



A REVIEW ON AACHARA RASAYANA W.S.R. TO THE MANAGEMENT OF PSYCHOSOMATIC DISORDERS

Gupta Satish Chand^{1*}, Shenoy Sumanth¹, Sasanoor Manjunatha T.², Kotecha Mita¹

¹Department of Dravyaguna, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

²Department of Maulik Siddhant and Samhita, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

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*Corresponding author

Dr.Satish Chand Gupta, M.D. Scholar, Department of Dravyaguna, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India 302002
E-mail: dr.sgupta1982@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Rasayana is one among the major classification of Ayurvedic therapeutics. It can be advised to both diseased and healthy individual in order to strengthen one's body as well as mind. Aachara Rasayana is one among Nitya Rasayana (for using on daily basis) which is nothing but the codes and conduct advocated by Acharya Charaka in Rasayana chapter of Charaka Samhita. It is the summarized form of Swasthavritta. In present day medical practice it is observed that major proportion of the population is suffering from the diseases of psychosomatic origin. In present scenario the management of psychosomatic disorders includes the use of psychotropic drugs, psychotherapy, behavior therapy, biofeedback etc. along with concurrent undertaking of the treatment for organic dysfunction. In this regard, ancient Ayurveda Acharyas have given equal consideration to physical, psychological, food and nutritional and behavioral patterns of an individual. When the ancient and modern concepts are reviewed, the biological, psychological and social factors seems to be influential on the state of health and illness of an individual. Aachara Rasayana makes an individual strong (immune) physically, mentally, spiritually, socially (personality wise) and morally by means of codes and conducts and use of some Nitya Rasayana Dravyas.

Key words: - Rasayana, Aachara Rasayana, psychosomatic disorder, Swasthavritta, super ego,

INTRODUCTION

Therapeutics (Bheshaja) in Ayurveda is said to be of two types Urjaskara (energizers /strengthening agents) and Roga Shaamak (curing agent)¹. Rasayana comes under the first category and has dual action i.e. it makes a healthy person strong (immune) and also alleviates the diseases but the later one is meant for only treating the diseased one. Here strength of a person is meant not only for the physical strength but an individual can become strong mentally, spiritually, socially (personality wise) and morally too. Aachara Rasayana delivers the same benefits to an individual by means of codes and conducts and use of some Nitya Rasayana Dravyas.

In present day medical practice we find a major proportion of patients, who are suffering from psychosomatic disorders like irritable bowel syndrome, diabetes mellitus, hypertension, ulcerative colitis, bronchial asthma etc. The reason behind this being changing lifestyle, never ending desires and needs, moral degradation and more struggles of human being in each and every aspect of life. Today, Somatological and Psychological solutions which have been put forward in the past haven't succeeded much and now the scientists have begun to think in terms of 'Psyche in soma'. This concept has given origin to the term 'psychosomatic disorders'. Psychosomatic disorders (a term coined by Heinorth, 1918) are those disorders in which mental factors play a significant role in the development, expression, or resolution of a physical illness.

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Ancient Ayurvedic Acharyas have included the psychological factors by giving equal consideration as that of physical, food and nutritional and behavioral patterns of an individual while listing the causative factors of diseases in the classics.

Aachara rasayana is a code of conduct aimed to keep oneself healthy in terms of physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing is concerned (which itself is the definition of health according to W.H.O).

Definition

The physical disorders which are either initiated or exacerbated by the presence of meaningful psychosocial environmental stressors are called psychosomatic disorder. These refer to a group of disorders in which condition are disturbed due to psychological factors such as stress and anxiety.

Clinical manifestation

The commonly recognized psychosomatic conditions classified according to the involvement of organ system² are mentioned in Table 1.

Etiological theories

Emotional disturbances could be responsible as predisposing, precipitating and perpetuating factors in these disorders.

Neuro-Endocrinal Theory

Emotional disturbances acting through the hypothalamus affect the sympathetic and the parasympathetic systems, resulting in alteration in the functions of the viscera. Hence organs become more susceptible to external or internal stimuli, both physically and physiologically.

Psychoanalytical theory

The basic underlying defect is weakness of ego, which is that aspect of the self which helps an individual to face and react to the realities of life. Whenever individuals are met with any sorts of stressful conditions in early or later

part of life which they cannot cope-up adequately, there occurs a psychological and physiological regression to these infantile or immature patterns of functioning resulting in the development of psychosomatic illnesses.

Psychological factors are not the only responsible agents but genetic, constitutional, endocrinal and metabolic disturbances also contribute to the development of these condition. It is a complex interaction of all these varied etiological factors which result in the manifestation of any psychosomatic disorder.

With this background, let us think the solution to the problem as met in our classics. Manas and Sharira are regarded as separate entities in our classics, but not in the sense of separation. According to Ayurveda an organism is the complex combination of Aathma, Indriyas, Manas and Sharira i.e. soul, sense organs, mind and body³.

Hence the Ayurvedic approach to disease is definitely psychosomatic in nature. We find numerous references regarding this in Ayurvedic classics. Some of such examples are listed in Table 2.

Our Acharyas have given the equal importance for the mind also and more emphases is given to the integration aspect of these two i.e. Manas (mind) & Sharira (body). To keep the mind in balanced state they have given some guidelines in the form of Aachara Rasayana.

Aachara Rasayana

The term Aachara signifies the physical and mental conduct of an individual and it has been designated as a Rasayana i.e. a vitalizing agent for the entire span of life. This is a measure having no involvement of drugs, may replenish and maintain the total life process free from ailments.

In Rasayanadhyaya our Acharyas have introduced a unique concept of codes and conducts for day to day implementation along with wholesome food habits. Basically the Rasayana is divided into two groups i.e. Dravya Bhoota and Adravya Bhoota.

The Aachara Rasayana majorly belongs to the Adravya Bhoota group which also incorporated Ajasrika Rasayana like use of ghee, cow's milk etc. It is one of the major components and summarized form of Swasthavritta also.

For better understanding the quote by Acharya Charaka from the fourth part of Rasayana section⁴, the contents of Aachara Rasayana can be categorized as-

- Psychological Aspect
- Personal Aspect
- Religious and Spiritual Aspect
- Social and Behavioral Aspect
- Food and nutritional aspect

Psychological Aspects

- Satyavadi: To be honest, trustworthy
- Akrodhi: To be calm and never get on to nerves
- Ahimsaka: To be non-violent
- Anayasa : Never be tired, but be cheerful
- Prashanta: To keep cool, calm and quiet
- Priyavadi: To speak good, pleasant and never to speak ill of others
- Japa para: To practice incantation of holy hymns

Social and Behavioral Aspects

- Satyavadi: To be honest, trustworthy
- Nivruttam madhya maithunath: To walk away from alcohol and sex (i.e. to observe abstinence)
- Deva-Gau-Brahmana Acharya Guru Vriddha Archanaratam : To be devoted to Gods, cows Brahmins, teachers, sages, elders and serving them
- Anrushamsam: To be non-violent forever and be devoted to love
- Nitya Karunavedi : To be ever compassionate and merciful
- Anahankrutam: To be ego-free
- Upasitaram Vriddhanam: One who accompany and serve elders
- Astikaanam: To have faith in almighty
- Jitaatmanaam: To be self controlled, non-yielding to sensory pleasures

Religious and Spiritual Aspects

- Dharmashastraparam: To be duty bound and ethical
- Adhyatma pravanendriyam: One who indulges in spiritual texts
- Tapaswinam: To practice meditation / to be focused on the task
- Daana nityam: To do charity regularly

Personal Aspects

- Shouchaparam: To maintain purity
- Samajagarana swapna: Balance in the state of sleep and wakefulness
- Desha kala pramanajnam: Who is having proper knowledge of desha and kala
- Yuktijnam: To be skilled and never get deceived easily
- Jitatmanam: To be self controlled, non-yielding to sensory pleasures

Food and Nutritional Aspects

- Nityam ksheera grithashinam: To consume milk and ghee in regular basis
- Asankeernam (Asankeerna Bhojee): One who takes simple and planned diet

Bio-Psycho-Social Model for Psychosomatic Disorders

On reviewing psychosomatic disorders from the modern point of view, it is evident that George Angel in 1977 gave a Bio-Psycho-Social model to explain the complex interaction between biological, psychological and social spheres⁵. The interaction of these three spheres will result into the psychosomatic problem.

The biological component of the Bio-Psycho-Social model demands the understanding of the cause of the illness by observing the functioning of an individual's body.

The psychological component of the above said model looks for potential psychological causes for a health problem such as lack of self-control, emotional turmoil, and negative thinking.

The social part of the Bio-Psycho-Social model investigates how various social factors such as socioeconomic status, culture, poverty, technology, and religion can influence on health status of an individual. This view point has become very popular in today's medical science.

The very same concept was explained by our great Acharyas 3000 years back.

1. As in the model we have seen there are mainly three factors which are responsible for the causation of psychosomatic disorders. If a person adopt the Aachara Rasayana right from the beginning (i.e. childhood), or at least during the disease process, these four aspect of Aachara Rasayana will help to resolve the biological, psychological and social factors there by the person will overcome the psychosomatic diseases.
2. Besides the use of Rasayana drugs and Ajasrika Rasayana in terms of nutritious diet, it has been claimed that Rasayana affects both mind and as well as body. It can be achieved by improving the practice of 'code of conduct' i.e. Aachara Rasayana.
3. Aachara Rasayana keeps a person's emotional status in balance and permits a less stressful life with health and happiness.
4. Acharya Charaka explains in the context of Aachara Rasayana – The person who follows the instructions given in Aachara Rasayana, will achieve all the benefits of Rasayana therapy itself i.e. if a person doesn't consumes Dravya Bhoota Rasayana, then also he will get all the advantages of Rasayana therapy and will be free from psychosomatic disorders throughout his life.

In 1923, Freud divided the mental apparatus into three dynamic structures, The Id, The Ego and Super Ego⁶.

1. The super ego is predominantly unconscious subdivision of mental apparatus which is especially concerned with the moral standards. It is derived from the parental influences.
2. The concept of Super ego, ego and Id can be compared with the Ayurvedic version of Satwa, Rajas and Tamas (Triguna). Satwa is said to be the purest quality which does not get vitiated by any of the factors which makes the person strong mentally in order to with stand all types of stress⁷.
3. This parental influence not only includes the effect of actual parents, but also includes the family members, religion, friends circle and important people in surrounding environment.
4. Adopting Aachara Rasayana at the early part of life will help to achieve strong super ego, which always controls and monitors the ego of the person by preventing his involvement in anti-social activities and behaviors, which effect the psyche. So that he will not suffer from psychosomatic diseases, at the same time making the person understanding the reality.

So, by adopting the Aachara Rasayana we can overcome and prevent the psychosomatic disease in a better way.

Table 1: Some Psychosomatic disorder according to systems involved

S. No	System involved	Psychosomatic conditions
1	Gastrointestinal	Peptic Ulcer, Ulcerative colitis, Anorexia nervosa, Irritable bowel syndrome, Chron's disease.
2	Cardiovascular	Hypertension, Myocardial infarction, Angina pectoris.
3	Respiratory	Bronchial Asthma.
4	Urogenital	Menstrual disorders like amenorrhea, Dysmenorrhoea, Menorrhagia.
5	Integumentary	Urticaria, hyperhidrosis, psoriasis, neurodermatitis, rosacea, Acne vulgaris.
6	Endocrine	Thyrototoxicosis, Diabetes.
7	Musculoskeletal	Rheumatoid arthritis.
8	Vasomotor	Migraine and other types of headaches
9	Immune system	Auto immune disorder, Allergic disorder(Hypersensitivity)

Table 2: Some examples for psychosomatic approach towards disease as per Ayurveda

Examples	Reference
Nidra Nasha due to Vata vridhi	S. Su 15/13
Murcha due to Pitta vridhi	S. Su 15/13
Tandra and Nidra due to Kapha vridhi	S. Su 15/13
Kama and Shoka aggravates Vata	C. Ci 3/115
Krodh aggravates Pitta	C. Ci 3/115
Bhaya leading to Atisaara	C.Ci 19/12
Kushtha is due to disrespect to Guru and Bhramans, Manasik abhighat, Paapkarma etc.	C.Ci 7/8
Vata vyadhi due to Chinta, Kroda, Shoka etc.	C.Ci 28/16

DISCUSSION

Scope of practical application

Facts and Possibilities regarding the practical implementation of Aachara Rasayana can be considered as follows-

Facts

Benefits of Aachara Rasayana are the proven facts and hence documented in the classics. Its applicability in present scenario of competitive world is based on the following facts-

1. It is successful if and only if an individual is willing and follows it strictly.
2. Human being is a social animal and the society influences an individual in every aspect. Hence

Aachara Rasayana may be difficult to follow in the morally diluted society of the modern world.

3. Support and secure feeling should be extended by the family as well as the surrounding society to those who follow Aachara Rasayana without any compromise to overcome the Psycho-somatic disorder and to lead a happy and stress free life.

Possibilities

We can hope for a quality wise healthy society if Aachara Rasayana is implemented. Its possible implementation may be achieved in the following manner.

1. This can be included as a subject under moral science (in primary school education), behavioral

science, and also in the field of human resource development.

2. This can keep an individual morally strong, self controlled, free of guilt and happy if followed strictly.
3. It plays an important role in improving one's social image, communication, maintains an improved healthy relationship with the society around.
4. It removes mental stress and also improves psychosomatic condition.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda has a better answer for the psychosomatic problems, which can be applied effectively in day today practice. This is beneficial not only for an individual but also for the society as a whole. It can be co-opted as a compulsory part of children and public education at every level, so that we can hope fewer incidences of psychosomatic disorders in future. This education will not only improve the physical, mental, social and spiritual health of an individual but also the society as a whole and render the happy and healthy life while living in this world.

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ABBREVIATION

- C. Ci: Charak Samhita Chikitsa sthan.
S. Su: Sushruta Samhita Sutra sthan.