



IMPORTANCE OF RASAYAN IN BALROGA

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ABSTRACT

A large number of diverse diseases such as recurrent bacterial, viral and fungal infections, human immunodeficiency virus infection, allergies and cancer, threatening mankind, are believed to have resulted from altered functioning of the immune system. Whereas conventional medicine is primarily oriented toward the treatment of disease, Ayurvedic medicine is oriented toward prevention, health maintenance, and treatment. In conventional medicine, drugs are developed based on the concept that the elimination of specific causes of a disease, such as microorganisms, will cure a disease. On the other hand, the belief in Ayurvedic medicine is that a disease is the product of an imbalance in the body and mental elements that reduce the body's resistance to diseases. Rasayana therapy which is given to the children and are well-known to promote health by preventing them from various infections are called as Balrasayana. They have wonderful effect on child's immunity and are specially prepared to protect the child from diseases and promote proper growth and development. Studies done on various rasayana drugs prove that they have hepato-protective, immunomodulatory, antimicrobial, antioxidant, antiinflammatory, Neuroprotective and anti-stress properties etc.

KEYWORDS : Ayurveda, Rasyana, Immunity etc.

INTRODUCTION

A large number of diverse diseases such as recurrent bacterial, viral and fungal infections, human immunodeficiency virus infection, allergies and cancer, threatening mankind, are believed to have resulted from altered functioning of the immune system.

Whereas conventional medicine is primarily oriented toward the treatment of disease, Ayurvedic medicine is oriented toward prevention, health maintenance, and treatment. In conventional medicine, drugs are developed based on the concept that the elimination of specific causes of a disease, such as microorganisms, will cure a disease. On the other hand, the belief in Ayurvedic medicine is that a disease is the product of an imbalance in the body and mental elements that reduce the body's resistance to diseases. If the imbalance is corrected and the body's defense mechanisms are strengthened by herbal formulas, lifestyle changes, and diet, then the body will resist a disease with a goal of eliminating it. Herbal and herbomineral products regularly used in Ayurveda are believed to strengthen the body's defenses. Scientific evidence is gradually developing in support of the Ayurvedic concept. Infectious diseases have a significant place in the field of child health for the morbidity and mortality causes by these diseases in this age group and also for the high incidence as more than 60% of the infectious diseases affect the children in the developing countries.

'Rasayana' is amongst the Astangayurveda, the eight divisions of Ayurveda as advocated in various ayurvedic texts. This branch also serve the fundamentals of Ayurveda, i.e. "Swasthasyaswasth rakshamanum aaturasaya vikarum prashmanum ch" as set out by the pioneers of Ayurveda, acharya Charaka (Charaka Samhita Chikitsasthana 30/26 p.587)^[1] and Sushruta (Sushruta Samhita Sutrasthana 1/22 p.4).^[2] Acharya Sushruta further defines Rasayana Tantra as "Rasayantantrum nama vayasthapanayurvedhabalkaram rogaapharansamartham ch" (Sushruta Samhita Sutrasthana 1/15 p.4)^[2] which means that branch of Astangaayurveda where all measures which help in promoting longevity, enhance intelligence & mental strength, and increase immunity against various disorders are elucidated.

Rasayana therapy which is given to the children and are well-known to promote health by preventing them from various infections are called as Balrasayana. They have wonderful effect on child's immunity and are specially prepared to protect the child from diseases and promote proper growth and development. Studies done on various rasayana drugs

prove that they have hepato-protective, immunomodulatory, antimicrobial, antioxidant, antiinflammatory, Neuroprotective and anti-stress properties etc.

It is a specialized type of treatment influencing the fundamental aspects of the body viz., Dhatus (body tissues), Agni (the metabolic activity) and Srotamsi (micro circulation) and helps in the prevention of aging.

Rasayana is the science of nutrition aiming to procure the best qualities of body tissues (dhatus) leading in turn to: - longevity, immunity, resistance against disease, improved mental faculties, ideal social environment.

Exigency Of Rasayana

Various factors leading to cellular damage in body, due to physical, metabolic and psychological impairments, thus setting foundations of various ailments. With Rasayana therapy, it is possible to prevent or delay this damage. The possible mechanisms of action of rasyanas may be : Nourishes and maintains the cell life (neutriceutical action), Encourages the growth of new cells (regenerative action), Prevents recurrent infection, expelling the damaged cells (immunomodulatory action), Eliminates the toxic metabolites and pollutants (antioxidant action), Maintains the balance between mind and body (adaptogenic), Rasayana drugs act at the subcellular level.

Rasayana Chikitsa (as advised by our Acharyas) proves beneficial by Corrects the structural deformity of the dhatus thereby normalising the functions, Strengthens the dhatus, Prevents the instinct of recurrence, Prevents the instinct for secondary diseases, Prevents early ageing process.

Indication Of Rasayana

Both Acharya Sushruta (Sushruta Samhita Chikitsasthana 27/3 p.120)^[2] and Vagbhata (Ashtanga Hridayum Uttaratantra 39/3 p.1183)^[3] counsel that Rasayana should be used in early and or middle age: 'Purve vayasi madhye va.' Acharya also advised not to use Rasayana without body purification i.e. detoxification, to be undertaken by Panchkarma methods. The Rasayana dravya are advised for use, according to vaya, desha, kala, satmya, prakriti, agnibala etc.

Classification

A) According to Acharya Charaka:

1. **Kutipraveshika:** while using this method, patient has to stay in a specially designed cottage or kuti for the whole duration of this therapy (Charaka Samhita

Chikitisasthana 1/1/16-20, p.7-8).^[1]

2. **Vatatapika Rasayana:** While undertaking this mode of rasayana therapy, a person can carry out his daily routine (Charaka Samhita Chikitisasthana 1/1/16, p.7).^[1]
 3. **Achara Rasayana:** Acharya Charaka (Charaka Samhita Chikitisasthana 1/4/30-35, p.58)^[1] described it in detail in Rasayana chapter. Aim is to follow a particular code of conduct in routine life, which attains good mental and spiritual health. After following this, person can be keep away from anxiety, stress, and thereby from all diseases etc.
- B) According to Acharya Sushruta (Sushruta Samhita Chikitsasthana chapter 27-30,120-132)^[2]:**
1. Sarvopaghatashamaniya (rasayana formulation which counteract various diseases process)
 2. Medhaayushkamiya (rasayana which increase intellect and longevity)
 3. Svabhavavaydhipratishedhaniya (means delaying onset of svabhavika disease)
 4. Nivrittasantapiya rasayana (means which clears all type of santapa (dukha or diseased state))
- C) According to the health status of the patient/person (rogi-awastha) (Charaka Samhita Chikitisasthana 1/1/4 p.3)^[1]:**
1. Rasayanas which are used even in good health as they promote and maintain the health of a person i.e. "Swasthasyaorjaskara".
 2. Rasayanas used in case of diseased states as they have restorative properties in certain diseases i.e. "Kinchitartasya roganut".

This fact has been reinforced by Dalhana in his commentary on Sushruta, where he classifies Rasayanas as – (1) Kamyara rasayana, used during health (2) Naimittika rasayana for diseased person (Sushruta Samhita Chikitsasthana Dalhana 27 p.121).^[2]

Benefits

Acharya Charaka (Charaka Samhita Chikitsasthana 1/1/7-8 p.5, 1/2/3 p.21)^[1] and Vagbhata (Astanga Hridayam Uttarantra 39/1-2 p.1183)^[3] described various benefits of rasayana therapy as - enjoying long healthy life, enhances intelligence, memory, strength, youth, lustre, sweetness of voice etc. or simply, enhancing physical and mental vigour lifelong. Also, Rasayanas improve metabolic processes, which results in apposite biotransformation and produces the best-quality bodily tissues. Rasayana therapy is basically targeted towards the daily wear and tear the human body suffers in the course of routine life and also the unwanted ill-effects of infirmities afflicted during the same. Ayurveda, true to its nature of being the science of life has throughout propounded the factors favourable and unfavourable towards a healthy lifestyle (Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 1/41 p.13).^[1]

Rasayan drugs are believed to slow down the aging process (jara) and provide a defense against diseases (vyadhi). Rasayanas improve the host resistance of an individual, helping to prevent aging and diseases. Specific diets and lifestyle changes are also advised in rasayana therapy.

According to Acharya Charaka, even the continuous use of ksheer and ghrita gives the same effect as that of Rasayana(Charaka Samhita Chikitsasthana 1/4/30-35 p.58)^[1]. As ksheer (milk) and ghrita are wholesome for children, they should continuously use them.

Importance

Important properties of Rasayana therapy i.e. its potency to increase the essence of bodily Dhatus and another to enhance immunity are very useful in terms of paediatric

medicine. A number of such Rasayana herbs find mention in Ayurveda. These Rasayans promote growth and development of children and have been advocated to be used since very young age as infancy known as Ksheerap kala in Ayurveda. As the immunological system of children is not yet fully developed as in an adult, hence they are more prone to opportunistic infections. For protection of children against such life threatening infectious diseases, Ayurveda has advocated a preventive measure in form of Rasayana therapy for children as well. Different acharyas have specified various Rasayana yogas (formulations) for the pediatric age group. Some of these are –

1. **Acharya Charaka:** Mahapaishachik ghrita (Charaka Samhita Chikitisasthana 9/45-48, p.319)^[1] use enhance intelligence and memory as well as helpful in growth and development with effective in disorders. Brahmi ghrita (Charaka Samhita Chikitisasthana 10/23, p.332)^[1] etc. Acharya Charaka has described 4 medhya rasayana which when used in children increases memory in children and also helps in prevention of psychological disorders. These are Mandukaparni swarasa, sankhapuspi (Charaka Samhita Chikitisasthana 1/3/330-31 p.39)^[1].
2. Acharya Sushruta described following formulations (containing gold) which provide general immunity, body resistance, helpful in growth & development (Sushruta Samhita Sharirsthana 10/72-74, p.84).^[2] These are: (1) Svaran bhasm with kustha, vacha, madhu & ghrita. (2) Svaran bhasm alongwith brahmi, sankhpuspi, with honey & ghrita. (3) Svaran bhasm, arkpushpi, vacha, honey & ghrita. 4) Svaran bhasm, khaidarya, sweta durva, ghrita.
3. **Acharya Vagbhata prescribed following yoga:** Sarshvata ghrita (Astanga Hridayam Uttarantra 1/45, p.885),^[3] combination of vacha and savarna bhasma with honey and ghrita, (Astanga Hridayam Uttarantra 1/47, p.885),^[3] etc.
4. **Acharya Kashyapa (Kashyapa Samhita Sutrasthana p:4-5)^[4] prescribed following yoga:** Shuddh Swam (in small quantity) has given with honey and ghrita, results in promotion of health, growth, complexion & strength (immunity). Panchgavya ghrita, Brahmi ghrita, Abhaya ghrita, Samvardhana ghrita (effective in children with delayed milestones) (Kashyapa Samhita Sutrasthana, Lehaadhyaya, p.4-6).^[4] For enhancing intellect, any one out of the Brahmi, mandukaparni, triphala, chitaka, vacha, satapushpa, satawari, danti, nagabala, trivrita, kalayanka ghrita, panchagavya ghrita, brahmi ghrita. Samanga, triphala, brahmi, chitrak,Bala, atibala and chitraka be used with honey and ghrita for increasing intellect, longevity and strength.

Rasayana dravya have also found to have beneficial physiological effects on different organ system of body as hepatoprotective, immunomodulator, adaptogenic, antimicrobial, antiseizure etc. The various researches conducted on these drugs, which prove that these drugs are beneficial in prevention of diseases and enhance immunity, growth, development, intelligence and maintain proper health. Some of these are as follows:

1. **Centella Asiatica:** various studies reported following property of brahmi (centella asiatica) as immunomodulatory effects^[5,6], neuroprotective effect,^[7] cognitive enhancing effect^[8].
2. **Embllica Officinale:** Modern science has shown Amla to have anti-inflammatory, hypoglycemic, anti-hyperglycemic, anti-hyperlipidemic, and antioxidant properties in various studies.^[9,10,11]
3. **Acorus Calamus:** possess potent antihyperglycemic activity,^[12,13] hypolipidemic effect,^[14] antioxidant activities,^[15] anticonvulsant activity.^[16]

4. **Tinospora Cordifolia:** Tinospora cordifolia commonly named as "Guduchi" is known for its immense application in the treatment of various diseases in the traditional ayurvedic literature. It possess Antioxidant properties,^[17] immunomodulatory potential,^[18] Hypoglycaemic actions,^[19] hepatoprotective activity.^[20]
5. **Bacopa Monnieri:** studies reported cognition and anti-anxiety effects,^[21,22,23] Antioxidant activity.^[24,25]
6. **Terminalia Chebula:** antioxidant activity,^[26,27] anticancerous activity,^[28] antibacterial activity,^[29,30,31] hepatoprotective effects,^[32] anti-diabetic activity.^[33]
7. **Sida Cordifolia:** Analgesic, antiinflammatory activities,^[34,35] hepatoprotective effects,^[36] antistress, and adaptogenic activity.^[37]
8. **Piper Longum:** Antiinflammatory activity,^[38,39] antioxidant activity.^[40]
9. **Curcuma Longa:** Anticancer potential,^[41,42] antioxidant activity,^[43] antifungal Activity,^[44] anti-inflammatory activities,^[45] antimicrobial.^[46]
10. **Achrynthus Niger:** posses antibacterial activities,^[47,48] hypoglycemic activity,^[49] antioxidant activity.^[50,51]
11. **Piper Nigrum:** anticancer activity,^[52] Analgesic and anti-inflammatory activities,^[53] anxiolytic activity,^[54] antioxidant activity.^[55]

CONCLUSION

Rasayana is one of the eight branches of Ayurveda (Ashtang Ayurveda) and it encompasses rejuvenative life style, Healthy dietetics, Use of rejuvenative herbomineral nutraceuticals. Rasayana therapy helps to attain healthful longevity and includes mental development and resistance against disease.

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