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, luster, 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, Naimithika, 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 atma² (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 aging. 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 person.

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 process. 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 administered in those desire to promote health and 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 raktidhatu (blood) with the help of dhatvagni (fire that is present in tissue). Well-formed dhatu (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 metabolism\(^9\). Drugs having ushna (hot), laghu (light), ruksha (rough), katu (pungent), tikta (bitter) and kashaya (astringent) rasas act at the level of agni (digestive fire) leading to the formation of good dhatus (tissue elements).

**Prana kamya Rasayana** (promote longeviy 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 indriya 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 medha 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 rasas\(^9\). 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 Panchabhouitika (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, tajastiya, apya drugs having satva guna predominance, hence improve medha. On the basis of rasas, 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) the 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 sakti and smrithi.

**Sri kamya Rasayana** (promote complexion) Promoter of complexion. It increases the ojas and their by increases the Vyadhikshamativa (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

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

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 Age 10.

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) – sankhappushi (Convolvulus pluricaulis), jyothishmati (Celastrus paniculatus).
5. Twak (skin) - bhringaraja (Eclipta prostrate), jyothishmati (Celastrus paniculatus).
6. Drshti (eye sight) – triphala (Embilica officinalis, Terminalia bellirica, Terminalia chebula), satawari (Asparagus racemosus).
7. Shukra (semen) - atmagupta (Mucuna pruriens), ashwagandha (Withania somnifera).
8. Vikaram (power) - amalaki (Embilica officinalis), bala (Sida cordifolia).
10. Karmendriya (strength of the motor organs) - bala (Sida cordifolia), aswagandha (Withania somnifera).

Rasayana drugs have their action particularly on sense and other organs are also mentioned in our Samhithas 10.

1. Eyes – triphala (Embilica officinalis, Terminalia bellirica, Terminalia chebula), satawari (Asparagus racemosus).
3. Skin – bakuchi (Psoralea corylifolia), tuvaraka (Hydnocarpus laurifolia).
5. Heart – swarna bhasma (fine powder of gold), guggulu (Commiphora mukul).

1. Rasa fluid – draksha (Vitis vinifera), satawari (Asparagus racemosus).
2. Raktha (Blood) – amalaki (Embilica 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), vamsalochna (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 Prakrithi\(^\text{10}\) (constitution)
1. Vata- bala (Sida cordifolia), aswagandha (Withania somnifera).
2. Pitta – amalaki (Emblica officinalis), guduchi (Tinospora cordifolia), satawari (Asparagus racemosus).
3. Kapha- bhallatthaka (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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drugs</th>
<th>Indications</th>
<th>System on which they mainly Act.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vaca</td>
<td>Jvarahara, Lekhaniya, Medhya, Unmada, Apasmarah</td>
<td>Physiological, Psychological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aswagandha</td>
<td>Sopha, Svitra, Kshaya, Nidranasa,Granthi, Gandarogah, Apaci, Klaibhy, Vandyvatya, Balya, Rasayana, Sukrala</td>
<td>Immunological, Physiological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bala</td>
<td>Balya, Brahmana, Vrisya, Rakthapitta Hara, Vatavyadhi Hara, Premeharahara, Kshayaharah</td>
<td>Physiological, Immunological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amalaki</td>
<td>Vayasthapana, Cakshusya, Framehahara, Rakthapithahara, Mutrakrcha Hara, Sula</td>
<td>Physiological, Immunological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sankhapusphi</td>
<td>Medhya, Svarya, Bhrama Hara, Apsmarahara, Manasaroga Hara, Kushtahara, Krimihara, Visaragahara.</td>
<td>Psychological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jyoshmati</td>
<td>Deepana, Medhya, Kushtahara, Vatavyadhihara, Udarahara, Gulmahara.</td>
<td>Psychological, Physiological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringaraja</td>
<td>Keshya, Balya, Panduhara, Svasahara, Kasahara, Netrarogahara, Hdroga Hara, Krimihara, Sothahara, Sirasula Hara.</td>
<td>Physiological, Immunological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triphala</td>
<td>Vayasthapana, Cakshusya, Framehahara, Rakthapithahara, Mutrakrcha Hara, Sula, Anulomma, Lekhana, Vrshya, Chardhihara, Sothahara, Netrarogahara, Mutrakrcha, Hdroghahara, Swasaksahara.</td>
<td>Psychological, Physiological, Immunological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satavari</td>
<td>Stanyavanana, Artavakshayahara, Rakthapithahara, Atisararahara, Grananinasanam, Kshayaharam, Gulmanashanam.</td>
<td>Physiological, Immunological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atmagupta</td>
<td>Brhma, Vajikarana, Vatavyadhihara, Klaibhyahara, Mutrakrcha.</td>
<td>Immunological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahmi</td>
<td>Medhya, Apasmarahara, Premehahara, Kushtahara, Panduhara, Sothahara, Jwara, Kasahara.</td>
<td>Psychological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakuchi</td>
<td>Keshya, Tvacya, Kushtaghna, Balya, Kushtahara, Sophahara, Krimihara, Panduhara.</td>
<td>Physiological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvaraka</td>
<td>Deepana, Kushtaghna, Krimighna, Grahi, Premehahara, Netraroga Hara, Kanduhara, Krimihara.</td>
<td>Physiological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guggulu</td>
<td>Medorogahara, Lekhana, Amavatahara, Vatavyadhihara, Premehahara, Apachi, Sothahara, Pitakanasanam.</td>
<td>Physiological, Immunological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draksha</td>
<td>Brhma, Cakshushya, Jwara, RakthaPittahara, Kamalhara, Rajayaksha Hara, Dahasamanan.</td>
<td>Physiological, Immunological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masha</td>
<td>Brhma, Sophahara, Mala Utpadaka, Sthanyajnana, Krcharatavahara.</td>
<td>Immunological</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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*. *Rasayana* drugs are having *madhura* (sweet), *guru* (heavy), *snigdha* (slimy) and *sheetha* (cold) properties. The example of such drugs may be *Satavari*, *madhyashti* (*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* rasas 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, Haemo poetic, Anabolic action, Nutritive action, Neuro-protective

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 *rasayana*drugs 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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15. http://www.who.int/topic/ageing/e


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