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A CRITICAL REVIEW ON ROLE OF LIPID-BASED AYURVEDIC FORMULATIONS (*GHRITA*) IN MENTAL HEALTH

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To critically review the role of lipid-based Ayurvedic formulations (*Ghrita*) in promoting mental health and managing mental disorders. Data Sources: Data were collected from classical Ayurvedic texts, including *Charaka Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Sharangadhara Samhita*, *Bharat Bhaishajya Ratnakara*, and *Bhaishajya Ratnavali*, along with relevant research articles published in peer-reviewed journals. **Review Methods:** A comprehensive literature review was carried out to identify *ghrita* formulations used in mental health conditions. Classical literature was reviewed and studied for therapeutic indications and modern scientific researches were conducted for pharmacological and clinical effect assessment. **Results:** Various *ghrita* formulations are mentioned in *Ayurveda* for the management of anxieties, stress, memory problems, epilepsy, insanity and other neurological disorders. *Ghrita Kalpana* is a special form of dosage which capitalizes on the therapeutic properties of both herbal ingredients and *ghrita*. As *ghrita* is rich in lipids, it may assist in delivering the bioactive components across the blood–brain barrier, thereby increasing their therapeutic effects. Recent studies have highlighted the positive effects of several *ghrita* formulations on cognition, memory, stress tolerance, neuroprotection and global mental well-being. **Conclusion:** *Ghrita* formulations are among the major modalities in Ayurveda for sustaining mental health and treating various neuropsychiatric disorders. The scientific appraisal of

these formulations, both from classical and modern research, show. their potential use for the treatment and management of mental health. Further research including experimental investigations and clinical trials are needed to evaluate the efficacy, safety and mechanisms of action of these formulations.

KEYWORDS: *Ghrita*, *manas roga*, mental health, memory, *Ghrita Kalpana*, *Ayurveda*.

INTRODUCTION

One in seven people worldwide has a mental disorder, according to the WHO,[1] making it one of the top ten most prevalent diseases in the world.[2]

Hruday (heart or cardiac region) and ten dhamanis are the location of mana (mind) while classical descriptions indicate the brain as 'intellectual heart'.[3]

Dhee, *Dhruti*, *Smriti*, *medha*, and *Buddhi* are functions of *mana*.[4] Its disturbance may lead to disorders like *unmada (*mania/psychosis*), apasmar (*epilepsy*), chittodvega*, etc.

Ghritas have the ability to act on *manovaha srotas*. It also has *Sanskarasya anuvartan* property.[5] Hence, *ghritas* from five main *granthas* have been compiled and used in this review.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Five classical texts have been studied in this review, and *ghrita* (clarified butter) indicating effects on mental health and mental disorders are compiled from the following classical texts: *Charak* (Ch.) *Samhita*[6] (1500-1000 BC), *Ashtang Hruday*[7] (A.H.) (700AD), *Bhaishajyaratnavali*[8] (B.R.) (19th century), *Bharat Bhaishajya Ratnakar* (B.B. R)[9] (19th century), *Sharangdhar Samhita (Sh. S.)*[10] (13th century CE).

All *Ghritas*, mainly or secondarily indicated as *Medhya* (intelligence promoting), *Smrutikar* (increasing memory) or indicated in diseases like *Unmada* (Insanity disorder), *Apasmar* (Epilepsy disorder), *Bhrama* (giddiness), *Mada* (intoxication), *chittovikar* (mental disorders), are included in this article. Some formulations with the same name are repeated in the table because of differences in ingredients.

OBSERVATION AND RESULTS

In this review, five classical texts are reviewed from which 116 *ghrita* formulations working on mental health or *manovaha srotas* (channels of mind) are found. Their name, words related to mental health and textual references are mentioned in Table 1.

Table 1: *Ghrita* names with Indications and References.

Sr. No.	*Ghrita* Name	Words used related to Mental health	Reference
1	*Yakshamdinashak Ghrita*	*Apasmar*	A. H. Chi. 3/ 108- 109
2	*Nagabaladi Ghrita*	*Bhrama*	A. H. Chi. 3/121-125
3	*Eladi Ghrita*	*Medhya*	A.H. Chi. 5/28-32
4	*Dadhik Ghrita*	*Unmada, Apasmar*	A.H. Chi. 14/13-20
5	*Nilini Ghrita*	*Unmada*	A. H. Chi. 14/55-58
6	*Udarrognashak Ghrita*	*Unmada, Apasmar*	A. H. Chi. 15/ 28-30
7	*Karpasbijadi Ghrita*	*Unmada*	A.H. Chi. 5/18
8	*Mahabhutarav Ghrita*	*Unmada*	A. H. Chi. 5/20
9	*Unmadnashak Hingvadi Ghrita*	*Unmada, Apasmar*	A. H. Chi. 6/22
10	*Brahmi Ghrita*	*Smruti, Medha*	A. H. Chi. 6/23-26
11	*Kalyanak Ghrita*	*Unmada, Apasmar, Buddhi*	A. H. Chi. 6/26-31
12	*Mahapaishachik Ghrita*	*Unmad, Apasmar, Buddhimedhasmrutikar*	A. H. Chi. 6/34-37
13	*Mahapanchagavya Ghrita*	*Apasmar*	A. H. Chi. 7/19-23
14	*Brahmi Ghrita*	*Medhya, Unmada*	A. H. Chi. 7/24
15	*Vatapittaj Apasmarnashak Ghrita*	*Vata pittaj Apasmar*	A.H. Chi. 7/26-27
16	*Tiktashatpal Ghrita*	*Mada*	Ch. Chi. 7/140
17	*Mahatiktak Ghrita*	*Unmada*	Ch. Chi. 7/146
18	*Hingvadya Ghrita*	*Unmada*	Ch. Chi. 9/ 34
19	*Kalyanak Ghrita*	*Unmada*	Ch. Chi. 9/ 35-41
20	*Mahakalyanak Ghrita*	*Sannipataj Unmada*	Ch. Chi. 9/42-44
21	*Mahapaishachik Ghrita*	*Apasmar, Unmada, Buddhi smrutikar*	Ch. Chi. 9/45- 48
22	*Lashunadya Ghrita*	*Unmada, Apasmar*	Ch. Chi. 9/49- 51
23	*Dvitiya Lashunadya Ghrita*	*Unmada*	Ch. Chi. 9/52-55
24	*Hingvadi Ghrita*	*Unmada*	Ch. Chi. 9/57
25	*Hingvadi Ghrita -2*	*Unmada*	Ch. Chi. 9/58
26	*Prapurana Ghrita*	*Medhya*	Ch. Chi. 9/61
27	*Siddharthak Ghrita*	*Apasmar, Unmada*	Ch. Chi. 9/73-74
28	*Panchgavya Ghrita*	*Apasmar*	Ch. Chi. 10/17
29	*Mahapanchgavya Ghrita*	*Apasmar, Unmada*	Ch. Chi. 10/18-24
30	*Brahmi Ghrita*	*Unmada, Apasmar*	Ch. Chi. 10/25
31	*Saindhavadi Ghrita*	*Apasmar*	Ch. Chi. 10/26
32	*Vachadi Ghrita*	*Vata kaphaj Apasmar*	Ch. Chi. 10/27
33	*Jivaniya Ghrita*	*Vata pittaj Apasmar*	Ch. Chi. 10/29
34	*Kashadi Ghrita*	*Vata pittaj Apasmar*	Ch. Chi. 10/30
35	*Amalakadi Ghrita*	*Pittaj Apasmar*	Ch. Chi. 10/31

36	*Dhatrifaladya Ghrita*	*Apasmar*	Ch. Chi. 11/50-53
37	*Amrut Ghrita*	*Apasmar, Unmada*	Ch. Chi. 23/242- 249
38	*Jivaniya Ghrita*	*Apasmar*	Ch. Chi. 29/61-70
39	*Shatavari Ghrita*	*Unmada*	Bh. R. 13/139-144
40	*Eladimantha Ghrita*	*Medhya*	Bh. R. 14/233-236
41	*Hingvadya Ghrita*	*Unmada*	Bh. R. 24/58
42	*Lashunadya Ghrita*	*Unmada*	Bh. R. 24/59-63
43	*Paniyakalyanak Ghrita*	*Apasmar, Unmada*	Bh. R. 24/64-70
44	*Kshirkalyanak Ghrita*	*Unmada*	Bh. R. 24/71
45	*Mahakalyanak Ghrita*	*Unmada*	Bh. R. 24/72,73
46	*Swalpachaitas Ghrita*	*Unmada*	Bh. R. 24/74-76
47	*Mahapaishachik Ghrita*	*Unmada, Apasmar*	Bh. R. 24/77-79
48	*Shiva Ghrita*	*Unmada, Apasmar*	Bh. R. 24/ 81-92
49	*Kushmanda Ghrita*	*Apasmar*	Bh. R. 25/34
50	*Brahmi Ghrita*	*Apasmar, Unmada*	Bh. R. 25/35
51	*Panchagavya Ghrita (Swalp)*	*Unmadaa, Apasmar*	Bh. R. 25/36
52	*Panchagavya Ghrita (Brihat)*	*Apasmar*	Bh. R. 25/37-42
53	*Mahachaitas Ghrita*	*Apasmar, Unmada*	Bh. R. 25/43-48
54	*Nakuladya Ghrita*	*Apasmar, Unmada*	Bh. R. 26/221-226
55	*Chagaladya Ghrita*	*Apasmar, Unmada, Bhrama*	Bh. R. 26/232-256
56	*Rasonadya Ghrita*	*Unmada, Apasmar*	Bh. R. 32/ 166-168
57	*Vidari Ghrita*	*Apasmar, Unmada*	Bh. R. 35/26-37
58	*Mahatiktak Ghrita*	*Unmada*	Bh. R. 54/243-249
59	*Mayuradya Ghrita*	*Apasmar*	Bh. R. 65/77-80
60	*Chhagaladya Ghrita*	*Apasmar, Unmada, Bhutonmada, Bhrama*	Bh. R. 74/312
61	*Dhatri Ghrita*	*Unmada, Bhrama*	Bh. R. 101/23-28
62	*Amruta Ghrita*	*Unmada, Apasmar*	B. B. R. Vol 1/ 161
63	*Ashtamangal Ghrita*	*Medhya, Smruti, Medha*	B. B. R. Vol 1/174
64	*Ailey Sarpi*	*Shirobhrama*	B. B. R. Vol 1/ 587
65	*Kalyanak Ghrita*	*Apasmar, Unmada*	B. B. R. Vol 1 / 826
66	*Kumudadya Ghrita*	*Mada, Bhrama*	B. B. R. Vol 1/ 835
67	*Kushmandadi Ghrita*	*Apasmar*	B. B. R. Vol 1/ 843
68	*Guggultiktak Ghrita*	*Unmada*	B. B. R. Vol 2 - 1353
69	*Guggulpanchatikta Ghrita*	*Mada*	B. B. R. Vol. 2- 1355
70	*Chatushkuvalaya Ghrita*	*Medhya*	B. B. R. Vol. 2 - 1762
71	*Chandanadi Ghrita*	*Unmada, Apasmar*	B. B. R. Vol. 2 - 1763
72	*Chaitas Ghrita - 1*	*Sarvachetovikar*	B.B. R. Vol. 2- 1783
73	*Chaitas Ghrita - 2*	*Chittavikar, Unmada, Mada, Murccha, Apasmar*	B. B. R. Vol 2 - 1784
74	*Jivantyadik Ghrita*	*Bhrama, Murccha*	B.B. R. Vol. 2 - 2041
75	*Tiktak Ghrita*	*Unmada, Apasmar*	B.B. R. Vol. 2 - 2432
76	*Dantyadi Ghrita*	*Smruti*	B. B. R Vol 3 - 3036
77	*Dadhik Ghrita*	*Unmada*	B. B. R Vol 3 - 3057
78	*Duralabhadya Ghrita*	*Bhrama*	B. B. R. Vol 3 - 3062
79	*Drakshadi Ghrita (4)*	*Bhrama, Mada, Unmada*	B. B. R. Vol 3 - 3072
80	*Narsinha Ghrita*	*Medha, Dhi, Smruti*	B. B. R. Vol 3 - 3480
81	*Nishadi Ghrita*	*Unmada*	B.B. R. Vol 3 - 3491

82	*Nilinyadi Ghrita*	*Unmada*	B. B. R. Vol 3 - 3493
83	*Panchgavya Ghrita (1)*	*Unmada, Apasmar*	B. B. R. Vol 3 - 4049
84	*Panchagavya Ghrita (3)*	*Apasmar, Unmada, Bhutonmada*	B. B. R. Vol 3 - 4050
85	*Panchagavya Ghrita (4)*	*Apasmar*	B.B. R. Vol 3 - 4051
86	*Pathadya Ghrita (1)*	*Mati, Smruti*	B.B. R. Vol 3- 4073
87	*Paniyakalyanak Ghrita*	*Unmada, Bhutonmada*	B. B. R. Vol 3 - 4078, Sh. S. M. Kh. 9/38-43
88	*Purana Ghrita*	*Unmada*	B.B. R. Vol 3- 4104
89	*Paishachakam Ghrita*	*Buddhi, Medha, Smruti Vardhak, Unmad, Grahapasmar*	B.B. R. Vol 3 - 4105
90	*Baladya Ghrita*	*Unmada, Apasmar, Medha, Smruti*	B. B. R. Vol 3 - 4662
91	*Brahmi Ghritam (1)*	*Unmada, Apasmar, Smruti, Medha*	B. B. R. Vol 3 - 4674
92	*Brahmi Ghritam (3)*	*Unmada, Apasmar*	B. B. R. Vol 3 - 4676
93	*Brahmi Ghritam (4)*	*Shrutamatra tu Dharayet*	B. B. R. Vol 3 - 4677
94	*Brahmi Ghrita (5)*	*Unmada, Apasmar, Bhutagraha, Shrutnigadi*	B. B. R. Vol 3 - 4678
95	*Brahmi Ghrita (6)*	*Apasmar*	B. B. R. Vol 3 - 4679
96	*Bhutarav Ghrita (1)*	*Grahonmada*	B. B. R. Vol 3 - 4878
97	*Bhutarav Ghrita (2)*	*Grahonmada*	B. B. R. Vol 3 - 4879
98	*Manjishthadi Ghrita*	*Apasmar*	B. B. R. Vol 4 - 5210
99	*Manjishthadi Ghrita (1)*	*Apasmar*	B. B. R. Vol 4 - 521
100	*Madhuk Ghrita*	*Pittaj Apasmar*	B. B. R. Vol 4 - 5216
101	*Mahakalyan Ghrita*	*Unmada, Apasmar*	B. B. R. Vol 4 - 5226
102	*Rasonadya Ghrita*	*Unmada, Apasmar*	B.B. R Vol 4 - 5940
103	*Lashunadya Ghrita (1)*	*Unmada, Apasmar*	B.B. R. Vol 4 - 6271
104	*Lashunadya Ghrita (2)*	*Unmada*	B. B. R. Vol 4 - 6272
105	*Vachadi Ghrita (2)*	*Medha, Smruti*	B.B. R. Vol 4 - 6726
106	*Vachadi Ghrita (3)*	*Apasmar*	B. B. R. Vol 4 - 6728
107	*Vidari Ghritam (2)*	*Apasmar, Unmada, Smaran Shakti Vardhak*	B. B. R. Vol 4 - 6749
108	*Shankhapushpadya Ghrita*	*Apasmar, Unmada*	B. B. R. Vol 5 - 7357
109	*Shatavari Ghrita (3)*	*Unmada*	B. B. R. Vol 5 - 7362
110	*Shitakalyanak Ghrita*	*Mada, Bhrama*	B. B. R. Vol 5 - 7379
111	*Sarasvat Ghrita (1)*	*Medha, Smruti*	B. B. R. Vol 5 - 7951
112	*Sarasvat Ghrita (2)*	*Smruti Medha Vardhan*	B. B. R. Vol 5 - 7952
113	*Sarasvat Ghrita (3)*	*Smruti Medha*	B. B. R. Vol 5 - 7953
114	*Suryodaya Ghrita*	*Unmada*	B. B. R. Vol 5 - 7961
115	*Saindhav Ghrita*	*Apasmar*	B. B. R. Vol 5 - 7962
116	*Hingvadi Ghrita*	*Unmada*	B. B. R. Vol 5 - 8532

Abbreviations in table:

A. H. Chi - Ashtang Hruday Chikitsasthan

Ch. Chi. – Charak Chikitsasthan

B.R. - Bhaishajya Ratnavali

B. B. R. – Bharat Bhaishajya Ratnakar.

DISCUSSION

Mental health involves a complete balance of all three *doshas* (regulatory functional factors of the body) and maintenance of *manovaha srotas*. The terms *dhee* (perception of knowledge), *Dhruti* (distinguishing ability), *smriti* (memory), *medha* (intellect), and *buddhi* (knowledge) are all related to the functions of mana (mind).[4] Since *Hriday* (heart or cardiac region) is the seat of both *manovaha srotas* and *rasavaha srotas*, a disturbance in *manovaha srotas* may lead to rasa dhatu (primary product of digested food) *dushti* (vitiation), followed by the vitiation of other dhatus. Among the five types of *vata (*dosha responsible for movement and cognition), *prana* (the breath of life), *udana* (*vata* seated in thorax) and *vyana* (*vata* seated in *Hriday*), *vata* are involved in the function of *medha*. *Prana vata* sustains the function of the intellect, sensory organs, heart and mind. *Udana vata* controls the process of speech, effort/enthusiasm/ initiating the action of grasping, etc.[11] *Medha* and *Dhee* are mentioned as the functions of pitta.[12] More specifically, *sadhaka pitta* (pitta situated in Hriday) is mentioned as the dosha concerned with *medha*. The achievement of one's own aspiration, especially that of perception and memory, is dependent upon *sadhaka pitta*.[13] *Dharan* (retention) and tolerance are the actions of kapha (dosha responsible for regulating body fluids and keeping the body constituents cohesive); *Avalambak kapha* (kapha situated in the chest region), being at the site of *hruday*, provides support to other *kaphas,*[14] while *tarpaka kapha* (*kapha* situated in the head region) has the major role of nourishing the sensory organs.[15]

Sneha (lipid) is indicated in various disorders, along with *chitta vikar* being one of them.[16] *Ghrita* is termed as excellent for *dhi, smruti, medha*, and *ayu* in *Ashtang Samgraha*[17] It is considered the best among the four *snehas (ghrita, taila, vasa, majja*) and can be easily administered to both young and old individuals. It gets assimilated easily in the body and also achieves the property of the drug by which it gets medicated without losing its own property.[18] *Ghrita* gets easily assimilated in the body, both in its natural and medicated forms.[19] According to *Acharya Shrangdhar*, when the type of *ghee* is not mentioned, cow *ghrita* should be used.[20] *Go ghrita*, cow ghee has the ability to reduce the three doshas, has *Madhura rasa* (sweet taste), *sheeta veerya* (cold potency) and *Madhura vipaka* (sweet bio-transformed rasa) as well as *guru guna* (heavy property).[21] When it is infused with certain

medicines, because of the *yogavahi* (carrier of properties) *guna*, *ghrita* acts as a carrier to reach the site of action, the infusion drug hereby acting as a thermal stabiliser and *ghrita* being the bioenhancer. Depending upon the site of action, Acharyas have included different plant species for ghrita preparations. Ghritas are prepared in such a way that it includes preparation of kwatha (decoction) as well as the addition of ghrita. This helps to get both the hydrophilic and lipophilic active constituents into the finally obtained ghrita. Several herbs used in ghrita preparations have antioxidant properties.[22] Lipid-based formulations involving herbs (ghrita) help to imbibe these antioxidant properties as well.

Described as having a good effect on buddhi and smruti, ghrita is also termed as Medhya in various classical references. It is indicated in various mental disorders like Unmada, Apasmar, and Bhrama in Ayurveda.

Individual components found in *ghee*, like Short Chain Fatty Acids (SCFAs), omega-3 fatty acids and Conjugated Linoleic Acids (CLAs), show a promising role in improving brain health.[23] Beneficial fatty acids in *ghee*, like DHA, EPA, and CLAs, have been found beneficial for cognitive functions and anti-inflammatory effects in the brain.[24] Research suggests that SCFAs released by gut microbes have potential anti-inflammatory effects on impaired microglia in Alzheimer's disease.[25]

After studying 116 *ghritas* mentioned in six *Ayurvedic granthas* (classical texts), it was observed that these *ghritas* were mainly infused with drugs such as *jeevaniya* (vitalizers) *gana, brahmi, shankhapushpi, shatavari* etc which are already well known in classics for their *Medhya, smrutivardhak* activities or have a positive impact on improving the quality of life. Some *ghritas* contain dravyas like *chitrak, vacha, trikatu, Bhallatak*, which, due to their *Tikshna gunas (*high potency), may help in attaining faster drug delivery to the brain. Some herbs like *haritaki, trivrut, kutaki, aragvadh, danti* etc are used in some formulations that could potentially act as *rechak* (a form of osmotic laxative) and balance the vitiated *pitta dosha*. Many *pachak dravyas* (enhancing digestion), like *chitrak* and *triphala*, are also included in some of these ghritas that would help in converting agni (digestive/metabolic factors) to its prakrit (normal) form.

When infused in a lipid-based formulation, these may have a further increased therapeutic efficacy in affected individuals. *Goghrita* is known for its ability to dissolve in lipids and hence drives it towards cell entry and delivery to the mitochondrion, microsome and nuclear

membrane. These medications are soluble in lipids and hence can spread throughout the intended locations, such as the neurological system, after being quickly absorbed. The medications that are soluble in lipids can enter the extracellular and intracellular regions faster. Lipophilic in nature, the blood-brain barrier (BBB) separates circulating blood from CNS tissue and permits selective permeation of certain medicines and lipids. *Goghrita* perceptibly has the ability to penetrate some of the most difficult to reach places, including the central nervous system, due to its lipophilic nature (4.0–5.0). *Goghrita* contains linoleic acid, which has a similar rate of blood-brain barrier crossing as other polyunsaturated fatty acids.[26]

Research on the effect of mental health of some of the *ghritas* has been done, like: *Brahmi Ghrita* on depression[27] (clinical trial), *Kalyanak ghrita* in memory impairment[28] (in vivo), *Mahapaishachik ghrita* in ADHD[29] (case series), *Maha Panchagavya Ghrita* in *Apasmar* (Epilepsy)[30] (case series), *Mahakalyanak Ghrita* in *Vataja Unmada* w.s.r to Schizophrenia[31] (case study), *Lashunadi Ghrita* in *Kaphaja Unmada* w.s.r to Major Depressive disorder[32] (clinical trial), etc.

However, many of these *ghrita* formulations have not been studied yet. This has left a huge research gap in the present times.

CONCLUSION

The formulations consisting of words *medhya, medha, smruti, buddhi* etc focusing on mental health were undertaken in this review. Also, *ghritas* indicated in mental disorders like *unmada, apasmar, chittavikar* were included. There are 116 *ghrita* formulations found in six major *granthas*. *Ghrita* itself has effect on buddhi and after infusion with herbs, its therapeutic efficacy is likely to increase. Thus, it can be concluded that *Ghritas* have significant therapeutic potential in maintenance of mental health balance. This review will be useful for research and pharamaceutical standardization purposes of *Ghrita* formulations in psychiatric disorders as well as mental health.

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