

Exploring Ayurvedic Practitioners' Understanding of Psychosomatic Disorders and its Treatment

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda being a system of Alternative Medicine which gives high relevance to the interplay of body and mind has been identified to be very relevant in studying psychosomatic disorders. This study explores Ayurveda as a scientific system of health for understanding and treating psychosomatic disorders. Ayurvedic practitioners' knowledge and understanding of psychosomatic disorders and the strategies used to treat psychosomatic disorders were the two broad categories of focus. Semi-structured one-on-one telephone interviews were conducted with six Ayurvedic practitioners. The model of Thematic analysis of Braun and Clarke was used to analyze the data. The results demonstrate that the practitioners have a solid understanding of the concept and are knowledgeable on how to approach it based on the theoretical underpinnings of the ancient system. The system has its own very established conceptualisation of the mind, its roles and its interference with physical health. The research also identified concepts and terms parallel to psychosomatic disorders from Ayurveda. Finally, the various Ayurvedic modalities used for treating psychosomatic conditions were explored. The study has identified the potential of the ancient system in formulating a plausible theoretical framework to study and treat psychosomatic conditions.

Keywords: *Ayurveda, Complementary and Alternative Medicine, Indian psychology, Psychophysical disorders, Psychosomatic disorders, Traditional healing*

As long as we are not living in harmony with nature and our constitution, we cannot expect ourselves to be really healed. Ayurveda gives us the means (Frewly,2020). Ayurveda is a traditional system of health and medicine with roots in ancient India. The system of health is based on the principle that the human body is a differential component of the universe which is manifested by the interaction of five basic elements Air, Water, Fire, Space and Earth. The human body consists of three Doshas (*Vata, Pitta, Kapha*) which are formed by the amalgamation of the elements in different combinations. Ayurveda is much more than a mere science of health and healing and throws light onto spiritual concepts such as subtle energies, immortality, liberation and universal love (Svobodha, 1996).

According to the report of Industry Research, nearly 75% of the Indian population use some form of Ayurveda as an alternative system of medicine or healthcare. Ayurveda has been

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gaining immense acceptance across the globe as a health system to boost overall immunity and wellness. The Covid-19 pandemic has put the spotlight on the concepts and methods of Ayurveda among other alternative systems of health (Kaushal, 2020).

Need and Significance

Better understanding about the interplay of psychological factors and physical health can be put to use and lead to great advancements in integrative medicine. It is necessary to develop a psychosomatic approach to the research and treatment of health and illness in general, rather than limiting it to a few so-called psychosomatic ailments (Singh,1981).

The close association of Ayurveda with the *Sankhya* school of thought which talks extensively about the interplay of mind and body makes it a system of health that is most appropriate to study psychosomatic disorders or psychosomatic aspects of physical disorders. Based on solid philosophical and scientific foundations, Ayurveda is the world's most coherent, individualized, holistic, and sustainable health system (Pradeep and Pamila,2012). Parallels can be easily drawn between modern psychology and concepts within Ayurveda (Ahuja S., 2015). Knowledge from the teachings of Ayurveda can be put to use to understand the cause, effects and diagnosis of a number of psychosomatic health conditions as well as to develop better treatment methods. The gaining popularity of traditional systems of medicine such as Ayurveda should alone encourage thorough research in the field (Sood. Kumar & Chadda., 2017).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A notable study which used an algorithmic heuristic approach to the exhaustive list of qualitative features commonly used in Ayurveda has proved that the concept of *tridosha* has a solid empirical foundation (Joshi, 2004). Factors such as better awareness, changing health behaviors, concern of becoming addicted to chemical medications, and unsatisfactory experiences with conventional care has increased the prevalence of Complementary and Alternative therapies around the globe in the last decade in spite of being driven by mistrust by agents of mainstream medical fields (Bystritsky, 2004). Wortman et al. (2019) created a significant breakthrough in accepting the need for psychosomatic treatments in the case of MUS but failed to address how the unexplained symptoms are possibly understood by other health systems and healing therapies.

Sood et al. explained how the psychosomatic approach to health and disease forms the basis of Ayurvedic medicine. Back pain or joint pains pathologic, depression, insomnia, severe headache or migraine, and stomach or intestinal illnesses have been identified as the major psychosomatic disorders that can be efficiently cured by Ayurvedic treatment. Ayurvedic practices of *Shavasana*(Corpse Pose), *Shirodhara*(Oil-dripping therapy), *Sarpagandha Vati* (A medicine derived from Sarpagandha root) and meditation have been found to be effective in treating both labile hypertension as well as primary hypertension(Sachin, 2016)(Kundu1, Shukla, Santwani & Bhatt, 2010) Another clinical study by Alex Hankey found out that both Ayurvedic herbal juices and Yoga improve variable regulation and resulted in the normalization of both high and low blood pressure(2016).

Daniel Rhoda in her article states that Ayurvedic treatments are being tested for efficacy both in medical and psychological applications, but it is often examined in ways that isolate individual therapeutic substances or treatments in a way that is antithetical to the holistic approach of Ayurveda (2014). She draws parallels between Ayurveda and transpersonal

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approaches in psychology and states how they are supposed to be relevant to each other, and how the latter may benefit from transpersonal research methodologies.

Although the efficacy of the health system as a treatment option has been backed by a lot of research, proper explanation of its functioning and methods have not been established satisfactorily.

Aim and objectives

- To explore Ayurveda as a scientific system of health for understanding and treating psychosomatic disorders.
- To explore Ayurvedic practitioners' knowledge and understanding of psychosomatic disorders.
- To explore the strategies used to treat psychosomatic disorders in Ayurveda.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The study used Qualitative exploratory research design. Outcomes of qualitative studies are very significant in medical contexts both in terms of psychology and physiology as it answers the "how" and "why" questions of medical phenomena.

Operational Definition

- **Ayurveda** is a system of health and medicine with roots in the ancient Indian subcontinent. It is one of the most popular alternative therapies in the world.
- **Ayurvedic Professionals** are doctors with practice of treatment using Ayurveda. The mode of training can be either through formal education or traditionally passed on knowledge.
- **Psychosomatic Disorder** is any psychological condition that leads to physical symptoms, often without any medical explanation. Disorders caused by the interplay between the two entities are psychosomatic in nature. All disorders might not be entirely psychosomatic but psychosomatic aspects are anticipated in all major physical disorders.

Procedure

The study was conducted on 7 participants with formal practice in Ayurveda. Semi-structured interviews were conducted on the selected participants. 7 participants were manually selected for the study. A brief introduction to the study topic, objectives, methods and ethical consideration were provided to the participants. Questions and pointers were used to extract more data relevant to the chosen topics. The data was collected down as transcripts and further underwent thematic analysis.

Data Analysis

The in-depth interviews with the participants were recorded and themes and sub themes were analyzed. The six-step model of Braun and Clarke was followed which involved Familiarisation, Coding, Generating themes, Reviewing themes, Defining and naming themes and Writing up. To establish codes and basic, organizing and global themes, the recordings were listened to repeatedly and the transcript data was read and reread numerous times. Excel sheets were used to store the themes and codes that were discovered. These codes and themes were manually identified without the aid of any software.

Ethical considerations

The research was IRB approved. Anonymity and confidentiality of the individuals were given utmost importance. Respect for privacy, establishment of honest and open interaction and avoiding misrepresentations were also initiated. Informed consent was taken from all the participants. The stored data would be used only for the purpose of the research and would not be used externally.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research paper aimed to explore Ayurvedic practitioner’s understanding of psychosomatic disorders and its treatments.

Table 1 Thematic Table

| Global theme | Organizing Theme | Basic Theme |
|--|---|--|
| 1. Knowledge of Ayurvedic Practitioners on Psychosomatic Disorders | 1.1. Mind as a Component of the Individual | 1.1.1. Mind-body-soul connection 1.1.2. Mind as a sixth sense 1.1.3. Nature and tendencies of the mind |
| | 1.2. Mind’s interference into physical health | 1.2.1. Disconnection from Atma 1.2.2. Mind body relation in health and illness 1.2.3. Gurutva’s role in physiological disorders 1.2.4. Mind in karmic pathology |
| | 1.3. Conceptualisation of Psychosomatic disorders | 1.3.1. Classification as a psychological disorder 1.3.2. Manoshariradhistithavyadhi and Manovaidhik Vyadhi as parallel concepts 1.3.3. Tridosha and Triguna theory as a theoretical ground |

Table 2 Thematic Table

| Global theme | Organizing Theme | Basic Theme |
|---|---|---|
| 2. Treatment of psychosomatic disorders in Ayurveda | 2.1. General treatment(Yukthivipashraya Chikitsa) | 2.1.1. Direct biological interventions 2.1.2. Relaxation techniques- Yoga, Pranayama |
| | 2.2. Psychotherapy (Sattva Avajaya Chikitsa) | 2.2.1. Ashwasana therapy 2.2.2. Vismapana therapy 2.2.3. Assurance and Moral statements |
| | 2.3. Religious therapy (Daiva Vipashrya Chikitsa) | |
| | 2.4. Self-healing of Psychosomatic conditions | |

1. Knowledge of Ayurvedic Practitioners on Psychosomatic Disorders

The system of Ayurveda has a stern depiction of psychosomatic disorders based on its body-mind-soul model of individual existence and its unique conceptualization of the human mind.

“Ayurveda has been developed based on the Sankhya philosophy of which the mind-body connection is a basic premise in itself. Therefore, Ayurveda is the most appropriate system to understand anything related to mind-body connection.” (P6, Personal communication, 2022)

Ayurveda gives a detailed description about *Masasika*(psychics), *Sharirika*(Somatic) and *Manodaihika Vyadhi*(psychosomatic disorders) and their mode of treatment(Singh, Anil & Panda, Ram & Mishra, 2016).

1.1.Mind as a component of the individual

Conceptualisation of mind has been very different as per different schools of thoughts in Ayurveda. The most repeatedly occurring themes in the Ayurvedic conceptualisation of mind would be as an entity that connects the body or senses and soul. It has been described as the sixth sense. Ayurveda views the mind in its *dravya*(substance) nature with both sensory and motor nature(Rao, 2022) which makes its study much easier and practical. The mind is considered to have five *Chitta Vrittis*(tendencies) which are perception, delusion, imagination, sleep and memory through which it enacts in the world. The role of mind or ‘Manas’ is highlighted by the fact that it is this component which contributes to the supremacy of mankind over other animals(Amin, Sharma, Vyas and Vyas, 2014).

“Just like modern medicine, a controversy exists in Ayurveda as well regarding the conceptualization of the mind. Some scholars advocate that the mind is located in the heart while some believe it to be located throughout the body. A third group believes that the mind is located in the head. But, all of these schools agree upon the fact that the body and mind are related to each other.” (P4, Personal communication, 2022)

1.2.Mind’s interference into physical health

The relationship between the body and mind is very concrete with them sharing an inseparable connection which goes up to the level of one disrupting the other’s functioning and also to the two being one at the same time. This gives a very stern framework for the understanding of psychosomatic disorders. Ayurvedic practitioners acknowledge the fact that disorders in the mind and body affect each other.

1.2.1.Disconnection from Atma

Even though the concept of *Atma* lacks a strong clinical relevance, it forms the philosophical base of the system. Disorders are more related to the mind-body system with the soul being always pure and illness-free. Mind’s disconnection from the *Atma* is another theoretical perspective of what a psychosomatic condition is.

“The soul or Atma is a much more abstract metaphysical concept. Ayurveda is a paravidya which deals with life on earth. The role of the soul and its importance is very high and relevant but explaining it in

particular to a disorder would be difficult. “(P3, Personal communication, 2022)

Mukhedkar and Chavan explained how Ayurveda considers an individual as a combination of *Sharir*, *Satva* (One of the three Gunas), *Indriyas*(senses) and *Atma* with the *Atma* being related to the spiritual power and moral attire of the individual and the *Manas* being the primary contributor to the arisal of psychosomatic conditions (2022).

1.2.2.Mind-body relation in health and illness

Ayurveda uses a ghee-pot model to explain transference of disorders between mind and body. Illness is compared to heat which transfers itself from the pot to ghee or from ghee to pot depending on where its concentration is more. Various mental factors like *Krodha*(anger), *Kama*(lust), *Ahamkara*(arrogance), *Bhaya*(fear), anxiety, stress, guilt etc. are identified to be causal factors for a number of physiological disorders. People have different levels of *Sattva Bala* (mental strength) which is closely associated with the likelihood of developing physiological disorders from a psychological source. A person who has high levels of *Sattva Bala* is less likely to manifest physiological symptoms from psychological issues and vice-versa.

“If you pour hot ghee into a vessel, the vessel will get hot. If you pour cold ghee into a hot pot, the ghee will get hot. That is the explanation in Ayurveda about body and mind. When the body is getting affected, the mind is also supposed to get affected. If the mind will be affected, the body will also get affected.” (P6, Personal communication, 2022)

The development of any physical, mental, or psycho-somatic disease as well as the preservation of health are both significantly influenced by a variety of psychological elements together referred to as *Manasika Bhavas* (Ankita, Jala and Chander., 2018). *Sattva bala*, according to Charaka, is an individual's mental fortitude, willpower, and tolerance. Additionally, it is described as the genetic traits chosen at creation under the guidance of *satva vaiseshikara bhavas* (Chakrapani, and Prakasan, 2014).

1.2.3.Gurutva’s role in physiological disorders

Some people can be categorized as *Laghu rogis*- one who gives very little attention to any illness, manifests symptoms in very mild ways and easily overcome disorders whereas *Guru rogis* tend to overly express their bodily concerns and easily manifest physical symptoms. The former group is less likely to manifest psychosomatic disorders. *Gurutva*(intensity) of the person’s concern of his symptoms is an important cause for psychosomatic diseases. Each person will fall under the category of either *Laghr rogi* or *Gurur rogi* based on his mental state. This decides whether and how he/she would develop psychosomatic conditions.

“One kind of person will be presenting the physical symptoms much more aggravated than what it really is. And other kinds of patients will

present their symptoms much milder than what it is.” (P6, Personal communication, 2022)

Gurutva and *Laghutva* are repeatedly used to classify *Matra*(quantity), *Guna*(property), and *Vipaka*(digestion)(Gajarmal and Rath, 2018), but a strong classification of patient personality type or illness characteristic has not been established by proper research.

1.2.4.Mind in karmic pathology

Mind's interference in the karmic pathology through the feelings of guilt, stress and doubt which leads to physiological conditions explains how past activities cause somatic disturbances.

“A person's actions in the past creates a feeling of guilt in him which develops mental difficulties and later manifests into physiological disorders.” (P2, Personal communication, 2022)

“If you ask for a scientific explanation, I would not be able to provide it. But, these things keep coming in practice and according treatments have also been found to produce results.” (P2, Personal communication, 2022)

Participating in medical and genetic research requires taking into account the concepts of karma and reincarnation as it explains how one's physical well-being can have an impact on future lives and the health of one's descendants(Hutchinson and Sharp, 2009).

1.3. Conceptualisation of Psychosomatic disorders

1.3.1.Classification as a psychological disorder

Ayurveda classifies mental disorders into different levels. *Manasika vega* is mild mental urges, *Manasika bhava* is cognitive patterns and emotional conditions that may develop into serious disorders and *Mano Vibharama* is mental diffusion which are not intense enough to be classified into a psychological disease. *Manasika roga* is the term for psychological conditions under which psychosomatic disorders fall under. Psychiatric disorders such as *Unmad*(psychosis) and *Apasmar*(neurosis) make up the remaining part of the spectrum.

“There are different levels of psychological disorders as per Ayurveda depending on the domains which are affected” (P1, Personal communication, 2022)

1.3.2.Manoshariradhistithavyadhi and Manovaidhik Vyadhi as parallel concepts

Although, review of literature identified *Adhyatmika roga* as an Ayurvedic term for psychosomatic disorders, the collected data contradicts this. The book 'Psychopathology in Indian medicine' by SP Gupta takes extensively about *Manovaidika Vyadhi* which are stated to originate in the mind and later affect the body. In some cases, it begins in the body, affects the mind and as a result increases its severity in the body. All these are considered to be psychosomatic.

“Adhyatmika disorders are mostly psychosomatic in nature but these concepts are not entirely the same.” (P4, Personal communication, 2022)

“...*Manodhaihika vyadhi*. As per my understanding, this is the exact Ayurvedic concept for psychosomatic disorders.” (P2, Personal communication, 2022)

“*Psychosomatic disorders would be more related to the Ayurvedic concept of Manoshariradistitha vyadhi*.” (P5, Personal communication, 2022)

Ayurvedic concepts of ‘*Mano Śariradhithita Roga*’ which are disorders caused by affliction of *Manodoshas* subsequently leading to the involvement of the *Sharirika doshas* and ‘*Manodaihika vyadhi*’ are parallels to psychosomatic disorders (CCRAS, 2018).

1.3.3. Tridosha and Triguna theory as a theoretical ground

Concepts of *Tridoshas* and *Trigunas* are of high clinical value. The three *Doshas*-*Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* and the three *Gunas*-*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* form the biological and psychological base of the human system respectively. The imbalances in *Doshas* and *Gunas* cause physical and mental disorders respectively. The theoretical formulation connecting the ‘*Doshas*’ and ‘*Gunas*’ forms a dynamic explanation to how disorders in mind and body are related and endorse each other. The *Pancha Bhootas* which make up the physical body are directly connected to the *Doshas* and *Gunas* in the individual framework. Each ‘*Prakriti*’ (Body type) is related to a different mode of psychological issue. Ayurvedic practitioners are of the opinion that *Vata* patients are more likely to develop psychosomatic disorders. People with ‘*Kapha*’ body type are least likely to develop psychosomatic disorders as they are more prone to sustain depressive symptoms within the mind. *Sattva Guna* is the ideal nature of the mind. *Rajas* and *Tamas* depict egoism and lethargy respectively. Rise in the latter *gunas* within the mind forms the scope for somatic disorders.

“*This is a unique contribution of Ayurveda which helps in addressing the difference in each individual being*.” (P6, Personal communication, 2022)

“*Health is created by the dynamic equilibrium of all these factors (Trigunas and Tridoshas). The Trigunas are related to the mind and the Tridoshas are related to the body. But these six energies are related to each other*.” (P5, Personal communication, 2022)

Any illness in the body or mind is caused by the toxins produced by the buildup of *dosha*. The biological *doshas* of the body are ‘*Vata*’, ‘*Pitta*’ and ‘*Kapha*’ while ‘*Sattva*’, ‘*Rajas*’ and ‘*Tamas*’ are the *gunas* of the mind. These six are related to each other and an imbalance in one of them affects the other as well and may cause or may cause a number of chronic mental illnesses if they are not eliminated from the body within a certain amount of time. (Behere, Das, Yadav and Behere, 2013)

2. Treatment of Psychosomatic Disorders in Ayurveda

Treating psychosomatic disorders using Ayurveda has a wide range of options and modalities. Addressing the individuality of each being is a unique selling point of Ayurveda. Thus, the treatment methods also vary from patient to patient and condition to condition. An experienced practitioner assesses the disease condition, severity, patient nature, patient

preferences and other external factors and chooses the best method or a combination of methods.

“The fundamental tenets of ayurveda are the ideas of universal connection, bodily constitution (Prakriti), and life forces (Doshas). The person benefits from treatment when pollutants are removed, symptoms are decreased, illness resistance is increased, worry is decreased, and life harmony is increased.” (P2, Personal communication, 2022)

“.....treatment varies from individual to individual. The patient's mental state, requirements, geographical locations, nature etc. influences the type of treatments that would be effective.” (P6, Personal communication, 2022)

2.1.General treatment (Yukthivipashraya Chikitsa)

2.1.1.Direct biological interventions

Direct biological interventions for psychosomatic conditions fall under the *Yukthi Vipakshaya* treatment and involve the intake of herbal medicines, *Abhyanga*(massage therapies) and *Shirodhara*. All treatments are classified into either *Shamana* or *Shodhana* depending on whether it aims to alleviate the symptoms or completely eradicate the root cause of the disorder respectively. *Yukthi Vipashrya* treatment for psychosomatic disorders is mainly *Shamana* because the root cause which is psychological cannot be directly addressed by these interventions which are mostly physiological. This mode of treatment helps reduce the symptoms and improve the ill effects on the patient.

“Yukthi Vipashraya is the physiological mode of treatment in which the practitioners play the major role” (P5, Personal communication, 2022)

2.1.2.Relaxation techniques

Certain non-medical practices such as Yoga and Pranayama are prescribed to patients as relaxation techniques. These improve mental strength, reduce stress and improve prognosis.

“I use Yoga, Pranayama along with medications. I find this collaborative method to be very efficient for psychosomatic conditions. A lot of patients coming for follow-ups indicate the effectiveness of this approach.” (P4, Personal communication, 2022)

Patients' ability to control their own behavior is emphasized in yoga therapy, along with the value of psychosomatic functioning. The spiritual path of yoga is examined, with a focus on its application in treating various psychosomatic illnesses where therapeutic efficacy can be logically and scientifically shown (Singh, 2006).

2.2.Psychotherapy (Sattva Avajaya Chikitsa)

‘Sattva Avajaya chikitsa’ is the umbrella term for Ayurvedic psychotherapy. The primary objective is to overcome *Rajas* and *Tamas* which are the negative *Manasika* Gunas to strengthen *Sattva* which restores mental health and eliminates physiological symptoms. This mode of treatment involves the domains of *Dhee*(Intelligence), *Dhairya*(Ego strength), *Atma Vijnana*(Self-realization) in counseling.

“According to me, the most apt mode of treatment for psychosomatic disorder is the Sattvavajaya Chikitsa. Depending on the Dosha and Guna imbalance that has caused the psychosomatic disorder, we have different methods of talking therapies under the Sattva Avajaya Chikitsa.” (P1, Personal communication, 2022)

“Certain techniques are very similar to modern psychology such as replacing negative thoughts as in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. This is used in treating psychosomatic as well as psychological conditions.” (P5, Personal communication, 2022)

Behere et al. (2013) have explained how modern psychotherapy and *Sattva avajaya* have no essential differences and how both require removing the mind from unpleasant sense-objects. *Sattva avajaya* means victory over the mind or complete control of mental tendencies. It aims to control the mind by restraining the mind from desires and urges (Bagali, Baragi and Deshmukh, 2016).

2.2.1. Ashwasana therapy

Used to calm the mind.

“Ashwasana therapy has been found to be very effective for both simple psychological disorders and psychosomatic conditions.” (P1, Personal communication, 2022)

Aashwasana therapy is made up of ethical behavior, communication with close friends and family, and excellent, uplifting, and benevolent thoughts and spiritual ideas (Naik and Naik, 2017).

2.2.2. Vismapana therapy

The *Vismapana* therapy which is very similar to the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is used to change mental patterns.

“In this, the negative thoughts are identified and are threatened by counseling and then replaced by newer positive thoughts.” (P1, Personal communication, 2022)

2.2.3. Assurance and Moral statements

Preaching religious and moral statements, quoting well-known verses are other methods of application of *Sattva Avajaya Chikitsa*. A healthy assurance of regaining health is made to be acknowledged by the patient.

“An important component of Ayurvedic psychotherapy is reassuring the patient about a healthy outcome.” (P1, Personal communication, 2022)

2.3. Religious therapy (Daiva Vipashrya Chikitsa)

The '*Daiva Vipashrya*' mode of treatment centered around religious beliefs and practices are found to be most effective for psychosomatic conditions in people who comply. This has been used throughout the ancient times for physiological disorders with unclear pathologies. Practitioners are of the opinion that these methods have produced very significant results in a lot of complicated cases which had very poor prognosis. The compliance of the patient is very important before moving ahead with this mode of treatment. The practitioner is not supposed to instill his religious affiliation towards an unwilling patient. The different types of religious treatment include Prayer, visiting temples, chanting mantras, worship of specific deities, rituals and

astrological remedies. Although the explanation of these practices in a scientific manner falls outside the scope of this study, the practitioners have stated how these have been very effective in their clinical practice and explained it in terms of patient satisfaction.

“These treatment procedures might not appear very logical, But, these provide very satisfying results with no side effects and no costs. So, people who ascribe to such treatment techniques should not be denied their right to do so” (P2, Personal communication, 2022)

“I use the Daiva Vipashrya mode of treatment extensively because the patient population I receive ascribe to it. Its effectiveness can be proved by the number of patients who consult me” (P2, Personal communication, 2022)

The *Daivavyapashraya* treatment is a faith-based therapy used in the management of both Physiological and Psychological disorders (Deepika and Kamath, 2021).

2.4. Self-healing of Psychosomatic conditions

The concept of ‘*Vyadhi Kshamata*’ addresses the fact that the body has an innate tendency to resist and overcome disorders be it psychological, somatic or psychosomatic by itself. The level of *Vyadhi Kshamata* varies from person to person and is dependent on a number of factors such as the individual’s *Sattvabala*. A person with high *Vyadhi Kshamata*, a healthy lifestyle and positive external factors easily overcomes disorders even in the absence of any medical interventions. The role of a practitioner in such cases is limited to educating and guiding the patient.

Vyadhikshamata is a resistance to the deterioration of the doshas (bioenergies) and Dhatus of the individual. It helps the body and mind be resilient enough to handle all the physical and mental stresses of an illness (Pawar and Kulkarni, 2020).

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore Ayurvedic practitioner’s knowledge and understanding of psychosomatic disorders. The findings show that they have a vigorous understanding of the concept and are well-versed in its treatment based on the ancient system’s theoretical ground. Conceptualisation of the mind, definition of its roles and its interplay with physiological health is understood using the spirit-mind-body model. Psychosomatic disorders predominantly termed as ‘*Manoshariradhistithavyadhi*’ and ‘*Manovaidhik Vyadhi*’ are very cogently mapped into the spectrum of psychological illness or ‘*Manasika roga*’ and is explicated using the dynamic model of *Tridoshas* and *Trigunas*. There exists a wide number of treatment modalities for psychosomatic conditions which are broadly classified into *Yukthi Vipakshaya*(General treatment), *Daiva Vipashrya*(Religious healing) and *Sattva Avajaya*(Ayurvedic Psychotherapy). The practitioner exercises his intuition and assesses the individual condition and patient preference to choose the most appropriate method of treatment or a combination of treatments.

Future Implications and Limitations

The results of the study give a broad understanding of Ayurvedic practitioners’ understanding of psychosomatic disorders and its treatment. The study has identified the potential of the ancient system in formulating a plausible theoretical framework to study psychosomatic conditions. It has brought out information about the various modes of treatment applicable to different populations based on their preferences, Although the objectives were met, further exploration into a lot of specific areas have been missed out because of the broadness of the

subject. A profound investigation into ancient texts is very important to conclude the scriptural authenticity of the results. The findings of the research, particularly on the various treatment modalities and its efficacy needs to be further established by clinical studies.

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Conflict of Interest

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