculiar symptom such as morbid fears, compulsion, and obsessions.
   D. This group of disorder is the legacy of childhood experiences and perceptions.

**Spectrum of Mental Diseases in Ayurveda**

Acharya Charaka mentioned that eight essential psychological factor are negatively affected in all psychiatric disorders, which are manas (mind), buddhi, smriti (memory), sajna jnana (orientation and responsiveness), bhakti (devotion), shila (habits), cheshta (psychomotor activity) and achara (conduct). Many dosha vikaras such as kama, krodha, lobha, moha, harsha, visada etc. These are the product of manas dosa. Psychiatric diaseses implicate manas as well as sharira dosha such as unmada, apsmara, chittodvega, bhrama, tanda, klama, mada murcha, sanyas etc. Beside above mentioned catagories of major psychiatric diseases Ayurveda also referred to many health issues such as manodaihika diseases.
like bhayatisara, shokatisra, jarajanya mental impairment, alcohol, or any substance induced diseases like vishaja unmada etc.

**Management**

Ayurveda believes that prevention of diseases is better than cure hence has a suggested series of measures for prevention of psychological and somatic diseases as well. Ayurveda seeks to remove the root causes of mental illness in a holistic way. In Swasthavritta, a speciality of Ayurveda, various codes of conduct are mentioned to achieve good mental health, like Diet (satvika ahara), Ritucharya (seasonal regimen), Sadvritta (right codes of conduct), Dharaṇiya Vega, Achara Rasayana, Medhya Rasayana, and Yoga including Meditation. In Ayurveda two main functions of Manas are considered as Sensorial abstraction (indriyanigrahāh) and Self-Regulation (swasyanigrahāh). Prajñaparādhā is considered as most potent cause of all diseases. Prajñapratipattīḥ (promotion of intellectual faculties) is the act to correct the impaired state of prajña as a whole or one or more of its components.

The modalities for the management of Manasroga have been classified into three groups- Dai-vavyapashraya, Yuktvivyapashraya and Satwavajaya.

- **Diet (Satvika Ahara):** Consumption of pure food i.e. Satvika Ahara makes the mind clear. When mind is devoid of blemishes memory power enhances. (Sri. Bha. Geeta). Satvika ahara includes fresh fruits and vegetables, pure grains, milk, ghee, spices and all the vegetarian foods. Satvika ahara is generally contains all the nutrients, viz., carbohydrates, fats, vegetable proteins, minerals and vitamins, essential for growth and maintenance of health. Upavasa also plays an important role in controlling the tāmas and rajas activity of the mind.

- **Ritucharya (Seasonal regimen)**\(^8^9\): Vata pitta and kapha accumulate in the body during grishma, varsha, and sharada seasons respectively. This accumulation leads to pathological events in the body, which ultimately affect the mind. By following seasonal regimen (Ritucharya) we can avoid mental illness.

- **Sadvrittā\(^10\) (right codes of conduct):** Ethical practices i.e. Sadachara brings down a great stress on mind acts as a shield against continuously exposed ill consequences of stress and strains of life. Acharya Charaka has prescribed a long list of good conducts, which are related to emotional and psychological aspects of the individual and concerned with social and ethical facet of human life. These ethical practices serve two main purposes i.e. Arogya (Health) and Indriyajaya (Control over mind and other senses).

- **Dharaniya Vega (Suppressible urges):** Natural urges of psychological origin should be suppressed like avarice, grief, fear, anger, vanity, impudence, excessive attachment, and malice.\(^11\) Non-suppression of these urges leads to violence and many mental disorders.
• **Achara Rasayana:** Person who are truthful and free from anger, devoid of alcohol and sex indulgence, do not indulge in violence or exhaustion, peaceful, have patience and pleasing in their speech, practise japa and cleanliness, who regularly offer prayer to God, cow, brahmana, teacher, whose period of a awakening and sleep are regular, who are free from ego, whose conduct is good, who are not narrow minded, who have love for spiritual knowledge, get the best out of rejuvenation therapy.

• **Medhya Rasayana:** The medhya rasayanas enhance biological nourishment of brain, producing tranquillity of mind, concentration, and improved memory, in addition to their general rejuvenating effects eg. Ashwagandha, Jatamansi, Mandukparni, Shankhapushpi, Guduchi, Yastimadhu etc. These medicines act as specific molecular nutrients for neurological tissues, promotes mental health leading to alleviation of behavioural disorders.

• **Yoga including Meditation:** Various Asana, Pranayama, help to establish control over the mind. Sensorial abstraction or withdrawal of senses from their objects is surly and certainly the first step towards achieving mind control. This process technically known as Pratyahara, and constitute the fifth step in Ashtanga Yoga. Mind tends to go where vision goes, so mind should be withdrawn and kept under one’s control. Meditation brings out calming effect on mind by reducing activity in the sympathetic nervous system and increase activity in the parasympathetic nervous system.

• **Daivavyapashraya:** It includes chanting of mantras, performances of various homas, Ausadhi (talisman), Mani (gems), Mangala (auspicious offerings), Homa (oblation), Niyama (religious rules), Prayascitta (atonement), Upavasa (fasting), Svastyayana (chanting of auspicious hymns), Pranipata (paying obeisance), etc. All the items enumerated under this therapy are effective in the eradication of disease only due to the divine influence.

• **Sattwavajaya:** It is the withdrawal of mind from unwholesome objects. It also includes methods mentioned under Adravyabhuta Cikitsa. The methods of this treatment are Bhayadarsana (terrorizing), Vismaphana (surprising), Vismarana (de memorizing), Ksobhana (socking), Harsa (exciting), Bhatsana (chiding), etc.

• **Yuktivyapashraya:** This modality involves the judicious use of medicines and diet. It is broadly classified into two groups namely Shodhana and Shamana. Beneficial Shodhana (purificatory procedures) for better mental health care are Nasya, Shirodhara and Shiro Vasti.

**Nasya:** Nasal medication acts as a purificatory aid to the head where major sensory faculties are located. The clarity of these faculties (indriyaprasada) leads to clarity of mind.

**Shirodhara:** Medicated water, Ayurvedic oils, and medicated milk are poured on the forehead through a special method for 30 to 45 minutes. It reduces anxiety, depression, and mental stress and rejuvenates the central nervous system.
**Shiro Vasti:** Done by keeping Ayurvedic oil in a cap fitted on head, having almost similar effects as of Shirodhara.

**CONCLUSION**

Ayurveda believes in the integrated approach of health and consciousness and develops its own applied philosophy of life, health, disease, and cure based on the theories of panchamahabhuta, tridosha, triguna etc. Today, besides the recovery after the treatment of diseases, one of the most urgent needs of public health is to find alternative strategies for prevention and management of Mental illness, which is going out of control. This would be achieved through “Ayurveda”, the cost-effective way of personalized healthy conduct fitted to the individual, involving lifestyle, nutrition, self-awareness and good relationships with other people and nature. Ayurveda is an integrative body mind spirit system of life and health care with greater emphasis on mental health care. Ayurveda leads people to know their own nature, to adequately use the mind, and to modify the interactions with the environment in order to achieve an optimal status of health. Various modalities like Satvika Ahara, Sadvritta, Dharaniya vega, Achara Rasayana, Medhya Rasayana, Yoga including Meditation etc. have special significance in the management of mental disorders.

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