



Review Article

DAIVAVYAPASHRAYA CHIKITSA-A PREVENTIVE STRATEGY TO DEAL MATERNAL STRESS

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ABSTRACT

Maternal stress is a potential risk factor for the onset of neurodevelopmental disorders. These days, prenatal check-ups just look at women's physical health concerns. It is crucial to remember that a variety of stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms, such as a strained relationship with one's spouse, can also have an impact on fetal development, in addition to diagnosable illnesses. It is very well highlighted in Ayurveda with the concept of *Satva Vaisheshyakara Bhaavas*, which says that, the psychological makeup of the offspring is influenced by various factors, such as the mother's mental health and what she hears, while she is pregnant. Through *Mantra, Mani, Mangala, Bali, Homa, Upavasa* and other healing techniques, *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* is an Ayurvedic therapy method, that promotes spiritual health and helps manage mental stress by dispelling negativity and fear and replacing it with a sense of optimism and control. Additionally, this *Chikitsa* has several logical traits that are consistent with the Theory of Cognitive Adaptation, which holds that, people create positive delusions as a defensive mechanism to shield their mental health from outside threats. With a scientific justification, this article seeks to highlight the potential advantages of *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* in lowering maternal stress.

INTRODUCTION

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism, learning difficulties, intellectual disabilities, and conduct problems are examples of neurodevelopmental illnesses that are becoming increasingly dangerous to public health. A recent study indicated that among Indian children aged 2 to 9 years, the prevalence of NDDs was close to 12%.^[1] Development in every child begins in the mother's womb. As a result, every developmental condition needs to be taken into account before conception. Prenatal exams today exclusively address the physical health issues, which affect the mothers. Despite numerous studies showing a link between prenatal stress and child development, there has been less concern in recent years about behavioral or emotional teratogenicity and its potential implications on the progeny.

Screening for maternal mental health is rare and often focuses only on postpartum depression. Pregnancy-related maternal stress raises the child's risk of having many neurodevelopmental abnormalities. It is evident that obstetric medicine appears to overlook the mental health of expectant mothers (Glover, 2014)^[2]. Fetal development is impacted by a variety of symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression, including strained relationships with partners, in addition to diagnosable illnesses. This can be taken as the *Adrshta hetu*^[3] (unknown cause) as mentioned in Ayurvedic classics for which, *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* has been told as a treatment modality.

The Concept of Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa in Ayurveda

In Ayurveda, the mode of treatment is divided into three primary categories. They are *Daivavyapashraya* (divine therapy), *Yuktivyapashraya* (rational therapy) and *Satvavajaya*^[4] (psychotherapy). Among these, *Daivavyapashraya*, comprises of *Mantra* (sounds based on energy), *Aushadhi* (medication), *Mani* (gem wearing), *Mangala* (chants of auspicious chants), *Bali* (auspicious offerings), *Upahara* (gift),

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Homa (oblations), *Niyama* (following the rules of scripture), *Prayashchitta* (atonement), *Upavasa* (fasting), *Swasthyayana* (chanting of auspicious hymns), *Pranipaata* (obeisance to the Gods), and *Gamana*^[5] (making pilgrimage).

1.	<i>Mantra</i>	<i>Mantras</i> are holy recitations. Chanting various <i>Mantras</i> praising and describing a particular deity have been in practice according to the <i>Sanatana Dharma</i> . When treating a specific illness, a certain <i>Mantra</i> -chanting may be beneficial.
2.	<i>Aushadhi</i>	<i>Aushadhi</i> refers to tying of herbs to specific body parts like hand/wrist/waist etc. Some specific herbs when tied to a particular body part are found to bring about certain actions with their <i>Prabhava</i> .
3.	<i>Mani</i>	<i>Mani</i> refers to precious stones or gems which are not just beautiful ornamental stones, but the ones that contain within them hidden energies. It is believed that diamond's therapeutic properties stem from their capacity to release light or energy in a selective manner. Gemologists use gems in rituals to balance energy fields, bring about tranquility, and encourage safety and love. Not every gem is appropriate for every wearer, and these particular jewels should be flawless and free of flaws.
4.	<i>Mangala</i>	The good deeds performed, which are considered to be morally positive and helpful to others.
5.	<i>Bali</i>	<i>Bali</i> is offerings to God or sacrificial rituals. This includes the traditional rituals, sacrifices performed during <i>Yajnas</i> , <i>Homas</i> and also the animal offerings. Such practices are mentioned in <i>Vedas</i> , but are not practiced nowadays.
6.	<i>Upahara</i>	The root of the word <i>Upahara</i> is ' <i>Hriyati</i> ', which means to give, and ' <i>Upa</i> ' which means near. Thus, <i>Upahara</i> refers to an unreserved gift or offering to God.
7.	<i>Homa</i>	<i>Homa</i> is the practice of using fire to worship the <i>Agni</i> or other deities. Giving all of our bad energy to the fire in order to receive only positive energy is a spiritual practice.
8.	<i>Niyama</i>	The <i>Niyama</i> are rules on how one should treat other people and oneself. These are essential for social well-being. Such observances create a tranquillity, both at the psychological and physical level, promoting prevention and healing.
9.	<i>Prayashchitta</i>	Reconciliation through charitable labor, social service, and poverty donations.
10.	<i>Upavasa</i>	Fasting is defined as 'to sit or remain near the Lord, to keep the Lord near your heart and mind.' Fasting on particular days or for a specific duration, as a means of worship of some deity, to get blessings and fulfill wishes.
11.	<i>Swasthyayana</i>	Chanting sacred songs, such as <i>Shanti Mantra</i> or <i>Swasti Vakya</i> , for world peace and well-being is known as ' <i>Swasti</i> .'
12.	<i>Pranipata</i>	It represents letting up of the ego through submitting to a particular manifestation of God, such as through <i>Namaskara</i> or bending down.
13.	<i>Gamana</i>	<i>Gamana</i> is making a pilgrimage and going above and beyond to pray and connect with the Gods. The change of place and sticking to <i>Vrata</i> for pilgrimage brings in a positive mindset.

Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa, is a kind of divine healing. The main foundation upon which it operates is faith. Faith is a vital component of therapeutic methods. The effect and healing would be greater in proportion to the person's level of belief.

The *Satva* attribute of the mind, which is required to establish the regular functioning of the mind, may be revived and balanced via *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa*. Numerous therapies

discussed in this therapy elevate the mind's *Satva* quality and eclipse its unbalanced *Rajas* and *Tamas* qualities. All mental diseases stem from a decrease in *Satva* quality and an increase in *Rajas* and/or *Tamas* qualities of the mind. Disorders brought about by *Rajas* and *Tamas* are *Kama* (passion), *Krodha* (anger), *Lobha* (greed) *Irshya* (envy), *Moha* (delusion), *Soka* (sorrow), *Chinta* (anxiety), *Udwega* (disgust) and *Bhaya* (fear). When applied to the mental channels (nerves, brain),

Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa has a purifying effect that helps to nurture positivity while eliminating negative ideas and anxieties. It removes fear, pessimistic tendencies and helps in improving one's confidence through the dimension of spirituality.

Probable Mode of Action

Empirical evidence suggests that practicing attentive meditation and prayer can improve a person's emotional stability and awareness. According to the Theory of Cognitive Adaptation (Taylor 1983)^[6], people build a system of constructive illusions to shield their psychological well-being in the face of threats (Taylor and Brown 1988, 1994)^[7]. These optimistically skewed thoughts are not regarded as false or delusional; rather, they are an indication of mental health since they make room for optimism, individual development, and adaptability. Exercises like walking, running, working out, laughing exercises, meditation, and listening to music are recommended by doctors for the majority of diseases. These exercises trigger the release of endorphin hormone, which gives patients strength, confidence, and a positive, upbeat mood.

Emotions and their role on health

Acharya Vagbhata, in the very first *Sloka* of *Sutra sthana* regards *Raaga* (lust), *Lobha* (greed) *Dweshha* (aversion) and such other *Manasika bhaavas* as the cause for *Autsukhya* (discomfort), *Moha* (delusion), *Arathi* (restlessness) etc^[8]. Due to *Adhara-Adheya Sambandha* (integral relation) the *Manasika bhavas* influences *Shareera* and vice-versa. Acharya Vagbhata regards *Lobha*, *Irshya*, *Dweshha*, *Raaga* as *Dharaniya Vegas*^[9] which are to be controlled and not expressed. If these *Vegas* are not controlled, they increase in frequency and intensity and gradually get converted into psychological disorders.

Raaga, *Lobha*, *Dweshha* etc are nothing but the emotions; the responses to significant internal and external events. Emotion^[10] is a subjective state of mind, which have the capacity to alter our body chemistry and functioning. The limbic system is a network of brain regions that regulates our emotions. Among other important structures, the limbic system includes the thalamus, hypothalamus, amygdala, hippocampus, basal ganglia, and cingulate gyrus. The limbic system's various parts cooperate, to control a number of critical brain functions. The limbic system, often known as the emotional nervous system, integrates both primal feeling and higher mental activities into one system. Both conscious and unconscious patterns, such as those pertaining to emotions, perceptions, social interactions, behaviors, and motor control, are governed by the limbic system of the brain.

Maternal stress and its effect on health

Strong emotions and moods might result from pregnancy hormone changes as well as due to one's unique situation. As soon as a woman discovers she is pregnant, her body begins to prepare to safeguard and maintain the pregnancy. The sensation of a new life can be thrilling and breathtaking, apart from the emotional ups and downs brought on by increased hormone levels, throughout the first three months of pregnancy. It's also typical to feel scared, exposed, and overtaken by the significant changes that a pregnancy and a new baby will bring about. A lot of women pose queries to themselves. They may have concerns about their capacity to handle their finances, their relationship, or their ability to be a mother.

Elevated maternal stress^[11] during pregnancy has been found to affect infant brain development and lead to a higher risk for mental health problems in offspring. The mother and fetus are one entity, and the child will be impacted by anything that affects the mother. A child's risk of developing a variety of emotional, behavioral, and/or cognitive issues in later life is increased by stressful life events, exposure to a natural disaster, and indications of worry and depression in the mother. Stress in mothers is linked to alterations in the limbic and fronto-temporal networks, as well as the functional and microstructural connections that connect them, according to research on in vivo brain imaging^[12]. 10-15% of the blame for the emotional and behavioral outcomes of the fetus may originate from maternal worry and sadness. (Glover, 2014)^[13]. Stress results in increased catecholamines^[14] production, which in turn leads to decreased uterine blood flow and increased fetal hypoxia. Prenatal hypoxia reduces the hippocampus's neuronal count and synaptic density, which modifies neurotransmitter release (Chen et al., 2020; Camm et al., 2021)^[15]. Hypoxia during pregnancy may harm the developing central nervous system (CNS) and cause behavioral problems later on.

Ayurveda emphasizes that in order to produce a healthy offspring with the desired features, one must apply the variables in the form of *Guna samanya* (elements with similar properties), *Dravya samanya* (the same element), or *Karma samanya* (same effort) giving the similar, to receive similar output. Acharya Charaka while explaining the *Satva vaisheshyakara bhaavas*^[16], specifically states the *Matru satva* (psychic status of mother) and *Shrutayah abhikshanam* (acquisition of information by listening) amongst the factors influencing the formation of the *Satva* of the progeny. The mother's actions and thoughts, as well as what she sees, tastes, touches, feels, and thinks, have a profound effect on the child's temperament and conduct in the future. The epic tale of *Abhimanyu*, the warrior son of *Arjuna*, found in the Mahabharata, is a

well-known illustration of this 'Karma based garbha samskara.' Even as a fetus in Subhadra's womb, Abhimanyu learned from his maternal uncle Lord Krishna, how to enter the Chakravayuha, a unique kind of fighting formation. In Korea, for prenatal development, expectant mothers are advised to do certain practices called 'Taegyo'^[17]. Maintaining composure, avoiding negative thoughts, reading aloud inspirational stories, listening to soothing music, being aware of their surroundings, acting and speaking wisely are some of the tips which the expectant mothers can follow. Adhering to these protocols offers a safe and secure environment for the growth of the foetus.

DISCUSSION

Simple measures of *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* may help to boost the production of feel-good hormones like dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin, endorphins which can counter-act the catastrophic effect of the catecholamines. Each of these feel-good compounds has a very distinct function in mood, emotion, and motivation regulation. The *Vyadhi pratyani*^[18] (contrary to disease) and *Devaprabhava* (influence of deity) as told by *Acharya Chakrapaani* may be understood on these lines.

Acharya Chakrapaani states the reason behind mentioning *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* as first due to its *Aashuvyadhiharatva*^[19]. This *Aashuvyadhiharatva* (rapid relief from illness) points out that the effect is more towards the *Manas* or *Manasika bhaavas*. *Mantra, Aushadhi, Mani, Mangala, Bali, Upahara, Homa, Niyama, Prayashchitta, Upavasa, Swasthyayana, Pranipaata* and *Gamana* etc helps to develop adaptive coping mechanisms in regulating emotions. Involving in such practices enables one to respond to the threatened situation, with high levels of optimism and self-esteem. *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* calms the stressed out limbic system; help humans calm their fear and focus on positive solutions.

CONCLUSION

Women's and their families lives are significantly impacted by pregnancy and childbirth. The concept of safe parenting needs to be broadened, to include respect for women's feelings, choices, dignity, and preferences in addition to preventing illness and death. A woman's psychological state affects her capacity to take care of herself and her child as well as to adhere to medical advice. Providing emotional and psychological support is also of great significance, in addition to medical care, in order to achieve optimal outcomes. The measures like *Mantra* (energy based sounds), *Aushadhi* (medicines), *Mani* (wearing of gems), *Mangala* (auspicious chants), *Bali* (auspicious offerings), *Upahara* (gift), *Homa* (oblations), *Niyama* (observance of scriptural rules), *Prayashchitta* (atonement), *Upavasa* (fasting),

Swasthyayana (chanting of auspicious hymns), *Pranipaata* (obeisance to the Gods) and *Gamana* (going to pilgrimage) helps one to give up egoism and negative ideas, engage in self-analysis, and practice self-help after realizing one's own value. Reasoning cannot explain *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa's* mode of action. It seems to have a specific function in fostering self-assurance, eliminating fear, and fostering a disciplined way of living. *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* is significant because of its *Aashuvyadhiharatva* (rapid relief from illness), *Vyadhipratyanika* (specific and targeted therapy method), and *Adrushtahetupratyanika* (it targets the hidden source of illness). A multi-modal treatment including *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* may be helpful to promote emotional healing of the mother, thereby preventing behavioral teratogenic effect on the offspring.

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