



CONCEPTS OF SATMYA-ASATMYA, PRAGYAPARADH, AND DUSHI VISHA IN RELATION TO SUBSTANCE ABUSE

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ABSTRACT

Substance use has been a topic of interest to many professionals in the area of health, particularly public health and toxicology. An area with enormous implications for public health, it has generated a substantial amount of research. In India, the epidemic of substance abuse in children has assumed alarming dimensions. However, substance abuse is more of a public health issue rather than an *Ayurveda*/clinical issue but a specific branch of *Ayurveda*, *Agad Tantra* deals with harmful or hazardous uses of psychoactive substances and so this review is an approach to identify and fill gaps between the public health and *Agad Tanta*. There are many concepts mentioned in ancient *Ayurveda* texts like *Satmya-Asatmya*, *Pragyaparadh*, and *Dushi visha* which can not only help in understanding the dynamics of substance abuse in the human body but can also help in its management. This review is an attempt to present a description and correlation of substance abuse in relation to *Ayurveda* concepts.

Keywords: Satmya-Asatmya, Pragyaparadh, Dushi visha, substance abuse

INTRODUCTION

Substance abuse refers to the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs (1). Psychoactive substance use can lead to dependence syndrome - a cluster of behavioral, cognitive, and physiological phenomena that develop after repeated substance use and that typically include a strong desire to take the drug, difficulties in controlling its use, persisting in its use despite harmful consequences, a higher priority is given to drug use than to other activities and obligations, increased tolerance, and sometimes a physical withdrawal state (2). The term addiction commonly used for substance abuse is the uncontrolled use of alcohol, nicotine, opiates, heroine, and other psychoactive substances. Apart from this sometimes it is also used for other compulsions. These unwholesome substances or bad habits (*Ap-athya aahar vihar*) are the remote causes of several other diseases. These bad habits are harmful to health but sudden discontinuation of these again produces some discomforts or diseases. These are known as withdrawal symptoms like cravings, irritability, insomnia, depression, anorexia, etc. According to *Ayurveda*, there are three main causes of disease, namely *asatmyendriyatha samyoga* (indiscriminate use of senses and their objects), *prajnaparadha* (error of intellect resulting in a loss of discrimination between wholesome and unwholesome with subsequent indulgence in unwholesome diets and behaviour) and *parinama* (seasonal variation, cosmic effects and the effects of time).

Ayurveda believes that right *aahar* and right *vihar* are the epitomai of health. It had laid down certain rules to lead a truly happy and healthy life. Any divergence from these rules gives rise to many disorders. The divergence occurs due to *pragyaparadh*. *Pragyaparadh* vitiates all the *doshas* and leads to various disorders. Modifiable behavioral factors lead to lifestyle disorders. These factors can be totally modified, and lifestyle disorders prevented. *Pragyaparadh* according to *Ayurveda* is totally preventable by increasing *satva guna* of mind and restricting *raja* and *tamo guna* (3).

Substance abuse can be seen as a result of *Pragnyaparadh* and practicing *Asatmya Ahar Vihar*. This *Asatmya Ahar Vihar* can be used as a synonym for substance abuse. Ayurvedic literature has provided details of *Asatmya Ahar Vihar* and *Pragyaparadh*.

Satmya- Asatmya Vivechan

Satmya is a condition that exists along with the body and gives comfort. However, *the Asatmya* condition is opposite to *Satmya* and produces discomfort. It is mentioned somewhere i.e. “समीक्ष्यसम्यगात्मानम~” means thinking one's self and its purpose is always to consider and decide what is wholesome and what is unwholesome to him. The word *Satmya* and *Asatmya* described in various books and dictionaries, these are as follows-

Vyutpati of Satmya and Asatmya

सात सुखेउपादानेसातयति सुखेभरतः। (Vachaspatyam)

The word *Satmya* has been derived from the word ‘*Saat*’ which means happiness or substance which provides pleasure. According to *Vaiydyaka Shabdsindhukosha*, the word *Satmya* has been derived from the word ‘*Saat*’ ‘सात्’ (सातयति-ने) it means to give pleasure. The word ‘*Saat*’ also means *Brahma*, God. Hence it is termed the elixir of life which denotes ambrosia. The word *Asatmya* may be written as *Asatmyah*, *Asatmyaa* and *Asatmyam*. (-त्स्यः-त्स्या-त्स्यं) which means unwholesome and disagreeing with (as food). *Satmya* indicates the suitability of any substance, however, if the word ‘A’ is added as a prefix to the word *Satmya* as a result it denotes unsuitability means *Asatmya* (4).

Nirukti of Satmya and Asatmya

A. Regarding body suitability

In *Vaiydyaka Shabdsindhukosha* -*Satmya* is the substance that is conducive to one's own constitution १/३२; ११/११ and opposite to *Satmya* are *Asatmya*. Activities and diet which bring happiness and pleasure are known as *Satmya* (4).

B. Equality to God

क्ली, देवत्वमायथा, भागवते।६।१८।२० “इन्द्रेणप्रापिताःसात्म्यंकिंतसाधु

कृतंहितैः॥” सारूप्यमायथा, तत्रैवा।७।१०।४०।

“नृपाश्चैद्यादयःसात्म्यंहेरेस्तच्चिन्तयाययुः॥”

In *Shabda Kalpadruma*, according to *Bhagawat Geeta*, a reference is quoted about the word *Satmya* means ‘*Devatvam*’, which means similar to God. If an administrator or emperor attains the *Satmya* status, then all types of anxiety or phobias are eliminated from society (5).

C. Regarding universal aspect of Satmya

सात्म्यं, त्रि, सुखजनकम्।आत्मनोहितंकर्म।आत्म्यं।आत्म्येनसहवर्तमानंसात्म्यम्।

इतिभैषज्यरत्नावली॥ (यथा, सुश्रुते।१।४५ “सात्म्यंनामतद्यत्सेव्यमानमुपशेते

As mentioned in *Shabda Kalpadruma* a substance that brings pleasure to the body in all manners is known as *Satmya*. Pleasing substances are termed as *Satmya* or substances which provide pleasant feeling are termed as *Satmya*. A substance conducive to an individual is called *Satmya* and the use of such substances results in the well-being of that individual. *Satmya* stands for such factors as are wholesome to the individual even when continuously used (5).

According to Monier-Williams English Sanskrit dictionary, the word *Satmya* refers to the adaptability of any substances to one's own body. The word *Satmya* also means wholesome hence it is also termed *Pathya*. There are various ways of *Satmya* mentioned like *Pathya*, *Pathyaaa*, and *Pathyam*. *Satmyais* is also known as *Hitam* which means conducive to the body cells and tissues, and it is also termed as *Hita*, *Hitaa*, *Hitam*. The word *Apthya* means non-adaptability of any substances to one's cells and tissues; hence it is termed as unwholesome. *Asatmya* is also termed as *Apthya*, *Apthyaa*, *Apthyam*. The ‘ku’ prefix used before the word *Pathya* indicates *Kupathya* which means unsuitability or unwholesome nature of the substances. The words *Pathya*, *Hita*, and *Satmya* indicate salubrious nature. The substances which are recuperative and advantageously beneficial to the cells and tissues and the flourishing nature of any substances may be termed *Satmya*. Substances that are noxious, insalubrious, unhealthy are termed *Asatmya*. The substances which provide displeasure and discomfort to

the body are also known as *Asatmya*. Some people also term *Asatmya* as *Vishma* and *Virrudha* which indicates the incompatible nature of any substances. The things which favor the destruction of cells and tissues are termed *Asatmya*, hence it is called *Apathyaashi*. Substances that help to maintain homeostasis of body cells and tissues or substances which regulate physiological parameters or substances which are salutiferous to the body or substances which are favorable to one's own body physiology (6).

D. Regarding the causative aspect of Satmya

सात्म्य- सात्, BRAHMA, GOD.साति to cause happiness,

The factor which helps, to provide happiness to human beings is known as *Satmya*.

असात्म्य- Unwholesome, disagreeing with, (as food, etc.)

The factor which helps, to provide displeasure or discomfort to the human being is known as *Asatmya*. (Wilson Sanskrit-English Dictionary) (7)

Thus, various types of *Niruktis* of the term *Satmya* are available, and even more, *Niruktis* may be formed. As has already been pointed out, these *Niruktis* are made with different ideologies and approaches. The most practicable approach is certain factors that can easily assimilate into the human body without causing any harm or difficulty called '*Satmya*'. It offers pleasure to the body and helps in the development process.

In *Ayurveda*, the chronic hazards of drug addiction like Alcohol, Opium, and Cannabis have been described in brief but the latter semi-synthetic and synthetic drugs from natural or chemical sources have not been found in *Ayurveda*. *Ayurveda* has mentioned that the withdrawal effect of Alcohol causes psychosomatic disorder (8). But withdrawal effect of other natural, semi-synthetic and synthetic addicted drugs has not been found in *Ayurveda*. The *padansik kram* to the withdrawal of any substance has been suggested in *Ayurveda* which is a unique method to taper up the abused drugs or replacement of that abused drugs (9). Recreational therapy, psychological counseling is also suggested only for Alcoholism (10,11).

Hence it is a need for time to evaluate, elaborate, and discussion of concepts mentioned in ancient *Ayurveda* texts in association with addiction and poisonous effects. The present study compiled concepts of

Ayurveda in relation to these hazardous substances and discussed various concepts of causal and association of substance abuse with various concepts of *Ayurveda*.

Results and Discussion:

According to a recent report by the Government of India the prevalence of different substance abuse drugs is shown in the table below (12).

Table 1: Prevalence of different substance abuse drugs (12)

	India (current use %)	Uttar Pradesh (current use %)
Alcohol	14.6	23.8
Cannabis	2.83	7.39
Opioids	2.06	2.11
Sedatives	1.08	1.10
Cocaine	0.10	0.02
Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS)	0.18	0.10
Inhalants	0.70	0.69
Hallucinogens	0.12	0.02

Substance abuse management in relation to *Ayurveda*

Drug addiction is a major problem in the world including in India. Substance abuse can be correlated with *Asatmya* in *Ayurveda*. 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 abuse. Many different types of drugs can be addicted: not only illegal drugs such as heroin, cannabis, cocaine, or ecstasy but also prescription drugs such as tranquilizers, analgesics. The main groups of addicted drugs are Stimulants, Depressants, Narcotics, and Hallucinogens. Addiction is a state of physical or psychological dependence on a substance. Physical addiction includes the development of tolerance (needing more and more of the drug to achieve the same effect) and withdrawal symptoms that appear when the user stops taking the drug, and disappear when more of the drug is taken. The management of drug addiction is divided into two subheadings pharmacological and non-pharmacological treatment. *Acharya Charak* stated that the concept of *Oak satmya* (13) on which *Acharya Chakrapani* has given the commentary that *Apathya* (unwholesome) substance whatever it may be harmful or less harmful may become *satmya* (homologous) due to continuous prolonged utilization. Hence, we can conclude that addiction is a form of *satmya* though the prolonged

adverse effect of the substance depends upon the nature, property, dose of a substance, duration, and mode of utilization. *Acharya charak* stated the *Jitendriya* (Sense subdue) person who leaves all types of alcohol that intelligent person who never suffers from a physical and mental disorder. It means if a person who is not *jitendriya* and leaves alcohol he will suffer from physical and mental disorders and the clinical manifestations are called withdrawal symptoms. Headache, joint ache, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, restlessness, sleeping difficulties are some common physical manifestations of drug withdrawal and there is some specific manifestation like running nose & tearing seen in opium & its derivatives. Anxiety, agitation, mood swings, depression, irritability, loss of concentration are some common psychological manifestations along with some specific manifestations like anhedonia seen in cocaine withdrawal. *Mahrshi Vedavyas* has mentioned in his *Mahakavya Bhagvatgeeta* that the *Sidha purush* (Ascetic) is free from all indulgence but the common people cannot because of the perception of substance remain in the body (13). *Achrya Charak* suggested the *padanshik krama* for withdrawing such drugs subsequently so that none of or less withdrawal effect will be appeared in the addicted persons. The severity of withdrawal symptoms of a drug present for a particular period varies from drug to drug (14–18), after this period the withdrawal

symptoms disappear so it is very important to manage this clinical manifestation of withdrawal in this particular period by replacing the addicted drug with specific Ayurvedic preparation having the same ingredient of that addicted drug or same drug taper up in decreasing quantity following *padanshik* karma. *Shrikhandasav* is mentioned in *madatyay* (alcoholism) treatment (19) and it can be successfully used to taper the Alcohol. *Sameergaj kesari ras* contains opium and it is used as an opioid analgesic or in vata disease. With the help of *sameergaj kesari ras*, Opium and its derivatives can be taper up in the opium-addicted patient. Also, the purified one-part *Strychnos nuxvomica* (*shodhit kuchla*) is poured into 16 parts of cow milk and granulated on heating to prepare *mava* (*khoya*). This *mava* is given in a dose of 250 mg twice a day to the opium-addicted patient helps to de-addict it (20). In the case of cannabis-addicted patients, *madanodak modak* is very useful for tapering cannabis, it contains 50% *shodhit bhanga*, so *Cannabis* and its derivatives are replaced by *madnodak modak* (21). Coca leaf is used to make coca herbal tea which has the same effect as cocaine but in a lesser amount. It can be used to replace the Cocaine and taper up the cocaine. Quit nicotine powder is a mixture of nicotine and ajowan, and it can be used to taper up tobacco. In Quit nicotine powder the decreasing quantity of nicotine and increasing quantity of ajowan is used. The *ajowan* has the same *ras* (*katu, tikta*), *gune* (*laghu, tikshan*), *virya* (*ushana*), and *vipak* (*katu*) as tobacco (21,22), it does not have *vyavay* and *vikasi guna* but due to its similar taste, it gives the false filling of tobacco in the mouth. Benzodiazepines, Barbiturate, Gamma-Hydroxy Bupivrate (GHB), and Methamphetamines are the drugs for which we don't find any herbal drugs that can be used to replace these drugs and taper up. So, tapping these drugs is done with the same drug withdrawn by decreasing its own quantity in *padanshik karma*. The withdrawal symptoms generally do not appear on the complete stopping of the drugs by *padanshik karma*, if it appears then the symptomatic treatment is given. Nausea vomiting is the common withdrawal symptoms seen in opium, cannabis, alcohol, and amphetamine. In this case, *Ela churna* is used which is

indicated in vomiting (23).

Concept of Asatmya in relation to Substance abuse

A thing that is not adjusted by body cells is regarded as *Asatmya* or unwholesome. It is also called *Anupashaya* or *Ahita* or *Apathya*. It may be said that *Anupashaya* is opposite to *Upashaya*, which is not suitable for the body or yield abnormal reactions inside the body or does not give happiness to the body; this is also termed as *VyadhiAsatmya*. In another word, it can be said that the factor or particle which brings changes in normal physiology or yield an exaggerated immune response or causes tissue injury against its own tissues or damage the *Dhatus* is known as *Asatmya*. In a nutshell, it can be correlated to substance dependence and substance abuse, allergy, auto-immunity, and hypersensitivity reactions.

The following modern concept may be correlated to *Asatmya* based on their similar actions inside the body. Substance use disorders may also be described as substance dependence and substance abuse. Unfortunately, the term substance dependence instead of addiction is used because dependence can develop without addiction and addiction involves much more than dependence per se. physical dependence develops through resetting of homeostatic cellular mechanisms to permit normal function despite the continued presence of a drug; when drug intake is terminated abruptly, a withdrawal syndrome emerges. Withdrawal from alcohol or other sedative-hypnotics causes nervous system hyperactivity, whereas withdrawal from psychostimulants produces fatigue and sedation. Tolerance is a reduction in response to a drug, which like dependence, develops after repeated use. It results from a change in drug metabolism (pharmacokinetic tolerance) or cell signaling (pharmacodynamic tolerance).

Substance abuse in relation to Pragyaparadh

Ayurveda had laid down certain rules to lead a truly happy and healthy life. Any divergence from these rules gives rise to many disorders. The divergence occurs due to *pragyaparadh*. At the psycho-physical plane, *Dhi* (intelligence, cognition), *Dhriti* (retention, patience), and *Smriti* (memory, recall) are three

important mental faculties (24). *Dhi* is the discriminative power viewing things in reality, which decides the likeliness and unlikeliness, differentiates between correct and incorrect. *Dhriti* is the patience, *Niyamat-maka* i.e., regulating, and controlling power by which the mind restrains the body from indulging in worldly pleasures, excess desires, and harmful objects. *Smriti* i.e., memory is the power to recall the knowledge of experienced things. A person whose intellect, patience, and memory are impaired, subjects himself to volitional transgression (*Prajnaparadha*) by virtue of his bad actions. This aggravates all the *doshas* (25).

Thus, *Dhi vibhramsha* i.e., impaired intellect resulting in indecisiveness, improper perception, and inappropriate thoughts, *Dhriti Vibhramsha* i.e., impaired patience showing lack of self-control, excess indulgence, and allurements, *Smriti* indicating poor recall and memory are predominant factors at the psychophysical plane in *Vishada*. *Pragyaparadh* according to *Ayurveda* is totally preventable by increasing *satva guna* of mind and restricting *raja* and *tamo guna* (3). Based on logical thinking the following cycle is presented.

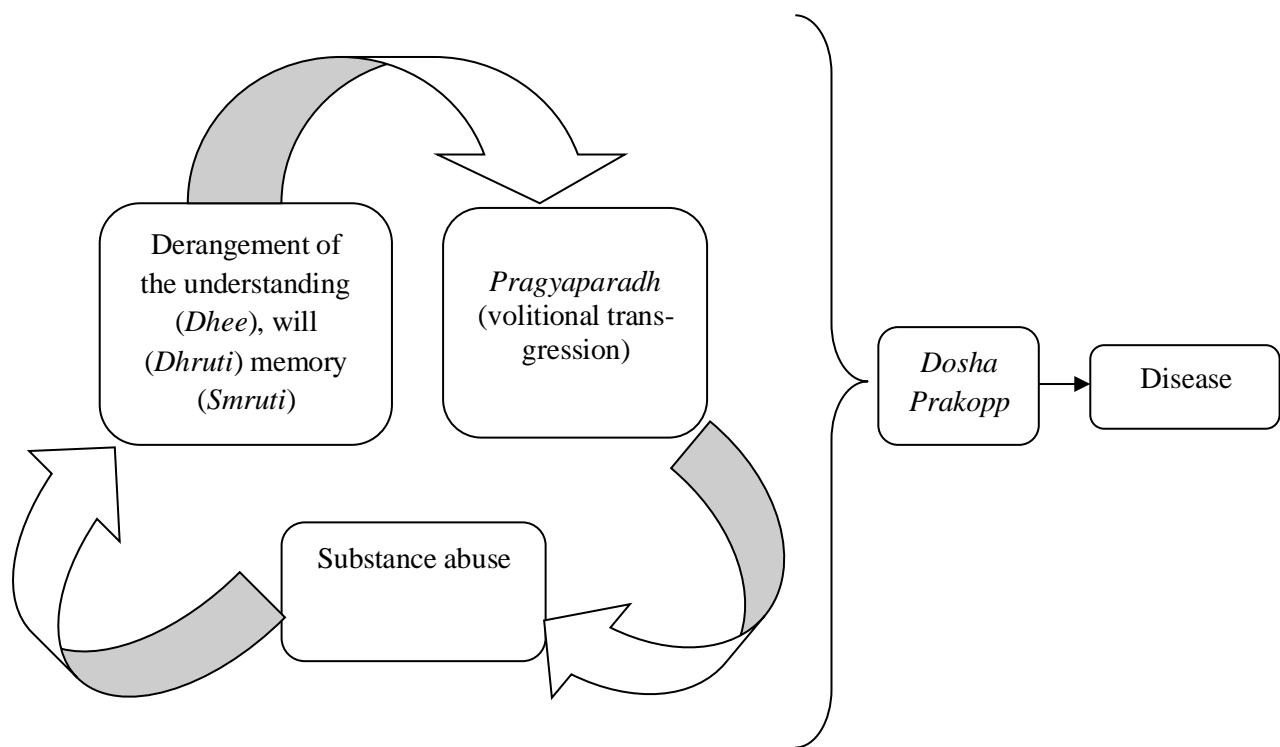


Figure 1 Vicious cycle of Substance abuse and *Pragyaparadh* (volitional transgression)

Concept of *Dushi visha* in relation with Substance abuse

According to *Charaka*, latent poison (*Dushi Visha*) vitiates *Raktadhatu* (blood) and causes skin diseases such as *Kitibha* and *Kota*. Latent poison (*Dushi Visha*) vitiates the humors (*Doshas*) one by one and at last causing death. *Chakrapani's* comment on this verse as, the poison, which gets aggravated after a long time is a latent poison (*Dushi Visha*). Even *Dushi Visha*

Keetas are also considered as low potency poison (*Heena Visha*). *Vagbhata* has also endorsed the view of *Susruta*. *Madhava Nidana* has given the same explanation as that of *Susruta*. But in *Madhukosha's* commentary on *Madhava Nidana* author has given some clarifications regarding *Dushi Visha*. Cold wind (*Sheetanila*), cloudy days (*Durdina*) are considered aggravating factors of latent poison (*Dushi Visha*) as they aggravate *Kaphadosha*, and latent poison (*Dushi*

Visha) is covered (Avrita) by Kapha. Laxity of joints (Vishlesha) and Romaharsha (horripilation) are Vata-kapha Lakshanas, Annamada is considered as improperly metabolized tissue rasa (Rasaajeerna) by author Gadadhara. Avipaka is clarified as improper digestion (Annasyaapaka). It is also told that latent poison (Dushi Visha) can cause impotence. Author Bhavamisra, in his work Bhavaprakasha, has also agreed to the same explanation as Susruta. The commentator has clarified some of the points like 'Kaphavrutam' by saying that the potency of hot (ushna), minute (Sukshma), dry (Ruksha), etc. Gunas are reduced by Kapha. Because of Kapha Dosha, Avarana's defective digestion (Agnimandya) and defective metabolism (Dhatwagnimandya) occurs which in turn leads to Apakata of latent poison (Dushi Visha) and stays for a long time in the body without producing any signs and symptoms. According to Yogaratnakara, artificial poison (Krtrima Visha) is of two types, one is latent poison (Dushi Visha) formed by mixing toxic components (Savishadravyas) another is Gara Visha formed by non-toxic components (Nirvishadravyas). According to Kriyakoumudi, the author agrees with the explanation of Susrutha but added that even external application of medicated paste (Pralepadi) may transform to latent poison (Dushi Visha) after the initial absorption. Bacterial toxins and drugs like antibiotics, steroids, etc, frequent food (Adhyshana), incompatible food (Viruddhahara), intake of food prior to the digestion of food last taken (Ajeernaavastha) also come under latent poison. He adds that feces (Mala), urine (Mutra), menstrual blood (Artava), not properly discharged from the body may also become latent poison (Dushi Visha). Some secondary aggravating factors mentioned are fear (Bhaya), thirst (Trishna), weakness (Dourbalya), sorrow (Vyasana), hunger (Kshuda), exercise Aadhvana), diarrhea (Atisara), and an increase in Vata and Pitta, thunder, sexual intercourse, and Vishasankata. In Gara Visha or Kaivisha's condition also same features of latent poison (Dushi Visha) are seen but death supervenes only in Kaivisha and not in latent poison (Dushi Visha). He also mentioned some of Dushi Vishakeeta, spider (Luta), and rat (Mushika) features (Lakshanas). In Dushi

Vishaasadhyalakshanas (symptoms), bleeding and fever are extra symptoms mentioned. In classics, it is very well mentioned that 'any type of poison irrespective of inanimate (Sthavara), animate (Jangama) and artificial poison (KrtrimaVisha) will attain a stage called latent poison (Dushi Visha) after they divest their potency to some extent or if they are improperly expelled or partially detoxified in the body. And some less toxic things can be considered latent poison. Present food habits, life style, and mental attitudes, etc. are entirely different from that of the past. The basic essentials of life air, food, and water are all polluted and the hazards paint a gloomy picture for the coming generation. So, by considering factors such as Viruddhahara and Ahitahara, Fast foods and cold beverages like colas, Alcohol, tobacco, drugs like quinine, NSAIDs, steroids, Pesticides, metals, minerals, pollutants, etc. can be considered under latent poison (Dushi Visha) (26).

CONCLUSION

There are several concepts mentioned in Ayurveda highlighted in this study like Asatmya, Pragyaparadh, and Dushi visha which are not only helpful in understanding the problem of substance abuse but also can play an important role in designing effective invention strategies. Understanding the vital concepts of Asatmya, Pragyaparadh, and Dushi vish will help the policy makers and implementing agencies to design an effective intervention. Various methods of de-addiction mentioned in Ayurveda like Psychological Counselling, Abhyang, shiro-Abhyang, Shirodhara, Yoga, and meditation can play an important role and should be highlighted for de-addiction. This study lays the direction for future research in the field of substance abuse management in relation to Ayurvedic drugs.

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