



Review Article

# Mental/ psychological disorders in children and their therapy as per Ayurveda

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## Abstract

Mental disease has been recognized throughout history in every civilization of the world though its significance is understood and its treatment has evolved in significantly different directions. Psychological and mental disorders involve physiological and/or genetic components in children but the etiology of some psychological disorders in children is unknown. Mental retardation, learning disorders, communication skills disorders and pervasive developmental disorders (such as autistic disorder) etc. comes under these category. The treatment of psychological and mental disorders requires special attention. Ayurveda involve various treatment component as part of Kaumarabhrta for such conditions like; herbs, yoga, panchkarma and use of various traditional formulation like; Medhya Rasayanas. Ayurveda enhances mental ability, learning disorders, behavioral therapy through natural techniques etc. This article shares some traditional approaches of treating mental disorders in children.

## Key words

Mental disease, Bi-polar disorder, Anxiety, ADHD.

## Introduction

As per Ayurveda, most mental illness is caused by gunic and doshic imbalance and ultimately

loss of understanding. There is some specially classified disease need to be treating under fundamental consideration of Kaumarabhrta as per Ayurveda; these diseases are Autism, Bi-



Polar Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) etc. A fundamental approach of Ayurveda to treat mental illness is to enhance dhi, dhriti and smriti which ultimately enhance the mental coordination. Ayurvedic herbs used for children to treat mental disease are safe and very effective. As per Ayurveda, balanced foods, simple herbs and spices can also boost mental health if used properly. Ayurveda suggest that achieving doshic balance, promoting healthy habits and strengthening immunity and agni in early childhood can set the foundation for optimal mental growth and development. The true root of mental illness has no physical basis and its treatment is not aimed at correcting chemical imbalances. The mental illness may also be due the avidya or ignorance of our true nature [1].

There are some mental/ physiological disorders in children are as follows:

#### **Bi-polar disorder**

Bi-polar disorder generally childhood and continues into adulthood. It is characterized by intense mood swings. This may be due to the genetic illness and found in children generally under age of 12.

#### **Anxiety**

Anxiety symptomatically involves restlessness, distressed and uneasiness. Some common anxiety disorders are panic disorders characterized by episodes of intense fear.

#### **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

ADHD is a neurobehavioral developmental disorder generally seen in children with early age and characterized by hyper activeness, impulsiveness and inattention.

#### **Ayurveda for mental/ physiological disorders**

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#### **Improvement of mental performance by herbal therapy**

The different studies were conducted to enhance mental performance of children by improving their reaction time. The study found that different herbs were significantly effective in improving total mental performance. Ayurveda believes a different view regarding cognitive processes and theories of information processing, therefore possesses new approaches for management of disorders of cognition. Studies reflect that herbal therapy is highly effective in improving total reaction time and no adverse effects were observed with herbal treatment.

Various research confirmed the significant boosting effects of herbs like; Bacopa monnieri, Convulvulus pluricaulis, Acorus calamus, Saussurea lappa individually as well as with combination. These all study also establish traditional formulation "Brahmi Ghrita" as potent mental rejuvenator.

As per Ayurveda the mechanism of regulating mental performances involves predominantly Tikta, Katu-Rasa; Laghu, Tiksha, Ushna, Sara-Guna; Rasayana, Dipana, Pachana and Tridosha Shamaka property and Medhya Prabhava.

- Tikta Rasa has direct action on medha (intellect).
- Ushna, Tikshna and Laghu Guna dispel the avarana of Tama and increase the sattva guna of mana.
- Ushna Virya and Tikshna Guna enhance grahana (perception) and smarana (retrieval) by harmonizing the Pitta.
- Sara Guna improves prerana (channelizing/ motivation)
- Tridosha Shamaka property of ingredients harmonizes specially Vata, thereby regularize the function of mana and improve an attention, working memory and procedural memory [2].



## Bi-polar disorder

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Bipolar Disorder involves ojas, which leads to disturb emotional responses. It is characterized by intense mood swings. In ayurveda diagnosis is based on the patient's prakruti and doshic imbalances. Ayurveda consider levels of ojas, tejas and prana; as well as the state of mental principles, sattva, rajas and tamas. The Ayurvedic treatment for managing bipolar disorder encompasses enhancement of ojas and reduction of stressors.

Ayurveda suggest some herbs for the treatments of bipolar disorder such as; ashwagandha, brahmi, shatavari, ginseng, shanka pushpi, nutmeg, skull cap, kappikacchu, haritaki and bhringaraj. These may act as a mild stimulant and sedative also depending on what mood state needs to be balanced. Ashwagandha builds ojas and pacifying vata in the nervous system and mind. Cinnamon, thyme, mint and eucalyptus may also be useful as stimulant. As per Ayurveda relaxing or calming effect of herbs builds ojas and pacifies vata. As per ayurveda foods also help to regulate the body mental status leading to the relaxed mood. Ayurveda also relies on the development of healthy routines life style and habits to maintain proper balance of ojas and vata.

## Anxiety

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Anxiety symptomatically involves restlessness, distressed and uneasiness. The reason for anxiety in children may be stressed induced due to the modern life style involves high level of competitions in all field. The instances of anxiety in children are increasing day by day and lead to the many other complicated mental disorders. Ayurveda suggest discipline and maintained life style as first line of treatment for anxiety. As per Ayurveda other herbs which can be beneficial

for anxiety are; Jatamansi, Shanka pushpi, Ashwagandha and Brahmi [3, 4].

## Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

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Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a neurobehavioral developmental disorder generally seen with children before seven years and characterized by hyper activeness, impulsiveness and inattention. Ayurveda treats ADHD by using herbs and their combinations, and also through the preventive mode of Yoga. Ayurvedic herbal components are used as home remedies in the treatment of ADHD. The ayurveda suggest utilization of various herbs to treat ADHD including; Rhodiola rosea, Matricaria chamomilla, Matricaria chamomilla, and Bacopa monniera. Ayurveda believe on various mechanism of action of herbs by which they can provide relief in ADHD as they may act as neuroprotective; anti-fatigue and anxiolytic; increases serotonin levels; increases cognitive function, inhibits reuptake of serotonin, nor epinephrine and dopamine. Also improves cognitive function; memory and learning [5, 6, 7].

## Summary

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Learning is an important part of children growth which requires healthy mental status, but mental disorders inhibits mental as well as physical growth, for treating such conditions herbs can rejuvenate the mind like; rasayana herbs. These herbs promote memory and intelligence. As per traditional ayurvedic text different rasayana herbs can be used to treat depression, psychosis, and other mental disorders. The ayurvedic treatment of mental disorders involves correction or balancing of tarpaka kapha, sadhaka pitta, and prana vayu, the doshas present in the brain. The different



herbs used alone or with each other such as Jatamansi, Shanka pushpi, Vacha, Ashwagandha, or Jyotishmati. Ayurveda has herbs that have an affinity to all of the organs, dhatus, and srotamsi that relate to vata dosha. Other typical ayurvedic herbs for rejuvenating the mind and the nervous system are Rhodiola rosea, Matricaria chamomilla, Matricaria chamomilla, and Bacopa monniera. A fundamental theme of Ayurveda to treat mental disorders is to develop ones full mental potential through Medhya Rasayanas and herbs that provide powerful nourishment for the mind. Medhya Rasayanas enhances dhi, dhriti, and smriti individually and improve coordination between various mental factors.

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