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Review on Rasayana therapy to improve immunity for better health

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ABSTRACT

Ayurvedic medicine has many rejuvenating herbs, traditionally known as Rasayana, which improve health, immunity, vigor, vitality and longevity, as well as protect against stress and help in boosting immunity power. Rasayana Chikitsa (rejuvenation) is a inimitable branch of Ayurveda. The word "Rasayana" means the way for attaining excellent Rasadi Dhatus. In Ayurveda, one of the major methods of presentation of positive health has been described i.e. Rasayana. This resistance power of the body, which prevents the development of diseases, is called as Immunity or Vyadhikshamatva. The ultimate aim of Rasayan therapy is to correct dosha disturbances and improve Agni and Dhatu function which overall improves strength, immunity. Basically, the application of Rasayan therapy comes in the perspective of premature ageing (Jara) and death. Rasayanas are used as preventive, curative and health promotive purpose.

Key words: Rasayana, Rasa, Agni, Jara, Strotas, Oja.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurvedic medicine has many rejuvenating herbs, traditionally known as Rasayana, which improve health, immunity, vigor, vitality and longevity, as well as protect against stress and also help in boosting immunity power. The beneficial actions of Rasayana herbs have been scientifically proven through experimental as well as clinical studies. Rasayana herbs keep enzymes in the cells in their normal state of function. These cells are revitalized and their

composition is changed. Tranquillity of the mind is also promoted, which helps combat the process of aging. Rasayana therapy is the lead therapy employed to treat Ojas or immunodeficient disorders, in such a way that it increases the essence of each Dhatu, starting from Rasa and enrich Ojas.

This resistance power of the body, which prevents the development of diseases, is called as Immunity or Vyadhikshamatva. Vyadhikshamatva in Ayurveda is not merely immunity against a specific infectious agent or disease. Rasayana therapy is indicated for the prevention as well as for curing of such type of diseases. It is emphasis on restoration and revitalization, strengthening of tissues and body systems, Concentration on mental and spiritual health. Several medicinal plants have been described as Rasayanas in Ayurveda. Ashwagandha and Guduchi are the best of the Rasayanas described by Charaka.

Types of Rasayana

1. **Dravya & Adravya:** Rasayana done by using various ingredients like herbs, minerals, food etc. is called as Dravya Rasayana.

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2. **Geriatric and Disease specific:** Procedures, nutrition and herbs that keeps away old age and which prevents the diseases.
3. **Kamya, Naimittik & Ajasrika:**
 - a. Kamya - Kamana means a definite aim. These are promoters of normal health. Pranakamya – Promoter of vitality and longevity
 - b. Medhakamya - Promoter of intelligence.
 - c. Srikamya - Promoter of complexion.
4. **Nimitta** means things used for a short and precise period. This type is used for treating diseases also. Hence Rasayana done for only a specific period (e.g. Use of *Tinospora cordifolia* after cure of fever) is called as Naimittik Rasayana.
5. **Ajasrika Rasayana** is using food, medicine on regular basis for nourishment of body e.g. daily usage of cow's milk, ghee etc.
6. **Vardhaman Rasayana:** Specific drug is used for Rasayan either in increasing or decreasing technique. Vardhamana means increasing. Hence the Rasayana in which the dosage is increased periodically (and reduced periodically) is called Vardhamana Rasayana. E.g. pippali- for lungs and for rasavaha srotas.
7. **Kutipravesnik & Vatatapik:** Kuti means chamber, hence in this form of Rasayana the person is made to stay in a specially designed chamber for a certain period and is given Rasayana preparations (Non-ambulatory method).
 - a. Amalaki - Chyavanaprasha
 - b. Haritaki - Abhayavaleha
 - c. Pippali - Vardhaman Pippali Rasayana
 - d. Brahmi - Brahma Rasayana
8. **Achara Rasayana:** This means how ideally the person should behave while moving in the society.
9. **Medhya Rasayana:** Charaka has mentioned specific Rasayana for increasing medha or intelligence and memory. A special branch of

Rasayana that deals with rejuvenation of the nervous system and the brain is called medhya Rasayana. Medhya literally means “intelligence enhancement,” *Withania somnifera* (ashwagandha), *Centella asiatica* (gotu kola), *Bacopa monnieri* (bacopa) and *Mucuna pruriens* (macuna) are considered nerve and brain tonics.

DISCUSSION ON CONCEPT OF IMMUNITY

The word ‘Rasayana’ is composed of two words Rasa + Ayan. Rasa means “nourishing juice” and Ayan means “pathways or channels”. So Rasayana means by which one gets the excellence of Rasa (Nourishing juice) is known as Rasayana. The body's resistance is importance in the health of living beings, for prevention and rapid recovery from diseases. This force computed, as regards everyday wellness termed as vyadhikshamatva. Principles of Vyadhi Kshamatva in Ayurveda are free from diseases and lead healthy and prosperous life. Majority of Rasayana drugs works on multiple areas and helps in achievement of vyadhikshamatva through its dipana, pachana, medhya, antioxidant, adaptogenic, and immunomodulators properties.

CONCLUSION

Rasayana therapy is a specialized part of treatment in Ayurveda which mainly deals with the disease prevention and promotion of health by revitalizing the metabolism and enhancing the power of immune system. Rasayana drugs are not only immunomodulatory activity, but also have other effects such as immune-stimulation, anti-stress, antioxidant properties. Modification and balancing such immune responses with immunomodulatory, antioxidant, and increase the Ojas Rasayana offer a huge potential for the development of health promotion and cure of diseases.

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