



A BRIEF REVIEW OF *MANAS BHAVA* AS CAUSATIVE FACTOR IN THE MANIFESTATION OF DISEASES

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Abstract

Ayurved is an ancient science with deep understanding of human existence. It gives due importance to *manas* (mind) in health as well as diseases; evident from the mention of various *manas bhavas* as *nidana* of various diseases like *jwara*, *atisara*, *kushtha*, *pandu*, *hridroga*, *prameha*, *aruchi*, *vatvyadhi* etc. Current modern research also validates this fact. Human mind is expressed in terms of emotions like anger, fear, sadness, despair, etc and these affect the body functions. As goes well with the human nature these negative emotions like anger, hostility, sadness, anxiety etc have a profound impact on health and in long term contribute in causing various ailments like heart disease, respiratory illness, diabetes mellitus, migraine, cancer, peptic ulcer etc. Stress is an emotional experience which consists mainly of these negative emotions.

This paper reviews *manas bhavas* mentioned in various *Samhitas* responsible for manifestation of diseases.

Keywords- emotions, stress, anger, *manas bhava*

Introduction

Human mind and body are like parallel universe. Events occurring in one echoes in the other. *Ayurved* has its own beautiful philosophy regarding human existence. *Charak samhita* the ancient text of *ayurved* mentions body, mind and soul as tripod for existence, everything abides in this¹. Human being is a social animal, constantly interacting with his fellow beings, environment and oneself. This gives rise to the spectrum of emotions. Emotions matter because they influence our behavior and there is no emotional experience that has a more powerful influence on us than stress. Recent research shows that the amount of negative emotions evoked during going through the daily life hassles is a strongest predictor of physiological stress response.³ Now in modern times, in the hustle bustle of daily life it is practically impossible to eliminate stress because many ongoing situations are stressors like noise, climate, hassles of everyday life regarding work, family, finance, social situations etc.²

Modern concept

Stress is defined as an internal state which can be caused by physical demands on body like disease, exercise or extremes of temperature or by environmental and social situations which are evaluated as potentially harmful uncontrollable or exceeding our resources of coping.² The entities which cause stress are called stressors. Once induced the internal state can respond in psychological and physiological ways and one has anxiety, hopelessness, depression, irritability and a general feeling of not being able to cope with the world.

Changes in one's life are important stressors like injuries to the body, major changes in the environment, major transitions in life like marriage and childbirth and anticipated or actual threat to self esteem. Many ongoing situations are also stressors like injury, infection, noise, climate, hassles of everyday life related to work, family, health, finances, social activities and they have been found to be related to bodily illness.²

How the body responds to stress-It is termed as **General Adaptation Syndrome** by Hans Selye. It is divided into three stages.

- 1) **Alarm reaction-** this is the emergency response of the body (fight or flight response)
- 2) **Stage of resistance** – body resists the effects of continuous stressors. Hormonal response is important which is known as HPA axis. It is the interaction between hypothalamus, pituitary and adrenal glands. Adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH) is secreted by pituitary gland. Its secretion in turn is controlled by Corticotrophin releasing factor (CRF) from hypothalamus. Stressors activate the nerve cells of hypothalamus. So CRF secretion increases which leads to increased secretion of ACTH. **Brain activity triggered by stressors influences hormone release. This is the major link between stressors and bodily state of stress.** ACTH stimulates release of corticoid hormones like cortisol. It has many functions which help the body deal with stress adaptively but maintained high levels can be harmful. For e.g cortisol promotes formation of glucose by breaking down fats and proteins. In the long run this harms the body because less protein is available for formation of White Blood Cells, so ability of fighting the infections is hampered. Also cortisol inhibits formation of antibodies. Together they impair the immunity²
- 3) **Stage of exhaustion-** the capacity of body to respond is seriously compromised. Low immunity may lead to disease and death. Or because of other stressor induced hormonal effects gastric ulcer, diabetes, skin disorders, asthma, hypertension, increased susceptibility to cancer and host of other diseases may occur.²

Psychosomatic disorders term is used when perceived stressors, mental events increase the susceptibility of body to disease.

Chronic stress is bad for health. Chronic stressors include daily hassles, frustration of traffic jams, work overload, financial marital or family problems etc. The pent up anger or guilt or resentment we hold inside ourselves towards these situations or other, all produce the same effect on hypothalamus.⁴ The current research shows the connection of stress to certain diseases like

- 1) Asthma- stress leads to release of histamine which can trigger bronchoconstriction. Also stress can enhance allergic inflammatory response.⁴
- 2) GI diseases- anger and hostility increase acidity in stomach. The mucous protective barrier of stomach is also affected. Certain stressful life event is associated with onset or exacerbation of peptic ulcer, ulcerative colitis and Irritable Bowel Disease. During extreme parasympathetic stimulation, often caused by emotional disturbances, so much mucus may be secreted into large intestine that the person has bowel movement of ropy mucus as often as every half an hour, with little or no fecal matter.⁸
- 3) Coronary heart disease (CHD) is regarded as a classical psychosomatic illness. Type A personality traits are related to it.² Studies show that people scoring high on measures of anger were three times more likely to get heart attacks³. Also that clinical CHD events can be predicted by hostility.⁴ Stress causes increased levels of cholesterol and is a major factor in etiology of hypertension.

- 4) Rheumatoid arthritis consists of autoimmune response and it was hypothesized that a self-destructive personality may manifest through this disease.⁴
- 5) Migraine- feeling of anxiety, nervousness, anger or repressed rage are associated with it.⁴
- 6) Diabetes mellitus- emotionally stressful experience is associated with endocrine disorders like DM.⁴ Stress is a potential contributor to chronic hyperglycemia in diabetes. Some evidence suggests that stress may precipitate onset of disease or compromise glycemic control after disease has started.⁵
- 7) Cancer- a recent study found a link between stress, tumor development and natural killer cells.⁴ stress hormones can compromise DNA repair mechanism leading to the development of cancer. Chronic stress can cause changes in body's immune function and inflammatory response Long term inflammatory response along with decline in immunity is implicated in tumorigenesis.⁵
- 8) Fever- psychogenic fever is stress related psychosomatic disorder. Some people develop extremely high body temperature (up to 41° C) when exposed to emotional events and some show persistent low grade high temperature (37-38° C) during situations of chronic stress. It is alleviated not by antipyretics but with psychotropic drugs.⁶
- 9) Skin disorders- The role of stressful events in psoriasis, alopecia areata, atopic dermatitis, pruritis, urticaria seems to be apparently clearer. The role of stress in vitiligo, lichen planus, acne rosacea pemphigus and seborrhoeic dermatitis is either controversial or insufficiently explored.⁷ Depression, stress, anger, fear, pressure can trigger acne rosacea or cause psoriasis.⁵
- 10) DNA damage- stress damages DNA making us less likely to be able to repair wounds and respond to genetic mutations that cause diseases.

Ayurvedic concept

Ayurved has the concept of *vega* means urges. *Adharniya vega* should not be suppressed whereas *dharniya vega* should be controlled or they should not be initiated. *Charak samhita* says that *lobh*, (greed), *shok*, (sorrow or grief) *bhaya* (fear), *krodha* (anger), *maan* (pride) these are the suppressible urges. Having them in less quantity and expressing them less is considered as *hitkar* means beneficial for life.¹

Further while explaining code of conduct i.e., *sadvrutta* it has been said that one should not think too much (*na sarva kaal vichari*), should not have *aachar* and *upchar* leading to sadness, should not be in *shok* means not be engulfed by sorrow or grief.

Sadvritta and Aachar Rasayana- Ayurveda offers some code of good conduct under the heading of Sadvritta and Aachar Rasayana. The manners under Sadvritta and Aachar Rasayana can be categorized into personal (early sleeping and awakening, avoiding excessive exertion, avoiding suppression of natural urges, etc.), social (being merciful, telling truth, avoiding alcoholic beverages, being soft-hearted, always using clean and washcloths), psychological and emotional (try to maintain a steady mental state i.e. avoid the height of emotions, keep patience, try to avoid recalling distressing past experiences such as being insulted by someone, etc.) Such a type of lifestyle adaptation is always helpful in the prevention and management of a wide range of mental disturbances including stress and anxiety⁹.

To summarize the whole concept of importance of *manasbhava* in diseases *charak samhita* says *vishado rogvardhananam shreshtha* means unhealthy state of mind is supreme in aggravating the elevating magnitude of diseases and ultimately the suffering of human beings.¹

Ayurved mentions *nidana* (causative factor) for various diseases in terms of *aahar*, *vihar doshadushti* etc. In certain diseases *manasbhava* are also mentioned. These *bhavas* causes vitiation of *doshas* and then diseases for e.g. *kaam*(desire), *shok*(sorrow), *bhaya*(fear) causes *vaatprakop* and *krodha*(anger) causes *pitta prokap*.

Here is a list of few diseases with the concerned *manasbhava* as mentioned in *charak samhita nidana sthana* and *chikitsa sthan*.¹

- 1) *Jwara- krodha kaam shok bhay.*
- 2) *Vaataj gulma- shok*
- 3) *Prameha- krodha, udvega, shok*
- 4) *Kushta-bhaya, shrama, santapa*
- 5) *Shosha-atimatra shok, chinta, irshya, utkantha, bhaya, krodha*
- 6) *Pandu-kam, chinta, bhaya, krodha, shok,*
- 7) *Atisar- krodha, irshya, bhaya, shoka, chittodveg*
- 8) *Trishna- kshobha, bhaya, shoka, krodha*
- 9) *Hridrog- chinta, bhaya, tras*
- 10) *Pinus and nasa rog -atikrodha*
- 11) *Aruchi- shok, bhaya, atilobha, krodha manognashangandharup*
- 12) *Urusthamba- bhaya*
- 13) *Vaatvyadhi-krodha, chinta, shok*
- 14) *Vaatrakta- krodha*
- 15) *Shukradushti- krodha, chinta, shok, bhaya*
- 16) *Stanyadushti- mansharirsantap, chinta, krodha*

Few diseases named after the *manasbhava* causing it like *bhayaj atisar* and *shokaj atisar*. Here the mental factor seems to play a major role in causing disease, hence the name. Also *jwara* is divided in two types *sharirik* and *manasik*, the latter develops in *manas* first. The specific type *abhishangaja jwara* is caused due to *kaam*, *bhaya*, *shok*, and *krodha*.

Discussion

Human brain has evolved since millennia but certain aspects remain the same. Emotions are one of them. Emotions are psychological and physiological phenomena. The stress response helped in survival and is present since ancient times. The caveman had the fight or flight response when endangered. But in today's modern life, this response has taken the chronic form because the stressors are varied and unending. Due to various amenities and advents, pace and look of modern lifestyle, life seems to be physically at ease but mentally it is ever demanding. This has led to increase in psychosomatic diseases. Diseases like CHD is a major cause of death and diseases like diabetes affect whole life. Further research is still going on. Till now we have found the correlation as mentioned above but the impact of emotions on health can be more pervading as we may know in coming times.

Ayurved has given correlation of specific emotional states for specific diseases like *krodha* for *jwara*. Further negative emotions like *krodha*, *bhaya*, *shok* are mentioned repeatedly. This should be considered while treatment so as to treat the root cause and to treat the mind and body together.

Conclusion

Human mind is constantly interacting with oneself and outer environment. We cannot have control over the outside conditions but we can definitely decide our mindset and response. The outer conditions will deteriorate as time goes by so in our best interest we should take care of ourselves physically and mentally. *Ayurved* comes as a help as seen in description of *dharaniya vega* and *sadvrutta* description. Further by evaluating our mental makeup we can decide which emotions need to be paid attention to. Negative *manasbhava* like *krodha*, *bhaya*, *shok*, *santapa* etc are best curtailed for healthy life.

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