



AYURVEDA : A BOON FOR PSYCHOSOMATIC DISORDERS W.S.R. TO FUNCTIONAL DYSPESIA

Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT

Psychosomatic disorder is a condition in which psychological stress adversely affect physiological (somatic) functioning to the point of distress. It is a condition of dysfunction or structural damage in bodily organs through inappropriate activation of the involuntary nervous system. Irritable bowel syndrome, functional dyspepsia, chronic fatigue syndrome are few examples of these type of disorders. Out of which functional dyspepsia is one of common psychosomatic disorder mostly affecting youth. With a history of previous psychiatric disturbance, patient complaints of anorexia, colicky pain, morning nausea, pain before taking food. In modern medicine, anti-spasmodic, antacids, sedatives, anti-depression drugs are given which also produces adverse effects on patients. But our Ayurveda with an integrated approach provides a satisfactory treatment to functional dyspepsia. Herbomineral preparations like *kamdudha ras*, *praval pishiti*, *suta shekhar ras*, *jeerakarishtha* etc. alleviates somatic symptoms. Herbs like *Brahmi*, *Madhuyashti*, *Jatamansi*, *Kushmand* etc. (*medhya* herbs) relieves of psychiatric symptoms. Along with these preparations, yoga & meditation helps to get rid of anxiety & depression which ultimately relieves of functional dyspepsia. So various herbomineral preparations, *medhya* herbs, meditation and *yoga* which play roles in management of functional dyspepsia, are discussed.

KEYWORDS

Psychosomatic disorders, functional dyspepsia, herbal preparations, yoga & meditation

INTRODUCTION

Psychosomatic disorders are the consequences of harmful effects that result from psychic influences on the organic control of tissues. The term psychosomatic is derived from Greek word “psyche” (mind) and “soma” (body). A psychosomatic disorder is a disease which involves both mind and body. Sometimes mental and emotional factors may act as risk factor that could influence the initiation and progression of functional dyspepsia. Psychosomatic disorders are defined as disorders characterized by physiological (somatic) working to the point of distress. DSM-II 1968 defined psychosomatic disorders as “Psychosomatic symptoms that are caused by emotional factors and involve a single organ system usually under autonomic nervous system innervations.”^{1,2}

Functional dyspepsia is defined as at least one month of epigastric discomfort without evidences of organic disease found during an upper endoscopy, and it accounts for 70% of dyspepsia. Symptoms of functional dyspepsia include postprandial fullness, early satiety, and epigastric pain or burning. Functional dyspepsia is of two types: postprandial distress and epigastric pain syndromes. Postprandial distress represents a dysmotility-like syndrome where there is early satiety and epigastric pain type represents a syndrome where there is burning, ulcer like pain.³

Psychological distress is associated with Functional dyspepsia FD, with a strong link to anxiety.⁴ The best evidence for the role of anxiety comes from longitudinal investigations of subjects free of FD symptoms. In a study conducted in Australia, the development of FD was nearly 8-fold higher in those with baseline anxiety, suggesting a cause and effect relationship.⁵ In most of the cases, anxiety precedes the disorder (a brain-gut link). Early life factors are likely key, with the possibility of a vicious cycle developing in which mood disturbance exacerbates dyspepsia, which in turn increases the severity of the mood disorder.⁶ Reasons for this brain-gut link are unclear. One of the reason can be, distress may increase the levels of inflammatory mediators like prostaglandins, cytokines etc. which in turn produces the gut inflammation.

Ayurveda concept for functional dyspepsia

In Ayurveda, functional dyspepsia can be correlated with Amlapitta. It is a clinical entity of upper gastrointestinal tract caused due to abnormal pathological condition of Pitta.⁷ It is not clearly described as an independent clinical entity in Brihatrayi. Acharya Charaka has mentioned Amla Pitta as one of the diseases that is a consequence of faulty diet and Ama Visa. Kasyapa Samhita is the first available treatise describing Amla Pitta (as Shuktaka) as a separate clinical entity.⁸ Madhavakara has described etiopathogenesis, signs, symptoms, and

two subtypes of Amlapitta in his great treatise Madhava Nidana.⁹ One of the nidana (reason) told in madhav nidana for amlapitta is manas vikar.

Ayurveda approach for the treatment of functional dyspepsia

Amlapitta is a common pathological disorder of annavaha srotasa (gastrointestinal system) which is explained in different classical transcripts of Ayurveda. The cardinal sign and symptoms of Amlapitta are Avipaka (indigestion), Hritkantha Daha (burning sensation in heart and throat) as well as Tikta-Amlodgara (sour and bitter belching).^{10,11}

This is one of the leading public health problems, which can jeopardize the Quality Of Life (QOL) of a patient. Currently, Ayurveda healing system plays a substantial task in the improvement of hurting symptoms and QOL of the individuals suffering from Amlapitta (FD). Amlapitta is commonly expressed with two types of symptoms/presentations depending upon the association of Agni and Jala Mahabhuta. When the Drava and Ushna Guna of Pitta increases, it leads to pathogenesis of amlapitta. Increase in Drava Guna can be reduced using drugs that have properties opposite to that of Drava Guna, i.e., Ruksha, Laghu, Ushna, Teekshna, etc. similarly when Ushna Guna increases and manifests as amlapitta, the choice of drug should be opposite to that of Guna like Sheeta, Snigdha, etc.¹²⁻¹⁴

To treat the mental conditions of the patients like stress, anxiety, depression etc. *medhya* drugs are prescribed which helps in improving the mental conditions of the patients. So both type of drugs working on psyche and amlapitta are used to treat functional dyspepsia of the patient.

Herbs like *Yashtimadhu*, *aardrak*, *kadli*, *kalounji*, *shankhpushpi*, *brahmi*, *kushmand* etc. can be used to treat stress induced functional dyspepsia.

Formulations like *kamdudha ras*, *praval pishiti*, *sootshekhar ras*, *jeerakarishtha* can be used. Change in Dietary habits can also help.

DISCUSSION

Yashtimadhu – It is liquorice root or *Glycyrrhiza glabra* Linn. Its *guna karma* as per Ayurveda are *Guna- guru snigdha, rasa- madhur, vipaka- madhur, virya- sheet, vata pitta shamak*. Due to its *sheet, snigdha* property it will pacify pitta in amla pitta condition. It pacifies burning. It reduces gastric hyperacidity because of its *madhur* characteristics.¹⁵ It is also a *medhya* drug when taken its powder with milk. So it will act both on dyspepsia as well as on psyche condition.

Shankhpushpi – *Convolvulus plauricaulis* choisy belongs to family convolvulaceae. Its *guna karma* are *Guna- snigdha, pichhil, rasa- tikta, vipak- madhur, virya- sheet, prabhav- medhya, vata pitta shamak*. It acts as nerve tonic and has *medhya* property. It also pacifies *vata pitta*, so it will lower down *raja tama pravritti*. Due to its *snigdha pichhil guna& sheet virya*, it will calm mind. Clinical studies

have exhibited demonstrable beneficial effects of *C. pluricaulis* on the patients of anxiety neurosis. The herb induces a feeling of calm and peace, good sleep and a relief in anxiety, stresses, mental fatigue, producing a significant reduction in the level of anxiety, neuroticism arising due to various levels of stresses. The herb appears to produce its action by modulation of neurochemistry of the brain.¹⁶

Brahmi – *Bacopa monnieri* Linn. belongs to family Scrophulariaceae. Its guna karma are *Guna-laghu, rasa-tikta, vipaka-katu, virya-ushana, prabhav-medhya, kapha vata shamak*. It is a medhya drug. It is used for the improvement of intelligence, memory & revitalization of sense organs.¹⁷

Jatamansi – *Nardostachys jatamansi* DC belongs to Valerianaceae family. Its guna karma are *Guna-laghu, snigdha, rasa-tikta, madhur, kashaya, vipaka-katu, virya-sheet, prabhav- bhootghna, manasdosha har & tridosha har*. It directly acts on *manas dosha*, hence beneficial in improving stress conditions.¹⁸

Kushmand – *Benincasa hispida* Linn. belongs to family cucurbitaceae. Its guna karma are *Guna-laghu, snigdha, rasa-madhur, vipak- madhur, virya-sheet, prabhav medhya, tridosha shamak*. It is *medhya* & *pacifies tridosha*. It is a brain tonic, improves psyche conditions. Due to its *snigdha, sheet and madhur* property, it pacifies pitta also so helpful in amlapitta rog.¹⁹

Aardrak- Zingiber officinale Linn. belongs to family Zingiberaceae. It exhibits *snigdha, ushna* property and specifically acts on *aama*. It clears out *aama* from digestive tract and improves digestion hence acts in dyspepsia.²⁰

Kadli – *Musa sapientum* Linn. belongs to family Musaceae. It pacifies pitta as it is *sheetal & madhur*. It stops burning so helpful in dyspepsia.²¹

Kalonji – *Nigella sativa* Linn. Belongs to family Ranunculaceae. It is a medhya drug, so acts on brain and also a *deepan pachan* drug, improves digestion and increases the threshold level of satiety. So it is a very good drug in Dyspepsia.²²

Kamdudha ras - It is a preparation made by mixing *mukta pishti, praval pishti, shankh bhasma, kaparda bhasma, mukta shukti, swarna gairik, guduchi*. It acts as antacid, anti-emetic, *daha nashak, pitta shamak*, stops water brash. It is highly recommended in dyspepsia results due to its promising results.²³

Praval Pishti – It is made by mixing purified coral and rose water and kept in moon light. It is a very good formulation in amlapitta rog. It pacifies pitta, good in hyperacidity and anti-emetic also, so also helpful in dyspepsia.²⁴

Sootshekhar Ras – It is a preparation made by mixing *Parad, Gandhak, swarna bhasma, roudya bhasma, tankan, trikatu, dhatura seeds, tamra bhasma, chaturjata, shankh bhasma, Bilva, Kachoor*. It is a very good formulation for amlapitta. It corrects pitta dosha, stops water brash, hyperacidity, helpful in epigastric pain. It is a good appetizer also.²⁵

Jeerakarishtha – formulation made by mixing *cumin, jaggery, dhataki, shunthi, musta, chaturjata, jatiphala, Kankol, lavang*. It is a good appetizer and improves digestion. Because of these characteristics, it is highly recommended in dyspepsia.²⁶

Dietary habits

There is also positive association between dyspepsia and irregular dietary habits like skipping meals, dining out etc. So patient has to adopt some dietary habits like to consume smaller and frequent meals in a day. One should avoid hot, spicy, acid-stimulating and high fat-food. Patient should limit alcohol and caffeine intake. Patient should also avoid FD triggering foods. These triggers are specific from person to person. Patients have to identify themselves and have to stay away from these foods.²⁷

Yoga and meditation

The ultimate goal of yoga therapy is to bring an individual's body and mind back to a state of harmony - *sattva* through an address of the physical, mental and energetic condition of the person. Mentally, people with dyspepsia and ulcers often keep their anxieties, frustration and anger pent up inside. Physically the diaphragm and solar plexus

area are likely to hold much tension leaving these areas energetically blocked. Practices with a focus on surrender and letting go of effort, as well as a release of tensions in the upper gastro-intestinal area of the body, will help to restore *sattva* (harmony) to the body-mind and aid a return to normal digestive function.²⁸

A. Pawan mukt asana

(joint-freeing series) relieves tension. Pawan means wind. Mukta means release. These simple movements relax and align the brain and body, and remove blockages that prevent the free flow of prana (life-force). They balance *vata dosha*.

B. Gentle supine postures

- i. Warm ups: pelvic tilts, circling legs alternately, cycling legs alternately frees up energy in the abdomen.
- ii. *Jathara Parivarthanasana*, a gentle supine twist beneficial for toning liver, spleen and pancreas. It Balances *vata, pitta and kapha dosha*,
- iii. Supine supported backbends soothe *vata* and *pitta dosha*. *Suptavajrasana* (reclining hero pose) stretches the abdomen and improves digestion. *Viparita karani* (half shoulderstand, against the wall) is known to benefit dyspepsia.

C. Pranayam

Anuloma Viloma (alternate nostril breathing) balances the nervous system and calms the mind.

D. Meditation and Deep relaxation – it relaxes nervous system and eases tridosha.

E. Shavasan for 10-20 minutes to calm the nervous system and it eases *vata & pitta*.

CONCLUSION

Many diseases now a day have a psychological component in their etiology or have some effect of psychological factors. Because stress is increasing in everyday life due to cut-throat competition in every field, there are more chances of developing more serious somatic diseases. Ayurveda provides assuring results in psychosomatic disorders as Ayurvedic medicines have broad spectrum. Single medicine covers many diseases including psychiatric one. So Ayurveda is very beneficial in psychosomatic disorders. Ayurveda is just like feather in cap especially in medical system.

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