DEPRESSION BETWEEN BIOMEDICINE AND AYURVEDIC MEDICINE – a case of patient experiences in Slovenia

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According to global health statistics, depression today ranks among one of the most common forms of mental disorders, and its incidence is on the rise. The present work explores "major depression", which falls in a psychiatric categorization of mental disorders within the spectrum of mood disorders. The subject of the research was the (de)construction of scientific knowledge of depression in terms of Indian system of medicine, Ayurveda and biomedicine / psychiatry, and the understanding of treatment, accompanied by an example of these two medical systems from the points of view of the patients in Slovenia diagnosed with major depression. To this end the following was conducted: (1) a comparison between the conceptualization and treatment of major depressive disorder in contemporary psychiatric and Ayurvedic theory, (2) an examination of Ayurveda practice transferred to a different cultural environment, i.e. in Slovenia, in comparison with the environment from which it comes, i.e. in India, (3) an identification of key factors that prompt subjects to undergo Ayurvedic or psychiatric management procedures, (4) an analysis and a comparison of the course and the outcome of the treatment using both approaches, and (5) a comparison of participants' understandings of depression from the psychiatric and the Ayurvedic aspects using narrative approach. The purpose of this research was to examine the differences between the two approaches of treatment for depression arising from the different concepts of understanding its causes, its course and consequently its therapeutic intervention. The main focus lies on the advantages / disadvantages of compared practices as experienced by patients with depression. The effects of Ayurvedic practice as treatment of mental disorders are still relatively poorly examined, as well as the transfer of Ayurvedic appreciation of health and wellness and mental health and Ayurvedic approaches to management of mental health and Ayurvedic medicaments into a different cultural environment. Studies on the treatment of mental disorders with Ayurvedic Medical and health approaches including Ayurvedic medicaments from the perspective of a European patient experience are few and there is a major gap in this research field. From the scientific point of view, the results of this research represent a significant development in our current understanding of the still prevailing concepts of medical theories and practices in the field of mental health.