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A literary review on the effect of menstruation on the mental health of women.

Prerna Gaur

Senior Research Fellow,

MSM Institute Of Ayurveda , Smart Ida 2.0 Project In Collaboration with

CARI , CCRAS , New Delhi, India

Author Correspondence: prernagaur94@gmail.com

Abstract

Menstruation is a natural physiological process that can significantly impact the mental health of females. In *Ayurveda*, the menstrual cycle is viewed as a reflection of a woman's overall health, encompassing physical, emotional, and psychological dimensions. This article reviews the Ayurvedic perspective of effect on mental health during menstruation, exploring the interplay between *doshas*, emotional well-being, and menstrual symptoms. By understanding these connections, we can develop holistic approaches to support women's mental health during their menstrual cycles. The insights gained from this review can inform both Ayurvedic practitioners and modern healthcare providers by addressing the mental health challenges faced by women during menstruation.

Keywords: Menstruation, mental health, Ayurveda, *doshas*, emotional well-being, holistic health.

Introduction

Menstruation is a complex physiological process that occurs in females, typically on monthly basis, and is often accompanied by a range of physical and emotional symptoms. While the physical aspects of menstruation, such as cramps and bloating, are widely recognized, the mental health implications are less frequently discussed. Many women experience mood swings, anxiety, irritability, and depression during their menstrual cycles, which can significantly affect their quality of life (Bromberger & Epperson, 2018).

In Ayurveda, the menstrual cycle is considered a vital sign of a woman's health, reflecting the balance of the three *doshas*: *vata*, *pitta*, and *kapha*. Each dosha plays a role in influencing physical and mental well-being. For instance, an imbalance in *vata* may lead to anxiety and restlessness, while an excess of *pitta* can result in irritability and anger (Lad, 2002). Understanding these *doshic* influences can provide valuable

insights into managing mental health during menstruation.

This article aims to explore the Ayurvedic perspective of effects on mental health during menstruation, examining the relationship between doshic imbalances and emotional well-being. By integrating traditional *Ayurvedic* wisdom with contemporary understanding, we can develop holistic strategies to support women's mental health during their menstrual cycles.

Aims and Objectives [1]

The primary aim of this article is to review the Ayurvedic understanding of effects on mental health during menstruation and its implications for women's well-being. The specific objectives include:

1. **Understanding Dosha Influence:** To explore how three *doshas* (*vata*, *pitta*, and *kapha*) affect mental health during menstruation.
2. **Identifying Symptoms:** To identify common mental health symptoms experienced by women during their menstrual cycles and their *Ayurvedic* interpretations.
3. **Holistic Management Strategies:** To discuss *Ayurvedic* practices and lifestyle modifications that can support mental health during menstruation.
4. **Integrating Modern Perspectives:** To consider how *Ayurvedic* insights can complement modern approaches to women's mental health during menstruation. [2]

This review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the mental health challenges faced by women during menstruation from an *Ayurvedic* perspective, offering insights that can enhance both traditional and modern health practices.

Methods and Materials

This review article employs a qualitative approach, synthesizing information from classical *Ayurvedic* texts, contemporary research, and expert opinions to explore the mental health of females during menstruation. The following methods were utilized:

1. **Literature Review:** A comprehensive review of classical Ayurvedic texts, including the *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita*, was conducted to extract relevant information regarding the menstrual cycle, *dosha* imbalances, and their effects on mental health (Sharma & Dash, 2009; Lad, 2002).
2. **Contemporary Research:** Recent studies from peer-reviewed journals were analyzed to understand the modern interpretations of mental health issues related to menstruation, including premenstrual syndrome (PMS) and premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) [3].
3. **Expert Opinions:** Insights from Ayurvedic practitioners and mental health professionals were gathered through interviews and discussions to provide a practical perspective on managing mental health during menstruation.

4. **Case Studies:** Relevant case studies highlighting the experiences of women dealing with mental health challenges during their menstrual cycles were reviewed to illustrate the practical implications of *Ayurvedic* principles.

Discussion

The *Ayurvedic* perspective on menstruation emphasizes the interconnections of physical and mental health. According to Ayurveda, the menstrual cycle is influenced by the balance of the three doshas: *vata*, *pitta*, and *kapha*. Each *dosha* has distinct characteristics that can affect a woman's emotional state during her menstrual cycle.

- **Vata Imbalance:** An excess of *vata* can lead to anxiety, restlessness, and mood swings. Women with a *vata* constitution may experience heightened emotional sensitivity during menstruation, making them more prone to stress and irritability (Lad, 2002).
- **Pitta Imbalance:** An increase in *pitta* can result in anger, frustration, and irritability. Women experiencing *pitta* imbalances may find themselves more easily agitated and may struggle with feelings of aggression or impatience during their menstrual cycles [4].
- **Kapha Imbalance:** An excess of *kapha* can lead to feelings of lethargy, sadness, and depression. Women with a *kapha* constitution may experience a lack of motivation and emotional heaviness during menstruation, which can exacerbate feelings of sadness or hopelessness [5].

The interplay of these *doshic* influences highlights the importance of individualized approaches to managing mental health during menstruation. *Ayurvedic* practices such as dietary modifications, herbal remedies, *yoga*, and meditation can help restore balance and alleviate mental health symptoms. For instance, incorporating warming spices like ginger and turmeric can help balance *vata* and *pitta*, while grounding practices such as *yoga* and meditation can support emotional stability [6].

Conclusion

The mental health of females during menstruation is a multifaceted issue that can be effectively addressed through an *Ayurvedic* lens. By understanding the influence of *doshic* imbalances on emotional well-being, women can adopt holistic strategies to manage their mental health during their menstrual cycles. Integrating *Ayurvedic* practices with modern health approaches can provide a comprehensive framework for supporting women's mental health, ultimately enhancing their quality of life. Future research should focus on empirical studies that validate *Ayurvedic* principles and explore their efficacy in contemporary mental health management.

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This review highlights the importance of a holistic approach to effects on mental health during menstruation, emphasizing the need for further exploration of *Ayurvedic* practices in modern healthcare settings.

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