

RATIONALITY OF RASAYANA THERAPY AS ADAPTOGENIC, ANTIOXIDANT AND ANTI-INFLAMMATORY AGENT

Singh Akhilesh Kumar*

Department of Kayachikitsa, Faculty of Ayurveda, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India

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*Dr. Akhilesh Kumar Singh, E-mail: singh_drakhilesh@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Rasa in Sanskrit means juice, essence, emotion etc and Ayana means path. Therefore Rasayana roughly means - the path of the juice. Rasayana has been widely and elaborately described by Acharyas. The classification and selection of Rasayana has been described on various grounds for the better understanding and appropriate applicability. Rasayana nourishes body, boosts immunity and helps to keep the body and mind in best of health. Our immunity, strength and resistance depend on the quality and quantity of Ojas, when depleted it predisposes us to lowered immunity, low spirits and ill-health. The main aim of Ayurvedic rejuvenation therapy or Rasayana therapy is to restore spirit, vitality and enhance Ojus thereby attain longevity.

KEY WORD: Rasayana, Ojas, Daiv Vyapasraya, Yukti Vyapaksray, Satvavajay, Dhatu.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is India's traditional, natural system of medicine, has been practiced for more than 3,000 years. Ayurveda is a Sanskrit word that literally means "science of life" or "practices of longevity." Ayurveda emphasizes prevention of disease, rejuvenation of our body systems and extension of life span. There are three types of modalities for the treatment of diseases as per Ayurvedic classics, namely Daiv Vyapasraya, Yukti Vyapaksray and Satvavajay. The main procedure concerned with the medical treatment is Yukti Vyapashray which comprises of Samshodhana and Samshaman therapy. Rasayana is most important among the Samshaman therapies for the maintenance of health of healthy person. Rasayana drugs are used not only for the maintenance of health of healthy person but also as treatment of the disease of diseased person. Several recent researches revealed that Rasayana drugs have adaptogenic¹, antioxidant² and anti-inflammatory potentials³.

Aims And Objectives

1. To search and re-evaluate Rasayan therapy in various texts including Charak, Sushruta, Astang and other Ayurvedic literatures with references.
2. To understand the adaptogenic, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effect of Rasayan therapy.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This article is based on a review of Ayurvedic and Modern texts along with researches related to the subject. Materials related to Rasayan and other relevant topics have been collected. The main Ayurvedic texts used in this study are Charak Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Astang Sangraha, Astang Hridaya, Madav Nidana and available commentaries on these. We have also referred to the modern texts and searched various research papers, websites to collect information on the relevant topics.

DEFINITION

Rasayana is the measure which prolongs longevity, develops positive health and improves mental faculties^{4,6} and provides resistance against disease or Rasayana is the measure to obtain good quality of Dhatu^{4,6} or Drugs which destroy the ageing process and disease are known as Rasayana⁵.

CLASSIFICATION OF RASAYANA⁴

According to method of use -

1. Kutipravesnik Rasayana (Indoor regimen)
2. Vatatapika Rasayana (Outdoor regimen)

According to purpose -

1. Aajashrika Rasayana (drug Rasayana)

2. Naimittika Rasayana (promoter of specific vitality in specific disease)
3. Kamyas Rasayana (promoter of normal health)

According to content of Rasayana -

1. Aajashrik Rasayana (dietary Rasayana)
2. Aachar Rasayana (conduct Rasayana)

The Selection of Rasayanas

Rasayan drugs according to age⁸

Decade of life	Loss of impact	Desirable Rasayanas
1-10	Balya	Vaca, Svarna
11-20	Vrdhhi	Kasmari, Bala
21-30	Chavi	Aamalaki, Lauha
31-40	Medha	Sankhapushpi
41-50	Tvak	Jyotismati
51-60	Dristi	Jyotismati
61-70	Sukra	Aatmagupta, Ashvagandh
71-80	Vikrama	Aamalaki, Bala
81-90	Buddhi	Bramhi
91-100	Karmendriya	Bala Rasayana

Rasayana drugs according to Dhatu⁸

Rasa – Draksh, Kharjura, Kashmari

Rakta - Aamlaki, Palandu, Lauha

Mansa - Ashwagandha, Bala

Meda- Haritaki, Guggulu, Amrita

Asthi- Laksha, Shukti, Shankha

Majja- Lauha, Majja, Vasa

Shukra- Aatmagupta, Pippali, Nagbala

Rasayana drugs according to Deha Prakriti⁸

Vattik- Bala, Ghrita

Paittika- Aamlaki, Shatavari

Kaphaj- Bhallataka, Guggulu, Pippali

Rasayana drugs according to Kala⁸

Adan Kala – Shita Virya – Laghu Guna - Amalaki

Visharg Kala – Ushna Virya – Guru Guna – Bhallataka

Rasayana drugs according to Srotas⁷

Pranavaha Srotas – Pippali, Bhallatak, Amalaki, Marich, Kasturi

Udakvaha Srotas – Sarva jaliya Padartha

Annavaaha Srotas – Panchkola, Kapardika, Shankh Bhasm, Hing, Nagkeshar

Rasavaha Srotas – Kharjur Manth, Laja Manda, Guduchi

Raktavaha Srotas – Loha Bhasm, Ghrit, Goroachana, Kushtaghna Dravyas

Mansavah Srotas – Karaskar, Suvarna Bhasma

Medovaha Srotas – Guggulu, Shilajatu, Kumbha
 Astivaha Srotas – Abha
 Majjavaha Srotas – Vacha, Bringraj, Roupya Bhasma
 Shukravaha Srotas – Gudha, Vang Bhasm
 Mutravaha Srotas – Shilajatu, Gokshura, Punarnava
 Purishvaha Srotas – Kutaj, Bilwa, Haritaki
 Swedavaha Srotas – Vang Bhasm

Rasayana drugs according to Disease⁸

Prameha - Shilajatu, Haridra, Aamlaki
 Aamvata – Amrit, Bhallatak
 Hridroga – Shalparni, Arjuna
 Medoroga –Guggulu, Haritiki
 Shwas – Bhallatak
 Kustha – Tuvarak
 Pandu – Lauha

Manasroga – Medhya Rasayana

Medhya Rasayana⁸

Mandukparni – Swarasa
 Yastimadhu – Churna
 Guduchi – Swarasa
 Shankhapuspi – Kalka

Medhya rasayanas have psychotropic as well as hypotensive effect.

Level of action of Rasayana drugs⁷

At the level of Posaka Rasa
 At the level of Agni
 At the level of Srotas

Free Radical Injury of Cells and Rasayana⁹

- Generation of free radical
- Redox reaction occur during normal physiological process
- Transition metals such as Copper & iron
- Enzymatic metabolism of exogenous chemicals
- Radiation
- Mechanism of cell injury by free radical
- Lipid peroxidation of membrane
- DNA fragmentation
- Cross linking of proteins
- Neutralization of free radicals
- Cells have developed many enzymatic & non-enzymatic systems to inactivate free radicals. these are--
- Superoxide dismutases (SODs)
- Glutathione peroxidase (GSH)
- Catalase
- Antioxidants

Rasayan drugs induce immune-stimulation and improves defense mechanisms against free radical damage¹. It is worth mentioning that the free oxygen radical scavenging activity of Brahma Rasayana has already been studied by in vitro and in vivo models².

DISCUSSION

Ojas – the Subtle Essence of Life and Rasayan

A substance known as Ojas is central to the discussion of rejuvenation. It is said to be the eighth tissue or the essence of all the body tissues, the ultimate product of nutrition and digestion and the prime energy reserve for the entire body. It provides the energy, vitality that gets us throughout life. Our immunity, strength and resistance depend on the quality and quantity of Ojas, when depleted it predisposes us to lowered immunity, low spirits and ill-health. All rejuvenation therapies are, therefore, targeted on improving Ojas. There are many Rasayana herbs and foods but for these great healers

to have their fullest rejuvenating effects, we need to prepare ourselves first by optimizing digestion, cleansing toxins from the system and resolving imbalances of the doshas.

Rejuvenation and Adaptogenic Effect of Rasayana

In the modern era, people are much more health conscious and make sincere efforts to maintain and upgrade their health status. In doing so, Ayurveda - the Indian science of life brings nature's own gift for rejuvenation and revitalization. Rejuvenation means making young again. The term used in Ayurvedic texts for the rejuvenation treatment is Rasayanachikitsa or Rasayana therapy. Rasayana is one of the eight branches of Ayurveda. As per Ayurvedic definition, Rasayana means, that which destroys the oldness and disease through the conservation, transformation and revitalization of energy.

In this stressful, over-busy and toxic world, our natural health, happiness and the inner sense of well-being are masked by the accumulation of impurities. These impurities or toxins cause deterioration of normal body functioning. A rejuvenation therapy can revitalize senses, detoxify the body, restore good health and young look and even increase resistance to diseases. Ancient Ayurveda texts say that rejuvenation therapy can bring back the youthfulness long after one has past that age and it can also increase the life span by many years. Ayurveda rejuvenation therapy is known to have cured chronic diseases which were otherwise impossible to find treatment for. Rasayan drugs have been proved effective against biological, physical and chemical stressors as judged by using markers of stress responses and objective parameters for stress¹.

The anti-inflammatory potential of Rasayan drugs has been proved with the action and/or synthesis of prostaglandins and also perhaps by stabilization of the lysosomal membranes. According to a research its antiinflammatory activity is comparable to that of indomethacin³.

CONCLUSION

The term Rasayana does not only refer to a drug or a therapy but to a comprehensive discipline which may of course include a therapy. It is a multiangled approach taking care of the body, mind and spirit, thus affecting a total wellbeing of an individual. Rasayana nourishes body, boosts immunity, strength, resistance, quality and quantity of Ojas, restore spirit, vitality and thereby attain the longevity.

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