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### **Review Article**

## **AN AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE ON DRUG ABUSE AND PSYCHOSOMATIC DISORDERS: A REVIEW**

**DR. JAGDISH PRASAD BAIRWA<sup>1</sup>**

1. Ayurved Medical Officer, Government of Rajasthan.

### **Address for correspondence:**

Dr. Jagdish Prasad Bairwa, Ayurved Medical Officer, Government of Rajasthan.

Email Id: [dripbavu@gmail.com](mailto:dripbavu@gmail.com)

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### **1. ABSTRACT**

Psychological disorders are disturbances of the mind manifesting through abnormal thoughts, feelings, or behaviours that significantly disrupt an individual's well-being or the welfare of those around them. These conditions emerge from a complex interplay of genetic factors and environmental influences. According to the 2024 United Nations World Drug Report, nearly 292 million people worldwide used illicit drugs in 2022—a rise of about 20% over the past decade. Ayurveda, an ancient system of holistic health, identifies psychological disorders under the category of Unmad, with established guidelines for causes, development (pathogenesis), and treatment. Long-term consumption of addictive substances often leads to both psychological and physical disorders. The Ayurvedic management of such conditions aligns with treatments prescribed for Unmad, involving techniques such as *Satvavajaya Chikitsa* (mental therapy), *Yukti Vyapashraya* (rational and medicinal intervention including detoxification), and *Medhya Rasayana* (herbal medicines that enhance intellect/mind). This review explores drug abuse and associated psychosomatic disorders through the lens of Ayurveda, emphasizing preventive measures and therapeutic strategies.

**KEYWORDS:** Drug abuse; Unmad; Psychosomatic disorders; Ayurveda

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Drug abuse refers to the inappropriate or non-medical use of substances, whether therapeutic or non-therapeutic, that may lead to harmful physical, psychological, or social consequences, even in the absence of clinical addiction. The issue has grown into a major public health concern worldwide, particularly among adolescents and young adults. Prescription medications such as narcotic analgesics and central nervous system stimulants, which are originally intended to manage conditions like chronic pain, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and narcolepsy, are increasingly being misused for recreational purposes or

for enhancing performance and mood [1]. Recent data highlights the gravity of the problem. According to the 2024 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) World Drug Report, approximately 292 million people globally—equivalent to 1 in 18 individuals aged 15–64—reported the use of illicit drugs in 2022. This reflects an alarming 20% increase in drug use over the past decade. Cannabis remains the most commonly consumed drug, followed by opioids, cocaine, and amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS). Furthermore, about 39.5 million people are estimated to be living with drug use disorders, a figure that continues to strain healthcare systems across the world [2]. These statistics indicate not only the widespread prevalence of drug use but also the growing burden of drug-related mental health issues. From an Ayurvedic perspective, mental and psychosomatic disorders induced by substance abuse can be studied under the concept of *Unmad* (insanity or derangement of mind). Classical texts describe *Visha* (toxic substances) as one of the important etiological factors contributing to disturbances of the mind and body. The ingestion of such harmful agents vitiates the *Doshas* and obstructs the normal functioning of the *Manovaha Srotas* (channels related to the mind), ultimately leading to psychological disorders. The ancient seers not only described the clinical manifestations and pathogenesis of these disorders but also prescribed comprehensive therapeutic measures for their management. Therefore, the Ayurvedic approach to drug abuse and its related psychosomatic disorders is highly relevant in the present era. With rising prevalence, particularly among youth, there is a need to revisit and evaluate traditional principles of *Satvavajaya Chikitsa* (psychotherapy), *Yukti Vyapashraya* (rational and pharmacological therapy, including detoxification), and *Medhya Rasayana* (rejuvenative and nootropic formulations). This article attempts to analyze the problem of drug abuse and its psychosomatic consequences through an Ayurvedic lens, offering insights into causation, pathogenesis, and holistic management strategies.

## 2. Aims and Objective

- To examine and analyze the spectrum of psychological disorders arising as a consequence of substance and drug abuse, with emphasis on their impact on mental health and overall well-being.
- To evaluate, elaborate and discuss the management of psychological disorders.

## 3. Material and Method

Information was collected from classical Ayurvedic texts with commentaries, modern medical literature, and both indexed and non-indexed journals. Reports from international agencies, including the UNODC World Drug Report, were also reviewed to provide updated prevalence data.

This integrated approach helped in understanding the etiology, pathogenesis, and management of psychosomatic disorders related to drug abuse.

## 4. Conceptual study

### Causes of Psychological Disorders due to Substance Abuse (Hetu):

Acharya Charaka describes the origin of psychological disorders as arising from the intake of impure or harmful substances (*duṣṭa dravyas*), which disturb the balance of *Vatādi Doṣas*. Continuous and excessive consumption of such

substances not only harms the body but also disrupts the mind. Over a period of time, this habitual use creates dependency and addiction, leading to both mental and physical disorders.

### Pathogenesis of Psychosomatic Disorders due to Substance Abuse:

According to Acharya Charaka, the development of psychological illness occurs when the *Manovaha Srotas* (mental channels) are impaired by aggravated *Vatādi Doṣas*. Once these disturbed doshas influence the Buddhi (intellect) and Mana (mind), the natural functioning of mental faculties is obstructed. This imbalance results in psychosomatic conditions, in which emotional and cognitive disturbances manifest together with somatic symptoms. Clinical feature of psychological disorders due to abuse substance<sup>4</sup>

**Table no 1. Long term effect of Drugs**

Sr.	Drugs	Long term effect
1.	Opioid	Mood instability <sup>[5]</sup>
2.	Cannabis	Psychosis <sup>[5]</sup>
3.	Cocaine <i>Stimulant</i>	Paranoid ideation, visual and auditory hallucinations <sup>[6]</sup> .
3.	Amphetamines <i>Stimulant</i>	Psychosis, dizziness, mood or mental changes, mental illness <sup>[7]</sup> .
4.	Methampheta-mine <i>Stimulant</i>	Anxiety, confusion, insomnia, mood disturbances, violent behavior, psychotic features, including paranoia, visual and auditory hallucinations, and delusions <sup>[8]</sup> .
5.	MDMA <i>Stimulant</i>	Confusion, Depression, Sleep problems, Severe anxiety, Possible depletion of serotonin and memory <sup>[9]</sup>
6.	Barbiturates <i>Depressant</i>	Insomnia <sup>[10]</sup> .
7.	Benzodiazepines <i>Depressant</i>	Impaired thinking, memory loss, anxiety, depression, irritability, aggression, personality change, difficulty sleeping. <sup>[11]</sup> .
9.	LSD <i>Hallucinogen</i>	Psychosis, A motivational syndrome, Flashbacks.
10.	PCP <i>Dissociative Anesthetics</i>	Impaired memory, Flashbacks (similar to chronic LSD), anxiety and depression, suicide attempts, Social withdrawal and isolation, Toxic psychosis, paranoia and auditory hallucinations <sup>[12]</sup> .
11.	Inhalants	Psychosis and permanent brain damage <sup>[13]</sup>

### 5. Management of psychological disorders due to drug abuse

#### • *Sattvājaya Chikitsā* (Psychological Counselling):

*Sattvājaya Chikitsā* emphasizes creating awareness in individuals about the harmful consequences of alcoholism and substance abuse. The foundation of this therapy lies in establishing a supportive, empathetic, and trusting relationship between the therapist and the patient. Such a therapeutic bond forms the core of effective psychotherapeutic intervention, enabling the individual to develop insight, self-control, and motivation for recovery.

### • Yukti Vyapāśraya (Rational Therapy):

- In cases of psychological disorders caused by substance abuse, the initial step is detoxification, which is achieved by discontinuing the abused substance and managing withdrawal symptoms. This may be followed by purification procedures such as Induced Emesis (Vamana) or Purgation (Virechana), as described in Ayurveda. Therapeutic formulations like *Mahāpaishāchika* Ghṛita, enriched with Medhya (nootropic) herbs, and Purāṇa Ghṛita are considered highly beneficial in alleviating and managing psychological disturbances associated with drug abuse.

**Table no 2. Some Ayurvedic formulation used in psychological disorders and drug abuse**

Sr. no	Ayurvedic formulation	Dose	Anupan	Indication
1.	<i>Sarasvatarista</i>	12-24 ml	<i>Water</i>	<i>Apasmara, Manasa dosa</i>
2.	<i>Brahma rasayana</i>		<i>Milk, water</i>	<i>Tandra, Shrama, Manodaurbalya</i>
3.	<i>Brahmi ghṛta</i>	12g	<i>Warm milk, warm water</i>	<i>Apasmara, unmada, vandhyatva, kushth</i>
4.	<i>Kalyanaka ghṛta</i>	12g	<i>Warm milk, warm water</i>	<i>Kasa, Pandu, Apasmara, Balagraha, garavisa, Bhutonmada</i>
5.	<i>Maha kalyanaka ghṛta</i>	12g	<i>Warm milk, warm water</i>	<i>Mandagni, Pandu, Kasa, Smṛti kshay</i>
6.	<i>Maha pancagavya ghṛta</i>	12g	<i>Warm milk, warm water</i>	<i>Udara rog, Jvara, Sopha, Apasmara</i>
7.	<i>Pancagavya ghṛta</i>	12g	<i>Water</i>	<i>Pittaja unmada, Bhrama</i>
8.	<i>Sarasvataurna</i>	5 gm	<i>Water</i>	<i>Shrama, Sirahshula</i>
9.	<i>Manasamirta vataka</i>	1-2 tab	<i>Milk,</i>	<i>Manodosa, unmad, apasmara</i>
10.	<i>Sarpagandha vati</i>	2-3tab	<i>Water, milk</i>	<i>Unmada, nidranasa, apasmara</i>
11.	<i>Smṛtisagara rasa</i>	125 mg	<i>Honey, ghee</i>	<i>Manasaroga, cittodvega, smṛtinasa, Anidra</i>
12.	<i>Unmada gajakesari rasa</i>	250 mg	<i>Ghee, honey, nagvalli ras</i>	<i>Anidra, Unmada, apasmara</i>

## 6. DISCUSSION

Acharya Charaka has described three principal modalities of treatment for managing diseases, including psychological disorders: *Daivavyapāśraya Chikitsā*, *Sattvāvjaya Chikitsā*, and *Yukti Vyapāśraya Chikitsā*. In the context of Manas Roga (mental disorders), treatment is primarily carried out through *Vijñāna* (knowledge), *Jñāna* (wisdom), *Dhairya* (patience), *Smṛti* (memory), and *Samādhi* (concentration or meditation) [14]. In modern terms, *Sattvāvjaya Chikitsā* is often correlated with psychotherapy, wherein the patient's mind is guided away from harmful thoughts and influences. *Yukti Vyapāśraya Chikitsā* refers to therapeutic

interventions aimed at eliminating disorders through the rational use of medicines and procedures. The term *Vyapāśraya* also implies the avoidance of causative factors, which is considered a fundamental principle in the management of all diseases. Additionally, *Pañchakarma* therapies are recommended in psychosomatic disorders for detoxification and balance of doshas. Certain medicated preparations such as *Mahāpaishāchika Ghṛita* and *Purāṇa Ghṛita* are also prescribed for their efficacy in alleviating psychological disturbances [15].

## 7. CONCLUSION

Psychological disorders arising from drug abuse have become one of the most pressing global health issues, with India also being significantly affected—particularly among the youth. The harmful effects of substance abuse, along with its psychological consequences, can be effectively addressed through *Sattvājaya Chikitsā* (psychological counselling), and *Yukti Vyapāśraya Chikitsā*, which includes detoxification procedures and the administration of *Medhya Rasāyana* for strengthening mental health and restoring balance,

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