



HEALING POWER OF AYURVEDA FOR ADDICTION

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<https://doi.org/10.46607/iamj2008112020>

(Published online: November 2020)

Open Access

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Article Received: 20/10/2020 - Peer Reviewed: 06/11/2020 - Accepted for Publication: 10/11/2020



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ABSTRACT

Addiction is habitual psychological or physiological dependence on a substance or practice that is beyond voluntary control. It is a chronic brain disease that causes compulsive substance use despite harmful consequences. Addiction causes widespread harmful effect to human being along with its social consequences. The term addiction does not only refer to dependence on substance such as heroin or alcohol. A person who cannot stop taking a particular drug or chemical has substance dependence. In *Ayurveda* every human being is considered a combination of both mind and body. The perfect balance of mind, body and soul is considered ideal health in *Ayurveda* and is the result of a pure body and selfless mind. There are specific mental treatments in *Ayurveda* to cure physical problems as well as mental disorders. The mental attitude of a person plays an important role in the caring process. Even modern medical science admits that there is a direct co-relation between a healthy mind and healthy body. *Ayurveda* helps in an addict's long-term recovery by changing their lifestyle rather than simply giving them a pill to swallow. *Ayurvedic* therapy is generally accomplished through a careful diet, herbal medicines, exercise, massage therapy, personal counseling and forms of *Yoga*. Present article is aimed to explore all the possible treatment modalities from the treasure of *Ayurved* texts which may be used for de-addiction

Keywords: *Ayurveda*, Addiction, Health, Counseling, *Yoga*,

INTRODUCTION

Addiction is a psychological and physical inability to stop consuming a chemical drug activity or substance even though it is causing psychological and physical harm. Addictive habits have been a part of society for as long as plants have been growing on the planet. We all know the ugly side of addiction that some people fall into substance like drugs, alcohol, tobacco etc. are not only an individual's problem but also affects his/her family, friends, workplace and society as a whole. The addicted individual experiences, financial, physical, psychological, emotional, family and social problems. All of this suffering creates a spiritual crisis of sorts. *Ayurveda* can address these issues. There are specific mental treatments in *Ayurveda* to cure physical problems as well as mental disorders. *Ayurveda* can offer a number of treatments that may be of value for people recovering from an addiction.

Aim and Objectives –

1. To evaluate, elaborate and discussed the addiction as per *Ayurveda*.
2. To evaluate, elaborate and discussed the solution of addiction as per *Ayurveda*.

Methodology –

- For this review article different *Ayurvedic* textbooks, classical *Ayurveda* and modern books, reference books, magazines, journals were searched and analyzed.

Diagnosis of addiction in *Ayurvedic* way-

The diagnosis in *Ayurveda* comprises of a detailed understanding of a person's characteristics, habits, sleep patterns, hereditary traits body type etc. as a first step. Followed by that will be an understanding of the state of the 'Tridoshas' within an individual *Vatta*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. *Ayurveda* believes that the problems in a human body are caused due to the misbalance among these *doshas*. Some of the other diagnosis techniques that are frequently used by *Ayurvedic* experts are diagnosis of tongue, diagnosis of nails, eye and diagnosis of the pulse. These diagnoses provide vital clues about the nature and tendencies of the individual.

De-addiction treatment in *Ayurvedic* way – De-addiction treatment comprises of the following way in *Ayurveda*:-

• Purification Therapies –

These are also known as *Panchakarma* therapies which target at uprooting the toxins present in the patient's body. These are quite potent therapies and are generally done under the supervision of an *Ayurvedic* expert. *Virechana* is the therapy which comprises of taking a mixture of herbal medicinal plants or their parts. This therapy eliminates the toxic substance from the body via the anal route. Herbs like *Ginger*, *Cardamom*, *Cinnamon* and *Embelia* etc. are used for this purpose. Another popular cleansing therapy used is *Vamana* which can be called a therapy for vomiting. This method uses the upper track leading to the mouth, to cleanse the toxins caused due to indigestion of food. *Ayurvedic Panchakarma* helps addict to recover from it, by cleaning the body's deep tissues of toxins, opening the subtle channels, bringing life changing energy therapy increasing vitality inner peace, confidence and well-being. An expert *Ayurveda* physician can help to overcome this dreadful condition in a different way ^[1].

• *Rasayana* therapies –

Another highly effective treatment in *Ayurveda* for de-addiction is the *Rasayana* therapies. The *Rasayana* therapy primarily works on the basis of transmutation and conservation of our energy to improve both our mental as well as physical characteristics so as to improve our body's natural metabolic process while at the same time enhancing the functioning of the brain and the immune system. These therapies generally follow the *Panchakarma* treatments which purify the body. This set of procedures further nourishes and strengthens the body after *Panchakarma*, for addiction related problems, *Rasayana* treatment include dietary changes and consuming oral herbal medicines. ^[2]

• Oral medication -

A range of herbal medicines and combinations are used in the treatment of addictive problems, which are meant to be administered orally. *Jatamansi* (*Nardostachys jatamansi*) and *Ashwagandha*

(*Withania somnifera*) are two herbs that are used in combination to heal lungs damaged from smoking, they actually help in removing smoke in the lung and healing the internal tissues. Congestion reliving herbs like *Ginger* (*Zingiber officinale*) and *Pippali* (*Piper longum*) mixed with honey and lemon are also prescribed for the addiction affected individuals. *Kapikacchu* (*Mucuna pruriens*) can also be very helpful by revitalizing and balancing the mind. The *Brahmi* (*Bacopa monnieri*) and *Mandooparni* (*Centella asiatica*) herbs are used to cleanse hallucinogenic drugs from the liver and brain. Consuming the *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*) herb helps to rebuild the nervous system. *Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*) helps to restore emotion sensitivity and balance to an addict.^[3]

- **Massage therapy -**

Abhyanga is a specialized form of massage therapy used in *Ayurveda*, for 15 to 30 minutes therapists' massage warm, herb-infused, oils into those undergoing treatment. This wonderfully relaxing and energizing massage relieves stress anxiety and feelings of being overwhelmed with their addiction.^[4]

- **Yoga and Meditation -**

Yoga is the Sanskrit word for union. *Yoga* is a physical and spiritual union between the mind and the body. *Yoga* is a practice that combines physical activity and physical postures, breathing awareness mind fullness and meditation. The regular practice of *Yoga* postures can improve health and help people deal better with stress. According to *Ayurveda* medicine, it will also restore energetic balance in the body and provide deep purification following the cessation of alcohol and drug abuse. The system has also been recommended as a behavioral therapy for smoking cessation and substance abuse (including alcohol abuse).^[5] Meditation is a wonderful tool for people recovering from an addiction. It not only helps them better deal with stress, but it can also increase their ability to manage the stressors that occur in their life.^[6]

- **Dietary changes -**

The *Ayurvedic* type of diet provides the patient with adequate nutrition and plenty of rest to the affected

organs, so diet regulation is also helpful in such cases. Diet rich in proteins and carbohydrates and low fat's is recommended. The patient should eat fiber rich food and plenty of raw vegetables. Intake of coffee and tea etc. should be reduced and alcohol should not be touched. Most addicts suffer from nutritional deficiencies so following an *Ayurvedic* diet may help with a qualified dietician, this is particularly important in the early recovery.^[7]

- **Psychological counseling -**

Psychological counseling has very important role in de-addiction. It is also mentioned in *Ayurvedic Samhita* which aware the patient from ill effects of addiction and give will power to come out from addiction. It is needed to correct awareness about the ill-effects of addiction. A warm friendly and sympathetic relationship between the therapist and the patient is the basis of any psychotherapeutic procedure.^[8]

DISCUSSION

Addiction is the major problem in the world including India. As the number of drug addicts is fast rising in the country, it is important for their families and general practitioners to understand the psychosomatic problems caused by drug abused. Many different types of drugs can be addicted not only illegal drugs such as heroin, cannabis, cocaine or ecstasy, but also prescriptions drugs such as tranquilizers, analgesic etc. Addiction is a state of physical or psychological dependence on a substance. *Acharya Charak* stated the concept of *Oak-Satmya*^[9] on which *Acharya Chakrapani* has given the commentary that *Apathy* (unwholesome) substance whatever it may be harmful or less harmful may become *Satmya* (homologous) due to continuous prolonged utilization. Hence, we can conclude that an addiction is a form of *Satmya* through the prolonged adverse effect of substance depends upon the nature, property, dose of substance duration and mode of utilization. In *Panchakarma* therapy *Abhyang*, *Virechana* and *Vamana* is helpful to normalize the vitiated *Vata* and reduces anxiety, stress and insomnia. Psychological counseling has very important role in de-addiction. It is also mentioned in

Ayurvedic Samhitas which aware the patient from ill effects of drug addiction and give will power to come out from drug addiction. As the psychological manifestation of drug withdrawal hence *Abhyanga*, Meditation, *Rasayana* therapy, Psychological counseling should be extended for addiction patients.^[10]

CONCLUSION -

Ayurveda does not force someone to stop the addictive behavior but encourage to replace it with another more constructive habit. The uniqueness of *Ayurveda* is that it not only attacks the roots of an addiction, but also helps to remove the toxins of the body. The general belief is drug addiction or intoxication of any kind is a social as well as psychological problem, which needs a holistic approach of treatment keeping in mind the affected person's socio-economic condition and atmosphere in mind. *Ayurveda* does just that and adopts a systematic approach in treatment of addiction cases. Those who are already established in recovery from addiction may find that *Ayurveda* helps them to maintain good physical, mental and spiritual health.

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Source of Support: Nil

Conflict of Interest: None Declared

How to cite this URL: Pathak Reetika et al: Healing Power Of Ayurveda For Addiction. International Ayurvedic Medical Journal {online} 2020 {cited November, 2020} Available from:

http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/5096_5099.pdf