



Doctrines of Rasayana Therapy: an Ayurvedic narrative review

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Abstract

Ayurveda is the ancient system of Medicine in the world. Ayurveda, the science of life deals with every aspect of life. Ayurveda has two aims i.e. prevention and promotion of health and secondly cure of the disease. Rasayana may be employed for fulfilling both of them i.e. protection and promotion of health and curing the diseases. Rasayana is one of its eight branches being practised since time immemorial. Rasayana therapy has been described in Ayurveda as a systematic and scientific medical discipline. Rasayana drugs are those medicines that are capable of imparting superior Rasas and Dhatus to the body and toning up the system of healthy persons. Rasayana aid in increasing natural immunity, enhancing general wellbeing, improving the functioning of all fundamental organs of the body and keep the signs of early ageing at bay. The main purpose of Rasayana therapy is to impede the ageing process and to delay the degenerative process in the body. Rasayana is the term given to special herbs, fruits or any other form of medication that are known to promote positive health and longevity. After taking Rasayana we can learn how to maintain a balance between the material and spiritual aspects of life and help others also to understand it. This article aims to elaborate on the comprehensive review of Rasayana procedure and its benefits. Rasayana therapy is one of the important branches of Ayurveda Medicine stream, which deals with the preservation and promotion of health with youth

ness. Rasayana therapy is a holistic one comprising of rejuvenation, anti-ageing, immunomodulatory, neuroprotective and revitalizing the complete metabolism. The present article intends to brief about the various medicinal plants used in the Rasayana therapy, their active ingredients and the scientific studies carried out on them concerning their biological activities

Key words - Ayurveda, Rasayana Therapy, Aging, Lifestyle

1. Introduction

Ayurveda is one of the major indigenous medicine systems of India that is followed for thousands of years. The core concept of Ayurveda is not only curing the disease but keep mankind more healthily both in body and mind. Rasayana therapy is one of the eight major divisions of Ayurvedic science. 'Rasa' means the essence of nutrition, 'Ayana means body tissues elements, and Rasayana therapy means the treatment methods that enrich the body tissue elements through nutrition in an effective way. According to Ayurveda, Rasayana therapy improves longevity, memory, intelligence, health, youth, complexion, voice, motor and sensory strength. Rasayana drugs possess multifaceted action on human physiology and pacify all afflictions.

2. Role of Rasayana in Ageing

Ageing, a physiological state in which there is a progressive decline in organ functions, delay in regeneration, and development of age-related diseases, is a multifactorial process. Free radicals are proposed to initiate/enhance ageing, and antioxidants and phytochemicals have been shown to possess anti-ageing properties. These drugs are also believed to be good tonics, rejuvenates, immune stimulators, and adaptogens. Regular consumption of these drugs is considered to enhance physical strength, increase sex drive, and improve complexion. They are mostly polyherbal in composition and are comprised of medicinal plants, minerals, pearls, and coral. This manuscript addresses, for the first time, the benefit and scientifically validated properties of commonly used Rasayana drugs such as Amalakyas Rasayana, Triphala, Chyawanprash, Amalaki Rasayana, Amrita Rasayana, Brahm Rasayana, Ashwagandha Rasayana, Narasimha Rasayana, Brahmi Rasayana Amritaprasham, Anwala churna, and Amalkadi Ghrita with emphasis on the possible mechanisms responsible for the beneficial effects of these drugs.

3. Effect of Rasayana Therapy

The Rasayana therapy is a clinical speciality of Ayurveda that helps nourish the whole body by strengthening the *Rasa Dhatu*, the essence of all food we take, and which the body assimilates. Rasayana therapy contains various methods of rejuvenation. The benefits of Rasayana therapy are:

- To increase the strength of body tissues (*Rasa*)

- To increase digestive power
- To increase the functional capacity of the brain
- To increase the strength and immunity of the body
- To destroy diseases in the body
- To delay the aging process
- To develop barriers against stress and infection

Rasayana therapy includes drugs, dietary regimens and codes of conduct. The possible mechanisms of action of rasayana therapy are Antioxidant, Immunomodulatory, Anti-ageing, Nutritive, Anabolic and Neuroprotective actions.

4. Classification of Rasayana

A. Dravaya Rasayana:

This includes Ayurvedic herbs and foods which are useful for optimum functioning of the body and brain. There are four types of dravaya-

- **Age-promoting Rasayanas:** These herbs and diets provide stability to life, vitality, stamina, glow to the skin, sweetness to the voice, and virtually tend to enhance the life span of a person. A popular example is Chyavanprash.
- **Mental acuity enhancing Rasayanas:** These rasayanas act as an effective brain tonic and may help in increasing intelligence and memory. They enhance the grasping, concentration and retention power of an individual and help in fighting mental fatigue. Examples of these rasayanas include cow's milk and ghee, herbs like bramhi, vacha, and shankhpushpi, and bhrama rasayana
- **Eyesight promoting Rasayanas:** These are beneficial for and may promote proper functioning of the eyes thereby aiding a clear vision. These include Ayurvedic herbal formulations like aamalki rasayana.
- **Disease combating Rasayanas:** Here, specific rasayanas are given to the patients suffering from some particular disease. For example, bhallataka rasayana is used in diseases of skin and pippali rasayana is for respiratory diseases.

B. Adravya Rasayana:

Here, general rules of living and the natural regimen of seasons are to be followed. All benefits of rasayana therapy can only be achieved if these good conducts are practised on regular basis.

- Avoid anger
- Be Truthful, free from ego
- Avoid consumption of alcohol, indulgence in sex and violence
- Period of awakening and sleep should be regular

- Practice self-control
- Consume milk and ghee regularly
- Respect elders and teachers
- Practice spirituality

C. Other Classification of Rasayana

a. Naimittikarasayana

- b. Used for a particular cause, which causes a disease. e.g. Pippli (piper longum) rasayana for Rajyakshma, Mandookparni (Centelaasiatica) rasayana for medha, Triphalarasayana for chakshu.

c. Ajasrikarasayana

- d. It is used to maintain good health and improve the quality of life through a healthy lifestyle, diet, or exercise in daily routine. e.g. Milk, Ghee, Honey, adopting the principles of Aacharrasayan.

e. Kamyarasayana

- f. It is used to fulfil a desire or to serve a special purpose

g. Based on modalities

- Achar Rasayana - Behavioural modalities
- Ahar Rasayana- Dietary modalities
- Dravya Rasayana - Aushadh or Drug based modalities

h. Based on mode of administration

- Kutipravesika: therapy which is given in indoor, i.e. in the room, specially made huts.
- Vatatapika: Therapy is given in outdoor, i.e. in free air and sun rays

5. Rasayana Drugs In Ayurveda which Boost Immunity

Ashwagandha (*Withaniasomnifera*), Amalaki (*Embllica Officinalis*), Bibhitaka (*Terminaliabellicrica*), Haritaki (*Terminaliachebula*), Brahmi (*Bacopamonnieri*), Bala (*Sidacordifolia*), Bhringraja (*Eclipta alba*), Jyothishmati (*Celastrspaniculatus*), Pippali (*Piper longum*), Atmagupta (*Mucunaprurita*), Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*), Kashmiri (*Gmelinaarborea*), Guduchi (*Tinosporacordifolia*), Chitraka (*Plumbagozeylanica*). Advanced Researches validating claims of Rasayana drugs shows that these drugs are immune busting drugs. Experimental researches done on various Rasayana drugs prove that Rasayanas have immune stimulant, antioxidant, and anti-stress etc. properties

6. Mode of therapy

Rasayanadravya's are used for the preservation of positive health. Acharya Sushruta defines a healthy man as one who has an equilibrium of Doshas, normal function of Agni, normal condition of seven dhatus, beside

his soul, the sense organs and mind should be happy and cheerful. Rasayana stands as an answer to solve the problem of healthful longevity including mental development and resistance against disease. Rasayana is a specialized type of treatment influencing the fundamental aspects of the body i.e. Dhatu, Agni, and Stratos. Different Rasayana drugs may act with a predominance effect at different levels. These comprehensive effects are brought about with the help of the varied Pharmacodynamics properties of these drugs. Rasayana effect is not a specific pharmacological action but is a complex phenomenon operating through a comprehensive mechanism involving the fundamental factors like Rasa-Samhana, Dhatus, Agni and Srotas. It may ultimately be leading to the achievement of comprehensive effect as stated by Aacharya Charak "Labhopayo Hi Shastanam Rasadinam Rasayanam". It Produces the Rasayana effects mentioned in terms of Vayasthapanam and Ayushkara, Medhakara, Urjaskara so that Rasayana Dravya's acting at the level of Rasa by improving specific nutritional values of Poshak Rasa. Probably Rasayana Dravya's are having Madhura, Guru, Snigdha and Sheeta properties act as Rasayana at the level of Rasa by promoting the nutritional value of Rasa which in term help in obtaining the best quality of Dhatus. The example of such drugs may be Shatavari, Madhuyashti, Bala, Dugdha, Ghrita etc. Rasayana Dravya's have a fundamental effect at the level of Agni or digestion and Metabolism. The Rasayana Dravyas possessing the Ushna, Laghu, Ruksha and katu, Tikta, Kashaya Rasa may be acting at the level of Agni, Vitalizing the organic metabolism leading to an improved structure and function pattern of Dhatus, may cause Srotoshodhana and production of the Rasayana effects. Dravya's such as Pippali, Guggulu, Rasona, Bhallataka, Rudanti mainly acts at the level of Agni to improve the digestion and create excellence of Saptadhatu. The Rasayanadravya's like Vidang, Chitrak and Haritaki are experienced to enhance Agni at the level of Jatharagni. Similarly, Amalaki, Amrita, Pippi, Kumari are supposed to act on Dhatu. Rasayanadravy's which influence Oja are supposed to induce Bala and Vyadhikshamatva or Immunity.

7. Discussion

Rasayana therapy is one of the important treatment protocols of the Ayurveda and practised by experienced and exponent Ayurvedic physicians. In Rasayana therapy, the plants are used as medicine in various forms as single drugs or formulations while giving equal importance to the diet and lifestyle. Even though, the effects of Rasayana Therapy on human subjects have been documented by various researchers, the modes of action of Rasayana Therapy have not been scientifically explored much. Modern research has only documented the biological activity of the individual medicinal plants and their active ingredients. Based on these, the Rasayana therapy is interpreted in modern science like Immuno-modulatory action, Anti-ageing action, Adaptogenic action, Longevity or extended life span. However, the research on the finding of some suitable model systems is still a major challenge in the understanding of the mode of action of Rasayana therapy.

8. Conclusion

At last, it can be concluded that Rasayana therapy is a wonderful treatment procedure of Ayurveda. By its proper use, a person can live a healthy and happy long life. Rasayana therapy is not a simple drug therapy but is a specialized therapeutic procedure implicating the fundamental concept of Ayurveda. Science of Rejuvenation deals with recipes that enable a man to retain his manhood or youthful vigour up to good old age and which generally serve to make the human systems invulnerable disease and decay. Rejuvenation therapy has unimaginable and wonderful effects. It promotes life, maintains positive health, and preserves youth and cure morbid sleep, drowsiness, physical as well as mental fatigue, laziness and weakness. It maintains proper balance amongst Vata, Pitta and Kapha. It produces stability, cures the stiffness of muscles, stimulation of muscles, stimulate Digestion and Metabolism. Therefore persons desirous of attaining long life, vitality and happiness should practice Rejuvenation therapy with complete devotion according to the prescribed procedures.

Furthermore, Rasayana Therapy is one of the eight branches of Ayurvedic Science, which comprises preventive, promotive and curative aspects for healthy and happy living with youth ness. The benefits of Rasayana therapy are long life with youthness, enhanced memory and brilliance, the great strength of body and sense organs and pleasing personality. Various plants and plant products are used in the Rasayana treatment along with prescribed diet and lifestyle. Even though the active components of the plants and their biological activities have been documented individually, the holistic mechanisms of action of Rasayana treatment are still not explored in depth.

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