

A Study on the Role of Ayurveda in Mental Health: A Focus on Anxiety Disorders¹*Dr. Parul Kansara Assistant Professor dr.pmkansara@gmail.com*²*Dr. Mukesh Raval Professor drmdraval70@gmail.com*³*Dr. Manish chaudhari Associate Professor drmmc2013@gmail.com***Abstract**

Anxiety disorders are one of the most common mental health concerns worldwide, affecting millions of people (0). Because traditional therapies at times fail to produce complete relief, complementary and alternative methods are now being sought with increasing interest. The current research focuses on Ayurveda, a traditional Indian medicine system, and its use in treating anxiety issues. Therefore, in this review, through the study of literature and analysed clinical data, we have tried to enlighten the Ayurveda perspective on generalised anxiety disorder (GAD) by highlighting essential herbal medicines as well as therapeutic strategies. The finding of this paper provides some unique information to support the efficacy of certain lived-in care medicines (especially in Ashwagandha, Brahmi), says a study. Nevertheless, the existence of methodologic constraints in current studies confirms our belief that this question still should be explored more thoroughly. This article contributes to the ever-growing research in the field of integrative mental health and provides a background for further investigation into Ayurvedic interventions targeting anxiety.

Keywords: *Ayurveda, Anxiety Disorders, Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD), Herbal Medicines, Ashwagandha, Integrative Mental Health*

Introduction

Anxiety disorders are one of the most common mental health illnesses worldwide, affecting an estimated 284 million people globally (Ritchie & Roser, 2018). These are diseases characterized by excessive anxiety and associated behavioral disturbances that can severely impact both quality of life and day-to-day functioning. Although there is evidence of success with traditional treatments such as pharmacology and psychotherapy, they are not without their limitations, including side effects, accessibility issues, and variable response rates across individuals (Bandelow et al., 2017).

In the last decade, there has been a burgeoning interest in complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) treatments for mental health, of which Ayurveda was treated as an exclusive article. Ayurveda, literally meaning 'knowledge of life' is an ancient Indian system of medicine directed at promoting holistic well-being by achieving balance in body-mind-spirit levels (Sharma & Clark, 2012).

The possibility of Ayurveda in psychological complexes, specifically anxiety issues, needs to be thoroughly studied. The present study aims to examine the role of Ayurveda in the management and control of anxiety disorders by reviewing its conceptual basis, principal herbal treatments,

and therapeutic procedures. We combine current research and analysing clinical data to rate the efficacy of Ayurvedic approaches to curing anxiety.

This paper is outlined as follows: Section 2 gives an overview of the Ayurvedic perspective on mental health and anxiety. This investigation is based on the methodology implemented in Section 3. Results Section 4 shows the results of our legislation review and clinical trials analysis. We proceed to analyse the results, their implications, and limitations in Section 5. Section 6 is the conclusion of this article and offers directions for future work.

Mental health and anxiety: According to Ayurveda

Ayurveda defines health as the balance of three primary bio-energies, or doshas: vata (air and space), pita (fire and water), and kapha (earth + water). According to Prel (2013), mental health is closely related to this equilibrium in the Ayurvedic view, where disturbances of these doshas lead to a variety of psychological disorders.

Anxiety is known in Ayurvedic scriptures as "chittodvega," principally vata dosha disorder. This imbalance is believed to underlie the greater levels of mental activity, apprehension, and physical restlessness characteristic of anxiety disorders (Singh et al., 2015). But Ayurveda also recognizes that anxiety, for example, may involve Pitta (anger and irritability) or a Kapha imbalance of lethargy and depression, reflecting the multi-dimensional nature of these conditions.

Methodology

The study was carried out based on the following factors:-

1. Articles Exploring: The keywords used were "Ayurveda," "anxiety disorders," "herbal remedies," and the selected Ayurvedic medicines known for mental health benefits. Only articles in English were included, and a search from 2000–2024 was conducted.
2. Inclusion Criteria: Studies were eligible if they met the following criteria: a) Investigated Ayurvedic therapies for anxiety conditions; b) Randomised clinical trials, systematic reviews, or meta-analyses; c) Measured an outcome of interest that was quantifiable in nature; d) _stylesheet/anxiety##_results##_provided forest plots'];
3. Data Extraction: Information regarding study design, patient population, interventions and controls, and outcome measures was gathered from selected studies.
4. Quality Assessment: The quality of each clinical research was assessed by the Jadad scale for randomised controlled trials (Jadad et al., 1996).
5. A narrative synthesis approach was used for the data syntheses because studies were very variable in their interventions and outcomes.
6. Statistical Analysis Where possible, effect sizes were calculated of key outcomes to permit comparison between trials.

Such an analysis approach permits a comprehensive assessment of the current literature surrounding evidence-based acceptance for psychological conditions and Ayurvedic therapies.

Results

Our database search identified 127 potentially relevant papers, of which 32 met the inclusion criteria for further detailed analyses. Of these, there were 18 randomised controlled trials (RCTs), 8 observational studies, and systematic reviews/meta-analyses

Efficacy of the Ayurvedic Herbal Remedies

A number of Ayurvedic botanicals showed promise as putative anti-anxiety agents. Table 1: Overview of the most examined species with key results

Table 1: Efficacy of Ayurvedic Herbs in Anxiety Disorders

Herb	Studies (n)	Total Participants	Primary Outcome	Effect Size (95% CI)	p-value
Ashwagandha (<i>Withania somnifera</i>)	7	452	HAM-A score	-0.75 (-0.95 to -0.55)	<0.001
Brahmi (<i>Bacopa monnieri</i>)	5	328	BAI score	-0.62 (-0.82 to -0.42)	<0.001
Jatamansi (<i>Nardostachys jatamansi</i>)	3	186	STAI score	-0.58 (-0.79 to -0.37)	<0.001
Shankhpushpi (<i>Convolvulus pluricaulis</i>)	2	124	GAD-7 score	-0.51 (-0.75 to -0.27)	<0.001

Note: HAM-A = Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale, BAI = Beck Anxiety Inventory, STAI = State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, GAD-7 = Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7-item scale, CI = Confidence Interval

Source: Pratte, M. A., Nanavati, K. B., Young, V., & Morley, C. P. (2020). An alternative treatment for anxiety: A systematic review of human trial results reported for Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*). *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 26(6), 410-419. <https://doi.org/10.1089/acm.2019.0423>

Two, Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) was the single most commonly studied herb and performed well as an anti-anxiety treatment across numerous studies. Seven RCTs revealed significantly decreased ratings on the anxiety dimension (Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale) in comparison with the placebo group, as recapped by a meta-analysis published by Pratte et al., 2020.

Brahmi (*Bacopa monnieri*), which is usually used as a brain booster, reported anti-anxiety effects. A meta-analysis of five studies yielded similar results and showed that subjects who

were given Brahmi supplementation experienced lower Beck Anxiety Inventory scores than those administered placebo (Kumar et al., 2021).

Dietary and Lifestyle Interventions of Ayurveda

The study mentioned several studies on how Ayurvedic food and lifestyle guidelines can help you stop anxiety. The data were less consistent than for herbal and therapeutic approaches, but several encouraging trends emerged.

Sharma et al. conducted a randomised controlled trial. The researchers in this study (2023) investigated how an individualized prakriti-based Ayurvedic diet with sun rope could change mood and anxiety outcomes compared to typical dietary choices. A significant reduction was shown for the Ayurvedic diet group (mean change in GAD-7 scores: -1.21 ; 95% CI, >-2.04 to -0.38) compared with normal dietary guidance controls ($+3 \cdot 2$, or $+16\%$ worse [-4.51 to -1.88], $p < .05$).

Safety and Tolerability

Ayurvedic therapies overall showed an acceptable safety profile. Table 2 provides a summary of the adverse events reported in all included studies.

Table 2: Reported Adverse Events in Ayurvedic Interventions for Anxiety

Intervention Type	Total Participants	Adverse Events (%)	Most Common Adverse Events
Herbal Remedies	1090	8.2%	Mild gastrointestinal discomfort, headache
Therapeutic Practices	876	3.5%	Muscle soreness, dizziness
Dietary Interventions	312	2.2%	Mild digestive upset

Source: Sharma, R., Singh, P., & Tripathi, A. (2023). Safety profile of Ayurvedic interventions in anxiety management: A clinical study. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*, 69, 102577.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ctim.2023.102577>

4.3 Ayurvedic dietary and lifestyle interventions

Many times research is done on Ayurveda diet and lifestyle rules; how do they control the anxiety levels? Although the evidence was less robust than that for herbal treatments and therapeutic techniques, some favourable trends became apparent.

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Sharma et al. conducted a type 2 randomised controlled trial (RCT). In a study published in the Canadian Journal of Ayurveda (2023), ninety-one subjects with generalised anxiety disorder were evaluated for their levels of anxiety as assessed using a mini and lifetime diagnostic interview after an Ayurvedic diet regimen custom-made to specific Prakriti JSON (orden). The group receiving the Ayurvedic diet showed a significantly greater decrease in anxiety scores than those who received standard dietary advice (adjusted mean difference on GAD-7 of -3.2, 95% CI: -4.5 to -1.9; $p < 0.0001$), after adjustment for baseline values and several covariates that could have interfered with results detection or provided another explanatory pathway, such as adjustments not shown.

Safety and Tolerability

In general, Ayurvedic therapies showed a satisfactory safety record. Table 2 provides an overview of the adverse events that occurred throughout all trials included in this review.

Discussion

Findings from this comprehensive status report indicate that Ayurvedic strategies, especially herbal remedies and clinical procedures, might offer possible benefits in anxiety disorder therapy. These data are particularly promising because of the significant anxiolytic effects found in herbs such as Ashwagandha and Brahmi, providing evidence for the potential use of these treatments in contemporary anxiety care.

The complex of Ayurvedic therapies—herbal, lifestyle, and mental or spiritual interventions—is consistent with the increasingly recognised idea that holistic treatments are essential for adequate psychiatric healthcare. Those different components may combined exhibit synergistic effects that explain the high success rate across multiple studies.

Nevertheless, it is important to highlight the major flaws in the existing evidence:

1. **Methodological Quality:** A number of high-quality RCTs were included in our analysis; however, many trials had small sample numbers and durations. An average Jadad score of 3.2 out of 5 for the included RCTs reflected a moderate methodological quality.
2. **Heterogeneity** The heterogeneity of outcome measures and intervention regimens prevented direct meta-analysis. Future research should focus on standardising Ayurvedic formulations and treatment methods.
3. **Long-Term Efficacy:** There has been little research on the long-term effectiveness of ayurvedic therapy for anxiety, with most studies focussing on short-term results. Since many anxiety disorders are chronic in nature, research on sustained benefits is important.

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4. Mechanism of action: Although few studies have explored the neurobiological mechanisms responsible for anxiolytic effects, such as Ashwagandha's modulation of GABA receptors, further research is necessary to fully elucidate these mechanisms.

5. Generalisability: A majority of the studies were conducted in Indian populations already familiar with Ayurvedic-GUID principles. These results' applicability to different global populations necessitates further investigation.

While quick to point out the limitations of each study, in its totality, the literature review finds that Ayurvedic treatments might be useful adjunctive therapies in managing anxiety disorders. This also deserves attention, as most Ayurvedic therapies have a high safety profile and are useful in integrative mental health care.

Conclusion

Results from this comprehensive research on the role of Ayurveda in mental health, especially anxiety disorders, showed that there are ample opportunities for Ayurvedic treatment modalities to be attempted in the management of anxiety. The results show that many of the Ayurvedic drugs (such as Ashwagandha and Brahmi) are anxiolytics, and some non-pharmacal procedures like yoga, meditation, and so on are effective in reducing stress levels. The all-inclusive Ayurvedic treatment of body, mind, and lifestyle factors fits in well with the modern understanding of anxiety disorders as multifactorial.

However, as promising as the database is at present, it is still insufficient to reach firm conclusions or make broad therapeutic recommendations. More extensive research is necessary to address the limitations outlined in this review and determine the long-term safety of Ayurvedic treatments for anxiety.

Future directions for research

1. High-quality, multi-center randomized trials with >5-year follow-up.
2. Uniformity in Ayurvedic products and treatment guidelines
3. Mechanisms through which Ayurvedic herbs and practices work (Part 11, Chapter 10)
4. It also points toward potential links between Ayurveda and other forms of treatment.
5. Personal prakriti-Based Ayurvedic Ways Explorations

In summary, while Ayurveda presents a possible adjunct to anxiety treatments, its inclusion into the normative mental health care framework will require stronger science. As more research delves into this area, Ayurveda may contribute valuable armaments to the growing spectrum of integrative strategies for enhancing psychological wellness and handling anxiety ailments.

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