

Udāvarta: A Hidden Gut–Mind Disorder, Rediscovered Through a Clinical Case

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Abstract: *Udāvarta*, though described in *Charaka Saṃhitā* (including the significant *Trimarmīya Adhyāya*) and *Bhāvaprakāśa*, remains a **less discussed and underdiagnosed** condition in current Ayurvedic practice. Yet, it holds great clinical relevance today, as its primary etiological factors—*vega-dhāraṇa* and *akāla-bhojana*^{1,2}—are extremely common in modern lifestyles. This case presents classical *Udāvarta lakṣaṇas*, including **agni-dushti, abdominal pain, constipation, bloating, insomnia, and mental disturbance**, reflecting the upward movement of *Vāta* and early gut–mind axis involvement^{3,4}. Management was based on authoritative Ayurvedic principles using *dīpana-pācana, Vāta-anulomana, mala-virecana, snehana, and basti therapies*^{5,6} as described in *Charaka Chikitsā Sthāna 26* and *Bhāvaprakāśa Udāvarta Adhyāya*. The patient achieved **complete recovery**, reinforcing *Udāvarta* as a crucial diagnostic

entity connecting digestive impairment and mental symptoms. This case highlights the urgent need to re-establish *Udāvarta*'s significance in everyday Ayurvedic practice.

Keywords: Udavarta, Gut mind axis, Agni dushti, Samhita based Management, Clinical Case Study, Ayurveda in Daily Practice, Treat the gut , Heal the mind

Introduction: *Udāvarta* is a classical disorder described in *Charaka Saṃhitā Chikitsā Sthāna* and *Bhāvaprakāśa*, characterized by *pratiloma gati* (reverse movement) of *Vāta*, mainly due to suppression of natural urges, faulty dietary habits, and psychological stress. This leads to *Agnidushti*, obstruction of *Apāna Vāta*, and systemic manifestations involving both **digestive and mental functions**¹⁻².

Classical texts recognize *Udāvarta* as a **psychosomatic disorder**, where disturbed digestion gradually manifests as **insomnia**,

avasāda (depression), *chittodvega*, and *buddhi vibhrama*. Modern concepts of the **gut–brain axis** strongly support this Ayurvedic understanding, establishing the relevance of *Udāvarta* in present-day clinical practice.

Aims and Objectives: To evaluate *Udāvarta* as a gut-mind disorder through Ayurvedic classical principles and modern gut-brain axis concepts, and to clinically assess the effectiveness of *Samhita* based Ayurvedic management in associated gastrointestinal and psychological symptoms.

Material and Methods: Case Presentation

Patient Profile

- **Age:** 55 years
- **Gender:** Male
- **Occupation:** Grocery shop owner
- **Socioeconomic status:** Middle class
- **Religion:** Jain

Chief Complaints

- **Depression (*Avasāda*)** – 2 years
- **Insomnia (*Nidrānāśa*)** – 1.5 years
- **Loss of interest (*Aśraddhā*)**
- **Loss of confidence**

General Examination:

- Vitals were normal
- Weight: 60kg
- Systemic examination: Normal
- Abdominal examination: Distension and mild tenderness at Hypogastrium and Umbilical region.
- *Agni: Madagni*(weak digestion)
- *Mala*(stool): *Mala-Avashthamb* (constipation)
- *Jivha* (tongue): *Saam*(coated)
- *Akruti* (build): lean
- *Bala*(strength): *Alpa*(less)
- *Prakruti: Pitta-Vataja*

Investigations

- ECG: Normal
- MRI Brain: Normal
- CT Scan: Normal

Associated Symptoms

- *Udgāra bahulya* – excessive belching
- *Ādhmāna* – bloating
- *Karśya* – weight loss
- *Klama* – lethargy
- *Āyāsena śvāsa* – dyspnea at rest
- **Irregular bowel habits (mostly constipated)**

Past Medical History

Prolonged use of:

- Antidepressants
- Antipsychotics
- Tranquilizers

Nidāna (Etiological Factors)

- *Akāla Bhojana* – irregular meals
- *Śukadhānya Sevana* – dry grain-dominant diet
- **Chronic mental stress**
- *Adhāraṇīya Vega Dhāraṇa*

These confirmed *Udāvarta* as the primary pathology.

Diagnosis: *Udāvarta Janya Manasa Roga*

Pathophysiology:

Udāvarta, Agni, and Mental Health – Classical Perspective

Charaka states that **Agni is the root of health**, and its derangement becomes the basis of systemic disorders. In *Udāvarta*, ***Agnidushti* occurs due to *Vāta āvaraṇa***, leading to improper digestion, gas accumulation, and upward movement of *Vāta*. This disrupts ***Prāṇa* and *Udāna Vāta***, affecting ***hridaya*, *śhira* and *basti***⁷. **Unable to treat on time may lead to *updravas* like *Grahni dushti*, *Vato-udar*, *Aruchi*, *Shwas* and most important *Mano-Vikara***⁸.

Bhāvaprakāśa mentions that prolonged *Udāvarta* can lead to ***Moha* and *Mano-vibhrama***⁹, clearly establishing its **psychosomatic nature**. Thus, *Udāvarta* can be understood as a **hidden gut–mind disorder**, where untreated digestive pathology gradually manifests as psychiatric symptoms.

First 15 days	(<i>Shunthi</i> 1 gm + <i>musta</i> 1gm) with <i>ghrit</i> – before meal <i>Shankh vati</i> 500mg BD – After meal (<i>Haritaki</i> + <i>trivrutta</i>) 3 gram – At night <i>Yog basti</i> <i>Anuvasan</i> – <i>Sahchar tail</i> and <i>Niruha</i> – <i>Dashmul</i> , <i>Gomutra</i>
Next 15 days	(<i>Shunthi</i> 1gm + <i>Musta</i> 1 gm) – Before meal <i>Agnitundi vati</i> 250mg BD – After meal <i>Sneha virechan</i> with <i>Castor oil</i> 15 ml – At night
Next 1month	<i>Shankh vati</i> 500 mg BD – After meal <i>Hingvadi churna</i> 2 gram BD – After meal <i>Gandharva haritaki</i> 2 gram – At night
Next 1 month	<i>Chitrakadi vati</i> 375 mg BD – Before meal <i>Praval panchamruta</i> 1 tablet BD – After meal <i>Mrudvika</i> (15-20) Soaked

Correlation with Modern Medicine

The gut-brain axis consists of bidirectional communication between the enteric nervous system, vagus nerve, immune pathways, gut microbiodata, and the central nervous system¹⁰. Dysbiosis and impaired gut motility are strongly associated with depression, anxiety and insomnia¹¹. Chronic constipation and altered microbial metabolites influence serotonin, GABA, and inflammatory cytokines, paralleling Ayurvedic concepts of Agni dishti and Vata prakopa¹².

Thus, *Udāvarta* correlates with:

- Functional bowel disorders
- Psychosomatic GI diseases
- Gut-induced depression and insomnia

Treatment Protocol

Based on *Charaka*¹³ and *Bhāvaprakāśa*:¹⁴

1. *Deepana–Pachana* – correction of Agnidushti
2. *Sneha virechan as Anulomana* – restoration of Apāna Vāta gati
3. *Varti* – controlled evacuation
4. *Swedana* – relief of Vāta sanga

5. *Niruh Basti Therapy* – main treatment for *Udāvarta*(mostly *Tikshna basti*)

*Pathya-apathya*¹⁵: *Yav*(barley), *Yavagu*, *Takra-manda*, Fermented Rice water, *Ghrit*, *Mrudvika*(Black Raisins).

Result and Observation: Within 6 weeks:

- Belching and bloating resolved
- Bowel habits normalized
- Sleep restored
- Depression and loss of confidence resolved
- Psychiatric medications discontinued gradually
- No relapse on follow-up

Discussion: This case establishes *Udāvarta* as a **primary gut–mind disorder**, not merely a digestive disease. Modern psychiatry often overlooks GI pathology as the root cause of chronic mental illness, whereas Ayurveda clearly states that **disturbed Apāna Vāta and Agni generate Manasa Vikāras**.

Failure to identify *Udāvarta* leads to:

- Long-term drug dependence
- Gut dysbiosis
- Chronic *Agnidushti*
- Poor quality of life

Early *Vāta-anulomana* and *Basti* therapy can reverse even long-standing psychiatric conditions.

Conclusions: *Udavarta* represents an ancient yet precise Ayurvedic understanding of gut-brain axis. Early recognition and *Samhita* based management can reverse chronic psychosomatic disorders. Integrating Ayurvedic wisdom with modern science offers a comprehensive model for treating gut-origin mental illness.

Informed consent: Written informed consent was obtained from the patient for publication of this case report.

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Conflict of Interest : Non

Source of funding: Nil

Cite this Article

*Shirin Mohammed Arshad, Sunil Patil, Manju Chaurasia.
"Udāvarta: A Hidden Gut–Mind Disorder, Rediscovered Through a Clinical Case".*

Ayurline: International Journal of Research In Indian Medicine: 2026 10(02)