



Psychosomatic disorders and its management through Ayurveda

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Abstract Psychosomatic - psyche (mind) and soma (body) - A psychosomatic disorder is a disease which involves both mind and body. Some physical diseases are thought to be particularly prone to be made worse by mental conditions such as stress and anxiety. Your current mental status can influence how bad a physical disease is, at any given time. Both mind and body are a single identity, so the involvements of one definitely affect the others. So the bidirectional approach should be done to proper diagnosis and management of psychosomatic disorders. In Ayurveda detail description is given about psychic (Manasika), Somatic (Sharirika) and psychosomatic disorders (Manodaihika Vyadhi), their mode of treatment, they are as follows.

Key words: Mansika, Psychic; Sharirika; Somatic; Manodaihika; Psychosomatic; Vyadhi, Diseases; Treatment.

Introduction

Ayurvedists have followed the psycho-somatic treatment approach, where more emphasis is given to the integration aspect of these two factors. In somatic diseases the psychological aspect cannot be neglected, similarly in psychological diseases the organic (somatic) affairs have been given due consideration. *Manasikabhava* (psychic factors) plays an important role in etiopathogenesis & symptomatology of psychic and psychosomatic disease conditions. Psychic factors-*kama* (lustre), *krodha* (anger), *shoka* (grief), *bhaya* (fear), *irshya* (envy) etc. within physiological limit can be defined as *Manasika-bhava* whereas crossing the physiological limit these are termed as *Manasika-vikara* or psychic disorders. Moreover, body and mind are interdependent to each other. From the above line it clears that the *Ayurvedic* approach to disease is definitely psycho-somatic in nature. *Chakrapani* the commentator of *Charaka Samhita* further clears the above as these *Sharirika* (somatic) and *Manasika* (psychic) disorders follows each other as somatic to somatic, psychic to psychic, and psychic to somatic vice versa. However, the term psychosomatic disorder is mainly used to mean... "a physical disease that is thought to be caused, or made worse, by mental factors". Some physical diseases are thought to be particularly prone to be made worse by mental factors such as stress, anxiety and depression for example- psoriasis, eczema, stomach ulcers, high blood pressure, and heart disease etc.

Psycho-somatic approach in Ayurveda

The history of psychosomatic problem is as old as the *Ayurveda* as the history of human civilization. In *Ayurveda* *Manas* and *Sharira* are regarded as separate entities but not in the sense of separation, because an organism is the complex combination of mind, soul and body. So technically speaking the *Ayurvedic* theory cannot be regarded a dualistic approach, firstly because soul is also a part of the complex human organism, secondly the theory of *Ayurveda* is of integration and not of separate existence and the complex integration of these three factors is the human organism but for practical purpose, ¹*Manas* (psyche) and *Sharira* (soma) have been separately defined and their entity and *doshas* (humors) have been distinctly mentioned.²*Sharirika* and *Manasika doshas* are found to be affecting mutually each other.

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It seems that *Ayurvedists*³ have followed the psychosomatic approach where more emphasis is given to the integration aspect of these two factors. In somatic diseases the psychological aspect cannot be neglected, similarly in psychological diseases the organic (somatic) affairs have been given due consideration. We find a rich material in *Ayurveda* which establishes that the *Ayurvedic* approach to disease is definitely psycho-somatic in nature. *There are* so many instances where it has been shown that somatic disorders also effect the psychic condition of a human being for examples, with the increasing of *Vatika* humors results *Anidra* (insomnia)⁴. *Pittavridhi* causes *murchha*⁵ and *Kapha vridhi* causes *Tandra and Nidra (sleep)*.⁶ There are also so many somatic diseases where mental symptoms have been also pointed along with the physical symptoms of the disease.⁷ The concept of *Suddha Pitta* appears to be psycho-physiological in outlook. This *Pitta* may be a substance or a complex of substances which are deemed to be essential in connection with some of the higher mental faculties and emotional states.⁸

The effects of psychic or mental disorders on the body have been also mentioned. The emotions like anger, fear and pleasure etc., have their own effects on the healing process of the ulcer and the ulcers of the persons who are fearful are not easily healed.⁹ The *Pitta* is deranged by *Krodha* (anger), *Bhaya* (fear) and *Soka* (grief) and blood is vitiated by anger.¹⁰ *Charaka* hold that *Vayu* is provoked by *Kama* (lustre) *Shoka* (grief) and *Bhaya* (fear), *Pitta* is provoked by anger.¹¹ The fevers are produced due to emotional causes like fear, grief anger etc. The emotions like grief fear etc. causes *Vataja shiriroga*.

There are so many somatic diseases in which mental symptoms have been also described, whereas in the description of mental diseases somatic characteristic have been mentioned. It is therefore, *Charaka* who mentions the somatic and psychic disorders following one another occasionally occur together.^{12, 13} These *Sharirika* (Somatic) and *Manasika* (psychic) disorders in long term associated each other as somatic to somatic, psychic to psychic, somatic to psychic and psychic to somatic.¹⁴ These references from *Ayurvedic* texts reflect that a great stress has

been laid by *Ayurvedists* on the psycho-somatic approach towards diseases.

List of psychosomatic disorders:

Here is a list of psychosomatic disorders. It doesn't mean that each is exclusively psychosomatic, but inclusively; it may not at all be. Your family physician can diagnose it and also, it's sometimes difficult to separate between system nervous, cardiovascular, because, many disorders touch more than one organ.

Mental symptoms dominants disorders:

Unmad (psychosis), *Apasmar* (epilepsy) *Mada* (psycho-enuresis), *Murcha* (fainting), *Anidra* (insomnia) etc.

Somatic disorders due to psyche:

Bhayaj, *Shokaj Atisar* (nervous diarrhea), *Kamaj*, *Shokaj Jwar* (nervous pyrexia).

Respiratory disorders:

Tamaka swasha (bronchial asthma).

Gastrointestinal disorders:

Peptic ulcer, *Grahani* (Irritable bowel syndrome), Colonic disorders as *Vivandha* (constipation) or *Atisar* (diarrhea), *Bhuktadvesha* (Anorexia nervosa).

Skin disorders:

Anutjata (Urticaria), *Ekakustha* (Psoriasis).

Disorders of muscles and joints:

Amanata (Rheumatoid arthritis),

Endocrine disorders:

Hyperthyroidism, *Madhumeha* (diabetes mellitus)

Cardiovascular disorders:

Ucharaktachap (Essential hypertension), *Hridayanga* (Coronary diseases and Cerebro-vascular disorders), *Shirashbula* (migraines).

Disorders associated with menstrual and reproductive functions:

Amenorrhea, Menorrhagia, Premenstrual tension, Menopausal disorders, premature ejaculations

Child psychosomatic troubles:

Chronic Abdominal Pain, Enuresis, appetite troubles.

Management of Psychosomatic disorders through Ayurveda:

Psychosomatic medicine emphasizes the unity of mind and body and the interaction between them. Overall, the conviction is that psychological factors are important in the development of all diseases; either the role is in the initiation, progression, aggravation or exacerbation of a disease, or in the predisposition or reaction to a disease. Here we described the various treatments which are given in *Ayurveda* for psychic, somatic and psychosomatic disorders-

The former (pathogenic factors of the body) are reconciled by therapies based on religious rites and physical properties (proper medicine, proper diet and proper regimen); the latter ones (pathogenic factor of mind), by spiritual knowledge, patience, memory and medication.¹⁵

Diseases can be prevented by taking recourse to the avoidance of intellectual errors; restraint of sense organs: good memory: knowledge of the place, time and one's capabilities and good conduct. Once desirous of his own well-being should follow this up well in advance.¹⁶

Knowledge about the prescriptions of authoritative sages and assimilation of such instructions can only help in the prevention and treatments of the diseases (both psychic and somatic).¹⁷

Therapies are of three kinds, viz., *Dainavyapashrya* (spiritual therapy), *Yuktivyapashrya* (therapy based on reasoning i.e. physical properties) and *Satvanajaya* (psychotherapy-treatment by self-control). Spiritual therapies are incantation of mantras talisman, wearing of gems, auspicious offerings gifts, oblations, observance of scriptural rules, atonement, fast, chanting of auspicious hymns, obeisance to the gods, going on pilgrimage, etc., administration of proper diet and medicinal drugs comes under the second category. Withdrawal of mind from harmful objects constitutes psychic therapy.¹⁸

In the event of vitiation of bodily *doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*), generally three types of therapies are required to be applied to the body, viz., internal-cleaning, external cleaning and surgical therapy. Diseases caused by the improper diet, etc. are eradicated by medicines meant for internal cleansing. The cleansing therapy which has its curative effect by external contact with the body such as massage, fomentation, unction, affusion and kneading is the external one. Surgical therapy comprises excision, incision, puncturing, rupturing, scraping, uprooting, rubbing with a substance having rough surface, suturing, probing, application of alkalies and leeches.¹⁹

A person (even if) suffering from the mental diseases should very carefully consider again what is useful and what is harmful for health; he should strive for discarding the harmful or unwholesome regimens and adopt the wholesome ones in regard to virtue (*dharma*), wealth (*artha*) and desire (*kama*), for no happiness or unhappiness can occur in this world without these elements. So one should try to serve world without these three elements. So one should try to serve persons well versed in the nature and cure of psychic diseases. One should also try to acquire knowledge of the self, the place, family, time, strength and the capacity.²⁰

The unwholesome conjunction of the sense organs with their objects (*Asatmendriyarthasanyoga*), intellectual blasphemy (*Pragyapradha*) and transformation (*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.²¹

All sensation of pain (psychic and somatic) cease to exist in the state of *Yoga* (union with the self) or with various exercise regimen) and *Moksha* emancipation).²²

In the event of vitiated *doshas* (somatic and psychic) brought forth by *Snehana* (oleation) and *Svedana* (fomentation) therapies, a physician should administer those five elimination therapies-*Panchakarma* i.e. (*Vaman*-therapeutic emesis, *Virechana*-therapeutic purgation, *Vasti*-medicated enemas, and *Rakatamokshan*-bloodletting) paying due regard to the dose and time.²³

Besides the above *Panchakarma*, in *Ayurveda* the following six *Up-karmas* have been also described as six method of treatment of diseases as *Brimhana* (promotion growth or encouraging plumpiness, *Langhana* (effectives reduction), *Snehana* (increasing the fat contents of the body.), *Rukshana* (promoting dryness or removal of the fatness), *Svedana* (promoting the sweating) and *Stambhana* (promoting contraction). *Charaka* further emphasized the person who know above *Upkarmas* is real physician.²⁴

Conclusion

Various other treatments are described detail in *Ayurveda* for healthy person to maintain his health and disease person to be cured, as *Rasayana* therapy specially *Acharya Rasayana* (follow up all the code and conduct of living, *Sadvrita* (good conduct-based on personal cleanness of the mind and body, *Swabhavrita* (follow up code of the hygiene), *Medhya Rasayana* (mental health promoting drugs).²⁵ One desirous for preventing the diseases, should not suppress any of the natural urges²⁶ and should suppress urges relating to rashness and evil deeds- mentally, orally and physically.

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