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A Review Study on Stress Management Through the Principles of Ayurveda

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Abstract:

Health refers to a state of physical, mental, social and spiritual well being. Thus, mental health is one of the components of broad concept of health. In the modern era, the high-tech communication facilities, rapid industrialization, sophisticated life style and extensive use of computers have made lives much easier but they are blamed for making the life stressed. It is estimated that all modern diseases have their origin in stress. Constant exposure to stress leads to psycho-somatic disorders affecting immune, cardiovascular and nervous systems. To achieve these aims, one needs a healthy body and mind. *Ayurveda* considers body and mind as inter related and inter-dependent to each other. *Dhi*, *Dhairya* and *Atmadi vignynana* plays a very important role in the attainment of healthy mind and in turn contributes a healthy body. Any factor which adversely affects the *Shareera*, *Indriya*, *Satwa* and *Atma* may lead to ill health either at somatic or psychic level. It treats stress by various life style modifications by the use of *Medhyadravya*, *Satvavajaychikitsa*, *Panchkarma*, etc. *Ayurvedic* methods of treating stress not only maintain the balance in body & mind but also progressively raise the level of inner happiness & satisfaction. This paper focuses review On Stress Management through the Principles of *Ayurveda*.

KEYWORDS: Stress, Lifestyle, *Medhyadravya*, *Satvavajaychikitsa*

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Introduction:

Stress can be defined as any type of change that causes physical, emotional, or psychological strain. Stress is body's response to anything that requires attention or action. Everyone experiences stress to some degree. The way they respond to stress, however, makes a big difference to overall well-being. Sometimes, the best way to manage stress involves changing your situation. At other times, the best strategy involves changing the way you respond to the situation.

Developing a clear understanding of how stress impacts your physical and mental health is important. It's also important to recognize how your mental and physical health affects your stress level. Causes of Stress

1. Aaharaja (Dietary causes):

Tamasika Aahara (including Irregular meal times or skipping meals), eating too late at night, Spicy food habits like pizza, burger, Chinese food, Oily foods, pickles, Salty and sour foods like chips, alcohol, fermented foods etc.. Improper dietary habits like *Samashana*, *Adhvashana* and *Vishamashana*. These may cause *Vishada* because of *Pragya-paradha*

2. Viharaja (Life style causes):

Avyayam (lack of physical and mental exercise) is the vital causative factor in

pathogenesis of depression. The absence of physical challenge and overwhelming abundance of mental work is forcing more and more people to become victim to depression.

3. Manasika karana (Psychological factors):

Duhkha produced due to loss of beloved one or any financial or social loss, *Bhaya*, *Irshya*, *Dainya*, *Lobha*, *Chinta*, *Krodha* may lead to *Vishada*. (Anxiety and worry, Negative attitude toward self and others).

4. Rogaja (Secondary to medical conditions):

Vishada is observed as a symptom in *Vataja Jwara* in the classics. But it can occur in all somatic disorders, because, it allowed to persist for long time, psychic diseases and somatic diseases get combined with each other Haphazard and disorganized.

5. Stress Symptoms

The primary symptom by which Stress can recognize that person is under stress is the lack of concentration that makes all tasks hugely difficult. There is an internal fear of events and there is always a negative feeling which makes things more difficult.

The emotional symptoms include grimness, short temper, constant irritability, confining self to loneliness and excessive depression.

As for the physical symptoms, there can be nausea, pains, diarrhoea, speedy heart beat, chest pain and frequent cold, breathing trouble, sleeplessness and fluctuation in one's loss.

There is also high blood pressure, back ache and a decreased immunity.

Management of stress

Ayurveda considers that all three *Sharirik Doshas-Vata, Pitta, Kapha* and two *Manas Dosha -Raja and Tama* when in morbid state are responsible for *Manas Roga* as such all the three modalities of disease management are equally applicable in management of *manasroga* also.

The *Chikitsa* for treating mental illnesses are of three types

1. Daivavyaparshraya Chikitsa (spiritual management)

Applications of certain religious practises from Hindu or vedic culture.

2. Yuktivyaparshraya Chikitsa (physiopharmacological methods of management)

Medhya rasayana has specific action on *Dhriti*, which improves the function of *Prana & Udana vayu*, and regulate the function of *Mana* by using herbominral compound medicines and *Panchakarma* therapy.

1. Life style modifications according to *Ayurveda*

Ayurvedic treatment has two aim to maintain of health of a healthy person & to cure the disease of an ill person. Life style modifications as given in *Ayurveda*, accomplish both the above aims in management of stress. It can be used to prevent stress & to cure stress. It consists of various methods as given below

2. Dincharya

Dincharya means to follow daily routine activity as described in *Ayurveda* for better physical & mental health. *Dincharya* includes various steps that should be followed to relieve stress e.g.

- Oil application on head by applying oil on head, foot massages regularly sense organ becomes cheerful, face has pleasant glow, sound sleep and happiness also develops[3] . Refined *Tila* (sesame) oil can be used alone or as a base oil in which *Brahmi (Centella asiatica)*, *Jatamansi (Nardostachys jatamansi)* etc. medicines are cooked, for application over head & foot to relieve stress and anxiety.

• Vyayam (Physical Exercise)

Vyayam or physical exercise is an important mode for curing and preventing many diseases. By physical exercise one gets lightness and tolerance of difficulties[4]. But *Vyayam* should be performed daily

only upto the half of the strength i.e. one should utilise about 50% of his capacity daily because the purpose of *Vyayam* is not to drain all energy but to utilise most of it. Perspiration, enhanced respiration, lightness of body, inhibition of heart and other organs of the body are indicative of the exercise being performed correctly.

Pranayam

It includes *Yogic* prayer, *Pranayama*, *Asana*, *Dhyana* (meditation) etc. It is not a technique but a way of life which includes cessation of all thought processes which distract mind. It describes a state of consciousness when mind is free from scattered thoughts & various patterns.

3. Satvavajaya Chikitisa

Psychological practises including counseling, behavioural therapy, etc..

Aashwasana –

Proper assurance helps to correct the way of thinking, also it builds confidence in the individual and hence stress is reduced.

Ayurvedic drugs & procedures

Medhyadravya

Medhyadravya are the herbal medicines described in *Ayurveda* e.g. *Mandookparni* (*Centella asiatica*), *Shankhpushpi* (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*), *Aindri* (*Bacopa monnieri*), *Kushmaand* (*Benincasa*

hispida), *Jyotismati* (*Celastrus panniculatus*) *Amalak*(*Embelica Offincinalis*), *Vacha*(*Acorus Calamus*), *Ashwagandha*(*Withania Somnifera*), *Jatamansi*(*Nardostachys Jatamansi*), *Guduchi*(*Tinospora Cardifolia*), *Tagar*(*Valeriana Wallichii*), *Yashtimdhru*(*Glycyrrhiza Glabra*), *Triphala* (*Embelica Offincinalis*, *Terminalia Bellerica*, *Terminalia Chebula*). etc. These drugs play important role in managing stress reduction in exploratory behavioural pattern, and suppression of aggressive behaviour, reduction in spontaneous motor activity, hypothermia, alterations in the general behaviour pattern and potentiating of pentobarbitone sleeping time was observed by methanolic extract of the whole plant [7]

Improve mental functions by a modulation of the cholinergic and GABA(gamma-amino butyric acid)neuro transmission.

Restoring the frontal cortical muscarinic and cholinergic receptor activities. Improve mental quotient, memory span, concentration ability & stress threshold. Reduces the level of tribulin- endogenous Mono amine oxidase inhibitor which is responsible for various levels of stress & anxiety.

Acts as an Hypotensive agent for stress related hypertension.

Improves overall immunity.

Medhya drugs mostly appear to be largely *Sheeta* in *virya*, *Tikta* and *Madhura* rasa.

Therefore, *Medhya Rasayana* drugs improves nutritional value of the *Rasa* (Plasma) (through *poshak rasa*), then level of *agni* by promoting digestion & metabolism, thus improving the tissue nourishment, calming effect on mind.

Panchkarma: In *Ayurveda*, for the balance state of mind, body & consciousness, few *Panchkarma* procedures are prescribed e.g *Abhyanga*, *Nasya*, *Shirodhara*, *Sarvanga* *Taildhara*, *Pizichil*, *Thalapothichil*.

1. ***Abhyanga***-

A daily *Abhyanga* practice restores the balance of the *doshas* and enhances well-being and longevity. Regular *Abhyanga* is especially grounding and relaxing for *Vata dosha* imbalances. Its Nourishes the entire body—decreases the effects of aging, increases circulation, stimulates the internal organs of the body, increases stamina, calms the nerves, benefits sleep—better, deeper sleep, enhances vision.

3. *Nasya*- The nasal administration of medication is done through *Nasya*.

The nasal part is the doorway to consciousness and path to our inner pharmacy. Medications that are administered through the nasal passage affect the mind *prana*, *vata*, *tarpaka kapha* and *sadhaka pitta*. It cleans the sensory organs, provide normal sleep, mental satisfaction and thus it act as a key factor in stress management.

4. ***Shirodhara***- *Shirodhara* is a healing technique that involves pouring a liquid such as milk, buttermilk, oil, or water, onto the forehead. *Shirodhara* has a calming, soothing, and relaxing effect on the body and mind. It is an ideal treatment for reducing stress. It induces calmness, promotes tranquility, and relaxes the body. By repeated gentle stimulation to the center of the forehead, *Shirodhara* treatment reduces anxiety.

1. ***Sarvangadhara***: Pouring hot medicated oil or any kind of *kashaya*, milk on body called *Sarvanga dhara*. It Soothes the nerves and improves blood circulation, & helps to eliminates the stress, relaxes mind and rejuvenates the senses.

2. ***Thalpothichil*** : *Thalapothichil* is a special

procedure of application of medicated paste on the head. *Thalapothichil* is also called as *Shirolepa* (anointment to head/ head pack). It Corrects imbalance of *pitta dosha*, Relaxes and calms down the mind; has a soothing effect on the body. It stabilizes the nervous system, activates the *Marma* (vital areas) points, relieves stress, tension, heaviness of the head, and improves quality of sleep.

Discussion- *Ayurveda* is probably the first system of medicine which has given the concept of mind, body & soul relationship. According to *Ayurvedic* text, life is the combination of mind, body & soul. This balance may be disturbed by modern life style which causes lots of stress and mental illness. To achieve the balance state of mind, body & consciousness, *Ayurveda* has prescribed life style modifications, *Medhya Rasayana* drugs improves nutritional value of the *Rasa* (Plasma) (through *poshak rasa*), then level of *agni* by promoting digestion & metabolism, thus improving the tissue nourishment, calming effect on mind. *Satvavajay chikitsa* is a psychological self control that helps to discriminate

between thoughts and actions and to pull out phobic nucleus. *Abhynga* to removes stress by balancing *Vata*. *Nasya* give mental relaxation by cleanse toxins of head. *Shirodhara*, *Sarvangadhara*, *Thalapothichil* relieves stress by giving deep feeling of relaxation.

Conclusion- *Ayurveda* has a solution for a Stress, from the above description there is chances to cure stress, anxiety with proper application of *ayurvedic* drugs and implications of lifestyle, food habits. *Panchakarma* treatments has a major role to treating stress disorders by removing elevated *doshas* and maintain the balance in body, mind and soul. The *ayurvedic* treatment is effective, free from side effects and there are very lower chances of recurrence.

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