

Role of Ayurvedic Rasayana Therapy in Prevention and Management of Ear, Nose and Throat Diseases

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Abstract: Rasayana therapy holds significant importance in the modern era, especially as humanity faces a wide range of diseases and health challenges. Rasayanas serve as strengthening and protective agents that enhance physiological functions and improve overall quality of life. Within Shalakyatantra, Rasayana therapy plays a crucial role in promoting clarity and efficiency of the sense organs. Incorporating Rasayana practices into daily life can fortify the sensory organs and help prevent various disorders.

Key words: Rasayana, Shalakya Tantra, Sense Organs

I. INTRODUCTION

Rasayana is regarded as one of the eight principal branches (Ashtangas) of Ayurveda. It represents a therapeutic approach aimed at maintaining internal balance and slowing down the natural aging process, thereby preventing the onset of various diseases. Ayurveda views aging as a degenerative condition that develops gradually over time, and Rasayana therapy focuses on preventing premature aging while promoting healthy and graceful longevity.

Aligned with the Ayurvedic principle of “Swastasya Swasthya Rakshanam, Aturasya Vikara Prashamanam”, Rasayana not only preserves the health of a healthy person but also assists in the management and alleviation of diseases. In Charaka Samhita, Rasayana therapy is elaborated in the opening chapters of Chikitsa Sthana, highlighting its foundational role. In Sushruta Samhita, however, it is discussed later, in chapters 27–30 of Chikitsa Sthana. Ashtanga Hridaya also describes Rasayana measures,

emphasizing their impact on nourishment, tissue strength, and overall well-being.

Rasayana does not receive extensive attention in the Chikitsa Sthana and is mentioned only briefly in the 39th chapter of the Uttar Tantra. This limited coverage indicates that the prominence of Rasayana therapy had already begun to diminish during the later Samhita period. The golden era of Rasayana Tantra seen in the times of Charaka and Sushruta gradually declined as the prevalence of diseases increased. As a result, the use of indoor Rasayana regimens decreased significantly, leading to Rasayana being absorbed into general therapeutic practices, especially Kayachikitsa, rather than remaining an independent specialty.

Among its various benefits, Rasayana therapy is known for strengthening the Indriyas (sense organs). When administered to pregnant women, specific Rasayana formulations can help prevent congenital disorders such as deafness (Badhirya), muteness (Mooka), and blindness (Andhatva). Since Shalakya Tantra focuses on diseases of the sense organs or Gyanendriyas, the use of Medhya, Brimhana, and Tarpana-type Rasayanas becomes essential for restoring normal sensory functions and preventing related diseases.

In today's world, maintaining the health of the ears, nose, and throat is especially important, as these regions are frequently exposed to various microorganisms, increasing the risk of infections and disorders. Hence, the consistent use of Rasayana preparations for ENT health is crucial. These therapies help preserve the natural mucosal flora and support the physiological functions of these organs.

II. EFFECTS OF RASAYANA

A person who undergoes rejuvenation therapy attains improved longevity, sharper memory, better intellect, disease-free status, youthfulness, enhanced complexion, clarity of voice, strong physical and sensory functions, eloquence, recognition, and brilliance. Rasayana therapy enriches Rasa dhatu—the primary nourishing fluid formed after digestion. Along with physical benefits, it also promotes better mental capabilities such as attentiveness and cognitive sharpness.

Rasayana in Shalakya:

Worldwide, around 2.2 billion individuals suffer from near or distant vision impairment. Nearly half of these cases could have been prevented. While visual impairment is more common in people above 50, it can affect individuals of all age groups. Similarly, according to WHO estimates, around 42 million people experience hearing loss. Childhood tonsillitis is also becoming increasingly common, and headaches are now prevalent across all age categories. To prevent disorders arising in the head and neck (Jatrurdhva) region, Rasayana therapy can be effectively implemented. These therapies enhance the perceptive capacity of the sensory organs. The classical Acharyas have emphasized the importance of Rasayanas for strengthening the Indriyas, as they are vital organs responsible for perception and communication.

Rasayana in ENT Disorders

Modern lifestyle factors and rising environmental pollution negatively impact the health of the sensory organs. Common causative factors include exposure to dust, smoke, cold wind, sunlight, and various pollutants—conditions now unavoidable due to increased urbanization and population density. As a result, allergic conditions and immune-related disorders have become increasingly widespread. Busy schedules, improper diet, stress, lack of rest, and deviation from Sadvrutta and Yoga practices contribute to nutritional deficiencies and autoimmune issues. These factors accelerate tissue degeneration, ultimately disrupting normal body functions. Rasayana therapy plays a vital role in enhancing immunity, improving resistance against disease-causing factors, and maintaining optimal functioning of the Indriya.

KARNA(EAR)

The ears are responsible for hearing and maintaining body balance. For the ear to function normally, its anatomical integrity and physiological processes must remain intact. Common causes of ear disorders include prolonged exposure to loud sounds, improper diet, and contact with mist or water. With continuous exposure to such factors and with advancing age conditions such as deafness and tinnitus become more common. To delay or prevent the progression of these ailments, Rasayana therapy is highly beneficial. Since Vata dosha plays a predominant role in ear disorders, and elderly individuals naturally experience Vata dominance, Rasayana therapy becomes even more relevant. Classical texts suggest that after administering Shamana Aushadhis, specific Rasayanas should be given to complete the treatment of ear diseases.

Rasāyana for Karṇa Roga

1. Chyavanaprāśa Avaleha

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Chikitsā Sthāna 1/1

Action: Rasāyana, Vātapitta-śāmaka, Indriya-prasādana

Utility: Karṇa-daurbalya, age-related hearing loss

2. Triphalā Rasāyana

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Chikitsā Sthāna 1/4

Action: Rasāyana, Raktaprasādana

Utility: Chronic inflammatory ear conditions

3. Amṛta (Guduchi) Rasāyana

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Chikitsā Sthāna 1/3

Action: Tridoṣa-śāmaka, Vaya-ssthāpana

Utility: Recurrent ear infections, chronic otitis

4. Pippalī Rasāyana

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Chikitsā Sthāna 1/3

Action: Kapha-vāta hara, Agni-varadhaka

Utility: Karṇa srāva & Kapha-dominant Karṇa roga

5. Medhya Rasāyana (Group)

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Chikitsā Sthāna 1/3

Dravyas: Brahmi, Mandukaparni, Shankhapushpi, Guduchi

Utility: Nervine deafness, Karṇanāda (tinnitus)

6. Karṇa-Rasāyana through Karṇa-pūraṇa (Mūrdhni Taila)

Reference: Sushruta Samhitā, Uttara Tantra

Examples: Tila Taila, Bilva Taila, Kṣāra Taila

Action: Vāta-śāmaka, Karṇa-bala vardhaka

Utility: Karṇaśūla, Karṇanāda, Karṇabadhīrya

Nasa (Nose):

According to the classical saying “Nasa hi Shiraso Dwaram,” the nose is the gateway to the head and also serves as the entry point of the respiratory system. It is a major route through which infectious agents reach the body via inhalation. Exposure to mist, dust, cold wind, poor diet, irregular sleep patterns, or contaminated water can lead to Pratishyaya (rhinitis), which, if neglected, may progress to lower respiratory infections. Some individuals develop immediate allergic reactions to dust or pollen, resulting in allergic rhinitis. Children, whose immune systems are still developing, frequently suffer from colds and flu. Proper use of Rasayana can help in preventing allergic reactions and control of nasal diseases.

Rasāyana Kalpa for Nāsa Roga (as per Samhitā)

1. Chyavanaprāśa Avaleha

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Chikitsā Sthāna 1/1

Action: Rasāyana, Tridoṣa-śāmaka, Indriya-prasādana

Utility in Nāsa Roga: Chronic Pratiśyāya, allergic rhinitis, recurrent URTI

2. Brahma Rasāyana

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Chikitsā Sthāna 1

Action: Medhya, Balya, Rasāyana

Utility: Chronic nasal disorders associated with Śira–Indriya daurbalya

3. Triphalā Rasāyana

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Chikitsā Sthāna 1/4

Action: Rasāyana, Chakṣuṣya, Kapha-pitta śāmaka

Utility: Pīnasa, nasal congestion, recurrent sinusitis

4. Amṛta (Guduchi) Rasāyana

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Chikitsā Sthāna 1/3

Action: Tridoṣa-śāmaka, Raktaprasādana

Utility: Inflammatory Nāsa roga, chronic rhino-sinusitis

5. Pippalī Rasāyana

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Chikitsā Sthāna 1/3

Action: Kapha-vāta śāmaka, Agni-var dhaka

Utility: Dushta Pratiśyāya, nasal blockage, chronic cold

6. Medhya Rasāyana (Group)

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Chikitsā Sthāna 1/3

Dravyas: Brahmi, Mandukaparni, Shankhapushpi, Guduchi

Utility: Nāsa roga associated with Śiro-roga & Manasa vikāra

7. Nāsa-Rasāyana through Nasya

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Sūtra Sthāna 5

Examples: Anu Taila, Shadbindu Taila (used as Rasāyana Nasya)

Action: Strengthens Nāsa indriya, prevents degeneration

Utility: Chronic rhinitis, dryness, loss of smell

Mukha (Oral Cavity):

A person's general health can often be evaluated through the condition of their oral cavity. The mouth contains teeth, gums, tongue, and palate, all protected by a mucosal layer. The oral cavity serves both sensory (Gnanendriya) and functional (Karmendriya) roles. Proper form and function of the oral structures are essential for speech articulation, mastication, and overall well-being.

Perception of taste is an important function of the oral cavity, and Rasayana therapy helps maintain the integrity of Rasanendriya, supports gum health, strengthens the teeth, and promotes clarity in speech.

Rasāyana Kalpa for Mukha-roga (As per Samhitā)

1. Chyavanaprāśa Avaleha

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Chikitsā Sthāna 1/1

Action: Rasāyana, Tridoṣa-śāmaka, Indriya-prasādana

Utility in Mukha-roga: Daurgandhya, mukhapāka, weakness of gums & teeth

2. Brahma Rasāyana

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Chikitsā Sthāna 1

Action: Medhya, Balya, Rasāyana

Utility: Chronic Mukha-roga with Śiro-indriya daurbalya, hoarseness

3. Triphalā Rasāyana

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Chikitsā Sthāna 1/4

Action: Rasāyana, Raktaprasādana, Chakṣuṣya

Utility: Mukhapāka, dantagata & oshthagata roga

4. Amṛta (Guduchi) Rasāyana

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Chikitsā Sthāna 1/3
Action: Tridoṣa-śāmaka, Raktashodhaka
Utility: Inflammatory Mukha-roga, recurrent oral ulcers

5. Pippalī Rasāyana

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Chikitsā Sthāna 1/3
Action: Kapha-vāta hara, Agni-varadhaka
Utility: Kaphaja Mukha-roga, heaviness & sliminess of mouth

6. Medhya Rasāyana (Group)

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Chikitsā Sthāna 1/3
Dravyas: Brahmi, Mandukaparni, Shankhapushpi, Guduchi
Utility: Vak-daurbalya, disorders of speech & taste

7. Gandūṣa & Kavala as Mukha-Rasāyana

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Sūtra Sthāna 5
Examples: Triphalā kaṣāya, Tila taila, Yaṣṭimadhu siddha jala
Action: Strengthens teeth, gums & tongue
Utility: Dantagata, Jihvā-gata & Sarva-Mukha roga

Shira (Head):

The head (Shiras) is regarded as the supreme organ (Uttamanga). It houses Prana Vayu and contains all the major sensory organs. Acharya Vagbhata explains its clinical relevance through the analogy of a plant: the head is comparable to the root, while the limbs correspond to the branches. Any disturbance to the root inevitably affects the entire plant, similarly, disorders of the head can impact overall health. Improper diet, irregular sleep, excessive water intake, and exposure to cold wind are among the causes of Shiroroga. Psychological stress is a major contributing factor for a range of conditions such as chronic headaches and hair fall. Rasayana therapies help to manage these conditions by enhancing resilience and restoring balance.

Rasayana for shirorog:

1. Brahma Rasāyana

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Chikitsā Sthāna 1 (Rasāyana Adhyāya)
Indication: Śirośūla, smṛtibhramśa, indriya daurbalya
Action: Medhya, Balya, Indriya-prasādana
Utility: Chronic headache, mental fatigue, neurological weakness

2. Chyavanaprāśa Avaleha:

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Chikitsā Sthāna 1/1
Indication: Shiroroga due to dhātu-kṣaya
Action: Vātapitta-śāmaka, Rasāyana
Utility: Recurrent headache, weakness of head & sense organs

3. Amṛta (Guduchi) Rasāyana:

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Chikitsā Sthāna 1/3
Indication: Jvara-janya śirośūla, inflammatory conditions
Action: Tridoṣa-śāmaka, Medhya
Utility: Chronic inflammatory head disorders

4. Triphalā Rasāyana:

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Chikitsā Sthāna 1/4
Indication: Netra-śiro roga, indriya kṣaya
Action: Chakṣuṣya, Rasāyana
Utility: Shiroroga associated with eye strain & aging

5. Medhya Rasāyana:

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Chikitsā Sthāna 1/3
Dravyas: Brahmi, Mandukaparni, Shankhapushpi, Guduchi
Action: Medhya, Smṛti-varadhaka
Utility: Shiroroga due to manasa & nervine causes

6. Lauha Rasāyana:

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Chikitsā Sthāna 1/3
Indication: Pandu-janya shiroroga
Action: Dhātu-varadhaka
Utility: Headache due to anemia & weakness

7. Śiro-Rasāyana through Mūrdhni Taila:

Reference: Charaka Samhitā, Sūtra Sthāna 5
Procedures: Śiro-abhyanga, Śiro-dhāra, Śiro-basti
Action: Prevents aging & diseases of head
Utility: Chronic Shiroroga, Vāta disorders Disease specific Rasayanas

General Rasayanas:

- Intake of water early in the morning- prevents Galaroga, Shirashula, Karnashula (Cakradatta)
- Gritha Pana (Su.U.21/3) - Karna Roga, Nasashosha (S.U.23/11), Pratishyaya (S.U.24/18)
- Intake of Gritha or Taila after intake of milk - Shiraroga (Su.U.26/3)
- Rasala - Pratishyaya (A.H.U.40)

III. DISCUSSION

Rasayana therapy represents a distinctive branch of Ayurveda focused on strengthening the body's fundamental components such as Dhatu, Agni, and Srotas. Each Rasayana drug exerts its effects at different physiological levels based on its pharmacodynamic properties. Rather than acting through one specific mechanism, Rasayana produces a combined effect by improving tissue nutrition (Rasa-Samhara), enhancing metabolic activity, and purifying bodily channels.

According to Acharya Charaka, Rasayana functions by improving the qualitative aspects of Rasa dhatu, which ultimately nourishes all subsequent Dhatus. Substances with Madhura, Guru, Snigdha, and Sheeta qualities nourish Rasa, whereas those with Laghu, Ruksha, Ushna, and Katu/Tikta/Kashaya rasa promote metabolic activity and channel cleansing.

Anabolic Effects:

Early studies on Rasayana herbs explored their potential to support growth and tissue regeneration. Herbs such as Amalaki, Pippali, and Guduchi demonstrated positive outcomes in enhancing cellular nutrition and slowing tissue degeneration. This indirectly improves the functioning of sensory organs.

Anti-Stress and Adaptogenic Effects:

Stress is an unavoidable part of life, and its intensity varies from person to person. A higher threshold of stress tolerance ensures better resilience. Rasayana drugs—particularly Ashwagandha—have been shown to possess anti-stress and adaptogenic properties. They not only counteract the harmful impact of stress on the body but also improve the body's capacity to cope with future stressors. Since stress is a major contributor to Shiroroga, these effects are particularly beneficial.

Immunomodulatory Effects:

The immune system protects the body from external pathogens and involves multiple organs and components. Rasayana herbs are being increasingly recognized for their ability to modulate immune responses. Current evidence suggests that these drugs enhance immune strength and improve resistance to infections.

Antioxidant Effects:

Modern research highlights the damaging role of excessive free radicals, which contribute to a spectrum of diseases ranging from allergies to cancer. Rasayana herbs help strengthen the body's enzymatic defense systems, thereby reducing oxidative damage and supporting tissue health.

Anti-Aging Effects
Although limited studies exist, available evidence suggests that Rasayana therapy may influence anti-aging mechanisms—possibly by affecting hormones such as DHEA, which decline with age. Since repeated cellular stress accelerates aging, Rasayana drugs help delay this process by improving cellular resilience.

IV. CONCLUSION

In today's world, Rasayana therapy is essential for enhancing overall health and vitality. Individuals who are prone to illness or already suffering from diseases can significantly benefit from appropriate Rasayana treatments tailored to their condition.

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