

## Role of Meditation in patients of Cancer: Ayurvedic Perspective

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### ABSTRACT

<sup>1</sup>Cancer is a major global health challenge characterized by physical, psychological, and emotional distress. Alongside conventional oncological treatments, complementary and alternative medicine systems have gained attention for improving quality of life and holistic well-being. <sup>2</sup>Cancer remains a leading cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide. oncology has increasingly recognized the role of integrative therapies in enhancing quality of life and psychological well being among patients.

<sup>3</sup>Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine, emphasizes balance of body,mind, and spirit in health and disease.

<sup>4</sup>Meditation (Dhyana) is a key component of Ayurvedic and yogic practices, aimed at mental purification, stress reduction, and restoration of homeostasis.

This article explores the role of meditation in cancer patients from an Ayurvedic perspective, discussing its theoretical basis, mechanisms of action, clinical benefits, and scope in integrative oncology. The review highlights meditation as a supportive, intervention that enhances psychological issues, improves quality of life, and complements conventional cancer therapy.

**Keywords:** *Cancer, Meditation, Dhyana, Ayurveda, Integrative Oncology, Mind–Body Medicine*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Cancer is a chronic, multifactorial disease involving uncontrolled cellular proliferation and systemic dysfunction. In addition to physical symptoms, cancer patients often experience anxiety, depression, fear, fatigue, pain, and reduced quality of life. Modern oncology focuses primarily on tumour eradication through surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy, and immunotherapy. However, these treatments frequently produce adverse effects that further compromise mental and emotional health.

Ayurveda offers a holistic framework for understanding disease, emphasizing the interaction between physical, psychological, and spiritual factors. <sup>5</sup>Meditation, described as Dhyana in classical Ayurvedic and yogic texts, is an important tool for mental balance and emotional stability. In recent years, meditation has been increasingly incorporated into integrative cancer care as a supportive therapy. This article reviews the Ayurvedic concept of cancer and elaborates on the role of meditation in supporting cancer patients.

## 2. CONCEPT OF CANCER IN AYURVEDA

### 2.1 Ayurvedic Understanding of Disease

Ayurveda does not describe cancer as a single disease. It explains it through concepts such as:

1. Dosha imbalance (Vata, Pitta, Kapha)
2. Agni Mandya (impaired digestive fire)
3. Ama accumulation (toxic metabolic by-products)
4. Dhatu dysfunction (tissue derangement)
5. Srotodushti (obstruction and vitiation of body channels)

Conditions resembling tumors and malignancies are described under terms such as Arbuda and Granthi. These conditions are considered chronic, deep-seated disorders involving all levels of the body and mind.

### 2.2 Role of Mind (Manas) in Disease

Ayurveda recognizes the mind as a crucial factor in health. <sup>6</sup>Mental stress (Chinta), fear (Bhaya), grief (Shoka), and anger (Krodha) disturb the equilibrium of Rajas and Tamas, leading to psychosomatic imbalance. Prolonged mental stress weakens immunity (Ojas), making the body susceptible to chronic diseases like cancer.

## 3. MEDITATION (DHYANA): AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE

### 3.1 Definition of Meditation

Meditation (Dhyana) is defined as a continuous, focused flow of awareness toward a single object, thought, or consciousness. It is described in yoga as a state that brings mental clarity, emotional stability, and inner peace.

### Ayurvedic Models of Meditation in Cancer Care

1. Meditation Techniques in Ayurveda
  - a. Dhyāna (Focused Meditation)  
Sustained attention on a chosen object, mantra, or breath.
  - b. Prāṇāyāma (Breath Awareness)  
Regulated breathing practices enhancing prāṇa flow and autonomic balance.
  - c. Mantra Meditation  
Repetition of sacred syllables believed to modulate mental states and enhance sattva.
  - d. Trataka (Steady Gazing)  
Focus on a fixed point to calm mental fluctuations and improve concentration.

### 2. Role of Meditation in Dosha Balancing

Vata imbalance, often linked with anxiety and restlessness, can be pacified by slow, rhythmic breathing and calming meditation. Pitta imbalance, associated with irritability and inflammation, may benefit from cooling, mantra-based practices. Kapha imbalance, correlated with lethargy and depressive tendencies, may respond to invigorative breath awareness.

### <sup>7</sup>3.2 Types of Meditation Relevant to Cancer Care

Breath-focused meditation  
Mantra meditation  
Mindfulness meditation

Guided relaxation and visualization

These practices aim to calm the mind, reduce stress, and promote a balanced mental state.

#### **<sup>8</sup>4. MECHANISMS OF ACTION OF MEDITATION:**

##### **Psychological Effects:**

Meditation helps:

1. Reduce anxiety, depression, and emotional distress.
2. Improve coping ability and emotional disturbance.
3. Enhance self-acceptance and inner strength.

From an Ayurvedic viewpoint, meditation increases Sattva Guna, reducing mental agitation caused by Rajas and inertia caused by Tamas.

##### **Physiological Effects**

1. Scientific studies suggest that meditation:
2. Lowers stress hormones such as cortisol.
3. Improves autonomic nervous system balance.
4. Enhances sleep quality and reduces fatigue.
5. Positively influences immune regulation

These effects are particularly beneficial for cancer patients undergoing aggressive treatments.

#### **<sup>9</sup>5. ROLE OF MEDITATION IN CANCER PATIENTS**

Stress Reduction and Emotional Well-being

Cancer diagnosis often triggers fear, uncertainty, and emotional trauma. Meditation provides a mental strength helping patients manage psychological stress and maintain emotional balance throughout treatment.

Improvement in Quality of Life :

Meditation has been shown to -

1. Reduce cancer-related fatigue
2. Improve sleep and appetite
3. Decrease perception of pain
4. Enhance overall sense of well-being

<sup>10</sup>In Ayurveda, these outcomes are associated with improved Ojas, the essence responsible for vitality and immunity.

Support During Conventional Treatment :

Meditation acts as an adjunct to chemotherapy and radiotherapy by:

- 1.Reducing treatment-related anxiety
- 2.Improving tolerance to side effects
- 3.Enhancing patient compliance and motivation

#### **<sup>11</sup>6. MEDITATION AS PART OF INTEGRATIVE AYURVEDIC ONCOLOGY**

Meditation is rarely used alone in Ayurveda. It is combined with:

1. Yoga Asanas for physical strength
2. Pranayama for respiratory and autonomic balance
3. Rasayana therapy for rejuvenation
4. Ahara (diet) and Vihara (lifestyle) modification

This integrative approach supports both physical healing and mental harmony.

#### **7. <sup>12</sup>DISCUSSION**

1. Integrative Clinical Application: Meditation should be considered an adjunctive therapy, not a standalone cancer treatment.
2. Individualization of Practice: Ayurveda emphasizes customized meditation protocols aligned with constitutional types (prakṛti) and current imbalances.

## 8. CONCLUSION

From an Ayurvedic perspective, meditation plays a significant supportive role in the management of cancer patients. By calming the mind, reducing stress, and enhancing emotional resilience, meditation helps restore balance at both mental and physiological levels. When integrated with conventional oncology and Ayurvedic therapies, meditation contributes meaningfully to holistic cancer care, improving quality of life and overall well-being.

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