



Review Article

SCOPE OF AYURVEDIC MANAGEMENT IN THE NON-SUBSTANCE ADDICTION

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: Addiction disorder is a major issue, rapidly increasing worldwide. There're limited treatment options in modern science. Hence before the increasing addiction cases become a global burden, preventive measures should be taken. Ayurveda modalities may hold a satisfactory solution for this, to spread awareness and take preventive measures for addiction, and available treatment options in Ayurveda for de-addiction. This study focuses on the Ayurvedic management of non-substance addiction. Hence this conceptual study is planned. **Data source:** The classical Ayurvedic Texts with their commentaries, other Ayurvedic and Modern texts, journals, articles, relevant websites were referred. **Review methods:** Addiction is considered as a chronic, relapsing disorder which involves compulsive use of a substance, thing or activity even after harmful consequences. It's a mental illness as per Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition (DSM-5). In Ayurveda also, non-substance addiction can be involved in *Manas Vikar*, where the subjects and functions of mind are affected. They can be managed by Ayurveda. **Results:** Ayurvedic treatments like *Medhya Rasayana*, *Nasya*, *Shirobhyanga*, *Satvavajay*, *Mantra Chanting*, *Ashwasana*, *Achar Rasayana*, *Sadvritta palan*, *Vyayama*, *Chitta Vritti Nirodha*, *Dhyana* and *Naisthiki Chikitsa* can be beneficial for de-addiction. **Conclusion:** Non-substance addictions can be well treated by Ayurveda.

INTRODUCTION

Addiction is considered as a chronic, relapsing disorder which involves compulsive use of a substance, thing or activity even after harmful consequences. It can be nonsubstance addiction and substance addiction (substance use disorder- SUD).^[1] Non substance addition includes addiction of gaming, Pathological Gambling (PG), internet browsing (problematic internet use PIU), smartphone (problematic Smartphone Use PSU), sex addiction or even food addiction.^[2] SUD involves amphetamine-type substances, cocaine, or other stimulants leading to clinical impairment or distress.^[3]

Previous studies suggests that both of these types are almost similar, except in one thing that, in

SUD individual is addicted to substance/drug while in behavioural addiction there is behaviour of non-substance thing. In India prevalence of Problematic Internet Use (PIU) in adolescents is 21.5%.^[4] PSU has prevalence of 24.6%% in children and 44% in young adults in 2022.^[5] Lifetime gambling has a prevalence 19.5%, problematic gambling 7.4% in college students, in 2016.^[6]

Non-substance addiction can have affects mental, physical and social well-being, relationships, financial condition, leading to anxiety, depression and social isolation. Treatment options in modern science are limited and unsatisfactory. Drugs used, like antipsychotics, amphetamines, mood stabilizers, antidepressants have unsatisfactory results, cause adverse effects with long term use; varying from mild nausea, vomiting, weight gain, constipation, to severe sexual dysfunction, movement disorder, increased risk of heart diseases, suicidal thoughts. Hence it is important to find Ayurvedic solution for de-addiction.

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METHODS

The classical Ayurvedic texts with their commentaries, other Ayurvedic, modern texts, journals, articles, relevant websites were referred.

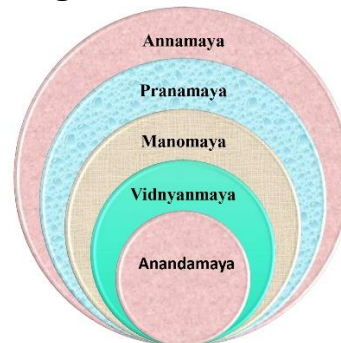
As per modern science, defect in the reward circuitry is responsible for any type of addiction.^[7] Reward circuitry is a complex network of neurons, that include one's ability to assess the likely outcomes of different choice effectively. Amygdala and hippocampus are involved in memory of reward related cues; while prefrontal cortex has executive control over obtaining rewards.^[8]

In Ayurveda, concept of addiction can be understood by the terms *Moha* (infatuation) and *Atiyoga* and/or *Mithyayoga* of *Indriyarth* and *Karma*. In Bhagavad-Gita is said that, excess of everything is bad. Similar concept is mentioned in Ayurveda that, *Hina* (deficit), *Mithya* (incompatible), *Atiyoga* (excess) of *Kala*, *Indriyarth* (five senses), *Karma* (any action/behaviour) is responsible for any mental or physical disease.^[9,10,11] Addiction is described under the chapter *Madatyaya*, which can be correlated to substance addiction.^[12] While non-substance addiction can be involved in the *Manas Vikar*, where the subjects and functions of mind are affected.

Affected subjects of mind ^[13] in *Manas Vikar* is *Chintya* -thinking about things, *Vicharya* -analysis and discrimination between good and bad, *Uhya* -making a guess, *Dhyeya*-ability to focus on something, *Sankalpam* -decision making based on the discrimination between good and bad. Hence the addict cannot stop himself from compulsive behaviour of doing the things that are mentioned in the behavioural addiction. There are four Functions of mind, ^[14] *Indriyabhigraha* (indulge sense organs with their respective objects), *Uha* (to understand subject meaning), *Vichara* (though process, reasoning to accept or reject a thought) and the *Swasya Nigraha* – self-control from the undesired subjects. Mainly affected functions are *Indriyabhigraha*, *Swasya Nigraha* that can lead to *Asatmendriyarth Samyoga* (Incompatible contact of *Indriy* and their *Arthas*). This can be considered as the important cause for the addiction disorder.^[10]

Manomay kosha is an emotional body out of the five *Koshas*, lying in between^[15] *Annamaya*, *Pranamaya*, *Anandamaya*, *Vidnyanmaya Kosha*; which is affected in non-substance addiction. Healthy *Manomay Kosha* is connected with the five sense organs, and *Raja*, *Tama*. *Raja dosha* is responsible for desires while *Tama* forms covering over the *Budhhi* (intellect) leading to its impairment. Lack of *Satva Guna* i.e., quality of mind and excess of contaminants of mind i.e., *Manas Doshas*, *Raja* and *Tama* are responsible in *Manas Vikara*.^[16]

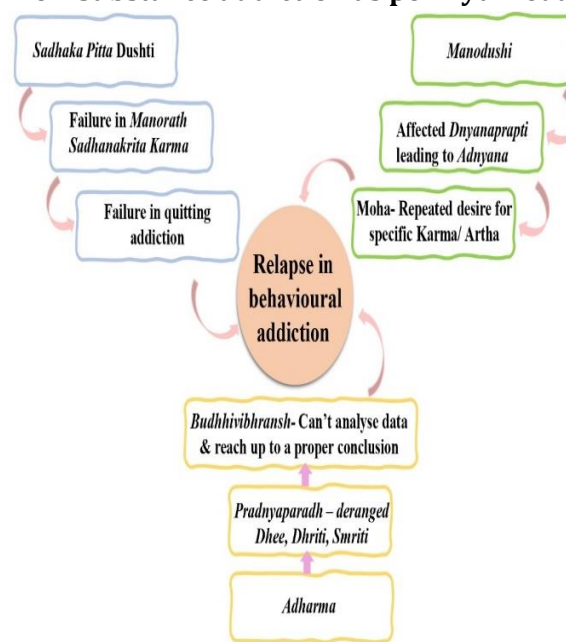
Figure 1: Panchkosha



Major causes for relapse in non-substance addiction can be associated with *Sadhaka Pitta Dushti*, *Moha* (infatuation), and *Pradnyaparadha*.

- **Sadhaka Pitta** ^[17,18] is one of the five types of *Pitta Dosha*, which is responsible for *Budhhi*, *Medha* (*Dharanashakti*), *Abhimana* (self-esteem), and to achieve any aspiration in life. *Pitta Prakriti* people are said to be *Medhavi* (high intellect), *Nipuna Mati* (sharp memory). Hence *Pitta Dushti*, mainly of the *Sadhaka Pitta*, is associated with inability to quit the addiction.
- **Moha** is due to *Adnyana* – improper knowledge.^[19] In the process of *Dnyanaprapti* ^[20] i.e., gaining knowledge of anything, mind plays important role, by the association of Sense organ, ^[21] Sense object/thing, *Mind*, *Budhhi* and soul. It's a connecting link between sense organs, *Budhhi* and soul. If it's not there in the above equation one cannot gain proper knowledge leading to *Moha*.
- **Prdnyaparadha** is derangement of *Dhee/Budhhi* (intellect), *Dhruti* (restraint), *Smriti* (memory).^[22]

Figure 2: Probable etiopathogenesis of relapse in non-substance addiction as per Ayurveda



Charaka has mentioned about *Dnyana* (spiritual knowledge), *Vidnyana* (scriptural knowledge), *Dhairya* (patience), *Smriti* (memory), *Samadhi* (mental equanimity), [23] while *Vagbhata* has mentioned *Dhee*, *Dhairya*, *Atmadi Vidnyana* (Knowledge of self). [24]

Hence as per Ayurveda non substance addiction can be summed up as a mental disorder with affected qualities, subjects, functioning of mind due to *Sadhaka Pitta* and *Manomay Kosha Dushti*, *Pradnyaparadha*, *Asatmendriyarth Samyoga*, *Moha* and can be treated by following approaches:

Figure 3: Management in Ayurveda for De-addiction of non-substance addiction



Nidan Parivarjanam

This refers to avoiding the disease-causing factors. *Nidan Parivarjanam* [25] is first step and most important part of treatment in any type of disease. Just like any other treatment, *Nidan Parivarjanam* also gets harder with the progression of disease, leading to relapse. Addiction cases which are new in origin i.e., early detected, with minimal/no complications can be easily curable. While the chronic addiction, with complications developed can be harder to treat. This concept can be understood by the features of *Sukhasadhya* (easily curable) and *Krichhasadhya Vyadhi* (harder to treat) mentioned by Charak [26] *Vagbhata* [27]. For this early detection is important, and can be achieved by *Darshana Pariksha* (keen observation) [28] of the addictive person. Behavioural changes can be assessed by *Manas Prakriti*, with the help of *Anumanagamy Parikshya bhava* (inferential behavioural assessments) [19] described in Ayurveda. *Manas Prakriti* is nothing but reflection of one's behaviour. In this way *Nidan Parivarjanam* should be followed. This can be well achieved without relapse, by combining it with below mentioned treatment modalities

Atmadi Vidnyana [24]

Vagbhata has mentioned this in the *Manas Vikara Chikitsa*. It means to have complete knowledge about our self in terms of *Dashvidh Parikshya Bhava* and act accordingly. That is to know 'Who I am' and what is *Hitakar* (good) and *Ahitakar* (bad) for our health.

Satvavajay Chikitsa

Charak has mentioned *Satvavajay Chikitsa* for mental disorders. [29] It refers to *Satva* (mind) and *Avajay* (to win), which means to restrain mind from unwholesome subjects. This can be achieved by "*Ahitebhyo arthebhyo mano nigrh*". [29] *Mano nigrh* can be achieved by *Yoga*, [30] which means *Nirodha* of *Chittavriddhi*. There are 5 *Chittavriddhi* that means fluctuations of mind and their *Nirodha* refers to cessation of them.

Vyayama

Vyayama (Exercise) is mentioned in the daily regime by *Acharya Vagbhata*. [31] Exercise releases Brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF). It serves as a modulator in neurotransmission, [32] involved neuroplasticity. [33] Neuroplasticity as the ability of nervous system to modify itself, structurally as well as functionally, in response to experience. Hence regular *Vyayama* can modify the neuroplasticity hence reducing craving in the non-substance addiction. [34]

Samyak Nidra

Nidra (sleep) is important pillar out of the three pillars which are responsible for maintaining health [35] because *Dnyana-Adnyana* even life-death depends upon the *Nidra*. [36] Disturbance in sleep is proved to be a Universal Risk Factor for relapse in addictions. [37] Also, the poor sleep hours, is a risk factor for psychological as well as physical diseases. [38]

Medhya Rasayana

Rasayana improves *Smriti*, *Medha*, *Arogya* (optimum health), *Tarunavastha* (youth by delaying ageing), *Prabha* (lustre), *Varna* (complexion), *Dehbala* (physical strength), *Indriyabala* (Strengthens sense organs) and gives longevity. [39] *Medhya Rasayana* includes 4 drugs, *Mandukparni*, *Yashtimadhu*, *Guduchi* and *Shankhapushpi*. Out of these *Shankhapushpi* is mainly responsible for improving *Medha*. [40] Hence, they can be used in non-substance addiction to stop the relapse.

Shirobhyang

It's a technique included in the *Murdhni Taila Shirahartapanam*. [41] It is said to be *Indriya Prasadak* (rejuvenation effect on sense organs). *Shirobhyang* can be correlated with oil massage of head, which brings about *Indriya tarpan* (satisfaction). [42] It benefits in de-addiction by satisfying *Indriyas* so that one cannot

involve in over indulgence with the *Indriya Artha*, *Karma* which is a root cause for addiction.

Nasya

It's one of the five procedures described in Ayurveda as *Panchakarma*.^[43] In *Nasya*, medicated oil, decoction, powder are given by the nasal passage. It is said to be '*Sarv indriyanam vaimalya*' i.e., cleansing sense organs, making them faultless.^[44,45]

Mantra Chanting

It can be correlated with the *Japa* mentioned in *Achara rasayana*.^[46] Charak has mentioned *Dyana-Adhyatma Dyana* (spiritual knowledge) for the treatment in mental illness.^[23] By *Mantra chanting*, the distraction of mind (*Chitta Vritti*) and *Mano Nigrah* can be achieved, which is required in addictive behaviours.

Yog Asanas

Earlier studies have proven the positive effect of *Yoga* on dopamine limbic pathway; the Hippocampus, Amygdala, default brain network, Prefrontal cortex, cingulate cortex of the brain;^[47] many of which are involved in reward circuitry. Hence normal function of having control over the behaviour, emotions by amygdala^[48]; and efficient decision making by prefrontal cortex^[49] can be achieved.

Balancing *Asanas* requires stability, focus and awareness, which are associated with the *Adhya Chakra* and the *Manomay Kosha* as well. There are seven *Chakras*^[50] and five *Koshas* (Sheath) in body. Hence *Practising Balancing Asanas* act on the *Adhya Chakra* (third eye), *Manomay Kosha* thereby providing mental stability. *Yogasanas* should be performed regularly in addicts.

Dhyana

Dhyana is a practice of focusing on a particular thing within body or external environment, with mental awareness. It is one of the eight path folds of the *Ashtanga Yog*.^[51] It is said to be *Prakashavaran Kshaya* i.e., diminishes the *Raja* and *Tama dosha*,^[16] so that removing *Tama Avarana* over *Budhhi*. Hence normal function of *Budhhi* to analyse the data and reach up to a proper conclusion can take place. It is also helpful to achieve a control over mind.

Ashwasana and Santvana chikitsa

Ashwasana refers to assurance, *Santvana* refers to consoling of the patient.^[52] It is described under the treatment of *Unmada* which is also a mental disorder. *Moha* is responsible for both *Unmada*^[53,54] and Addiction relapse. Even Sushrut has described the assurance *Chikitsa* for *Manas Vikara*.^[55] This can be achieved by proper counselling of the patient.

Achar Rasayana^[46]

Achara refers to behaviour of a person. It depends upon his *Ahara*, *Vihara*, *Prakriti*, *Dosha*, *Desha*,

Kala. *Adharma Acharana* referred as immoral behavioural, is a root cause for *Pradnyaparadha*; and *Pradnyaparadha* is root cause of any illness. Hence to have a well-disciplined behaviour as mentioned in Ayurved, *Atmadi Vidnyana* is important. *Achara Rasayana* is a unique concept of Ayurveda for rejuvenation of mind. This can be correlated with the cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), behavioural modification, dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT) mentioned in the modern science. It includes disciplined training in the behaviour and mental attitudes. It is said to be equally effective to the *Ahara* and *Aushadhi Rasayana*. By following this we can prevent as well as treat the addictions.

Sadvritta Palan

Charaka has mentioned about *Sadvritta palan* in detail.^[56] By this one can achieve *Indriya Vijaya* and *Aarogya*. *Indriya Vijaya* refers to achieve control over the Sense organs which is lacking in addiction disorders. *Aarogya* refers to be *Swastha* (Healthy), a state of physical, mental and social well-being as per WHO.^[57] Vagbhat mentioned in *Sadvritta Palan* that, one should not get too much indulged with the sense organs, which refers to *Indriyabhigraha* (function of mind). Hence *Sadvritta Palan* is important tool for mental health and hence in the de-addiction of non-substance disorders too.

Naishthiki Chikitsa

Acharya Charak has described this *Chikitsa* to live a healthy life, free from any desires (*Upadha*).^[58] He says that *Upadha* is the root cause for any mental or physical illness. Repeated desires lead to *Moha*, which causes relapse. Hence this *Chikitsa* can be helpful to achieve *Mano Nigraha*, and preventing *Pradnyaparadha* by controlling desires.

DISCUSSION

Prevention of behavioural Addiction

Ayurveda has given importance to *Swasthyarakshan* first, this can be achieved by prevention, early detection of diseases. Hence for prevention of behavioural addictions; *Achara Rasayana*, *Sadvritta Palan*, maintaining daily regime mentioned in Ayurveda, play important role. Daily *Vyayama*, *Yoga* releases a protein called BDNF, which is involved in neuroplasticity, influence neurotransmission which is affected in Addiction disorders. Regular *Dhyana* practice, is responsible for the healthy *Manomay Kosha* and maintaining balance in *Manas Guna, Doshas*.

Treatment for behavioural Addiction

After *Swasthyarakshan*, Ayurveda described about treatment of the diseased person. Wide variety of treatments are mentioned for *Manas Vikara*. For addiction treatment, *Nidana Parivarjanam* holds

utmost importance which can be achieved by strong will power to quit the addiction. This can be brought by engaging *Indriyas* with their compatible *Artha* and diverging them by incompatible *Artha*.

Treatment to stop relapse

Apunarbhava Chikitsa refers to a treatment which stop the recurrence of disease by treating root cause of the disease. Relapse is the major problem in cases of addiction. This can be treated with *Panchkarma* procedures, which eliminates the vitiated *Manas* and *Sharir Doshas* from the root, hence treating the *Sadhaka Pitta* as well. Hence its function of *Manorath Sadhanakrita*, being able to achieve any aspiration in life and so the determination to quit addiction can be achieved. The cleansing techniques like *Nasya* which help to achieve control over mind is helpful. If *Indriya* are not satisfied by the association with their respective *Arthas*, there is repeated demand of that certain behaviour. *Tarpan* is necessary for the satisfaction of *Indriya*, which can be achieved by the *Shirobhyanga*. Moderns' drugs taken for long term due to relapse, cause many side effects. [59,60,61] Hence, in this way Ayurveda holds a satisfactory solution for De-addiction of the behavioural addictions.

CONCLUSION

Ayurvedic management can be effective for prevention of addiction, and treatment for De-addiction. Non-substance addictions can be well treated with wide range of treatment options mentioned in Ayurveda.

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