

A CONCEPT OF MANODAIHIK VIKARA (~PSYCHOSOMATIC DISORDERS) IN AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE: AN OVERVIEW

Rajesh Jain*¹, K. S. Girhepunje², K. H. H. V. S. S. Narasimha Murthy³, J. S. Tripathi⁴

¹Junior Resident III, Dept. of Kayachikitsa, Faculty of Ayurveda, IMS, BHU, Varanasi.

²Junior Resident III, Dept. of Kayachikitsa, Faculty of Ayurveda, IMS, BHU, Varanasi.

³Asso. Professor, Dept. of Kayachikitsa, Faculty of Ayurveda, IMS, BHU Varanasi.

⁴Professor & Head, Dept. of Kayachikitsa, Faculty of Ayurveda, IMS, BHU Varanasi.

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*Corresponding Author

Dr. Rajesh Jain

Junior Resident III, Dept. of
Kayachikitsa, Faculty of
Ayurveda, IMS, BHU,
Varanasi.

ABSTRACT

The huge complexity of human body offers extent to conceptualize its dynamic organization in a number of ways such as functional, structural, biochemical, etc. The conservative western medicine views the body from a structural perspective, whereas Ayurveda, the earliest medical system of India, understands the human body from the perspective functions of tridoshas (vata, pitta and kapha) and triguna (satwa, raja and tama). The Psychosomatic problem of health and illness has attained the central theme of the current trends of contemporary medicine. Optimal health conceived in Ayurveda is perfect synchronization of body, mind and soul i.e. a psychosomatic

approach of health. Mind controls the functions of the senses and the motor organs. Ayurveda emphasizes uniformly on endorsement of physical and mental health for prevention as well as for management of a illness. The Ayurvedic concept of physical and psychological constitutions and their relation with health, diseases and their prevention is unique and is being very much appreciated and accomplished by the scientific world of today. *Ayurvedic* remedies are immersing as ultimate therapeutic hope for such disorders. These disorders may be prevented by the use of psychotropic drugs, highlighted as *medhya dravyas* and *medhyarasayanasa*, in traditional texts of *Ayurveda*.

KEYWORDS: Mana, Triguna, Manodehika, Medhyadravyas.

INTRODUCTION

The meaning of the word “*Ayurveda*” is self descriptive (*Ayu*=Life, *Veda*=Science). Life has been described as the multifaceted combination of Body, Senses, mind and Soul.^[1] In recent years, the frequency of psychosomatic diseases has shown a remarkable raise all through the world, especially in western affluent society, where most of the communicable and nutritional causes of ill health have been completely eradicated, but the psychosomatic disorders are rising as a bigger and growing challenge before the medical profession.^[2] Man being a psychosomatic living being is naturally prone to psychosomatic disorders. Though in broad every disease is psychosomatic in nature but in limited terms a psychosomatic disease is one whose main cause is in the mind and the manifestations are chiefly visible in the body. This can be elucidated by the definition of health, the causes of disease, the approach to the assessment of the patient, the application of psychosomatic constituent, the regimen of mental and physical hygiene and the several other facts extensively dealt in Indian Medicine including the use of psychotropic drugs i.e. *medhya dravyas* and *medhya rasayanas*.^[3]

The psychosomatic diseases are those which tap at the same time mind and body. Body and mind are in single identity so it is ordinary that diseases interact between body and mind as well as mind and body. The relation between mind and body depends in fact upon the relation between intellectual emotional and physical organ or yet, between subconscious, unconscious psyche and the body. In *Ayurveda* *manasika bhava* plays an important role in etiopathogenesis and symptomatology of psychic and psychosomatic disease. Psychic factors- *shoka*, *bhaya*, *irshya kama*, *krodha*, etc. within psychological perimeter can be defined as *manasik bhava* where as crossing the psychological limit these are termed as psychic disorders. *Ayurveda*, an earliest system of medicine, primarily concerned with the preventive and promotive aspects of health for the well being through the concepts of positive physical and mental wellbeing. Management of mental disorders or psychological medicine was an area of interest even during *Acharya Caraka*'s time (500 B.C.). The detailed anatomy and physiology of mind, senses and motor organs and their relation with body are dealt with in detail. Mind controls the functions of the senses and the motor organs. Psychological processes like memory, intellect, decision, thinking, fear, anger, grief, greed, passion are described in detail and their role in production of various psychological, psychosomatic and physical diseases are described. The *Ayurvedic* concept of physical and psychological constitutions and their relation with health, diseases and their prevention is exclusive and is being very much appreciated and practiced by the scientific world of today. Similarly the

Ayurvedic belief of psychosomatic diseases is well accepted by the recent development of psychosomatic concept in modern medicine. Other unique Ayurvedic concept of affecting the mind by somatic factors and Somato-psychic diseases if explored appropriately may lead to develop a new move toward treating the mental diseases in modern medicine.

Psychosomatic approach in Ayurveda

Ayurveda is a greatly systematized medical system based on proven theories and thousands of years of recognized clinical observations with uninterrupted and successfully continuing clinical practices. Despite these, proper recognition and appreciation have been denied for Ayurveda. One of the major criticisms is its use of a language seen to be archaic and of terms that do not relate to the modern scientific terminologies that one is familiar with. This coupled with the fact that Ayurveda's concepts and approaches to health and diseases are very different from those of western remedy, has made one wonder whether Ayurveda is yet another mystery of India. The history of psychosomatic problem is as old as the Ayurveda. 'Psychosomatic', however, is a word that is so innovative that it is found in the most current dictionaries and it means, of course, Pertaining to both the psyche and the body. In Ayurveda *manasa* and *sharirika* are regarded as separate entities but not in the sense of partition, because an organism is the complex arrangement of mind, soul and body. The concept of psychosomatic medicine is not new; it is as old as the evolution. It simply means that the causes and cures of diseases are both associated to body and mind and they are interrelated. Mind and body are not independent entities and therefore, affection of the one affects the other. Ayurveda has duly recognized the individualism of *manas*, *sharira* and their inseparable relationship in living body.

For all *manasika vikaras* *Alpasatwa* is the most important part, excited *vata* depresses mind gives rise to feeling of helplessness, delirium, fear, etc. This suggests Ayurveda is perhaps the earliest Medicare system to have a understandable concept about psychosomatic approach. A psychosomatic disorder, by definition, is a stress disorder whose principal cause is psychological in origin but its manifestations are mostly observed in the body.^[5,7] Stress is a non-specific response of the body to any demand made upon it.^[8,9] Such a response consists of a series of endocrine, neurohumoral and metabolic changes with associated physiological alterations involving entire body parts and systems able to varying degrees.^[10,12] Normally these stress-induced physiological changes are compensatory, adaptive and self-limiting but when stressful conditions are frequent, intense, these physiological changes become rather

permanent and pathological in nature.^[13] Adrenal cortex, an integral part of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenocortical (HPA) axis plays a very significant role in the stress physiology. Cortisol, a principal glucocorticoid in man, is secreted by the adrenal cortex, has intense effects in health and disease.^[14] While this psychosomatic approach to medicine is relevant to all illness, there are a particular group of disorders, the psychosomatic disorders, in which the relationship between psychosocial disturbance and the occurrence of illness is particularly clear. In these conditions hereditary factors are important and disturbances of the neuro-endocrine system are whispered to play an important part in the disease manifestation. Forms of colitis, mucous or ulcerative, bronchial asthma, migraine, peptic ulcer, certain types of hypertension and of musculoskeletal disorder, dental conditions such as Vincent's angina and periodontitis, rheumatoid arthritis, eczema and dermatitis disturbances of menstrual and sexual function and endocrine disorders such as thyrotoxicosis and perhaps some cases of diabetes.^[4]

Etiology of Psychosomatic Disorders

Ayurveda and specially Charaka consider psychic reason the cause of all diseases and this is made clear by a categorical statement like this. 'Whatever act is done by one who is deranged of understanding, will or memory is to be regarded as volitional transgression.'^[17] Here the original word for 'volitional transgression is Prajnaparadha which is translated as 'misuse of intelligence.' Both these meanings roughly express the original word Prajnaparadha. The word Prajna has more than one meaning and over and above the common meanings like 'intelligence and wisdom' it means also 'insight' and 'discernment.' The last meaning has a touch of natural insight or instinctive of the self or conscience in general. Such a faculty is in all persons but its expression varies from individual to individual in accordance with his internal and cultural advancement. Coming back to the root cause of all diseases, given by Charaka that root cause of all diseases is Prajnaparadha. This term in turn covers threefold psychic mistake or blunder and that is, misuse of will, deranged understanding and wrong use of memory. These three combined constitute Prajnaparadha. Prajna is almost same as insight in modern terminology.^[18] 'In the event of the derangement of the will, the mind which is always reaching out for its objects is not capable of being controlled from undesirable objects, for the will is the controller.'^[19] Dhritibhransha is lack of will or self-control will plays an important part in man's life according to Ayurveda. The influence of will finds an important place in the psychology of Ayurveda and mainly in its psychosomatic aspect. Equally important is memory. Describing the place of memory Charaka states; 'When on

account of the mind being loaded with passion and fantasy, the relation of true knowledge is shattered; that is called the derangement of memory; for indeed the memorable abides in the memory.^[20]

Memory too plays an important role in Ayurvedic psychosomatics. If it is deranged or is faulty due to passions and delusions, there is bound to be an adverse outcome on the mind and ultimately, on the body. Derangement of these three or one of them result in the prajnaparadha. So, according to Charaka, personal and social, mental and physical, moral and psychical transgression is the root of all psychosomatic diseases. Ayurveda believes firmly that change of season and especially adverse season creates disparity in the mind and body and so it is a cause of diseases. Past action also has such an effect. Past action means action of the past in this life or the earlier life meaning the accumulation of past actions and its effect in this life in accordance with the inscrutable laws of life.^[21] Imbalance either in body or mind is also an important factor in Ayurvedic etiology. Similarly incorrect use in three ways like over-use, disuse and misuse in relation to sense-objects, action and season also plays its part in producing diseases.^[22] All these different causes, though mainly related to mind and body, are shown to be three mainly. 'Of both kinds of psychic and somatic factors the exciting factors are three. They are non-homologate contact of the senses with their sense-objects, volitional transgression and time-effect.'^[23]

Mechanism of Psychosomatic Disorders

Psychological states influence body organs through a combination of Psychological states influence body organs, through a combination of three interrelated mechanisms: neural, hormonal and immunologic. Voluntary movements are mediated through the motor neurons by the conscious power of the brain. In stress, clenching of the teeth, mediated by the similar motor neurons, may occur, but the act may not be voluntary and conscious. Stress usually causes a starting of the sympathetic nervous system and the hypothalamo-pituitary-adrenal axis followed by a reduce in immuno-competence. Immune mechanisms may be suppressed in part through corticosteroid activation, but a decrease in T-lymphocyte action in stress may not be mediated by hormones. Individual specific, but unintentional, conditioning of specific conflict or stress to specific bodily malfunction may be an important psychosomatic mechanism.

Comparison with Modern Approach

The concept of psychosomatics in contemporary times is still under formation and taking its own scientific shape as research work advances. It is the interrelation of body and mind, of psychology and psychology of physical actions and mental actions in normalcy and diseases. 'The term' psychosomatics is most often thought of in relation to the way emotions express themselves in disease or in divergence from normal physiological performance. It properly includes all psycho physiological associations including normal physiology and psychology. Just as emotional stresses can generate conflict in physiological function, emotional satisfaction can have profound psychosomatic consequences.^[15] Though psychosomatics mainly has its foundation in psychology it seems to be on the borderline of medicine and psychiatry and touches a number of fields like physiology, comparative anatomy and others. Each of them has its own approach to this subject. All these approaches can be fit in two main approaches bodily and psychological and they too are based on the interrelation of mind and body. The interrelation of the physical and the mental is accepted by some well-known psychologists. In modern psychological concept, personality expresses the union of the human being and when personality is affected, both mind and body are afflicted. Psychosomatic medicine has shown how personality difficulties may convey themselves in disease or in digression from normal physiological functioning. The effects of chronic emotional excitation may appear for the time being or persistently disturbed functioning which in time noticeably affects the physiological system and finally may produce visible damage to tissue.^[16]

Treatment of Psychosomatic Disorders by Ayurveda

Psychosomatic medicine emphasizes the unity of mind and body and the interaction between them. Overall, the certainty is that psychological factors are important in the development of all diseases; either the function is in the initiation, succession, provocation or exacerbation of a disease, or in the predisposition to a disease. Ayurveda described the two fold management of disorders which is Dravyabhoot Chikitsa) and Adravyabhoot Chikitsa. The non-pharmacological management of psychosomatic disorders contains Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa, Satvavajaya Chikitsa, Pathyapathya (do's & don'ts regarding diet and behavioral conducts), Achara Rasayana and Yoga therapy. Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa include chanting of mantras, Aushadhi, Mani Dhaaran Mangal Karma (propitiatory), Bali (offering oblations), Homa, Prayashchita, Upavasa, Swastyayana (rituals for social well being) etc. All these practice directly or indirectly put a positive impact on the mind and cause decrease in stress,

reduction & elimination of negative thoughts like suicide etc in the patients of various psychosomatic disorders.^[24]

These activities also reinforce the mind which helps in diminution in frequency of social withdrawal, Increases frequencies of social activities and 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).^[25] Ayurveda offers some good conducts under the direction of Sadvratta and Achara Rasayana. Thus, the term Sattvavajaya implies to that modality which is beneficial for mental or emotional stresses and conflict. This is secured best by preventive the mind from desire for unwholesome objects, directing it towards wholesome objects and the promotion of Gyana, Vigyana, Dhairya, Smriti and Samadhi. All these measures help in developing control over the Manas or mind, which is usually unstable.^[26] Ahara, Nidra & Brahmacharya are considered as Tryopastambha (three sub-pillars) of life. These three play an important role in the promotion of positive psychosomatic health and prolonged existence. Therefore, these are important milestones for prevention as well as management for a huge range of psychosomatic disorders. The mind is regulating constituent of the body and largely influenced by socio-cultural factors. Acharya Patanjali propounded the Yogic practices or Ashtanga Yoga for controlling over mind and promotion of psychosomatic health. Here are some treatment which are given in Ayurveda psychosomatic disorders-

1. The pathogenic factors of the body are reconciled by therapies based on spiritual rites and physical properties (proper medicine, proper diet and proper regimen); the latter ones (pathogenic factor of mind), by patience, spiritual knowledge, memory and medication.^[27]
2. Diseases can be prevented by taking recourse to the avoidance of intellectual errors; self-control of sense organs: good memory: knowledge of the place, time and ones capabilities.^[28]
3. Knowledge about the prescriptions of reliable sages and adaptation of such instructions can only help in the prevention and treatments of the diseases.^[29]
4. Therapies are of three kinds, viz., Daivavyapashrya, Yuktivyapashrya and Satvavajaya. Spiritual therapies are chanting of mantras, wearing of gems, atonement, fast, chanting of auspicious hymns, obeisance to the gods, oblations, going on pilgrimage, etc. Pulling out of mind from harmful objects constitutes psychic therapy.^[30]

5. A person suffering from the psychological diseases should very cautiously consider again what is useful and what is injurious for health; he should strive for discarding the harmful or unwholesome and adopt the wholesome ones in regard to dharma, artha and kama, for happiness or misery can occur in this world without these fundamentals. So one should to try to serve persons well versed in the nature and healing of psychic diseases.^[31]
6. The unwholesome combination Asatmendriyarthasanyoga, Pragyapradha and Parinama—these are three fold causes of diseases (psychic, somatic and psychosomatic). Proper utilization of the objects, action and time is beneficial to the maintenance of normal health.^[32]
7. All sensation of pain ceases to exist in the state of Yoga and Moksha.^[33]

DISCUSSION

Ayurvedic approach is logical but its all causes are integrated into only a few basic factors like disproportion of qualities and volitional transgression. Ayurvedic analysis of all probable disease-causes invading the body under the categories of Asatmendriyarthasanyoga, Prajnaparadha, Parinama. Charaka considers both mind and body as the abodes of all diseases. The etiology according to Charaka is, in short, can be expressed under these heads (1) Unwholesome combination of the elements, (2) Incomplete correlation of the senses with the sense-objects, (3) Misuse of intelligence or volitional transgression, Seasonal and other phenomena governed by time factor known as parinama (5) Unequilibrium of the qualities. The last is the root cause of all other factors. As it is already seen, mind and body are two closely split entities though dependent and interconnected with each other i.e. why Charaka considers both of them as abodes of diseases. The body and the mind are both considered to be the abodes of diseases, likewise of well-being; their concordance is the cause of well-being.^[34] But in spite of lots of types of diseases, the somatic and psychic types are never forgotten in Ayurveda. From these three causes, three kinds of somatic diseases arise, of the kapha type, Pitta type and Vata type. There are the psychic diseases which are of two kinds – those caused by Rajas and those by Tamas. Sushruta classifies diseases in four main types — (a) Exogenous (b) Somatic (c) Psychic and (d) Consequential (in nature of course) or Swabhavxka.^[35] This is how Ayurveda has made its contribution in psychosomatics by giving a full-blown concept thereof. It covers almost all the aspects of man's psychic life and physical body too. It envelops the causes and cures and the abode also. Not merely is it wide enough to cover up all important aspects but is intrinsic in its depth too. It emphasizes the

psychic factors more than the physical time and at the same/does not ignore the physical causes and cures.

CONCLUSION

In the present era the occurrence of psychosomatic disorders are constantly increasing due to disturbed lifestyle and faulty food habits. The foremost etio-pathogenetic factors involved for the appearance of psychosomatic disorders are altered immunity and psychosocial stress. Ayurveda derives this concept from its philosophic principles and naturally concludes that mind and body being both materials is interrelated and affects each other but mind being subtler of the two, has its profound and abrupt effect on the body. *Ayurveda* has considered the mental and physical diseases as two separate specialized subjects. Nevertheless, no clear line of demarcation has been drawn between the mental and physical disease and a flexible psychosomatic approach has been worked out. The Management of illness is based on knowledge of its specific and non-specific aspects. The influence of psychosocial and ecological factors on the appearance of the infirmity must be recognized and dealt with. As the world faces increasing chronic, psychosomatic, stress and lifestyle-related disorders, Ayurveda with its different understanding of the human body and distinctive approach can play a key role in the prospect of healthcare. Medical scientists are beginning to realize that it is difficult to understand the totality of health by understanding individual parts as in a mechanical system. The understanding of human body yielded by structural/biochemical study is just only one part of the multifaceted picture. Ayurveda offers a systematic methodology to take care of the different relationships at different levels based on *doshas* and use them to plan beneficial protocols and modify them.

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