

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS IN CHILDREN AND IT'S AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Autism is a complex neurodevelopmental disorder that impacts on the normal functioning of brain, challenging child development particularly in the field of language and communication, social and emotional with presence of unusually strong narrow interest and personal occupation by repetitive stereotype mannerism. In Ayurveda autism features are similar to Unmad in Ayurveda, the formulations and procedures mentioned best suited in autism. This paper discusses the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Symptoms, Causes, Pathogenesis and management with shaman and Panchakarma chikitsa in terms of Ayurveda.

KEYWORDS: Autism, ASD, Unmad, Shaman, Panchakarma.

INTRODUCTION

Autism spectrum disorder is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by persistent deficits in social communication and interaction and presence of repetitive, restricted pattern of behaviors, interests and activities. It typically manifests in early developmental period and significantly affects the functioning of child. In a systemic review published in 2012, the global prevalence of pervasive developmental disorders in children was estimated to be 62/10,000 Or 0.62%. In a recent review the prevalence of ASD has been estimated to be at least 1.5 % in developed countries. The exact etiology is unknown, but most common factors are Family History, Chromosomal disorder, Genetic disorder, Intrauterine infection, Congenital brain malformation, Postnatal encephalitis, meningitis, infantile spasm.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To study the autism in ayurvedic perspective and its management. Analysis of the effects of various conventional Ayurveda treatment modalities-in the management of Autistic children.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The material was collected from ayurvedic literature and modern literature, Magazine and

Research journals.

Clinical Features of ASD

Autistic children are often considered as “Good Babies” in infancy as they do not demand attention. Delayed development of speech is usually the initial parental concern in these cases with gradual recognition of typical features as follows:

- Impaired social interaction:** These children do not show any interest in their parents and do not make friends. They are withdrawn spend hours in solitary play, often pre occupied with trivial objects, e.g. buttons or parts of their own body.
- Impaired communication:** These children lack in both verbal as well as non verbal communication skills. Even after developmental of speech, they are unable to sustain a conversation and have other abnormalities, e.g. echolalia, pronominal reversal, nonsensical rhyming etc. Cognitive development for information processing and temporal sequencing is mainly affected.
- Stereotype behaviours:** i.e. inordinate desire for sameness with rigid interest and repetitive or obsessive activities. These children play many hours with one object, alone and do no

want to be disturbed.

- d. Associated behavioural problems:** e. g. hyperactivity, short attention span, impulsivity, aggressiveness, temper tantrums are common.

Ayurveda and ASD

In Ayurveda ASD can be correlated with Unmad. It is defined as a wandering about mind, intellect, consciousness, knowledge, memory, inclination, manners, activities and conduct. According to Acharya Charak, Unmada is the manasvyadhi which understands the unsettled condition manas (Mind), Buddhi (Understanding), Samjna (Consciousness), Gnana (Perception), Smriti (Memory) Bhakti (Inclination), Sheela (Character), cheshta (Behaviour) and Achara (Conduct).

Classification of Unmada

Classification is based on the prognosis, the knowledge of which is very essential in treating any disease is focusing on aetiology, mode of manifestation, prognosis and principles of treatment offers two more classifications as nija and Agantuja. Unmada is further divided into four kinds. They are also known as Doshaja Unmadas (Those arising from morbidity of Doshas). Out of these four kinds namely sannipataja Unmada is said to be incurable according to Acharya Shushruta and Vagbhata.

Nidana: The Hetu of the Unmada are given as:

- 1. Aaharaja hetu:** Incompatible, dirty, impure foodlike fruits and milk, heavy diet like non veg, Dahi, bakery products etc. increases Tridoshas.
- 2. Viharaja hetu:** Disrespect of Dev (God), Guru (Teachers), Brahmins (Learned), excessive Bhaya (Fear), Harsha (Joy) to produce Manobhata disturbs all normal mental functions increases Rajas and Tamas Mansik Doshas. Agantu Unmadas arising Himsa (Cruelty) the Rati (Lust) and Abhyarchana (Extortion).

Etiopathogenesis Samprapti of Autism as per Ayurveda

As per Ayurvedic classics, the acquisition of knowledge takes place by a sequence of events where the conjunction of Atma (The soul), Manas (Mind), Indriya (Sense organ), Indriyarth (Object of perception). Atma (The soul) is responsible for the cognition, and Manas is the substratum of Indriyas (Sense organs) to perceive Indriyarth (object of perception). The factors responsible for the mental constitution of the foetus are Satwa (Mind) of mother and father, the objects of hearing, actions of the pregnant mother and past deeds. In children with Autism, the conjunction between Atma and Manas is disrupted. i.e.;

Manovaha-Srota-Dusti (Vitiation of channels of consciousness that flows through mind) along with Tridosha Dusti (Vitiation of three doshas) is the characteristic feature of Childhood Autism. As per Ayurvedic classics, the same etiopathology is explained in the context of Unmada (Disease of mind characterized by mental confusion etc.).

Characteristics: The features of Unmada as per Ayurvedic classics are:

1. Manovibhrama (perversion of mind) - Due to this, the subject does not think about such matters which are worth thinking, and he/she also indulges in thinking about the matters which he/she is not supposed to think about.
2. Buddhi Vibhrama (Perversion of intellect) - Due to this, the subject understands the eternal things as non-eternal and advantageous as disadvantageous.
3. Samjajnana Vibhrama (Impaired sensory perception)
4. Smruti Vibhrama (Impairment of memory)
5. Bhakti Vibhrama (abnormal desires)
6. Sheela Vibhrama (Inappropriate manners and behaviors)
7. Cheshta Vibhrama (abnormal activities)
8. Achara Vibhrama (Loss of learned skills) By analyzing the etiopathology and clinical features of Autism, it can be included under the broad spectrum of Unmada. As per Ayurvedic classics, Garbhopaghatakara bhavas (the prenatal factors which harm the product of conception) (8) are considered as major etiological factors in its causation. Among cases of childhood Autism, etiopathogenic factors and line of treatment varies from individual to individual.

Treatment (Chikitsa) of autism as per ayurveda

The classical management of Unmada mentioned in Ayurvedic classics is found to be very effective in the management of Autism. Deepana and Pachana which are the procedures in which various drugs are used for promoting digestion, Snehapana (Oral intake of medicated ghee preparation), Mridu Shodhana (Mild purification of body by emesis or purgation), Niruha Basti (Decoction enema) and Sneha Basti (Oil enema), Siro Virechana or Nasya (Medicated nasal drops), Samdnya Prabodhana (Medication to stimulate the mind). Apart from the Shodhana (Purificatory) therapies mentioned in Ayurvedic classics, Abhyanga (Oil massage of head and body), Siro-Pichu (Overhead application of a piece of cotton dipped in medicated oil), Sirodhara (Pouring of medicated oil over the forehead as a continuous stream), Sirolepam (Overhead application of medicinal paste), and Takra Dhara (pouring of medicated buttermilk over forehead

as a continuous stream) are various treatment modalities aimed to promote the development of brain and to reduce or control the troublesome behaviours found with Autism Spectrum Disorders. As per Charaka Samhita, the avoidance of Meat and intoxicating drinks, intake of Heetahara (Compatible foods), following cleanliness and possessing a good mental strength can prevent the disease Unmada and, the person

cured of Unmada will attain clarity of Indriyarth (Objects of senses), Buddhi, Atma, Manas and normal Dhatus. Autism is regarded as a lifelong condition due to Bija Dosha (Genetic predisposition). But, by adopting Unmada Chikitsa as a long-term intervention the triggering elements of Autism can be eliminated thereby the quality of life can be improved.

The treatment consideration as per dosha predominance will be differ as per patient.

Vataj	Snehapana, snehyukta mridushodhan, mridu virechan
Kaphaj	Snehan, Swedan, Vaman, Virechan, Basti, Shirovirechana
Pittaja	Snehan, Swedan, Vaman, Virechana, Basti,
Sannipata j	Tridoshaj chikitsa
Aagantuj	Vatshamak ghritpana, niruha basti, anuvasana basti, Daivvyapashraychikitsa, Ashwasam chikitsa, todan chikitsa

Shaman chikitsa

Deepan pachana

1. Ajmodadi churna
2. Rajanyadi churna

Ghrita

1. Kalyanak Ghrita
2. Samvardhan ghrita
3. Siddharthak Ghrita
4. Brahmi Ghrita
5. Nalanadi Ghrita
6. Puranghrita

7. Mhakalyanak Ghrita

Vati

1. Manasmitra Vati
2. Brahmi vati

Arishta- Asava -kashayam

1. Ashvarga kashaym
2. Indukant kashayam
3. Kalyanak kashayam
4. Sarasvatarishta
5. Dashmoolarishta

Panchkarma therapy-Prescribed in routine patients having ASD are

Sarvang abhyanga	Dhanvantar taila, ksheerbalataila, Mahanarayan taila
Virechana	Nitya virechana wih Trivruta churna/Avipittakar churna
Shirodhara	ksheerbala taila, Jatamansi taila
Shirolepa	Vacha, jatamansi, Tagara, Ashwagand ha, Musta
Nasya	Dhanvantara taila, Ksheerbala taila
Matra Basti	Brahmi taila, Dashamool Taila, Jatamansi taila

Daiva-Vyapashraya Chikitsa (Spiritual therapy)

Ayurveda considers individuals as part of the supreme conscience and the role of spirituality has been explained in detail in various contexts. Logical use of Mantra, Aushadhi, Mani (Wearing gems), Bali (Auspicious offerings), Upahara (Gifts to deserving people), Homa (Oblations), Niyama (Observance of scriptural rules), Prayashchitta (Atonement), Upavasa (Fasting), Svastyayana (Chanting of auspicious hymns), Pran-Patagamana (Obeisance to the Gods, going to pilgrimage), etc. are aimed at boosting the self-confidence and mental strength to the individuals.

Satvavajaya chikitsa: Satvavajaya Chikitsa literally means controlling the mind, in such a way that it is not acted upon by various stress making it prone to Prajnaparadha. Acharya Charaka, defines Satvavajaya as withdrawal of mind from unwholesome objects. It includes:

- **Mano nigraha:** Regulating mind/subjugating mind from unwholesome interactions for ex Asking to chant ramraksha or Atharva sirshsha
- **Dhee-Dhairyaatmadi vijnanam:** It is providing a deeper level of understanding which helps ultimately in better control of mind. Acharya Charaka also explains the utility of replacing negative emotions with that of positive emotions that is beneficial to psyche. Thus, Satvavajaya encompasses various aspects that deal with mind - its physiology, morphology, morbidity and also management of Psychological as well as Psychosomatic diseases. For ex. Pranayam, listening good music or reading positive thoughts.
- **Yuktivyapashraya chikitsa:** This includes treatment through logical use of medicines and modification of Ahara and Vihara to suit the needs of the person. The patient should be

encouraged to follow proper dietary regimen, follow rules of Sadvrita, to use Medhya Rasayana (Medicines that boost psyche) and Doshahara Aushadha (Medicines) to control the imbalanced mind.

- **Dietary management:** Most of ADHD affected patients have the proper nutrients deficient that's why, parents who are troubled with medicating their children are often more comfortable with the initiative of dietary interventions. Proper nutrition is essential for growing children, and children who eat a diet high in "junk food" in early childhood are more likely to exhibit hyperactivity by age seven; this may reflect a long-term nutritional imbalance. So advised the parents to refined, carbohydrates, sugars, and processed foods containing additives should be completely eliminated from the diet And ask to provide home made satvik ahara, with proper exercise, social behaviour.

DISCUSSION

Autism spectrum disorder is group of neurological and developmental disorders having variability in clinical presentation and response to therapies available in modern as well as alternative medicines. As per Ayurveda the plan of action is completely based on Dosha assesment of disease manifestation. In the management of this disease manas chikitsa is the main part managed by Adrvya chikitsa, Acharrasayana, Daivya ashrya chikitsa, interdisciplinary interventions like speech and behavioural therapy along with shaman chikitsa and panchkarma give significant result.

Every patient having autistic symptoms categorizes into pitta anubandha and kaphavata involvement with avastha and niramavastha. Deepan pachana for mutation mentioned have prescribed first and after dhatu and koshtagata amapachana, ghrith kalpanas prescribed. As per symptoms the oral medications part changed as if speech problem is here. Samvardhan ghritha or kalynak ghritha is good for that as having deepan pachan properties also. If there are seizures associated with autism Mahapaishachik ghritha is better.

As per improvement, Panchakarma therapy can be added after 15 days to one month, as easy therapies like Shirobhyanga and Pratimarsha Nasya prescribed first followed by matra basti as per vata predominance. The medication can change as per season also. As long term follow up and treatment requirement in these disease.

CONCLUSION

Psychiatric disorder is well explained in Ayurvedic Samhita. That ancient knowledge of Ayurveda will help in diagnosis and management of Unmad in present era very well. In Ayurveda it may be correlated to Unmad (Autism) disease. So, line of treatment such as neuro-protective medications along with Panchakarma therapies have definitely shown outcome on the disease and thus save way to further researches in employing Ayurvedic methods towards the management of Autism. So, this review article is an attempt to highlighting on details of Unmada with co-relating with Autism.

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