

REVIEW ARTICLE

Pathyavihara and Yoga for Psychological Etiological Factors in Infertility

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ABSTRACT

Background: Infertility or *Vandhyatva* is a common problem among couples in the current scenario which can be due to various factors one of them being the psychological factor. Advancing technologies, changing lifestyles, stressful work patterns, lack of health awareness emotional instability in relationships, etc. can be the cause of infertility too. Observance of right *Dinacharya Ritucharya Sadavritta* and *Yoga* modalities can help in reducing these issues.

Aim: The study aimed to understand the role of *Pathyavihara* and *Yoga* modalities in the reduction of psychological factors causing infertility.

Methodology: It is literary research, *Ayurveda* classical texts, books, journals, and articles have been analyzed for this paper.

Results: Imbalance in thoughts, emotions, etc. can be the triggering factors for stress, anxiety, and depression leading to a lack of acceptance in relations which can be the reason for infertility in any of the partners. This can be managed by the proper observance of *Sadvritta, Dinacharya, Ritucharya Yoga, and Pranayama* in daily life.

Discussion: Infertility due to psychological factors can be originated in both males and females. These factors need to be addressed for a completely healthy progeny.

1. INTRODUCTION

Infertility or *Vandhyatva* is a disease of the male or female reproductive system defined by the failure to achieve a pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse.^[1] It is a common problem among couples which can be due to various reasons. The psychological factor is one among such factor. Advancing technologies, changing lifestyles, stressful work patterns, lack of health awareness emotional instability in relationships, etc. can be the cause of infertility too. This manuscript prioritizes the need for observance of right *Dinacharya Ritucharya Sadavritta* and *Yoga* modalities which can help in reducing these issues by managing the stress factors and relaxing mind and body along with enhancing the feeling of acceptance

of oneself as a whole. Mental health is equally important for good progeny as physical health as mentioned by *Acharaya Charaka* that conception brings happiness while the unhappy state of mind decreases the potency of sperm/ovum,^[2] Hence, there is a need to study about the role of observance of *Pathyavihara* and *Yoga* for managing the psychological factors in infertility.

1.1. Aim

The study aimed to understand the role of *Pathyavihara* and *Yoga* modalities in the reduction of psychological factors causing infertility.

2. METHODOLOGY

It is a literary Review. *Ayurveda* classical texts *Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita*, etc. were searched for reviews, books on Yoga and Meditation peer-reviewed journals and articles from Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and data on the internet were searched and analyzed.

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3. RESULTS OF REVIEW

3.1. Infertility

Important constituents for pregnancy are time, nutrition, uterus, and sperm/ovum.^[3] The *Uttama Bhava Ojas* decide the strength, immunity, and longevity of an individual as well as the quality of future progeny.^[4] *Acharya Charaka* explains in *Sharira Sthana* that pregnancy is caused by a combination of six factors, which are related to mother, father, food, mental health, adaptability, and soul.^[5] *Acharaya Charaka* also puts emphasis on the fact that conception occurs as a combination of *Shudha Yoni* and *Beeja* and when the soul wants to enter the *Garbha*.^[6] When there is abnormality in these factors either there is no pregnancy or if it occurs then deformations might be there. There are various types of *Vandhyatva* (Infertility) mentioned in classical, these are mainly three types: *Vandhya*: Complete sterility, *Apraja*: curable as women can conceive or primary infertility, and *Sapraja*: Secondary infertility. On the basis of symptoms, they have been classified as *Garbhakosha Bhanga* – uterine injury, *Anapatya* – primary infertility, *Kakvandhya* – secondary infertility, *Garbhastravi* – repeated abortions, *Mrutvatsa* – stillbirths, *Balakhshaya* – weakness originated infertility.^[7]

3.2. Mental and Emotional Health in Infertility

This is the major factor in present infertility cases. The normal psychology of a couple is important in the achievement of pregnancy. The changing patterns of living, use of higher technologies, radiations improper circadian rhythm, patterns of eating food, taking *Tamasika Ahara*, and lack of physical activity tend to and enhanced nature of mental activity affect the mental and emotional health of any of the partners. Psychological factors such as stress, agitation, anxiety, and depression are results of a bad lifestyle, which produce abnormality at *Manomaya Kosha* level. Moreover, the feeling of unacceptance has been increasing in individuals these days. The lacuna of society for not being able to channelize the emotional imbalance among humans has enhanced this issue. This also leads to various other diseases too resulting in more difficulty to conceive.

3.3. Role of Pathyavihara

Acharya Charaka beautifully explained various *Pathya Viharas* for Everyone in *Swasthachatushaka*,^[8] similarly, other Acharyas have given their affirmations in their texts too. *Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Sadvritta*, *Vegadharana*, and *Achara Rasayana* are the blessings given to us as a manual to live a life.

Dinacharya:^[9] Modalities such as *Bhramamuhurta Jagrana*^[10] help in balancing circadian rhythm and increasing oxygen take-up capacity by the cells. Regular *Abhyanga* helps in *Vatashamana*^[11] which is the major cause of Mental instability, it relaxes the Mind and Body and one can get good sleep after massage. *Udvardana* acts as *Bhayaparimarjana* of malas on a regular basis helping the body cells to rejuvenate and making the body strong.^[12] Washing feet, and wearing unteared clothes, and footwear enhances virility as per *Acharayas*^[9] which is related to the planet Venus which governs the sacral and *Chakra*.^[13]

Ratricharya:^[11] Helps in a relaxation of mind and body as a good sleep activates the Healing and calms down irrelevant thoughts and emotions.

Ritucharya:^[14] Provides the regimens for every season helping the body to deal with changes occurring in the environment not harm the microcosm. *Shodhana Karmas* not only physically clears the body

but also helps in balancing the *Manasika Doshas*, as once the body is cleansed mind starts to feel happy and serene.

Sadvritta:^[15] Most important modality for reducing the psychological factors. Worshiping the deities and following the Vedic rituals helps in calming the mind and reduces agitation, stress, anger, etc. It helps in bringing confidence and generating feelings of care, love, and peace. A good company endows with *Satvika* qualities, and the person will be devoid of mental and emotional disturbances. *Achara Rasayana*^[16] mentioned by *Acharaya Charaka* is a complete ethical code of conduct that prevents and treats psychological and psychosomatic diseases.

All these modalities help in relaxing the mind and body and coordinate them. When all these factors are managed, then the treatment of infertility will be fruitful. Both partners must come together to accept a baby in their life.

3.4. Yoga and Infertility

Yoga practice provides physical mental and emotional balance in oneself. *Ashtanga Yoga* by *Maharishi Patanjali*^[11] has all the aspects for maintaining health and attaining the Moksha. It helps in alleviating the emotional trauma of infertility.^[17] Not being able to conceive is dealt with as a failure in one's life, which generates stress, emotional imbalance, depression, and low self-esteem, which can further contribute to the worsening of the condition. Sacral *Chakra* and Heart *Chakra* also play an important role. Energy blockage at these chakras tends to increase the risk of infertility. *Yogic* regimens, such as *Yama Niyama*, *Pranayama*, and *Pratyahara Dharana Dhyana* help in the reversal of affliction of *Mano maya Kosha* level and reconcile the mental health.^[13]

3.4.1. Asanas to be practiced

Sukshama Vyayamas, *Suryanamaskara*, *Balaasna*, *Malasana Trikonasana*. *Gomukhasana*, *Naukasana*, *Paschimottanasana*, *Setubandhasana*, *Bhujangasana*, *Shalabhasana*, *Makarasana*, and *Shavasana*^[18] These *Asanas* help in supporting and maintaining the pelvic muscles and maintain the hormonal levels, thereby preparing the body for conception at physical level. One will learn the coordination of the body as well as the mind.^[18]

3.4.2. Pranayama

Bhramari, *Nadishodhana*, *Pranayama*, *Chandrabhedi Pranayama*:^[19] All these *pranayamas* help in balancing the feminine energy and reduce stress factors.^[20]

3.4.3. Mudra

Yoni Mudra:^[20] This mudra helps in keeping the Sacral *Chakra* aligned thereby maintaining reproductive health; it can be helpful in infertility. It calms and cools the mind and opens up the Sacral *Chakra*.

4. DISCUSSION

Infertility due to psychological factors can be originated in both males and females. These factors need to be addressed for a completely healthy progeny. Acceptance of oneself as a whole and embracing the fact of actually bearing a child as a couple and not merely considering it as a pregnancy can help in alleviating the psychological distress and help in actually manifesting a child. Psychological factors such as stress, agitation, anxiety, and depression are results of a bad lifestyle which produce abnormality at *Manomaya Kosha* level. Moreover, the feeling of unacceptance has been increasing in individuals these days. Observance of the *Ayurveda* and *Yoga* modalities can help in reducing the psychological factors involved in infertility.

Role of *Pathyavihara: Dinacharya*: Modalities such as *Bhramamuhurta Jagrana* help in balancing circadian rhythm and increasing oxygen take-up capacity by the cells. Regular *Abhyanga* helps in *Vatashamana* which is the major cause of mental instability. Washing feet, wearing unteared clothes, and footwear enhance virility as per *Acharayas* which is related to the planet Venus who governs the sacral *Chakra*. *Ratricharya*: helps in the relaxation of mind and body as a good sleep activates the healing and calms down irrelevant thoughts and emotions. *Ritucharya: Shodhana Karmas* not only physically clears the body but also helps in balancing the *Manasika Doshas*. *Sadvritta*: A good company endows with *Satvika* qualities, and the person will be devoid of mental and emotional disturbances. *Achara Rasayana* mentioned by *Acharaya Charaka* is a complete ethical code of conduct that prevents and treats psychological and psychosomatic diseases.

Role of *Yoga*: It helps in alleviating the emotional trauma of infertility. *Yogic* regimens, such as *Yama Niyama, Pranayama, and Pratyahara Dharana Dhyana* help in the reversal of affliction of *Mano Maya Kosha* level and reconcile mental health. *Asanas* help in supporting and maintaining the pelvic muscles and maintain the hormonal levels, thereby preparing the body for conception at physical level. *Pranayamas* help in balancing feminine energy and reduce stress factors. *Yoni Mudra* helps in the removal of energy blockages at the Sacral *Chakra* level.

5. CONCLUSION

Imbalance in thoughts, emotions, etc. can be the triggering factors for stress, anxiety, and depression leading to a lack of acceptance in relations which can be the reason for infertility in any of the partners. This can be managed by the proper observance of *Sadvritta, Dinacharya, Ritucharya Yoga, and Pranayama* in daily life.

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9. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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10. DATA AVAILABILITY

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