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## A randomized controlled study to evaluate the therapeutic effectiveness of *Sattvavajava Chikitsa* (Ayurvedic psychotherapy) in the management of Major Depressive Disorders: A pilot study

Effect of *Sattvavajava chikitsa* (Ayurvedic psychotherapy) in Major Depressive Disorders

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### ABSTRACT

**INTRODUCTION-** Major depressive disorder (MDD) is a serious affliction that affects people of all genders, ages, and backgrounds. Its most prominent symptoms include relatively persistent depressive mood and a loss of interest that can range from mild to severe. MDD causes hindrance to the routine activities and subjective well-being of the individuals. In typical Ayurvedic contexts, *Sattvavajava Chikitsa* (SC) is well-known Ayurvedic psychotherapy used primarily to treat and manage mental illnesses and psychosomatic disorders. The present pilot study aims to investigate the therapeutic effectiveness of SC on patients of MDD.

**METHODS-** The present parallel-arm randomized controlled study was conducted on MDD patients, attending *Kayachikitsa Manas Chikitsa* (Neuropsychiatry and Psycho-Somatic Medicine) O.P.D., I.P.D., and Department of Psychiatry O.P.D., S.S. Hospital, I.M.S., B.H.U., Varanasi from October 2021- March 2022. All the patients who were fulfilling the DSM-5's diagnostic criteria for MDD were selected following their consent for the proposed study. The patients age ranged from 21 to 60 years. The registered cases were randomly allocated into two groups. For Group A (N=15), the patients were given *Ashwagandha Churna* (*Withania somnifera* powder) 5gm twice a day whereas, for Group B (N=15), the patients were given SC along with *Withania somnifera* powder 5gm twice a day. The primary outcome of depressive symptoms was measured by the Hamilton Depression Rating Scale. The pre and post treatments status were assessed.

**RESULTS-** Both groups showed highly significant differences ( $p < 0.005$ ) when compared to the initial and third follow-ups. The intergroup comparison was also found to be significant at the third follow-up ( $p < 0.005$ ). In the third follow-up patients with normal range of the HDRS were higher in group B (80%) as compared to group A (33%). The combination of SC with *Withania somnifera* powder exhibited a better & clinically significant reduction in the severity of MDD as compared to the effects shown by *Withania somnifera* powder alone.

**KEYWORDS-** *Sattvavajava Chikitsa*, Major Depressive Disorder, Ayurvedic Psychotherapy, *Ashwagandha Churna*, *Withania somnifera* powder

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