

Role of Rasayana / Herbomineral Drugs in Mental and Spiritual Health¹Dr. Anupama Chatrvedi, ²Dr. Jyoti Sharma, ³Dr. HP Joshi¹Associate Professor, Dept. of Dravyaguna, Govt. Ayurveda College, Kota, Rajasthan, India²Assistant Professor, Dept. of Kaychikitsa, Govt. Ayurveda College, Kota, Rajasthan, India³Associate Professor, Dept. of Rasa Shastra and Bhaishjya kalpana, Govt. Ayurveda College, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India³Member Secretary, Rajasthan State Naturopathy Development Board, Ayush Bhawan, Jaipur, India³In-charge, Govt. Ayurveda Drug Testing Laboratory, Ajmer, Rajasthan, India³Associate Professor, Dept. of Rasa Shastra and Bhaishajya Kalpana, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Rajasthan Ayurveda University, Jodhpur, India³Manager, Government. Ayurveda Pharmacies, Ajmer, Rajasthan, India**Corresponding Author:** Dr. Anupama Chatrvedi, Associate Professor, Dept. of Dravyaguna, Govt. Ayurveda College, Kota, Rajasthan, India**Type of Publication:** Original Research Article**Conflicts of Interest:** Nil**Abstract**

Ayurveda, the most ancient system of medicine in the world, offers a profound understanding of life processes, health, and disease management. In the modern era, the prevalence of stress-induced psychosomatic disorders is escalating due to unwholesome interactions between individuals and their environment. This paper explores the fundamental Ayurvedic concepts of mental health (Manas Swasthya), the etiopathology of Manoroga (psychiatric disorders), and the comprehensive three-fold therapeutic approach: Daivavyapashraya (Spiritual therapy), Sattvavajaya (psychotherapy), and Yuktivyapashraya (rational biomedical Merapy). Special emphasis is placed on Medhya Rasayanas-both single herbs and polyherbal formulations-as potent neuroprotective and cognitive-enhancing agents.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Manoroga, Sattvavajaya, Daivavyapashraya, Medhya Rasayana, Polyherbal Formulations.**1. Introduction**

Ayurveda describes the basic aspects of life processes, health, disease, and management in terms of its own unique principles. The Charaka Samhita, a seminal work on Internal Medicine, emphasizes that the ultimate goal of life is the attainment of the four-fold objectives: Dharma (righteousness), Artha (wealth), Kama (desire), and Moksha (salvation). To achieve these, the maintenance of both physical and mental health is a prerequisite.

In the current psychosocial landscape, individuals are constantly subjected to high-stress situations. The response to these stressors varies based on the individual's psychosomatic constitution (Prakriti). When psychic factors (Mansik bhavas) such as Chinta (worry), Udvega (anxiety), Lobha (greed), Shoka (grief), Bhaya (fear), and Krodha (anger) cross physiological limits, they precipitate mental illnesses ranging from anxiety neurosis to depression and hypertension.

2. Concept of Mental Health in Ayurveda

According to Ayurveda, mental health is not merely the absence of disease but a state of sensorial, mental, intellectual, and spiritual well-being.

2.1 Signs of Mental Health

A mentally healthy individual exhibits specific characteristics indicative of balanced Sattva (purity/clarity):

- **Healthy Memory (Smriti):** Strong retention and recall.
- **Awareness:** Consciousness of responsibilities toward self and society.
- **Value System:** Adherence to good values and ethical conduct.
- **Hygiene:** Maintaining self-hygiene and cleanliness.
- **Emotional Stability:** Fearlessness (Abhaya) and perseverance (Dhairya).
- **Enthusiasm:** Performing actions with vigor.
- **Regimen:** Adherence to dietary rules according to body type and time (Kala).

2.2 Etiology of Mental Illness (Nidana)

Mental ill-health results from an unwholesome interaction between the individual and their environment. This interaction is mediated by three fundamental factors: **Kala** (Time/Season), **Buddhi** (Intellect), and **Indriyarth** (Sensory objects).

Principal causative factors include:

1. **Genetic Factors (Sahaja):** Inherited predispositions.
2. **Personality Makeup (Manas Prakriti):** The inherent mental constitution.
3. **Environmental Factors:** External stressors and lifestyle choices.
4. **Pragyaparadha:** Intellectual error or "crimes against wisdom," specifically the lack of coordination between Dhi (learning), Dhriti (retention), and Smriti (recall).

3. Classification of Psychiatric Conditions (Manoroga)

Ayurvedic texts describe various psychiatric and neuropsychiatric conditions. The principal disorders include:

No.	Sanskrit Term	Modern Correlation
1.	Unmada	Psychosis
2.	Apasmara	Convulsive Disorders /Epilepsy
3.	Bhrama	Vertigo/Illusion
4.	Atatvabhinivesha	Obsessive / Delusional Disorders
5.	Prajanapradha	Intellectual error
6.	Tandra	Drowsiness/Stupor
7.	Klama	Neurasthenia / Mental Fatigue
8.	Mada	Loss of perception / Intoxication
9.	Aptantrakam	Hysteria
10	Chitto Udvega	Anxiety Neurosis
11	Madatyaya	Alcoholism/ Withdrawal

12	Avasada	Depression
13	Manas Mandata	Mental Retardation

4. Therapeutic Modalities

Ayurvedic treatment for Manoroga employs a holistic approach categorized into three primary therapies:

4.1 Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa (Spiritual/Divine Therapy)

This modality addresses the root causes of diseases that are idiopathic or karmic in nature. As described by Acharya Charaka (Char. Samh. 11.54), components include:

- **Mantra:** Chanting sacred hymns to induce specific vibrational healing (e.g., in Unmada and Visha treatment).
- **Mani:** Gemology; wearing specific gemstones to refract and absorb light energy therapeutic effect.
- **Homa & Bali:** Performing sacrificial fires (Yajnas) and oblations.
- **Niyama & Upavasa:** Observance of strict discipline and fasting to purify the mind.
- **Mangala & Swastyayana:** Performing auspicious deeds and chanting for good luck.

4.2 Sattvavajaya Chikitsa (Ayurvedic Psychotherapy)

Sattvavajaya is defined as "Ahitebhyo arthebhyo mano nigrahah"-the withdrawal of the mind from unwholesome objects.

Mechanism of Action:

The mind consists of three Gunas: Sattva (clarity), Rajas (agitation), and Tamas (inertia). Mental illness often stems from an increase in Rajas (causing craving/agitation) and Tamas (causing depression/lethargy).

- **Objective:** To increase Sattva guna, thereby reducing Rajas and Tamas.
- **Technique:** It functions as a non-pharmacological "Trance Therapy" or cognitive restructuring. It focuses on restoring the coordination between Dhi (Intellect), Dhriti (Patience), and Smriti (Memory).
- **Methods:** Includes Sakshi Dhyana (Mindfulness/Witness meditation), separating the Ego (Ahankara) from the Self (Atman), and counseling.

4.3 Yuktivyapashraya Chikitsa (Rational/Biomedical Therapy)

This involves the use of diet (Ahar), lifestyle (Vihar), and medicine (Aushadhi) to balance the vitiated physical Doshas.

4.3.1 Panchakarma (Bio-Purification)

Since the mind and body are linked, physical toxins (Ama) must be eliminated to treat mental disorders.

- **Antahaparimarjana (Internal Cleansing):** Includes Vamana (Emesis), Virechana (Purgation), and Basti (Enema).
- **Bahirparimarjana (External Therapies):** Includes Snehana (oleation), Swedana (sudation), and Shirodhara (pouring medicated liquids on the forehead).

4.3.2. Single Herbs (Medhya Rasayanas)

Specific herbs are used to enhance cognitive function. These herbs are specifically classified in Ayurveda as brain tonics that improve memory (Smriti), retention (Dhriti), and acquisition (Dhi).

The Medhya Rasayanas (Cognitive Enhancers)

These herbs are specifically classified in Ayurveda as brain tonics that improve memory (Smriti), retention (Dhriti), and acquisition (Dhi).

1. Mandukaparni (*Centella asiatica*)

Common Name: Gotu Kola / Indian Pennywort

➤ **Primary Action:** Cognitive enhancement and microcirculation improvement.

➤ **Detailed Profile:**

- **Neuroprotection:** Rich in triterpenoids (asiaticoside), it stimulates dendrite branching, which aids in neural plasticity and repair.
- **The "Brain" Signature:** The leaves physically resemble the shape of the cerebellum, a classic example of the "Doctrine of Signatures" indicating its use for brain health.
- **Circulation:** Unlike other sedating herbs, Mandukaparni improves cerebral microcirculation, ensuring the brain receives adequate oxygen and nutrients. It balances Pitta (heat) in the mind, promoting clarity without agitation.

2. Shankhapushpi (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*)

➤ **Common Name:** Aloe Weed / Morning Glory

- **Primary Action:** The Agrya (Best) drug for mental health; Anxiolytic and Antidepressant.
- **Detailed Profile:**
 - **Mental Stability:** Ayurveda regards this as the single best herb for improving intellect while simultaneously reducing anxiety. It helps balance neurotransmitters to stabilize mood.
 - **Sleep & Stress:** It is highly effective for stress-induced hypertension and insomnia. Unlike sedatives that cause drowsiness, Shankhapushpi calms the mind while keeping it alert and sharp.
 - **Dosha Effect:** It is Tridoshic, meaning it balances Vata, Pitta, and Kapha, making it suitable for almost all body types.

3. Guduchi (*Tinospora Cordifolia*)

Common Name: Giloy / Heart-leaved Moonseed

- **Primary Action:** Immunomodulator with neuroprotective properties.
- **Detailed Profile**
 - **The "Amrita":** Known as "Divine Nectar," it possesses strong antioxidant properties that protect brain cells from oxidative stress and free radical damage.
 - **Gut-Brain Axis:** As a potent immunomodulator and digestive aid, it supports the gut-brain connection, reducing systemic inflammation that often manifests as brain fog or mental fatigue.
 - **Stress Resistance:** It is an adaptogen that helps the body resist physical and mental stress.

4. Jyotishmati (*Celastrus paniculatus*)

Common Name: Intellect Tree / Black Oil Plant

Primary Action: Potent memory enhancer and neuroprotective agent.

Detailed Profile

- **Memory Oil:** The oil extracted from the seeds is traditionally used to sharpen memory and improve concentration. It is considered "Teekshna" (sharp/penetrating), allowing it to penetrate the blood-brain barrier effectively.

- **Cognitive Decline:** It inhibits acetylcholinesterase enzyme activity (similar to modern Alzheimer's drugs), thereby increasing acetylcholine levels in the brain which is crucial for memory retention.

II. The Stress Busters & Adaptogens

These herbs focus on the physiological response to stress, managing the HPA (Hypothalamus-Pituitary-Adrenal) axis.

5. Ashwagandha (*Withania Somnifera*)

Common Name: Indian Ginseng / Winter Cherry

Primary Action: Adaptogen that modulates the HPA axis.

Detailed Profile

- **Cortisol Regulation:** Ashwagandha is arguably the most potent herb for lowering cortisol (stress hormone) levels. It prevents adrenal fatigue.
- **Nervine Tonic:** It strengthens the nervous system (Balya), helping to reduce trembling, nervous exhaustion, and anxiety.
- **Dual Action:** Uniquely, it provides energy (stamina) during the day while promoting deep, restorative sleep at night.

6. Yastimadhu (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*)

Common Name: Licorice Root

Primary Action: Nervine tonic and stress buster.

Detailed Profile

- **Adrenal Support:** Contains glycyrrhizin, which supports adrenal gland function, helping the body manage cortisol breakdown. This makes it excellent for burnout.
- **Soothing Effect:** Its sweet taste and cooling energy soothe the mucous membranes and the nervous system. It is particularly helpful for "Pitta" type stress anger, irritability, and frustration.

III. The Channel Clearers & Sedatives

These herbs are used for more severe imbalances, clearing blockages in the mind or inducing deep rest.

7. Vacha (*Acorus calamus*)

Common Name: Sweet Flag

Primary Action: Srotoshodhana (Channel Clearing) and speech enhancement.

Detailed Profile

- **Clearing the Fog:** Vacha literally means "speech." It is used in conditions like Unmada (psychosis) and Apasmara (epilepsy) to "scrape" away excess **Kapha** (heaviness) and **Tamas** (darkness/lethargy) from the neural pathways.
- **Cognitive Awakening:** It wakes up the brain. It is often given to children to improve speech and articulation or to adults suffering from post-stroke speech/cognitive deficits.

8. Jatamansi (*Nardostachys jatamansi*)

Common Name: Spikenard / Muskroot

Primary Action: Neuroprotective and Sedative.

Detailed Profile

- **Grounding:** Growing at high altitudes in the Himalayas, the root has a heavy, grounding energy. It is excellent for "Vata" imbalances where the mind is racing or ungrounded.
- **Mood Stabilizer:** It increases the levels of GABA and serotonin in the brain, making it a powerful agent against depression and hysteria.

9. Tagara (Valeriana wallichii)

Common Name: Indian Valerian

Primary Action: Sedative and anxiolytic.

Detailed Profile

- **Insomnia Management:** specifically indicated for Anidra (insomnia). It relaxes the central nervous system and muscle tension, allowing for sleep onset.
- **Chittodvega:** This term refers to "anxious agitation" of the mind. Tagara subdues this agitation, reducing palpitations and tremors associated with panic.

10. Kushmanda (Benincasa hispida)

Common Name: Ash Gourd/ Winter Melon

Primary Action: Stabilizing effect on the mind; Medhya drug.

Detailed Profile

- **Cooling Stabilization:** Unlike the heating herbs, Kushmanda is deeply cooling. It is used in Unmada (insanity/psychosis) to cool down an overheated brain.
- **Prana Nourishment:** It is considered highly pranic (full of life force). Regular consumption of the fruit or confection (Kushmanda Avaleha) nourishes the brain tissue and improves intellectual sharpness without overstimulation.

Herb	Primary Target	Best For
Mandukaparni	Cortex/ Microcirculation	Cognitive decline, aging brain
Shankhapushpi	Whole Brain / Psyche	Anxiety, general mental health, exam stress
Ashwagandha	Adrenals / HPA Axis	High stress, burnout, cortisol management
Vacha	Neural Pathways	Speech delay, brain fog, lethargy
Tagara	CNS (Depressant)	Insomnia, panic attacks, muscle tension

4.3.3 Multi-Herb Combination Therapies (Mishra Yogas)

While single herbs act on specific pathways, Ayurveda emphasizes Samyoga (combination). Polyherbal formulations are designed to achieve therapeutic synergism, where the combined efficacy of herbs exceeds the sum of their individual effects. These combinations often utilize Yogavahi (catalyst) to enhance bioavailability and target specific Manovaha Srotas (memory channels).

A. Rationale of Combination Therapy

1. **Synergism:** Combining Medhya (intellect-promoting) herbs with Deepana-Pache (digestive) herbs to ensure the medicine is metabolized properly.
2. **Dosha Balancing:** Neutralizing potential side effects (e.g., balancing heating herbs with cooling herbs).
3. **Blood-Brain Barrier Penetration:** The use of Ghrita (ghee) or Bhasma (nano-particles) as carriers.

B. Key Polyherbal Formulations

Formulation	Key Ingredients Name	Clinical Indications	Mechanism of Action
Manasamitra Vatakam	Bala. Nagabala, Generalized Bilva. Gold (Swarna)	Anxiety, Panic Disorders.	Modulates GABAergic pathways to induce calmness without sedation.
Saraswatarishta	Brahmi, Shatavari, Gold leaf	Depression (Avasada), Memory loss.	A fermented preparation (Arishta) that enhances Ojas (vitality) and improves micro-circulation.
Saptavishati Guggulu	Triphala, Trikatu. Guggulu	Krimija Shiroroga (Infections).	Anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial: clears obstructions in channels.
Sarasvata Churna	Kushta. Ashwagandha, Vacha	Apasmara (Epilepsy), Mania.	Pacifies Vata dosha: improves Dhi and Dhriti.

C. Herbo-Mineral Combinations (Rasa Aushadhis)

For acute conditions, Ayurveda utilizes Rasa Shastra (alchemy) formulations:

- **Smritisagar Rasa:** (Mercury, Sulfur, Copper ash + Brahmi juice) for Epilepsy and memory loss.
- **Unmada Gajakesari Rasa:** Specifically, for Psychosis (Unmada), used to break severe Vata-Kapha obstruction.
- **Brihat Vata Chintamani Ras:** (Gold and Silver ash) A premium neuro-protective for degenerative conditions like dementia.

5 Conclusion

Ayurveda provides a sophisticated and holistic framework for mental health. By viewing physical and mental diseases as a psychosomatic continuum, it offers unique therapeutic avenues. The combination of Sattvavajaya (mind control), Daivavyapashraya (spiritual healing), and Yuktivyapashraya (pharmacological intervention) specifically through the synergistic use of polyherbal formulations-offers a robust, evidence-based approach to managing the growing global burden of psychiatric disorders.

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