

CONCEPT OF RASAYANA FOR DIRGHAJEEVAN (LONGEVITY)

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(Raj.)Article Received on
20 Nov. 2020,Revised on 10 Dec. 2020,
Accepted on 30 Dec. 2020

DOI: 10.20959/wjpr20211-18805

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Udaipur (Raj.)**ABSTRACT**

Introduction- *Ayurveda* has explained about longevity and vitality in terms of *Jarachikitsa* and *Rasayana*. The aspects of ageing in pharmacological as well as non-pharmacological approaches have been explained meticulously in *Ayurveda* classics. Geriatric is emerged as a main challenging speciality because of over growing population of aged people all over the world including India. **Aim and objectives-** To review the concept of *Dirghajeevan* (Life longevity) and explore the prevention and treatment of ageing in *Ayurvedic* literature. **Material and Method-** *Brihatrayi*, *Laghutrayi* materials pertaining to *Dirghajeevan* (Longevity) available in the internet were thoroughly screened, compiled, analyzed and presented in systemic manner.

Discussion and Conclusion- Acharya Charaka states that the means of obtaining maximum nourishment to body tissues are called *Rasayana*, Shusrut defines *Rasayana* as a measure which prolong and provide positive health, improve mental state as well as immunity against disease. In *Ayurved* various herbomineral formulation like *chyanwanprash*, *silajit*, *guduchi*, *amalaki* etc. An individual has to adopt these formulation for *dirghajeevan*(Longevity).

KEYWORDS:- Longevity, *Rasayana*, Ageing, *Chyawanprash*, Herbomineral formulation.**INTRODUCTION**

During last few decades there has been a noticeable rise in the average life expectancy of the population which is resulting in population-aging. Population-aging is progressing rapidly and this trend is expected to continue over the next few decades. Population-aging has many socioeconomic and health related

consequences. Accordingly, Geriatrics is emerging as a major medical specialty. A great need is now felt to strengthen the geriatric health care system. Conventional medicine system has nothing much to offer in the core-area of geriatric health care except the medical management of the diseases of old age. On the contrary, *Ayurveda* presents a sound concept of aging along with prevention and management of geriatric health problems. *Ayurveda* incorporates a special branch called *Rasayana Tantra*, which is exclusively devoted to geriatrics. The rejuvenative approach of *Ayurveda* is gaining greater attention and popularity in many regions of the world. Our *Acharya* understood the delicate cellular mechanisms of the body and the deterioration of the functional efficiency of the body systems or tissues.

MATERIALS

The article is based on the reviews of various text books of *Ayurveda* and some modern medical science books; various relevant research papers, reports, books and websites etc.

Ayurvedic aging perspective

This description is relevant even today if the chronology is corrected with present human life-cycle. This is especially significant because it can provide a guideline to select an age-specific organo-protective *Rasayana* to restore the age-related specific bio-loss during different decades of the life span as a measure to retard aging. *Dhatu*, *Indriya*, *Bala*, *Virya* etc start to deteriorate after the age of forty. After seventy they get deteriorate day by day and the person gets old. *Vata Dosha* get increased especially during this phase and various disorders of multiple body systems produce.^[1] This stage of life accompanying various multi-system disorders of the old age is known as '*Jara*' which lies under *Svabhavabala-pravritta Vyadhi*.

If the person is aware of this aging, these changes are seen at appropriate time and the process is called *Kalaja Jara*. If we are not aware about our health and don't alert ourselves from these changes then they precipitate early than expected and the process is called *Akalaja Jara*.^[2] Aging is essentially a physiological phenomenon resulting due to the changes occurring in the mind-body system.

Concept of *rasayana*

Rasayana means the *Ayana* (path) that *Rasadi Dhatu* follow to nourish the body.

The quality of *Rasa* influences the quality and status of other *Dhatu*.^[3] *Rasayana* is the source of best quality *Rasadi Dhatu*^[4] and one can get rid from unwanted conditions caused by ageing by using *Rasayana*^[5] On the basis of therapeutic use, *Rasayana* can be classified as following–

- a) ***Kamyā Rasayana*** – When a healthy person uses *Rasayana* for further promotion of health.
- b) ***Naimittika Rasayana*** – When *Rasayana* is used for a special purpose e.g. *Medhya Rasayana*, *Hridya Rasayana*,

DISCUSSION

Concept of *Rasayana* seems encompassing the entire human system with its diverse and complicated immuno-endocrine pathway. It was well known to *Acharya* that the delicate cellular machinery of the body suffers from trauma, resulting in wear and tear on different body structures and the deterioration of the functional capacity. So the procedures of revitalization and rejuvenation were adopted to increase the power of resistance to disease.

These procedures retarded advancement of aging also. The data in the review of the plants for their antioxidant activity so far prove that *Rasayana Dravya* could exert a more global and nonspecific antioxidant effect. These *Dravya* also exert some protective effects on specific organs. Tremendous reports show that many plants works as an antioxidant in various diseases.

From the review, it is evident that most of the *Rasayana* plants possess potent antioxidant activity but still there is lacuna in the existing knowledge. Firstly, many drugs described and extensively used as *Rasayana* have not been tested for their antioxidant potential e.g. *Malayavacha* (*Alpinia galanga*), *Vridhadaruka* (*Argyrea speciosa*), *Punarnava* (*Boerhaavia diffusa*), *Shankhapushpi* (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*), *Jatiphala* (*Myristica fragrans*), *Gokshura* (*Tribulus terrestris*) and *Hingu* (*Ferulafoetida*) etc. Most of the reports claim to validate the traditional claim of these *Dravya* as a *Rasayana*, but the proper mechanism of the action of these plants is not clear.

Secondly, there are a number of preparations or formulations, which are sold on the name of *Rasayana*, whose activity or the use has not been established. The

ethnopharmacological claims of these preparations need to be validated to make them more acceptable. Also the method and mode of the treatment mentioned in the *Ayurvedic* texts needs to be understood before undertaking any biological screening.

Thirdly, clinical efficacy of these preparations though reported by the continuous use in traditional practices has not been scientifically validated. The personalized medicine is still followed by *Ayurveda*, making it difficult for the global acceptance, as the exact mechanism or indications for their uses are not clear. Thus, A more focused research and understanding is required to validate the *Rasayana* drugs as antioxidants.

CONCLUSION

Concept of *Rasayana* encompasses the entire human system with its diverse and complicated immuno-endocrine pathway. Most of the *Rasayana* drugs exert a more global and nonspecific antioxidant effect along with some specific organo-protective effects. *Rasayana* are effective enough to prevent aging and related degenerative diseases so can be adopted to increase the power of resistance towards diseases and to retard the advancement of aging. More focused research activities and understanding along with an integrated approach are required to remove some lacunas e.g. non-established clinical efficacy, non-validated mechanism of the action and untested antioxidant potential of many *Rasayana* drugs and formulations.

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