



INTEGRATING AYURVEDA INTO MODERN PSYCHOTHERAPY

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ABSTRACT **Introduction:** Ayurveda, one of the oldest traditional medical systems, emphasizes holistic health by integrating physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Its concept of health, as outlined in texts like the Charaka Samhita, aligns with the World Health Organization's definition of health. With the global rise in mental health disorders, Ayurveda offers preventive and therapeutic approaches for mental well-being. **Methods:** This research draws on classical Ayurvedic texts such as the Sushruta Samhita and Charaka Samhita, along with Brihatrayee and Laghutrayee reference works. Contemporary studies were reviewed through websites and scholarly publications to incorporate traditional and modern perspectives. **Discussion:** Ayurveda identifies the three Guna Sattva (balance), Raja (arrogance), and Tama (indolence) as key factors in mental health, with imbalances leading to emotional disturbances. Ayurvedic methods like Achar Rasayana (ideal behavior), Sadvritta (ethical conduct), and Sattvavajaya (psychotherapy) promote lifestyle changes and emotional regulation, paralleling modern therapies like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). Its classifications of treatments Daivavyapasraya (faith therapy), Yuktivyapasraya (rational therapy), and Sattvavajaya offer a comprehensive approach to mental health. **Conclusion:** Ayurveda provides a timeless, integrative approach to mental health, emphasizing ethical behavior, preventive care, and emotional regulation. Its Sattvavajaya psychotherapy aligns with modern goals of emotional resilience and cognitive clarity, offering a complementary blend of ancient wisdom and contemporary insights for lasting well-being.

KEYWORDS : Ayurveda, psychotherapy, Sadvritta, Sattvavajaya,

INTRODUCTION

India's oldest and most traditional medical system, Ayurveda, has its own unique personality. Ayurveda describes the art of living and is a science of life that discloses what is appropriate as well as auspicious for a happy and long life, therefore it deals with the full human existence from birth to death. Ayurveda is a comprehensive system that explores all dimensions of life, including aspects of joy and sorrow, health and illness, and longevity. It emphasizes the importance of both wholesome and unhealthy lifestyles, grounded in the fundamental principles of Ayu, which represents the essence of life.

According to the Sushruta Samhita, one of the foundational texts of Ayurveda, the definition of health (Swastha) is One who is established in Self, who has balanced Dosha (primary life forces), balanced Agni (digestive fire), properly formed Dhatu (tissues), proper elimination of Mala (waste products), well-functioning bodily processes, and whose mind, soul and senses are full of bliss is called a healthy person. This definition emphasizes that true health as a state of balance and harmony between the body, mind and spirit, resulting in physical, mental and spiritual well-being. This holistic view of health is a core principle of Ayurveda.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. This definition emphasizes that health encompasses more than just the lack of illness; it includes overall well-being in various aspects of life.

In today's so-called advanced society, many of us have lost touch with our true selves. We are constantly distracted by screens from computers, smartphones, and TVs, which overwhelm our senses. The fast pace of life puts a lot of stress on our nervous systems. This busy lifestyle, along with competition and moving away from natural routines, is affecting our physical and mental health.

Mental disorders are highly prevalent worldwide, affecting millions of people across all age groups. The prevalence of mental disorders has increased substantially in recent decades, with a particularly sharp rise among children, adolescents and young adults. The prevalence of mental disorders increased in 2019, 1 in every 8 people, or 970 million people around the world were living with a mental disorder, with anxiety and depressive disorders the most common. 301 million people were living with an anxiety disorder including 58 million children and adolescents, 280 million people were living with

depression, including 23 million children and adolescents. This underscores the importance of enhancing mental health awareness, as well as advancing prevention and treatment initiatives on a global scale.

To attain a healthy life, Ayurveda outlines various protective measures detailed in its ancient texts like Sadvrittacharan, Achar Rasayan, Manasik Dharaniye Vega, Sattvavajaya etc.

In contemporary science mental-health, psychotherapy is defined as the treatment by psychological means, of problems of an emotional nature in which a trained person deliberately establishes a professional relationship with the patient with the object of removing and modifying or retarding existing symptoms of mediating disturbed pattern of behavior of promoting positive personality growth and development. This is perhaps the most widely accepted definition given by Wolberg in 1967.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The foundational and theoretical resources for this research were drawn from classical Ayurvedic texts, including the Sushruta Samhita, Charaka Samhita, and other works accompanied by available commentaries. Reference books, such as those from the Brihatrayee and Laghutrayee collections, were also included for evaluation. To gather insights on recent studies related to specific subjects, a range of websites and scholarly publications were reviewed as well. This comprehensive approach provided both traditional and contemporary perspectives.

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda identifies three fundamental qualities of the mind, known as Guna Sattva (Balance), Raja (Arrogance), and Tama (Indolence). The mind is referred to as Mana. According to Ayurvedic principles, imbalances in Raja and Tama can lead to emotional disturbances and psychological disorders. These two qualities are considered the Dosha of the mind. The terms associated with the Dosha reflect the interplay of light and darkness in the mind, indicating clarity or negativity in thought processes. When these Dosha become imbalanced, they can produce toxins that manifest as negative emotions. If these emotional toxins are not addressed promptly, they may contribute to chronic mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, insomnia, and neurosis. Ignoring these conditions can lead to severe disorders like Unmad (a state of irrationality akin to hysteria) and Apasmara (epilepsy), categorized under mental disorders within Ayurveda. The

Ayurvedic approach emphasizes a holistic view of health that integrates the mind, body, and soul. It posits that true health arises from a pure body, a joyful soul, and a selfless mind. Happiness is seen as a direct outcome of health, while unhappiness stems from disease; both affect the individual comprehensively.

Ayurveda promotes a proactive approach to health by prioritizing prevention and comprehensive disease management through balanced lifestyle practices, such as a proper diet, regular exercise, mental well-being techniques, and seasonal routines. By nurturing harmony between the body, mind, and environment, it aims to reduce the risk of illness. When managing diseases, Ayurveda takes a personalized approach, recognizing individual constitutions (Prakriti) and providing tailored treatments, including herbal remedies, detoxification (Panchakarma), dietary modifications, and lifestyle adjustments. This strategy addresses not just symptoms but also the root causes of health issues, fostering long-term physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.

Preventive Approach for Mental Health Achar Rasayana (Ideal Behavior of Human Being) :

According to the Charaka Samhita, certain guidelines are recommended for promoting better psychological health, which can be understood as the principles of Achar Rasayana the ideal behavior of human beings, which serves as a code of conduct aimed at promoting good mental, physical, social, and spiritual health for individuals who consistently practice it. An individual who practices Achara Rasayana is characterized by qualities such as truthfulness, calmness, and non-violence, while also abstaining from alcohol and promiscuity. This person is relaxed, soft-spoken, and engages in meditation, cleanliness, and perseverance. They participate in charitable acts, perform penance, and show respect to deities, cows, Brahmins, Guru, and elders. With a loving and compassionate disposition, they remain vigilant, maintain a balanced sleep routine, and regularly consume ghee from milk. By being mindful of their environment and timing, they exhibit humility, good manners, and a strong focus on spirituality. Surrounding themselves with wise individuals, they cultivate a positive outlook and self-restraint. Such individuals, who are devoted to holy texts, are considered to be consistently benefiting from the principles of Rasayana. Those endowed with these positive qualities and who practice Rasayana will enjoy its many benefits.

Manasik Dharaniya Vega: In Ayurveda, the nine suppressible mental urges (Manasik Dharaniya Vega) Lobha (Greed), Shoka (Grief), Bhaya (Fear), Krodha (Anger), Maan (Ego) Lajja (Shame), Ershya (Envy), Atiraga (Excessive attachment), Abhidya (Malice) are directly linked to emotional imbalance and can disrupt the body's Dosha (Vata, Pitta, Kapha), leading to lifestyle disorders. For example, anger (Krodha) exacerbates Pitta, causing conditions like hypertension, while fear (Bhaya) and grief (Shoka) disturb Vata, leading to anxiety and depression. Ayurveda promotes managing these urges through Yoga, meditation, and lifestyle changes to maintain Dosha balance, preventing psychosomatic disorders and fostering overall well-being.

Sadvritta (Ayurvedic Code of Ethical Conduct)

It is another foundational concept in Ayurveda, encompassing a code of conduct that promotes holistic health through proper behavior and lifestyle choices. It is essential for cultivating a long, joyful, peaceful, and healthy life, free from physical and mental illnesses. The term combines two Sanskrit words: "Sad," which means good, and "vritta," meaning regimen. It encompasses moral principles that encourage positive personal behavior and social conduct. By following these guidelines, individuals can achieve Hit Ayu (a life that benefits society) and Sukh Ayu (a life that brings personal happiness). Adhering to the principles of Sadvritta not only promotes good health, or Aarogya, but also fosters self-control over senses and desires, known as Indriya Vijaye.

Sadvritta, is classified into five distinct categories, each focusing on different aspects of behavior that contribute to holistic well-being:

Types of Sadvritta - Describe Figure No. 1



Ayurveda's ethical codes of conduct promote holistic health and harmony across various life aspects. Vyavaharika Sadvritta emphasizes truthfulness, preparation for activities, moderate exercise, and hygiene. Samajika Sadvritta focuses on compassion, respect for elders, public decorum, and health precautions. Manasika Sadvritta encourages timely action, emotional balance, and detachment from outcomes. Together, these principles guide personal care, mindful eating, and respectful behavior, fostering overall well-being in modern life

Integrative Curative Approaches for Mental Health

According to Ayurveda, the root cause of all diseases is mainly three. They are Asatmyaindriyarthasamyoga (improper use of the senses), Pragyaparadha (intellectual errors), and Parinama (effects of time and seasonal changes). These factors disrupt the balance of the body's Dosha leading to illness.

- Pragyaparadha:** It is disobeying the laws of nature. Mistake of intellect; the mistakes performed by intellect is classified into 3 groups.
 - Dhi (intellectual): - mistake due to lack of intellect or ignorance.
 - Dhriti:- lack of awareness produces mistakes.
 - Smriti : -mistakes due to loss of memory.
- Asatmyaindriyarthasamyoga:** Improper contact of senses with their objects, results in an over stimulation and deficiency of sensory activity. This harms the body and mind which requires moderation and harmony internally and externally for healthy functioning.
- Parinam or Kala:** The external environment can trigger disease by unbalancing the body through unnatural and extreme variations in temperature, rainfall or wind which in turn leads to causation of Epidemics. It also refers more generally to the effects of time and natural physical transformation that occur over time. For example, seasonal influences on the disorders associated with specific phases of life and ageing are all in this category.

The method of treatment in Ayurveda as a whole has been classified into three categories by Charaka

- Daivavyapasrya – Faith therapy
- Yuktivyapasrya – Rational therapy
- Sattvavajaya – Psychotherapy

Daivavyapashraya, a divine therapy rooted in the Atharva Veda, is a faith-based treatment for mental disorders (Manasaroga). It emphasizes the patient's belief in healing, targeting illnesses linked to past actions (Daivikruta diseases). The term "Daiva" refers to divine influences, while "Vyapashraya" means seeking refuge. This therapy relies on divine powers, with Charaka prescribing methods associated with divine intervention like Mantra (Hymns), Aushadha (Amulets or talismans), Mani (Wearing of gems), Mangala (Auspicious ceremonies), Bali (Offerings to deities), Upahara (Gifts), Homa (Fire sacrifices or oblations), Niyamana (Observance of scriptural rules), Prayascita (Atonement), Upavasa (Fasting), Svastyayana (Chanting auspicious hymns), Pranipata (Devotional observance to deities), Gamana (Pilgrimage) Daivavyapashraya is a spiritual therapy that uses faith, rituals, and divine influence to promote holistic healing. It focuses on purifying the mind and spirit by addressing emotional toxins, aiming to restore mental balance and well-being.

Yuktivyapashraya is a therapeutic approach in Ayurveda that emphasizes the application of reason and rational thinking in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases. The term "Yukti" signifies a connection or strategy, particularly in the context of utilizing logical reasoning to understand the causes and nature of illnesses. Charaka, a key figure in Ayurvedic medicine, categorizes Yukti as a means of Pramana (valid knowledge) and defines it as the judicious use of reasoning by physicians to determine appropriate treatment plans. Yukti vyapashraya is characterized by careful and purposeful employment of treatments, making it one of the most scientific methods within Ayurveda. It aims to address the root causes of diseases and mitigate their pathogenesis through tailored interventions. According to Charaka, this approach involves a strategic application of Ahara (diet) and Aushadha (medicines), emphasizing the importance of individualized treatment plans. Charaka outlines three primary types of therapies within Yuktivyapashraya:

- Antahparimarjana: Internal cleansing methods.
- Bahirparimarjana: External cleansing methods.
- Shastrapranidhana: Surgical interventions.

These therapies reflect a comprehensive approach that integrates both

internal and external methods for disease management, underscoring the necessity for a rational and customized treatment strategy in Ayurveda.

Sattvavajaya is a therapeutic technique specifically designed for managing mental disorders. It involves controlling the mind by withdrawing it from undesirable objects or distractions. Ayurvedic texts reveal that, just as there are comprehensive treatments for physical ailments, Sattvavajaya provides remedies for mental disturbances. In addition to Ayurvedic literature, detailed descriptions of psychotherapeutic techniques can also be found in spiritual and philosophical texts, such as the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita. An example of this is Lord Krishna, who acted as a counselor to Arjuna during the Mahabharata, offering guidance when Arjuna faced despair an early instance of psychotherapy. Upon reviewing the literature, it is evident that the concept of Sattvavajaya, or psychotherapy, is briefly and concisely addressed in Ayurvedic texts. This technique focuses on controlling the mind's desires for unwholesome objects, which can be achieved by enhancing Sattva to subdue the vitiated Manasa Dosha, specifically Rajasa and Tamasa. Sattvavajaya Chikitsa, is based on two fundamental principles:

Assurance and Emotional Support

When a patient is experiencing grief or sudden loss, they are provided with empathetic emotional support and assurance of the return of the lost object or person. This principle aims to alleviate the patient's distress by acknowledging their pain and offering consolation, even if the exact situation cannot be remedied.

Inducing Opposite Emotions

The second principle involves substituting the patient's distressing emotions with their opposite counterparts. If a patient has developed psychological issues due to excessive emotions such as: Kama (desire, affection, or lust), Bhaya (fear), Krodha (anger or aversion), Harsha (happiness), Irshya (jealousy), Lobha (greed). They are treated by cultivating the opposite emotional state. For instance, if a patient has an excessive "Kama" (affection) toward alcohol, they may be encouraged to develop "Krodha" (aversion) toward that affection instead. This principle aims to diffuse the emotional imbalance by shifting the patient's attitude and emotional response to the distressing situation. Both these principles of Sattvavajaya Chikitsa work to alleviate psychological distress by providing emotional support, inducing positive emotions, and guiding the patient toward a more balanced and adaptive emotional state. The techniques derived from Sattvavajaya Chikitsa are rooted in these two core principles of assurance and emotional substitution. Ultimately, this approach enables the mind to resist harmful sensory impressions (Ahita Artha), which represents the ultimate goal of Sattvavajaya Chikitsa.

In Contemporary psychotherapy uses psychological techniques to promote personal change and healing by helping individuals understand their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, addressing mental health issues like depression, anxiety, trauma, and substance use disorders. It includes cognitive behavioral therapy to alter negative thought patterns, psychodynamic therapy to explore past influences, interpersonal therapy to enhance relationships, and family and group therapy to address collective dynamics. All these therapies align with Sattvavajaya chikitsa. Confidentiality, fostering trust and open communication, with psychotherapy is essential which align with Daivavyapasrya chikitsa. These ultimately enhancing emotional resilience and overall quality of life.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda promotes mental health by balancing the mind's three Guna Sattva, Raja, and Tama to prevent emotional disruptions. It uses holistic treatments, lifestyle changes, and ethical principles like Achar Rasayana and Sadvritta for well-being. Ayurveda's therapies Sattvavajaya (psychotherapy), Yuktivyapasrya (rational therapy), and Daivavyapasrya (faith-based therapy) integrate spiritual, psychological, and physical care. Sattvavajaya parallels modern psychotherapy, enhancing emotional resilience and self-awareness. Overall, Ayurveda offers a holistic approach to mental health, fostering long-term balance and wellness.

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