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# Anxiety and Depression management through Ayurveda drugs and *Panchakarma*

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## ABSTRACT

For about last one hundred year, two conditions which have affected human life in a profound way are Anxiety and Depression. When an individual is affected in any disease condition the major things which will be affected in their life are health and their financial condition but in these two conditions a patient's life will be affected in every possible way be it financially, socially etc., these conditions more than being a diseased state sadly it has become a stigma especially in our Indian sub-continent both in rural and urban areas.

**Key words:** Diseases, Stigma, Anxiety, Depression.

## INTRODUCTION

Anxiety and Depression are one of the symptoms in various diseases but not disease itself. It may be due to various reasons such as which involves aspects in both personal and professional life of an individual. The basic differences between these two conditions are Anxiety is characterized by worry. Worry which is abnormal in two ways - either the patient is habitual of worrying over everything or patient worries only in certain situations. In depression the basic feature is the inaction, sorrowful, idle and with low emotions. In anxiety *Rajo Guna* is majorly affected and in depression *Tamo Guna* is affected. Anxiety is usually characterized by hyperactivity, low decision making capability and depression with less activity or inactive state.

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The incidence of these two conditions has soared high due to stress, strain. In actuality human beings have not been exposed the kind of stress and strain which they have bought themselves up due to the inevitability of current circumstances which is affecting them both by the influence of world around them and also by the individuals surrounding them. In the last one hundred years factors such as new inventions, industrializations, globalization, formation of nuclear families and different styles of living of human beings has affected the people in ways we have not imagined. They have changed and destroyed the life and somehow people are trying to adjust with the situations but our mind is not capable of adapting with the given situation and that is why these problems arise. We need to diagnose precisely these two conditions though there is lot of overlapping of symptoms. Majority of patients have mixed symptoms of both anxiety and depression.

We shall understand the features of these conditions in below table.

Anxiety		Depression	
Psychological	Somatic	Psychological	Somatic
Worries	Rise of palpitation	Low mood	Low appetite or

			Excess of appetite
Irritability	Tremors	Unhappiness	Weight gain or Weight loss
Anticipation of bad things	Sweating in hands, feet etc.,	Negative thoughts	Disturbed sleep
Lack of concentration	Dizziness	Suicidal thoughts	Reduced libido, Erectile dysfunction
Fearfulness	Muscle tension		Constipation or Diarrhoea
Reduced memory	Fatigue		
Inferiority complex	Insomnia		
	Frequent urination		
	Breathless		
	Chest pain		

As Ayurveda *Vaidyas* we have an opportunity to treat such conditions since our *Acharyas* have mentioned about these conditions and also suggested apt medications, do's and don'ts to the individuals who are suffering from these problems.

### Management of anxiety and depression

Anti-anxiety drugs - *Medhya Rasayanas* : *Tagara*, *Brahmi*, *Mandukaparni*, *Shankapuspi*, *Ashwagandha*, *Jatamamsi*, *Parasika Yavani*.

Anti-depressants - *Manobalya* : *Jyotismati*, *Vacha*, *Akarakarabha*, *Gandira*.

Aphrodisiac - *Putranjiva*, *Kokilaksha*, *Kapikacchu*.

*Rasayanas* - *Shilajatu*, *Amalaki*, *Ashwagandha*, *Abhraka*, *Yashada*, *Mukta*, *Shukti*, *Swarna*, *Rajata*

*Satvavajaya* - *Sadvruta*, *Yoga*, *Dhyana*, *Pranayama*.

*Brahmi* and *Tagara* are drugs which are complimentary to each other in many ways which helps in anxiety. To a greater extent *Mandukaparni* has similar actions to *Brahmi*. *Aswagandha* which is both anti-anxiety and also anti-depressant drug. *Jatamamsi* induces sleep for a brief period, we should base our treatment with these drugs for anxiety and depression. Minimum of three months of treatment is required for treatment this condition.

### Mode of action

- 1) *Brahmi (Baccopa monneiri)* - considered as an adaptogenic herb which increases body's resistance to stress. Research says it helps in reducing stress and anxiety by reducing levels of cortisol & increases the serotonin levels which elevates the mood.<sup>[1]</sup>
- 2) *Tagara (Valeriana wallichii)* - *Tagara* roots help in improving sleep as it relaxes the central nervous system due to its sedative properties. It increases the amount of GABA- gamma aminobutyric acid which helps regulate nerve cells and has calming effect on anxiety. It is also beneficial in managing blood pressure by relaxing smooth muscles and increasing the blood flow.<sup>[2]</sup>
- 3) *Mandukaparni (Centella asiatica)* - contains brahminoside, brahmoside which binds to cholecystokinin receptors, a group of G protein coupled receptors which bind the peptide hormones cholecystokinin and play a potential role in modulation of anxiety.<sup>[3]</sup>
- 4) *Shankapuspi (Convulvulus pleuricalis)* - it balances the neurotransmitters and ups the dopamine secretion which inturn keeps the serotonin level under control and helps to reduce symptoms of anxiety.
- 5) *Jatamansi (Nardostachys jatamansi)* - increases in the levels of monoamines and inhibitory amino acids, serotonin, 5- hydroxyindole acetic acid, gaba and taurine contributes to its antidepressant action.<sup>[5]</sup>
- 6) *Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera)* - stabilizing effect on the HPA axis where it becomes less

reactive to stressors. It reduces cortisol and DHEA-S levels suggesting it has moderating effect on HPA axis activity in stressed adults.<sup>[6]</sup>

Some of the formulations which are helpful in conditions;

1. *Brahmi Rasayana*
2. *Saraswatarista*
3. *Kalyanaka Ghrita*
4. *Mahakalyanaka Ghrita*
5. *Manasamitra Vati*

### **Panchakarma in Anxiety and Depression<sup>[7]</sup>**

Apart from the medications said above, patients are treated with various *Panchakarma Chikitsa*. Procedures which are helpful are described below:

- a) **Abhyanga:** Medicated oil massage which increases blood circulation in the body and brain. *Srotas* gets activated which release stress and relax the *Manas*. It is effective in balancing the *Vata* which is the main cause for mental illness.
- b) **Shirodhara:** It is one of the most calming relaxation therapies. Medicated oil or *Takra* is poured on the forehead in cyclic pattern stimulates the points covering whole of forehead. It rejuvenates the central nervous system that gets clogged with residual stress, lifestyle habits and work pressure. It relieves various conditions rising by vitiated *Vata Dosh*.
- c) **Nasya:** medicated oil is administered into the nasal cavity which helps in relieving headaches, sinus related migraines, reduces anxiety, strengthens the mind and stimulates nervous system.
- d) **Karnapoorana:** the small bones in the inner ear called ossicles, stimulate the nerve endings, transmits the signals to brain. When medicated oil poured in the ear it stimulates neurons and supports our mental well being by calming the mind.

*Satva* - mind, *Avajaya* - control, we need to control the mind, first we need to treat the patient through counseling and try to calm their mind, then train the

patient how to calm their mind, because problems lies in the thoughts, emotions, behavior. Everything starts with the thoughts, so patient has to control their thoughts, emotions, whether it is anxiety, depression they must take control of their emotions. This is possible only through *Satva Avajaya*, counseling. Sadly, seeking counseling has become a taboo, once if patient approaches for counseling they will be regarded as insane. But factually every human being on earth needs counseling in one or other point in their life. That is described through *Satva Avajaya*, *Achara Rasayana* - ideal behavior, do's and don'ts, reassurance, enlightenment. *Yoga*, *Pranayama*, meditation and exercise, walking also need to be followed.

### **DISCUSSION**

There is close relationship between body and mind. Incidentally people who are inactive or who doesn't indulge in exercise are prone to these anxiety and depression. Patient must be encouraged to have physical activities in various forms like exercise, *Yogasanas*, *Pranayama* is important too. The shortest way to calm the agitated patient would be through *Kumbhaka* - inhale and filling the maximum air in the lungs, retain for maximum time and exhale. This will have a positive impact on activity of brain.

### **CONCLUSION**

*Ayurveda* has a lot to offer to the suffering humanity. Everyone in this world has some level of stress, depression and everyone needs to improve their mental health. So, for that we have counseling, exercises, *Yoga*, brain tonics (*Medhya Rasayanas*), *Manobalya* medicines etc. tools to manage patient suffering from anxiety and depression.

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