



Journal Homepage: [-www.journalijar.com](http://www.journalijar.com)

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR)

Article DOI: 10.21474/IJAR01/23188
DOI URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/23188>



RESEARCH ARTICLE

ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD) – AN AYURVEDIC REVIEW

Madhavi Deodas¹, Sachin Chavan² and Sudha Singh³

1. HOD and Professor, Department of Kaumarbhritya, CARC, Nigdi, Pune, Maharashtra, India.
2. PG Scholar, Department of Kaumarbhritya, CARC, Nigdi, Pune, Maharashtra, India.
3. Associate Professor, Department of Kaumarbhritya, CARC, Nigdi, Pune, Maharashtra, India.

Manuscript Info

Manuscript History

Received: 4 February 2026
Final Accepted: 8 March 2026
Published: April 2026

Key words:-

ADHD, Ayurveda, Vata Dosha,
Manovaha Srotas, Medhya Rasayana,
Sattvavajaya Chikitsa, Brahmi,
Shankhapushpi.

Abstract

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a common neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity, affecting academic, behavioral, and social functioning. In Ayurveda, ADHD can be correlated with Manovaha Srotas Dushti, Vata Prakopa, and impairment of Dhi, Dhriti, and Smriti. Etiological factors include improper Ahara, Vihara, and psychological stress, leading to disturbance in mental equilibrium. Ayurvedic management focuses on Vata balancing, cognitive enhancement, and manasik stability through Medhya Rasayana, Panchakarma therapies, and Sattvavajaya Chikitsa. Herbs such as Brahmi, Shankhapushpi, Mandukaparni, and Yashtimadhu are known to improve memory and attention. Therapies like Shirodhara, Abhyanga, and Nasya further help in calming the mind and enhancing concentration. Thus, Ayurveda offers a holistic and integrative approach in the management of ADHD by addressing both physiological and psychological aspects.

"© 2026 by the Author(s). Published by IJAR under CC BY 4.0. Unrestricted use allowed with credit to the author."

Introduction:-

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders seen in childhood and is characterized by persistent patterns of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity that interfere with functioning or development. The prevalence of ADHD has been increasing globally, affecting approximately 5–7% of school-aged children. The disorder can significantly impact academic performance, social relationships, and emotional well-being if not properly managed. Although the exact etiology remains unclear, modern science suggests that genetic factors, neurochemical imbalance, and environmental influences play a major role in its pathogenesis.¹The core symptoms of ADHD include difficulty sustaining attention, excessive motor activity, inability to remain seated, impulsive behavior, and poor organizational skills. These symptoms often appear in early childhood and may continue into adolescence and adulthood. Conventional management mainly involves behavioral therapy, psychological counseling, and pharmacological agents such as stimulants.

Corresponding Author:-Madhavi Deodas

Address:-HOD and Professor, Department of Kaumarbhritya, CARC, Nigdi, Pune, Maharashtra, India.

However, long-term use of such medications may be associated with side effects, leading to increasing interest in complementary and traditional systems of medicine for safer and holistic management.²Ayurveda, the ancient system of Indian medicine, provides a comprehensive understanding of mental health through concepts such as Manas (mind), Triguna (Sattva, Rajas, Tamas), and Tridosha (Vata, Pitta, Kapha). Although ADHD is not described as a specific disease entity in classical Ayurvedic texts, its clinical features closely resemble conditions involving Vata vitiation, Rajo-guna predominance, and disturbances in ManovahaSrotas. The imbalance of Dhi (intellect), Dhriti (retention), and Smriti (memory) is considered a key factor in the manifestation of abnormal behavioral patterns and cognitive impairment.³Ayurveda emphasizes that improper diet, irregular lifestyle, excessive exposure to sensory stimuli, psychological stress, and lack of proper nurturing during childhood may disturb the equilibrium of mind and body. Such factors may lead to aggravation of VataDosha, which is responsible for neurological and mental functions.

Disturbed Vata can manifest as restlessness, poor concentration, unstable behavior, and impaired cognitive functions—features that closely resemble ADHD.⁴TheAyurvedic approach to management focuses on restoring balance through MedhyaRasayana (nootropic herbs), Panchakarma therapies, dietary regulation, lifestyle modification, and Sattvavajaya Chikitsa (psychotherapy). Herbs such as Brahmi, Shankhapushpi, Mandukaparni, and Yashtimadhu are widely described for improving memory, concentration, and mental stability. These therapies aim not only at symptomatic relief but also at strengthening cognitive functions and promoting overall mental well-being.⁵Thus, exploring ADHD through the lens of Ayurveda may provide a holistic understanding of its pathogenesis and offer safe, natural, and effective management strategies. This review article aims to analyze ADHD from an Ayurvedic perspective, focusing on its conceptual correlation, etiopathogenesis, and therapeutic approaches described in classical Ayurvedic literature.⁶

Aim:-

The aim of this review article is to explore Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) from an Ayurvedic perspective and to analyze its correlation with Ayurvedic concepts such as Manovaha Srotas Dushti, Vata Prakopa, and impairment of Dhi, Dhriti, and Smriti. The study also aims to review the role of Ayurvedic therapeutic approaches including Medhya Rasayana, Panchakarma, Pathya-Apathya, and SattvavajayaChikitsa in the management of ADHD.

Methodology:-

This study is a conceptual review based on classical Ayurvedic texts and modern medical literature. Relevant information was collected from Ayurvedic compendia such as Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya, and various Nighantus, along with published research articles, journals, and online scientific databases. The collected data were analyzed to understand the etiopathogenesis, symptom correlation, and therapeutic principles of ADHD according to Ayurveda.

Detailed Review:-

Concept of ADHD:-

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by persistent symptoms of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. It commonly begins in childhood and may continue into adolescence and adulthood. ADHD affects cognitive functions such as attention span, working memory, emotional regulation, and behavioral control.From the Ayurvedic perspective, ADHD can be correlated with disturbances of Manas (mind) and ManovahaSrotas, along with predominance of VataDosha and RajoGuna. These disturbances may impair the normal functioning of Dhi (intellect), Dhriti (self-control), and Smriti (memory), resulting in poor concentration and unstable behavior.

Ayurvedic Concept of Mind and Cognitive Functions:-

Ayurveda explains mental functions through the concept of Manas, Atma, Indriya, and Sharira. The mind acts as a bridge between the sensory organs and the soul.

Proper functioning of the mind is dependent on the balance of Triguna:

Guna	Function
Sattva	Clarity, intelligence, stability of mind
Rajas	Activity, stimulation, restlessness
Tamas	Inertia, dullness, ignorance

In ADHD-like conditions, Rajo Guna predominance along with Vata Dosha aggravation leads to symptoms such as restlessness, impulsive behavior, and poor attention.

Nidana (Etiological Factors):-

Various causative factors described in Ayurveda that may contribute to ADHD-like manifestations include:

Aharaaja Nidana (Dietary factors):-

- Excess consumption of Ruksha, Laghu, and Vata-aggravating foods
- Irregular food habits
- Excess intake of processed or incompatible food

Viharaaja Nidana (Lifestyle factors):-

- Lack of proper sleep
- Excessive exposure to sensory stimuli
- Irregular daily routine
- Excessive screen exposure and mental stress

ManasikaNidana (Psychological factors):-

- Emotional stress
- Lack of parental attention
- Psychological trauma
- Disturbance in mental equilibrium

These factors mainly aggravate VataDosha and disturb the ManovahaSrotas, leading to behavioral abnormalities.

Samprapti (Pathogenesis):-

The pathogenesis of ADHD from an Ayurvedic perspective can be understood as follows:

1. Intake of improper diet and lifestyle habits.
2. Aggravation of VataDosha and increase in RajoGuna.
3. Disturbance in ManovahaSrotas.
4. Impairment of Dhi, Dhriti, and Smriti.
5. Manifestation of symptoms such as hyperactivity, impulsivity, and poor attention.

Thus, ADHD can be considered a functional disturbance of the nervous system and mind due to Vata imbalance and Rajas predominance.

Lakshana (Clinical Features):-

Symptoms of ADHD that correlate with Ayurvedic descriptions include:

Modern Symptoms	Ayurvedic Interpretation
Inattention	SmritiVibhramsha
Hyperactivity	VataPrakopa
Impulsivity	RajoGuna dominance
Poor concentration	DhiVibhramsha
Emotional instability	ManovahaSrotasDushti

Role of Medhya Rasayana:-

Ayurveda describes a group of drugs called MedhyaRasayana, which improve memory, intelligence, and cognitive functions.

Drug	Botanical Name	Action
Brahmi	Bacopamonnieri	Improves memory and concentration
Shankhapushpi	Convolvulus pluricaulis	Enhances cognitive functions
Mandukaparni	Centellaasiatica	Improves intellect and mental clarity
Yashtimadhu	Glycyrrhizaglabra	Nourishes nervous system

These herbs act as nootropics, neuroprotective agents, and adaptogens, helping to enhance cognitive performance and mental stability.

Ayurvedic Management Principles:-

Nidana Parivarjana:-

Avoidance of causative factors such as improper diet, irregular lifestyle, and excessive sensory stimulation.

Medhya Rasayana Therapy:-

Use of cognitive-enhancing herbs to improve memory and concentration.

Panchakarma Therapy:-

Important therapies include:

- **Shirodhara** – Calms the mind and reduces stress
- **Abhyanga** – Improves nervous system functioning
- **Nasya** – Enhances brain functions and sensory clarity
- **Shirobasti** – Strengthens neurological functions

Sattvavajaya Chikitsa:-

Psychological therapy aimed at controlling the mind through:

- Meditation
- Yoga
- Counseling
- Behavioral training

Pathya-Apathya:-

Proper diet and lifestyle regulation play an important role in improving mental health and cognitive function.

Probable Mode of Action of Ayurvedic Therapies in ADHD:-

Shirodhara:-

Shirodhara involves the continuous pouring of medicated oil, decoction, or other liquids on the forehead. This therapy has a calming effect on the central nervous system and helps regulate mental functions. The gentle and rhythmic stimulation of the forehead region is believed to influence the hypothalamus and autonomic nervous system, leading to relaxation and reduction of stress. From an Ayurvedic perspective, Shirodhara helps pacify aggravated Vata Dosha and Rajo Guna, thereby reducing restlessness, anxiety, and hyperactivity. It promotes mental clarity, improves concentration, and stabilizes emotional responses, which are beneficial in conditions like ADHD.

Abhyanga:-

Abhyanga is a therapeutic oil massage that nourishes the body and nervous system. The application of warm medicated oils improves blood circulation, neuromuscular coordination, and sensory integration. In Ayurveda, oil massage helps in Vata Shamana because Vata is associated with dryness, movement, and instability. By providing unctuousness and warmth, Abhyanga stabilizes the nervous system, reduces hyperactivity, and promotes relaxation. It also improves sleep quality and supports proper functioning of the brain and peripheral nerves, which can help in improving attention and behavioral control in children with ADHD.

Nasya:-

Nasya therapy involves the administration of medicated oils or herbal preparations through the nasal route. Ayurveda considers the nose as the gateway to the head (Nasa Hi ShirasoDwaram), and therefore Nasya directly influences the brain and sensory organs. The therapy helps in clearing the channels of the head, improving oxygenation and nourishment of brain tissues. Medicated oils used in Nasya may stimulate neural pathways and enhance neurotransmitter activity, leading to improved cognitive functions such as memory, attention, and learning ability. Nasya also helps in pacifying Vata in the head region and supports the functioning of Manovaha Srotas.

Shirobasti:-

Shirobasti is a specialized Panchakarma therapy in which medicated oil is retained over the scalp for a specific period. This therapy provides deep nourishment to the brain and nervous tissues. The prolonged contact of warm oil with the scalp may improve cerebral circulation and relaxation of neural tissues, which helps in calming excessive

mental activity. From the Ayurvedic perspective, Shirobasti effectively pacifies VataDosha in the head region, thereby improving mental stability, concentration, and cognitive functioning. It also strengthens the nervous system and reduces symptoms such as irritability, impulsiveness, and mental fatigue.

Probable Mode of Action of Sattvavajaya Chikitsa

Sattvavajaya Chikitsa is an Ayurvedic psychotherapy aimed at strengthening the mind, restoring balance of Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas, and improving mental discipline. Practices like meditation and yoga enhance mental calmness, attention, and emotional stability by regulating stress and balancing Vata Dosha. Counseling and behavioral training provide psychological support, improve coping skills, and promote self-control (Dhriti), thereby enhancing concentration and overall cognitive functioning.

Discussion:-

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity, significantly affecting cognitive and behavioral functions. Ayurveda explains this condition through Vata Dosha aggravation, Rajo Guna predominance, and Manovaha Srotas Dushti, leading to impairment of Dhi, Dhriti, and Smriti. Aggravated Vata disturbs neurological functions, while increased Rajas causes restlessness and impulsivity, closely correlating with ADHD symptoms. Ayurvedic management focuses on correcting these imbalances through Medhya Rasayana, Panchakarma therapies, and Sattvavajaya Chikitsa, along with proper diet and lifestyle. Medhya Rasayana drugs such as Brahmi, Shankhapushpi, Mandukaparni, and Yashtimadhu play a significant role in enhancing cognitive functions, memory, and concentration. These drugs possess neuroprotective and adaptogenic properties, which help in reducing stress and improving brain function. Panchakarma procedures like Shirodhara, Nasya, and Abhyanga further support mental relaxation, improve circulation to the brain, and stabilize the nervous system. Additionally, Sattvavajaya Chikitsa, including counseling, meditation, and behavioral training, helps in improving emotional control and attention span. Adoption of Sattvika Ahara and a disciplined lifestyle also contributes to mental stability. Thus, Ayurveda offers a comprehensive and integrative approach for managing ADHD by addressing both the root cause and symptomatic manifestations.

Conclusion:-

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder marked by inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity affecting cognitive and social functioning. In Ayurveda, it can be correlated with Vata Dosha aggravation, Rajo Guna predominance, Manovaha Srotas Dushti, and impairment of Dhi, Dhriti, and Smriti. Management includes Nidana Parivarjana, Medhya Rasayana, Panchakarma, and Sattvavajaya Chikitsa, along with proper diet and lifestyle. Herbs like Brahmi, Shankhapushpi, Mandukaparni, and Yashtimadhu, and therapies such as Shirodhara, Nasya, and Abhyanga help improve memory, attention, and mental stability. Thus, Ayurveda offers a holistic and integrative approach for effective management of ADHD. Ayurveda provides a safe, integrative approach promoting mental well-being and better quality of life.

References:-

1. American Psychiatric Association. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5). 5th ed. Washington DC: APA; 2013.
2. Barkley RA. Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: A Handbook for Diagnosis and Treatment. 4th ed. New York: Guilford Press; 2015.
3. Sharma PV. Charaka Samhita. Varanasi: ChaukhambhaOrientalia; 2014.
4. Tripathi B. AshtangaHridaya. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Sanskrit Pratishthan; 2017.
5. Sharma RK, Dash B. Charaka Samhita (Text with English Translation). Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series; 2012.
6. Singh RH. Exploring Ayurveda's Knowledge on Mental Health. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Sanskrit Series; 2010.