



Case Study

AYURVEDIC MANAGEMENT OF MODERATE DEPRESSIVE DISORDER

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ABSTRACT

Depressive disorder is a serious, common mental health condition characterized by persistent low mood, loss of interest in activities and low energy lasting at least two weeks. Affecting roughly 3.5% of global population. Moderate depression lies between mild and severe which involves low mood that interfere with daily life, other symptoms such as fatigue, reduced activity and social withdrawal. According to Ayurveda, depression usually involves imbalance of *Manasa Doshas* i.e., *Rajas and Tamas*, and the physical *Doshas* mainly *Vata* and *Kapha*. Current case presented with dull mood, loss of interest in daily activities, disturbed sleep, loss of appetite and reduced social activity. Based on the observation made in the level of affective and behavioural domains, diagnosis of depressive disorder – current episode moderate was eventually done as per the diagnostic criteria mentioned in International Classification of Mental and Behavioural Disorders 10. In Ayurveda, the condition was diagnosed as *Kaphaja Unmada* based on the typical symptoms. The treatment protocol including *Shodhana* and *Shamana Aushadhi* was administered. *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* was also adopted along with *Yukti Vyapashraya Chikitsa*. There was significant improvement in the Hamilton Depression Rating Scale after the intervention.

INTRODUCTION


Mood disorders have been known to man since antiquity. Hippocrates coined the words mania and melancholia, it was Aretaeus who first described mania and depression occurring in the same individual. Recently, the World Health Report 2001 has identified unipolar depression as the 4th cause of Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) in all ages, and the 2nd cause in the age group of 15-44 years. Unipolar depression is also the 1st cause of YLD (Years of Life Lived with Disability) in all ages. The comparison was with all medical disorders, and not only psychiatric disorders.^[1] Depressive disorder is a serious, common mental health condition characterized by persistent low mood, loss of interest in activities and low energy lasting at least two weeks. Moderate depression lies between mild and severe depression which involves

low mood that interferes with daily life, such as causing fatigue, reduced activity and social withdrawal.

In Ayurveda, moderate depression can be corelated to *Kaphaja Unmada* where *Kapha-Vataja* derangement is observed. *Manasaika Dushti* involved is *Tama Pradhana Rajo Dasha* in *Avara Satva* person. Symptoms include *Sthaanamekdeshe* (reduced interest in activities), *Tooshnibhava* (observance of silence), *Anannabhilasha* (loss of appetite), *Svapnamaniyataa* (disturbed pattern of sleep) and *Rahaskaamata* (decreased social interaction).^[2]

Ayurveda approach for depression as per *Kapha- Vataja Unmada* is *Snehana, Swedana, Vamana, Virechana, Niruha* and *Snehabasti* followed by *Samsarjanakrama*. After attaining *Shira* and *Koshtashuddi*, *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* can be administered.^[3]

A diagnosed case of moderate depressive disorder was managed with an Ayurveda treatment protocol with integrating *Panchakarma, Shamana Chikitsa* and *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*.

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AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

A case study of Ayurvedic management of moderate depressive disorder.

A 29-year-old male patient

Occupation: Farmer

Socio-economic status: Upper middle class

Marital status: Unmarried

Basic Information of Patient

Clinical Presentation with History

S.No		
1.	Chief complaints	Patient came with the complains of dull mood and loss of interest in daily activities since past 2-3 months.
2.	Associated complaint	Loss of appetite, disturbed sleep and low backache.
3.	History of present illness	29 years old male patient who is a farmer complains of dull mood and loss of interest in activities since past 2-3 months. The symptoms manifested when the patient's parents forced him to get married to a girl in whom he was not interested. Since then, he stopped speaking to girls and reduced communication with the family and friends. He was getting anxious while speaking with strangers. He lost interest in doing day to day activities and hobbies. He complains of loss of appetite and disturbed sleep. He is also suffering from severe low back ache radiating to B/L lower limb. The patient is seeking help to cure his illness so he came to our hospital for treatment.
4.	History of past illness	<i>Gridhrasi (sciatica)</i>
5.	Family history	All are said to be healthy.
6.	Premorbid personality	Introverted, energetic, responsible, optimistic.

Mental Status Examination

General appearance and behaviour	Moderately built, looks worried, cooperative, adequate dressing, good hygiene and self-care
Speech	Non-spontaneous, decreased volume, hesitant
Mood and affect	Mood- Sad; Affect – Sad. Anhedonia
Thought	Non-goal-oriented, helplessness
Perception	No hallucinations
Cognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consciousness – Intact. • Orientation – Oriented to time, place, person. • Attention – Slightly decreased. • Concentration – Slightly decreased. • Memory – Immediate- Intact, Recent- Intact, Remote- Intact • Intelligence- Intact
Insight	Grade 6
Judgement	Partially impaired.

Investigations

On 25-03-2025: MRI Brain- Non-specific small ischaemic changes.

MRI Spine L4-L5- Mild asymmetrical central diffusion, bilateral posterior disc bulge

Assessment: Hamilton Depression Rating Scale

On 16-07-2025: Before treatment – 16

On 1-11-2025: After Treatment – 4

Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale

On 16-07-2025: Before treatment – 15

On 1-11-2025: After Treatment - 2

Treatment Protocol

The patient was diagnosed with *Kaphaja Unmada*. The predominant *Doshas* identified were *Kapha-Vata* and *Tamas*. As the patient was also suffering from *Gridhrasi*, the management plan included *Erandamooladi Niruha Basti* and *Shamana Aushadhi*. A detailed treatment algorithm is mentioned below.

Total duration of treatment – 3 months

On 21-07-2025

Erandamooladi Niruha Basti: Yoga Basti

Honey – 60 ml

Saindhava Lavana – 12gm

Kalka – 48 gm

Erandamooladi Kashaya – 350 ml

Sneha – Sahacharadi Taila – 80 ml

Anuvasana Basti with Sahacharadi Taila – 60ml

Total Niruha Basti – 3

Total Anuvasana Basti – 5

Schedule of Yoga Basti

Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Basti	A	N	A	N	A	N	A	A

Advised Discharge Medicine

1. Tab. Mansamitravati 2-2-2 (A/F) for 15 days.
2. Saraswatarishta 15ml-15ml-15ml with equal water (A/F) for 15 days.
3. Tab. Trayodashanga Guggulu 2-2-2 (A/F) for 15 days
4. Cap. Palsineuron 1-0-1 (A/F) for 15 days
5. Sahacharadi Kashaya 20ml-0-20ml with 80ml of water (B/F) for 15 days.

First follow up

1. Tab. Mansamitravati 1-1-1 (A/F) for 15 days
2. Saraswatarishta 0-0-25ml with equal water (A/F) for 15 days.
3. Hingavashtaka Churna 5gm-5gm-5gm with the first bolus of food for 15 days.
4. Sattvavajaya Chikitsa

Second follow up

1. Tab. Mansamitravati 1-1-1 (A/F) for 15 days
2. Ashwagandha Churna + Gokshura Churna 6gm-0-6gm with milk (B/F) for 15 days.
3. Sattvavajaya Chikitsa

Third Follow Up

1. Tab. Mansamitravati 1-0-1 (A/F) for 15 days
2. Ashwagandha Churna + Gokshura Churna 6gm-0-6gm with milk (B/F) for 15 days.
3. Sattvavajaya Chikitsa

Fourth Follow Up

1. Tab. Mansamitravati 0-0-1 (A/F) for 15 days
2. Ashwagandha Churna + Gokshura Churna 6gm-0-6gm with milk (B/F) for 15 days
3. Sattvavajaya Chikitsa

Fifth Follow Up

Sattvavajaya Chikitsa

Sixth Follow Up

Sattvavajaya Chikitsa

DISCUSSION

In this case the combined effect of Panchakarma Chikitsa along with effective management of Sattvavajaya and Samshamana Chikitsa has been shown benefit.

Procedures

Erandamooladi Niruha Basti: Erandamoola is said to be a Shreshta Vatahara dravya. Erandamooladi Niruha Basti is indicated in Trika, Prishtha Shoola (pain in low back) and acts as Maruta Nigraha. Anti-inflammatory, anti-oxidant, central analgesic, antinociceptive and bone regeneration activity are found in Ricinus communis (Eranda) which is the main content of Erandamooladi Niruha Basti. This Basti contains 34 drugs in which most of the drugs are having Ushna Veerya and are Vatakaphahara in nature. Drugs are also possessing Ushna, Teekshna and Sukshma Guna which helps in the elimination of obstruction of Srotas (channel system) which further helps in the formation of Prakrita Dhatu. It is also indicated in Kaphavrita condition, by which it plays major role in pacifying the Kapha Dosha and reducing the symptoms like Stambha (stiffness) and Gaurava (heaviness).^[4]

Action of Basti through Enteric nervous system (ENS): This action can be explained in modern parlance by the direct action of active principles of drug on receptors in the gastrointestinal tract related to the enteric nervous system. ENS is substantial group of neurons, it is capable of Autonomous reflex without influence of central nervous system. More than 500 million neurons present in the ENS so it is called "second brain." There are so many similarities between CNS-ENS regarding cellular structure, neuropeptide secretion and specific functions and recent studies have shown that there is great influence of CNS and ENS on each other. Basti may act over the receptors of the ENS to stimulate the CNS causing secretion of required hormones or other chemicals. Hence the effect of Basti may also be associated with "Touch & Go Theory" causing activation of ENS receptors. It is recognized that the enteric nervous system has a unique ability to mediate reflex activity independently of input from the brain or spinal cord.^[4]

Sattvavajaya Chikitsa: The elemental approach for treating psychiatric and psychosomatic problem in Ayurveda is Sattvavajaya Chikitsa. Sattvavajaya Chikitsa is one amongst the brainchild concepts of Acharya Charaka. Sattvavajaya Chikitsa is not merely a form of treatment, but it is meant to be used for the maintenance of the mental health of a human being as well. The word Sattvavajaya comprises of two words 'Sattva' and 'Avajaya' where, Sattva refers to being, entity, intellect, consciousness or mind, and one of three Gunas of mind while Avajaya means conquer,

victory and control over it. Thus, the word *Sattvavajaya* refers to self-command, strength of mind or character whereas *Chikitsa* means treatment/management. *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* potentiates *Sattva* with the intentions of modifying maladaptive symptoms caused by *Rajas* and *Tamas* which are considered as illness-causing mental humors. There is no harm in correlating *Acharya Charaka's Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* with modern psychotherapy. The comprehensive definition of psychotherapy given by Wolberg states that "Psychotherapy is the treatment, by psychological means, of the problem of an emotional nature in which a trained person deliberately establishes a professional relationship with the patient with the object of removing, modifying, or mediating disturbed patterns of behaviour, retarding existing symptoms and promoting positive personality growth and development". The *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* also works on the same grounds as modern psychotherapy. It is full-fledged, non-pharmacological psychotherapy described in ancient literature. [5]

In this case duration of each session was 45 minutes that encompassed various elements. These included *Jnana*, which focused on educating the individual about his strength and weakness, as well as addressing the psychological abnormalities such as pessimistic ideas, reduced social interaction, misinterpretation and diminished coping abilities. The aim is to bring strength or firmness by calming down the vitiated or hyper-excited state of the *Manas* which was done by giving *Dhairya* and *Ashwasana*. *Dhairya* (a motivational approach) according to *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*, gives the person the courage to bear pain and other challenges in life. This support is to give maximum empathy and create a matured level of awareness and judgement. *Smriti* is a type of *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* which means trying to remember the past incidences, as *Charakacharya* states that only if one remembers the real nature of things, he gets rid of miseries. *Manonigraha* focused on mind control strategies, including the replacement of stressful thoughts with neutral or positive ones, engaging in conversations, and participating in enjoyable activities. *Pratidwandwa Chikitsa* emphasized self-suggestion through positive affirmations to counter negative perceptions of people and events, actively neutralizing painful past experiences, and employing the *Harshana* technique to engage in pleasurable activities like reading books, conversation with a friend and finding new hobbies. *Aashwasanadi* included elements of providing reassurance.

These steps of *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* help in normalisation of mental symptoms with physiological functions by balancing *Mano Doshas* of body.

Mode of action of drugs

Manasamitra Vati: *Manasamitra Vataka* is a compound formulation with drugs having reported effects on the central nervous system. Ingredients such as *Aswagandha* (*Withania somnifera*) are known to enhance cognition; *Vacha* (*Acorus calamus*) when combined with polygala root helps to maintain mental and intellectual health of the elderly; *Draksha* (*Vitis vinifera*) is adaptogenic and nootropic; *Bala* (*Sida cordifolia* Linn) is a known anti-oxidant; *Yashtimadhu* (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) has anxiolytic and antioxidant effects; and so on. In the Ayurveda literature, these drugs are described as *Medhya* (neuroprotective, cognitive enhancer) and *Rasayana* (health and cognitive promoting). *Brahmi* (*Bacopa monnieri*) enhances cognition in healthy individuals when administered orally. Ayurveda treatment adopts an individualized, philosophical, and patient-centred approach in the diagnosis and treatment of psychiatric diseases.[6] The treatment is a multimodal approach, comprising of *Shodhana*, *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* and *Shamana Chikitsa* using *Manasamitra Vati* along with other *Medhya Rasayana* drugs.

Saraswatharishta

Saraswatharishta is one of the best *Rasayana* drug. It is good for people of all age groups; it improves immunity and strength. *Saraswatharishta* has shown proven effects in the treatment and management of neurological illnesses and disorders. An in vitro study on *Saraswatharishta* effect showed that it enhanced the memory of mice treated with Scopolamine (Prabhu et al., 2020), while performing better than Piracetam, a commercial drug for neuro-protection. In another study, when Albino mice were pre-treated with *Saraswatharishta* for two weeks, they gained protection against the memory and learning impairment effects of Diazepam (*Rajopadhye & Sahasrabudhe*, 2020). The above-mentioned examples of experimental research on *Saraswatharishta's* effect in mice showed that it imparts neuroprotective properties.[7]

Ashwagandha

Root and leaf extracts of *Ashwagandha* exhibited noteworthy anti-stress and anti-anxiety activity in animal studies and human studies. It may alleviate these conditions predominantly through modulation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal and sympathetic-adrenal-medullary axes, as well as through GABAergic and Serotonergic pathways. *Ashwagandha* is a real potent regenerative tonic (*Rasayana* of Ayurveda), due to its multiple pharmacological actions like anti-stress, neuroprotective, antitumor, anti-arthritis, analgesic and anti-inflammatory etc. It is useful for different

types of diseases like Parkinson, dementia, memory loss, depression, stress induced diseases, malignancy and others.^[8]

Gokshura Choorna: Gokshura is designated as *Mutravirechaniya* (diuretic), *Shothahara* (anti-inflammatory), *Krimighna* (anthelmintic), *Anuvasanopaga* (unctuous enema), *Vrushya* (aphrodisiac)^[9], *Bala-krut* (strength promotor), *Deepana* (appetizer), *Pushtida* (strength promotor), *Ashmarihara* (anti-urolithiasis), *Pramehahara* (anti-diabetic), *Shvasahara-Kasahara* (improve respiratory diseases), *Arshahara* (piles), *Mutrakricchahara* (improve urinary tract infection), *Hridrogahara* (cardiac protective), *Brimhana* (growth promotor), *Shulahara* (pain reliever), *Vatahara* (pacifies *Vatadosha*), *Tridosahara* (pacifies all *Doshas*), *Dahahara* (improve burning sensation), *Kusthahara* (improve skin diseases), and *Rasayana* (rejuvenator).

Gokshura contains biologically-rich compounds as steroids, saponin, flavonoids, alkaloids, glycosides, and unsaturated acids, which are involved in promoting numerous physiological responses.^[10]

Hingvashtaka Churna: Ingredients of *Hingvashtaka Churna* are *Sunthi*, *Maricha*, *Pippali*, *Ajamoda*, *Saindhava Lavana*, *Swetha Jeeraka*, *Krishna Jeeraka* and *Shuddha Hingu*. The ingredient *Sunthi* has *Katu Rasa* and *Ushna Veerya*. It has the capacity to increase digestion. Because of *Katu Rasa*, it has the capacity of purification of tongue and because of *Ushna Veerya*, it helps in increasing the *Agni* of the person thereby curing *Agnimandya*. It has also *Teekshna Guna* which helps in the process of *Pachana*. Phytoconstituent like gingerols can enhance gastro intestinal activity. It is HMG-Coa reductase inhibitor. Gingerols can suppress gastric contractions and can enhance gastric motility. *Maricha* has *Ushna Veerya*, *Teekshna Guna* and *Katu Vipaka*. It also has *Pramathi Guna* which helps in *Srotosodhana* thereby helps in pacifying *Agnimandya*. Piperine in *Maricha* can increase absorption of Vitamin B complex, beta carotin and selenium. *Pippali* has *Deepana Karma* and has the potency to tackle *Vishamagni*. It can inhibit ciliary contraction of oesophagus thus preventing heartburn and nausea. Another ingredient *Ajamoda* helps in *Vatanulomana*. It can reduce the fullness of stomach. *Saindhava Lavana* can act as a catalyst and is hygroscopic in nature. It is *Ruchya*. It also has the capacity to enhance the properties of other drugs with which it is mixed. *Shuddha Hingu* has *Katu Rasa*, *Teekshna Guna*, *Ushna Veerya* and *Katu Vipaka*. *Hingu* can reduce the acidity of the stomach and can also increase the pH of the gastric juice. It also helps in *Vatanulomana*. *Krishna Jeeraka* has *Katu Rasa* and *Katu Vipaka*. It also possesses *Ushna Veerya*. It acts as *Deepana*, *Pachana*, *Ruchya* while *Swetha Jeeraka* is an appetizer and a

carminative.^[11] *Hingvastaka Churna* was advised to the patient as he was complaining of loss of appetite.

CONCLUSION

According to Ayurveda the focus of treatment in depressive disorder is to balance *Shareerika Dosh* as well as *Manasika Dosh*. Hence treatment adapted in this case are *Shodhana Chikitsa*, *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* and *Shamanoushadha* which are *Medhya Rasayana*. The outcome of the Ayurvedic therapy which included detoxification, proper medication, and counselling is much encouraging.

Patient Perspective

Patient has good inter-personal relationship with family and friends and is getting married.

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