



PREVENTION OF ALCOHOL ADDICTION THROUGH AYURVEDA – A REVIEW ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

Addiction is the repeated involvement with a substance or activity, despite the substantial harm it now causes, because that involvement was pleasurable and or valuable. Alcohol is commonly abused due to easy access and the lack of stigma around binge drinking. According to WHO, globally 3.3 million deaths every year result from harmful use of alcohol. Over the past 30-40 years, increasing percentages of young people have started to drink alcoholic beverages, their alcohol consumption has increased in quantity and frequency and the age at which drinking starts has declined. Alcoholism is considered as a disease and alcohol a disease agent, which causes intoxication, cirrhosis, gastritis, pancreatitis etc. It is also an important aetiologic factor in suicide, accidents and injuries. Beyond health consequences, the harmful use of alcohol brings significant social and economic losses to individuals, society at large. Alcoholism prevention is a proactive approach to avoid the adverse effects of alcohol abuse. Prevention should be directed towards developing a healthier lifestyles and mental stability. Ayurveda laid its basement over prevention and maintaining health through right-diet, lifestyles and thinking. It gives emphasis for both body and mind and explained *Aahara, Sadvritta, Achara Rasayana, Yoga* etc through which one can attain stability of both

body and mind. From an early stage of life, if one follows these, can master their minds, guide his life and never be a victim of any kind of Addiction.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Addiction, *Aahara*, *Sadvritta*, *Achara Rasayana*

INTRODUCTION

A compulsive, chronic, physiological or psychological need for a habit-forming substance, behaviour, or activity having harmful physical, psychological or social effects and typically causing well defined symptoms upon withdrawal or abstinence-definition of Addiction according to Merriam Webster Dictionary. Alcoholism is world-wide social and medical problem. In 2016, the harmful use of alcohol resulted in some 3 million deaths worldwide. Of all deaths attributable to alcohol consumption worldwide, 28.7% were due to injuries, 21.3% due to digestive diseases, 19% due to cardiovascular diseases, 12.9 % due to infectious diseases and 12.6% due to Cancer.¹ In India, the recorded per capita consumption of pure Alcohol in 2016 was 3.0 litres. While alcohol is used traditionally by men, its use by women is now on the increase. The proportion of dependent users is large. Chronic alcoholism is defined as the regular imbibing of an amount of ethyl alcohol (Ethanol) that is sufficient to harm an individual socially, psychologically or physically. A daily consumption of 40 gm of ethanol (4 small pegs or 2 larger pegs) is likely to be harmful but intake of 100 gm or more daily is certainly is dangerous.

Aetiology

Availability of alcohol and social patterns of use appear be the most important factors. Genetic factors may play some part in predisposition to dependence.

Consequences of Chronic Alcohol Misuse

Acute Intoxication –

- Emotional and Behavioural disturbance
- Medical problems: Hypoglycaemia, Aspiration of vomit, Respiratory depression.
- Accidents and injuries.

By harmful use

Medical consequences

Neurological - Dementia, Cerebral haemorrhage, Peripheral neuropathy etc, Hepatic - Fatty change and Cirrhosis, Liver Cancer, Gastrointestinal - Gastritis,

Pancreatitis, Oesophageal Cancer etc, Respiratory - Pulmonary TB, Pneumonia, Skin - Palmar erythema, Dupuytren's contractures, Cardiac - Cardiomyopathy, Hypertension, Musculoskeletal - Myopathy, fractures, Reproductive - Hypogonadism, Infertility, Psychological problems - Depression, Anxiety, Alcohol Hallucination²

Treatment

There are two main elements to intervention in a person with Alcoholism. Motivational interviewing and brief intervention, During Motivational interviewing, the clinicians help the patient to think through the assets and liabilities of the current pattern of drinking. If the patient agrees to stop drinking, sudden decrease in alcohol intake can produce withdrawal symptoms. Once the patient begins to consider change, the emphasis shift to brief interventions designed to help the patient understand more about potential action. Features include tremor of the hands, agitation and anxiety, Autonomic nervous system overactivity including an increase in pulse, respiratory rate and body temperature and insomnia.³

In Ayurveda, there is explanation of *Madya*, its *Guna* and about *Madatyaya*.

A substance, because of its *Tamo guna* masks the *Budhi* and causes *Mada* is called *Madya*.⁴ *Madya* is hot in potency, penetrating, subtle, nonslimy, dry, quick acting, quick spreading and loosening joints. By its hot potency it wards off cold, by penetrating property it destroys functions of the mind, by minuteness it spreads to all organs, by nonslimy nature it destroys *Kapha* and *Sukra*, by dryness it aggravates *Vata*, by the property of quick acting it does action quickly, by the property of spreading to all parts it bestows pleasure and by the property of loosening it spreads to all parts of the body.⁵

If a person who is *Durbala* (Weak) and of *Tamasika Prakarti* consumes excessive Alcohol, all *Tridosas* get

vitiated and get localized in the Buddhi. This produce obstructions in the activities of speech, body and mind leading to *Vaisamya* of *Sanjnyavaha* and *Pranavaha* srotases.⁶

After drinking Alcohol four stages of intoxication are observed, First Stage - Pleasant and Decent, Refreshing stage of Alcoholism

Middle Stage – Confusion, excessive talk, excessive movements, incoherence in standing etc

Third Stage – Person become motionless like a cut wood, his mind being covered with narcosis and confusion, though living he appears as dead.⁷ Based on *Dosa* predominance, it is classified into 4 - *Vataja*, *Pittaja*, *Kaphaja* and *Tridosaja*. Acharyas mentioned treatment according to *Dosa* predominance. All types of alcoholism are *Tridosaja*, hence the physician should first treat the *Dosa* which is predominant therein. In alcoholism the treatment should be started of *Kapha* because it is predominantly situated flanked by pitta and *Vata*. This disorder which is caused by faulty, excessive or deficient drinking is pacified by wine itself in proper quantity.⁸

DISCUSSION

Alcohol withdrawal syndrome is the serious complications facing during intervention Features include tremor of the hands, agitation and anxiety, Autonomic nervous system overactivity including an increase in pulse, respiratory rate and body temperature and insomnia. About 2-5 % alcoholics experience a withdrawal seizure, with the risk increasing in the context of concomitant medical problems, misuse of additional drugs, and higher.⁹ So prevention is the best solution for Alcoholism.

People become addicted to alcohol because they are trying to escape from their problems and tensions. The intoxication effect fools them to believe that they are helped from their situations but actually creating imbalances both mentally and physically. The aim of Ayurveda is to fix all the imbalances and provide the individual with the ability to deal better with stress. It has emphasized on foods and activities to be followed for maintaining a healthy body and mind. These are:

Ahara

Food has given the prime importance since Vedic period. It is considered as Brahma in Upanishad. *Kasyapa* gives it the name *Mahabhaisajya*. This is responsible for growth, development and enhancement of Ojas. According to Sri Bhagavat Gita, consumption of food I.e. *Satvika Ahara* makes the mind clear, when mind is devoid of blemishes memory power enhances.¹⁰

Sadvrta

Sadvrta comprises of two words Sat meaning good and Vrta meaning Acara or regimen. These are some rules regarding hygiene, speech, diet, urges, study, social relations etc by following this leads to prevention of psychological, physical and psychomatic disorders.¹¹

Yoga

Yoga is the Sanskrit term meaning to join/unite together, that is to bring together body, mind and spirit into a harmonious whole.¹² The central methods are Asanas (bodily postures), Pranayama (breathing techniques) etc. Aside from the physical benefits, one of the best benefits of yoga is how it helps a person manage stress. The regular practice of yoga postures can improve health and help people with better with stress.

Acharya Rasayana

Acharya Charaka introduced the unique concept of Acharya Rasayana, It is a right code of socio-behavioural conduct, it teach us a preferred life style with defined do's and don'ts, such as worship to Gods, to elders, speaking truth, avoiding excessive indulgence in alcohol, sex and excessive labor, practicing mantra, japa, kind and well behaved, keeping self-peaceful, regular use of milk, ghee and other nutritious elements of diet etc.¹³

Acharyas explained that, the person predominant in Sattva quality enjoys all the merits of *Madya* without hampering the observance of virtue and wealth.¹⁴ For improving the *Satva Guna*, one can follow *Satvika* diet, as it is explained that what we eat what we become. Also, some codes and conducts through one can control his sense organs. He, who is self-controlled, should withdraw himself from drinking further before he gets disorder of vision and de-arrangement of mind. By adopting measures mentioned in Acharya *Rasayana*, a person can be free from the emotional disturbances and

stressful life and maintains both physical and mental stability. Regular Yoga practice creates mental clarity and calmness, increase body awareness, relieves chronic stress pattern, relaxes the mind, centres attention and sharpens concentration.

CONCLUSION

Madhya by nature is just like food. It is like nectar for that who drinks according to prescribed methods, in proper quantity, in proper time, with wholesome food, according to strength on the contrary, act as poison. Those persons whose mind has been strengthened by following proper diet and regimens and codes of conduct will not become an addict, as self-awareness are important because they can help with early detection of problems and allow for early preventive action.

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