



## AYURVEDIC APPROACH TO MENTAL HEALTH- ADDRESSING ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

Jyoti<sup>1</sup>, Sanal Lasitha<sup>2</sup>, Sharma Sujata<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>P.G. 2nd Year Scholar, P.G. Department of Ayurveda Samhita evum Siddhant, Institute for Ayurved Studies and Research, Shri Krishna AYUSH University, Kurukshetra, Haryana

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, P.G. Department of Ayurveda Samhita evum Siddhant, Institute for Ayurved Studies and Research, Shri Krishna AYUSH University, Kurukshetra, Haryana

<sup>3</sup>P.G. 2nd Year Scholar, P.G. Department of Ayurveda Samhita evum Siddhant, Institute for Ayurved Studies and Research, Shri Krishna AYUSH University, Kurukshetra, Haryana

Corresponding Author: [jyotijangra2000@gmail.com](mailto:jyotijangra2000@gmail.com)

<https://doi.org/10.46607/iamj3413022025>

(Published Online: February 2025)

### Open Access

© International Ayurvedic Medical Journal, India 2025

Article Received: 06/01/2025 - Peer Reviewed: 30/01/2025 - Accepted for Publication: 09/02/2025.



### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda emphasises the interplay between body and mind through concepts like Tridosha, Trigunas, and various channels. The mental attributes, or *Trigunas*—*Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*—impact one's mental state, where *Sattva* promotes harmony, *Rajas* induces activity, and *Tamas* causes inertia. *Manovaha Srotas*, the channels of the mind, play a role in the psychosomatic operations of the body. The three doshas—*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*—govern bodily and mental functions. Mental health requires a balance of *Vata* for *Dhi*(intellect), *Pitta* for *Dhruti* (processing information), and *Kapha* for *Smruti*(memory). Coordination among these factors ensures mental well-being, while imbalances lead to mental illness like anxiety-related disorders (*Udvega*), anger, irritability, insanity (*Unmada*) and depressive states (*Vishada/Avasada*), highlighting the mind-body connection.

The essence of vitality, *Ojas*, is also crucial for mental health, with depletion leading to symptoms such as confusion and fear. *Acharya Charaka* noted that *Vishada* worsens disease conditions (*vishado rogavardhananam*). *Vishada* is an acute state of dejection with immediate physical consequences, whereas *Avasada* is a chronic depressive condition with long-term effects on mental and physical health.

Ayurvedic therapies for mental illness include:

1. *Daivavyapashraya* (Spiritual Therapies)
2. *Yuktivyapashraya* (Medicinal Treatments)
3. *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* (Psychotherapy)

Management Inputs for Mental Health:

1. *Aachara Rasayana*: This philosophy emphasises a drug-free lifestyle, truthfulness, anger management, abstinence from alcohol, regular sleep, and a wholesome diet for well-being.
2. *Dinacharya*: Aligns daily habits with natural rhythms and promotes proper diet and sensory control. It encourages eating when hungry, resting when fatigued, and maintaining creativity.

Ayurvedic management of anxiety and depression involves a holistic approach, integrating spiritual, medicinal, and lifestyle practices to maintain and restore mental health, i.e. “*आत्मादेशकुलकालबलशक्तिज्ञानेयथावच्चेति*” (Ch. Su. 11/46).

**Keywords:** *Vishada, Avasada, Udvega, Anxiety, Depression, Manovaha Strotas, Daivavyapashraya, Yuktivyapashraya, Sattvavajaya.*

## INTRODUCTION

Mental health is a crucial aspect of overall well-being, influencing how individuals think, feel, and act. In recent years, the prevalence of mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression has been on the rise, leading to an increased interest in alternative and complementary therapies. Ayurveda, an ancient system of medicine originating in India, offers a unique approach to mental health that encompasses the balance of physical, mental, and spiritual elements.

Ayurveda's holistic framework is built on the principles of *Tridosha* (the three bodily humors: *Vata, Pitta, and Kapha*) and *Trigunas* (the three mental qualities: *Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas*). These concepts are essential for understanding the Ayurvedic perspective on mental health. This paper explores the Ayurvedic approach to managing anxiety and depression, focusing on the theoretical foundations and practical applications of Ayurvedic therapies.

### Theoretical Foundations of Ayurvedic Mental Health

#### Tridosha and Mental Health

In Ayurveda, the *Tridosha* system describes the three fundamental energies that govern all physiological and psychological processes. Each *dosha* is associated with specific functions in the body and mind:

- **Vata (Air and Ether):** Governs movement, communication, and creativity. It is responsible for *Dhi* (intellect) and can contribute to anxiety when imbalanced.
- **Pitta (Fire and Water):** regulates digestion, metabolism, and perception. When imbalanced, it influences *Dhruti* (processing information) and can lead to irritability and anger.
- **Kapha (Water and Earth):** Provides structure, stability, and endurance. It is associated with *Smruti* (memory) and can cause lethargy and depression when imbalanced.

#### Trigunas and Mental State

The *Trigunas* are the three essential qualities that influence the mind:

- **Sattva (Purity and Harmony):** This practice promotes clarity, wisdom, and peace. A predominance of *Sattva* is associated with mental health and well-being.
- **Rajas (Activity and Passion):** Drives action, desire, and restlessness. Excessive *Rajas* can lead to anxiety and hyperactivity.
- **Tamas (Inertia and Darkness):** It induces dullness, ignorance, and lethargy. Its predominance can result in depression and confusion.

### Manovaha Srotas and Psychosomatic Connections

*Manovaha Srotas* are the channels that connect the mind and body, facilitating psychosomatic interactions. Proper functioning of these channels is vital for mental health, and blockages or imbalances can lead to psychological disorders. Ayurveda emphasises maintaining the balance of these channels to ensure mental and physical harmony.

### Ojas: The Essence of Vitality

In Ayurveda, *Ojas* is considered the essence of vitality and immunity. It is crucial for maintaining mental and physical health. Depletion of *Ojas* can lead to mental confusion, fear, and vulnerability to stress. Strengthening *Ojas* through proper diet, lifestyle, and spiritual practices is fundamental in Ayurveda.

### Ayurvedic Perspective on Anxiety and Depression

#### Anxiety (Udvega)

Anxiety, referred to as *Udvega* in Ayurveda, is characterised by excessive *Vata* and *Rajas*. Symptoms include restlessness, fear, and nervousness. Ayurvedic management of anxiety focuses on calming *Vata* and reducing *Rajas* through diet, lifestyle modifications, and herbal remedies.

#### Depression (Vishada/Avasada)

Depression, known as *Vishada* or *Avasada*, is associated with an increase in *Tamas* and *Kapha*. *Vishada* is an acute state of dejection with immediate physical consequences, while *Avasada* is in chronic condition with long-term effects. Symptoms include lethargy, lack of interest, and sadness. Ayurvedic treatment aims to balance *Kapha* and reduce *Tamas* through stimulation and purification therapies.

### Ayurvedic Therapies for Mental Health

#### Daivavyapashraya (Spiritual Therapies)

Spiritual therapies in Ayurveda involve practices that connect the individual with higher consciousness and promote mental peace. These include:

- **Mantra Chanting:** Repetition of sacred sounds to calm the mind and balance the *Trigunas*.
- **Meditation:** Techniques to enhance *Sattva* and reduce mental fluctuations.
- **Prayer and Rituals:** Activities that provide mental clarity and spiritual comfort.

### Yuktivyapashraya (Medicinal Treatments)

Ayurvedic medicinal treatments involve the use of herbs, dietary adjustments, and physical therapies to balance the doshas and support mental health:

- **Herbal Remedies:** Plants like *Brahmi*, *Ashwagandha*, and *Jatamansi* are used for calming and rejuvenating properties.
- **Dietary Guidelines:** Emphasis on *Sattvic* foods that promote mental clarity and stability.
- **Panchakarma:** Detoxification procedures to cleanse the body and mind.

### Sattvavajaya Chikitsa (Psychotherapy)

Ayurvedic psychotherapy focuses on enhancing the strength of the *Sattva* and reducing *Rajas* and *Tamas* through cognitive and behavioural strategies:

- **Counseling:** Guiding to cultivate positive thinking and emotional resilience.
- **Lifestyle Modifications:** Encouraging routines that align with natural rhythms and promote mental well-being.

### Management Inputs for Mental Health

#### Aachara Rasayana

*Aachara Rasayana* emphasises a holistic, drug-free lifestyle to promote mental and physical health:

- **Truthfulness and Non-violence:** Ethical living to reduce mental stress.
- **Anger Management:** Techniques to control anger and promote emotional stability.
- **Abstinence from Alcohol:** Avoidance of substances that disturb mental equilibrium.
- **Regular Sleep:** Ensuring adequate rest to rejuvenate the mind.
- **Wholesome Diet:** Consuming nutritious foods that support mental clarity and balance.

#### Dinacharya (Daily Routine)

*Dinacharya* involves aligning daily activities with natural cycles to maintain mental health:

- **Proper Diet:** Eating at regular intervals and choosing *Sattvic* foods.
- **Sensory Control:** Managing sensory inputs to prevent mental overload.
- **Rest and Activity Balance:** Ensuring periods of rest and activity to avoid mental fatigue.

- **Creativity and Learning:** Engaging in creative activities stimulates the mind and promotes *Sattva*.

## CONCLUSION

The Ayurvedic approach to mental health offers a comprehensive framework for addressing anxiety and depression through a combination of spiritual, medicinal, and lifestyle practices. Individuals can achieve and sustain mental well-being by understanding and balancing the *Tridosha and Trigunas*, maintaining the health of *Manovaha Srotas*, and enhancing *Ojus*. Integrating these ancient practices into modern mental health care can provide a holistic and effective strategy for managing mental health disorders.

## REFERENCES

1. Charaka Samhita, Sutrasthana, Chapter 11, Verse 46.
2. Dash, B., & Sharma, R. K. (2009). Charaka Samhita (Vol. 1-7). Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office.
3. Lad, V. (2002). Textbook of Ayurveda, Fundamental Principles (Vol. 1). The Ayurvedic Press.
4. Frawley, D. (1997). Ayurveda and the Mind: The Healing of Consciousness. Lotus Press.
5. Ravindra PN, Babu P. A Correlation Study between Tri-Guna and Emotional Style: A Theoretical Approach toward Developing a Working Model to Integrate Tri-Guna with Affective Neuroscience and Well-Being, *International Journal of Yoga*, 14(3), 213-221. doi: 10.4103/ijoy.ijoy\_52\_21.

**Source of Support: Nil**

**Conflict of Interest: None Declared**

How to cite this URL: Jyoti et al: Ayurvedic Approach to Mental Health- Addressing Anxiety and Depression. *International Ayurvedic Medical Journal* {online} 2025 {cited February 2025}