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REVIEW ARTICLE ON ANTI AGING PROPERTY OF RASAYANA

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ABSTRACT

Rasayana (rejuvenation therapy)being a unique branch of Ayurveda aims at prevention of aging and maintenance of health. Different types of Rasayanas (rejuvenation therapy)are mentioned in Ayurveda. As per utility, Rasayana (rejuvenation therapy) is of two types — Naimithika (therapy against a disease) and Kamya Rasayana (therapy which promote normal health). Naimithika (therapy against a disease) promotes vitality in specific disease and Kamya Rasayana (therapy promotes health). Kamya Rasayana (therapy promote health) is again divided into Pranakamya (promote vitality and longevity), Medhakamya (promote intelligence) and Shrikamya (promote complexion). In aged person, there is impairment of immunity and anabolism. So they are more susceptible to diseases and impairment of other higher mental functions like memory, intellect etc. Aging makes a person dependent on others both mentally and physically. With this therapy, a person attains longevity, freedom from diseases, and excellence of complexion, clear voice, enhanced memory power and preservation of youth. It enhances the immune modulation, destroys free radical formation, enhances the cellular detoxification, repair of the damaged cells, and induces the cell proliferation. It improves longevity, memory, intelligence, health, youth, lusture, colour, clarity of sound, strength of body and sense organs. So the need of Rasayana (rejuvenation therapy) is relevant in the current medical scenario.

Keywords: Rasayana, Naimittika, Kamya, Prana, Medha, Shri Kamya.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of Ayurveda is prevention and promotion of health and cure of the disease¹. Various cells and tissues of the body undergo changes as age progresses. It is necessary to rejuvenate the body for better harmony of the *sareera* (body), *satva* (mind) and *atma*² (soul). *Rasayana chikitsa* (Rejuvenation) is known as Rejuvenation therapy. It is one of the eight branches of the Ayurveda³.

PROBLEMS OF THE AGED

Intellectual impairment, mental impairment, sleep disorders, depression, infectious and metabolic disorders, Side effects of therapeutic drugs, Alzheimer's disease, Cardiac disorders, Diabetes mellitus, Weakening of immune Systems, hearing and vision decline, decreased muscle strength, blood vessels become less flexible, blood pumping from heart declines, protective function of immune systems and endocrine system, sensitivity decreases and

functions of testes and ovaries declines - are the main problems of aging⁴. These problems can be addressed with *Rasayana* (rejuvenation) therapy.

DEFINITION

Word 'Rasayana' is derived from two words Rasa (fluid) and Ayana (pathway). Rasa means fluids and Ayana means pathway. Hence the word Rasayana (rejuvenation) means the path of the juice. Rasayana means getting maximum nourishment to the dhatus.

Acarya Caraka says the substance which produces best quality of rasa (primary waters of body like lymph, interstitial fluid, plasma and non-cellular portion of blood), rakta (blood) and other dhatus (tissues) in a healthy person⁵.

Sushrutha Acarya mentions substances which decreases the aging process, increases the longevity and increases the mental as well as physical strength and which destroys the diseases process⁶. Drugs, diet and regimen which removes age and disease and keeps the body healthy is known as *Rasayana* (rejuvenation therapy).

CLASSIFICATION

The main classifications of *Rasayana* (rejuvenation therapy) as per scope of use:

Kamya Rasayana(therapy which promotes health): used to full fill a wish or desire or to serve a special purpose. It is also used to promote general physical and mental health. It is administered in those desire long life, great intelligence and wealth. It is again divided into 3 types⁷.

- 1. *Prana kaamya* (therapy promote vitality and longevity): aimed at increasing Ayu-Vitality and longevity⁸.
- 2. *Medha kaamya* (therapy promote intelligence): It is used for enhancing the memory and intellect⁸
- 3. *Srikamya* (therapy promote complexion): Promotes the complexion⁸.

Naimittika Rasayana (therapy against disease): used in the context of treatment of diseases- aimed at arresting further progress and at the same time maintenance of health status. For example dhatri rasayana (rejuvenation therapy mainly containing Emblica officinalis), triphala rasayana (rejuvenation

therapy mainly containing Emblica officinalis, Terminalia bellirica, Terminalia chebula), silajatu rasayana (rejuvenation therapy mainly containing Asphaltum), tuvaraka rasayana (rejuvenation therapy mainly containing Hydnocarpus laurifolia) and bhallathaka rasayana (rejuvenation therapy mainly containing Semecarpus anacardium).

Prana kaamya Rasayana (therapy promotes vitality and longevity): It is used for attaining or maintaining the best quality of Prana/Ayu (life sustaining elements) in the body. Here Prana (life sustaining elements) refers to the vitality and dhatus (tissues). Good Prana (life sustaining elements) denotes the long life and all the physiological functions are up to the level. Good dhatu (tissue) functions denote the wellbeing of the body. Various Prana kamya rasayanas (therapy promoting vitality and longevity) are mentioned such as Amalaki (Emblica officinalis) and Haritaki (Terminalia chebula). These rasayana drugs will promote the longevity. It is good for the general health. It eliminates the doshas (fundamental body bio elements) and stimulates the digestion and is carminative in nature. It promotes the sense perception and vitality. Prana kamya rasayana (therapy promote vitality and longevity) will act upon dhatu (tissue), agni (entity that is responsible for digestion) and srotas (channels of the body to carry out the functional and physiological activity). These drugs will bring about the proper uptake, growth and improvement of sapthadhatu (seven body tissues). When Rasayana (rejuvenation therapy) drugs of different rasas is taken, they are digested by the Jatharagni (digestive fire in the body that is responsible for metabolising food) followed by bhutaagni (fire that is present in the basic elements). This qualitative ahara rasa (food) will produce pure Rasa dhatu (bodily fluids) which then continues the production of chain of other raktadidhatu (blood) with the help of *dhatvagni* (fire that is present in tissue). Well-formed dhatus (tissues) will nourish the body. Rasayana (rejuvenation therapy) drugs act at the level of the Rasa (bodily fluid) producing good rasadi dhatu (rasa and other body tissues) and so on. Some Prana kamiya drugs act at the Agni (digestive fire)

and srotas (channels) level by improving the digestion and metabolism⁹. Drugs having *ushna*(hot), *laghu* (light), *ruksha* (rough), *katu* (pungent), *tikta* (bitter) and *kashaya* (astringent) rasa act at the level of *agni* (digestive fire) leading to the formation of *good dhatus* (tissue elements).

Prana kamya Rasayana (promote longevity and vitality) drugs act at the Physiological level. All the benefits of this rasayana type can be correlated with the physiological level benefits such as improvement of Agni, formation of rasadi dhatus and proper elimination of malas (waste materials) and good indriva balam (good sense perception).

Medha Rasayana (Promote intelligence): Medha (intelligence) is to have proper correlation and understanding about the knowledge of the existing objects. Due to *medh*a a person will be able to obtain the knowledge of existing object and person becomes learned. Medhya drugs mainly act by their Achintya veerya (unexpected property/potency)i.e.Prabhava. The medhya drugs in different levels of agni, srotas and rasa⁹. In the Agni level it enhances stimulating and improving the agni. In the Srotas, these drugs improve the circulation of Rasa by opening and cleaning the channels and then ultimately improve the function of medha. These drugs have beneficial effects on mind and body. Various medhya rasayana are mentioned in Susrutha Samhitha such as mandukaparni (Centella asiatica), Shankapushpi (convolvulus pluricaulis), Guduchi Swarasa (Tinospora cordifolia), etc. Medhya rasayana drugs may act by Panchabhoutika (five great elements that is earth, water, fire, air and ether)) composition. Some by Rasa (taste), Guna (attribute) Veerya (potency) and *Vipaka* (final outcome of biotransformation). Panchamahabhootas have characteristic of three Mahaguna like Satva (mental illumination), Raja (goal oriented endeavour) and Tama (clouded mental faculty). Medha are attributed to predominance of satvaguna, hence akashiya, taijasiya, apya drugs having satva guna predominance, hence improve medha. On the basis of rasa, tikta rasa has a direct action on medha due its laghu guna, deepana (carminative) and srotoshodaka action (purifying channels). Madura rasa promotes the formation of ojas (essence part of all body tissues) there by nourishing five senses, mind and medha. Most of the rasayana drugs have tiktha and madura rasa. Amla (sour), lavana (salt) and katu (pungent) rasa are having least importance in Medha drugs. Ushna veerya (hot potent) drugs stimulate sadhaka pitta (type of pitta that is located in heart) which promote the medha. Ushna veerya drugs improve grahana shakthi (grasping power) and smrithi (retention power). Majority of the rasayana dravyas are having madura vipaka which nourishes medha by formation of Ojas. So, all the medha rasayana dravya improve mental faculties, mental function and intellect.

Medha kamya Rasayana act at the level of Psychology. It increases the Medha, improves the Grahana sakthi and smrithi.

Sri kamya Rasayana (promote complexion)

Promoter of complexion. It increases the *ojas* and their by increases the *Vyadhikshamatva* (immunity). The good *ojas* will keep the people strong in all seasons and all stages of life. It is giving good physical and mental fitness. *Ojas* gives bright complexion, high performance and pleasure. Production of good *Rakthadi dhatu* will lead to good *Ojas* which leads to increased *sareera bala*⁹ (strength of the body).

Srikamya Rasayana will act at the immunological level. These drugs act as immune-modulator by strengthening the immunity. Rasayana acts as antioxidant which prevents many diseases. It is an interesting fact that all 3 of these are interrelated. These three act upon the level of agni, srotas and dhatus. With the usage of proper rasayana desired effect can be obtained. By the use of these rasayanas, there is complete excellence of Agni, rasadhi dhatu and correct the function of srotases.

PROBLEMS OF OLD AGE-

Let us examine the problems of old age. These may classified into 3 levels i.e. Physiological (*Prana* level), Psychological (*Medha* level) and Immunological (*Sri* Level) depending upon the impact on each level.

Table 1

Disorders	Prana	Medha	Sri
Intellectual impairment	+	+++	+
Mental impairment	+	+++	+
Sleep Disorder	++	+++	+
Depression	++	+++	+
Infectious and metabolic disorders	++	+	+++
Diabetic Mellitus	+++		++
Cardiac Disorder	+++		++
Weakening Of Immune Systems			+++
Alzheimer's Disease	++	+++	+
Hearing And Vision Decline	+++	++	+
Muscle Strength Lessens	+++		++
Blood Vessels Less Flexible	+++		++
Sensitivity Decreases,	+++		++
Genetic Functions Of Testes And Ovaries impairs	+++		++

Dravyas used in Rasayana

Various drugs are used for *rasayana* purposes such as *bala* (Sida cordifolia), *aswagandha* (Withania somnifera), *bakuchi* (Psoralea corylifolia) etc are mentioned in our *samhitha*. In *Sarangadara Samhitha* various drugs are mentioned for improving the effects of aging according to the Age¹⁰.

- 1. *Balyam*(young age) *vacha* (Acorus calamus), *swarna bhasma* (fine powder of gold).
- 2. *Vrddhi* (middle age) *aswagandha* (Withania somnifera), *bala* (Sida cordifolia).
- 3. *Chavi* (complexion) *amalaki* (Embilica officinalis), *lauha bhasma* (fine powder of iron).
- 4. *Medha*(memory) *sankhapusphi* (Convolvulus pluricaulis), *jyothishmati* (Celastrus paniculatus).
- 5. *Twak* (skin) *bhringaraja* (Eclipta prostrate), *jyothishmati* (Celastrus paniculatus).
- 6. *Drshti* (eye sight) *triphala* (Emblica officinalis, Terminalia bellirica, Terminalia chebula), *satawari* (Asparagus racemosus).
- 7. *Shukra* (semen) *atmagupta* (Mucuna pruriens), *ashwagandha* (Withania somnifera).
- 8. Vikaram (power)- *amalaki* (Emblica officinalis), *bala* (Sida cordifolia)
- 9. *Buddhi* (intelligence) *brahmi* (Bacopa monnieri).

10. *Karmendriya* (strength of the motor organs)- *bala* (Sida cordifolia), *aswagandha* (Withania somnifera).

Rasayana drugs having their action particularly on sense and other organs are also mentioned in our Samhithas¹⁰

- Eyes triphala(Emblica officinalis, Terminalia bellirica, Terminalia chebula), satawari (Asparagus racemosus)
- 2. Nose *anu taila nasya*.(medical preparation instilled in nose)
- 3. Skin *bakuchi* (Psoralea corylifolia), *tuvaraka* (Hydnocarpus laurifolia).
- 4. Brain *vacha* (Acorus calamus).
- 5. Heart- *swarna bhasma* (fine powder of gold), *guggulu*(Commiphora mukul).
- 6. Neuromuscular- *bala* (Sida cordifolia). Various dravyas acting on various tissues¹⁰.
- 1. *Rasa* (fluid) *draksha*(Vitis vinifera), *satawari*(Asparagus racemosus).
- 2. *Raktha* (Blood) *amalaki* (Emblica officinalis), *bhringaraja* (Eclipta prostrate),.
- 3. *Mamsa* (flesh) masha (Vigna mungo), *aswagandha* (Withania somnifera).
- 4. *Meda* (Fat) *guggulu* (Commiphora mukul), *shilajatu* (Asphaltum).

- 5. Asthi (bone) sukthibhasma (pearl oyster), kukkutandatvak bhasma (egg shell calcium), vamsalochana (Bambusa arundinacea).
- 6. *Majja* (bone marrow) *Sankhapusphi* (Convolvulus pluricaulis), *lohabhasma* (fine powder of iron).
- 7. *Sukra* (Semen) *kapikacchu* (Mucuna pruriens), *vidarikanda* (Pueraria tuberosa).

Drugs according to the Prakrithi¹⁰ (constitution)

1. *Vata- bala* (Sida cordifolia), *aswagandha* (Withania somnifera).

- 2. Pitta amalaki (Emblica officinalis), guduchi (Tinospora cordifolia), satawari (Asparagus racemosus).
- 3. Kapha- bhallathaka (Semecarpus anacardium), lasuna (Allium sativum), pippali (piper longum)

These *dravyas* (drugs) may be classified according to which system they act upon. Various drugs have various functions and each of these functions can be classified under Physiological, Psychological and immunological. Therefore the drug action can be classified into these 3 systems.

Table 2:

Drugs	Indications	System on which they mainly Act.	
Vaca	Jvarahara, Lekhaniya, Medhya, Unmada, Apasmara	Physiological, Psychological.	
Aswagandha	Sopha, Svitra, Kshaya, Nidranasa, Granthi, Gandaroga, Apaci, Klaibya, Vandhyatva, Balya, Rasayana, Sukrala	Immunological, Physiological	
Bala	Balya, Brahmana, Vrisya, Rakthapitta Hara, Vatavyadhi Hara,Pramehahara, Kshayahara	Physiological, Immunological	
Amalaki	Vayasthapana, Cakshusya, Pramehahara, Rakthapittahara, Mutrakrcha Hara, Sula	Physiological, Immunological	
Sankhapusphi	Medhya, Svarya, Bhrama Hara, Apsmarahara, Manasaroga Hara, Kushtahara, Krimihara, Visarogahara.	Psychological	
Jyoshmati	Deepana, Medhya, Kushtahara, Vatavyadhihara, Udarahara, Gulmahara	Psychological, Physiological	
Bringaraja	Keshya, Balya, Panduhara, Svasahara, Kasahara, Netrarogahara, Hrdroga Hara, Krimihara, Sothahara, Sirasula Hara.	Physiological, Immunological	
Triphala	Vayasthapana, Cakshusya, Pramehahara, Rakthapittahara, Mutrakrcha Hara, Sula, Anulomna, Lekhana, Vrshya, Chardhihara, Sothahara, Netrarogahara, Mutrakrchahara, Hrdrogahara, Swasakasahara.	Psychological, Physiological, Immunological	
Satavari	Stanyajanana, Artavakshayahara, Rakthapittahara, Atisarahara, Grahaninasanam, Kshayaharam, Gulmanashanam.	Physiological, Immunological	
Atmagupta	Brhmana, Vajikarana, Vatavyadhihara, Klaibyahara, Mutrakrchrahara.	Immunological	
Brahmi	Medhya, Apasmarahara, Pramehahara, Kushtahara, Panduhara, Sothahara, Jwarahara, Kasahara.	Psychological	
Bakuchi	Keshya, Tvacya, Kushtaghna, Balya, Kushtahara, Sophahara, Krimihara, Panduhara.	Physiological	
Tuvaraka	Deepana, Kushtaghna, Krimighna, Grahi, Pramehahara, Netraroga Hara, Kanduhara, Krimihara.	Physiological	
Guggulu	Medorogahara, Lekhana, Amavatahara, Vatavyadhihara, Pramehahara, Apacihara, Sothahara, Pitakanasanam.	Physiological, Immunological	
Draksha	Brhmana, Cakshushya, Jwarahara, RakthaPittahara, Kamalahara, Rajayakshma Hara, Dahasamanam.	Physiological, Immunological	
Masha	Brahmana, Sophahara, Mala Utpadaka, Sthanyajnana, Krchraartavahara.	Immunological	

Vidarikanda	Sthanyajnana, Mutrala, Varnya, Balya, Kshayahara, Dahahara, Mutrakrchra Hara.	Physiological, Immunological
Lasuna	Brhmana, Netrya, Sulahara, Gulmahara, Asthibhangahara,	Physiological, Immunological
Lasuna	Hrdrogahara, Kasahara, Rajayakshmahara, Sothahara, Krimihara.	Thysiological, illimatiological
Bhallathaka	Medhya, Vrshya, Arsahara, Kushtahara, Krimihara, Gulmahara,	Physiological, Immunological
	Grahanihara,Vatavyadhi Hara.	

Since all these *rasayana dravyas* are having their action on the three systems which also get affected in the old age. So by the use of these *rasayana* drugs having their specific action on the Physiological, Psychological, Immunological level, Problems of aging can be dealt with. Hence *Rasayana* act as an anti-aging therapy

DISCUSSION

Rasayana drugs are used for preservation of positive health. Rasayana provides a healthy longevity including mental development and resistance against the diseases. It has specific effects on fundamental aspects of body such as Dhatu, Agni and srotas. It is a comprehensive mechanism involving the fundamental factors like rasa samhavana (carrying fluids), dhatu, agni and srotas. Rasavana drugs are having madhura (sweet), guru (heavy), snigdha (slimy) and sheetha (cold) properties. The example of such drugs may be Satavari, madhuyashti (Glycoriza glabra), bala, dudgha (milk) and ghritha (ghee) etc. Rasayana drugs have fundamental effect at the level of agni or digestion and metabolism. The rasayana drugs possessing the ushana, laghu, ruksha and tiktha, kashaya rasa may be acting at the level of Agni, vitalizing the organic metabolism leading to an improved structural and function pattern of dhatus and production of rasayana effects.

Pippali, guggulu, rasona, bhallataka mainly act at level of agni to improve the digestion and creation of saptadhatu. Rasayana drugs like vidanga, chitraka and hareetaki increases the agni at Jataragni level. Amalaki and Pippali act at the level of dhatus. It helps to promote the persons mental and physical capabilities. Intake of rasayana will increase the immunity power and keeps away the person from diseases. Increase in memory power, long life, good

health, youthfulness, glowing skin, modulated voice and calmness are the benefits of *rasayana*.

Rasayana will have the following actions such as Ant aging action, Antioxidant, Immune modulatory, Haempoetic, Anabolic action, Nutritive action, Neuroprotective

Anti-Aging effect

Aging is progressive procedure related with time. As time passes, by the age of 70 onwards there is reduced muscle tone, power, vision, memory, loco motor functions and immune functions. Free radicals will cause their effect on the tissue causing its damage such as hydroxyl free radicals will damage the cell membrane. Certain rasayanadrugs like Ashwagandha inhibit the oxidative protein modification, thereby decreasing the aging process. Rasayana acts as an antioxidant therapy for delaying the aging process. It enhances the immune modulation, destroys free radical formation, enhances the cellular detoxification, repair of the damaged cells, induces the cell proliferation, longevity, increase of memory, increase of intelligence, health, youth, lusture, colour, sweet sound, strength of body and sense organs, vocabulary and purified body elements. Hence it is an excellent anti-aging therapy.

CONCLUSION

Rasayana is purely Rejuvenation therapy. Rasayana can be given for preventing and curing the disease, promoting health and it also act as anti-aging therapy. In the present era, sedentary life style, dietetic regimen and social fabric influences early aging in people. Problems of aging can be classified in 3 levels - Physiological, Psychological and immunological level. Rasayana dravyas mentioned in our samhitha could address all these levels aging. In the current medical scenario, proper knowledge, practise and popularisation of Rasayana is significant.

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