

AYURVEDIC APPROACH TOWARDS DEPRESSION

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the science of life which focuses on maintenance of positive health in healthy and eradication of ailments in diseased through its holistic approach, lifestyle practices, dietary habits and safer medications. With the stresses and strains of modern life, most people are suffering some form of tension at the mental level. This may be expressed by such emotions as depression, anxiety, irritability, insecurity or a general feeling of dissatisfaction¹. *Ayurveda* has paid serious attention to such problems and has formulated effective treatment methods. Depression is referred to as *mano avasad* in *Ayurveda*. *Ayurveda* advises therapies, lifestyle adjustments and herbal preparations that clear and strengthen the mind allowing us to cope with life's challenges more effectively and also bring positivity to our lives at all levels.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda*, Depression, *Avasad*.

INTRODUCTION

Depression is the commonest psychiatric disorder affecting 121 million peoples worldwide. *Vishada* and *Avasada* are the two conditions in *Ayurveda*, which are similar to depression. In *Ayurveda*, it is believed that depression results from vitiated *doshas* in the brain, as – the *prana vayu*, *sadhaka pitta*, and *trapaka kapha*, which suppresses *Ojus* leading to loss of desire to participate in one's life's activities.

The three types of *doshas* which can give rise to depression are

- *Vata*- type;
- *Pitta*-type; and
- *Kapha*-type depressions.

Symptoms of *vata*-type depression

- Anxiety,
- Irritational fears,
- Phobias,
- Insomnia,
- Paranoid,
- Incoherent speech,
- Forgetful

Symptoms of *pitta* -type depressions

- Anger,
- Irritability,
- Suicidal ideation,
- Violent mindset,

- Self-destructive behaviour,
- Abuse of alcohol and drugs

Symptoms of *kapha*-type depressions

- Lethargy
- Apathy,
- Dullness,
- Excessive sleep,
- Heaviness.

Etymological derivation of *Vishada*

1. (Pu) Vi+ Shad - Dhaj Pratayaya = *Vishada*
2. Vi + Shad+ Kta = *Vishada*.

Depression is an illness that infiltrates the body system, and when such happens, it affects the way a person feels about things and situations. It also affects how such human thinks and how the brain responds. It's a mental disease coupled with body processes.^[2]

Causative factors (Nidana)

Depressive episode, mild (with or without somatic syndrome), moderate depressive episode (with or without somatic syndrome); severe (with or without somatic syndrome), recurrent depressive disorder (moderate with or without somatic syndrome); recurrent depressive disorder (sever with or without psychotic symptoms); cyclothymia and dysthymia. Recurrent depressive disorder is also referred as unipolar depression. The other method to classify mood disorder is into major

depressive disorder; bipolar I disorder, bipolar II disorder, bipolar III disorder, and bipolar IV disorder.^[3]

An episode may be characterized by^[4]

- Sadness.
- Indifference or apathy.
- Irritability & is usually associated with change in neurovegetative functions, including sleep patterns, appetite & weight motor agitation.
- Feeling of shame or guilt & through of death or dying.
- Patients with depression have profound loss of pleasure in all enjoyable activities.

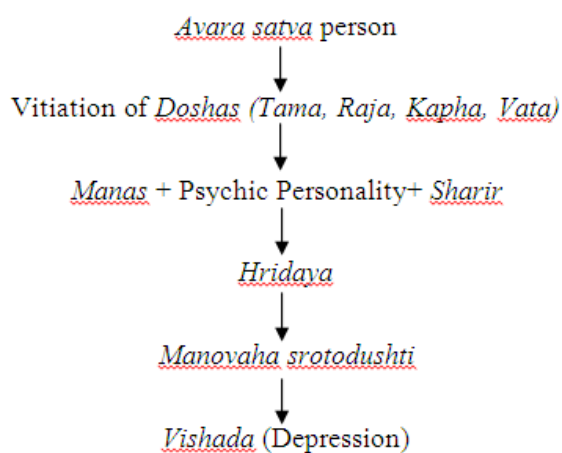
In some depressed patients mood disorder does not appear to be episodic and is not associated with either psychosocial dysfunction or change from individual's usual experience in life.

In *Ayurveda*, imbalance in psychic energies (*sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*) supported by imbalance of physical energies (*vata*, *pitta*, *kapha*) are believed to cause various mental disorders. This applies to depression as well. Lack of mental discipline, indulgence in negative thoughts and activities and negative emotions, such as hatred, anger, etc. are known to cause imbalance in psychic energies which in turn leads to diseases like depression. Weakened *ojas* (which is the essence of all *dhatu*s) often contributes to this problem. *Prana vayu* is responsible for proper functioning of the mind. Weakened *ojas* disturbs the *prana vayu* which then fails to stimulate the mind.

Concept of mental health in *Ayurveda*^[5]

Susruta state that man in *Swastha* whose bodily structure & function in terms of *Doshas*, *Agnis*, *Dhatu*s, *Malas* are in state of *Samya* i.e. balance and who is mentally, sensorily & Spiritually in State of calmness.

Samprapti (Pathogenesis) of depression^[6]

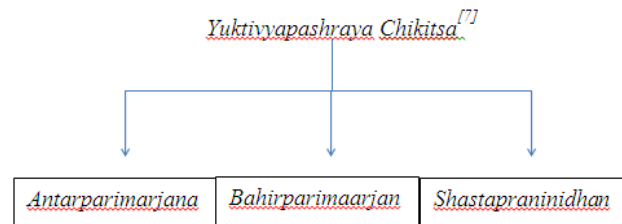


Depression disorder & its Ayurvedic management

Depression disorder and its management divided into two ways.

I. Pharmacological Management

Pharmacological & Non-pharmacological treatments are equally important. -In ayurveda the therapeutics is divided in to three, *Daivavyapashraya*, *Yuktivyapashraya*, and *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*. Out of these *Yuktivyapashraya* falls under pharmacological management.



1. *Antarparimarjana* (Internal purification)

- Samshodhana* (purification) i.e. elimination of vitiated *Doshas* by *Panchacarma* therapy.
- Samshaman* (alleviation) - It include different type of drugs, diet activities used to alleviate the vitiated doshas.

2. *Bahirparimarjana* (External purification)

It includes *Purvakarma* of *Panchakarma* i.e. *Snehan* (oileation) & *Swedana* (sudation). Medicated oil are used for external application with heat application.

3. *Shastrapranidhana* (operative procedures)

Bloodletting has been indicated in various types of psychoses.

II. Non pharmacological management

Non pharmacological management of depression are as follows: 1. *Daivavyapashrya chikitsa*. 2. *Sattvavajaya chikitsa*. 3. *Nidan parivarjana*. 4. *Naisthiki chikista*. 5. *Yoga* therapy. 6. Relaxation therapy. 7. Shock therapy. 8. Diet. 9. *Rasayana* therapy.

1. *Daivavyapashraya chikitsa*^[8]

These methods create confidence & pessimistic tendencies. It includes *Mantras*, *Aushadha*, *Manimangala*, *Bali*, *Upadhan*, *Homa*, *Niyama*, *Prayascita*, *Upavasa*, *Pranipata*, *Yatragaman*.

2. *Sattvavajaya chikitsa*^[9]

It aimed at control of mind i.e. one should keep himself established in his oneself after knowing real nature of soul & attaining height of spiritual wisdom.

3. *Nidanparivarjana*^[10]

This is important principle in treatment of any disease is to avoid causative factors.

4. *Naisthikichikista*^[11]

"*Naisthiki ya vinopadham*" (*charaka*). This term refers to absolute eradication of miseries obtained by elimination of desires which are root cause of all miseries. Elimination of desires leads to eradication of all miseries. (*cha.su.1/94, 95*).

5. Yoga therapy^[12]

Yoga moksho pravarkak' i.e. by practice of Yoga, One can attain state of *Moksha*. Process of increasing *Sattva* and decreasing *Raja* and *Tama* leading to *Karmakshaya* (loss of deeds) is way of attaining *Moksha*. (*cha.su.1/131*)

6. Relaxation therapy

It is also important therapy. It means of getting free from stress is supposed to be a major causative factor of mental illness.

7. Shock therapy^[13]

He should be shown strange things or informed (falsely) of the death of someone near and dear to him. He should be terrified by trained elephants and non poisonous snakes. He should be tried with ropes and flogged by a whip or, he should be tied at very secrete place and horrified by hay fire.

8. Diet

Gruel should be given for three days, followed by parched barley powder mixed with water only for the next three days. Or, the learned physician may give boiled barley. The diet of the patient should be tasty, appetising and salutary.

9. Rasayana therapy^[6]

The aim of *Rasayana Chikitsa* is to nourish blood, lymph, flesh, **adipose tissue** and semen. This prevents the individual from chronic degenerative diseases. The therapy influences the fundamental aspect of body viz., *Dhatu*, *Agni*, *Srotansi* and *Ojus*. In *Rasayana* therapy, the *Bheshja* (medicine) is divided into two types:

- Swasthasyaurjaskara*-toning up the health of a healthy person
- Kinchit Artasya Rognut*-treating the ailments of the patients.

Rasayana Drugs

As per *Acharya Charak*, *Rasayana* is defined as the means of achieving the finest quality of *Rasadidhatu* (body tissues) where it increases life span, improves *Medhya* (intelligence), cures disease, stabilizes youthfulness, improves luster, complexion, voice and makes body and senses strong and healthy etc. *Rasayana* drugs acts as:

- Immunomodulator**- By augmenting or reducing the ability of the immune system.
- Adaptogen**- Increases the ability of an organism to adapt to environmental factors e.g., *Ashwagandha*, *Tulsi*, *haridra*, *Pippali*, *Amalaki*, *Guduchi*, *shatavari*.
- Antioxidant**- Circumvent the damage caused by oxygen free radical.e.g. *Amalaki*
- Nootropic**- Promote intelligence and functions of brain e.g., *Medhya Rasayana* drugs (namely- *Mandookparni*, *Guduchi*, *Yashtimadhu* and *Shankhpushpi*).

CONCLUSION

Depression is stage of mind due to various reasons and it can be manageable with the help of *Ayurveda* like *Daivavyapasrya* and *Satvavjaya chikitsa* etc.

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