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PSYCHIATRY IN AYURVEDA



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Abstract :

Psychiatry in Ayurveda integrates mind, body and soul. The mind-body connection is very important in Ayurveda. Physical imbalances can disturb mental state while mental illness leads to disruption of body functions. In Ayurveda many reference of Manas and treatment of manovikara was available which would be easy to understand and rewarding in the field of treatment, by describing the definition of Manas, its functions, qualities, concept of Manas, classification of mental disorders, treatment of mental illness prevention of mental illnesses, method of examination of mental illness and other important aspects.

Key Words:- Psychiatry, Mind, Ayurveda

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INTRODUCTION

Ayurvedic theory of health is based on Tridosha. The dynamic balance of Tridosha creates health¹. Ayurveda defines mental health as a state of mental, intellectual and spiritual well-being. Ayurveda has differentiated our organs into Dnyanendriye (organs of perception) and Karmendriye (organs of action.). It has given the special status of Ubhayendriya (organ of both, perception as well as action) to Manas (mind.)². It also says that in our body- mind apparatus, our mind controls our body and is more important than the body. Ayurveda aims at preservation and promotion of health, and prevention and cure of diseases through the concepts of positive physical and mental health. Management of mental disorders or psychological medicine was an area of specialization even during Charaka's time. Charaka suggests that, treatment for mental illnesses should be sought through an expert in the field of mental illnesses¹.

RELATION OF BODY, MIND & SOUL:

The three pillars of life are Manas(mind), Atma(soul) and Sareera(body). Psychiatry in Ayurveda integrates mind, body and soul. The mind-body connection is very important in Ayurveda. Physical imbalances can disturb mental state while mental illness leads to disruption of body functions. Charaka says that we can't learn without co-ordination between Manas, soul, sense organs and subjects.

Tridosha Concept and Body Mind constitution

The three life energies called Vata, Pitta and Kapha govern an individual's mind and body activities

- Vata - controls movement and nervous system.
- Pitta - regulates metabolism and brings about transformation in the body.
- Kapha - provides stability and is involved with building up of tissues.

An individual has all these three life energies in him, but in varying proportions. This unique body –mind constitution is very much like the genetic makeup of a person. When Vata dosha is high it results in anxiety, restlessness and insomnia. Excess of Pitta factor causes irritability and the person's behavior will be judgmental. Vitiating of Kapha dosha results in depression, possessiveness and greed.

DEFINITION OF MIND:

"मन ज्ञाने बोधे"⁴

It is the Way of understanding the knowledge
It also means, Opportunity to obtain knowledge & happiness

Functions of mind⁴

- Chintyam - Thinking
- Vicharam - Prolongation and expansion of thoughts
- Ooham - Imagination of past, present and future
- Dhyeyam - Deep thinking and concentration on a thought of object
- Sankalpam- Planning
- yatkinchit- All the other things which man can Perceive

Qualities of mind:⁵

- I. Satvic guna is very good and pure and is filled with love, kindness and spirituality
- II. Rajasic guna is aggressive and is subject to temptations of the world. But in right proportions it will give a person leadership qualities.
- III. Tamasic guna is filled with darkness and is always confused and doubtful.

. Location of Mind

- Brain – neurological i.e. Sensory and motor functions of mind are chiefly attributed to brain⁶
- Heart - Psychological functions, particularly the emotional aspects of psyche are attributed to the heart.⁷

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Swaroopa of Manas (Nature of Mind)

Manas is without any rupa. It is nirvikara. As it is athindriya swaroopa could be understood through laxanas. Man is exposed to vedanas like sukha, dukha, vichara, Krodha, kama etc. only through Manas.

Mind Concept in Ayurveda

A. Physical mind(objective mind)-

The physical mind is connected to three faculties called Dhi(intellect), Dhruti(processing information) and Smruti(memory). When there is proper coordination between these three factors, mental health is perfect. When there is lack of coordination it leads to a condition called Prajnaparadha⁸ when the person becomes totally ignorant of what he does.

- Dhi - is the intelligence which helps to learn, focus and understand. Vata dosha should be balanced for the optimal functioning of Dhi
- Dhruti - involves the chemical and electrical processing of information and is therefore related to Pitta dosha
- Smruti - is the ability remembers. Kapha dosha should be balanced for proper functioning of Smruti.

B. Spiritual mind(Chitta) -

Chitta is the subjective mind which carries subconscious memories. This is also known as the karmic mind. This is the subconscious mind which is believed to have memories from past lives.

C. Universal mind(Vibhu)–

Everyone in the universe is connected to each other according to this concept. Vibhu is the universal mind which links every living being in this world. Person who can reach higher dimensions through meditation, can cross the border of physical mind and merge with universal mind

Classification of mental strength:

- Avaram - Who cannot tolerate traumatic situations.
- Madhyam- is the in between condition.
- Pravaram is the best of all three, as a person of this nature will have the will power to withstand any difficulty. This stage can be attained through meditation and experience.

Definition of mental disorders⁹:

On the basis of the classical descriptions, manovikaras can be defined as a group of clinical conditions affecting the individuals with alpasatwa (weak psyche) and characterized by behavioral changes in them due to:

- A. Discordance of manodoshas or both manodoshas and shareera dosha
- B. Vitiation of manovaha srotamasi (channels carrying psychological impulses);
- C. Impairment of function of manah viz., Indrayabhigraha(perception and motor control), manonigraha (mental control),

Causes of Mental Illness¹⁰:

Several factors influence the psychological upset in a person such as Social circumstances, Hereditary factors, Traumatic incidents, Personality of the person, Biological reasons (abnormal changes in the chemicals which play major role in communication between neurons in brain.), Improper diet, Actions committed in this birth, Bad deeds done in the last birth, Physical illnesses and overindulgence, Severe mental or physical stress, Unfavorable -personal, familial and social environment, Negative feelings are emotional toxins. If they are not driven out of body in a stipulated time, they give rise to chronic mental disorders like anxiety neurosis, depression, etc.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING MENTAL DISEASES (MANOVRITTI):-11

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shoka(sorrow), krodha(anger), chinta(unnecessary thinking), kama(lust), krodha(anger), lobh(greed), moha(delusion), irshya(jealousy), abhimana(pride), mada(euphoria), bhaya(fear) These are some of the negative emotions which can contribute to mental imbalance. Holding on to negative emotions and past experiences are considered as toxins affecting mind.

Mental Disorders in Ayurveda:

Ayurveda mentioned following disorders as Unmada(psychosis), Apasmara(convulsive disorder), Apatantrakam(hysteria), Atavabhinivesham(obsession), Prajnaparadha(lack of coordination between dhi, dhruti and smruti), Bhrama(illusion), Tandra(drowsiness), Klama(neurasthenia), Mada(loss of perception), Personality disorders, Citto Udvega-Anxiety neurosis, Avasada- Depression, Manasa Mandata-Mental Retardation, Madatyaya - Intoxication etc

Treatment aspects in mental diseases:

Ayurvedic treatment for the mitigation of the diseases has always been through ‘holistic approach’ while it has only recently ushered in the west as big movement in the field of treatment. Ayurveda recommends three types of chikitsa as:

1. Daivavyapasraya chikitsa¹²: (divine or spiritual/therapy)

This refers to measure like mantra, (incantation), Ausadhi (wearing scared herbs), mani (wearing precious gems), mangala (propitiatory rites), bali (oblations), homa (sacrifice), upahara (offerings), niyama (vows), prauascitta (ceremonial penitence), upavasa (fasts), swastyayana (prostrations), pranipata (surrender), gamana (pilgrimage), etc. These measures are recommended in mental disorders caused by Agantu(extraneous) factors and administered judiciously after considering the nature, faith, religiosity, culture and educational level, of the patient. These may be useful in all types of manasavikara, i.e. both psychosis and neurosis.

2. Yuktivyapasraya chikitsa¹³: (logical therapy)

This refers to the use of ahara (diet) and aushadha (drugs).

Under Ahara, it is interesting to note that different food articles like ksira (milk), ghrita (ghee), draksa (grapes), panasa (jack fruit), Brahmi (Centella asiatica- plant), vastuka (goose foot, kakamaci (solanum nigrum), mahakusmanda (ash gourd), kapitha (wood apple) matulunga and others are recommended as beneficial in various mental disorders.

Thus, these and other descriptions available in the classics on ahara particularly in relation to mental disorders are worthy of scientific study.

Under drug therapy, it is said that, in all types of mental diseases where vata, pitta and kapha are deranged, dosha shodhana or srota suddhi (elimination of dosha or shodhana or srota suddhi (elimination of dosha or cleansing, the cells) has to be done by adopting various sodhana (purificatory measures).

Treatment processes:

1. Virecana (purgation)
2. Basti (enema)
3. Nasya (nasal instillation)
4. Abhyanga (aniling)
5. Takradhara/ Ksiradhara/ tailadhara, Kasayadhara (streaming of medicated buttermilk/ milk/ oil/ decoction on the forehead of the patient)
6. Mastishka (application of medicated wet cakes on the head)
7. Sirolepa (application of medicated wet cakes on the vertex)

When the cleaning is properly done, samshodhana (palliatives) and rasayana (tonics) are given in order to bring back the deranged manas to normalcy. Some of Medicines are Brahmi ghrita, Aswagandha, Cyavanaprasha, Sarasvatarista works as tonic & rasayana in treating mental disorders

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3. Satvavajaya chikitsa¹⁴: (psycho therapy)

The aim of this therapy is to restrain mind from desire for unwholesome objects. This permits considering, occupational, behavioral and like therapies as well, since the ultimate aim of them also would be to restrain mind from unwholesome objects.

The best approach to achieve the goal of satvavajaya chikitsa as mentioned earlier is through dnyanam (knowledge), vijñanam (analytical thinking), dhairya, (courage), smṛti (memory), and Samādhi (concentration), according to Caraka.

Mental disorders caused by kama (excessive desire) Soka (grief), bhaya (fear) krodha (anger), harsa (delight), irsyā (jealousy), moha (agreed) should be countered by inducing the opposites passion in order to neutralize the causative ones.

The above two approaches can be said to be more useful in manasaroga caused on account of certain external psychological reasons which refer to certain manasavikara (kevala manasavikara) related to neurotic conditions. Apart from these, measures like calming the patient with assurances and words of moral import, shocking him by announcing the loss of something he holds dear or showing him some wonderment, threatening him by physical torture have been mentioned.

CONCLUSION

In the classics of ayurveda, concepts on preservation and promotion of health and prevention of illnesses, descriptions in the chapters devoted to dinacarya (daily regimen) ritucarya (seasonal regimen), sadvrta (code of virtues), roganutpadana (prevention of diseases) and annapanavidhi (rules pertaining to food and drinks).

In order to be free from mental disorders Ayurveda prescribes that one should not allow one to become a victim of impulses like greed, grief, fear, anger, jealousy, impudence, vanity etc. Further, it declares that, one who speaks truth, refrains from over indulgence in alcohol and meat, hurts none, avoids overstrain, fair spoken, always compassionate and given to wholesome eating, would enjoy the benefits of sound mental health.

In Ayurvedic view points in this regard as a 'socio-moral value system' which if adopted with modifications to suit our needs without digressing from the core of these concepts, would be of great aid in warding off many a mental disorder, and promote the mental potentialities of mankind. It would also richly contribute in preventing and , treating many psychosomatic conditions like peptic ulcer, bronchitis, blood pressure, eczema and diabetes to mention a few.

All these measures are aimed at bestowing relaxation and mental equipoise which are the basic prerequisites of a sound mind. They are particularly relevant to our times when we are forced to battle continuously against 'stress' and 'strain' for our very survival.

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