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# Sadhaka Pitta: The Gatekeeper for Mental Health w.s.r. to Neurotransmitter

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## ABSTRACT

*Doshas, Dhatus, and Malas* are the fundamental building blocks (physical entities) of the human body. Amongst them, *Doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha)* are directive forces for all activities of the body and mind. Each of the *Tri Doshas* exhibits particular *Gunās*, like *Pitta Dosha*, which is sweltering in nature. One of the *Pitta* subtypes that is located in the *Hridaya* and associated with psychosomatic functions and behaviour is the *Sadhaka Pitta*. It has the effect of making *Hridaya* more active as it consistently prevents the heart from being influenced by *Kapha* and *Tamoguna*, which slow down the activity of *Hridaya*. *Sadhaka Pitta* is primarily aligned with our cognitive abilities. So, its imbalance may induce psychosomatic imbalances and emotional disturbances. The function of *Sadhaka Pitta* may be compared with the function of neurotransmitters, which serve as the communication means between neurons and their target tissues in the process of synaptic transmission (neurotransmission). The body requires an extensive range of neurotransmitters serving different purposes, including acetylcholine, glutamate, GABA, glycine, dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin etc. The functions of *Sadhaka Pitta* can be recognized as functions of higher centre of brain which is carried out by neurotransmitters. This article is an effort to explain the effect of *Sadhaka Pitta* on mental health and its correlation with neurotransmitter.

**Key words:** *Pitta Dosha, Sadhaka Pitta, Neurotransmitter, Mental health, Manovaha Srotas*

## INTRODUCTION

The three *Doshas Vata, Pitta, and Kapha* - are bio-energies or directive forces to carry out all bodily activities, so their imbalance may disturb the functional and structural units of the body. Disease and ill health are caused by imbalanced *Doshas*. Being scorching in nature, *Pitta Dosha* is responsible for regulating the body's metabolic processes, temperature, and heat, as

well as the bio-transformations that take place in the body.<sup>[1]</sup> It also governs mental activity. The term *Sadhaka* is derived from the *Sanskrit* root word *Saadha*, which denotes accomplishment. *Sadhaka Pitta* has the effect of making *Hridaya* more active because it consistently prevents the heart from being covered by *Kapha* and *Tamoguna*. According to *Acharya Dalhan*, *Sadhaka Pitta* is also called *Ojaka Pitta* because, when the mind is under control, *Shukra Dhātu* becomes excellent in quality and *Ojas* production takes place.<sup>[2]</sup> According to contemporary science, small molecules, slow and rapid-acting transmitters are the substances responsible for cognitive abilities, sentiments, excitement, and memorization. So, the impairment of *Sadhaka Pitta* ultimately leads to the mental disorder, which may be defined as a clinically significant impairment in a person's cognition, emotional regulation, or behaviour.<sup>[3]</sup> Furthermore, depression, anger, anxiousness, negative thoughts, inadequate sleep, and

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turbulence are considered characteristics of a weakened *Sadhaka Pitta*.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Present study will comprise of following sections:

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Review of literature will be done with the help of available *Ayurvedic Samhitas* with the irrespective commentaries, various text books of modern literature particularly related with this subject and authentic publications.

#### Modern Review

Detailed information will be collected from various modern text and journal and research paper, internet, scientific work.

#### Need of Study

According to the WHO, in 2019, 1 in every 8 people, or 970 million people around the world, are suffering from a kind of mental disorder, with anxiety and depressive disorders being the most common.<sup>[4]</sup> In 2020, the number of people living with anxiety and depressive disorders will increase significantly because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Initial estimates show a 26% and 28% increase for anxiety and major depressive disorders, respectively, in just one year.<sup>[5]</sup> In spite of the availability of effective prevention and treatment options, most people with mental disorders do not have access to effective care. As a result, many of them may experience stigma, discrimination, and violations of human rights. So, in order to understand the concept of *Sadhaka Pitta* in reference to mental health, the goal of the current article is to explain the association between *Sadhaka Pitta* and mental health so that the medical community will also find it helpful in their efforts to support patients with mental problems receiving *Sadhaka Pitta*-based treatment.

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the concept of *Sadhaka Pitta*.
2. The association between *Sadhaka Pitta* and neurotransmitters

3. *Sadhaka Pitta* and its correlation with mental disorders.

**Synonyms:** According to Acharya Dalhan *Sadhaka Pitta* is also called *Ojakar Pitta*.

### *Sadhaka Pitta* & Neurotransmitter

*Sadhaka Pitta* governs the activity of the brain and heart and is associated with the digestion of emotions, life experiences, and stress, according to Gyawali.<sup>[6]</sup> *Sadhaka Pitta* energises the mind, intellect, and personality, thereby helping us accomplish our targets.<sup>[7]</sup> Consequently, it is thought that this *Pitta* is significant for enhancing the attributes of one's own inner consciousness. It clears the *Tamas*, or darkness, enveloping the heart and keeps the mind attentive and concentrated. The activities of the *Sadhaka Pitta* can be distinguished as higher brain centre processes that are accomplished by means of neurotransmitters. The body employs an extensive range of neurotransmitters for many different purposes, including acetylcholine, glutamate, GABA, glycine, dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin. Depending upon the functions some of the neurotransmitters cause excitation of postsynaptic neuron, while others cause inhibition.<sup>[8]</sup>

Excitatory neurotransmitters	Inhibitory neurotransmitters	Neurotransmitters with excitatory and inhibitory actions
1. Acetylcholine	1. Gamma-aminobutyric acid	1. Noradrenaline
2. Nitric oxide	2. Glycine	2. Adrenaline
3. Histamine	3. Dopamine	
4. Glutamate	4. Serotonin	
5. Aspartate		

There are some examples of neurotransmitter and their cognitive abilities like Gamma- aminobutyric acid (GABA) and glycine, conversely, serve as the major inhibitory neurotransmitters, on other hand Researchers believe that glutamate has an impact in the brain's memory-storing components, or programmable synapses. Another important neurotransmitter, dopamine, is crucial for a number of mental processes, including as learning, emotion, reward, motor control, and executive functions. The release of norepinephrine in the brain regulates a wide range of processes, including anxiety, insomnia, consideration, and concentration. All these

Neurotransmitter and neurohormonal are liquid in nature and help in communication between different structures of the CNS, may represent *Sadhaka Pitta*.

### **Sadhaka Agni**

*Agni* is the constant catalyst in the *Paka* process (digestion, transformation). The *Agni* is responsible for digesting, absorbing, and assimilating ingested food, which is essential for the survival of life. *Acharya Shushrut* has described five types of *Agni*'s as the variety of *Pitta*. Among them, *Sadhaka Agni* is the one that aids in our emotional processing and helps us let go of unpleasant recollections. A person with strong *Sadhaka Agni* processes unpleasant emotions rapidly, much as someone with strong *Agni* has a strong metabolism and can digest food more quickly. Some people are born with an intense *Sadhaka Agni*, whereas others have a weak *Sadhaka Agni* or are experiencing a difficult time.

### **Manovaha Srotas & Sadhaka Pitta**

*Srotas* are the channels or networks that enable the secretion, conduction, transportation and transformation of body constituents.

स्रोतांसि च मनोवहानीत्यनेन हृदयदेशसम्बन्धिधमन्यो विशेषेण मनोवहा दर्शयति; किंवा केवलमेव शरीरं मनोऽभ्यनुस्यूतं जग्राह | Cha. Chi. 9/5

This unambiguously indicates that *Hriday* and *Dasha Dhamani* are *Mulasthanas* of *Manovaha Srotas*. *Manovaha Srotas* are said to be conduits via which the mind and body communicate with one another. These pathways exist throughout the body.<sup>[9]</sup> They govern the flow of emotions, thoughts, and other psychological activities, just like *Sadhaka Pitta*, which is also located in the *Hriday*. *Manovaha Srotas* are the primary site of aberrant channel activity in all psychological illnesses.

### **Vitiation of Manovaha Srotas and Sadhaka Pitta**

The eight elements - *Mana* (mind), *Buddhi* (intelligence), *Sanjna- Jnana* (awareness of ourselves), *Smriti* (recollection), *Bhakti* (devotion), *Sheela* (behaviours), *Cheshta* (psychomotor processes), and *Achara* - can be either associated with *Hridaya* or *Manas*. When these variables are out of balance, the

*Manas Dosh* (*Rajas* and *Tamas*) becomes vitiated, the *Sattva Guna* of the *Manas* deteriorates, and the *Tridosha*, mainly *Sadhaka Pitta*, gradually degrades. Food, activities, and excessive exhibitions of emotions such as anger, grief, lust, and fear, as well as mental traumas, are the primary etiological causes for the vitiation of *Manovaha Srotas* and *Sadhaka Pitta*, which ultimately leads to the mental disorder.

### **Sadhaka Pitta as an important entity in diagnosis of diseases**

Many disorders associated with intelligence, thinking processes, and discriminating abilities are caused by an imbalance of *Sadhaka Pitta*. The individual would become demotivated and unable to pursue any goals or undertake any duties. A decrease in *Sadhaka Pitta* will increase *Raja* and *Tama* levels in the brain. This causes desperation, a lack of ambition, and excessive sluggishness and sleepiness. The neurological system would slow down due to a lack of motivation from *Sadhaka Pitta*.<sup>[10]</sup> So, an imbalance of *Sadhaka Pitta* would result in numerous mental problems and physical disorders. The pathogenesis of *Pandu Roga* also describes the involvement of *Hridayastha Pitta* in the disease pathogenesis, which is *Sadhaka Pitta*.<sup>[11]</sup>

### **Therapeutic aspects related to the concept of Sadhaka Pitta**

According to ancient medical science, *Dinacharya* (daily routine), when followed properly, helps to establish balance in an individual's constitution and thus aid in maintaining the biological clock.<sup>[12]</sup> It also promotes digestion, absorption, and assimilation, while also encouraging discipline, peacefulness, pleasure, and longevity. The following simple practices can strengthen *Agni* and bring *Sadhaka Pitta* back into harmony:

- 1. Walk in nature in the early hours of the day and evening:** The simple act of exercising (*Vyayam*) itself promotes the production of chemicals that make one happy. Strolling in a relaxed manner also promotes detoxification and metabolism.
- 2. Yoga practices and meditation:** Regular meditation and *Yoga* practice balance all the *Doshas* and helps to create a state of serenity.



3. Avoid foods that weaken the *Agni* and produce *Aam*, such as canned or packaged foods. Eat fresh, gently cooked food, as it provides *Ojas* to the body, mind, and spirit.
4. Give attention to maintaining a diet (avoid *Adhyasan*, *Vishamasan*, etc.) and way of life that encourage regular bowel movements.
5. Never resist the impulse (*Vegvidharan*) to cry, defecate, yawn, eat, drink, pass gas, vomit, sleep, sneeze, or cough.
6. Avoid veggies from the family of nightshades, such as potatoes, because they obstruct *Srotas* (channels) in the body.

## CONCLUSION

It may be concluded that *Sadhaka Pitta* is the caretaker of the *Hridaya*, serving as the gatekeeper for psychosomatic wellbeing. Even contemporary science acknowledges that emotional dysregulation (i.e., stress) has a significant role in both physical and mental health problems. Bipolar disorders, ADHD, depressions, rages, anxiety, and other mental illnesses are all regarded as signs of weak *Sadhaka Pitta*, associated with *Sadhaka Pitta Kshaya*. Neurotransmitter activity is either increased or decreased in all of these psychosomatic cases, and there is a decrease in the development of *Smriti* and *Buddhi*. The patient is either distressed or hyperexcited. Neurotransmitter or neuropeptide hypo- or hypersecretions are the cause of disoriented cognitive function. Thus, neurotransmitter and neuropeptide functions are comparable to *Sadhaka Pitta* functions. In the absence of balanced *Sadhaka Pitta*, the body's channels, particularly those connecting the heart and mind, fail to function, as do *Dhi* (the capacity for learning), *Dhriti* (the capacity for keeping knowledge), and *Smriti* (the capacity for recall). To enhance our mental health and the well-being of our loved ones, we can balance our *Sadhaka Pitta* by strengthening our *Sadhaka Agni*.

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