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# Role of *Satvavajaya Chikitsa* in the management of Depression in current scenario

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## ABSTRACT

Mental health is the state of Emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel and act, it also determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. *Swastha* is defined as "*Sama Dosha Samaagnischa Sama Dhatu Mala Kriyaaha Prasanna Atma Indriya Manaha Swata Ityabhidiyate*" which highlights the importance of mental health for a healthy individual. Depression is mental health disorder characterized by persistently depressed mood or loss of interest in activities, causing significant impairment in daily life. At its worst, depression can lead to suicide, over 8,00,000 people die due to suicide every year. Suicide is the second leading cause of death in 15-29 year olds. It is considered as "*Vishada*" a condition originated from apprehension of failure resulting in incapability of mind and body to function properly. *Chikitsa* is broadly classified into 3 categories - *Daivavyapashraya*, *Yuktivyapashraya* and *Satvavajaya*. *Satvavajaya* is achieved by adopting "*Ahitebyo Arthebyo Manonigraha*". *Satvavajaya Chikitsa* plays an important role in *Manasika Vyadhis*. It is *Adravya Bhoota Chikitsa* by this one can easily overcome depression.

**Key words:** *Satvavajaya Chikitsa*, *Depression*, *Vishada*.

## INTRODUCTION

Mental health is the state of emotional, psychological and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel and act, it also determines how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. It's important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". Definition of

*Swastha* according to Ayurveda is *Prasanna*, *Atma*, *Indriya Manaha Swata Ityabhidiyate*<sup>[1]</sup> which highlights the importance of mental health for a healthy individual. *Chikitsa* in Ayurveda is broadly classified into 3 categories - *Daivavyapashraya*, *Yuktivyapashraya* and *Satvavajaya*,<sup>[2]</sup> among which *Satvavajaya Chikitsa* plays an important role in *Manasika Vyadhis*. The ICD-10 states that mental disorder is "not an exact term", although it is generally used "to imply the existence of a clinically recognizable set of symptoms or behaviors associated in most cases with distress and with interference with personal functions." (WHO, 1992). It focuses on "mental and behavioral disorders" and consists of 10 main groups.

## Depression

Major depression is defined as depressed mood on a daily basis for minimum duration of 2 weeks. An episode may be characterized by sadness, indifference, apathy, or irritability and is usually associated with change in sleep patterns, appetite and weight; motor agitation or retardation; fatigue;

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impaired concentration and decision making; feeling of shame or guilt and thought of death or dying.<sup>[3]</sup> Depression comes under Mood Disorders.

Approximately 15% of the population experiences a major depressive episode at some point of in life.<sup>[4]</sup> In India 65.4 per 1000 population are affected by mental illness, out of which 51% i.e. 31.2 per 1000 Indian population is suffering from depression.

#### Clinical Features

- Depressed mood
- Pervasive sadness
- Persistent sadness
- Anhedonia - in severe depression
- Depressive ideation/cognition
- Hopelessness
- Helplessness
- Worthlessness
- Psychomotor activity
- Retardation-slow thinking and activity
- Decreased energy and monotonous voice

#### Physical symptoms

- Headache
- Reduced energy
- Vague body ache
- Easy fatigability

#### Biological functions

- Insomnia
- Loss of appetite and weight
- Loss of sexual drive

#### Psychotic features

Delusion, hallucination, grossly inappropriate behavior, Suicidal thought.

#### Management

- a) **Somatic treatment** - Includes antidepressants etc., antipsychotics and other mood stabilizers.
- b) **Psychosocial treatment** - Includes cognitive behavior therapy, interpersonal therapy,

psychoanalytic psychotherapy, behavior therapy, group therapy and family and marital therapy.

#### Vishada

*Dalhana* defines *Vishada* as *Asiddhibhayat Dvididheshu Karmeshu Apravrutti Vishada*<sup>[5]</sup> - condition originated from apprehension of failure resulting in incapability of mind and body to function properly. There is significant reduction in both the activities. Indulging in *Nidanas* like *Tamasika Ahara, Kapha Vriddhikara Aahara, Avyayama, Divaswapana*, unnecessary and/or excess indulgence in stressful mental and physical activities causes increase in *Tama Dasha* and impairment in *Raja Dasha*. *Shoka, Bhaya, Lobha, Chinta, Krodha* are *Manasika Nidana*. *Ayasa* is also another major *Nidana* for *Vishada*. In *Bhagavad Gita* we get the *Lakshanas* of *Vishada* i.e. Arjuna's *Vishada*. Which lead Arjuna in a state of reduced physical and mental activities, finally refusing to perform his duties on the battle field, which can be described most similar to of depression.

#### Satvavajaya Chikitsa

##### Nirukti

The word "*Sattva*" is derived from the *Sanskrita* root "*Sat*" + "*Ktva*" = *Manas*.

*Avajaya* - translated as "victory over" or "defeat" which also means to take over or to uplift. These means *Satvavajaya* is not only victory over mind but it is victory with upliftment of mind. It is achieved by *Ahitebyo Arthebyo Manonigraha*<sup>[6]</sup> - Withdrawal of mind from unwholesome *Arthas*, it consists of *Manoartha* (*Chintya, Vicharaya, Uhya, Dheya* and *Sankalpa*) and *Gyana Artha* (*Shabda, Sparsha, Rupa, Rasa* and *Gandha*). *Ahita* (*Heena, Mithya* and *Atiyoga*). *Dhi* (intelligence) - *Dhairya* (confidence) - *Atmadi Vijnyana* (knowledge of the self)<sup>[7]</sup> are considered as best medicine for *Mano Dasha*. *Trivarga Anvekshana* : contemplation of the three objectives of life e.g. *Dharma, Artha* and *Kama*. *Tadvidhyaseva*: service of those who are well versed in the treatment of psychological disorders. *Atma-Desha-Kula-Kala-Bala-Shakti Jnanam*: The knowledge about one's own self, place and body,

race, age, vitality and ability.<sup>[8]</sup> Substitution or replacement of emotions with opposite ones is another novel method. It undertakes to diffuse the emotional imbalance by changing the attitude towards the whole situation. Some methods of psychotherapy for treating the patients suffering with psychotic disorders. When a person has been stressed by the loss of some favorite subject he/she should be treated by providing the desired articles and consolation. He has also advised that if the patient has developed psychosis due to emotional disorders such as 'Kama, Bhaya, Krodha, Harsha, Irshya and Lobha' it should be treated by producing the opposite nature of emotions.<sup>[9]</sup> *Jnana* (spiritual knowledge), *Vijnana* (scriptural knowledge), *Dhairya* (confidence), *Smarty* (memory), *Samadhi* (meditation).<sup>[10]</sup>

#### Application of Satvavajaya Chikitsa in Depression

##### *Jnana Chikitsa*

**Aim** - To provide support to the patient to develop an insight about himself.

##### **Technique**

- To assess the personality (*Prakriti*) of the patient and educating about it to them.
- To bring up and discuss issues regarding attitudes, feelings, beliefs and experiences related to self.
- Support to reveal and understand the source of the problem.
- Self-evaluation and monitoring.

##### *Vijnana Chikitsa*

**Aim** - Providing guidance to understand the nature of illness and improve his coping capabilities.

##### **Technique**

- Identification of irrational beliefs about the disease i.e. depression.
- Providing a theoretical knowledge about disease to level of his understanding.
- Educating about the probable emergencies, complications and risk factors.

##### *Dhairya Chikitsa*

**Aim** - Development of coping abilities.

##### **Technique**

- Counseling based on support concerning to problem solving.
- Family support.
- Identification and modification of the environment which maintain the symptoms.
- Identification of the negatively based ideas and boost up patients confidence

##### *Smriti Chikitsa*

**Aim** - To understand the exact nature of the object.

##### **Technique**

- Probing the past to develop an insight about the present problem.
- To make the patient understand the unrealistic nature of his problem.

##### *Samadhi Chikitsa*

**Aim** - To achieve higher level of awareness

##### **Technique**

- Meditation and other oriental techniques.
- Reading books on spiritual and philosophical aspects of life.
- Avoiding temptations.
- Following code of conduct.
- Education about the meaning and purpose of life.

#### DISCUSSION

Depression is mental health disorder characterized by persistently depressed mood or loss of interest in activities, causing significant impairment in daily life. At its worst, depression can lead to suicide, over 800 000 people die due to suicide every year. Suicide is the second leading cause of death in 15-29 year olds. In Ayurveda it can be correlated to *Vishada*. In which there will be involvement of *Manasika Doshas* like *Rajas* and *Tamas*. *Rajas* is responsible for all the activities, while *Tamas* regulates and at times inhibits the actions. In depression, all activities are reduced due to improper functioning of *Rajas* and excess functioning of *Tamas*. Among *Trividha Chikitsa*,

*Satvavajaya* is one. *Satvavajaya Chikitsa* is withdrawal of mind from unwholesome *Arthas*. *Dhi-Dhairya-Atmadi Vijnyana* here *Dhi* - faculty of intellect, which is discriminative and judging helps patient to know about good and bad thoughts. *Dhairya* - will power gives confidence to handle any situations. *Atmadi Vijnyana* - orientation to self in time, place and person. *Jnana Chikitsa* - insight orientation, *Vijnana* - education approach about disease he/she suffering (depression), *Dhairya* - supportive approach, *Smrithi* - cognitive approach and *Samadhi* - Psycho-philosophical approach.

### CONCLUSION

Depressive disorder is a “whole body” illness involving individual’s body, mood and thoughts. It is not a sign of weakness or a condition that can be willed or wished away. People with the depressive illness cannot merely pull themselves together and get better, but they need due attention and psychological health care. In Bhagavat Gita we get description about depression i.e. *Vishada* which shows it occurs to every individual at one point of life. Which can be well handled by adopting *Satvavajaya Chikitsa*. It can be included in both *Yukti Vyapashraya* and *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* depending on its *Dravya Bhutatva* or *Adravya Bhutatva*. If *Satvavajaya* is done by using *Dravya* then it is *Yuktivyapashraya* and if it is done by *Adravya* means then it is *Daiva Vyapashraya*.<sup>[11]</sup> The importance of *Satvavajaya Chikitsa* can be inferred by it’s relevance in *Daivavyapashraya* and *Yuktivyapashraya Chikitsa*. Hence it should be applied for all *Shareerika Vyadhis* and not merely in *Manasika Vyadhis*. So it’s inevitable part of any *Chikitsa*.

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