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MANOVAHA SROTAS: A CONCEPTUAL
REVIEW OF ITS ROLE IN PSYCHOLOGICAL
WELL-BEING THROUGH AN INTEGRATIVE
AYURVEDIC APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Background: Ayurveda describes health as a balanced state of body, mind, senses, and consciousness. The concept of Manovaha Srotas provides a functional understanding of the channels responsible for mental activities, emotional responses, cognition, and psychological stability. In the present era, increasing psychological stress and lifestyle-related disturbances highlight the importance of holistic approaches for maintaining mental health.

Aim: To explore the Ayurvedic concept of Manovaha Srotas and evaluate its role in psychological well-being through an integrative Ayurvedic perspective.

Materials and Methods: A conceptual review was performed using classical Ayurvedic texts including Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya. Relevant contemporary literature related to mental health, stress management, yoga, meditation, and integrative medicine was also reviewed. Ayurvedic concepts related to Manas, Manovaha Srotas, Dosha, and Manasika Guna were analyzed.

Results: The review indicates that balanced functioning of Manovaha Srotas is associated with emotional stability, proper cognition, memory, concentration, and adaptive psychological responses. Disturbances caused by improper diet, unhealthy lifestyle, excessive stress, and emotional imbalance may affect mental functions. Ayurvedic approaches including Ahara, Dinacharya, Yoga, Dhyana, Sadvritta, and Rasayana therapy support restoration of mental equilibrium.

Conclusion: The concept of Manovaha Srotas provides a comprehensive Ayurvedic model for understanding psychological well-being. Integration of Ayurvedic principles with contemporary mental health approaches may contribute to preventive and supportive strategies for psychological wellness.

Keywords: Manovaha Srotas; Ayurveda; Manas; Psychological Well-being; Mental Health; Sattva; Yoga; Integrative Medicine

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1. INTRODUCTION

Mental health is considered an essential component of overall health and quality of life. Psychological disturbances caused by stress, unhealthy lifestyle, and emotional imbalance are increasing worldwide and require holistic preventive approaches. [9,10]

Ayurveda describes health as a state of equilibrium among Dosha, Dhatu, Mala, Agni, sensory faculties, mind (Manas), and consciousness (Atma). [1]

The mind (Manas) is considered an important factor responsible for perception, cognition, memory, decision-making, and emotional responses. [1,4]

Ayurvedic literature explains that psychological well-being depends upon the balanced functioning of mental qualities (Manasika Guna) namely Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. [1,3]

The concept of Srotas represents functional channels responsible for transportation, circulation, and regulation of physiological activities within the body. [1,2]

Among these functional pathways, Manovaha Srotas is associated with mental activities including thought processes, memory, perception, and emotional regulation. [1,4]

Disturbance of Manovaha Srotas may result in impairment of psychological functions and contribute to mental imbalance. [1]

2. METHODOLOGY OF REVIEW

This conceptual review was performed through classical Ayurvedic literature analysis and review of contemporary scientific publications. [1,4]

Classical Literature Sources

The following classical texts were reviewed:

Charaka Samhita – for concepts related to Manas, Srotas, mental health, and lifestyle principles.

Sushruta Samhita – for understanding structural and functional concepts of body channels (Srotas). [2,5]

Ashtanga Hridaya – for concepts related to health maintenance and psychological balance.

Modern Literature Review

Scientific literature related to psychological stress management, meditation and mental well-being, yoga and physiological stress reduction, and integrative health care approaches was reviewed. [6-8]

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK / THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Concept of Manas in Ayurveda

Ayurveda considers Manas as an internal organ responsible for coordination between sensory organs, self, and external objects. [1]

The functions of Manas include: [1]

- Perception (Jnana)
- Thinking (Chintana)
- Decision-making (Nirnaya)
- Memory (Smriti)
- Emotional expression (Bhava)

Balanced functioning of Manas contributes to mental stability and psychological strength. [1,4]

Manasika Guna and Psychological Health

The three qualities of mind (Manasika Guna) influence psychological behavior and emotional responses. [1,3]

Manasika Guna	Characteristics	Psychological Influence
Sattva	Purity, knowledge, stability	Promotes clarity, concentration, emotional balance
Rajas	Activity, desire, attachment	Produces mental agitation and emotional fluctuation
Tamas	Inertia, ignorance, inactivity	Causes reduced awareness and mental dullness

Concept of Manovaha Srotas

Srotas are described as channels responsible for transportation and functional activities in the body. [1,2]

Manovaha Srotas represents the functional pathway responsible for mental activities and psychological processes. [1]

The main functions associated with Manovaha Srotas include: [1-4]

Function	Description
Smriti	Memory and retention
Buddhi	Intelligence and decision-making
Chinta	Thought processing
Bhava	Emotional responses
Indriya coordination	Sensory integration

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

4.1 Classical / Traditional Literature Review

The classical literature reviewed in this article presents Manas as an internal organ involved in coordination with sensory organs, the self, and external objects, with functions including perception, thinking, decision-making, memory, and emotional expression. [1,4] The three Manasika Guna—Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas—are described in relation to psychological behavior and emotional responses. [1,3] Srotas are described as functional channels, while Manovaha Srotas is considered a functional pathway associated with mental activities and psychological processes. [1,2,5]

4.2 Contemporary Scientific Literature

Contemporary literature reviewed in the manuscript includes psychological stress management, meditation and mental well-being, yoga and physiological stress reduction, and integrative health care approaches. [6-8] Meditation programs have been reported to reduce psychological stress and improve well-being, while yoga and mindfulness-based stress reduction have shown favorable effects on stress-related physiological measures. [6,7] The utilization of Ayurveda in health care has also been described as an approach for prevention, health promotion, and treatment of disease. [8]

4.3 Comparative / Integrative Analysis

The reviewed Ayurvedic concepts can be considered alongside contemporary approaches to psychological wellness, stress regulation, mindfulness, and lifestyle modification. The concepts of Manas, Manovaha Srotas, Manasika Guna, Ahara, Dinacharya, Yoga, and Dhyana provide an Ayurvedic framework that may complement contemporary preventive and supportive approaches to psychological care. [1,4,6-8]

5. MECHANISM OF ACTION / PATHOPHYSIOLOGY

Not applicable as a separate section. This is a conceptual review and does not investigate a specific drug, intervention, disease mechanism, or experimentally established pathophysiological pathway. The article discusses the functional role of Manovaha Srotas and factors that may disturb mental equilibrium rather than proposing a specific biomedical mechanism.

6. CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS

Factors Affecting Manovaha Srotas

According to Ayurveda, various dietary, behavioral, and psychological factors may disturb mental balance. [1]

1. Dietary Factors (Ahara)

Improper dietary habits, irregular food intake, and unsuitable food substances may influence physical and mental health. [1]

2. Lifestyle Factors (Vihara)

Irregular sleep patterns, lack of routine, excessive sensory stimulation, and unhealthy habits may contribute to mental disturbance. [1,3]

3. Psychological Factors

Emotions such as fear, anger, grief, and excessive worry may disturb mental equilibrium. [1]

4. Environmental Factors

Continuous stress and unfavorable environmental conditions may affect psychological well-being. [9]

Ayurvedic Approach for Psychological Well-being

1. Ahara (Dietary Management)

Ayurveda emphasizes wholesome food (Pathya Ahara) for maintaining physical and mental balance. [1]

A Sattvika Ahara is traditionally considered beneficial for promoting clarity and stability of mind. [1,3]

2. Dinacharya (Daily Routine)

Following a proper daily regimen helps maintain physiological rhythm and supports mental stability. [1,3]

3. Yoga and Dhyana

Yoga and meditation practices have demonstrated benefits in reducing stress and improving psychological well-being. [6,7]

Meditation-based interventions have been associated with a reduction in psychological stress and improvement in emotional regulation. [6]

4. Sadvritta (Ethical Conduct)

Ayurveda recommends ethical behavior, emotional control, compassion, and positive social interaction for maintaining mental harmony. [1]

5. Rasayana Therapy

Ayurvedic Rasayana concepts are traditionally described as supporting improvement in vitality, memory, cognition, and resilience. [1,4]

7. DISCUSSION

The review indicates that the Ayurvedic concept of Manovaha Srotas provides a holistic framework for understanding psychological function by linking Manas, its qualities, mental processes, lifestyle, behavior, and environmental influences. The functions described in the review—including Smriti, Buddhi, Chinta, Bhava, and Indriya coordination—show the broad functional scope attributed to mental activity in the Ayurvedic framework. [1-5]

The Manasika Guna table further illustrates the proposed psychological influence of Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. Sattva is associated with clarity, concentration, and emotional balance, whereas Rajas is associated with mental agitation and emotional fluctuation and Tamas with reduced awareness and mental dullness. [1,3] These concepts provide a traditional framework for describing variations in psychological functioning.

The review also identifies dietary, lifestyle, psychological, and environmental factors that may disturb mental balance. Improper dietary habits, irregular sleep and routine, excessive sensory stimulation, emotional distress, and continuous stress are discussed as relevant influences. [1,3,9] This is consistent with the broader contemporary emphasis on stress regulation, lifestyle modification, and mind-body approaches in psychological well-being. [6,7]

Ayurvedic approaches discussed in the review—including Ahara, Dinacharya, Yoga, Dhyana, Sadvritta, and Rasayana—are presented as preventive and supportive measures. Contemporary evidence cited in the manuscript supports benefits of meditation and yoga for stress and psychological well-being, while Ayurveda literature provides the traditional framework for these approaches. [1,6-8] These findings support consideration of an integrative approach, while further clinical research is necessary to establish the effectiveness and applicability of specific Ayurvedic interventions.

The present review is conceptual and therefore does not establish causal mechanisms or clinical efficacy. Further well-designed clinical and interdisciplinary studies are required to validate the relationship between the Ayurvedic concept of Manovaha Srotas and measurable psychological outcomes.

8. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

Further clinical studies are required to validate Ayurvedic concepts of Manovaha Srotas through appropriate scientific research methodologies. Future research may examine specific Ayurvedic interventions, psychological outcomes, and objective measures of stress and well-being within appropriately designed clinical studies. [8]

9. CONCLUSION

Manovaha Srotas represents an important Ayurvedic concept for understanding mental function and psychological stability. The review highlights the relationship of Manas and Manasika Guna with cognitive, emotional, and behavioral functions and identifies dietary, lifestyle, psychological, and environmental factors that may influence mental balance.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Approval

Not applicable, as this conceptual review did not involve human or animal subjects.

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