

Hallucinations; a critical review from Ayurvedic perspective

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Abstract

Hallucinations are false or distorted sensory experience that appear to be real perceptions, experienced in many psychotic disorders. These sensory impressions are auto-generated in the mind. In Ayurvedic classics, hallucinations were called false perceptions (mithyagnana), illusions (maya), infatuations (moha), or confusion (bhrama). Hallucinations are common in some unmada rogas. In the current study, associations of hallucination in each sensory organ were studied and reviewed using authentic Ayurveda literatures. Ayurveda explains the perception pertaining to the sense organs which is abnormal, arising without any apparent cause is indicative of death. Thus patients with psychotic hallucination are life endangered. The mind (manas) has three operational qualities known as trigunas which specifically indicate satva, rajas and tamas. The mind is responsible for sensory perception; it has specific self functions such as thinking (chintya), analysis (vicharya), speculation (uhya), distinct thought (dhyeya) and decision (sankalpa). Over activation of rajas (action) or tamas (inertia) causes the mind to loose balance which in turn affects tridosha (vata, pitta, kapha) and may lead to insanity by affecting the knowledge (buddhi). Buddhi is achieved in two ways: memory based knowledge (smriti) and experience based knowledge (anubhava). Smriti is defined as recollection of seen, heard and experienced things and develops due to eight reasons: perception of cause (nimitta grahanata), visual perception (rupa grahanata), similarity (sadrushya), contrast (viparyaya), mind getting in contact with objects (satvanubandha), practice (abhyasa), constant thinking (gnana yoga), and repetitive listening (punar shruta). Anubhava also consists of two types: true experience (yathartha) and false experience (ayathartha). Deviations of equilibrium in buddhi associated factors result in Hallucinations. With the modern developments in Ayurveda Psychiatry discipline, effective enhancement of subject knowledge can play a vital role in preventing patients from death indications either homicides or suicides.

Keywords: hallucination, buddhi, psychiatry, manas

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