

## Diet: Physiological, Psychological, and Spiritual Growth

<sup>1</sup>Kshirsagar Sharad, <sup>2</sup>Deshmukh Ajay, <sup>3</sup>Ajay Sharma, Received: 13- February -2023

<sup>4</sup>Devyani Rawat

Revised: 21- March -2023

Accepted: 15-April-2023

<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychiatry,

Krishna Institute of Medical Sciences,

Krishna Vishwa Vidyapeeth (Deemed to be University), Karad,

Email: medhavidesh@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>Department of Psychiatry,

Krishna Institute of Medical Sciences,

Krishna Vishwa Vidyapeeth (Deemed to be University), Karad,

Email: medhavidesh@gmail.com

<sup>3</sup>Asst. Professor, School of Management,

Graphic Era Hill University, Dehradun,

Uttarakhand India 248002,

ajaysharma@gehu.ac.in

<sup>4</sup>Department of Management Studies,

Graphic Era Deemed to be University,

Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India 248002,

devyanirawat@geu.ac.in

### Abstract

The Vedas recommend a sattvic diet for people because it promotes mental and physical well-being. Despite the common perception, not all Hindus adhere to a vegetarian diet. Some people's families are vegetarian by choice, while others aren't. Those who believe in the principle of Karma and who are thus making spiritual development are those who, in thought, word, and deed, refrain from violence. Direct or indirect injury to a person, animal, or other living thing is punished in our scriptures. So, eating meat, fish, or other animals is a terrible choice that will have consequences for us here or in the hereafter.

**Keywords:** Vedas, consumption, sattvic diet, vegetarians, karmic, spiritually, non-violence

### Introduction

The Vedas state, "By consuming clean food, one's mind becomes pure." Based on their effect on our nature, Ayurvedic practitioners divide foods into three categories: saatvic, rajasic, and taamasic. Good health, virtue, and pleasure may be attained by the consumption of saatvic foods such as grains, pulses, fruits, and vegetables. These meals are yu sattva (longevity-inducing), as declared by Shree Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. Rajasic foods are those with an extremely bitter, acidic, or harsh taste. They are associated with poor health, anxiety, and depression. Agitation, depression, and physical and emotional harm come from eating taamasic meals like meat and stale, foul-smelling foods. A healthy and robust body is more important than experiencing happiness when eating, as Swami Mukundanandaji points out. The wise, he says, eat things that are beneficial for their bodies and calm their minds.

The enlightened have said, "We are what we consume." The adrenal glands of killed animals produce stress and adrenaline, which are then injected directly into muscle tissue. Emotions that have been caught in flesh are eaten together with the meat. However, fruits and vegetables lack the capacity for feeling, thus they do not react emotionally to being harvested. Fruits and vegetables contain prana (subtle vital energy) that provides the body with clean nutrients and promotes a healthy state the mind at all times.

Food is an energetic force that interacts with people on the physical bodily level, the mental and emotional level, and the energy and spiritual level, as described so eloquently by Gabriel Cousens. Therefore, eating saatvic cuisine (vegetarian food) is extremely significant since it raises our good vibrations it energy level, makes it easier to continue on the spiritual path, and brings us to a higher awareness level. A healthy eating plan may be found in Science of Healthy eating.

## **Nutritional Psychology in terms of Diet and Mental Health**

Nutritional psychology (NP) is the study of how diet and lifestyle choices affect mental and physical health. The field of nutritional psychology examines the link between food and mental health from the vantage point of how dietary factors affect cognitive, affective, behavioural, perceptual, and experiential processes.

NP draws inspiration from psychology, a field that studies the mind and how it processes information in order to improve people's well-being and effectiveness in society. Nutritional science, which looks at how food and nutrients impact our well-being and how we may utilise them to improve our health and extend our lives, is another source of inspiration for NP practitioners. What we eat affects our emotions, moods, feelings, motives, and experiences, and understanding this connection is an important part of understanding psychology.

Professionals in the field of mental health are well-versed in the psychological, cognitive, and behavioural factors that contribute to flourishing mental health. The effects of food on health are well understood by dietitians and nutritionists. Nutritional psychology (NP) is a subfield of psychology that focuses on the relationship between food and mental health. Understanding the diet-mental health connection (DMHR) requires familiarity with this interface.

There is a wealth of literature illuminating the links between one's food and every facet of mental health and performance. However, there hasn't been a central location for these discoveries until now. There has been a dearth of formal college-level education and understanding of this evidence base among professionals, such as psychiatrists, therapists, dietitians, psychiatrists, doctors, and students concentrating in the psychological or nutrition sciences. It will be difficult to implement these results and effect significant change in the world's mental health landscape with the current mental healthcare system.

To address this need, CNP gathers together studies from across the globe on all facets of the DMHR and uses them to shape the evolution of DMHR-related ideas, vocabularies, and resources for use in professional training programmes. It's helping push forward a goal of include dietary considerations in mental health treatment by the year 2030.

### **Field of Nutritional Psychology**

New research in nutritional psychiatry is drawing conclusive conclusions about the relationship between what people eat and their mental health. The field of nutritional psychology is different from yet supplementary to the fields of psychology and behaviour analysis and nutrition. Nutritional psychology examines the diet-mental health link (DMHR) from the vantage point of the connections between what we eat and our emotions, thoughts, behaviours, and perceptual experiences.

Although there has been no dedicated research to the topic of nutritional psychology, it is informed by a wide range of disciplines, including the psychological, behavioural, social, nutrition, mind, and health sciences. The vocabulary, techniques, ideas, and methods that define the diet-mental health link within nutritional psychology are all informed by research from these other fields.

Nutritional psychology encompasses research into stress, distress, resilience, and the quality of life; emotions, behaviour, mental health, mood, and well-being; cognition and brain; sensation, thinking, and inner experience (interception); pain and pleasure; dietary intake regulation as well as substance use; aggression, violence, as well as trauma; and pain and pleasure. sleep, weariness, and performance; mental and emotional health; social and physical surroundings; and character.

In the field of nutritional psychology, the Centre for Nutrition Psychology (CNP) was the first institution to be established. It was established in 2015 to begin documenting the expanding body of NP data that may direct future linguistic, methodological, and conceptual advancements within the context of the behavioural and psychological sciences. Our mission is to help people live better lives by adjusting their eating habits.

The ability to make day-to-day decisions about educational, occupational, housing, or other options is directly tied to one's level of mental health and psychological well-being (WHO, 2012). There is more to mental wellness than a lack of mental disease. It's a mental condition that permits one to thrive and take pleasure in life to its fullest extent.

A person's eating habits, sexual orientation, and spiritual beliefs may all have an impact on their mental health. A person's spirituality, emotional and social intelligence, sexual orientation, eating habits, and socioeconomic status are just a few examples of his personal attributes and behaviours that have been shown to affect his mental health. Vegetarians and non-vegetarians may be roughly classified by their dietary preferences. The mental health of a person might be affected by any sort of eating pattern (Tripathi, Mishra, Tripathi, & Mishra, 2010).

Lord Krishna outlined three categories of food for Arjun in the Bhagavad Gita.

- i. *Sattvic*
- ii. *Rajasic*
- iii. *Tamasic*

The foods a guy eats reflect his individuality and preferences.

1. Accordingly, sattvic fare gives optimal nutrients and boosts vigour. Consumption of such a diet not only increases one's physical stamina and lifespan, but also promotes emotional and spiritual equilibrium. Sattvic fare, for these reasons, inspires morally upright contemplation.
2. However, Rajasic cuisine incorporates both vegetarian and non-vegetarian options. These meals cause mental and physical decline, and eventually death.
3. The lowest quality food is tamic. This food is old and bad for your health in general.

The importance of nutrition and diet is one of among the most evident but under-recognized variables in the formation of key trends in mental health. There is a rapidly expanding amount of data connecting nutrition to psychological well-being. There is mounting evidence that certain foods play a role in the aetiology, treatment, and prevention of a variety of mental health conditions, including but not limited to depressive disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and Alzheimer's disease.

Although many studies have examined vegetarians' physical health, not nearly as much has been done to examine their mental health, especially their mood. Eicosapentaenoic acid, also known as and docosahexaenoic acid, also known as are essential regulators of cell structure and function, but fish, the main dietary supply of these acids, is not included in vegetarian diets. There is no indication that the lack of direct consumption of these types of fatty acids in vegans has an unfavourable effect on emotional state, according to a cross-sectional research (Beezhold, Johnston, & Daigle, 2010).

The better mood profile we found with vegetarian diets may be explained by characteristics of the vegetarian food profile, such as a greater intake of all poly unsaturated fat and a minimal consumption of arachidonic acid. Vegetarians also have a higher frequency of depression, anxiety, and somatoform conditions (Michalak, Zhang, & Jacobi, 2012). Vegetarian diets have also been shown to reduce the risk of hypertension.

Hypertension is more common among persons who sometimes eat meat as opposed to strict vegetarians (Desai, 2007). Nonvegetarian diets have also been shown to benefit mental health and reduce the risk of developing a variety of mental illnesses. A research provided by the "University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine suggests, for instance, that omega-3 fatty acids, which are abundant in non-vegetarian foods like fish, may affect one's disposition, character, and behaviour."

Low blood levels of omega-3 fatty acids polyunsaturated fats were associated with increased likelihood of reporting mild to severe depressive symptoms, a more pessimistic view, and more impulsivity among 106 healthy volunteers. On the other hand, those whose blood contained more omega-3 fatty acids were shown to be friendlier (Araujo, Vilarim, & Nardi, 2010). Additionally, a number of prior research have connected low levels of omega-3 to clinically important diseases such bipolar chaos, schizophrenia, drug misuse, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. (Frangou, Lewis, & Mc Crone, 2006).

Evidence linking food and psychological well-being is, therefore, rapidly expanding. It has an effect on one's emotions, disposition, and state of health. There is mounting evidence that it has a role in the aetiology, prevention, and treatment of a variety of mental health issues (McCulloch, 2006).

### **Sexual Orientation and Mental Health**

One's sexual orientation is an innate trait that influences their romantic and sexual attraction to others, whether they are of the same gender or sexual orientation, the opposing sex or race, or a combination of sex or gender. These leanings are often categorised as either heterosexual, gay, or bisexual.

Mental health in connection to sexual orientation has been reported on in a number of contemporary epidemiological investigations. Both young gays and bisexuals (Faulkner and Cranston, 1998) and older homosexuals and bisexuals (Bagley and Tremblay, 1997) have been shown to have a much greater rate of suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts than the general population. According to the results of a Dutch population study (Sandfort, Bakker, Schellevis, & Vanwesenbeeck, 2006), those who identify as homosexual or lesbian tend to have worse overall mental health than their straight counterparts.

### **Mental Health and Spiritual Connotations**

Scientists from several fields have been investigating and recognising the benefits of spirituality for psychological well-being. Users and survivors of mental health services have also noted the positive effects spiritual practise may have in these domains. Depressed people, for example, might find new meaning and purpose in life via spirituality after losing sight of it owing to their disease.

Recovery from post-illness depression was shown to improve by 70 percent for every 10 point rise in spirituality (Koenig, George, & Peterson, 1998). Another research looked at the possibility that women's spirituality, beliefs, and coping techniques may explain some of the diversity in anxiety they experienced in the year after a diagnosis of cancer of the cervical cavity.

Spiritual practise has been linked to lower rates of anxiety and despair in a number of different groups, including women with gynaecological illness (Glas, 2011). Numerous research point to the benefits of spirituality in times of stress, tragedy, and loss.

Furthermore, spiritual coping is a pre-existing mediator of the connection between spirituality on mental health under adversity. It has been observed that among the most frequent spiritual coping techniques exhibited in people, the collaborative approach is the most helpful for psychological wellness (Genia, 1997).

The impacts of diet, sexual orientation, and spirituality on mental health, however, have been the subject of surprisingly little research. This research set out to investigate how these factors affect adults' psychological well-being.

There is no evidence linking vegetarian diets to better mental health, whereas the opposite is true for non-vegetarian or ovo-vegetarian diets.

Food is one of man's most fundamental requirements, thus it often contains a wide range of nutrients, including carbs, proteins, fats, vitamins, and minerals. All lifelong health, growth, and growth depend on these minerals. They're also crucial in helping those who are sick or recovering from an illness get the care they need.

### **Functions of food**

Foods may be classified according to their functions in the body.

- i) Functions (Physiological)
- ii) functions (Social)

### **Conclusion**

Energy-yielding foods are those high in complex carbohydrates and fatty acids. They fuel the body's automatic processes necessary for survival, enable people to go about their daily lives and pursue their interests, and transform the food we consume into useable nutrition. Oxidation of foods eaten provides the necessary energy. Good sources of fuel include grains, tubers, roots, dried fruits, oils, butter, and ghee. Body-building foods are those high in protein. High-quality proteins may be found in milk, meat, eggs, and seafood. Although the protein in nuts and pulses is plentiful, it is of low quality. These foods are essential for survival and development. They're also a source of power. Protein-rich, mineral- and vitamin-rich diets are often recommended as

preventative and regulating measures. In addition to controlling vital functions including body temperature, muscular contraction, water balance, blood clotting, waste elimination, and heart rate, they are also critical for sustaining overall health. Safe nourishment includes dairy products, eggs, liver, and fresh produce. Community, social, cultural, and religious activities have traditionally revolved around the availability of food. At religious, social, and family gatherings, it has been a sign of affection, camaraderie, and joy. Certain mental requirements of humans may be met by eating, in addition to their bodily and social requirements. Feeling loved and accepted are three of these. A good example of a kind gesture is the time and effort put into making a great meal for loved ones.

## References

1. Marx, W., Moseley, G., Berk, M., & Jacka, F. (2017). Nutritional psychiatry: the present state of the evidence. *The Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, 76(4), 427–436.
2. The Center for Nutritional Psychology (Retrieved Sept. 15, 2022). <https://www.nutritional-psychology.org>.
3. *Introduction to the Nutritional Psychology Research Libraries (NPRL)*. The Center for Nutritional Psychology. <https://www.nutritional-psychology.org/library-introduction/>
4. The Center for Nutritional Psychology (Retrieved Sept. 15, 2022). <https://www.nutritional-psychology.org/educations/>
5. Devonport, T. J., Nicholls, W., & Fullerton, C. (2019). A systematic review of the association between emotions and eating behaviour in normal and overweight adult populations. *Journal of health psychology*, 24(1), 3–24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359105317697813>
6. Altheimer, G., Giles, G. E., Remedios, J. D., Kanarek, R. B., & Urry, H. L. (2021). Do emotions predict eating? The role of previous experiences in emotional eating in the lab and in daily life. *Appetite*, 158, 105016. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2020.105016>
7. Ma, X., Chen, Q., Pu, Y., Guo, M., Jiang, Z., Huang, W., Long, Y., & Xu, Y. (2020). Skipping breakfast is associated with overweight and obesity: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Obesity research & clinical practice*, 14(1), 1–8.
8. Elliston, K. G., Ferguson, S. G., Schüz, N., & Schüz, B. (2017). Situational cues and momentary food environment predict everyday eating behavior in adults with overweight and obesity. *Health psychology: Official journal of the Division of Health Psychology, American Psychological Association*, 36(4), 337–345.
9. Burger, K. S., Sanders, A. J., & Gilbert, J. R. (2016). Hedonic hunger is related to increased neural and perceptual responses to cues of palatable food and motivation to consume: Evidence from 3 independent investigations. *The Journal of nutrition*, 146(9), 1807–1812.
10. Reents, J., Seidel, A. K., Wiesner, C. D., & Pedersen, A. (2020). The effect of hunger and satiety on mood-related food craving. *Frontiers in psychology*, 11, 568908.
11. Araujo, D. M., Vilarim, M. M., & Nardi, A. E. (2010). What is the effectiveness of the use of polyunsaturated fatty acid omega-3 in the treatment of depression. *Expert review of neurotherapeutics*, 11(11), 1117–1129. doi:10.1586/ern.10.77.
12. Australian mental health outcome and classification network (AMHOCN) (2005). *Mental Health Inventory, Training Manual*. Parramatta BC: NSW Institute of Psychiatry.
13. Bagley, C. & Tremblay, P. (1997). Suicidal behaviours in homosexuals and bisexuals males. *Crisis*, 18, 24–34. Beezhold, B. L., Johnston C.S. & Daigle D.R. (2010).
14. Vegetarian diets are associated with healthy mood states: across-sectional study in Seventh Day Adventist adults.
15. Nutrition Journal Department of Nutrition, Arizona State University, USA. Doi: 10.1186/1475-2891-9-26. Burkhardt, M. (1989). Spirituality: An Analysis of the Concept. *Holistic nursing practice*, 60–77.
16. Coleman, C. L. (2003). Spirituality and sexual orientation: relationship to mental well-being and functional health status. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 43(5):457–64.
17. Diet and mental health. Mental health foundation. Retrieved from [http:// www.mentalhealth.org.uk/helpinformation/mental-health-a-z/D/diet/](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/helpinformation/mental-health-a-z/D/diet/).