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PSYCOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF COMPUTER VISION SYNDROME AND IT'S AYURVEDIC MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT:
With the increasing digitalization of work, lifestyle and education, Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS) has become a prevalent health issue, characterised by the combination of both ocular and psychological symptoms. While local ocular symptoms such as dryness of eyes, eye strain and visual fatigue are recognised, the psychological effects such as irritability, mental fatigue, mood disturbances, anxiety, depression, and insomnia are often neglected and poorly addressed in conventional care. This narrative review aims to explore the psychosomatic dimensions of CVS, interpret its pathophysiology through Ayurvedic principles, and outline holistic management strategies that integrate traditional and modern approaches. This review of classical Ayurvedic texts, modern clinical studies and recent integrative health literature was conducted to recognize overlaps in causative factors, symptomatology, and treatment framework for CVS with psychological components. CVS shares notable similarities with Shushkakshipaka (dry eye syndrome), a Sarvagata Netra Roga(all eye diseases) described in Ayurveda. Disturbances in Manovaha Srotas (channels related to mind) and the vitiation of Alochaka Pitta, Prana Vata and Tarpaka Kapha account for the dual ocular and psychological symptoms. Netra Tarpana (nourishment to eye), Nasya (medicine administration through nose), Shirodhara (oil flow therapy), Medhya Rasayana (cognitive enhancer), Yoga(postures) and Pranayama (breath work) and lifestyle modifications provide targeted relief while improving overall mental health and visual resilience. Ayurveda offers a thorough and individualised approach for managing CVS and its psychological impacts. Integrating Ayurvedic principles with digital ergonomics and contemporary behavioural science can enhance the prevention, treatment and quality of life in individuals affected by this new digital-age disorder.
KEYWORDS: Computer vision syndrome, Shushkak shipaka, Psycological effect.

INTRODUCTION:

Computers have become very essential in day-to-day activities and an integral part of everyday tasks. In recent days electronic devices, including computers, are used in schools and offices as their main companion. Due to excessive usage of electronic devices, various optical, visual, and musculoskeletal symptoms have been reported which include eyestrain, dryness, burning, blurring of vision, double vision, irritation, ocular strain, redness, neck, and shoulder pain, etc. These symptoms represent the Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS).[1]
The COVID-19 pandemic significantly amplified CVS due to increased screen time for remote work, online learning, and social media use, with studies reporting symptoms in up to 74% of individuals.[2] Along with this the increased screen time leads to increased stress which in turn hampers the psychological health by causing mental fatigue, sleep disturbance,

anxiety, depression, irritability and aggression.[3] These symptoms are believed to be mediated through prolonged cognitive load, postural fatigue, disruption of circadian rhythms due to blue light exposure and the psychosocial effects of a sedentary, screen-dependent lifestyle.

The psychological dimensions of CVS however remain insufficiently addressed in clinical practice as well as public health discourse. The conventional management strategies focus mainly on ocular symptoms, often neglecting the deeper psychosomatic and psychological impacts of CVS. Although ergonomics, eyedrops and blue light filters can help with physical discomfort, they frequently don't address the underlying mental and emotional stress brought on by prolonged computer use. This gap calls for a more integrative and holistic approach to prevention and management.

Ayurveda, the traditional system of Indian medicine, provides a time-tested holistic frame-work for addressing the diseases involving both the Sharira (body) and Manas (mind). In Ayurvedic literature, the symptoms of CVS- particularly dryness, foreign body sensation, burning sensation and ocular fatigue- bear striking resemblance to the clinical description of Shushkakshipaka (dry eyes syndrome), a subtype of Sarvagata Netra Rogas (all eye diseases) described in Sushruta Samhita. It is primarily caused by the vitiation of Vata-Pitta, often due to Atidrishti (excessive visual strain) and Vishama ahara-vihara (irregular lifestyle habits). Sushrutacharya mentioned the lakshanas(symptoms)such as rukshata (dryness), toda (pricking pain), daruna (roughness) and srava (watery discharge), [4] closely resembling the symptoms of digital eye syndrome (DES) in modern times.

UNDERSTANDING COMPUTER VISION SYNDROME AND ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS:

American Optometric Association (AOA) defines Computer Vision Syndrome as a group of eye and vision-related problems that results from prolonged usage of computers, tablets, e-readers, and cell phones which causes increased stress to near vision in particular.[5] Common symptoms include dry eyes, eye strain, blurred vision, redness, burning sensation and neck or shoulder pain.[6] The intensity depends on duration of screen exposure, lighting conditions, ergonomics, viewing distance and pre-existing refractive errors.

But as a result of increased screen time across all age groups, especially among students, IT professionals and healthcare workers, CVS has been linked to more neurocognitive and psychosocial problems than just ocular discomfort. These are mediated by indirect neuroendocrine disturbances as well as direct sensory exhaustion. Psychological symptoms associated with CVS are often mild in onset but significantly impair quality of life. These include:

1. Cognitive load and Mental Fatigue: Continuous screen engagement demands persistent attention, quick visual processing, and decision-making. This leads to mental tiredness which is commonly known as digital fatigue.[7]
2. Sedentary Behaviour and Social Isolation: Excessive screen time is linked with lack of physical activity contributing to low energy levels, mild depression, and reduced motivation especially in teens and remote workers.[8]
3. Circadian rhythm Disruption: Prolonged exposure to blue light which is emitted from the screens particularly in the evening time disrupts melatonin secretion, causing mood instability, poor sleep quality and insomnia. The resulting sleep debt further aggravates emotional volatility and cognitive sluggishness.[9]
4. Postural and Physical Strain: Musculoskeletal strain and poor ergonomics lead to physical discomfort, which exacerbates psychological suffering by causing irritation and diminished focus.

A cross-sectional study conducted among Indian IT workers revealed that more than 60% of those with CVS symptoms also showed symptoms of emotional stress and difficulty focusing. Along with ocular problems, children and adults have also shown higher rates of anxiety and poor sleep, especially those enrolled in online learning after COVID-19.[10] Clinically, CVS may be conceptualised as a psychosomatic condition- the one in which prolonged sensory strain (visual) sets off a series of systemic responses affecting both the nervous and endocrine systems.

AYURVEDIC INTERPRETATION OF CVS AND ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS:

Ayurveda provides a multifaceted foundation for comprehending illnesses brought on by mental stress and excessive use of sense organs. Unlike the modern tendency to compartmentalize body systems, Ayurveda regards the visual apparatus and mental faculties as interrelated, both governed by the balance of doshas and working through intricate pathways such as Srotas (body channels) and Indriya (sense organs). Ayurveda provides valuable insights into the pathophysiology and systemic implications of CVS particularly its psychological consequences.

- Drishti Vyapad (Complications related to eye): Sensory Overload through Vision-

In Ayurvedic Samhitas, Atiyoga of Chakshurendriya (excessive and improper use of eyes) is described as cause of Netra Rogas (Eye diseases).[11] The Chakshurendriya (sense of vision) is associated primarily with Pitta Dosa i.e. Alochaka pitta, which is responsible for visual perception. Constant exposure to artificial light, rapid visual transitions and high visual concentration that is experienced by the use of digital screen can cause Alochaka Pitta dushti leading to both ocular and mental fatigue.

Long-term stimulation without adequate rest also aggravates Vata dosha, specifically Prana Vata, which regulates psychological activity, sensory perception, and cognitive functions. Due to disturbed Prana Vata, symptoms such as anxiety, irritability, lack of concentration and insomnia may manifest. This fits well with the psychological complaints commonly associated with CVS.

- Involvement of Srotas and Doshas:

According to Ayurveda, the health of Srotas (channels in body) is responsible for all physiological and psychological processes. The most significant Srotas (body channels) in CVS with psychological characteristics are: Manovaha Srotas

(channels of the mind), Rasavaha and Pranavaha Srotas (circulatory and respiratory channels involved in nourishing the mind) and Majjavaha srotas (channels related to nervous system).
When these are vitiated by Vata and Pitta, Manasika Vikara (mental disorders) such as Bhaya (fear), Udvega (anxiety), Vishada (depression), Anidra (insomnia) and Manodaurbalya (mental debility) occur.[12] In modern terms, these may be seen as psychosomatic disorders arising from sensory-cognitive overload.

- Gunas (Quality)of the Mind: Rajas and Tamas

The three gunas of Ayurvedic psychology- Satva, Rajas and Tamas are said to regulate mental health. It is well known that Rajo-Tamasic dominance is enhanced by prolonged screen time, irregular sleep patterns and overstimulation. This causes restlessness, mood swings, emotional dullness and attention problems.
For Medha (intellect), Smriti (memory) and Dhi (comprehension), a Sattvik (healthy, balanced, spiritual lifestyle) lifestyle is necessary, which includes mindfulness, controlled sensory input and sound sleep practices. This balance is upset in CVS, leading to both psychological and functional derangement.

- Role of Ojas and Mental Resilience:

Ojas is described as the essence of all dhatus (bodily tissues) and the substrate of immunity and mental strength. Depletion of Ojas- often due to overstimulation, emotional stress, poor diet and irregular routines- leads to fatigue, low motivation, and poor psychological endurance. This is conceptually consistent with burnout seen in chronic CVS.
Further, the depletion of Tarpaka kapha, a nourishing subtype of kapha which is situated in the head, is also involved in loss of mental calmness and emotional stability. This becomes particularly relevant in cases of digital burnout where individual experience emotional reactivity and chronic restlessness.

Table 1: Ayurvedic corelations of CVS symptoms.

Modern Symptom	Ayurvedic Concept
Eye strain, dryness	Alochaka Pitta dushti
Mental fatigue	Manovahasrotas dushti (complications in channel related to mind) Prana vayu dushti
Anxiety, irritability	Vata prakopa, Rajo guna vriddhi
Sleep disturbance	Vata-kapha imbalance, Anidra (Insomnia)
Lack of motivation, dullness	Tamas guna vriddhi, Ojas kshaya (bodily tissues depletion)

To sum up, Ayurveda provides a deep framework for comprehending how visual overstimulation and the decline of mental health in CVS interact. It considers the problem not merely as the local eye disorder but as a manifestation of deeper imbalances in dosha, srotas (channels in body) and manas(mind). Understanding this holistic connection enables all comprehensive interventions that address the underlying cause as well as the symptoms.

AYURVEDIC MANAGEMENT OF CVS AND ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS:

The Ayurvedic approach to health is holistic, focussing on the underlying cause rather than merely the symptoms. When it comes to CVS and its related psychological symptoms such as anxiety, fatigue and insomnia. Acharya Sushruta in Uttara tantra (section in book) mentions the general line of treatment for pre-monitory symptoms of eye diseases that these should be treated based on dosha predominance.[13]
Ayurveda provides a multifaceted treatment protocol that includes local, systemic, behavioural and dietary interventions. These are meant to relax the mind, nourish the ocular tissues by alleviating Vata and Pitta doshas and bring Manovaha srotas (channel related to mind) and Alochaka pitta back into equilibrium.
Local treatment: These therapies aim to soothe and rejuvenate the eyes, reducing visual strain and associated neurovascular tension.
Netra Tarpana (procedure related for nourishment of eye): In this procedure the medicated ghee is placed over the eyes. It makes the eyes appear softer thereby helpful in reducing friction brought on by dryness and irritation.[14] Formulations such as Triphaladi Ghrita (medicated clarified butter with Myrobalan, Indian Gooseberry, Terminalia bellirica) Jeevantyadi Ghrita (medicated clarified butter) and Ghrita (pure clarified butter) prepared from Jeevaniya gana dravyas (vitalizing agents or immunity booster) etc. Certain studies have shown improved ocular comfort and tear film stability.
Aschyotana (Eye drops): In this procedure medicated ghee or decoctions are instilled into the eyes in the form of eye drops. A study showed that Go ghrita (cow's ghee) has an excellent effect in reducing the symptoms of CVS. Go ghrita (cow's ghee) has lipophilic action which strengthens lipid layer of tear film and hence reduces dryness in the eyes and the lubricating properties of it also helps in reducing dryness along with burning sensation.[15]
Anjana (Collyrium): In this procedure the medicines are applied over inner surface of lid margin from medial canthus to lateral canthus with Anjana shalaka (Ayurvedic instrument for application). The drug penetrates through the conjunctiva, increases the lacrimal secretions as drugs used are having teekshna (penetrating) property and improves the circulation.[16] It is used when dryness leads to irritation and psychological manifestation.

1. **Systemic Treatment**: It includes,

Nasya Karma (procedure of administration of oil in nose): The procedure in which medicated oil or powder is instilled into the nostrils. Abhijeet Taila (medicated oil) Pratimarsha Nasya (type of procedure) has shown effective results in a clinical trial on CVS.[17] Jeevaniya Ghrita Nasya (procedure with help of oil medicated with vitalizing agent) or Anutaila

Nasya (type of oil used in procedure) is advised by Acharya Sushruta.[18] Pratimarsha Nasya has been mentioned as klama nashana (exhaustion destroyer) i.e. it reduces the fatigue and eye strain. It improves the vision and hence can be beneficial in relieving the complains of blurred vision, eye strain and difficulty in focusing. Sneha Nasya acts as rejuvenating therapy as it strengthens the sense organs and improves the vision.[19]

Shirodhara(oil flow therapy): The procedure of continuous pouring of medicated oil or decoction on the forehead. It is effective in reducing the irritation caused to eyes.

Shiroabhyanga (Head Massage): The procedure of application of oil to head. Shiroabhyanga (Head massage) helps the oil to reach up to the brain stem. Hence regular head massage with medicated oils nourishes the eyes, improves vision, relieves stress thereby managing headache, anxiety and depression caused by CVS.

2. Internal Medications: Certain Ayurvedic medicines like Medhya Rasayana (cognitive enhancer) helps rejuvenate the nervous system and enhance emotional balance. Medhya dravyas (cognitive enhancer) like Brahmi (Bacopa monnieri) reduces anxiety and improves focus; Jatamansi (Indian valerian) improves sleep quality; Mandukaparni (Indian pennywort) relieves mental fatigue and nervous irritability thereby reducing insomnia. These herbs can be given singly or in formulations depending upon the Prakriti (body constituent) of individual.[20]

3. Behavioural and Lifestyle Interventions: In Ayurveda, daily regimen and mental discipline are very much essential for a healthy mind and emotional balance. With slight modifications in daily regimens one can get rid of CVS.

Satmya Ahara (personalized or suitable food): Having fresh food which is Snigdha (unctuous) and Sheeta (cool) to maintain Alochaka pitta and protect Ojas.

Maintain digital hygiene by enforcing the 20-20-20 rule (every 20mins, look 20feet away for 20 seconds). It aligns with Niyamita Drishti Parivartana (Regular eye change or alteration).

Nidra(sleep): A healthy and regulated sleep cycle is utmost important to maintain psychological health. Sleeping before 10 pm and waking by 6 am pacifies Vata and nourishes Ojas. Padabhyanga(Foot massage): Regular oil massage to feet is believed to improve the vision.

Sheetodaka Shira Snana (bath with cold water of head especially): Avoid hot water for head wash, as it adversely affects the eyes. Hence, cold water should be used for head wash.

Yoga(postures) and Pranayama (breath work): Practice of Trataka yoga (gazing at an object for a specific time) is believed to not only eradicate eye discomforts but also enhance physiological and mental functions. It reduces fatigue, stress and eye strain. Meditation techniques like mindfulness meditation help people become more detached and regulate their emotions by encouraging them to view their thoughts and feelings calmly. This is consistent with the psychological concept of mindfulness, which has been studied extensively and proven to reduce stress, anxiety and depression. Bhramari (Humming bee breath), Nadi Shodhana (Alternate nostrils breathing) and Yoga Nidra (conscious relaxation) calms down the Prana Vata and reduce anxiety.[21]

DISCUSSION:

Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS) is no longer confined to visual discomfort alone- it represents a growing psychosomatic ailment of the present digital era, progressively affecting daily performance, emotional health and cognitive function. The present-day understanding of CVS emphasises how a variety of ocular and psychological symptoms are produced by the combined effects of visual overuse, sedentary lifestyle, circadian disruption and neuroendocrine imbalance. This includes irritability, mental fatigue, sleep disturbances and mood instability with certain studies confirming a significantly higher incidence of emotional stress among the individuals with prolonged screen exposure.

Ayurveda provides a comprehensive understanding of CVS, viewing it not merely as ocular discomfort but as a systemic imbalance that includes Dosha derangement, Manovaha srotas (channel related to mind) dysfunction and depletion of Ojas (bodily tissues). The syndrome exhibits a clinical association with digital eye strain and is closely related to Shushkakshipaka (dry eye syndrome),a kind of Sarvagata Netra Roga (all diseases related to eye) caused by Atidrishti(excessive sight or hyper vision), Mithyadrishti (False perception) and Vishama ahara-vihara (unhealthy diet and lifestyle). Furthermore, vitiation of Prana Vata, Alochaka Pitta and Tarpaka Kapha explains the co-manifestation of ocular discomfort and psychological symptoms such as insomnia, anxiety, depression and emotional lability.

The therapeutic approach outlined in Ayurveda is comprehensive and deeply integrative. Ayurvedic procedures like- Netra Tarpana (nourishment to eye), Nasya (administration of oil in nose) and Shirodhara (oil flow therapy on head) not only target ocular tissues but also improve the brain function. Internal use of Medhya Rasayana (cognitive enhancer)-especially Brahmi (Bacopamonnieri), Mandukaparni (Indian pennywort) and Ashwagandha (withenia somnifera)- supports memory, improve cognitive stamina and reduce stress. These are supported by lifestyle practices such as Satmya Ahara (wholesome diet), Nidra (regulated sleep) and Yoga(postures)based therapies like Trataka(gazing at the same object for specific time) and Bhramari Pranayama (Humming bee breathing), providing resilience-building in addition to symptomatic relief.

Despite these benefits, the lack of strong clinical trials, standardised formulations, and interdisciplinary understanding has hindered the incorporation of Ayurvedic protocols into the mainstream clinical practice. A more inclusive and successful

CVS management paradigm may be possible if these problems are addressed through collaborative research and awareness programs.

CONCLUSION:

Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS) is rapidly emerging as one of the most prevalent and underdiagnosed lifestyle and occupational disorder of the 21st Century. Widespread digitalisation, particularly after COVID-19 epidemic, has significantly increased its prevalence. Its effects go beyond ocular discomfort and reach deep into the domains of mental health, emotional well-being, and quality of life. Even with the increasing amount of research recognising these multifaceted impacts, conventional treatment still remains largely symptomatic, focusing on eye strain relief while often neglecting the psychological and psychosomatic aspects.

Ayurveda offers a distinctive perspective that allows for a more thorough understanding and management of CVS because of its integrative and holistic approach. By considering that dosha imbalance, srotas (channels of body) vitiation, Ojas (bodily tissues) depletion and disruption in Manasika bhavas (psychological factor), Ayurveda not only treats the visible symptoms of CVS but also its underlying causes, especially the psychological and neurophysiological stress brought on by prolonged digital exposure. Therapies such as Netra Tarpana (nourishment to eye), Nasya (administration of oil in nose), Shirodhara (oil flow therapy on head) and Medhya Rasayana (cognitive enhancer) work synergistically to restore the balance of Prana Vata, Alochaka Pitta and Tarpaka Kapha, while lifestyle interventions rooted in Dinacharya (daily regimen), Nidra(sleep) Yoga(posture) and Pranayama (breathing exercises) improve both visual and psychological resilience.

The integration of these Ayurvedic principles into modern-day digital wellness strategies represents a much-needed paradigm shift- from symptom suppression to restoration of mental calmness and homeostasis. However, greater interdisciplinary collaboration, evidence-based clinical research and public health awareness are required for fully achieving this goal.

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