



Review Article

## ETIOPATHOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF SWASA ROGA IN RELATION TO ANXIETY

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### ABSTRACT

The modern era has seen significant changes in lifestyle that have disturbed people's physical and emotional well-being. Ayurvedic classics state that unhealthy lifestyle (*Apathya Aahar* and *Apathya Vihar*) is the root cause of all the *Vyadhis*. Many people go through periods of Anxiety at various occasions of their lives. Although these periods of anxiety are not permanent, if the symptoms persist for a long time, it can cause damage to both mind and body. Health is considered as a state free from mental and physical disorders. Anxiety serves as a predisposing factor for disease such as respiratory diseases. In *Ayurveda* respiratory disorders are mentioned under the *Swasa vyadhi*. *Swasa roga* is *Vata Kaphajanye vyadhi* and its aggravation is directly related to the anxiety. In the Ayurvedic classics, none of the *Acharya* has given any clear description regarding the role of anxiety in aggravation of *Swasa roga*. The lack of data drives the need to define the pathophysiology of *Swasa roga* with respect to Anxiety in order to understand the progression of *Swasa roga* in a better way.

### INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda originated from the desire to comprehend, treat and preserve the health of human being. *Nidan* is considered as an indispensable part of *Panchnidan* in Ayurveda [1]. *Nidan* is term that can refer to either etiological factors (*Vyadhijanak*) or disease diagnosis (*Vyadibhodak*). Disease may result due to various causes and its effects are seen in form of symptoms. *Trisutre (Hetu, Linga and Ausadhe)* concept is discussed in the same context in the Ayurvedic classics[2]. *Hetu* and *Linga* are used here for diagnostic purposes whereas *Ausadhe* is for therapeutic purposes. *Nidan* is the fundamental cause (*Adhikaran*) like *Beej* (seed) is the *Nidan* (source/cause) for *Ankur* (sprouts). *Nidan* can be categorized in several different ways, out of which one of them is *Vyanjak Nidan (Hetu)*[3]. *Vyanjak Nidan* is the cause that stimulates the development of diseases such as improper diet, unhealthy lifestyle, anxiety etc.

The state of fear, dread and uneasiness in response to stress is defined as the anxiety. Anxiety is an expression of excess of *Vata* in *Manovaha srotas*. Anxiety interferes with the normal ability of body to function. It contributes significantly to the risk of developing various diseases. In Ayurveda Anxiety is defined in the form of *Chittodvega* which comprises of two words- *Chitta* and *Vega* where *Chitta* denotes *Mana* and *Vega* denotes urge[4]. Also, according to *Acharya Charaka*, *Dhriti* regulates *Mana's* propensity for unsavory actions. A person develops *Dhritivibhansha* (capacity of their *Mana* to fend against bad things), if their *Dhriti* becomes *Aavrita* by *Raja* and *Tama doshas*[5]. This condition creates state of eagerness, unwanted fear, worries, and stress in the person which leads to the condition called *Chittodvega* (anxiety).

According to *Acharya Charak*, human body is comprised of number of *Srotas* and any disruption in their normal function might result in a variety of *Vyadhis*[6]. Among those *Vyadhis*, *Swasa roga* is a common and distressing disease. *Swasa roga* is a *Vata Kaphajanye vyadhi*[7] that occurs after vitiation in *Pranavaha srotas* and *Udakavaha srotas*[8]. Anxiety affects person's daily activities at first and then it progressively has a detrimental effect on the body's important systems including the *Pranavaha srotas* and *Udakavaha srotas*. In *Swasa roga*, *Chittodvega* (anxiety)

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act as a predisposing factor. Anxiety acts as a *Vyanjak nidan* for *Swasa roga*, as it triggers the *Dosha- Dushye sammurchana* which exacerbates symptoms of the disease.

According to modern science, the adrenal gland releases the catecholamines like epinephrine hormone<sup>[9]</sup>. On exposure to anxiety, body's stress hormone cortisol raises the respiratory rate, blood pressure and glucose in the blood. Moreover, when an anxious body put extra strain on lungs, heart and in response to it heart rate and respiratory rate increase and heart rate variability decreases. As a result of which increase in oxygen demand on the body occurs. In Ayurvedic classics, all *Acharya* have mentioned five types of *Swasa roga* that is *Maha Swasa*, *Urdhava Swasa*, *Chinna Swasa*, *Tamak Swasa* and *Shudre Swasa*<sup>[10]</sup>. *Acharya Charak* has named two types of *Tamak Swasa* – that is *Pratamak* and *Santamak*. One of the symptoms of *Santamak Swasa* is '*Tamasa vardhayardham*'<sup>[11]</sup> which implies that the symptoms of *Swasa roga* increases on the exposure to *Tama* and as in *Chittotvega* (anxiety) there is predominance of *Raja* and *Tama dosha*. So, ultimately exposure to anxiety leads to the aggravation of *Swasa roga* (*Tamaka Swasa*) which resembles with '*Samanye- vishesh*'<sup>[12]</sup> principle of Ayurvedic classics.

**METHOD**

As a source, various Ayurvedic classics like *Charak Samhita*, *Susuruta Samhita*, and modern literature were consulted. In addition to this, various peer-reviewed research journals and published research papers have been studied.

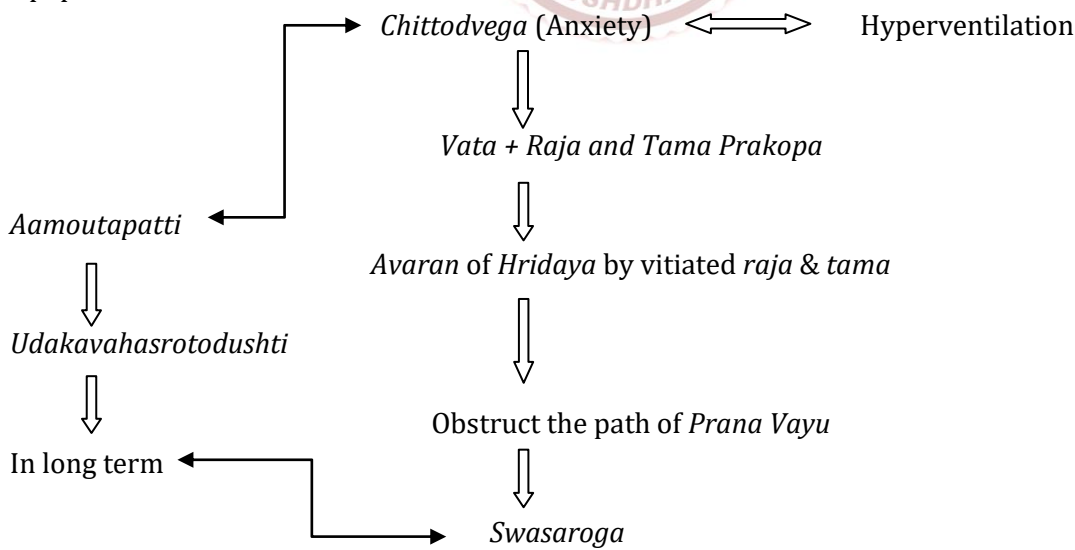
**RESULTS**

*Chittodvega* creates *Avaran* over the *Srotas* and in this manner it disturbs the normal functioning of (*Pranavaha srotas* and *Utakavaha srotas*) and it acts as a *Vyanjak nidan* in the *Swasa roga*.

**DISCUSSION**

*Swasa roga* occurs as a result of *Srotodushti* in *Pranahvaha srotas* and *Udakavaha srotas*. Anxiety plays an important role in the aggravation of it which can be understood in the following ways-

- The *Mool* (origin) of *Pranahvaha srotas* is *Hridaya* and *Mahasrotas*<sup>[13]</sup>. And as *Hridaya* is the seat of *Mana*<sup>[14]</sup>. Hence, any sort of anxious condition leads to the impairment in the activities of heart which in turns leads to formation of *Avaran* over the *Mana*. As a result, Anxiety causes the *Srotodushti* in *Pranavaha srotas* resulting into the aggravation of certain *Vyadhis* such as *Swasa roga*.
- The *Mool* (origin) of *Udakavaha srotas* is *Talu* and *Kloma*<sup>[15]</sup> and *Achaya Charak* have mentioned *Aam* as a one of the *Nidan* of *Udakavaha srotodushti*<sup>[16]</sup>. Also, as per the Ayurvedic classics, *Chinta* is a *Nidan* for *Aamoutapatti*<sup>[17]</sup>. Intake of food while the mind being afflicted with passion/desires, anger, greed, infatuation, envy, bashfulness, grief, conceit, excitement and fear are also the cause of formation of *Aam*<sup>[18]</sup>. All these factors combined on long term results into formation of *Ama* in the body which leads to obstruction in *Udakavaha srotas* and hampers normal activities of *Srotas*.



**Flow Chart 1: Samprapti of Swasaroga in relation to Anxiety**

Hence in this way, anxiety creates the obstruction in *Udakavaha srotas* and *Pranavaha srotas* and in long term leads to aggravation of *Swasa roga*.

The fight-or-flight mechanism of adrenaline hormone gets disrupted by anxiety, which increases the respiratory rate. As per the Ayurvedic classics anxiety is correlated with *Chittotvega* which has a

predominance of *Raja* and *Tama dosha*. *Swasa roga* becomes more aggravating, when exposed to anxiety. '*Sansepta kriyayogo nidan parivarjanam*'<sup>[19]</sup> as per the *Acharya Sushruta* focuses on the avoiding the root cause. Also, 'Prevention is better than cure' and to prevent disease it is good to keep away the causative or etiological factors of the disease.

### CONCLUSION

Hence, we can conclude from the review that Anxiety act as *Vyanjak nidan* in the *Swasa roga* and hence it causes the aggravation of it over the long run. Further clinical research is suggested in order to validate the intended conceptual theory.

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