ROLE OF MEDHYA RASAYANA IN JARAJANYA SMRITI BHRAMSHA

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ABSTRACT
Aging is a natural process that begins at conception, progresses throughout one’s life and ends at death. It is the process of physical, physiological and social change in multidimensional aspects. Ayurveda describes ageing or jaravastha as swabhavaja. Rasayana concept of Ayurveda is believed to be useful to overcome age related disorders. The “Medhya Rasayanas” are known to be beneficial to improve the intellectual capacity. Medhya rasayana drugs are used for prevention & treatment of mental disorders of all age groups. These drugs promote the intellect (dhee), retention power (dhriti) and memory (smriti). Moreover, Rasayana drugs work on hypothalamus—pituitary—adrenal axis (HPA axis) & normalize the secretion of neurotransmitters such as dopamine, serotonin, acetyl choline & thus can improve the mental function.

Keywords: Jaravastha, Rasayana, Medhya Rasayana, Dhee, Dhriti, Smriti, HPA axis, neurotransmitters.

INTRODUCTION
‘Medha’ means intellect and/or retention & ‘Rasayana’ means therapeutic procedure or preparation that on regular practice will boost nourishment, health, memory, intellect, immunity and hence longevity. In Ayurveda, Medhya is described in broad way. Medhya comprises of all the three mental faculties- Dhee, Dhriti and Smriti and these are interrelated with each other¹.
Rajas Aahara decreases Dhriti which is having control over the functions of Manas². Other causes are inability to restrain itself, excess thinking, loss of confidence, fails to achieve decided goals, persons who lags behind.

Samprapti of Smriti Bhramsha is below³ –

Due to etiological factors – Prana, Udana and Vyana vitiated first

Provoked vata enters in Hridaya & dislodges Avalamabaka Kapha therein

Dislodged kapha further obstructs the channels of Prana, Udana, Vyana and again vitiates them
Kaphavritta Prana results in Sada, Tandra, Daurbalya

Kaphavritta Udana hampers its function like Prayatna, Urja, Vakpravritti which results in loss of interest, loss of energy & low intended growth

Vitiated vata & other etiological factors depreciate Sadhakagni which results into Impairment of its function (Sadhaka pitta which is responsible for good Medha & Utsaha). Its impairment leads to disturbances Dhi, Dhriti & Smriti.

Control of Buddhi & Manas are functions of Prana
Vitiated Prana loses this control i.e. upaghata of these factors

Vitiated Vyana leads to disturbances in function of Manas upto some extent. Loss of enthusiasm as well as loss of interest in work.

Obstruction of three Vayu together causes Psychomotor retardation

Causes Smriti Bhramsha

Assessment scales in dementia⁴-
Montreal Cognitive Assessment
The et Montreal Cognitive Assessment [Nasreddine al. 2005] was originally developed to help screen for mild cognitive impairment (MCI). It takes minimal training and can be used in about 10 min by any clinician. It assesses attention/concentration, executive functions, conceptual thinking, memory, language, calculation and orientation. A score of 25 or lower (from maximum of 30) is considered significant cognitive impairment. It performs MMSE, including in screening for dementia. It has been widely translated. As it assesses executive function, it is particularly useful for patients with vascular impairment, including vascular dementia.

Medhya Rasayanas in Brain Function and Disease⁵
Medhya comprises of all the three mental faculties-Dhee, Dhriti and Smriti and these are interrelated with each other. Medhya can also be subdivided into the following faculties:
1. Grahana shakti (Power of Grasping)
2. Dharana shakti (Power of Retention)
3. Viveka shakti (Power of Discrimination)

4. Smriti (Power of recollection)
The aim of Rasayana Chikitsa is to nourish blood, lymph, flesh, adipose tissue and semen. This prevents the individual from chronic degenerative diseases. The therapy influences the fundamental aspect of body viz. Dhatu, Agni, Srotansi and Ojus. In Rasayana therapy, the Bheshaja (medicine) is divided into two types:
a. Swasthasyaurjaskara-toning up the health of a healthy person
b. Kinchit Artasya Rognut-treating the ailments of the patients

What is Medhya Rasayanas⁶,7?
The word 'medhya Rasayana' has been derived from the Sanskrit words 'medhya'- meaning intellect or cognition, and 'rasayana'- meaning rejuvenation. The medicinal plants in the Ayurvedic system are classed as brain tonics or rejuvenators. Earlier reports indicate that these plants are used both in herbal and conventional medicine and offer benefits that pharmaceutical drugs lack. Neurological and psychiatric disorders are generally associated with loss of memory, cognitive deficits, impaired mental function etc. The
'medhya rasayanas' are known to be beneficial to improve the intellectual e.g., mandukparni swaras, yashtimadhu churna with ksheer, guduchi swaras, and shankhapushpi kalka.

Table 1 describes about drugs having the Medhya Rasayana property.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medhya drugs</th>
<th>Synonyms</th>
<th>Properties</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yastimadhu (Glycyrrhiza glabra Linn., Family – Fabaceae)</td>
<td>Yastimadhuk, Klitaka. Dosha karma – Vata-pitta shamak</td>
<td>Guna: Madhur</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Medhya Rasayana drugs are used for prevention and treatment of mental disorders of all the age groups. These drugs promote the Intellect (Dhi) Retention power (Dhriti), memory (Smriti). In fact they produce Neuronutrient effect by improving cerebral metabolism. Medhya Rasayana drugs are known to have specific effect on mental performance by promoting the functions of “Buddhi” and “Manas” by correcting the disturbances of “Rajas” and “Tamas”. The description of Medhya Rasayana found in Samhitas indicates the specific utility of this type of Rasayana. In Charaka Samhita, there is no direct mention of Medhya Rasayana as an independent chapter. But there is description of four drugs viz. Mandookaparni Swaras, Yashtimadhu Choorna with go ksheera, Guduchi swaras & Shankhapushpi kalka as Medhya Rasayanas. The properties ascribed to these formulations include Medha (intellect) and Buddhi (wisdom) deteriorate in the fourth and ninth decades of life accordingly12. Both are closely associated with the mind & helps for the normal functioning of the mind. If these components decrease in the mind, then it will affect the normal function of mind.

Moreover, Acharya Charaka has noted that cognitive functions are thoroughly affected in old age as Grahana (power of understanding), Smarana (power of memorizing), Vachana (speech) & functions of sense organs qualitatively13.

**IMPORTANCE OF MEDHYA RASAYANA ON AGEING:**
The decline in brain weight and volume, degeneration of intracellular organelles, changes in cellular DNA and RNA, neuronal degeneration as well as
significant loss of synapses are the salient features of ageing in brain\textsuperscript{14}. Thus, therefore, physiological and neurological manifestations often form the hallmark of senility. \textit{Medhya rasayana} drugs act on hypothal-amus-pituitary-adrenal axis & thus improve brain function.

According to Acharya Charaka, \textit{Medhya rasayana} can be administered in the way of \textit{vatatapika rasayana} (rejuvenation therapy having no restrictions) but as per Sushruta\textsuperscript{15}, \textit{kutipraveshika rasayana} (rejuvenation therapy with specific rules) procedure is followed.

**Mode of Administration:**
1. **PURVA KARMA:** In the purva karma, koshtha shuddhi is done.
2. **PRADHAN KARMA:** Different forms of medhya drugs are administered with their proper dose, duration and adjuvant.
3. **PASCHATA KARMA:** After the digestion of Medhya rasayana, pathya apathya should be followed. Shashtika Shali with go ghrita and ksheera is the pathya mentioned for many of the formulations.

Time of administration: Early morning before the food.

**DISCUSSION**

**Concept of Medha (Intellect)**

The part of Dhee (Power of acquisition) which retains, understands, comprehends information is called as Medha (intellect)\textsuperscript{16}. Since Dalhana defines it as the subtle part of Buddhi (Mind) that contains the things heard\textsuperscript{17} as well as an intellectual capacity to comprehend or retain books that are read\textsuperscript{18}, we can also infer that in the context of medical text Buddhi (Mind) is synonymous to only Dhee (Power of acquisition) unlike in Sanskrit lexicoms where it is synonymous to Chitta (Mind), Chetana (Consciousness), Prajna (Intelligence)\textsuperscript{20}.

**Concept of Dhee (Power of acquisition)**

Dhee (Power of acquisition) is synonymous with Buddhi (mind). Buddhi (mind) has been defined by as that faculty which judges good & bad\textsuperscript{21} and controls our activities (physical and mental)\textsuperscript{22}. A good functional Buddhi (mind) is a function of prakrata Kaphe\textsuperscript{23}, a sign of good Twak (skin) & Satwa sara in any person\textsuperscript{24} and seen as a personality trait of a Pitta & Kapha Prakriti (body constituent) person\textsuperscript{25}. Its impairment is characterized by confusing permanent things with temporary things, temporary things with permanent things, beneficial things with harmful things and harmful things with beneficial things. Its health or normal functioning is recognized as the ability to view things as they are with no room for impaired judgment\textsuperscript{26}.

**The medhya rasayana drugs acts in the following way-**

The medhya effect of the rasayana can be considered as prabhava janya. Maintaining of normal functioning of sadhaka pitta and tarpaka kapha is the desired action of any medhya drug. Medhya drugs also act on manastika bhavas thereby relieving anxiety, stress etc. they are having mastishka balya (nourishing brain) property. Medha is the karma given to prakrita pitta. This can be related to orientation and grasping power.

**CONCLUSION**

Therefore, we can conclude that the Medhya action of Medhya dravya like Mandoorkarni (Centella asiatica), Yashtimadhu (Glycyrrhiza glabra), Guduchi (Tinospora cordifolia) and Shankhpushpi (Convolvolus pluricaulis) are ascribed to its Prabhava (special action) and unexplainable to the virtues of its Rasa (taste), Guna (property), Virya (potency) & Vipaka (end metabolism). Medhya Rasayanias thus plays an important role in ageing and Jara janya Smriti bhramsha.
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