

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MENTAL HEALTH AND CONSTIPATION: A
COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW ACCORDING TO AYURVEDA**Dr. Susmita Mote^{1*} and Dr. Bharat Oza²¹Pg Scholar Shalyatantra Dept. PDEA's CARC Pune Maharashtra.²Professor, Dept. of Shalyatantra PDEA's CARC Pune Maharashtra.

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ABSTRACT

Constipation is a prevalent condition affecting millions worldwide. Its occurrence has been strongly linked to various mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and stress. This review aims to explore the bi-directional relationship between constipation and mental health, focusing on the physiological and psychological mechanisms that link these conditions. We will also discuss potential therapeutic approaches for managing constipation in patients with mental health disorders.

KEYWORDS INCLUDED: "Manas Roga" (mental disorders), "Vibandha" (constipation), "Vata Dosha", "Agni", "Srotas", "Prajnaparadha" and "Ayurvedic treatment of constipation."

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the traditional system of Indian medicine, emphasizes a holistic approach to health, recognizing the interplay between the mind (Manas) and body (Sharira). In the Ayurvedic Samhitas, mental health and gastrointestinal health, particularly constipation (Vibandha), are closely linked. This relationship is understood through the Ayurvedic principles of **Doshas (Vata, Pitta, Kapha), Agni, and the Manovaha Srotas.**

In Ayurveda, the mind and gut are connected, much like the gut-brain axis in modern medicine. This review explores the connection between mental health and constipation from an Ayurvedic perspective, focusing on key concepts from the ancient texts and therapeutic approach.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**Aims**

1. To explore the relationship between mental health and constipation as described in the Ayurvedic Samhitas.
2. To assess the Ayurvedic understanding of the gut-brain connection and its role in gastrointestinal disorders like constipation.

Objectives

1. Review the references to mental health conditions and their impact on digestion and elimination in Ayurvedic texts.

2. Analyse how disturbances in the Doshas, particularly Vata Dosha, influence both mental health and constipation.
3. Discuss Ayurvedic treatments for constipation associated with mental health imbalances, focusing on dietary, lifestyle, and herbal interventions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS**Study Design**

This is a narrative review of classical Ayurvedic texts, including **Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya**, as well as modern interpretations of Ayurvedic concepts in relation to mental health and constipation.

1. Vata Dosha and Mental Health

In Ayurveda, Vata Dosha, which governs movement and communication in the body, plays a crucial role in both mental health and bowel function. Vata imbalances are often associated with Manas Roga (mental disorders) such as anxiety, fear, and overthinking. These mental disturbances directly affect Apana Vayu, a sub-dosha of Vata that governs elimination, leading to Vibandha (constipation).

2. Agni (Jathragni) and the Gut-Brain Connection

Agni, is a critical concept in Ayurveda that influences both physical and mental health. Impaired Agni (Mandagni or Vishmagagni) leads to improper digestion, toxin (Ama) accumulation, and constipation. Manasika Bhava (emotional factors), such as stress, anxiety, and

depression, can disturb Agni, resulting in irregular bowel movements and constipation.

Effect of improper Digestion : (Mandagni /Vishmagni)

स्त्रोतोरोधबलशंभौरवानिलमूढताः ॥
आलस्यापक्तिनिष्ठीवमलसङ्गारूचिक्लमाः । लिंगं मलानां सामानां,
नियामाणां विपर्ययः ॥ अ. द. सू. १३/२३, २४.

- Vishmagni is particularly associated with Vata imbalance and manifests as irregular bowel habits, including constipation, bloating, and gas. Because of ras dushti fuction of man (Prinan) is also affected.

- Sama Vata when Vata becomes imbalanced and associated with Ama (toxins), can further impair the colon's function, leading to chronic constipation.

3. Manovaha Srotas

चिन्त्यं विचारमूह्यं च ध्येयं संकल्पमेव च । यत्किञ्चिन्मनसो ज्ञेयं तत्
सर्वे ह्यर्थसंक्षकम् ॥ २० ॥
इन्द्रियाभिग्रहः कर्म मनसः स्वस्य निग्रहः । ऊहो विचारश्च, ततः परं बुद्धिः
प्रवर्तते ॥ २१ ॥
च. शा. १

Subject of Mind: Thoughts, feelings, goals and resolutions are subjects of mind. Apart from this, whatever is cognizable by the mind, also becomes the subject of the mind.

Actions of the mind: Absorption of the senses, self-control, meditation and thinking are actions of the mind. This leads to intelligence.

The Manovaha Srotas, which represent the channels of the mind, are directly connected to the body's physiology, particularly the gastrointestinal system. Mental disturbances, such as stress or emotional turmoil, obstruct the proper functioning of these channels, contributing to constipation.

PRADNYAPARADHA

धीधृतिरुमृतिविभ्रष्टः कर्म यत् कुरुतेऽशुभम् ।
प्रज्ञापराधं तं विद्यात् सर्वदोषप्रकोपणम् ॥ १०२ ॥ उदीरणं
गतिमतामुदीर्णानां च निग्रहः । सेवनं साहसानां च नारीणां चातिसेवनम्
॥ १०३ ॥ कर्मकालातिपातश्च मिथ्यारम्भश्च कर्मणाम् । विनयाचारलोपश्च
पूज्यानां चाभिधर्षणम् ॥ १०४ ॥ ज्ञातानां स्वयमर्थानामहितानां निषेवणम्
। परमौन्मादिकानां च प्रत्ययानां निषेवणम् ॥ १०५ ॥ अकालादेशसंचारौ
मैत्री संविलष्टकर्मभिः । इन्द्रियोपक्रमोक्तस्य सट्तरस्य च वर्जनम् ॥ १०६
॥ ईर्ष्यामानभयक्रोधतोभमोहमदभ्रमाः । तज्जं वा कर्म यत् विलष्टं विलष्टं
यदेहकर्म च ॥ १०७ ॥ यत्त्वान्यदीदृशं कर्म रजोमोहसमुत्थितम् ।
प्रज्ञापराधं तं शिष्टा नृवते व्याधिकारणम् ॥
च. शा. १

- Pradnyaparadha (intellectual errors), or actions that go against the body's natural rhythms (such as ignoring natural urges, unhealthy eating habits, or irregular sleeping patterns), are common in individuals with mental health disturbances and are key contributors to constipation in Ayurveda.

4. Mental Health Disorders and Constipation in Ayurvedic Texts

The Ayurvedic texts recognize mental health disorders as major contributors to gastrointestinal dysfunctions like constipation. In Charaka Samhita, Chikitsa Sthana it is stated that an overactive or disturbed mind, driven by Vata imbalance, leads to irregular bowel movements. Prolonged mental disturbances can lead to chronic Vata disorders, resulting in long-term constipation.

- Chinta (worry), Shoka (grief), Bhaya (fear), and Krodha (anger) are emotional states that aggravate Vata Dosha and impair Apana Vayu's function, leading to constipation.

Ayurvedic Treatment Approaches

1. Pacifying Vata Dosha

Since Vata Dosha plays a significant role in both mental health and constipation, balancing Vata is the first step in treatment. Snehana (oleation), using medicated oils both internally and externally, helps pacify Vata and soften the stools.

- Basti (medicated enema) I.e Niruha aur Anuvasan Basti is considered the most effective treatment for Vata-related constipation, as it directly balances Apana Vayu and promotes proper elimination.

2. Nourishing Agni

Improving and regulating Agni (mainly Jathragni) is crucial for preventing and treating constipation. Ayurvedic practitioners recommend
- Deepana (digestive stimulants) and Pachana (digestive herbs), such as Trikatu for Jathragni Vardhan. chitrakadi vati.

- Herbal laxatives like Triphala and Haritaki to relieve constipation by promoting bowel movements without disturbing Agni.

3. Addressing Mental Health through Rasayanas and Lifestyle

To balance mental health and its impact on digestion, Ayurvedic Rasayanas (rejuvenating formulations) like Ashwagandha and Brahmi are used to calm the mind and nourish the nervous system. These herbs help in managing stress and anxiety, thus preventing their negative impact on digestion.

- Abhyanga (oil massage), Shirodhara (oil pouring over the head), and Nasya (nasal administration of oils) are also recommended to balance Vata Dosha and promote mental relaxation.

4. Lifestyle Recommendations

- Dinacharya (daily routine) and Ritucharya (seasonal routine) are key to maintaining mental and physical health. Regular routines help calm Vata, improve Agni, and promote regular bowel movements.

- Yoga and Pranayama (breathing exercises) are encouraged to manage stress and maintain a balanced mental state, thus preventing Vata disturbances and constipation.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda recognizes a strong connection between mental health and constipation, with Vata Dosha playing a central role in this relationship. Mental disturbances like anxiety and stress aggravate Vata, which leads to impaired digestive function and constipation. A holistic approach that addresses both mental and physical health, balancing the Doshas, regulating Agni, and incorporating lifestyle changes, is crucial for treating constipation associated with mental health imbalances in Ayurveda.

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