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Psycho-somatic approach to health and disease: Ayurvedic view

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Abstract

In Ayurveda, no disease can develop without the interaction of the bodily and mental influences. This categories of the causes of illness (i) Asatmyendriyarth samyoga (ii) Pragaparadha (iii) Parinama, among these pragyaparadha is really very important. Charaka states that a individual, whose dhi or buddhi, dhriti and smriti i.e. intellect and memory are deranged, indulges in to undesired acts. Body and mind are the substratum of all diseases having their dosha (sharira dosha i.e. vata, pitta and kapha and manas dosha i.e. rajasa and tamasa). This paper describe body -mind interaction related to health and diseases separately.

Keywords: Ayurveda, body and mind, health, disease

Introduction

Ayurveda is a science of life and living being. The life is combination of the sharira (body), manas (mind), indriya (sense) and atma (consciousness). i.e. body, mind, sense and consciousness are the integral part of life. Living being is the outcome of the Sattva (mind), body (sharira & indriyas) and atma. The combination of sattva (mind), atma and sharira (body) is tripod of whole universe including Purusha i.e. The human being consist of combination of physical and mental aspect. Thus the Purusha or living being is a psychosomatic entity. In this connection Acharya charak in particular attaches considerable importance to the intimate relationship between the mind (mental activities) and body (physical function), disturbance in one affects the other and causes diseases. Its aim is primarily to maintain the health of healthy person and secondarily to cure the diseases.

Therefore for the maintenance of positive health as well as cure of diseases, both the mind and body are required to kept in proper condition Keeping this view in mind, Ayurveda has defined Svastha as a state of physical and mental equilibrium. Sushruta states that, a individual having dosha, dhatu, mala and agni in equilibrium state and indriyas and manas in happy condition is called Healthy. Mental activities like worry, grief, fear, anger and sorrow are as a causative factors for indigestion even if wholesome food is taken in proper quantity. So food should be taken which is wholesome to the physical constitution and psychic temperament of a person.

According to Ayurveda, the mind is controller of all the sense. The Psychosomatic diseases are considered as a product of disturbed physiology of mind and body. Sushruta states that the five sense organs grasp their respective objectives only when influenced by the mind. Chakrapani suggests that at given time the mind is attached with only one sense organ, this is why we do not perceive all the objects together. When the manas joined with a particular sense organ, the knowledge comes through that sense organ. When the manas is not attached to any sense organ, there is no perception of any objects. Thus no sensory organ can function without the association of mind.

For the both kinds of morbidic factors (psychic & somatic), the exciting factors are three viz. 1. Asatmyendriarth samyoga, 2. Pragyaparadha and 3. Parinama. These disorders both psychic such as Ragadi (desire) etc. and somatic such as jvaradi (fever) etc. follow each other. As also mentioned earlier Pragyaparadha which consists of (i) Dhi bhramsa (deranged intelligence) (ii) Dhriti bhramsa (deranged will power) and (iii) Smriti bhramsa (deranged memory) permits undesirable act which leads to excitation of all bodily doshas i.e. Vata, Pitta, Kapha.

Body- Mind interaction

The Sharira (body) and manas (mind) are the two complementary contents of living being. Ayurveda accepts three sharira dosha, viz vata, pitta and kapha and two manas doshas namely

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rajas and tamas which are responsible for the health and their imbalance causes disease. Each sharira dosha has three types gunas i.e., bhautika guna, rasayanika and manasika gunas. For example ruksha, sita etc. are the bhautika guna of vayu, yogavahi & ashukari are the rasayanika guna of vayu, Rajo guna and daruna are the manashika guna of vayu. If there is vitiation of any dosha, first vitiation takes place in bhautika gunas, step by step lastly manasika guna of that particular dosha get vitiated and produces some psychic symptoms. Thus deranged condition of sharira dosha influences the manas. The somatic symptoms were thought to be result of psychological disorders. However mind and body can not be so distinctly separated. There is continuous two-way interaction between the psychological reaction of fear and physiological reaction of tachycardia, sweating and hyperventilation. Thus a patient who develops a physical disorder also undergoes psychological changes. This interaction between body and mind is extremely sensitive.

Psycho-somatic diseases

Body and mind are the substratum of all diseases having their dosha (sharira dosha i.e. vata, pitta and kapha and manas dosha i.e. rajas & tamas). Physical and mental diseases have been described separately. Manas and sharira are regarded as separate entities in Ayurveda but not in the sense of absolute separation because an organism is the complex combination of mind, soul and body. The complex integration of these three factors is responsible for life. It seems that in Ayurveda there is established psychosomatic approach to health and disease, where more emphasis is given to the aspect of integrate of manas and sharira dosha. Acharya charaka has mentioned many instances where it has been shown that somatic disorders also affect the psyche of a human being. For example, aggravated vata, results in insomnia, pitta vriddhi causes murcha and kapha vriddhi causes tandra and nidra.

According to Ayurveda, no diseases can develop without the interaction of the bodily and mental influences. This categories of the causes of illness (I) Asatmyendriyarth samyoga (ii) Pragaparadha (iii) Parinama, among these, pragaparadha is really very important. Charaka states that a individual, whose dhi or buddhi, dhriti and smriti i.e. intellect and memory are deranged, indulges in to undesired acts. This is known as pragaparadha which leads to the development of an illness. Thus though this postulation attempt has been made to emphasis that a psychic disturbance may lead disease. Similarly Asatmyendriyarth samyoga and Parinama also causes different kinds of diseases by causing stress to human organism involving both the body and the mind. The mental and physical stresses have been further emphasised when Charaka says that adharm or misconduct is the essential cause of disease. The role emotional factors like harsa and vishada has been emphasised by Charaka, when he considers

Vishada to be most important among those nourishing the body and Shoka among those who cause emaciation.

The pathogenesis of a disease is also a psychosomatic phenomenon. The actual process of the production of a disorder is greatly governed by the state of mind and the body. Though described in physical terms, even the six Kriyakalas are likely to be modified by emotional and different kinds of environmental factors. Similarly the Atipravritiyadi srotasam may also be influenced by mental factors. As also pointed out elsewhere that varying degrees of involvement of both the mental as well as the physical aspects of a man are present in all kinds of diseases. How a mental factors influences the body and bodily event influences the mind, However it implicates the role of Doshas, Agnis Srotamsi in particular. Through these mechanisms the emotions may influence the pathogenesis of somatic disease. It is admitted that under different circumstances a mental disease may be converted or may get associated with a bodily illness and vice-versa. According to this concept the origin of a large number of diseases can be traced to prior proximate or remove mental origin.

As stated by charaka the Rajas and Tamas are the morbidic factors affecting mind. Among the disorders brought about by these two mental dosha are Raga (desire), Krodha (anger), Lobha (greed), Irsya (envy), Chinta (anxiety), Soka (remorse), Bhaya (fear) and harsa. The exheleration of Vata, Pitta and Kapha are the morbidic factors affecting the body. Among the disorders brought about by these morbidic factors are jvara, Atisara, Kshaya, Sosa, Svasa, Kustha etc (ii) Dhriti bhramsa (deranged will power) and (iii) Smriti bhramsa (deranged memory) permits undesirable act which leads to excitation of all bodily and Doshas i.e. Vata, Pitta, Kapha, Raja and. For the both kinds of morbidic factors (psychic & somatic), the exciting factors are three viz. 1. Asatmyendriarth samyoga, 2. Pragaparadha and 3. Parinama. These disorders both psychic such as Ragadi (desire) etc. and somatic such as jvaradi (fever) etc. follow each other. As also mentioned earlier Pragaparadha which consists of (i) Dhi bhramsa (deranged intelligence) etc (ii) Dhriti bhramsa (deranged will power) (iii) Smriti bhramsa (deranged memory) permits undesirable act which leads to excitation of all bodily and Doshas i.e. Vata, Pitta, Kapha, Raja and Tamas.

Classification of psychosomatic diseases

On the basis of ancient Ayurvedic literatures we may classify these diseases in following groups

1. Diseases with primarily Mental origin and Predominantly Physical symptoms- under this group, apasmara, aptantraka, sokaj and bhayaj atisara, nidranasa, sokaj and kamaj jvara.
2. Diseases With Primarily Physical Origin And Predominantly Mental symptoms- Under this group, attatvabhinivesa and mada.

Table 1: According to Madhavnidana

Disease	Mental cause References
Arochak	Soka, bhaya, chinta, krodha, dukha (Ma.Ni.14/3)
Hridaya Roga	Chinta (Ma.Ni.29/1)
Atisara	Soka (Ma.Ni.3/2)
Agnimandya	Chinta, soka, bhaya, krodha, dukha (Ma.Ni.6/9)
Chardi	Bhaya, udvega (Ma.Ni. 15/3)
Vataj grahani	Vega nigrah (Ma.Ni. 4/5)
Trishna	Bhaya (Ma.NI.16/1)
Hikka	Vegaghata (Ma.Ni.12/2)

Rakta-pitta	Soka (Ma.Ni.9/1)
Apasmara	Chinta, soka (Ma.Ni 21/2)
Kustha	Bhaya (Ma.NI.49/2)
Sula	Soka (Ma.Ni.49/2)
Vata vyadhi	Chinta & soka (Ma.Ni.22/2)
Murcha	Vegaghata (Ma.Ni.17/1)
Kasa	Vegavarodha (Ma.Ni.11/1)
Rajyakshama	Vegavarodha (Ma.Ni.10/1)
Vataj Arsa	Soka (Ma.Ni. 5/4)
Pittaj Arsa	Krodha (Ma.Ni. 5/5)
Urustambha	Manah Ksobha (Ma.Ni. 24/1)
Vata Rakta	Krodha (Ma.Ni. 23/2)

Practices preventing Psycho-somatic Disturbances

1. Person should get up in early morning.
2. Person should observe regular bowel habit.
3. Person should observe regular exercise.
4. Clean excretory passages and feet frequently.
5. Cut hair, nail, and shave thrice every fortnight
6. Apply oil to head, ear, nostril and feet
7. Take bath twice daily.
8. Dress neatly and appropriately.
9. Keep patience.
10. Perform meditation.
11. Person should knowledge.
12. Observe proper sleep in night.
13. Take light meals, specially Sattvika Ahara.
14. Observe Asta ahara vidhi visesayatana and dwadashashan pravichar, while taking meal.
15. The pernicious habits of drinking and smoking must be avoided.
16. Reconcile the angry.
17. Be controlled of intolerance.
18. Be of peaceful disposition and conquer the very roots of attachment and hatred.
19. Be friendly to all creatures.
20. Be clear, forbearing, virtuous

Conclusion

The body and mind constitute the substrate of diseases and happiness i.e. good health. The causes of disease relating to both body and mind are three fold, which is disuse, misuse and excessive use of time, mental faculties and sense objects. The balanced utilisation of time, mental faculties and objects of senses are the causes of happiness. For the maintenance of psychosomatic health, Ayurveda enjoins constant vigilance regular habits. The regimen are lying under the head swasthavritta i.e. Dincharya, Ritucharya and Ratricharya. Observance of the Swasthavritta is a simple way of attain and preservation of health and prevention of diseases. According to Sushruta, a man is called normal if dosha, dhatus and agnis are in the state of equilibrium, Apart from this he should be mentally happy. To maintain a psychic and somatic equilibrium one should follow the rules prescribed in Ayurveda.

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