

Review Article

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ROLE OF MANA IN HEALTH AND DISEASE: AN AYURVEDIC REVIEW

Dr. Anjana Dixit

Professor and H.O.D., Department of Kriya Sharir, Shri Babu Singh Jai Singh P.G. Ayurvedic Medical College Farrukhabad U.P, 209601

Corresponding Author - Dr. Anjana Dixit, Professor and H.O.D., Department of Kriya Sharir, Shri Babu Singh Jai Singh P.G. Ayurvedic Medical College Farrukhabad U.P, 209601

Email i.d.- agnihotrianjana@gmail.com

Mobile 9129347795

ABSTRACT

Background:

Ayurveda considers *Mana* as an integral component of life, functioning in close coordination with *Sharira* (body) and *Atma*. Classical texts clearly state that health is not limited to physical well-being alone but includes mental balance and clarity. Disturbance of *Mana* plays a central role in the origin and progression of many diseases, both mental and psychosomatic. **Aim** To review the role of *Mana* in the maintenance of health and in the causation of disease according to Ayurvedic principles. **Objectives** To explain the Ayurvedic concept and functions of *Mana*. To study the role of *Satva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas* in mental balance and imbalance. To understand the involvement of *Mana* in the pathogenesis of mental and psychosomatic diseases. **Materials and Methods:** This review is based on a detailed study of classical Ayurvedic texts such as *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, and their available commentaries. Relevant modern literature related to mind-body interaction was also referred for conceptual correlation. **Observations:** Ayurveda describes *Mana* as *Ubhayendriya*, having both sensory and motor functions. Normal functioning of *Mana* maintains harmony between *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala*. Vitiating of *Rajas* and *Tamas* leads to mental imbalance, which acts as a causative or aggravating factor for diseases like *Unmada*, *Apasmara*, *Chittodvega*, and several somatic disorders through psychosomatic pathways. **Discussion:** The Ayurvedic concept of *Mana* highlights the strong influence of mental factors such as emotions, stress, fear, anger, and grief on physical health. Principles like *Satvavajaya Chikitsa*, *Achar Rasayana*, and regulation of *Ahara* and *Vihara* emphasize mental discipline as a therapeutic and preventive approach. This shows that mental health is not treated in isolation but as part of a holistic health model. **Conclusion:** *Mana* plays a decisive role in both the preservation of health and the manifestation of disease. Balanced *Mana* supports physical, mental, and social well-being, while disturbed *Mana* contributes significantly to disease development. Understanding and managing *Mana* through Ayurvedic principles is essential for comprehensive healthcare and disease prevention.

Keywords: *Mana*, *Satva* *Rajas* *Tamas*, *Manas Roga*, *Psychosomatic Disorders*, *Satvavajaya Chikitsa*, *Ayurvedic Concept of Health*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda explains health as a state of balance of body, mind, and soul, where *Mana* plays a central coordinating role. Classical texts clearly mention that a person cannot be considered healthy if mental well-being is disturbed, even when physical parameters appear normal. *Mana* is responsible for perception, thinking, memory, desire, and decision-making, and it continuously interacts with the body and senses to maintain normal physiological and psychological functions.¹

According to Ayurveda, *Mana* is described as *Ubhayendriya*, having both sensory and motor associations. It acts as a link between *Atma* and *Sharira*, allowing knowledge to be perceived and actions to be performed. Proper functioning of *Mana* ensures harmonious coordination of *Indriya*, *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala*, thereby supporting a stable state of health. When *Mana* is stable, an individual shows clarity of thought, emotional balance, and appropriate responses to environmental stimuli.²

Mental disturbances arise mainly due to the vitiation of *Rajas* and *Tamas*, the two *Manasika Dosha*. Excessive emotions such as anger, fear, grief, stress, and anxiety disturb the equilibrium of *Mana*, which gradually affects bodily functions. Ayurveda recognizes that many physical diseases originate or worsen due to persistent mental imbalance, highlighting the psychosomatic nature of disease manifestation.³

To address this close mind-body relationship, Ayurveda emphasizes preventive and therapeutic measures aimed at mental regulation. Concepts such as *Satvavajaya Chikitsa*, *Achar Rasayana*, and proper regulation of *Ahara* and *Vihara* focus on strengthening mental stability and self-control. Thus, understanding the role of *Mana* is essential not only for the management of mental disorders but also for achieving holistic health and long-term disease prevention.⁴

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Aim

To review the role of *Mana* in the maintenance of health and in the causation of disease according to Ayurvedic principles.

Objectives

1. To explain the Ayurvedic concept and functions of *Mana*.
2. To study the role of *Satva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas* in mental balance and imbalance.

3. To understand the involvement of *Mana* in the pathogenesis of mental and psychosomatic diseases.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

MANA

Classical Ayurvedic literature provides a clear and systematic description of *Mana* as an essential component of life. *Charaka Samhita* explains that life (*Ayu*) is the conjunction of *Sharira*, *Indriya*, *Satva* (*Mana*), and *Atma*. Here, *Mana* is described as the internal instrument responsible for *Chintya* (thinking), *Vicharya* (analysis), *Uhya* (logical reasoning), *Dhyeya* (concentration), and *Sankalpa* (determination). Without the involvement of *Mana*, perception through sense organs does not occur, emphasizing its central role in cognition and behavior.⁵

Mana is classified as *Ubhayendriya*, having association with both *Jnanendriya* and *Karmendriya*. *Sushruta Samhita* states that *Mana* is subtle (*Anu*) and singular (*Ekatva*), which explains why attention can focus on only one object at a time. This concept highlights the selective and regulatory function of *Mana* in sensory perception and motor response, forming the basis of attention and mental control.⁶

Ayurveda describes *Rajas* and *Tamas* as the *Manasika Dosha*, while *Satva* is responsible for clarity, stability, and knowledge. When *Rajas* and *Tamas* dominate, *Mana* becomes disturbed, leading to mental and behavioral abnormalities. *Charaka Samhita* elaborates that imbalance of these qualities results in conditions like *Unmada*, *Apasmara*, *Bhrama*, *Chittodvega*, and other *Manas Roga*. These texts also indicate that mental disturbance can act as a primary cause or aggravating factor in somatic diseases.⁷

The interrelationship between *Mana* and *Sharira* is repeatedly emphasized in Ayurvedic literature. Emotional factors such as *Krodha* (anger), *Bhaya* (fear), *Shoka* (grief), and *Chinta* (worry) are mentioned as important etiological factors for various physical disorders. This reflects the Ayurvedic understanding of psychosomatic pathology, where disturbed *Mana* alters *Dosha* dynamics and weakens *Agni*, leading to disease manifestation.⁸

For the management of disturbed *Mana*, Ayurveda advocates non-pharmacological measures alongside medicinal therapy. *Satvavajaya Chikitsa* is described as a unique approach focusing on withdrawal of the mind from unwholesome objects and strengthening mental discipline.

Concepts like *Achar Rasayana*, ethical conduct, self-control, and regulation of *Ahara* and *Vihara* are repeatedly highlighted in classical texts as essential tools for maintaining mental health. Thus, Ayurvedic literature presents *Mana* as a decisive factor in both health preservation and disease causation.⁹

HEALTH

In Ayurveda, health is not limited to the absence of disease but is a state of complete balance of body, mind, and soul. Balanced *Mana* is considered essential for achieving true health. When *Mana* remains stable, clear, and controlled, it supports proper functioning of *Indriya*, maintains equilibrium of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala*, and promotes harmonious interaction between the individual and the external environment. Mental clarity and emotional stability are therefore regarded as core indicators of a healthy person.¹⁰

Classical texts emphasize that *Prasanna Mana* is a key feature of *Swastha Purusha*. A calm and disciplined *Mana* enhances *Agni*, improves immunity, supports proper sleep, and encourages healthy decision-making related to *Ahara* and *Vihara*. Positive mental states such as contentment, courage, patience, and self-control help in preserving physical vitality and preventing disease. Thus, Ayurveda clearly recognizes *Mana* as a fundamental pillar in the maintenance of holistic health.¹¹

DISEASE

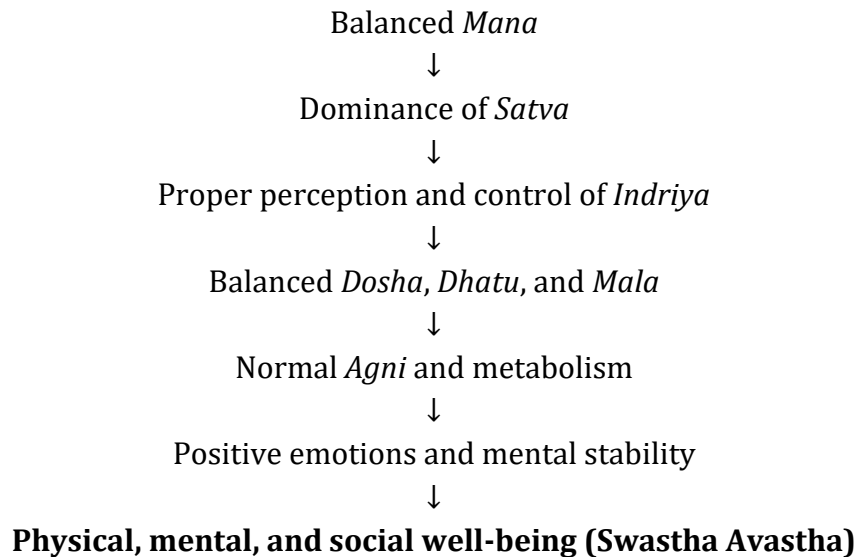
In Ayurveda, disease is understood as a state of imbalance affecting not only the body but also the mind. Disturbed *Mana* is recognized as a significant causative and aggravating factor in the development of various diseases. When *Rajas* and *Tamas* dominate *Mana*, mental stability is lost, leading to improper thinking, emotional disturbance, and unhealthy behavioral patterns. These disturbances directly influence *Dosha* and *Agni*, initiating the disease process.¹²

Classical texts describe that mental factors such as *Krodha* (anger), *Shoka* (grief), *Bhaya* (fear), *Chinta* (worry), and excessive stress vitiate *Mana* and contribute to the manifestation of *Manas Roga* like *Unmada*, *Apasmara*, *Chittodvega*, and *Bhrama*. Prolonged mental imbalance also plays a crucial role in psychosomatic disorders, where physical symptoms arise due to sustained mental stress.¹³

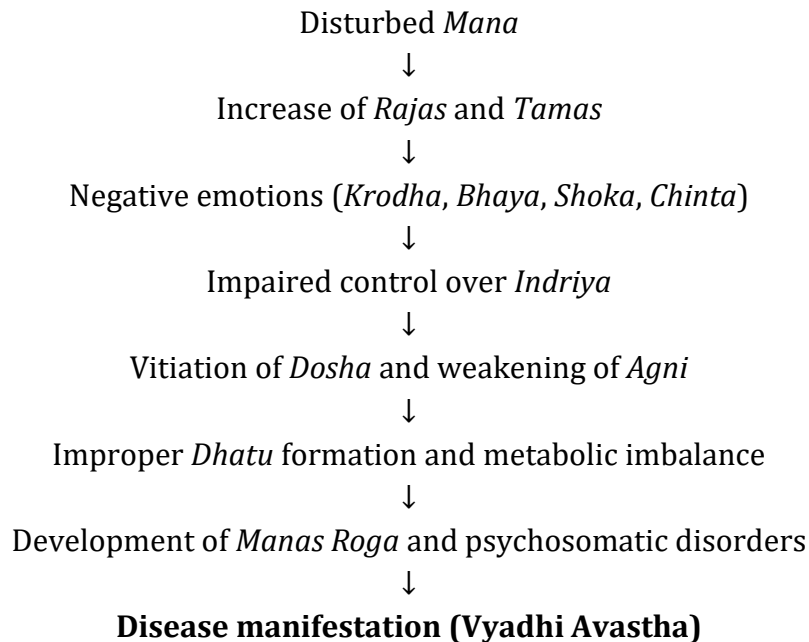
Ayurveda further explains that disturbed *Mana* weakens *Agni*, alters digestion and metabolism, and promotes improper formation of *Dhatu*. This leads to increased

susceptibility to chronic and recurrent diseases. Therefore, disease in Ayurveda is seen as a combined outcome of mental and physical imbalance, and effective management requires correction of *Mana* along with bodily factors through appropriate therapeutic and preventive measures.¹⁴

Role of *Mana* in Health



Role of *Mana* in Disease



RESULT AND FINIDNGS

- Balanced *Mana* with dominance of *Satva* was associated with mental calmness, clarity of thought, and emotional stability.

- Proper functioning of *Mana* supported effective coordination of *Indriya* and maintenance of normal *Agni*.
- Individuals with stable *Mana* showed balanced *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala*, indicating a healthy state.
- Dominance of *Rajas* and *Tamas* led to disturbance of *Mana* and loss of mental control.
- Disturbed *Mana* acted as a primary or contributory cause in the development of *Manas Roga* such as *Unmada* and *Chittodvega*.
- Persistent mental imbalance was found to aggravate physical and psychosomatic disorders through impairment of *Agni* and *Dosha* vitiation.
- Strengthening and regulation of *Mana* were observed to be essential for disease prevention and holistic health maintenance.

DISCUSSION

The present review highlights that *Mana* holds a central position in the Ayurvedic concept of health, acting as a bridge between *Sharira* and *Atma*. Balanced *Mana*, characterized by dominance of *Satva*, ensures proper perception, decision-making, and emotional stability. This mental equilibrium supports normal functioning of *Agni* and helps maintain balance of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala*. The findings of this study reaffirm the classical Ayurvedic view that mental well-being is an inseparable component of overall health.¹⁵

The discussion also reveals that disturbance of *Mana* due to dominance of *Rajas* and *Tamas* plays a significant role in disease manifestation. Negative emotional states such as *Krodha*, *Bhaya*, *Shoka*, and *Chinta* were found to initiate or aggravate both mental and physical disorders. Prolonged mental imbalance weakens *Agni*, alters metabolic processes, and contributes to improper formation of *Dhatu*, thereby explaining the psychosomatic nature of many chronic diseases described in Ayurveda.¹⁶

From a therapeutic perspective, the review emphasizes that correction of *Mana* is essential for effective disease management. Approaches like *Satvavajaya Chikitsa*, *Achar Rasayana*, and regulation of *Ahara* and *Vihara* focus on mental discipline, ethical conduct, and lifestyle modification. These measures not only help in managing *Manas Roga* but also support prevention and better prognosis of somatic diseases. Thus, understanding the role of *Mana* provides a holistic framework for health promotion and comprehensive disease management in Ayurveda.¹⁷

CONCLUSION

The present review concludes that *Mana* plays a decisive and foundational role in both the maintenance of health and the development of disease as described in Ayurveda. Balanced *Mana* with predominance of *Satva* supports mental stability, proper functioning of *Agni*, and harmony of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala*, thereby promoting holistic health. Conversely, disturbed *Mana* dominated by *Rajas* and *Tamas* acts as a significant causative and aggravating factor for *Manas Roga* and psychosomatic disorders. Therefore, preservation of mental balance through Ayurvedic principles such as *Satvavajaya Chikitsa*, *Achar Rasayana*, and appropriate regulation of *Ahara* and *Vihara* is essential for disease prevention, effective management, and achievement of complete well-being.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST -NIL

SOURCE OF SUPPORT -NONE

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