

An Ayurvedic Conceptual Review of Unmada Vyadhi and Its Management Through Indian Classical Raga Bihag

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Abstract - Unmada³ is described in Ayurveda as a broad category of psychological disorders grouped under a single entity. It is understood to arise due to the imbalance of the three Doshas (Tridosha) in individuals with diminished mental resilience (Alpasattva), often interpreted as reduced willpower or coping capacity. The disturbance primarily affects the Hridaya, considered the seat of intellect (Buddhi), and subsequently disrupts the Manovaha Srotas (channels of the mind). As a result, there is a dysfunction in multiple mental and behavioral faculties, including Mana (mind), Buddhi (intellect), Sanjna (conscious awareness), Jnana (cognition), Smriti (memory), Bhakti (preferences and aversions), Sheela (emotional disposition), Cheshta (activity and behavior), and Achara (conduct and habits)¹. The etiopathogenesis involves disturbance of Doshas, impairment of Manovaha Srotas, and imbalance² of Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. Classical Ayurvedic management includes Daivavyapashraya, Yuktivyapashraya, and Sattvavajaya Chikitsa. In recent years, music therapy (Raga Chikitsa)⁴ has emerged as a complementary modality for psychological disorders. Indian classical music, particularly Raga Bihag, is believed to produce calming and harmonizing effects on the mind. The present conceptual review explores the Ayurvedic understanding of Unmada Vyadhi and discusses the potential therapeutic role of Raga Bihag in restoring mental balance. The soothing and uplifting properties of this raga may help stabilize Manasika Doshas, improve emotional regulation, and promote mental tranquility. Thus, integrating Raga Bihag therapy with

Ayurvedic principles may provide a holistic approach in the management of Unmada.

Keywords - Unmada, Ayurveda psychiatry, Raga Chikitsa, Raga Bihag, music therapy, mental disorders

I. INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda considers mental health (Manasika Swasthya)² as an essential component of overall wellbeing. According to classical Ayurvedic literature, the proper functioning of Sharira (body), Indriya (senses), Manas (mind), and Atma (soul) is necessary for health.

The definition of health described in Charaka Samhita emphasizes mental stability along with physical equilibrium.

“समदोषः समाग्निश्च समधातु मलक्रियः।
प्रसन्नात्मेन्द्रियमनः स्वस्थ इत्यभिधीयते॥”

Disturbance of mental faculties leads to several psychiatric conditions, among which Unmada Vyadhi is a major disorder described in Ayurvedic texts. The term Unmada³ literally means derangement or perversion of mental faculties.

According to Acharya Charaka, Unmada occurs due to vitiation of Doshas affecting Hridaya (seat of consciousness), Manas, and the channels related to mental functioning.

In contemporary context, Unmada may resemble various psychiatric conditions such as psychosis, severe mood disorders, or schizophrenia-like states. Along with conventional Ayurvedic treatments, Sattvavajaya Chikitsa emphasizes psychological regulation through techniques that promote mental stability. Music therapy (Raga Chikitsa)⁴ is one such method capable of influencing emotional and neurological responses. Among various ragas, Raga Bihag is traditionally associated with calmness, joy, and mental relaxation.

II. CONCEPT OF UNMADA IN AYURVEDA

DEFINITION

Acharya Charaka defines Unmada³ as a condition where mental faculties become disturbed.

“मन बुद्धि स्मृति संज्ञा ज्ञान भक्तिशील चेष्टाचाराणाम् विभ्रमः उन्मादः।”

(Charaka Samhita, Nidana Sthana 7)

This means derangement of mind, intellect, memory, consciousness, knowledge, behavior, and conduct constitutes Unmada.¹

NIDANA

According to Ayurveda, Unmada develops due to multiple causative factors affecting both Sharirika Doshas and Manasika Doshas.

1. Physical causes

- Improper diet (Viruddha Ahara)
- Excessive fasting or overeating
- Consumption of impure or incompatible food
- Trauma to the head
- Chronic diseases

2. Psychological causes

- Excessive grief (Shoka)
- Fear (Bhaya)
- Anger (Krodha)
- Stress and emotional disturbances

3. Spiritual or unknown factors

- Daivika causes
- Psychological trauma beyond normal coping capacity

These factors vitiate Vata, Pitta, and Kapha Doshas, which subsequently affect Manovaha Srotas and disturb mental equilibrium.

SAMPRAPTI

The pathogenesis of Unmada involves several interconnected processes:

1. Dosha Prakopa - Vitiation of Vata, Pitta, and Kapha.
2. Hridaya Dushti - Hridaya is considered the seat of Manas and Chetana.
3. Manovaha Srotas Avarodha - Disturbance in the channels responsible for mental functioning.
4. Derangement of Manasika Gunas - Increase of Rajas and Tamas with depletion of Sattva. This leads to impairment of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral functions resulting in Unmada Lakshanas.

TYPES OF UNMADA

According to Charaka Samhita, Unmada is classified into five types:

1. Vataja Unmada
2. Pittaja Unmada
3. Kaphaja Unmada
4. Sannipataja Unmada
5. Agantuja Unmada

LAKSHANAS

1. Inappropriate speech
2. Emotional instability
3. Delusion or hallucination-like behavior
4. Abnormal movements
5. Fearfulness or aggression
6. Loss of memory and judgment
7. Social withdrawal

Ayurvedic Management of Unmada

1. Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa - Spiritual methods such as:

- a) Mantra
- b) Prayer
- c) Rituals

2. Yuktivyapashraya Chikitsa - Rational therapies including:

- a) Herbal medicines
- b) Panchakarma
- c) Dietary regulation

3. Sattvavajaya Chikitsa - Psychological therapy aimed at controlling the mind through:

- a) Meditation
- b) Counseling
- c) Emotional regulation
- d) Sensory therapies including music.

Music therapy⁵ falls primarily under Sattvavajaya Chikitsa.

Concept of Raga Chikitsa

Raga Chikitsa⁶ refers to the therapeutic use of Indian classical ragas to influence psychological and physiological states.

Sound vibrations can affect:

1. Brain wave patterns
2. Neurochemical activity
3. Emotional processing
4. Autonomic nervous system

Music stimulates limbic structures of the brain, which regulate emotions and stress responses.

In Ayurvedic philosophy, pleasant auditory stimuli enhance Sattva and reduce Rajas and Tamas, thereby promoting mental stability.

Raga Bihag and Its Therapeutic Significance

Raga Bihag is a prominent raga of the Hindustani classical music tradition, generally performed during the late evening.

Characteristics

1. Belongs to Bilawal Thaata
2. Creates a feeling of peace, joy, and emotional upliftment
3. Known for its serene and soothing tonal structure

Psychological Effects Listening to Raga Bihag may produce:

1. Mental relaxation
2. Reduction in anxiety and agitation
3. Emotional stability
4. Improved mood regulation

These effects are beneficial in conditions characterized by mental imbalance and emotional disturbance, such as Unmada.

Possible Ayurvedic Mechanism of Raga Bihag in Unmada

The therapeutic action of Raga Bihag can be explained through Ayurvedic principles:

1. Balancing Manasika Doshas - The calming sound vibrations may reduce Rajas and Tamas, thereby enhancing Sattva Guna.
2. Regulation of Vata Dosha - Mental disorders often involve Vata aggravation, which causes instability and restlessness. Harmonious music can help stabilize Vata.
3. Stimulation of Hridaya and Manovaha Srotas - Auditory stimuli reach the brain and influence

emotional centers, indirectly affecting Hridaya, the seat of consciousness.

4. Enhancement of Sattvavajaya - Music improves mental resilience, emotional control, and psychological wellbeing.

Integrative Therapeutic Approach

Combining Ayurvedic treatment with Raga Bihag therapy may provide a comprehensive management strategy.

Possible protocol may include:

1. Ayurvedic herbal medications for Dosha balance
2. Panchakarma procedures if required
3. Counseling and Sattvavajaya therapy
4. Daily listening sessions of Raga Bihag (20–30 minutes) in a calm environment

III. DISCUSSION

Mental disorders involve complex interactions between biological, psychological, and environmental factors. Ayurveda addresses these disorders through a holistic framework involving body, mind, and consciousness.

Modern research increasingly recognizes the therapeutic role of music in mental health management. Music therapy has been shown to reduce stress hormones, regulate mood, and improve cognitive function.

From an Ayurvedic perspective, music acts as a sensory therapy that enhances Sattva and harmonizes mental energies. Raga Bihag, with its calming tonal structure, may be particularly useful in alleviating mental agitation and restoring psychological balance.

Further clinical research is required to scientifically validate the effectiveness of Raga Bihag therapy in Unmada Vyadhi.

IV. CONCLUSION

Unmada Vyadhi represents a severe disturbance of mental faculties caused by imbalance of Doshas and Manasika Gunas. Ayurvedic management emphasizes restoring mental equilibrium through pharmacological, psychological, and spiritual therapies. Raga Chikitsa, particularly with Raga Bihag, may serve as a valuable complementary modality in the management of mental disorders. By promoting mental calmness, emotional balance, and Sattva predominance, Raga Bihag therapy can

support the holistic treatment approach advocated by Ayurveda. Integrating traditional music therapy with Ayurvedic principles may offer a promising pathway for improving mental health and overall wellbeing.

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