



AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH IN AYURVEDA FOR MENTAL HEALTH STATUS AIMED COVID-19.

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ABSTRACT

The CORONA virus disease 19(COVID-19) pandemic is unique and unprecedented in several aspects. It has challenged the health care system across the globe. Several epidemiological studies have reported the burden of mental health problems among the general population during COVID 19 ascribed to uncertain prognosis, looming severe shortage of resources, growing financial loss, intrude on the personal freedoms, added educational stress over burdens are among the major stressors that undoubtedly will contribute to widespread emotion distress and increase the risk for psychiatric illness aimed with COVID 19 pandemic. The above situation demands an alternative search for treatment in other sciences for maintaining both physical as well as mental health so, this is an encouraging development and a good initiative for the scope of generating physically, spiritually, and mentally healthier individual by adopting ayurvedic concepts of *Achara Rasayana*, *sadvrit*, *satvavjaya chikitsa*, and *manas rog chikitsa*. *Ayurveda* prescribes numerous ways to comprehend all the modalities of health care by the means of prevention promotion, curation, elimination, restoration, behavioral, dietetic, and so on. It is associated with a multifaceted role against a wide range of obnoxious stimuli generated by both the biosphere and the ecosphere. Its usage places physiology underneath the protective wraps and helps to maintain the structural and functional integrity at molecular levels. mental health sufferings would call for a concentrated mental health policy

Keywords: *Acchar Rasayan*, *Ayurveda*, *covid19*, Epidemiology, *Manas rog chikitsa*.

INTRODUCTION:

The COVID19 pandemic has alarming implications for individual and collective health, and economic as well as social functioning. The major Covid 19 related stressors such as exposure to infected sources, infected family members, loss of loved ones, physical distancing and also include some of the secondary adversities like economic loss causing severe depression, anxiety, psychosomatic preoccupation insomnia, increased substance use, and domestic violence. Ayurveda is considered as the perfect balance of mind, body, and soul. Being The science of life, it pays equal attention to physical and mental health. It has its own identity as the most ancient and traditional system of medicine followed in India. The ancient system of medical science has a lot to contribute, it emphasizes its treatment modalities into three parts viz. *satvavjaya chikitsa*, *daivyapashray*, and *yuktivyapashray chikitsa*. It considers mind and body as two inseparable units of an individual thus, equal importance is given to both physical and mental wellbeing. Ayurveda considers the mental illness under the *manovijanana aevum* the *manas rog*, an individual or separate branch that deals with various mental disorders such as stress, anxiety, the psychoactive substance used disorders, depression, schizophrenia, and many more. Currently, COVID19, being a global pandemic is affecting the population at large in all aspects of life. To maintain healthy living, it is very much essential to maintain the healthy mind of an individual, like the disturbances in the mental status directly disturb one's immunity. Focusing on the present scenario, we all know that today majority of the population is staying under lockdown and quarantine situations forming prey to mental disturbances especially stress, obsessive thoughts, unwanted fear, sleep disturbances, depression, anxiety et all. since, there is a common psychological saying that it requires only 21 days for your thoughts to become your habits, which indeed a great fear. so, it is the need of time to focus on the maintenance of your mental and physical health and avoid falling prey to any kind of bad or negative habit formation which may further affect your lifestyle.

Epidemiological analysis:

An ample number of studies have been conducted at various levels, which undoubtedly reported the burden of mental health problems among the general population during COVID-19. For example,

- A topical study published by Brooks et al. (2020) in the Lancet, it reviewed a large number of previous studies and reported the effect of quarantine on the mental health of patients. Constantly furthest studies reported the negative psychological effects, including some of the post-traumatic stress symptoms along with confusion, and anger. Stressors mainly included longer quarantine duration, infection fears, helplessness, ruthfulness, frustration, boredom, inadequate supplies, inadequate information, financial loss, and stigma. Some researchers even reported long-lasting psychosocial impacts caused during such public health emergencies. Such large-scale reporting of the program to minimize psychological and emotional issues during the COVID-19 outbreak. studies and media accounts provide a glimpse into the societal reflections and reactions. Largely, how the various ingrained sociocultural factors shaping the individuals' responses are brought to the fore.[1]

- In the context of SARS, Das (2001) reported that fear resulted from the unknown cause of the disease and a possibly fatal outcome. The novel coronavirus has a similar connotation as the countries getting overwhelmed in this crisis and the general population is showing great signs of distress.[2]
- The news channels are replete with incidents and personal accounts of people of healthcare workers, patients, suspects, and quarantined families who are facing stigma and discrimination by the communities. There is information on the upsurge of virus coming from all sources. From morning till evening, we are reminded about the virus through news, mobile notifications, WhatsApp messages, social media updates, and whatnot. So are the thoughts and fears building up overwhelming and all-consuming. A study conducted in China by Gao et al. (2020) to estimate the prevalence of mental health problems and examine their association with social media exposure illustrated a positive correlation between the two[3].
- A study by Lei and colleagues used the self-rating anxiety scale (SAS) and the self-rating depression scale (SDS) to evaluate mental health status among 1593 respondents aged 18 years and above in Southern China. In this study, the prevalence of anxiety and depression was 8.3% and 14.6%, respectively.[4]
- Another study on Weibo posts from 17,865 active Weibo users using several machine-learning predictive models. They calculated word frequency and scores of emotional and cognitive indicators before and after the declaration of the COVID-19 outbreak on 20 January 2020. It was found that the study shows that negative emotions like anxiety, depression, indignation, and sensitivity to social risks increased over time, whereas the scores of positive emotions like Oxford happiness and life satisfaction decreased.[5]

MATERIAL AND METHODS:

The classical texts of Ayurveda with their commentaries, other Ayurvedic texts, and journals, Relevant websites, articles, and presentations were referred to. All the information was compiled only after the extensive review regarding various treatment regimens in Ayurveda which can be used integrative for the prevention and management of covid-19.

The method of treatment in Ayurveda as a whole has been classified into three categories by *Acharya Charaka* viz. *Daiva Vyapasrya* – divine or the heavenly therapy, *Yukti Vyapasrya* – coherent therapy, and *Satvavajaya* -psychospiritualtherapy. The *satvavajaya chikitsa* along with the *achar Rasayana* mentioned in *charak Samhita* is used as a new concept of psychotherapy in Ayurveda. The effectiveness of 'traditional mental health-promoting practices' was identified as health regimes (SWASTHVRITA) correct behavior (SADVRITT) and yoga.

Acharya charak while defining the *manas rog chikitsa*, says that the *mano rog chikitsa* also called the *satvavajaya chikitsa* comprises of the following entities:

- “*Manso gyan vigyan dharya smiriti samadhibhi*” (ch. Su.1/58)

1. *Gyan* – means knowledge, getting to know oneself
2. *Vigyan*- the textual knowledge, guiding a better understanding of the nature of the illness
3. *Dharya*- maintenance of mental balance, the gaining of patience for building high tolerance capacity
4. *Smriti* -recalling capacity, it helps in recognition of the health status of the mind
5. *Samadhi*-restraining the mind from worldly objects by deep meditations on the spiritual dimensions

- “*Manasam prati bhasaijyam trivarga anvekshanam*” (ch. Su. 11/47)

Anvekshana
means to
search or
investigate

Trivarga comprises of

1. *Dharma*-virtue
2. *Artha*-wealth/ prosperity
3. *Kaam*-desire

So, the search for life or the above mentioned 3 real objectives of life is called as *trivarga-anvekshana*.

TREATMENT STRATEGIES:

Ayurveda, the science of life, has a peculiar approach to treating the patients i.e. holistic manner, it has got its root from *Vedas*, the basis of all contemporary sciences. *Dhanurveda*, a *upveda* of *Rigveda*, has viewed that if our mental health status is fit or in other words if a person is mentally fit and healthy then he will be physically sound as well. *Ayurveda* has a unique approach to promote health and spirituality by using rejuvenating therapy (*acharrasayan*) along with *satvavjyaya chikitsa* in promoting psychotherapy.

The idea of rejuvenation comes from *Atharvaveda*, where it is mentioned that

“*devasya pashyakavyam na mamar na jeeryati (Atharvaveda 1/8/32)*

i.e. the world is literature of god which can never die nor can grow older, with this thinking there came the development of *Rasayana* therapy. *Rasayana* therapy can be performed with food and drug, or without them as behaviourally. In this current topic the behavioral portion in the form of *Achara Rasayana*

ACHARA RASAYANA/ REJUVENATING ATTITUDES: (Ch.Chi.1/4/30- 35)- it is considered as behavioral therapy. Which helps in optimistic thinking by relieving mental and physical stress. it increases the patience with high tolerance capacity leading to the maintenance of the better family and social relationships.it also helps in forming a better-qualified human with an enriched fascinating personality. Its major domains according to *acharya charak* are:

- *Satya Vadi*- be truthful, being truthful boosts up our confidence and relieves all the anxiety
- *Akrodham*- free from anger, being excessive furious or heated up dry the rasa dhatu and mental; disruption
- *Madya mathuna nirvrutam*- avoid alcohol and maintain celibacy, *brahmacharya* improves the quality of mind and health naturally.
- *Ahimsa*- avoid violence. Violence here includes mental violence i.e. hating someone or thinking of causing any sort of harm to someone.
- *Anaayasam*- avoid exhaustion, avoid overstraining your mind by worrying or overthinking leading to unwanted stress
- *Prasanta*- internal peace, being calm and keeping yourself happy and joyful internally,
- *Priyavadinam*- purity in thoughts as well as in voice, talking with pleasing words.
- *Japa*- always mesmerizing the almighty with whole heart and soul, following religious rites.
- *Shoucha param*- maintaining hygiene, keeping your body and soul always clean and pure.
- *Dheeram*-stability in thoughts and courage in actions,
- *Daan nityam*- indulge in social service or charity.
- *Tapasvinum*- regular practice of penance, regular meditation for healthy and peaceful living
- *Dev go brahmana acharya guru vridharchane ratam*- respect God, cow, brahman, your teacher, elders. It helps in increasing *sattva guna*.
- *Nitya aanrishayaparam*- avoid barbaric behavior.
- *Sam jagranaswapanam*- regularity in the biological clock of your awakening and sleeping.
- *Nityasheeraghritaashinam*- inculcate the habit of intake of milk and ghee. Increases the inner strength of the body.
- *Desha Kala prama gyanam*- appropriate knowledge according to place and time
- *Yuktigya*- possesses knowledge of rationality, wisdom to judge and differentiate between good and bad, to adapt the good and reject the bad.
- *Anahankretam*- always have the habit of putting ego far away from you.
- *Shasthaachara* – good conduct.
- *Asamkeernam*- having broad aspects of thinking, which gives the power to feel the pain of others.
- *Adhyatmam* – having spiritual knowledge.
- *Pravanendriya*- optimum functioning sense organs.
- *Upasitharam vridhanama astikanam*- respect for seniors and for those who worship God.
- *Jeet hastmanam*- self-control, have control over your mind thoughts, and actions.

- *Dharma shastraparam vidyanatram*- forming the habit of reading the shastras or the texts.

SATVAJAYA CHIKITSA- it is considered to be having the psychospiritual approach

It is the psychotherapy that helps in controlling with a nonpharmacological treatment modality which solely deals on the mind and its related attributes. According to Agnivesh, the *satvavajaya chikitsa* or psychotherapy helps in controlling *Mana* (mind) away from *Ahita Arthas* like distractible, unwholesome objects, thoughts, or perceptions. Its main focus is the Withdrawal of the bothered mind from unwholesome objects by focusing on the intelligence, consciousness, memory, and spiritual aspects of the affected individuals, *satvavajaya chikitsa* aims at conscious stimulation, alteration and discrimination of the maladaptive thoughts or actions.

Satvavajaya Chikitsa means controlling the mind, in such a way that it is not acted upon by various stressors making it prone to *pratipaksha Bhavana* (thinking thoughts of opposite quality [7]). The treatment protocol implies the following aspects:

- *Mano nigraha*: regulating mind/subjugating mind from unwholesome interactions
- *Dhee-dhairyaatmadi vijnanam*: It is the in depth thinking, which helps ultimately in better control of the mind. Charaka also explains the utility of replacing negative emotions with that of positive emotions that is beneficial to the psyche. Thus, the *Satvavajaya chikitsa* encompasses various aspects that deal with the mind – such as physiological, morphological, morbidity, and also the management of the related diseases.

SADVRITT: (GOOD HABITS FOR GOOD CONDUCT) as mentioned in ‘Ayurveda based dietary’ of CCRAS [8]

Dinacharya (Daily regimen)- Ayurveda promotes a lifestyle that is in harmony with nature.

- It is advisable to wake up during *Brahma Muhurta* (preferably between 4.00 a.m. to 5.30 a.m.).
- Drinking water early in the morning according to one’s capacity cleanses the body by enhancing the elimination of toxic wastes.
 - One should attend nature's calls.
 - The soft brushes made out of twigs of *Khadira*, *Karanja*, *Apamarga*, etc. The tongue should be cleaned by a long flexible strip of metal or plant twig. It not only helps in cleaning the tongue but also stimulates appetite and digestion. The mouth should also be cleaned properly.
 - Eyes should be washed with fresh cold water in form of splashing, to prevent eye diseases and promote vision. Use of *Triphala Phanta* every day is essential and medicated form for clarity of vision and prevention of eye diseases.
 - Chewing betel leaves along with the pieces of Areca nut (*kramuka*) and fragrant substances like cardamom, cloves, refreshes the mouth and enhance digestion.
 - It is necessary to massage the body with oil every day. Oil massage ensures softness and unctuousness of skin, provides lubrication to joints and muscles, improves circulation, and elimination of metabolic wastes.

- Regular exercise is essential for perfect health. It not only builds up the stamina but also provide resistance against disease, clears the channels of the body (*Srotas*), and increases blood circulation. It enhances the efficiency of body organs, promotes appetite, digestion, and prevents obesity.

- Regular Bathing plays an essential role in gaining enthusiasm, strength, sexual vigor, appetite, the span of life, removal of sweat, and other impurities from the body. After bathing, one should always wear clean clothes and smear the body with perfume which enriches personality. One should always form the habit of shaving, cutting of hair as well as the nails adds on health and cosmetic enhancement.

Ritucharya (Seasonal regimen)- In the ancient Ayurvedic classical texts, there has been a thorough consideration for seasons, besides the dietetic regimens for days and nights. The whole year is divided into six seasons and a detailed regimen for these seasons is prescribed.

In the **spring season**, a bitter, hot and astringent diet is advised while salty, sour, and sweet food should be avoided whereas the intake of food such as wheat, barley, honey syrup, fruits and meat of forest animals are advised.

In the **summer season**, the hot climate elevates the Pitta inside the body. Hence to pacify pitta, the opposite regimens of cold, liquid, sweet, and oily diet are advised. An excessive hot and rich in spice diet should be avoided. Intake of rice, milk, ghee, sugar, grapes, coconut water, etc is advised.

In the **rainy season** aggravation of *Vata* occurs, hence the food elements that are sweet, sour and salty are preferred. The food should be hot, fatty, and easy to digest. rice, wheat, barley, and mutton soups are advised.

In **pre-winter** and **winter season** *Vatadosha* aggravates due to cold, dry, chilly atmosphere hence *Vataghna*, *Pittavardhaka* diet is recommended. The food articles which are hot in potency, sweet and sour in taste also milk, sugarcane, rice, oils, and fats are advised

In the **autumn season** aggravation of *Pitta dosha* occurs. Therefore, it is ideal to take food which are cold in potency and helps to overcome the pitta dosh vitiation, food elements such as ghee processed with bitter drugs; purgation, bloodletting, and light diet are advised. Bitter, sweet, pungent dominant taste, diets are good.

DISCUSSION:

1. The *manas rog chikitsa* mentioned in *Charaka Samhita* in *sutra sthana* chapter 1 and chapter 11 seems to be incomplete in terms of explanation therefore it was the need that the techniques and domains used under the *manas rogas* should be elaborated and described specifically for its proper utility in the management of mental disorders. so, with proper collection and application of all the information available in ayurvedic classics with holistic approaches i.e. *dincharya* and *ritucharya*, *sadvitrit* up to the *Achara Rasayana* has been combined to bring out the desired results for managing spiritual as well as mental illness aimed at COVID 19.
2. *Mana* (mind) is agile so, it is very difficult to conquer, therefore in the treatment strategies, there is conceptual learning of means to do so, one of the best approaches to achieve the goal of *satvavjaya* i.e. the withdrawal of the mind or *mana* from undesired objects and focusing it to the desired ones by

developing *Gyan, Vigyan, Dhairya, smriti, and samadhi*. Which also helps in increasing the *satvik guna*.

3. The *satvik guna* plays a well-defined role in abstaining the mental illness, and the domains of *achar Rasayana* along with the *Savitt* proves to be bestowed with all its effects, such as worshipping God, following the path of truth, purity in thoughts and speech, respecting the elders, teachers, *brahmans*, etc, habit of reading the mythological pieces of literature, intake of milk and ghee at. All.
4. Other psycho-supportive techniques like assurance, consoling, getting the knowledge according to the place and time, and not believing what is rumored all around, preaching religious and moral statements quoting well-known references and mythological stories, replacing the emotions, entertaining with recreational activities

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