

A Survey Study on Effect of *Rasayana* in Purview of Longevity

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the science of life by which a long, happy and healthy life can be achieved. *Rasayana* is definitely the only mean to accomplish it. *RasayanaTantra* is a distinct branch of *Ashtanga Ayurveda*. All classical treatises have explained *Rasayanain* great details. According to this, '*Swasthasyaswasthyarakshanam*' is the primary goal of *Ayurveda* which means to protect the health of a healthy person. In this context, *Rasayana* has been mentioned by *Acharya* to fulfillment this goal. Drugs, diet and regimens which promote longevity by delaying aging and preventing diseases are called *Rasayana*. A survey was conducted under Nirogi Rajasthan programme. In which we found significant amount of data related to *RasayanSevana* and their effect on longevity. Long and healthy life has been nurtured by man since ancient times. The survey study was done on 1500 persons, out of which 1070 persons take *Rasayana* on daily basis. The overall percentage of *RasayanaSevana* was 71.33%.

Key Words Longevity, *Rasayana*, Survey

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INTRODUCTION

Acharya Charaka explained in detail about the *Rasayana*, he says '*Swasthasyaorjaskaramyattu tad vrishyam tad rasayanam*'. It means that the medicine which provides energy and longevity to healthy individuals is called *Rasayana* and *Vrishya*. The description of *Rasayanais* found in detail in all the *Ayurvedic* texts. It means to promote and maintain the health of healthy person. The word '*Urja*' means best (*Prashasta*), *Bala* (strength), Energy and life (*Prana*). *Swasthasya Urjaskar* includes *Rasayana* and *Vajikaran* remedies. This

branch of *Ayurveda* appears to have practiced in ancient lines as an important speciality for the purpose of rejuvenation and geriatric care.

In fact, *Rasayana* is one of the eight branches of *Ayurveda*. *Rasayana Chikitsa* has importance from both the preventive and curative aspect of the disease. Therefore, much importance is given to this particular branch the chapters of the *Rasayana* take priority in the *Charaka samhita Chikitsasthana*. *Charaka Samhita* describes *Rasayana* in the first *Padas* of *Chikitsa Sthana*. In *Sushruta Samhita* it is pushed back to chapters 27-30 of *Chikitsasthana*. In

REVIEW ARTICLE

AstangaHridaya, Rasayana does not find a special place in *Chikitsasthana* and is described only briefly in the 39th chapter of *Uttara Tantra*.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the concept of *Rasayana* in *Ayurveda*.
2. To study the effect of *Rasayana* in purview of longevity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

RASAYANA

Rasayana means the way for attaining excellent *Rasaadisevan Dhatus*¹.

The *Dravyas* which promotes the body tissues (*Dhatus*) are known as *Rasayana*².

Rasayana is that which delays *Jara* (old age) and helps in curing disease³.

TYPES OF RASAYANA⁴

A. Classification of *Rasayana* based on the aim-

(1) *Naimittikarasayana*: Used for a particular cause e.g. *Pippali* (*Piperlongum*) *Rasayana* for *Rajyakshma*, *Mandookparni* (*Centelaasiatica*) *rasayana* for *Medha*, *Triphalarasayana* for *Chakshu*.

(2) *Ajasrikarasayana*- It is used to maintain good health and improve the quality of life through a healthy life style, diet or exercise in daily routine e.g. milk, Ghee, honey, adopting the principles of *Aacharrasayana*.

(3) *Kamyarasayana*- It is used to fulfil a desire or to serve a special purpose. It is of four types:

Pranakamya- achieves or maintains the best quality of *Prana* in the body.

Medhakamya- enhances the memory and intellect.

Ayushkamya- increase longevity.

Chakshukamya- maintain healthy eyes

B. Based on mode of action

(1) *Samsodhana* –

‘*Doshasyasamsodhanadisamsodhanam*’

(2) *Samshamana* –

‘*Samshamanamnagabaladiprayogadikam*’

Samsodhana and *Samshamana* both are curative in nature. *Samsodhana* type of *Rasayana* expels the aggravated *Dosha* whereas *Samshamana* type pacifies the accumulated ones.

C. *Sushruta* has classified into four types

1. *SarvopaghataShamaniya*

2. *Medhayushkamiya*

3. *SvabhavavyadhiPratishedhaniya*

4. *NivruttaSantapiya*

SarvopghataShamaniya is concerned with the prevention of diseases. *Medhayushkamiya* is one of by which an individual can increase his intellect and prolong his life. *Svabhavavyadhipratishedhaniya* is one which delays the onset of *Svabhavikavyadhi* like *Kshut*, *pipasa*, *jara*, *mrutyu* etc. and *Nivruttasantapiyarasayana* rebuilds the physical and mental faculties following their disturbance due to diseases process.

D. Based on method of administration

1. *Kutipravesikarasayana*

For this, a cottage should be constructed in an auspicious land facing east or north and in a

REVIEW ARTICLE

locality which is inhabited by king, physician and Brahmins, holy saints, is free from dangers, auspicious and with easy availability of necessary accessories. It should have sufficient space area and height, three inner chambers one after the other, a small opening, thick walls and should be comfortable for the seasons, well cleaned and favourable; it should be impermeable for undesirable sound etc, free from women, equipped with necessary accessories and attended by physician with medicaments and *Brahmins*⁵.

2. *Vatatapikarasayana*

It is better for people who engaged in their busy life schedule. *Rasayana* is administered with patient exposed to *Vata* and *Atapa* e.g. *Brahmarasayana*, *Shilajiturasayana*, *Amalakirasayana*, *Haritakirasayana*, *Pippalirasayana*, *Lohadirasayana*.

E. *Dravyabhuta* and *Adravyabhutarasayana*

TRIDOSHA, DHATU AND AGNI IN AGEING

According to the basic principles of *Ayurveda* the balance state of *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* *Dosh* maintains the health of an individual by controlling the physiological factors in the body. *Sushruta Samhita* has clearly emphasized that the *Vata Dosh* increases greatly during old age. So, it is responsible for most of the manifestations of ageing. There are tendencies of gradual diminution of all *Dhatu*s, *Indriya*s, *Oja*s during ageing because in old age *Vata* predominates and its fundamental properties precipitates the *Soshana* and *Kshaya* of different *Dhatu*s which are responsible for the most of the manifestations of ageing⁶. *Ayurveda*

has elaborated that *Agni* represents the digestive and metabolic functions of the body which consists of the digestive juices and different kinds of hormones, enzymes and co-enzymes. The optimum activity of *Agni* maintains the vigor and vitality of an individual and also keeps up the growth, development of the body. According to *Ayurveda* with the advancing age that *Ahara Rasa* will not be able to produce satisfactory in elderly persons by nourishing since their tissues are over matured due to old age⁷.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A survey was conducted under Nirogi Rajasthan programme. This survey was done on 1500 people aged above 60 years irrespective of their gender. A questionnaire format was used for this survey study. The questions prepared were in bivariate (yes/no) and multiple-choice forms and were used to collect the data.

The related references have been collected from different *Ayurvedic* texts and its available commentaries, related websites. The collected references have been critically observed, compiled and discussed thoroughly.

RESULTS

The survey study was done on 1500 persons aged above 60 years out of which 1070 persons take *Rasayana* on daily basis. The overall percentage of *Rasayana Sevana* was 71.33%. This shows that the people taking *Rasayana* have better life expectancy (longevity).

REVIEW ARTICLE

DISCUSSION

According to the modern discipline, ageing is probably the result of a breakdown of the cellular safety net. Some of the causes are unavoidable such as ultraviolet radiation, free radicals and genetic effects, environmental and behavioural influences. Free radicals that are highly reactive and can cause tremendous damage to the cell. They are capable of attacking the healthy cells of the body causing them to lose their structure and the function. It appears to be a major contribution to ageing and degenerative disorders in ageing. Thus, cell has responded to this threat by creating various enzymes that bind to free radicals and inactivate them which are called antioxidants. So, it has been reported by scientific studies that *Ayurvedic Rasayana* formulations are potent antioxidant drugs and having immunomodulatory, anti-stress and cytoprotective properties.

Ayurveda Rasayana Tantra which is exclusively committed to the science of ageing and its prevention with the help of *Rasayana* or rejuvenation therapy. It consists of drugs and specific therapeutic measures which act on *Dhatu*, *Agni*, *Srotas* in the body and results healthy in tissues development in the body. Ultimately it gives to the person long life, immunity, strength, happiness and intellect promotion. So, all these improvements are considered as anti-ageing effects.

As per the *Ayurvedic* principles the ageing is a *Swabhava* or natural phenomena of life. *Charaka*

Samhita mentions that the functional diminution of *Dhatu*, *Ojas*, strength of sense organs, power of cognition, strength of the body and valour are gradually decreasing during old age. So, the effect of therapy of *Rasayana* affords comprehensive physiologic and metabolic restoration and gives important contribution to minimize these difficulties, including mental development and resistance against diseases among elders. Because *Rasayana* drugs and therapeutic measures act on *Dhatu*, *Agni*, *Srotas* and produce healthy tissues development in the body and in turn it provides longevity, immunity, resistance against disease, strength, happiness and intellect promotion in the mind⁸.

a) Effect on *Agnibala*

From *Ayurveda* view point the *Agni* denotes the digestion and metabolism in the body. It is considered to be the root or the most important sustaining factor of living beings. *Agni* has been observed by using *Anumanapariksha* with reference to the *Abyavaharanashakti* and *Jaranashakti* in the human body. The optimum activity of *Agni* provides vigour and vitality of an individual and perform healthy and enthusiasm. *Charaka Samhita* clearly emphasizes the effect of *Rasayana*⁹. There is no disorders of *Kapha* and obstruction (*Sarotsa Avroda*) condition which is not ameliorated by *Bhallataka* quickly. Moreover, it promotes intellect and *Agni*¹⁰.

b) Effect on *Dehabala*

Regarding the effect on *Balavridhi*, in *Ayurveda* *Ojas* is known as *Bala* in the body. It provides

REVIEW ARTICLE

strength to the body in terms of physical, mental, immunological strength and resistance to diseases. Majority of aged individuals found to have affected their *Bala* in the body. Furthermore, Pharmacological studies have proven that *Chavyanprasha*, *Guduchi*, *Vidanga*, *Sankapushpi*, *Kustha* and *Shatavari* ingredients possess the property of immunostimulant. Moreover, the water and ethanolic extract of *Guduchi* stem inhibited the cyclophosphamide induced immune suppression. By using *Chavyanprasha Rasayana* the extremely old *Chyavana* regained youthful age. If this *Rasayana* is used by the indoor method, even the old attains intellect, memory, lustre, freedom from diseases, strength of sense, sexual vigour, increased *Agni*, and fairness of complexion¹¹.

c) Effect on *Sattvabala*

Because of the *Sevana* of *Rasayana*, the mental health of the elderly people in this study is currently in a pleasant and healthy state. The sound sleep is disturbed by mental tension, according to *Charaka*. As a result, it has been discovered that *Guduchyadi Rasayana* has improved *Sattvabala*. This allows a person's mental strain to be relieved.

Mode of action of *Rasayana* drugs

1. At the level of *Rasa* (*Poshak Rasa*) - They improve the nutrition as a result improving the nutritional value of Plasma.
2. At the level of *Agni*- They improve digestion and metabolism thus improved nutrition is provided to the tissue.

3. *Strotas* improvement - By improving micro circulation thus cleaning the *Strotas*.

4. *Dravya Prabhava*- Drugs produce specific type of *Rasayana* action by virtue of their specific potency.

Anabolic effects-

The purpose of the first studies on *Rasayana* medicines was to find out how they affected metabolism and tissue growth. Regular administration of such medications, such as *Aamalaki*, *Gambhari*, *Pippali*, *Shatavari*, *Guduchi*, and *Shilajatu*, has been found to improve nitrogen balance and so increase tissue formation.

Anti-Stress and Adaptogenic Effect-

Many paradoxical situations confront the living process. Paradoxical Stress is one such example. To be precise, every living entity in the cosmos is under a stressful circumstance in some way. The normal and pathological stress values are difficult to describe, because they will be very varied. The most important factor is one's tolerance threshold. Pharmacological studies on medications like *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*) and *Shilajatu* hint to *Rasayana* drugs having a unique biological effect. As a result, a substance of *Rasayana* quality can be beneficial to the user in two ways. To begin with, it can counteract the harmful physiological consequences of stress and restore equilibrium. This is referred to as the anti-stress effect. Second, long-term use of such medications may improve one's tolerance levels and help one cope with stress more effectively.

REVIEW ARTICLE

Adaptogenic effect is the name given to this phenomenon.

Immuno-modulatory Effect-

Immunity (*Vyadhikshmatva*) is a biological phenomenon that has a wide range of ramifications. First and foremost, the immune system strives to combat any foreign assaults on the body, such as microbial invasions. The immune system is a multi-component, multi-locational defence system that protects the entire body. Again, according to current knowledge, the immune system may perform a contradictory role in the body. When it acts in a balanced manner, for example, it protects the body from microbial invasions. When this defensive system process fails, the body becomes infected. A medicine that stimulates the immune cells to perform more efficiently may be required. On the other hand, under some circumstances, our immune system may begin to distrust our own tissues and invade them viciously. Such a strange occurrence could lead to the emergence of a new illness category known as "Auto-Immune Disorder." In such complex situations, it may be necessary to dampen the Hyper-acting immune complex.

The effects of *RasayanaDravya* on the immune system are still being studied. These medicines can be used to alter immunological function, according to available research. On the one hand, they may act to improve immune function and strengthen you from the inside out, or they may work to calm an enraged immunity cell and keep it within its limitations on the other.

In both respects, this *Rasayanamedication* benefits the host.

Anti-aging Effect-

The use of *Rasayana* medications appears to be linked to the prevention of ageing as well. Evidence suggests that *Rasayanamedications* may impact the secretion of the hormone Dihydroxyphenyl Alanine (DHEA), whose shortage is linked to the ageing process. In stressful situations, neurotransmitter molecules such as norepinephrine, acetyl chloride, and dopamine (DHEA) are released. The ageing process is triggered by repeated stress on each cell. As a result, *Rasayana* therapy is linked to a variety of physiological outcomes.¹²

CONCLUSION

Rasayana therapy, in conclusion, is a good therapy. A person can live a long and healthy life if they take *Rasayana*, according to *Ayurveda*. *Rasayana* therapy is a specialist *Ayurvedic* therapeutic method that is not merely a simple treatment therapy. *Rasayana* therapy has a variety of health benefits for our bodies, such as *JaraVyadhiNashana*, which enhances body tissues (*Dhatus*), strength, immunity, and the relief of illnesses. In addition, a person who wants greater favourable outcomes from *Rasayana* therapy should follow the *AyurvedicPathya-ApathyaAahar*, *Vihara*, *Dinacharya*, and *Ritucharya*. By this survey we found that *RasayanaSevana* produce longevity and help in healthy life.

REVIEW ARTICLE

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