

Management Of Asd Through Modern And Ayurvedic Aspect.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47071/pijar.2025.v10i03.01>

ABSTRACT

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a complex neuro-behavioural and developmental disorder characterized by delayed or absent language development, repetitive behaviours, and significantly impaired non-verbal communication, imagination, and social interaction. These symptoms typically manifest during early childhood . Ayurveda provides a detailed description of neurological disorders and their management, though ASD is not specifically mentioned by any Acharya. However, many features of Unmaad in Ayurveda are similar to those of ASD. Unmaad is characterized by impairments in Manas (mind), Buddhi (cognitive function), Sangya Guna (perception), Bhakti (desire/interests), Sheela (personality/activity), Cheshta (motor activity), and Achara (conduct). The condition may be due to Khavaigunya (disarrangements) of Srotas (channels) which nurtures Manas (mind) as a consequences of many Agantuja (epigenetic and toxic insults and post-natal environmental factor) and Sahaja (genetic) factors. Among the various type of treatment modalities Yuktivyapashrya Chikitsa plays a vital role in managing the symptoms of autism in children.

INTRODUCTION

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability caused by

differences in the brain. According to CDC, People with ASD often have problems with social communication

and interaction and restricted or repetitive behaviours or interests. People with ASD may also have different ways of learning, moving or paying attention. It is the world's third most common developmental disorder, so to spread awareness every year 2nd April is marked as World's Autism Day. The history of ASD dates back to 1943, when Leo Kanner, an Austrian-American psychiatrist and physician, wrote about ASD children with "extreme autistic aloneness", "delayed echolalia" and an "anxiously obsessive desire for the maintenance of sameness" (Diagnosis and Screening of Autism - CDC, 2020). According to National Institute of Mental Health, Autism is known as a "SPECTRUM" disorder because there is wide variation in the type and severity of symptoms people experience. According to WHO, 1 in 100 children has autism. For 2020, CDC reported 1 in 36 children aged 8 years (approx. 4% of boys and 1% of girls) was estimated to have ASD. These estimates of ADDM Network are higher than previous report of 2000-2018. For the first time the prevalence of ASD lower among white children than among other racial and ethnic

groups. INCLEN study suggests that ASD prevalence across five states in north and west India was as high as 1 in 125 children between 2-6 years age group and 1 in 80 among children in 6-9 years age. Overall prevalence in India is estimated to be 1 in 89. According to a report by ET Health World, about 18 million people in India are diagnosed with ASD. About 1-1.5 % of children aged 2-9 years are diagnosed with ASD.[3] ASD begins before the age of 3 years and can last throughout the life; symptoms may improve over time. 80% of the brain is developed in first 36 months (3 years) so this is the ideal time to start the treatment. Some children show ASD symptoms within the first 12 months of life and in others may not show up until 24 months of age. Some gain new skills and meet developmental milestones until around 18-24 months of age. The cause of ASD is still uncertain. It is one of the developmental disorders of the brain function. Neuroimaging and neurologic studies have shown abnormalities in parietal and frontal association cortex and also revealed lesions in the cerebellum such as cerebellar hypoplasia, Purkinje neuronal loss, loss

of cerebellar granule cells and loss of cells in cerebellar nuclei. Changes in multiple genetic regions, gene variants potentially contribute to abnormal neuronal and axonal growth, synapse formation and myelination. It is characterized by atypical and impaired development in social interaction and communication as well as restricted, repetitive behaviors, interests and activities. These symptoms can persist throughout life. It was last recognized as a diagnosis in the DSM IV and ICD-10, and has been superseded by autism spectrum disorder in the DSM 5 (2013) and ICD-11 (2022). Autism Spectrum Disorder is not mentioned in any of the major Ayurveda Texts. However, its majority of clinical features like poor eye contact, hyperactivity, flapping of hand, solitary play etc resembles features of Unmada, a disease of Manovahi Srotasa. In Ayurveda, pathogenesis of Autism can be understood as any imbalance in the form of bhramsa (aberration) of Dhi, Dhriti or Smriti, whether collectively or singularly due to indulgence in unwholesome action, termed as

pragyaparadha which leads to sarvadosh prakopa and various types of derangements in buddhi as well as in physiological functioning. Unmad is defined as cognitive distortion pertaining to mind (mana), intellect (budhi), consciousness (smaran shakti), knowledge (gyan), memory (smriti), desire (bhakti), attitude (sheel), activities (sharirik chesta) & behaviour (achar). The symptoms of Unmada are a mixture of features of Vata, Pitta and Kapha singularly or collectively are even seen in Autism. The present article is an effort to interpret and analyse the concept of Ayurvedic pathophysiology and all the aspects for prevention and management of autism.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

All relevant Ayurvedic and modern science literature along with internet databases is referred for study. A literature review to evaluate the effect of Ayurveda modalities, modern medicines, association of biochemical parameters, other interventions in Autism.

Table no 1. Clinical features of autism & their relation with Dosha

S.N	Social Features	Dosha
1	Problem in verbal and non-verbal communication	Vata
2	Inability to engage socially or emotionally with caregivers	Vata
3	Preference for solitary play	Vata
5	Poor eye contact	Vata
	Language Features	
5	Delay of speech and language	Vata
6	Impairment in comprehension and language	Vata
7	Fluent but unintelligible jargon	
	Activities	
8	Behaving like deaf	Vata
9	Irritable	Vata
10	Chronically unhappy	Vata
11	In some cases hyperactivity and impulsivity	Vata
12	Stereotypical body movements (Twirling, flapping of hands, toe walking)	Vata
	Mental Features	
13	Neurological dysfunction like seizures	Vata
14	Few children showing amazing remarkable talent	Vata,Kapha
15	. Mental retardation in 50-70% cases	Vata
16	Sleep disturbance (mostly in first year)	Vata

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To study literature review of Autism through Ayurveda.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Unmada

According to Acharya Charak, Unmada, is the Manasvyadhi is which understood as the unsettled condition of the Manas (mind), Buddhi (understanding), Samjna (consciousness), Gnana (perception), Smriti (memory), Bhakti (inclination), Sheela (character), Chesta (behaviour), and Achara (conduct).

Classification of Unmada

Classification is based on the prognosis, the knowledge of which is very essential in treating any disease is focusing on aetiology, mode of manifestation, prognosis and principles of treatment he offers two more classifications as Nija and Agantu Nija

Unmada is further divided into four kinds. They are also known as Doshaja Unmaadas (those arising from the morbidity of Doshas. Out of these the fourth kind namely Sannipataja Unmada is said to be incurable according to Acharya Shushruta and Vagbhata.

Nidana

The Hetu of the Unmada are given as:

1. Aaharaja Hetu
2. Viharaja Hetu

Aaharaja Hetu:

Incompatible, dirty, impure food like fruits and milk, heavy diet like non-veg, Dhadhi, bakery products etc. increases Tridoshas.

Viharaja Hetu:

disrespect of Dev (God), Guru (Teachers), Brahmins (learned), excessive Bhaya (fear), Harsha (joy) to produce Manobhigata disturbing all the normal mental functions increases Rajas and Tamas Mansik Doshas. Agantu Unmaadas arising Himsa (cruelty) the Rati (lust) and Abhyarchana (extortion).

Etiopathogenesis of Unmada

The manifestation of Unmada involves vitiated Doshas (Vata, Pitta, Kapha) alongside derangement of Manas Doshas (Rajas and Tamas).

Dietary Causes:

Aharaja Nidana Unhealthy dietary habits include consuming Tamasika

Ahara, which involves unhygienic or stale food, overeating, unhealthy cooking practices, and irregular meals, as well as Rajasika Ahara, characterized by the intake of caffeinated beverages, alcohol, and excessively spicy foods. Additionally, consuming foods that do not align with Ayurvedic dietary guidelines, such as unwholesome junk and processed foods, while avoiding nutritious options, and lacking healthy fats like ghee and milk in the diet contribute to poor health.

Lifestyle Causes:

Viharaja Nidana Imbalances in health can arise from physical inactivity, excessive sleeping, and irregular sleep patterns, while engaging excessively in entertainment and social media and neglecting responsibilities can lead to mental imbalance. Smoking, substance abuse, and stressful activities further disrupt mental harmony, and emotional triggers such as fear, envy, despair, desire, anger, and sorrow can disturb mental balance. Additionally, life events like the loss of loved ones, job changes, or severe illnesses can significantly impact mental health.

Manasika Nidana

Inability to control emotions such as Bhaya, Irshya, Dainya, Lobha, Kama, Krodha and Dukha may upset the mental balance. Life events such as mental trauma due to loss of family members, job, onset of severe illnesses etc.

Sadvritta palana

Not following the codes of conduct mentioned in Ayurveda for healthy living.

Avara Satva

People born with Heena Satva (mentally weak), are more prone to imbalances in mind. People with predominance of Rajas and Tamas in mind compared with Satva have more probability to get psychological imbalances. The dietary and psychological stress factors described in Unmada are similar to what we find in ASD.

Samprapti (pathogenesis) of

Unmada

The imbalance of Doshas (both physical and mental) caused by unhealthy dietary habits, lifestyle practices, and other triggering factors

leads to an upward movement of vitiated elements through the channels of Manovaha -srotas. This upward movement affects the heart (Hridaya), which houses intellect (Buddhi), and disrupts the mind by blocking the channels of Manovaha srotas.

Consequently, the consciousness (Chitta) becomes disturbed, resulting in a loss of discernment (Buddhi), leading the individual to engage in inappropriate actions. This disturbed mental state is known as Unmada.

Similarities of Features of Vatika Unmada and ASD

Features of Vatika Unmada	Features of ASD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant wandering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restless, unable to sit still
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improper or inappropriate movement of eyes, eyebrow, lips, shoulder, jaws, fore-arms and legs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetitive stereotyped movements of hand and eyes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant and incoherent speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monotonous speech, Oddity in speech
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drooling of saliva, sucking of fingers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always smiling, laughing, dancing, singing, and playing with musical instruments in inappropriate situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibits odd and bizarre behavior, often boisterous, and screams inappropriately. Fond of music and dance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loudly imitating the sounds of lute, flute, conch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impaired speech, meaningless utterance of words or sound, constant humming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riding on non-vehicle toys or objects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to process information leading to absent or deranged understanding of things like not

	able to have meaningful play with a toy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liking for adoration by strange ornaments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inability to relate with things, odd behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disliking for food articles and also a strong desire not to part with the eatables available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eating disorder (selective eating / overeating)

Features of Kaphaja Unmada having resemblance with ASD are described below

Features of Kaphaja Unmada	Features found in ASD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staying in one place/ prefer to stay lonely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefers to be alone, Withdrawal from surrounding, prefer solitary activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observance of silence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not try to communicate by words or gestures, shows few social reactions to others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced physical activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listless, sluggish, inactive, never moves spontaneously
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salivation and nasal excretions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drooling of saliva, running nose
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aversion towards food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eating disorder
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Love for solitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeks isolation from others, pays no attention when spoken to
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased sleep 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inactive

Features of Paittika Unmada having resemblance with ASD are described below

Features of Paittika Unmada	Features found in ASD
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intolerance/irritation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Irritable and whiny, resist any form of physical contact, don't wait for his turn while playing turn-based games
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anger	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cries over minor annoyances, temper tantrums/outbursts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inflicting injury to self or others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aggressive to other children or adults (verbally or physically), injures self on purpose
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excitability on inappropriate occasions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Impulsive, stamps feet or bangs objects, or slam doors, disrupts group activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Running	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Constantly runs or jumps around the room, does not stay in one place during meal, lesson or learning periods
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Having fondness for shade, cold water and food	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inclination towards water
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continuous state of anguish	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Depressed mood, does not pay attention to instructions

**ETIOPATHOGENESIS OF
AUTISM AS MODERN
SCIENCE**

Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder with an unknown etiology. Its primary characteristics include

impairments in social interaction, communication, imagination, and the presence of restricted interests and repetitive behaviours. Potential contributing factors include genetic influences, various environmental factors, perinatal brain injury, and hormonal imbalances. Neuro- radiological and neurochemical studies have also suggested abnormalities in brain structure and function. Despite these findings, results from various studies are often conflicting, and there are no specific diagnostic imaging or tests for autism. Previously, emotionally distant parenting styles (refrigerator mothers) and the MMR vaccination were thought to be causes of autism, but current evidence does not support these theories.

TREATMENT :

Treatment of Autism as per Ayurveda-

The classical management of Unmada mentioned in Ayurvedic

classics is found to be very effective in the management of Autism. Deepana and Pachana which are the procedures in which various drugs are used for promoting digestion, Snehapana (oral intake of medicated ghee preparation), Mridu Sodhana (Mild purification of body by emesis or purgation), Niruha Basti (decoction enema) and Sneha Basti (oil enema), Siro Virechana or Nasya (medicated nasal drops). Apart from the Sodhana (purificatory) therapies mentioned in Ayurvedic classics, Abhyanga (oil massage of head and body), Siro-Pichu (Overhead application of a piece of cotton dipped in medicated oil), Sirodhara (pouring of medicated oil over the forehead as a continuous stream), Sirolepam (Overhead application of medicinal paste), and Takra Dhara (pouring of medicated buttermilk over forehead as a continuous stream) are various treatment modalities aimed to promote the development of brain and to reduce or control

the troublesome behaviours found with Autism Spectrum Disorders. As per Charaka Samhita, the avoidance of Meat and intoxicating drinks, intake of Hitahara (compatible foods), following cleanliness and possessing a good mental strength can prevent the disease Unmada and, the person cured of Unmada will attain clarity of Indriyarth (objects of senses), Buddhi, Atma, Manas and normalcy of Dhatus. Autism is regarded as a lifelong condition due to Bija Dosha (genetic predisposition). But, by adopting Unmada Chikitsa as a long-term intervention the triggering elements of Autism can be eliminated thereby the quality of life can be improved.

Ayurveda approach

Unmada in a holistic approach with due importance to the logic based pharmacotherapy, Panchakarma interventions and psychotherapy in the form of spiritual and psychological interventions.

Daiva-Vyapashraya Chikitsa (Spiritual therapy)

Ayurveda considers individuals as part of the supreme conscience and the role of spirituality has been explained in detail in various contexts. Logical use of Mantra, Aushadhi, Mani (wearing gems), Bali (auspicious offerings), Upahara (gifts to deserving people), Homa (oblations), Niyama (observance of scriptural rules), Prayashchitta (atonement), Upavasa (fasting), Svastyayana (chanting of auspicious hymns), Pran-Patagamana (obeisance to the Gods, going to pilgrimage), etc. are aimed at boosting the self confidence and mental strength to the individuals.

Satvavajaya Chikitsa

Satvavajaya Chikitsa literally means controlling the mind, in such a way that it is not acted upon by various stressors making it prone to Prajnaparadha. Acharya Charaka, defines Satvavajaya as withdrawal of mind from

unwholesome objects. It includes:

- Mano Nigraha: Regulating mind/subjugating mind from unwholesome interactions

- Dhee-Dhairyaatmadi Vijnanam: It is providing a deeper level of understanding which helps ultimately in better control of mind. Acharya Charaka also explains the utility of replacing negative emotions with that of positive emotions that is beneficial to psyche. Thus, Satvavajaya encompasses various aspects that deal with mind - its physiology, morphology, morbidity and also management of Psychological as well as Psychosomatic diseases.

- Yuktivyapashraya Chikitsa

This includes treatment through logical use of medicines and modification of Ahara and Vihara to suit the needs of the person. The patient should be encouraged to follow proper dietary regimen, follow rules of Sadvrta, to use Medhya Rasayana (medicines that boost psyche) and Doshahara Oushadha (medicines) to control the imbalanced mind.

- Dietary Management

Most of ADHD affected patients have the proper nutrients deficient that's why, parents who are troubled with medicating their children are often more comfortable with the initiative of dietary interventions. Proper nutrition is essential for growing children, and children who eat a diet high in "junk food" in early childhood are more likely to exhibit

hyperactivity by age seven; this may reflect a long-term nutritional imbalance. So advised the parents to refined, carbohydrates, sugars, and processed foods containing additives should be completely eliminated from the diet.

CONCLUSION

Ayurvedic Samhita provides a comprehensive explanation of psychiatric disorders.

Psychiatric disorder is well explained in Ayurvedic Samhita. That ancient knowledge of Ayurveda will helps in diagnosis and management of Unmad in present era very well. In Ayurveda it may be correlated to Unmad (Autism) disease. So, line of treatment such as neuro-protective medications along with Panchakarma therapies have definitely shown outcome on the disease and thus pave way to further researches in employing Ayurvedic methods towards the management of

Autism. So, this review article is an attempt to highlighting on details of Unmada with co relating with Autism.

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Published BY:

Shri Prasanna Vitthala Education and Charitable Trust (Reg)

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Source of Support: NIL

Conflict of Interest : None declared

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