



Management of Chittodvega w.s.r. to Generalised Anxiety Disorder through Shirodhara and Padabhyanga - A Case Report

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In this era of modernisation and busy lifestyle due to excessive work pressure, academic burden, negative impacts of social media, substance abuse etc. there is rapid progression of mental illness in the society. Generalised Anxiety disorder (GAD) is one such mental disorder which is spreading rapidly but neglected by many people due to social stigma and lack of mental healthcare awareness. Anxiety disorder is world's most common mental disorders, affecting almost 301 million people in 2019. Women are more likely to experience an anxiety disorder than men. Antidepressant medications in contemporary medical system, such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) are used for treating adults with anxiety disorders but shows systemic side effects and drug dependency in long run. Chittodvega, classified as a Mano-Vikara (psychological disorder) in Ayurveda, can be correlated with general anxiety disorder. Asatmyaindriyarthasanyoga and Pragyaparadh are some of the Nidana of Manovaha Srota Vikara. The disturbance of Vata Dosha along with Manas Dosha (Rajas and Tamas) plays a critical role in its manifestation. Herein, a 38-year-old married woman was treated with Shirodhara and Pada-Abhyanga for 14 days along with Shamana Aushadi and Medhya Rasayana. There were significant changes in Hamilton's Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A) along with other symptoms.

Keywords: Manovikara, Chittodvega, Shirodhara, Padabhyanga, Ayurveda, Case Report

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Introduction

In this era of modernization and busy lifestyle due to excessive work pressure, academic burden, negative impacts of social media, substance abuse, etc. there is rapid progression of mental illness in society. Generalised Anxiety disorder (GAD) is one such mental disorder that is spreading rapidly but is neglected by many people due to social stigma and lack of mental healthcare awareness. Anxiety disorder is the world's most common mental disorder, affecting almost 301 million people in 2019.[1]

Women are more likely to experience an anxiety disorder than men. Antidepressant medications in the contemporary medical system, such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) are used for treating adults with anxiety disorders but shows systemic side effects and drug dependency in the long run. *Chittodvega*, classified as a *Mano-Vikara* (~psychological disorder) in *Ayurveda*, can be correlated with generalised anxiety disorder.[2]

Chitta means *Mana* or *Buddhi* and *Udvega* means *Bhaya* or *Udgamana*. So *Chittodvega* is anxious stage of mind. *Asatmya-Indriyarth* *Sanyoga* (~unwholesome contact with the object of senses) and *Pragyaparadh* (~intellectual blasphemy) are some of the *Nidana* (~causative factor) of *Manovaha Srota Vikara* (~mental disorders).[3] It is described as one of the *Vatajananatmaja Vikara*. [4]

The disturbance of *Vata Dosha* and *manas Dosha* (*Rajas* and *Tamas*) plays a critical role in its manifestation. Herein, a 38-year-old woman was treated with *Shirodhara* and *Pada-Abhyanga* for 14 days followed by *Shamana Aushadi* after discharge. There were significant changes in Hamilton's Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A) along with other symptoms.

Case Report

Chief complaints: A 38-year-old married, working woman had complaints of excessive worry, forgetfulness, lack of concentration and headache since last 8 years. **Associated complaints:** Disturbed sleep and constipation since last 2 years. **History of present illness:** The patient started experiencing excessive worry 8 years back which aggravated along with lack of concentration due to excessive work pressure for last 6 years.

The patient consulted an allopathy physician and was prescribed several antipsychotic medications but got only symptomatic relief. She also took counselling sessions and got relief but she started having disturbed sleep since last 2 years.

When her symptoms aggravated, she visited the Panchakarma OPD of our institute and got admitted.

Medical history: she was taking antipsychotic since last 8 years. There was no relevant family history.

General Examinations

Vitals were recorded normal. Patient was afebrile. Height recorded was 5 feet 2 inches, weight was 58 kgs, built was medium, pallor was mild, Icterus, cyanosis, clubbing, oedema were absent.

Appetite and digestion were proper, bowel was constipated and irregular, bladder was normal (5-6 times/ day), sleep was disturbed. Examination of cardiovascular, respiratory, urinary, central nervous systems revealed no abnormality.

Clinical Examination

Atura Bala Pramana (~strength of individual) was assessed by *Dashavidha Atura Pariksha* (~ten-fold examination of patient). *Prakriti* (~constitution) of patient was *Vata-Pittaja*; *Sara* (~proper nourishment of tissue), *Samhanana* (~body built), *Pramana* (~body proportion), *Ahara* and *Jarana Shakti* (~digestive and metabolic capacity) and *Vaya* (~age) were *Madhyama* (~medium); *Satva* (~psychological strength), *Vyayama Shakti* (~physical strength) and *Satmya* (~compatibility) were *Avara* (~low); *Vikriti* (~morbidity) was *Vata Pradhana* – *rajas* and *tamas*. *Ashtavidha Pariksha* (~eight-fold examination of patient) revealed *Nadi* (~pulse) as *Vata-Pittaja*, *Mutra* (~urine) as *Nirama*, *Mala* (~bowel) as *Sama*, *Baddha*, *Jiwha* (~tongue) as *Sama*, *Sabda* (~vocal sound), *Drik* (vision) as *Prakrita*, *Sparsha* (~tactile) as *Ruksha*, *Anushna* and *Akriti* (~built) as *Madhyama*.

Diagnostic Assessment

Based on the presented signs and symptoms, the patient was diagnosed with *Chittodvega* (~Generalized Anxiety Disorder). The assessment of the patient was conducted before and after the intervention using **Hamilton's Anxiety rating scale**.

Therapeutic Intervention

Table 1: Plan of Panchakarma

Therapy	Drug used	Amount	Duration
Shirodhara (14 days)	Sankhapushpi Taila	2 litres (approx.)	20 mins
Padabhyanga (14 days)	Mahanarayan Taila	Quantity sufficient	10 mins twice



Figure 1: Shirodhara



Figure 2: Padabhyanga

Table 2: Shamana Aushadhi after discharge.

Drugs	Dose	Dosage	Anupana
Yastimadhu Churna + Ashwagandha Churna	3 gms each	Twice daily after meal	Milk
Brahmi Vati	250 mg	Twice daily after meal	Lukewarm water

Shamana Aushadhis were prescribed on discharge for 15 days. 1st follow up was done on 30th day after discharge.

Follow-Up and Outcome

The patient got significant relief from symptoms as the treatment progressed. The episodes of headache decreased and the quality of sleep improved after the course of *Shirodhara* therapy. The bowel became laxated and regular.

Upon follow-up after 15 days in the OPD; the patient reported considerable alleviation of symptoms, reduced antipsychotic drug dependency and was satisfied with the treatment received.

Table 3: Hamilton's Anxiety rating scale.

SN	Symptoms	BT	AT
1.	Anxious mood	4	1
2.	Tension	3	2
3.	Fears	3	2
4.	Insomnia	3	1
5.	Intellectual	4	2
6.	Depressed mood	3	0
7.	Somatic (muscular)	2	0
8.	Somatic (sensory)	3	0
9.	Cardiovascular symptoms	1	0
10.	Respiratory symptoms	0	0
11.	Gastrointestinal symptoms	3	1
12.	Genitourinary symptoms	0	0
13.	Autonomic symptoms	2	0
14.	Behaviour at interview	3	1
	Total Score	34	10

0 = Not present, **1** = Mild, **2** = Moderate, **3** = Severe, **4** = Very severe, **BT** = Before treatment, **AT** = After treatment



Figure 3: BT-AT Comparison

Discussion

Acharya Vagbhata has categorised *Shirodhara* under *Murdhni Taila*.^[5] *Shiro* (the head) is considered as the *Uttamanga* (superior part) as it is the seat of all *Indriya*, various *Marma* like *Sthapani*, *Shankhaka*, etc., *Prana*, *Udana* and *Vyana Vayu*, *Sadhaka Pitta*, *Tarpaka Kapha*, *Mana* and *Buddhi*.^[6]

According to Acharya Charaka, one of the *Karma* of *Vata* is "*Niyata Praneta Cha Manas*" i.e. *Vata* is responsible for activity of mind.^[7] *Indriyas* are in close contact with the mind which is further controlled by *Vayu*.^[8] Thus, *Shirodhara* restores integrity among all these.

Taila Dhara done with lukewarm oil; stimulates the *Marma* points which helps in vasodilatation thus improving blood circulation of the brain and the Autonomic Nervous System. The *Sthapani Marma* corresponds anatomically to the level of the hypothalamus, pineal gland, and pituitary gland. Oscillatory movement during the process creates vibrations and pressure over the forehead. The vibrations are amplified by the hollow sinus of the frontal bone which are transmitted inwards via CSF. Vibration along with temperature - activates the function of the thalamus which helps balance the amount of serotonin and catecholamine released and produces a tranquilizing effect. *Acharya Caraka* has mentioned *Shankhapushpi* (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*) a *Medhya Rasayana*.^[9] It is *Katu*, *Kashaya* in *Rasa*, *Guru*, *Snigdha*, *Sara*, *Picchila* in *Guna*, *Ushana* in *Virya* and *Madhura* in *Vipaka*. Its *Karma* are *Medhakrita*, *Swarakara*, *Graha-Bhuta-Doshahara*. It balances *Tridosha* and is *Nootrophic*. *Padabhyanga*; According to *Acharya Susruta Is Nidrakaraka*, *Shramahara*, *Chakshuprasadana* etc. ^[10] *Vata Dosha* resides in the *Sparshan Indriya*, which is located in the *Twacha* (~skin).^[11] So, *Padabhyanga* with *Taila* does *Vatashamana*. Also, according to *Acharya Vagbhata*, 4 important sira in the sole of the feet are connected to the head.^[12] Oil massage increases the secretion of dopamine and serum serotonin which relaxes the mind and induces sleep. Also, massage stimulates blood circulation and reduces fatigue. *Ashwagandha* (*Withamnia somnifera*) is *Tikta*, *Madhura Rasa*, *Laghu*, *Snigdha Guna*, *Ushna Virya*, *Madhura Vipaka*, *Kapha-Vata Shyamak*.^[13] Its *Karma* are *Brimghaniya*, *Sukrakara*, *Rasayana*, *Balya* etc. Study showed; various properties like anti-inflammatory, hepatoprotective, antibacterial, sedative, anxiolytic, diuretic, aphrodisiac etc. Active principles of *Ashwagandha* like sitoindosides and Withaferin-A - showed significant anti-stress activity against acute models of experimental stress. *Yastimadhu* (*Glycerriza glabra*) has *Madhura Rasa*, *Guru Guna*, *Shita Virya* and *Madhura Vipaka* and is *Vata-Pitta Shamak*.^[14] *Acharya Caraka* has mentioned it under *Medhya Rasayana* and advised to take in the form of *Churna* along with milk to get its utmost benefits.^[15] Licorice contains a flavonoid called glabrol, which binds to GABA receptors in the brain, promoting relaxation and potentially aiding sleep. *Brahmi Vati* has *Brahmi*, *Shankhapushpi*, *Vacha*, *Maricha* etc.

Brahmi (*Bacopa monnieri*) has *Tikta Rasa*, *Laghu Guna*, *Shita Virya*, *Madhura Vipaka*, *Kapha-Pitta Shyamak* and *Medhya*.^[16] Its *Karma* is *Dipaniya*, *Hridya*, *Sothahara*, *Smritikaraka*, *Stanya Sodhana* etc. Bacosides promote the repair of damaged neurons – upregulating neuronal synthesis and kinase activity – stress relieving action. *Brahmi* also has antioxidants – a memory booster.

Conclusion

Chittodvega (anxiety disorders) can adversely affect overall quality of life, often leading to emotional distress across personal, familial, and social domains. A combination of Ayurvedic Panchakarma therapies such as *Shirodhara* and *Padabhyanga*, along with *Shamana Aushadhis* like *Medhya Rasayana*, has shown significant benefits in reducing drug dependency, improving sleep patterns, managing stress, and enhancing concentration and memory.

The current study shows that ayurvedic therapies are very effective, cost-efficient and less complicated treatment protocol as evidenced by the marked reduction in HAM-A and other subjective parameters in managing Generalised anxiety disorders. However, more studies are needed as a single study cannot establish a protocol.

Patient consent: Written permission for publication of this case study had been obtained from the patient.

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