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## An Ayurvedic Review of Gadodwega (Illness Anxiety Disorder) In Accordance with Psychosomatic Interface of Vata, Pitta, and Manovaha Srotasa

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### ABSTRACT:

Illness Anxiety Disorder (IAD) is a chronic mental health condition characterized by an excessive and persistent fear of having a serious medical illness despite the absence of significant physical symptoms or consistent reassurance by healthcare professionals. In Ayurvedic medicine, this condition is conceptually similar to Gadodwega, a Manasika Vyadhi resulting from the vitiation of Vata and Pitta doshas, and the aggravation of Rajas and Tamas gunas, leading to dysfunction in the Manovaha Srotasa. This paper presents a comprehensive Ayurvedic review of IAD as Gadodwega, including classical interpretations, pathophysiology, symptomatology, and a holistic treatment protocol. The study integrates insights from both Ayurveda and modern psychiatry to suggest an integrative approach for better long-term outcomes.

**KEYWORDS:** Gadodwega, Illness Anxiety Disorder, Ayurveda, Manovaha Srotasa, Vata, Pitta, Rajas, Tamas, Manas Roga, Psychosomatic Disorder.

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**INTRODUCTION:**

Ayurveda, being the *science of life*, primarily emphasizes overall well-being rather than merely treating disease. It defines health as a state of equilibrium among Sharirika Doshas (Vata, Pitta, Kapha), Manasika Doshas (Satwa, Rajas, Tamas), Agni (digestive/metabolic fire), Dhatus (body tissues), and Srotasas (body channels). Any disturbance in this balance leads to disease.<sup>1</sup> Gadodwega—from *Gada* (disease) and *Udvega* (mental distress)—refers to a state of anxiety and persistent fear of illness. The primary Doshas involved are Vata, which causes instability and overthinking, and Pitta, which intensifies emotions. Additionally, Rajas and Tamas are key mental causative factors. The main **Srotas** affected is the Manovaha Srotasa associated with the Hridaya (heart), resulting in disturbed thought processing.<sup>2</sup> In modern psychiatry, this condition closely resembles Illness Anxiety Disorder (IAD) characterized by an excessive fear of having a serious illness despite normal medical evaluations. It is classified under *Somatic Symptom and Related Disorders* in the DSM-5.<sup>3</sup> The prevalence of mental health disorders in India has risen steadily in recent years, contributing to the escalating public health concern. Estimates suggest that nearly 15% of the Indian population grapples with some form of mental health issue. This figure encompasses many disorders, including anxiety disorders, depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, substance use disorders, and neurodevelopmental disorders.<sup>6</sup> Similarly Acharyas have mentioned various psychological disorders such as Unmada, Apasmara, Chittodwega, Atatvabhinivesha, Mada, Moha, Vishada and Bhaya.

**Aim and Objectives**

**Aim:-** To explore Illness Anxiety Disorder (IAD) through the Ayurvedic lens of Gadodwega and propose a holistic treatment approach.

**Objectives:-** To understand the etiology and pathophysiology of IAD in both modern and Ayurvedic perspectives.

- To identify clinical features and pathological mechanisms common to IAD and Gadodwega.

- To evaluate classical references and management strategies in Ayurveda for psychosomatic disorders.

- To propose an integrative model of care combining Ayurvedic and contemporary psychiatric practices.

**Methodology-** This research is based on a qualitative review of classical Ayurvedic texts, modern psychiatric literature, and contemporary clinical guidelines. Sources include Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya, Bhaishajya Ratnavali, DSM-5, and indexed journals. Comparative analysis was used to draw correlations between IAD and Gadodwega.

**DISCUSSION:**

Modern psychiatry recognizes IAD as a mental disorder characterized by excessive preoccupation with illness. Cognitive Behavioral Theory explains that maladaptive beliefs and anxiety about bodily functions trigger reassurance-seeking behavior and health-related obsessions. Studies have found correlations with childhood trauma, overprotective parenting, and media exposure.<sup>3</sup> In Ayurveda, mental disorders are linked with the vitiation of Manasika Doshas (Rajas and Tamas), depletion of Satva, and dysfunction in Manovaha Srotasa. The Charaka Samhita describes Chittodvega (mental agitation) and Unmada (derangement) with overlapping



symptomatology.<sup>4</sup> Bhaishajya Ratnavali elaborates Gadodwega as a condition treatable by Santwana (counseling), Ashwasana (reassurance), Snehana (oleation), Harshana (upliftment), and Tarpana (nourishment).<sup>2</sup> Ashtanga Hridaya and Sushruta also emphasize the importance of Satvavajaya Chikitsa in such disorders.<sup>5</sup>

### Management Protocol

**Ayurvedic Management:-** Manasika Chikitsa: Counseling (Santwana), reassurance (Ashwasana), and mind-uplifting techniques (Harshana).

Snehana and Swedana: Use of Brahmi oil, Shirodhara, and warm oil massage. Vatanulomana Chikitsa with dravyas having Madhura, Amla, Lavana, Snigdha and Ushna properties and Pittashaman Chikitsa with dravyas having Madhura, Tikta, Kashaya and Sugandhi properties.

Medhya Rasayana: Brahmi, Shankhapushpi, Yashtimadhu, Ashwagandha.

Rasayana: Use of adaptogens and tonics to enhance Satva.

Diet and lifestyle: Regular Dinacharya, Abhyanga, Satvika Ahara, and avoiding stimulating media.<sup>2</sup> Modern Psychiatric

### Management:

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) remains the gold standard.

Pharmacotherapy includes SSRIs (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors) and anxiolytics.

Psychoeducation, mindfulness-based interventions and supportive therapy.<sup>3</sup>

### CONCLUSION:

Gadodwega offers a comprehensive Ayurvedic framework to understand and

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manage Illness Anxiety Disorder. The condition is multidimensional, involving Sharirika Dosha imbalance, Manasika Guna distortion, and Srotasa dysfunction. A personalized treatment plan involving Manasika and Sharirika Chikitsa, combined with modern psychiatric methods, can promote sustainable healing. Ayurveda's emphasis on preventive care, resilience, and harmony between mind and body makes it an effective complement to modern treatments for IAD.

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