

The science of mantra chikitsa and sound frequencies in healing - a review article

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Abstract

Introduction: In *Charaka Samhita*, *Mantra Chikitsa* is described as a healing method that uses mantras, the sacred sounds, chants, or prayers believed to have protective and restorative powers. It is part of *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* (divine therapies), one of the three main treatment methods in *Ayurveda*, mentioned in *Charaka Sutrasthana*, chapter 11. In modern science, sound healing means using sound waves and vibrations to help the body heal and regain balance. This works on the idea that sound can interact with our body's natural energy and stimulate recovery. In *Ayurveda*, chanting mantras and using sound frequencies are not just ancient customs but important tools for maintaining physical health, emotional stability, and spiritual harmony. **Methodology:** The traditional *Ayurvedic* idea of *Mantra Chikitsa* was compared with modern sound therapy to see how both can help in balancing energy and improving overall well-being. **Result and Conclusion:** Both *Ayurveda* and modern science agree that sound can help bring emotional calm, restore energy balance, and improve overall health, making it valuable in today's busy, stressful life.

Keywords: *Daivyapashraya Chikitsa, Mantra Chikitsa*, Sound frequencies, Binaural beats

Introduction

Sound has served as a healing force for thousands of years, forming an integral part of spiritual, cultural, and medical traditions. In *Ayurveda*, this approach is known as *Mantra Chikitsa* a branch of *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* (spiritual therapy) described in the *Charaka Samhita*. *Mantras* are sacred sounds or verses that are believed to harmonize the mind, body, and spirit by aligning internal vibrations with cosmic energy, emphasizing that true

health is the balance of subtle life forces. Ancient *Ayurvedic* works describe mantras as tools to treat psychosomatic disorders, calm the mind, and restore spiritual equilibrium. Modern research explores similar principles through sound therapy, binaural beats, music therapy, and vibroacoustic methods, with studies showing their ability to influence brainwaves, reduce stress, and promote healing. This review article connects these ancient and modern perspectives for examining how mantra chanting and sound-frequency therapies work, their applications for wellbeing, underlying mechanisms, limitations, and directions for future research.

Aim:

The aim is to clearly explain and evaluate how traditional *mantra* chanting (*Mantra Chikitsa*) and modern sound-frequency therapies can influence healing, wellbeing, and mind–body balance and to show practical applications, scientific mechanisms, limitations, and future research needs.

Objectives:

1. Explain the *Ayurvedic* concept of *Mantra Chikitsa* and its role in healing through sacred sounds.
2. Describe how sound frequencies affect the mind, body, and energy balance from both traditional and modern perspectives.
3. Present practical applications of mantra chanting and sound therapy for health and wellbeing.
4. Highlight scientific insights, limitations, and future research potential in sound-based healing.

Methodology

Modern books and *Ayurveda* classics were reviewed along with online sources for the topic.

Observation and Result

The concept of sound

In *Ayurveda*, everything in the universe is considered to be composed of five basic elements: earth, water, fire, air, and ether (space). These elements manifest in the human body as the three doshas, which are *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* that regulate our physical and mental health. In addition to these, *Ayurveda* also recognizes the influence of subtle energies or “spiritual vibrations” that affect our state of health. “Sound” or “*Nada*,” is an essential part of this vibrational system. *Nada* is the primordial sound, the cosmic vibration that underpins the entire universe. According to *Ayurvedic* philosophy, each part of the body and mind

resonates with a unique frequency, and sound has the potential to either harmonize or disrupt these vibrations. *Mantras*, which are sacred sounds or syllables, are considered a powerful tool in restoring balance and promoting health by aligning our internal vibrations with the cosmic harmony.

Mantras: Sacred Sounds for Healing

In *Ayurveda*, the principle of *Chikitsa* or treatment is classified as :

1. *Daivavyapasraya Chikitsa* (Spiritual therapy)
2. *Yuktivyapasraya Chikitsa* (Rational therapy)
3. *Sattwavajaya Chikitsa* (Psychotherapy)

There are disorders in modern science which are of idiopathic origin and are very challenging. Their symptoms, mode of their onset, cause, severity and management are totally different from other disorders. To pacify these, *Ayurveda* mentions *Daivavyapasraya chikitsa*. The *mantra chikitsa* is a part of it. The term *Daivavyapasraya* is made up of two words, *Daiva* and *Vyapasraya*. *Daiva* means that the outcomes or circumstances are unknown i.e., they cannot be explained by human knowledge as they dwell into another dimension of life. *Vyapasraya* means taking refuge or recourse. Thus, it is related to spiritual therapies, which have potential to eradicate diseases caused by unknown circumstances.^[1,2] In Sanskrit, “*Mantra*” means a sacred utterance or sound, while “*Chikitsa*” refers to treatment or therapy. Mantras are used to invoke divine energies or cosmic forces

for the removal of diseases caused by non-physical or supernatural factors such as curses, spirits, or planetary influences. They are believed to influence the mind and body positively, aligning the individual's energy with the universe. The vibrations created by chanting mantras have a therapeutic effect, restoring balance and promoting healing in the patient.

It addresses psychosomatic ailments and calms the mind, which is often seen as the root cause of many disorders. ^[3]

For example, the *mantra* “Om” is regarded as the primordial sound that represents the essence of the universe. Chanting “Om” is believed to help calm the mind, reduce stress, and promote a sense of inner peace. Other mantras, such as “Om Namah Shivaya” or

“*Gayatri Mantra*”, are used to invoke divine energies and purify the body and mind. The repetition of these sacred syllables is thought to create vibrations that heal the body and enhance mental clarity. ^[4]

***Mantra* Chanting and the Mind-Body Connection**

One of the most significant benefits of *mantra* chanting is its effect on the mind-body connection. *Ayurveda* emphasizes the importance of mental well-being for overall health, as the mind directly influences the body's functions. *Mantra* chanting can calm the mind, reduce mental chatter, and improve concentration. This mental clarity, in turn, promotes better physical health. Studies in modern medicine have shown that chanting mantras can trigger the parasympathetic nervous system, leading to a state of relaxation and reduced stress. Regular practice of mantra meditation or chanting can lower blood pressure, boost immune function, and improve emotional regulation.

Additionally, the rhythmic repetition of *mantras* has been shown to stimulate the production of endorphins, the body's natural “feel-good” chemicals, which promote happiness and reduce anxiety and depression. This is in line with *Ayurvedic* teachings, which recognize that mental peace is essential for maintaining overall wellness. ^[5]

The Science of Sound Frequencies

Frequency: It is measured in Hertz (Hz). The frequency means number of sound wave cycles that are produced per second. Different frequencies are thought to have distinct effects on the human body and mind.

Resonance: The principle of resonance states that sound waves can cause objects (or the body) to vibrate at their natural frequency, potentially restoring harmony and alleviating imbalances.

Biofield: The human body's energetic field is believed to respond to sound frequencies, facilitating relaxation, stress relief, and healing.

Ayurveda uses sound as a means of tuning the body's frequencies to achieve balance. The therapeutic use of sound involves specific frequencies or pitches that correspond to different states of being. These sound frequencies can either stimulate or relax specific areas of the body and mind. Research in the field of sound therapy has shown that different frequencies can have various effects on the body. For example:

- Low frequencies (20–250 Hz) are associated with grounding and healing the physical body. They can have a calming effect on the nervous system, reduce stress, and improve circulation.
- Medium frequencies (250–1,000 Hz) can stimulate the heart and lungs, promoting better respiratory function and emotional balance.
- High frequencies (1,000–4,000 Hz) stimulate mental clarity, enhance focus, and boost cognitive function.

In *Ayurveda*, sound frequencies are integrated with the concept of “*Srotas*” (channels of circulation) and “*Ojas*” (vital energy). When sound frequencies are in harmony with the body’s natural rhythms, they can clear blockages in the *Srotas*, allowing energy to flow freely and promoting overall vitality. Conversely, disharmony in sound can create energetic blockages, leading to physical and emotional imbalances. [6]

Chakras and Sound Healing in Ayurveda

The concept of *chakras*, the seven energy centers in the body, is also integral to the *Ayurvedic* understanding of sound healing. Each *chakra* is associated with a specific frequency and color, and it governs a particular aspect of health and consciousness. Ayurvedic practitioners use sound healing to balance these chakras, facilitating the free flow of energy through the body. For example, the “*Root chakra*” (*Muladhara*), which governs physical stability and grounding, resonates with lower frequencies and is often balanced using deep, low sounds such as drums or chanting. The “*throat chakra*” (*Vishuddha*), associated with communication and self-expression, resonates with higher frequencies and can be balanced through mantra chanting or singing bowls tuned to the appropriate pitch. Each *chakra* can be harmonized using sound therapy, ensuring the smooth flow of energy and promoting holistic health. This approach helps in alleviating physical ailments, emotional stress, and mental disturbances by balancing the energy field of the body. [7]

Practical Applications of Sound Healing in *Ayurveda*

Incorporating sound therapy into daily *Ayurvedic* practices can enhance health and wellbeing:

Morning Mantra Practice

Starting the day with a mantra chant can help set the tone for mental clarity and calmness. Simple mantras like “*Om*” or “*Om Namah Shivaya*” can be chanted aloud or silently during meditation.

Sound Therapy with Instruments

Using instruments such as singing bowls, tuning forks, or bells that resonate at specific frequencies can help balance the body’s energies. For instance, Tibetan singing bowls tuned to the *root chakra* can be used to ground and stabilize the body.

Sound Baths

Attending a sound bath session or creating a sound bath environment at home can help clear energetic blockages, promote relaxation, and rejuvenate the mind and body.

Chanting for Emotional Balance

When feeling stressed or emotionally overwhelmed, chanting specific *mantras* that align with the heart *chakra* or throat *chakra* can help release pent-up emotions and restore inner peace.

Practical Applications of Sound Healing in Modern Science

Binaural Beats:

When two slightly different frequencies are played in each ear, the brain perceives a third

frequency (the difference between the two). This is used to alter brainwave states, promoting relaxation, focus, or deep sleep

Solfeggio Frequencies:

A set of specific sound frequencies, such as 396 Hz (for liberating guilt and fear) or 528 Hz (for DNA repair and transformation), are believed to have unique healing properties.

Music Therapy:

Structured use of music to address emotional and psychological needs, aiding in pain management, stress reduction, and mental health improvement.

Vibroacoustic Therapy:

Low-frequency sound vibrations are directly applied to the body using specialized equipment, targeting pain, circulation, and relaxation.

Ultrasound Therapy:

High-frequency sound waves are used in medical treatments to stimulate tissue repair, improve circulation, and break up blockages like kidney stones.

While traditional in origin, modern research is increasingly exploring the potential therapeutic effects of *mantra* practices: Neurological studies examined how chanting impacts brain wave patterns, psychological research investigated stress reduction mechanisms and physiological studies tracked changes in body chemistry during mantra practices

Discussion

This review found that both *Mantra Chikitsa* and modern sound therapies help reduce stress, calm the mind, improve emotional balance, and promote relaxation. Ancient texts link these effects to spiritual and energetic harmony, while modern studies show measurable changes like altered brainwaves and lower blood pressure. Past research supports these benefits, but more large-scale, well-designed studies are needed to confirm long-term outcomes and standardize methods.

Conclusion

The exploration of *Mantra Chikitsa* and sound frequencies in healing presents a fascinating intersection between ancient wisdom and modern scientific understanding. Both approaches are rooted in the idea that sound and vibration can influence health to offer unique perspectives on healing. *Mantra Chikitsa*, in the *Charaka Samhita*, emphasizes the power of sacred sounds to restore spiritual and mental equilibrium, highlighting the deep

connection between mind, body, and spirit in traditional *Ayurvedic* practices. On the other hand, modern science has increasingly recognized the healing potential of sound frequencies, with fields such as music therapy, ultrasound, and binaural beats showing promise in treating a variety of physical and psychological conditions.

As research in sound healing continues to grow, the integration of these ancient practices with modern technologies could pave the way for a more holistic approach to health and well-being. The therapeutic use of sound through mantra or specific frequencies, offers a field for exploration in the future of healthcare, expanding the possibilities of healing beyond conventional methods. This merging of tradition and innovation highlights the timeless relevance of sound as a tool for health, bridging the gap between ancient wisdom and contemporary science for harmony and healing.

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Conflict of Interest

None

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