

**MANAS – A NIMITTA AND BHESHAJA IN ANNAVAHA SROTO
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ABSTRACT

The common notion that “too much stress makes you sick” holds more than a grain of truth. A healthy mind in a healthy body, is the principle aim guiding all the prevailing medicine system. In the era of fast food along with irregularities in the dietary habits, one is always exposed to tremendous amount of mental stress. All these factors accounts for Gastro-intestinal disturbances. A positive mental attitude and concentration of mind on food are crucial for proper digestion whereas the negative mental attitude adversely affects the digestive health. global distribution with varying prevalence and psychological consequences. Emotions like stress, anxiety, mood swings can trigger stomach secretions and give rise to many Gastro-intestinal disorders. The mind acts as a double way sword, in one way it acts as a nidana/nimitta(cause) for manifestation of disease and the other way it also acts as a bhashaja(cure) for the same disease. Hence the Tranquility of mind is considered to be very essential for proper nourishment of the body.

KEYWORDS: Stress, Dietary habits, Gastro-intestinal disturbance, mental attitude, Gut-Brain axis.

INTRODUCTION

Many of us might have had a Gut-wrenching experience, butterflies in the stomach or faced any stressful situations that landed into abdominal distress, nausea kind of symptoms!

Acharya Sushruta while explaining the definition of health mentioned about *Prasanna Atma, Indriya, Mana*.^[1] *Vishadou Roga Vardhananam*, which tells that mental factor has a capacity to manipulate the health of an individual.^[2] *Chintyam, Uhyam, Vicharyamare* attributed to *Mana* as their *Arthas*.^[3] While pondering upon the *Roga Adhithana* it's considered as *Shareera* and *Mana*.^[4] This Emphasizes on the role of *Manas* in maintenance of Health and manifestation of Disease.

A feeling of emotional or physical tension is called as Stress. It can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry or nervous.^[5] It is a sort of body's reaction to a challenge or demand. Certain conditions when abnormal human mental faculty fails to explain its characteristics within its psychological sphere alone and manifests its behavior involving the physical/somatic spheres as well, then the whole outcome or the phenomenon can be termed as psychosomatic distress.^[6] The overall prevalence rate of psychosomatic disorders is seen to be 5%-7%.^[7]

The Brain and the Gut are considered to be connected and constantly in communication. Infact more number of neurons reside in the gut than in the entire spinal cord. If the mind gets distracted by any means either stress, anxiety, nervousness etc it directly affects the digestion leading to diseases like *Grahani, Amlapitta, Atisara, Mukhapaka, Annadravashula* etc.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Concept of this study is based on review of *Ayurvedic* and Contemporary text books. Materials related to *Manas*, Psychosomatic disorder, *Samprapti* and other relevant topics have been collected from compiled books and through internet. The famous *Ayurvedic* texts used in this study are *Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Astanga Hridaya, Astanga Sangraha* and relevant articles.

Enteric-Nervous System as a “Second Brain

Life Sustaining functions such as breathing, heartbeat, blood pressure and body temperature are regulated through ANS. This complex network of nerves extends from the brain to all the major organs of the body and has 2 major divisions. The Sympathetic nervous system triggers the “fight or flight” response. The parasympathetic nervous system calms the body down after the danger has passed.

Both the Sympathetic and Parasympathetic nervous system interact with another less well known component of the autonomic nervous system-the enteric nervous system, which helps regulate digestion. The Enteric nervous system is sometimes referred to as a “2nd Brain” because it relies on the same types of neurons and neurotransmitters that are found in CNS. After sensing the food has entered the Gut, neurons lining the digestive tract signal muscle cells to initiate a series of intestinal contractions that propel the food farther along. The enteric nervous system along with its 100 million nerve cells that line our G. I tract from oesophagus to rectum, regulate digestive processes like swallowing, the release of enzyme to break down food and categorization of food into nutrients and waste products. At the same time the enteric nervous system uses neurotransmitters such as serotonin to communicate and interact with the central nervous system.^[8]

Stress and the Sensitive-Gut

The brain has direct effect on the stomach and intestine. Ex- A very thought of eating can release the stomach juices before food gets there. This connection goes both ways. A troubled intestine can send signals to the gut. Therefore a person’s stomach or intestinal distress can be the cause or the product of anxiety, stress or depression. That’s because the brain and GI system are intimately connected. The Gut-Brain axis tells us how psychological or social stress might cause digestive problems when a person becomes stressed enough to trigger the fight or flight response. Ex-Digestion slows or even stops so that the body can divert all its internal energy to facing a perceived threat. In response to less severe stress, such as public speaking, the digestion may slow down or be temporarily disrupted, causing abdominal pain and other symptoms of functional G. I disorder.

When stress activates the flight or fight response, it affects the digestive process by-causing esophagus to go into spasms, increases the acid in the stomach, nauseaetc, In severe cases stress may cause a decreased blood flow and oxygen supply to the stomach, which could lead to cramping, inflammation or an imbalance of gut bacteria. Ofcourse, it can work the other way as well: persistent G. I problems can heighten anxiety and stress.^[9]

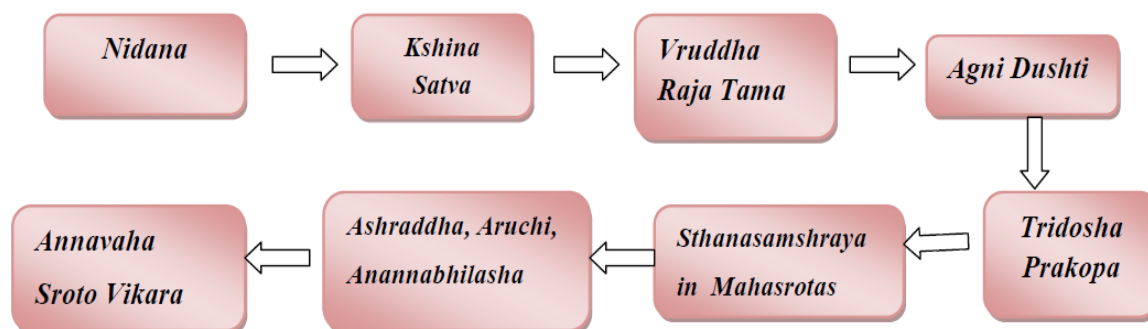
Many people with functional G. I disorders perceive painmore acutely than other people do because their brains are more responsive to pain signals from G. I tract. Stress can make the pain more worse.

Considering the *Nidana* like

Aharaja-Dushta, Asuchi, kalushitabhojana, not following the ashtaaharavidhis, etc.

Viharaja- Improper usage of *Indriyas*, not following the *Sadvritta* etc.

Mansika- excess *chinta, shoka, bhaya, udvega* etc.



Flow Chart 1: Samprapti Chart depicting the effect of Manas on Annavaahasrotas.

Management

1. Regular Physical activity-Physical activity relieves tension and stimulates the release of chemicals in your brain called Endorphins, which act as natural pain killers. Endorphins improve sleep, which can help relieve stress.
2. Yoga and Meditation- Many *asanas* like *Pavana muktasana, Dhanurasana, Bhujangasana, Vajrasana* etc facilitate digestion and bring mental stability. *Pranayama* and other meditative techniques bring about the stability in mind.
3. *Satvavajaya Chikitsa*- A *Satvika Manas* will always be *Sukhadayaka*. Hence *satva* is considered as *Mano guna* unlike *rajas* and *tamas*. *Acharya Charaka* considered *Satvavajaya* as *Nigrahana* of *Manas* from *Ahita Indriyarthas*.^[10] This can be achieved by five methods which are *Jnana*, *Vijnana*, *Dhairya*, *smriti* and *Samadhi*.

DISCUSSION

G. I disorders manifest due to disordered functions of *Agni*. For Ex- *Grahani*, It is said that after the cure of *Atisara* or the one suffering from *mandagni*, if such person consumes unwholesome diet and regimen leading to further vitiation of *agni* along with *Grahani*. In *Charaka Samhita* it's stated that wholesome food taken even in proper quantity doesn't get properly digested when the individual is afflicted with grief, fear, anger, sorrow, excessive sleep and Vigil.^[11]

Passion, anger, greed, confusion, envy, bashfulness, grief, indigestion etc. will end up in *Amapradoshaja Vikaras*. It's proved that IBS or *Grahani* occurs too frequently in psychiatric patients especially those with anxiety and mood disorders.

CONCLUSION

The Psychosomatic sphere is gradually increasing and the day isn't far when it would be top of the chart. Continuous target oriented work load, unrest, family conflicts, socio-economic aspects disturb the physical as well as mental health lead to insomnia, anxiety neurosis, indigestion etc leading to poor quality of life.

As *Ayurveda* has always stressed in treatment of disease from the root cause and not merely the symptoms. Psychosomatic disorders are such kind where triggering factor lies in the psyche first followed by physical illness. so it is more logical to control the mind by administration of *Medhyarasayana*, *murdhitaila*, etc.

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