



## Review Article

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### A REVIEW ON THE CONCEPT OF ADRAVYABHŪTA CIKITSĀ

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#### ABSTRACT

Main aim of Ayurveda is to preserve the healthy state and to treat the diseased humanity. Cikitsā is defined as the measures which create equilibrium in Dhātus. Medications are the tools which are employed by the physicians with a view to bring out equilibrium of Dhātus. Depending upon the nature of their composition, they are of two types; those having material substrata are called Dravyabhūta and those not having material substrata are called Adravabhūta. Scores of studies and research work has been done on Dravyabhūta therapies or Cikitsā. But Adravabhūta Cikitsā has yet not been explored. When duly applied Adravabhūta Cikitsā can help in the alleviation of disease and serving humanity. This review article is an effort to throw some light on this very important aspect of Cikitsā.

**KEYWORDS:** Adravabhūta Cikitsā, psychosomatic disorders, Sadvṛtta pālana, 'Nidāna Parivarjanam'

#### INTRODUCTION

Three basic streams of Cikitsā (treatment principle) are described in Ayurveda as; Daivavyapāśrya Cikitsā (Spiritual or Divine Therapy), Yuktivyapāśrya Cikitsā (Rational Therapy) and Sattvāvajaya Cikitsā (Psychotherapy)<sup>1</sup>. But In the context of Daśvidha Parīkṣya Bhāvas (ten factors to be examined in the patient), Ācārya Caraka has again mentioned two types of therapies depending upon the nature of their composition – Dravyabhūta (therapies having material substrata) and Adravabhūta therapy (therapies not having material substrata)<sup>2</sup>. The latter category of the therapy has indirect action on diseases. As a matter of fact, Āyurveda has very strongly put forward the importance of all these treatment methods but in current scenario, it seems that only Yuktivyapāśrya Cikitsā (rational therapy) is being propagated further. Keeping in mind; the increasing psychosomatic and lifestyle disorders in today's world, a prudent approach towards the promotion of this old and trustworthy therapy i.e. Adravabhūta Cikitsā is ardently required.

#### BACKGROUND

Ācārya Caraka has briefly counted the components of Adravabhūta Cikitsā as Bhayadarśana (fear therapy), Vismāpana (to surprise the patient), Vismāraṇa (forgetting therapy), Kṣobhana (shock therapy), Haṣṇa (pleasing act), Bhartsanā (condemning act), Vadha (fear of death), Bandhana (to bind the patient), Svapana (sleep), Samvāhana (mild body massage) etc<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, Ācārya Cakrapāṇi, the renowned commentator of Caraka Samhitā has also stated that other factors like attendants (Paricāraka) etc are also taken under Adravabhūta Cikitsā. Another commentator on Caraka Samhitā Ācārya Jyotiścandra Saraswati; further specifies that all the techniques included under Daivavyapāśrya Cikitsā (spiritual or divine therapy) should also be included in Adravabhūta Cikitsā.

#### ADRAVYABHŪTA CIKITSĀ : DEFINITION

'Adravabhūta Cikitsā' actually means utilizing non pharmacological procedures for the treatment of various diseases. Broadly speaking it is a therapy which is done through Upāyas (measures or modules) which are Amūrta-bhāva (formless)<sup>4</sup>. Considering this fact in mind it can be postulated that all the methods of treatment except the methods which involve mūrta-bhāva aushadh (direct administration of medicines) come under Adravabhūta Cikitsā'.

#### COMPONENTS OF ADRAVYABHŪTA CIKITSĀ:

**Bhaya Darsana (Fear Therapy):** It can be correlated to modern day psycho-shock therapies. Actually, these are fear tactics based on ancient presumptions that if a patient is put to shock by fear of life then he regains his lost consciousness and past memory. Bhaya Darśana has been used as method of treatment in Unmāda and Hikkā.

**Vismāpana (surprise therapy) :** Vismāpana means to surprise the patient. It has been utilized in the treatment of Hikkā and Unmāda.

**Vismāraṇa (forgetting therapy):** It means to wash away the memory related to bad experiences of the past. It also soothes the psyche of the patient and helps in recovering him. It has been used in the treatment of Unmāda.

**Ksobhana therapy (shock therapy):** It is also a sort of Shock Therapy.

**Harsan therapy (Pleasing therapy):** The mental stress of the patient is alleviated with the help of sudden excitement and recreational acts and ideas. This is indicated in the treatment of Kāma-Śoka-Bhayaja Jvara, Rājayakṣmā, Unmāda, Hikka, Chardi, Śānkā Viṣa.

**Bhartsana (Condemning therapy):** This is a sort of condemning act for the patient and this might be directed towards self realization.

**Samvāhana Therapy (Massage therapy):** It can be correlated to mild body massage. It has been advised in the treatment of Rājayakṣmā.

**Vadha (Fear therapy):** It means threatening for murder. Although it is not a rational approach, yet it can be used as a technique for treating patients of insanity. In the context of Unmāda; Ācārya Caraka has mentioned that among all the miseries of human body, the most devastating is the fear of death and it can help in regaining a calm mind again.

**Bandha therapy (Binding therapy):** Ācārya Caraka in the context of Unmāda Cikitsā has advised to bind the insane patient and leave him. Due to this his disturbed mind becomes calm and poised.

**Swapana (Sleep therapy):** Sleep has been given great importance in Ayurvedic text. It is one of the three Upstambhas (supporting pillars) of human life. A sound sleep is a precursor of positive health. If a patient, is provided with all the prerequisites for a sound sleep, it can very effectively help in treating his illness. Methods promoting sleep have been stated as Pathya Vihāra (wholesome actions) in Rakpitta.

**Occult practices:** Moreover, the various occult practices in the name of Daivayapāsrya Cikitsā are also sort of Adravyabhūta Cikitsā because no direct material substances are involved in them.

**Doctor–Patient relationship:** It is an important factor. In Ayurvedic texts and allied literature this has been very finely explained. In Śrī Mad Bhāgavat Gītā, the conversation of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna is a beautiful example of this relationship, when Arjuna gets depressed Lord Kṛṣṇa helps him in clearing his doubts through a sort of counseling. Ācārya Caraka have also denoted this relationship by explaining the ideal behavior of a patient<sup>5</sup>.

**Role of Paricāraka (Attendant):** Ācārya Caraka has considered the Paricāraka i.e. the attendant of the patient as one of the four qualities mandatory for an early recovery. He has explained four qualities of the attendant. These are knowledge of the proper performance of the diet and action, efficiency, fondness for the patient and cleanliness<sup>6</sup>. A patient having an attendant with above said qualities will surely feel confident towards his recovery. So it is also an important component of Adravyabhūta Cikitsā.

**Yoga:** Āyurveda and Yoga are the applied sciences. These deal with complete health. Vyādhi has been regarded in Yoga Sūtra as one of the nine Vikṣepa and Patañjali advises to abandon the Duḥkhas. Glimpses of Yoga are found here and there in Āyurveda. Ācārya Caraka has mentioned the term Yoga and its implications at several places. Patañjali has described eight-fold methods of Yoga known as Aṣṭāṅga Yoga. These are categorised into external and internal aids. The first five are called external aids to Yoga (Bahiraṅga Sādhanā). The last three levels are called internal aids to Yoga (Antaraṅga Sādhanā). This yoga can also be considered as a Adravyabhūta Cikitsā as it focuses on various methods which do not involve any physical entities.

**Sadvṛtta Palana (Following good moral conduct):** In Āyurveda good moral conduct is called Sadvṛtta which means leading a good life. Caraka has described in details, the good conduct which is to be followed for positive health in eighth chapter of Sūtra Sthāna of Caraka Saṁhitā<sup>7</sup>. He has laid down the rules that are to be followed by which one can acquire good health and conquest

of the senses. Good conduct has also been regarded in Āyurveda as an essential part in the path of salvation. This is also a kind of Adravyabhūta Cikitsā.

**Nidāna Parivarjanam (Refrain from etiological factors):** Ācārya Suśruta has mentioned that ‘Nidāna Parivarjanam’ is the foremost treatment principle of any disease in this world i.e. abstinence from the disease causing factors can treat the disease<sup>8</sup>. This can only be achieved if the patient is mentally strong and fully aware what has made him sick, this can be possible if he very effectively tries to avoid the intellectual blasphemy that he has already done by Ahitānāmupsevāna (in taking unwholesome). In other words, it means that his mind has to be restrained from the unwholesome objects that have caused the disease. ‘Nidāna Parivarjanam’ should also be included under Adravyabhūta Cikitsā.

**Nigraha Hetu (Coping factors):** Sage Sushruta while describing the four Nigraha Hetu i.e. four factors which should be duly employed in order to successfully cope up with a disease, which are sanshodhana (purification), sanshamana (pacification), ahara and achara (regimes of diet & conduct), included adravyabhuta chikitsa in the form of Achara. Two procedures of Langhana (lightening therapy) are given by Vagbhata i.e. shodhana and shamana. In this, out of seven types, five types of shamana procedures, i.e. kshuda (hunger), trit (thirst), vyayama (exercise), atapa (exposure to sunshine) and maruta (wind) are adravyabhuta forms of treatment. Similarly, while describing 18 types of Upshayas (homologatory sign), sage Chakrapani considered the importance of adravyabhuta chikitsa and mentioned it under all Viharaja upshayas<sup>9</sup>.

## DISCUSSION

Cikitsā is of two types Dravyabhūta and Adravyabhūta. Dravyabhūta Cikitsā is applied in routine practice. Adravyabhūta Cikitsā has indirect but important role in complete eradication of disease and in maintenance of healthy state. After keenly analyzing the methods of Adravyabhūta Cikitsā it seems that all these methods are somewhat closer to the methods of Sattvāvajaya Cikitsā and are more helpful in treating psychiatric disorders or psychosomatic ailments. All these methods have been widely used in Ayurvedic classics for treating various diseases arising by some psychological involvement. These methods will reduce the vitiated mānasa doṣas by raising the sattva guṇa of the patient and this added with the Yuktivyapāsrya Cikitsā for the particular disease will help the patient to recover early. Moreover it has been proved in recent researches that all the somatic diseases are influenced by psychological factors. Therefore the methods incorporated under Adravyabhūta Cikitsā can positively impact the line of treatment of somatic, psychosomatic as well as psychological diseases to a great extent.

## CONCLUSION

In modern world humanity is facing great challenges. Lifestyle disorders and psychosomatic disorders are a great concern along with some grave life threatening diseases. Our health budgets focus on medicines, infrastructure and man power. The concept of Adravyabhūta Cikitsā is a ray of hope for the ailing humanity as it does not require big budgets and infrastructure. As explained above all its components need to be explored and utilized. If the physicians are made to understand the importance of these components and further apply it properly along with the contemporary tools of treatment it can do wonders.

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