

STRESS MANAGEMENT THROUGH AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of *Ayurveda* is to maintain the health of a healthy person and to treat the diseased one. Healthy balance of the mind and body is given utmost importance in *Ayurveda*. This balance is hampered today by the change in life style of man, which is causing a lot of stress. Concepts of *Ayurveda*, meditation, *yoga*, physical exercises and a balanced diet may play an important role in relieving stress effectively. It is like rejuvenation and cleanup process on all levels, physical, mental and emotional. *Ayurveda* is highlighted as a holistic system with its concern for prevention and promotion of stress and mental health.

Keywords: Stress, effects of stress, Psychology in *Ayurveda*, Health in *Ayurveda*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the science of life, is the oldest system of medicine which has its mentioning in one of the oldest (about 6,000 years) philosophical texts of the world, the *Rig Veda*. The *Sutrasthana* of *Charaka Samhita*, a much referred *Ayurveda* text, says; "The three—body, mind and soul—are like a tripod, the world stand by their combination; in them everything abides. It is the subject matter of *Ayurveda* for which the teachings of *Ayurveda* have been revealed. (*Charaka Samhita*, 1.46-47). Life is the combination of body, senses, mind and reincarnating soul. *Ayurveda* is the most sacred science of life, beneficial to humans both in this world and the world beyond. (*Charaka Samhita*, *Sutrasthana*, 1.42-43).

Brahma the Creator, a part of the holy trinity of gods, first professed it and educated it to his son, *Daksha Prajapati*. Subsequently, *Lord Dhanwantari*, the god of healing and the teacher of the medical sciences passed it on to the prominent sages

Atreya, *Bharadvaja*, *Kashyapa*, *Sushrut*, *Parashara*, and *Charaka*. *Charaka Samhita* text is considered an authoritative pronouncement of *Ayurvedic* doctrine. Its present form goes back to the seventh century BC.

The study of mind is called as Psychology. The profounder of *Ayurveda* were probably the first who gave detailed description of mind and body relationship. They clearly stated that, the concept of mind and body are two separate entities. The word *Manas* is came out from the *Dhatu*s and it forms the meaning of this is through which we are collecting the knowledge and objects that is called as *Manas*. (Shri Kanta Murthy).

Stress

Stress is basic elements of various human diseases and mental illness. Stress is a term that refers to the sum of the physical, mental, and emotional strains or tensions on a person. Stress is the "wear and tear" our mind and body experiences as we attempt to

cope with our continually changing environment. Stress is also called as anxiety, tension etc. Psychosocial stressor is defined as "any life event or life change that may be associated temporally (and perhaps causally) with the onset, occurrence, or exacerbation [worsening] of a mental disorder (Joshua Cowa et al.).

Feelings of stress in humans result from interactions between persons and their environment that are perceived as straining or exceeding their adaptive capacities and threatening their well-being. The element of perception indicates that human stress responses reflect differences in personality as well as differences in physical strength or health.

Stressor

A stressor is defined as a stimulus or event that provokes a stress response in an organism. Stressors can be categorized as acute or chronic, and as external or internal to the organism (Prakash Bet al).

Causes of Stress

One significant source of stress in modern life is the cumulative effect of various toxic waste products in the environment. Our personality, behavior, and lifestyle all have important influences on our stress level. Much stress occurs through emotions such as aggression, impatience, anger, anxiety, and fear, all of which kindle the body's stress responses. Eating an unhealthy diet, smoking, drinking, and taking drugs can also contribute further to physical strain. Stress may be generated through work, at home, within relationships, as a result of internal emotional conflict, through environment, diet, ill-health, and financial insecurity as well as through major life events such as marriage death, divorce etc.

Man facing number problems in the modern society, these problems thrown the man in to mental stress. Mental stress causes the number of psychosomatic disorder like hypertension, migraine and severe headache etc.

How does stress affect you?

The initial stage of arousal remains the same whether we are faced with a major or minor. But under extreme, prolonged, or persistent pressure the body continues to manufacture extra quantities of stress chemicals, triggering further processes to maintain energy. If arousal continues, the adrenal glands manufacture anti-inflammatory chemicals that simultaneously speed tissue repair while depressing the body's immune defense system (Dr. David Frawley) and (Sundaram K) if all these changes continue, the body goes on trying to adapt under increasing strain and pressure. Eventually it breaks down. Exhaustion, variety of illnesses and even death may be the outcome of uninterrupted, excessive stress.

Stress & Mental Illness

Primary psychological conditions caused purely by mental disorders are *kama* (lust), *krodha* (anger), *lobh* (greed), *moha* (delusion), *irshya* (jealousy), *mana* (pride), *mada* (euphoria), *shoka* (sorrow, grief), *chinta* (anxiety), *udvega* (neurosis), *bhaya* (fear), *harsha* (happiness). The psychiatric conditions caused by a combination of physical and mental (psycho-physical) disorders are *unmada* (psychosis), *apasmara* (convulsive disorder), *apatantarka* (hysteria), *atattvabhinvesha* (obsession), *bhrama* (illusion, vertigo), *tandra* (drowsiness), *klama* (neurasthenia), *mada-murchha-sanyasa* (loss of sensory perception leading to coma), *madatyaya* (alcoholism), *gadodvega*

(hypochondriasis) (M.G. Ramu and B.S. Venkataram).

Ayurvedic Psychology Charaka in his treatise *Charaka Samhita*, describes eight essential psychological factors that are negatively affected in various ways in all psychiatric disorders. The psychopathological condition is a function of these factors, which are *manas* (mind), *buddhi*, *smriti* (memory), *sajna jnana* (orientation and responsiveness), *bhakti* (devotion), *shila* (habits), *cheshta* (psychomotor activity) and *achara* (conduct). Compared to other major *Ayurvedic* texts like *Sushruta Samhita* and *Ashtanga Hridayam*, *Charaka Samhita* gives more emphasis to the view of life as a self-aware field of pure consciousness and natural intelligence where the knower and the known are one. *Ayurveda* is very effective for stress management and to encourage body and soul to achieve composure of the mind (Ramesh U and Kurian Joseph).

Signs of Mental Health as per Ayurveda

Good memory, taking the right food at the right time, awareness of one's responsibilities, awareness of the self and beyond self, maintaining cleanliness and hygiene, doing things with enthusiasm, cleverness and discrimination, being brave, perseverance, maintaining cheerfulness irrespective of the situation, fearlessness in facing situations, sharp intellectual functioning, self-sufficiency, following a good value system and ability to proceed steadfastly against all odds.

Ayurvedic Treatment Methods

The *panchakarma* measures (L. V. Vithalani et. al.) used are:

1. *Vamana*: induced therapeutic vomiting.

2. *Virechana*: purgation through therapeutic laxative, providing symptomatic relief of mental illness.

3. *Vasti*: enema therapy. *Niruha Vasti* cleanses toxins from the *dhatu*s and removes naturally accumulated body wastes from the colon. *Anuvasana Vasti* is to be retained in the body for a longer period for effectiveness.

4. *Nasya*: Nasal medication acts as a purificatory aid to the head where major sensory faculties are located. The clarity of these faculties (*indriya prasada*) leads to clarity of mind.

5. *Shirodhara*: medicated water, herbal oils and medicated milk are poured on the forehead through a special method for 30 to 45 minutes. It reduces anxiety, depression and mental stress and rejuvenates the central nervous system.

6. *Shiro Vasti*: keeping herbal oil in a cap fitted on head.

7. *Panchakarma* therapy is followed by *shamana* or purification treatment with oral medicines including herbal powders.

Ayurveda Medicines for Stress

Ayurveda classifies herbs with a stabilizing effect on the mind as '*medhya rasayanas*'. These herbs promote the intellect and deeply nourish the neurological tissues (N.Srikanth et al.). They are nervine tonics. These medicines act as specific molecular nutrients for the brain, promoting better mental health that leads to the alleviation of behavioral disorders (I.P.V Sharma). The *medhya rasayanas* enhance biological nourishment of the brain, producing tranquility of mind, concentration and improved memory. *Ashwagandha*, *Brahmi* and *Shankha pushpi* have a secondary mild sedative ef-

fect. Others like calamus have a mild stimulating effect. (Jyoti Shankar Tripathi).

Stress is relaxation with compound herbal formulation consisting of *Tagar* (*Valeriana wallichii*), *Shankhapushpi* (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*), *Brahmi* (*Bacopa monnieri*), *Musta* (*Cyprus rotundas*), *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*), *Jatamansi* (*Nardostachys jatamansi*), *Munakka* (*Vitis vinifera*), *Raktachandana* (*Pterocarpus santalinus*), *Parpataka* (*Fumaria indica*), *Kutaki* (*Picrorhiza Kurroa*), *Dashmula*, *Amaltas* (*Cassia fistula*). This has been given in the dose of 20g twice a day as coarse powder to prepare decoction by 'Chaturthavashesh' method mentioned by *Sharangadhara* (Vansh Bina and Chandola H. M.).

Anti-stress effect against stress related changes in immunoglobulin in the body due to the battery of stresses encountered at Antarctica (Bansal P et al.), *Rasayana* therapy has an advantage over the conventional *Kayachikitsa* treatment in such conditions, as it is capable of counteracting the stress, promote the adaptogenic abilities of the body, and enhance mental endurance. (K. Indrajith et al), (Yogesh Shamrao et al).

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda can play an important role to control stress. *Ayurveda* provides a combination of benefits such as *Pancha karma* and *Medya Rasayanas* (Medicines). *Dinacharya* and Physical Exercises can have great benefits in Stress and Health. So in conclusion, yes, *Ayurveda* can be a great remedy for stress and can offer some stress relief.

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