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## Review Article

### A CRITICAL REVIEW ON THE USAGE OF GHRITA IN UNMADA

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#### ABSTRACT

In Ayurveda, the broad spectrum of psychiatric disorders is discussed under Unmada. The affected person has a hampered higher mental function and distorted perception of reality. Among the various herbal and herbo-mineral preparations explained for the treatment of Unmada, majority are made of Ghrita (cow's ghee/clarified butter). Ghrita, the best drug of oleation, assimilates the properties of the substance which accompanies it. Ghrita is capable of treating the disease as a single drug and in combination with several nootropic and mood stabilizing drugs. Ghrita opposes each of the etiology of Unmada at the level of constitution, diet and lifestyle. It is supposed to attenuate each stage of pathogenesis of the disease. It enhances the quality of diet. The anti-oxidant property of clarified butter is able to repair the degenerative changes in brain. The DHA, an omega 3 long chain poly unsaturated fatty acid is abundant in ghee which is seen in retinal and brain cells. The chemical changes in the brain due to the disorder are also corrected by the ghee. So Ghrita and its various combinations can be the appropriate medicine in diseases where higher mental functions and psyche is grossly impaired.

**Keywords:** Ghrita, Unmada, mind

#### INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda as a holistic science and a full-fledged health care system upholds its motto of prevention and cure with scientific explanations. It views life in a unique way as a combination of the supreme soul, mind, sense organs and body working together harmoniously. A breakdown at any level can cause a disorder. The preventive and curative modalities of this science always aim a psycho-somatic axis.

Among the 8 specialty branches, (ashta-anga) of Ayurveda, the diseases pertaining to mind come under Graha or Bhoota vidya. The word meaning of Graha is to seize or to possess. Bhoota can be understood in different ways. Bhootha is the term used for past<sup>1</sup>. Some opine that Bhoota are those which are invisible<sup>2</sup>. The psychiatric ailments are previously considered as occurred due to demonic possessions and misdeeds in the past. Unmada, Apasmara, Atattwabhinivesa, Graha etc are the mostly discussed diseases under this tradition. Though the causes of most of these are unknown or unseen, our seers could enumerate its etiology and draw a clear cut pathogenesis and treatment for these. All pioneers of Ayurveda have detailed on Unmada and have given systematic treatment for the same. The traditional procedures under Daivavyapasraya- the spiritual approach, Yukti vyapasraya- the rational approach and Satwavajaya- the psychotherapy are employed wisely to tackle the issues.

In Yukti vyapasraya arm of treatment, along with Panchakarma therapy (the five bio-purificatory processes), several herbal and herbo-mineral combinations are used. Alleviation of humors as well as normalizing the mental faculties are the two main

spheres to be taken care of during the treatment. Among the different form of drugs, the majority are in the form of Ghrita preparations. The oral, nasal and rectal route of administration is also opted.

#### UNMADA

Unmada is caused when the physical and psychological stressors vitiate the humors- Vata, Pitta and Kapha and are expelled upward to the mind. The vital points- Shiras and Hridaya are involved<sup>3</sup>. It covers a wide range of symptoms both physical and psychological. The individual loses the power for regulating his actions and conduct according to the demand of the personal and social life. The derailment of Mana- thoughts/ mental faculties, Buddhi- intellect, Samja- consciousness, Jnana- orientation, Smriti- memory, Bhakti- attitude to the society, Cheshta- psychomotor activities, Achara- routine/ rituals are noted in the disease<sup>4</sup>. These can be seen at once as a single manifestation or in a progressive order, as there will be impairment of all the faculties when mind is affected. The person loses reality concern and his skill to identify himself. The other associated features are hallucinations, delusion, impulsivity, obsessions etc.

The etiological factors of Unmada can be classified under constitutional, dietary and life-style causes. The individual prone to Unmada are of always timid personality. They are of a weak mental constitution so that they lack physical strength to withstand any biological changes in the body. Incompatible and contaminated food pattern which contribute to the dietary cause, deranges the digestive fire. This is the root cause of all disorders. The three basic humors which constitute the body viz,

Vata, Pitta and Kapha attain impurity and pathological changes are seen. Insulting elders, mental shock, fear, unnatural pleasure are result of a stressful life style<sup>5</sup>. This will make the Hridaya-seat of Manas and buddhi oppressed with impurities. The channels leading to the mind are vitiated<sup>6</sup>. This results in the disease with subtypes of Nija (endogenous) and Aganthu (exogenous cause)<sup>7</sup>.

Unmada, with its complexity may be correlated with a broad spectrum of illness in modern psychiatry. The psychological and physiological etiology contribute to the changes in structure and functioning of brain as in pre frontal cortex, limbic region, basal ganglia etc. the synaptic changes are noted which creates imbalance in neurotransmitters and mitochondrial changes are present which grossly affect the health and energy channel to the brain<sup>8</sup>.

### Treatment of Unmada

Ayurveda explains a systematic treatment protocol for Unmada including all arms i.e., Daivavyapasraya, Yukti vyapasraya and Satwavyajaya. In the Yuktivyapasraya chikitsa, the prior line of treatment is Snehapana (oleation of medicated ghee/ intake of medicated ghee). It is followed by Mridu sodhana (mild purification by emesis or purgation). The vitiated humors are removed and the channels to the mind are cleared by this process. Further treatment is planned in order to channelize the impaired Doshas. Niruha vasti (enema with decoction), Sirovirechana (medicated errhines) and Sagna prabhodhana (medication for mood and intellect stabilization) are given<sup>9</sup>.

A list of Ghrita preparations which are commonly used in treatment of psychiatric illness are given below

### GHRITA: (GHEE/ CLARIFIED BUTTER)

Ghrita is the best of all fats<sup>24</sup>. It is one of the Nitya Rasayanas (can be consumed daily) mentioned in Ayurveda which possess multi-systemic benefits<sup>25</sup>. It is a dietary supplement as well as a drug in its purest form and in combinations. It is sweet in taste, provide unctuousness and softness to the body tissues and cold in potency. The properties of Ghrita are to alleviate Vata and Pitta without increasing Kapha much. It enhances the digestive fire, improves eyesight, intelligence, memory, vitalizes the body and gives luster. It improves semen and Ojus- the ultimate end product of assimilation. Ghrita is known best for treating poisoning, insanity, seizures, pain, fever, phthisis etc. it is said to reduce inauspiciousness and provide protection<sup>26</sup>. The most highlighted property of Ghrita is that it assimilates the property of the drug added to it providing a synergetic action in combination<sup>27</sup>.

### DISCUSSION

Though the mind is included in nine Dravya (substances) in Ayurveda, it does not possess a form or shape. All Acharyas have given several location of mind in different contexts but the exact location cannot be elicited and it is only assessed by the attributes and functions. On the close observation of Nidana(etiology), Samprapthi(pathogenesis) and Lakshana(signs and symptoms) of Unmada, there is a total malfunctioning of higher mental faculties. Hridaya- the seat of mind and intellect in the pathogenesis of Unmada can be taken as the anatomical brain which is the centre of all activities such in human beings.

The mind, which is superior to all Indriya is vitiated by the upward movement of the deranged humors and localized in between Shiras (head) and Talu (soft palate) and thereby deteriorating Buddhi (intellect)<sup>28</sup>. The concept of Manovahasrothus can be explained as an axis of mind and body. It is told that one of the hundred channels from Hridaya (heart) goes to Moordha (head)<sup>29</sup>- confirming the concept of psycho neuro axis. This confirms the relation between the two vital points Shiras and Hridaya and its major role in the pathogenesis of Unmada. The psyche is affected by the upward displacement of deranged humors and these two locations are vitiated.

The individual prone to Unmada are a mostly timid personality who lacks physical and mental strength. The health of these people are generally compromised, digestion and assimilation are impaired leading to depletion of Agni and thus the final product of metabolism- the Ojus. This depletion can be compensated by Ghrita. The impure and incompatible foods in the pathology of Unmada are more of Tamasika qualities. The attributes of Ghrita like unctuousness, softness, cold in potency provide a good dietary pattern. The activities like insulting elders and avoiding rituals are considered to be sinful in Indian tradition. These are thus psychological stressors letting out the disease. Ghrita has the property of destroying inauspiciousness and giving protection.

Vata is the controller of the mind and Medha (intellect) is the property of Pitta<sup>30,31</sup>. So normalcy of Pitta and proper channeling of Vata are major concerns in the treatment of psychiatric illness like Unmada which can be done by the Vatapitta hara property of Ghrita. It improves Sadhaka pitta and Prana vata in general causing the person to reduce stress produced by the psychological causes of fear, depression and stress due to affliction of other diseases.

The Ghrita preparations used in Unmada have Medhya (cognitive enhancing) drugs it gives a synergetic action helping to correct the mental and intellectual faculties.

### Action of Ghrita over brain

The influential factors of drug distribution in blood are mainly difference in blood flow, lipid solubility and ionization. An aqueous soluble drug is usually absorbed in extra cellular spaces. They do not diffuse to CSF and other body cavities, whereas lipid soluble drugs are readily available to extra and intra cellular spaces. Blood brain barrier (BBB) has a lipophilic molecular structure. This makes the lipids and lipid soluble drugs pass easily through BBB. So the drugs which are given in the form of ghee which are lipids rapidly absorbed in the target areas of central nervous system<sup>32</sup>. Traditionally prepared ghee contains DHA, an omega 3 long chain poly unsaturated fatty acid<sup>33</sup>. This is seen in high concentration in brain cells too. Moreover studies have shown that DHA have positive outcome in cognitive decline. Ghee is known to have antioxidant property which acts upon the degenerative brain cells and repair them<sup>34</sup>. It also acts in normalizing the chemical changes in brain by balancing the neurotransmitters.

By applying the theory of similarity, it can be said Mastishka (brain) which resembles molten ghee can be supplemented with clarified butter in various therapies<sup>35-39</sup>.

Table 1

Ghrita	Rasa panchaka	Karma	Doshagnatha
Kalyanaka <sup>10</sup>	Rasa –Katu,thikta Guna-Laghu,ruksha, Virya -Ushna	Dipana Anulomana Balya Brumhana Vrushya	Tridosahara, Kaphaja Unmada
Mahakalyanaka <sup>11</sup>	Rasa – Thikta Guna- Laghu,Ruksha Virya – Ushna	Brumhana Balya Vrushya Medhya Anulomana	Tridosahara (Vata-pitta samana)
Tiktaka <sup>12</sup>	Rasa – Thikta Guna-Ruksha, Snigdha Virya - Sheeta	Anulomana Medhya Rakta prasadana	Pitta-Kapha samana
Mahatiktaka <sup>13</sup>	Rasa-Thikta Madhura Guna-Slightlyguru,Ruksha, Snigdha Virya - Sheetha	Anulomana Medhya Rasyana Rakta prasadana	Pitta-Kapha samana
Hingwadi <sup>14</sup>	Rasa – Katu Guna – Tikshna Virya - Ushna	Dipana Pachana Medhya Indriya prasada	Vata – Kaphahara Vaatanulomana
Sidharthaka <sup>15</sup>	Rasa- Katu,Thikta,Kashaya Guna- Tikshna,Ruksha Virya - Ushna	Dipana Medhya Grahaghna Samjna prabodana	Kapha-Vata samana
Lasunadi <sup>16</sup>	Rasa – Katu Guna- Tikshna,Snigdha Virya - Ushna	Dipana Medhya Hrudhya Balya	Vata-Kapha samana
Chethasa <sup>17</sup>	Rasa-Thikta, Kashaya,Madura Guna – Laghu Virya - Ushna	Dipana Brumhana	Kapha-Vata samana
Kushmanda <sup>18</sup>	Rasa – madhura Guna- Guru,Snigdha Virya - Sheeta	Brumhana Vrushya Medhya Vak visudhikara	Pitta- Vata samana
Brahmi <sup>19</sup>	Rasa-Thikta Guna – Tikshna Virya – Sheetoshna	Dipana Anulomana Swarya Medhya	Tridosahara Vata- pitta samana
Panchagavya <sup>20</sup>	Rasa – Thikta Guna – Tikshna Virya - Ushna	Dipana Anulomana Sukshma Medhya	Kapha-Vata samana
Mahapaisachika <sup>21</sup>	Rasa – Thikta Guna-Tikshna,Laghu, Sukshma Virya - Sheeta	Balya Pushtikara Medhya Grahaghna	Tridosha samana, Vatanulomana
Mahabhootarava <sup>22</sup>	Rasa – Thikta Guna-Tikshna,Laghu,Ruksha, Sukshma Virya - Ushna	Dipana Grahaghna	Kapha-Vata samana
Purana <sup>23</sup>	Rasa- Katu,Thikta Guna- ugragandha Virya- Seetha	Grahanasanam Medhyam	Tridosha samanam

## CONCLUSION

Ghrita as an individual drug and in combination is supposed to have desired effect in many of the diseases especially of psychiatric origin. It helps in stopping the disease of Unmada at the level of pathology, pathogenesis and manifestation. Ghrita can be included in daily diet in a larger quantity opposing the unhealthy dietary pattern contributing to the etiology of Unmada. It can be administered as a treatment modality by which channelizes Vata and normalize Pitta. The channels to the

mind are also cleared and thus reduce stress at physical and biological level. The property of ghee in enhancing cognitive abilities and balancing chemical changes in brain is appreciable. The various combinations with ghrita can be administered according to the aggravation of humors and the symptoms shown. All diseases are caused by deranged digestive fire. There is no drug like Ghrita which can enhance the fire. Ghrita which is the best among drug for oleation can correct the digestive fire, increase Satwa Guna (purest quality of mind) and cure the disease.

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