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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Role of Indian Classical Music in Treating Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias

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ABSTRACT

The prevalence of Alzheimer's disease (AD) and Alzheimer's disease related dementias (ADRD) is on rise all around the globe with limited treatment options. Current symptomatic pharmacological treatments are modestly effective and are associated with adverse side effects. Therefore, there is an increased interest in validating non-pharmacological alternatives to treat AD/ADRD. One of such alternatives is music therapy which has recently picked up an upsurge not only in treating mental disorders but also other disparities. Many systematic reviews and meta-analyses using PubMed/Medline, Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar, and Cochrane database searches have revealed that music-based interventions successfully improved mood, depression, anxiety, verbal fluency, gait/motor abnormalities, autobiographic and episodic memory, and cognition, in neurological disorders including AD/ADRD and other dementias. In that regard, targeted effects of Indian Classical Music (Raga) are worth deciphering. In contrast to general emotional upliftment induced by other musical genres, Raga has an ability to evoke specific emotions based on its defined notational structure arranged in a specific ascending/descending order, and these effects are further magnified when the Raga is sung/performed at a designated time of the day based on its circadian specificity. Ragas containing the predominance of major notes are known to activate default mode network via induction of dopaminergic pathways and evoke cheerful/ happy emotions, causing mind-wandering and self-referential mental activity. On the other hand, the Raga becomes incrementally sentimental as the proportion of minor notes increase in a Raga structure. Ragas can affect brain activity, emotions, and autonomic functions. This review elucidates enhanced therapeutic potential of Indian Classical Music (Raga) as an advanced music therapy, that has an ability to exert Raga-specific health-effects in a circadian-specific manner. Raga therapy may be an effective disease-modifying treatment for treating AD and other dementias.

Keywords: Aging, Dopaminergic, Large-Scale Brain Networks, Alzheimer's Disease, Alzheimer's Disease Related Dementias, Music-based Interventions

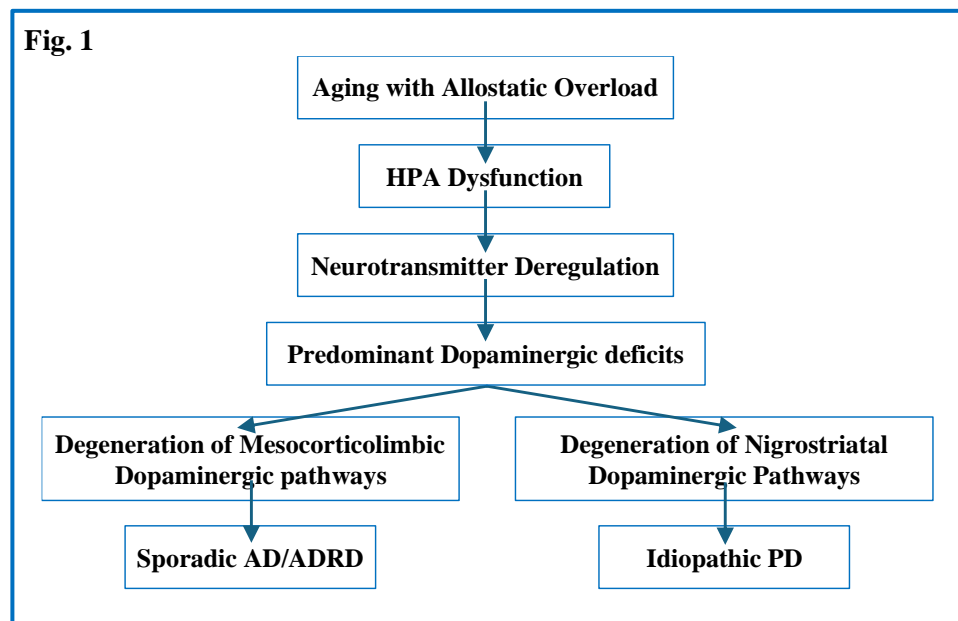
Introduction

Alzheimer's disease (AD) is a global health epidemic and a fifth leading cause of death in United States, currently afflicting ~7 million Americans (and ~55 million people worldwide) with AD¹. By mid-century these numbers are projected to escalate by ~14 million Americans (and ~140 million people worldwide) suffering from AD and/or Alzheimer's disease related dementias (ADRD), if effective disease modifying treatments are not discovered¹⁻³.

The most prevalent form of AD is of non-genetic origin (age-associated late onset sporadic AD) while a small percentage of AD is of genetic origin (early onset familial AD)¹. Regardless of its origin, terminal AD is characterized by the deposition of extraneuronal amyloid plaques and intraneuronal neurofibrillary tangles within

the brain parenchyma, and functionally characterized by cognitive decline¹.

As detailed in Fig. 1, cognitive decline with increasing age results from allostasis-induced stress^{4,5}. Stress deregulates Hypothalamo-Pituitary-Adrenal (HPA) axis⁶, which in turn produces neurotransmitter deficits^{7,8}. Although deficiencies in many neurotransmitter systems contribute to aging brain physiology⁹⁻¹¹, dopaminergic deficits are the most predominant ones^{12,13}, and fundamental to age-associated cognitive decline^{14,15}. According to the "Unifying Hypothesis"¹⁶, age-associated dopaminergic dysfunction, when splits for nigrostriatal dopaminergic degeneration, leads to the development of Parkinson's disease (PD), while degeneration of ventral tegmental mesocorticolimbic dopaminergic pathways leads to the development of AD/ADRD (Fig. 1).



Thus, dopaminergic degeneration constitutes a prime causative factor for age-associated cognitive decline and early onset of neuropsychiatric symptoms (NPS), also known as behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD), in AD/ADRD¹⁷⁻²⁰.

Alzheimer's disease (AD) begins decades prior to the manifestation of clinical symptoms^{21,22}. AD pathology exists over the disease continuum from a preclinical asymptomatic stage spanning over ~15-25 years to the progressive symptomatic stage(s) consisting of mild cognitive

impairment (MCI) and dementia^{1,23}. Therefore, timely diagnosis of AD is very critical to catch the window of opportunity in treating AD/ADRD^{24,25}. Given the non-feasibility of pathological confirmation of amyloid plaques and neurofibrillary tangles in the brain autopsy²⁶, primary diagnosis of probable AD/ADRD is determined by the degree and severity of cognitive decline based on NPS/BPSD index^{1,27,28}, confirmed by differential diagnosis of cerebrospinal fluid biomarkers i.e. Reduced amyloid and Increased tau, and diagnostic brain scans i.e. Positron Emission Tomography for brain amyloid, fluorodeoxyglucose for hypometabolism, and functional magnetic resonance imaging for brain atrophy, to determine the presence of AD/ADRD^{29,30}.

Current symptomatic drugs, including cholinesterase inhibitors and N-methyl-D-aspartate modulators, treat terminal/late-stage AD^{1,31}. However, there are no preventive treatments targeting early NPS/BPSD symptoms^{31,32}. The use of dopamine-rebalancing anti-psychotics and anti-depressants for treating NPS/BPSD are associated with numerous

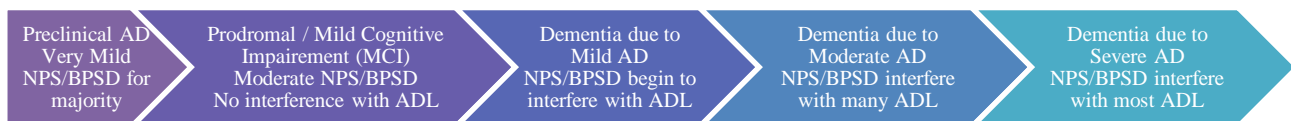
adversities^{1,33}. Therefore, there is an unmet medical need to validate preventive therapies during early stages of the disease that can interrupt the progression of AD/ADRD before the appearance of advanced symptoms³⁴.

Relatively safer non-pharmacological interventions targeting early stages of AD/ADRD include Cognitive Behavioral Therapy^{35,36}, Validation Therapy^{37,38} and Music Therapy³⁹⁻⁴¹. Music-Based Interventions (MBIs)^{42,43}, are increasingly recognized as the safe and effective alternative(s) in combating NPS/BPSD, that alleviate pain, anxiety, stress, depression, improve psychological, motor symptoms, and uplift emotional well-being in people with AD/ADRD and other dementias⁴⁴⁻⁴⁶.

This review discusses enhanced therapeutic potential of Indian Classical Music (Raga), attributed to its defined notational structure along with other salient features, inducing Raga-specific emotions and associated health-effects in a circadian-dependent manner^{47,48} for treating age-related neurodegenerative disorders with particular emphasis on AD/ADRD.

Alzheimer's Continuum

Fig. 2: Alzheimer's Disease (AD) Continuum



Alzheimer's Disease (AD); Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI); Behavioral and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia (BPSD); Activities of Daily Living (ADL)

The progression of Alzheimer's disease from brain changes that are unnoticeable to the person affected, to the brain changes causing problems with memory, eventually leading to physical disability, are known as the "Alzheimer's Disease Continuum. On this continuum, there

are three broad phases: Preclinical AD; Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) due to AD; and Dementia due to mild/Moderate/Severe AD¹ (Fig.2).

Preclinical AD: The continuum of AD begins with a long latent phase referred to as preclinical AD^{49,50} - the earliest asymptomatic phase of AD continuum⁵¹. Preclinical AD is characterized by few mild NPS/BPSD including hyperactivity, psychosis, anxiety, and apathy^{52,53}, along with altered cerebrospinal fluid biomarkers⁵⁴, and abnormal brain-scans⁵⁵. Despite individual variations, preclinical AD typically spans over ~6-10 years^{25,56}. Not all, but ~20% of preclinical AD with mild NPS/BPSD may advance to MCI due to AD²⁵.

MCI due to AD: People with MCI due to AD have biomarker evidence of Alzheimer's brain changes plus new but subtle problems with memory, language and thinking^{1,49}. These cognitive problems may be noticeable to the individual, family members and friends, but not to others, and these new problems don't interfere with activities of daily living (ADL). People with MCI due to AD, initially exhibit short-term memory impairment, followed by subsequent decline in additional cognitive domains²⁵. Approximately, 20-30% of people with MCI develop dementia due to Alzheimer's within ~2-5 years⁵⁷. MCI is expressed as non-amnesic MCI (nMCI) and amnesic MCI (aMCI)⁵⁸. Progressive dopaminergic degeneration accounts for the conversion of nMCI to aMCI^{59,60}. The conversion rate of aMCI to AD is ~80-90% after ~6 years from initial diagnosis⁶¹.

Dementia Due to Mild/Moderate/Severe Alzheimer's Disease: Dementia due to AD is characterized by severe NPS/BPSD, showing predominant impairments in memory, language, thinking and ADL, in presence of established Alzheimer-specific biomarkers¹. As AD/ADRD progresses, the severity of dementia increases affecting the degree of

damage from mild/moderate/severe dementia^{25,29}. Mild dementia due to AD is characterized by loss of recent memory, poor problem-solving, personality changes, trouble organizing/expressing thoughts, getting lost, misplacing belongings; Moderate dementia due to AD shows increasing memory loss and poor judgement, noticeable personality changes, some of the ADLs impaired; While severe dementia due to AD shows greater loss of memory, increasingly poor judgement, severe ADL disruptions, impaired problem solving, mixed up perception of time/space, language/speech problems, social withdrawal, and changes in mood/personality/behavior^{25,50}.

Neuromodulatory Changes during Cognitive Aging

Cognitive aging is a process in which older adults typically experience dysfunctionality in many cognitive domains that negatively impact their quality of life^{62,63}. Cognitive decline ranges from mild cognitive impairment to dementia, a form of decline in abilities severe enough to interfere with ADL^{64,65}. Cognitive decline is characterized by predominant atrophy of frontoparietal cortex, anterior cingulate gyrus, and hippocampus, involved in executive functioning, episodic and working memory⁶⁶⁻⁶⁹.

There are multiple aging factors that contribute to cognitive aging, but early neurotransmitter deficits⁹⁻¹¹, and dopaminergic deficits in particular^{70,71}, play a significant role in cognitive aging of the brain. *Cognitive decline stems from dysfunctional neurosynaptic connectivity mainly orchestrated by Dopamine*⁷²⁻⁷⁵. Studies show that higher level of dopamine synthesis capacity was associated with relative stability of cognitive performance in aging^{76,77}, and

interpreted as a compensatory mechanism towards building resilience against age-associated cognitive decline⁷⁸.

Postmortem analyses of aging brains revealed different degrees of degeneration in midbrain dopaminergic neurons and reduced density of dopamine receptors^{79,80}. Dopaminergic dysfunction is observed in late-life depression⁷¹. Dopamine transporter system is critically involved in the age-related synaptic plasticity⁸¹. Brain imaging studies showed that loss of midbrain dopaminergic neurons and dopamine receptors paralleled frontoparietal atrophy and was strongly correlated with declined cognition⁸², indicating a central role played by dopamine in maintaining cognitive functions in aging⁸³. Recent studies showed that progressive dopaminergic degeneration leads to conversion of nMCI to aMCI^{59,60}, and continued dopaminergic loss as the early pathophysiological sign of progressive neurodegeneration^{84,85}.

Memories are encoded through experience-dependent modifications of synaptic strength, which are regulated by catecholamines i.e. dopamine and noradrenaline⁸⁶. While cognitive aging research demonstrates how dopaminergic neuromodulation from the substantia nigra and ventral tegmental area regulates hippocampal synaptic plasticity and memory, recent findings indicate that the noradrenergic locus coeruleus sends denser inputs to the hippocampus⁸⁷. The locus coeruleus produces dopamine as biosynthetic precursor of noradrenaline, and releases both noradrenaline and dopamine, required to modulate hippocampal plasticity and memory^{19,88}. Although, no unifying genetic or non-genetic factor(s) have been identified as a cause for

cognitive deterioration, aberrant mutations in dopamine receptor genes are recognized to be associated with cognitive decline⁸⁹.

Thus, progressive loss of dopaminergic components during aging constitutes a causative factor for age-associated cognitive decline and early onset of neurodegeneration/dementia in absence of the disease, while elevated dopamine synthesis capacity represents a neurobiological mechanism of cognitive resilience for preserving age-associated cognitive decline^{78,90}.

Alzheimer's Pharmacological and Non-Pharmacological Therapy

Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved pharmacotherapy for AD/ADRD consists of cholinesterase inhibitors (Donepezil, Rivastigmine, Galantamine), NMDA modulators (Memantine) and combined use of Donepezil /Memantine¹. These symptomatic drugs give temporary relief, but do not alter the course of the disease, and are associated with many adversities^{91,92}. A newly introduced anti-amyloid antibody aducanumab (Aduhelm) reduces cerebral amyloid but there is no data on effectiveness or safety, and if the clinical benefits are not verified, it may be withdrawn^{93,94}. Pharmacological use of dopamine receptor activation, monoamine oxidase inhibition, Levodopa/Carbidopa, or dopaminergic neuromodulators (antipsychotics, anxiolytics, and antidepressants) in treating hallucinations, agitation, and anxiety components of NPS/BPSD of AD/ADRD/PD^{27,95}, appears partially effective but associated with adversities, drug interactions, intolerance and patient-non-compliance, and pose an increased risk of stroke and death in individuals with dementia^{96,97}.

These limitations of AD-pharmacotherapy prompted the emergence of non-pharmacological treatment(s) for AD/ADRD, which may not change the underlying biology of the disease but may prevent disease progression and improve overall quality of life by reducing NPS/BPSD. A review of nonpharmacologic treatments for agitation and aggression in people with dementia concluded that non-drug interventions are safe and more effective than pharmacologic interventions for reducing aggression and agitation as they pose minimal risk⁹⁸.

Various studies have considered the use of cannabis, which is legal in some parts of the USA, but still illegal under federal statute. A randomized control trial evaluated tetrahydrocannabinol (the active ingredient in cannabis), compared to placebo for control of aggression among 50 patients with AD, vascular, or mixed dementia, with 24 receiving tetrahydrocannabinol and 26 receiving placebo, and found that there were no significant differences in NPS/BPSD, agitation, or ADL⁹⁹. In a meta-analysis of randomized trial, patients receiving 22–24 weeks of *gingko biloba* experienced a reduction in BPSD, except for psychosis which was not changed¹⁰⁰. Multiple studies have evaluated whether aromatherapy, specifically lavender spray, reduces BPSD, but no significant reduction in agitation was observed^{101,102}.

Relatively safer non-drug interventions for combating NPS/BPSD in AD/ADRD include Cognitive Stimulation Therapy^{103,104}, Validation Therapy^{37,105}, and Music Therapy³⁹. Of all, Music Therapy can better enhance memory and emotional functions^{40,106,107} by virtue of its ability to uplift emotions, stimulate reward,

motivation, pleasure, arousal, and memory^{108,109}. Music is known to suppress anger, shame, fear, anxiety by inducing reward/motivation and physiological arousal^{110,111} and increase social integration^{112,113}. Clinical studies have shown benefits of Music Therapy in many neuropsychiatric disorders including AD/ADRD^{38,106}.

Alzheimer's Music Therapy

Music has been used in healing since centuries all over the world^{114,115}. A growing body of anecdotal and clinical research shows health benefits of music as a non-pharmacological alternative for treating NPS/BPSD in many brain disorders including AD/ADRD^{41,116-118}. Given escalating prevalence of AD/ADRD all around the globe^{1,2,119}, and failure of pharmacotherapy in treating AD/ADRD^{1,120-122}, there is a sharp emergence in validating non-pharmacological therapies, such as music therapy, not only for treating AD/ADRD but also for other disparities^{123,124}. MBIs uplift emotions and combat BPSD in AD/ADRD¹²⁵⁻¹²⁷.

Accumulating evidence shows that musicability is relatively well preserved in aging and dementia⁴⁰. Music for memory can remain intact in persons with AD, even while experiencing rapid cognitive decline^{128,129}, because musical memory networks are independent of traditional temporal lobe memory networks¹³⁰ and are spared until the terminal stages of AD¹³¹. These observations suggest that music perception forms "Islands of Cognitive Reserve" in otherwise cognitively impaired people, and hence can be effectively exploited even in late stages of AD/ADRD^{128,132}.

A study that utilized brain scans to investigate if music listening brain areas are affected by

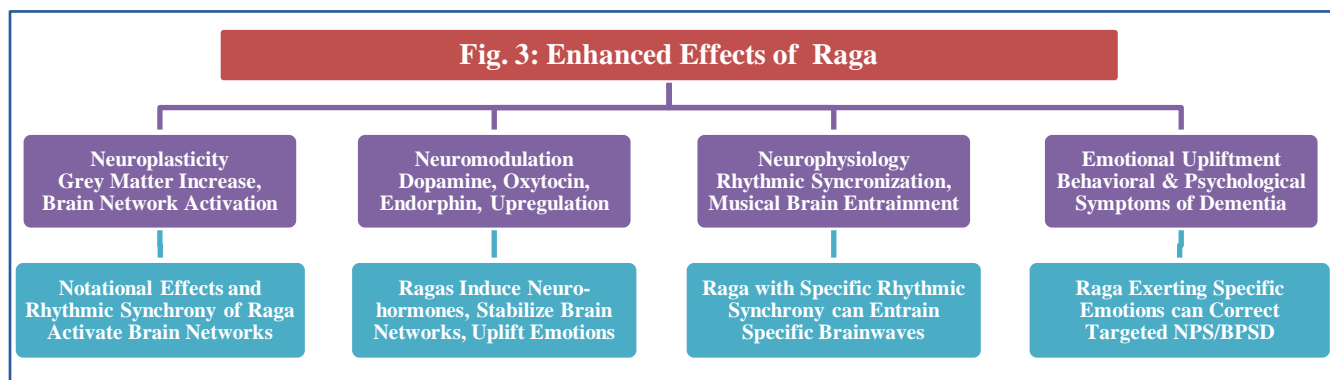
Alzheimer’s pathology in relation to amyloid deposition and glucose metabolism, found that specific brain areas involved in music listening, experienced less pathology¹³¹. Simmons-Stern et al. have observed that music enhanced verbal encoding and memorial awareness in AD patients^{133,134}, and lowered stress in AD as indicated by reduced salivary cortisol levels¹³⁵.

A systematic review mentioned that music interventions were best at reducing BPSD such as agitation and anxiety¹³⁶. Studies which used individualized playlists improved cognitive outcomes in both active music therapy and music listening, compared to methods that used music chosen by an experimenter^{137,138}. Another systematic review reported that music therapy effectively reduced depression in dementia^{139,140}. Additional systemic reviews between 2006-2022 using PubMed and Science Direct data bases^{40,141}, and other reviews between 2012-2023 including Cochrane, PubMed, PubMed/Medline, PsycINFO

databases^{40,41,142,143}, showed benefits of music therapy on cognition (memory, attention, language), emotion, behavior (anxiety, depression, agitation, irritability), autobiographical recall, and verbal fluency. Thus, the effectiveness of music therapy in AD/ADRD is widely recognized.

Enhanced Therapeutic Potential of Raga Therapy

While music therapy in general is widely recognized not only in treating AD/ADRD but also other disparities, specific targeted effects of Raga therapy are not well understood. Music therapy per se is postulated to work through four potential mechanisms that include Neuroplasticity, Neuromodulation, Brain Entrainment, and Emotional upliftment¹⁴⁴. Indian Classical Music (Raga) has a potential to further enhance these basic music mechanisms due to Raga’s structural uniqueness, defined rhythmicity, and circadian specificity^{47,145} (Fig. 3).



Raga: The word “Raga” is derived from the Sanskrit phrase “Ranjayiti Iti Raga” – ‘one which entertains by inducing emotions in mind’ – defined as uniquely designed melodic framework and the constructive core of Indian Classical Music for improvisation and composition¹⁴⁶⁻¹⁴⁹. Ragas are composed of permutations/combinations of seven “natural” notes derived

from the sounds of nature such as birds and animals, known as (Shuddha Swara) (major notes), and five “modified or movable” notes (Vikruta Swara), making a total of 12 notes/ Swaras (Table 1), composed in an ascending/ descending order, to create a melodic framework known as Raga¹⁵⁰⁻¹⁵⁵. If the frequency of a given note is more than its mean value,

then it is termed as “*Tivra*” Swara (sharp note), while if the frequency of a given note is less than the mean value, then it is called “*Komal*” Swara (flat/minor note) (Table 1)^{151,153}.

Table 1: Indian Musical Notes Corresponding to Western Musical Notes^{151,155}

Indian Musical Notes (<i>Swara</i>)	Corresponding Western Equivalent	Frequency (Hz)
Shadja (Sa)	C (Unison)	100
Shuddha Re	D (Major Second)	112.5
<i>Komal Re</i>	C#, Db (Minor Second)	106.66
Shuddha Ga	E (Major Third)	125
<i>Komal Ga</i>	D#, Eb (Minor Third)	112.7
Shuddha Ma	F (Perfect Fourth)	133
<i>Tivra Ma</i>	F# (Augmented Fourth)	142
Pancham (Pa)	G (Perfect Fifth)	150
Shuddha Dha	A (Major Sixth)	167
<i>Komal Dha</i>	G#, Ab (Minor Sixth)	159
Shuddha Ni	B (Major Seventh)	189
<i>Komal Ni</i>	A#, Bb (Minor Seventh)	178

Structural Uniqueness of Raga

The *Ragas* evoke various emotions in a listener/performer, such as sadness, romance, peace, strength, anger, devotion, longing, and passion^{146,156}. Raga is known to express inherent emotion(s) (Bhava) and the emotional response evoked in the listeners (Rasa)¹⁵⁷, nevertheless, Rasa term is frequently used to present both Bhava and Rasa¹⁵⁵.

Specific notes of Raga are known to elicit distinct Rasa/emotions^{148,149,158,159}. Predominance of Shuddha Swaras (major notes) makes the Raga “Happy” and “Cheerful” (Shringar Rasa)^{148,158,160}, which modulates reward-driven music-memory consolidation^{107,161}, by activating dopaminergic system in music-evoked pleasure^{162,163}. Whereas predominance of *Komal* Swaras makes the Raga progressively sentimental, elevating emotional seriousness from cheerfulness to sympathy to sad/sorrow/tensed to peace and tranquility^{151,164-168}.

The use of *Komal Re* (Western C#, Db - Minor Second) creates sentimental feelings, longing/craving/desire^{169,170}, *Komal Dha* (Western G#, Ab - Minor Sixth) produces serene and calm feelings¹⁶⁵⁻¹⁶⁷, while *Komal Ga* (Western D#, Eb - Minor Third) and *Komal Ni* (Western A#, Bb - Minor Seventh) create the mood of compassion/sympathy, submission, sorrow¹⁶⁴. The inclusion of *Tivra Ma* (Western F# - Augmented Fourth) intensifies the inherent effects (calmness, subtle joy, gentle feelings of affection/joy) of a given Raga¹⁵¹. These Swara-specific emotional effects produced by Ragas have neurochemical basis. Neural correlates underlying emotional response of music showed that listening to pleasurable music induces dopamine in the nucleus accumbens and mesocorticolimbic pathway, responsible for producing reward, emotions, and memory^{163,171-173}. Pleasurable music also increases opioid circulation and mu-opioid receptor expression¹⁷³⁻¹⁷⁶, and activates insular cortex, superior temporal lobe, and caudate putamen

associated with awareness of emotions^{177,178}. These neurohormones are known to modulate large scale brain networks i.e. salience network, central executive network, and default mode network^{179,180}, which are involved in reviving autobiographic/episodic memory - the components highly compromised in AD/ADRD. Thus, Pleasure producing Ragas have an ability not only to uplift emotions but also to activate dopaminergic and opioid pathways, correct the functioning of large-scale brain networks, resulting in the improvement of NPS/BPSD, learning/memory, and cognition.

Defined Rhythmicity of Raga

Rhythmic-auditory stimulation induced by music facilitates motor activities, smoother gait and attenuates ADL¹⁴⁴, involving large-scale brain networks^{181,182}, activation of motor brain areas including many cortical and sub-cortical regions involved in rhythmic timings i.e. cerebellum, basal ganglia, parietal, pre-frontal, pre-motor cortices and supplementary motor area¹⁸³⁻¹⁸⁶. Thus, multisensory stimulation with music therapy can improve NPS and autobiographic memory^{40,106,142,143,168,187}.

Raga has a defined rhythmicity. Raga composition is conventionally presented in two to three different rhythmic modes consisting of an arhythmic mode called "Aalap", followed by a second mode called "Gat" with a faster tempo with Raga-specific rhythmic cycles, followed by a third mode called "Tarana" with the fastest tempo of all with a specific rhythmic cycle, these rhythmic phases may produce differential rhythmic stimulation^{47,145,148-150,158}.

Arhythmic slow-tempo "Aalap" mode sets a mood for the selected follow-up Raga^{148,150,158}, while incremental modifications tempo/rhythm

of "Gat" and "Tarana" modes differentially elevate the mood with gradual transition between lower-slower to higher-faster beats of Raga, inducing a "Controlled" mind-wandering state involving balanced switching between heightened mind wandering (attention to self) and reduced mind wandering (attention to music) states, respectively⁴⁸. Such defined rhythmicity of Raga renders comprehensive brain entrainment, in contrast to electromagnetic single frequency stimulation.

The "Aalap" mode of Raga is usually less than 70 bpm (< normal heartbeat), is expected to produce calming effects. While the "Gat" mode of Raga is usually of 70 bpm (= normal heartbeat), will produce pleasurable/happy effects. The "Tarana" mode of a Raga on the other hand, is usually greater than 70 bpm (> normal heartbeat), which will produce excitement. Thus, Raga has an ability for comprehensive entrainment of slow/neutral/fast brainwaves^{48,168}.

Circadian Specificity of Raga

In addition to the above-mentioned specificities, each Raga has circadian specificity. Human physiology exhibits differential arousal patterns that match with circadian rhythms, with reduced arousal at night, rising arousal during the morning, peak arousal at mid-day, and declining pattern towards the end of the day. Traditionally, Ragas are designed to be performed at specific times of day, such as dawn, dusk, midday, evening, and night to match the bodily physiological rhythms, with the goal of obtaining peak-optimum effects of a given Raga^{146,168,188,189}.

Thus, Raga with various components described above can exert comprehensive effects on brain physiology ensuring enhanced health benefits,

which makes the Raga as an advanced therapy, not only for treating AD/ADRD, but also other disparities.

Postulated Raga Therapy for Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias

Current literature search revealed very few reports showing the effect of Indian classical music on brain in refining overall brain functions^{47,190-193}. By and large, Raga Bhupali (also known as Bhoopali, Bhup or Bhoop) has been implicated in improving memory and cognition. Nagarajan et al. showed that listening to Raga Bhupali instilled "happy/joy" emotions, uplifted sad/low mood, and improved Wechsler memory scale as evidenced by increased attention and concentration¹⁶⁶. Sarkar and co-workers showed that Raga Bhupali was effective in curing mental disorders¹⁹⁴. Sanyal et al. reported that Raga Bhupali produced calm/joy effects and relieved tension^{154,195}. Another study reported that Raga Bhupali induced alpha and theta brainwaves, increased memory, and reduced mental fatigue, stress, and anxiety¹⁹⁶. Ahuja et al. showed that Raga Bhupali increased frontal and central alpha and theta brainwaves, lowered sympathetic activity, raised vagal tone, reduced anxiety, induced positivity, and exerted relaxing effects in patients suffering from Schizophrenia¹⁹⁷.

These findings strongly support the notion that Raga Bhupali may be a "Candidate Raga" that has an ability to correct alterations in alpha/theta coherence paralleling with improved working memory in MCI and AD¹⁹⁸⁻²⁰⁰, leading to cognitive betterment^{201,202}, and emotional upliftment²⁰³.

In addition to the support from literature reviewed above, we also are certain of added benefits of Raga Bhupali exerted due to its

notational structure (Swara structure)^{148,149,158,159}, and Raga-specific association with *Chakras* or "Yogic Energy Centers" linked to autonomic neuronal plexuses that govern the brain/body physiology²⁰⁴⁻²⁰⁶.

Raga Bhupali is an Indian Classical Raga with a pentatonic scale (uses 5 notes-all notes Shuddha Swaras/major notes)^{166,194}. The predominance of Shuddha Swaras (major notes) makes the Raga "Happy" and "Cheerful"^{148,158,160}, which modulates reward-driven music-memory consolidation^{107,161}, orchestrated by the activation of dopaminergic system in music-evoked pleasure^{162,163}. Thus, Raga Bhupali can instill "happy/joy" emotions, uplifting sad/low mood, attributed to the presence of all five Shuddha Swaras. In addition, Raga Bhupali can induce devotional peacefulness due to the omission of "Ma" (a note associated with Cardiac plexus/*Anahata Chakra*, signifying love/affection), and "Ni" (associated with Carotid plexus/*Ajnya Chakra*, signifying lust) in its Swara structure^{151,207,208}, that can help increasing attention and concentration¹⁶⁶. These effects get magnified if Raga Bhupali is performed/listened during its designated circadian window of the day between 6-9 PM^{166,194}.

Whilst today's Indian Classical Music is very commonly heard as Ragas, its existence and evolution is rooted in the ancient yogic system known as "Nada Yoga"²⁰⁷⁻²⁰⁹. Nada Yoga is the yogic practice of body-mind-spirit integration through internal/*Anahata* (such as meditation) or external/*Ahata* (such as mantras/chanting/music) sound(s), via vibration of specific energy centers (*Chakras*) resonating in the body through specific sound frequencies²⁰⁷⁻²¹⁰. Integrative therapeutic use of Raga (*Raga Chikitsa/Therapy*) is a part of Nada Yoga, in which

defined melodic structure of a given Raga is aimed at synchronizing with its associated *Chakras* and vibrating/activating them^{151,207,208}. There are seven prime *Chakras* having close correlation with autonomic nerve plexuses^{205,206,210,211}. The scientific observations show near-perfect alignment of major autonomic nerve plexuses with each of the seven prime *Chakras*, as confirmed by cadaveric²¹², electro-photonics²⁰⁸ and contemplative cross-referencing^{205,206}. Raga Bhupali is known to be associated with "*Ajnya Chakra*" or Eyebrow/Third Eye Energy Center associated with Carotid plexus^{205,206,208}. It is known as the "Sixth Sense", responsible for analytical reasoning, intelligence, rational thinking, intellectual ability, and cognition^{205,206,208}. With these *Chakra*-associated qualities, Raga Bhupali is postulated to correct cognitive disabilities observed in AD/ADRD. Based on these facts, we theorize that the evening Raga Bhupali will be an effective disease modifying treatment for AD/ADRD.

Conclusions

The prevalence and incidence of Alzheimer's disease (AD) and Alzheimer's disease related dementias (ADRD) is on rise with increasing aged population around the globe. Besides existing limited benefits of symptomatic treatment(s) associated adversities, there is no cure for AD/ADRD. Therefore, there is an emerging interest in validating non-pharmacological therapies to treat AD/ADRD. Music constitutes one of such non-pharmacological therapies option that offers non-invasive, safe, and effective treatment. Many systemic reviews including PRISMA, PubMed/MEDLINE, Cochrane, Scopus, and Science Direct databases, have revealed the therapeutic usefulness of music in alleviating not only

AD/ADRD, but also other neurological disorders. Current review elucidated added health benefits of Indian Classical Music-Raga therapy, attributed to its defined notational-structure, rhythmic variability, circadian specificity, and its association with yogic "*Chakra*", in treating AD/ADRD and other disparities.

Conflict of Interest Statement:

The authors report no conflict of interests pertaining to this work.

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