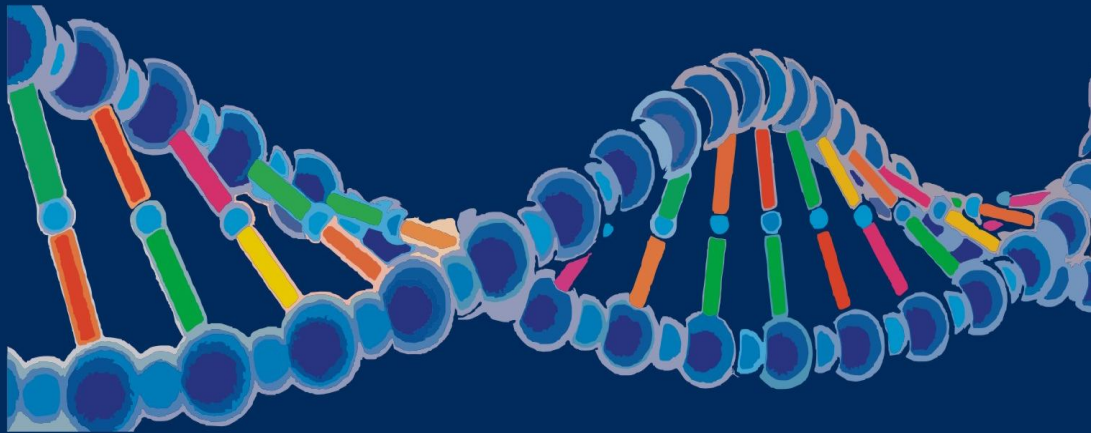


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ROLE OF 'RASAYANA' IN MAINTENANCE OF BODY PHYSIOLOGY: AN OVERVIEW

DEEPTI SINGH*

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Abstract

Maintenance of health in healthy persons is a very challenging task now a days. One of the aim of Ayurveda is putting quality and consistency of health in a disease free individual. There are seven dhatu described in Ayurveda and every dhatu has its specific function and normalcy of these functions lead to Swastha (health). Due to vitiation of dosha, dhatu may be affected if dosha-dusya sammurchana (amalgamation of attributes of vitiated dosha with body tissues causing qualitative and quantitative changes) occurs and results in generation of disease. Use of Rasayana dravya helps in achieving healthy dhatu and dhatuvaha srotas. Rasyan dravya include those all measures which give best status to the body tissues, so that body could withstand disordered/diseased phase with ease and rapidity and normal physiology of body is achieved.

Key words: Rasayan, Body Physiology, Dhatu, Swastha, Ayurveda

Introduction

Maintenance of health in healthy persons is a very challenging task now a days. One of the aim of *Ayurveda* is putting quality and consistency of health in a disease free individual. A body can be made healthy by making its *dhatu* (body tissues) healthy. *Dhatu* of body are entities which support and nourish body. There are seven *dhatu* described in *Ayurveda* and essence of all these seven *dhatu* is termed as 'Oja'. Every *dhatu* has its specific function and normalcy of these functions lead to *Swastha* (health). But due to vitiation of *dosha*, *dhatu* may be affected if *dosha-dusya sammurchana* (amalgamation of

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attributes of vitiated *dosha* with body tissues causing qualitative and quantitative change) occurs and results in generation of disease. This *dosha-dusya sammurchana* may be prevented by making *dhatu* and *dhatuvaha srotas* healthy in terms of proper act of *Dhatvagni paka* and nourishment of its own attributes and subsequent *dhatu*. As a result of which *vyadhibala virodhi tatava* i.e. *Oja* is produced properly and take its actions imparting immunity to the body. Use of *Rasayana dravya* helps in achieving healthy *dhatu* and *srotas*. So with the use of *Rasayana*, generation of disease may be prevented or can be weakened.

Materials and Method

The contents and references regarding *Rasayana* is collected from *Brihatrayi*, *Laghutrayi* and related *Ayurveda* texts and analyzed its role in the maintenance and promotion of health following the links and concepts described in *Ayurveda*.

Objectives

This paper attempts to explore the concepts regarding role of *Rasayana* in promotion and maintenance of health and tries to find out how *Rasayan Chikitsa* has different place in comparison to other line of treatment as per *Ayurveda*.

Literature review

Physiological Determinants of Health; Basis of this body are *dosha*, *dhatu* and *mala*. All these perform their own functions and collectively responsible for body functions and position¹. Among these those *dravya* which hold/maintain/continue the body are called as *dhatu*². This term is also applicable to *dosha* and *mala* in *prakrita avastha* (physiological state) but this is most fit for *rasadi* seven *dhatu* because of their priority to support and nourish the body. *Samata* (equilibrium) in the functioning of above said entities viz. '*dosha-dhatu-mala*' determines the level and status of one's health. This *Samata* implies for proper interplay and coordination of body from cell level to system level.

Pathological Determinants of disorder/or disease; Generation of any type of disturbance in body physiology or generation of any type of pathology in body is due to disturbance in *dhatu*³. Although, *Acharya Vagbhatta* says that diseases are caused due to vitiation of *dosha*⁴ but it also means the same because disturbance in *dosha* results in disturbance in *dhatu* hence later is called as '*dusya*'. So *dhatu* are those entities which are affected primarily by disturbance in *dosha* by the process of *dosha-dusya sammurchana*⁵. *Vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* after getting vitiated due to various reasons, vitiates the *dhatu*, resulting in *Dhatu Pradosaja Vikara* (disorders primarily originating from particular *dhatu*)⁶.

Along with the above explained vitiations of *dhatu*, '*dhatu kshaya*' is also responsible for generation of disease. '*Dhatu kshaya*' is the one of the important reason for diminution of *Oja*⁷. And *Oja* is the entity which fight with disease causing factors and limits the phenomenon of pathology or disease⁸. Above description defines the importance of healthy *dhatu* and role of *Rasayana* to acquire health⁹.

Rasyan Chikitsa; According to *Charak*, *dravya* (substance) can be categorized in three types – *doshaprashamana* (factors pacifying vitiated *dosha*), *dhatupradushanama* (substance causing vitiation of *dhatu*), *swasthavritta* (measures promoting health)¹⁰. *Swasthavritta dravya* are primarily subjected to maintenance of health. *Rasyan dravya* include those all measures which give best status to the

body tissues and they are perfect for enhancement of health status of body because practice of *Rasayan dravya* (substance), *guna* (attributes) and *karma* (regimens) results in nourishment and strength of all seven *dhatu* of body. *Rasayana dravya* are *urja* (energy) generating substance for *swastha* also¹¹. It seems that *swasthavritta dravya* and *swasthasya urjaskar dravya* are same and called *Rasayana dravya*. For prevention of disease, which may occur due to various reason, *Rasayana dravya* should be used in proper way and then *vaajikarana dravya* should be used¹². If *dhatu* of body and mind will be maintained in equilibrium/normalcy, disease will not affect body and mind¹³.

According to *Acharya Sushruta*, young person have new *dhatu* and due to new and healthy *dhatu*, wound are easily treatable¹⁴. The aim of this *tantra* (*Ayurveda*) is also to maintain the *dhatu* *samyata*¹⁵ or attempts to maintain the *dhatu* in equilibrium is called *Chikitsa* karma¹⁶ or the process which make the *sharir dhatu sama* or in equilibrium, is called as *chikitsa* or treatment¹⁷ So, if *dosha*, *agni*, *dhatu* and *mala* of any person are in equilibrium/normalcy, the person is called as *Swastha*¹⁸.

Why Rasayan Chikista ?

Acharya Charak advocated the principle of '*Svabhavoparam Vaada*' which means there is cause behind origin of every *karya dravya* (effects) but not in its termination or end. The process of termination (*uparam*) occurs naturally (*svabhava*). So disordered health (effect) is outcome of vitiated '*dosha-dhatu-mala*' (cause) and the body itself resolve the issue of this disordered health within physiological limit (natural termination). Even in the case of disease, termination of the same is done by body itself by regulating its own physiology. Application of different line of treatment are just supporting the process of natural termination of disease. *Ayurveda* designs *doshaprashaman* and *Rasayan chikitsa* which when analyzed, appears to be two-sided sword. From one end *doshaprashaman dravya* attacks causative factors and from another end *Rasayan dravya* potentiates the health status of *dhatu* so that body could withstand disordered/diseased phase with ease and rapidity. One acts on physiological level (to diminish vitiated *dosha*) and other works at structural level (strengthening the status of *dhatu*).

Discussion

Rasayana prayoga (application) is described in *Ayurveda* as a complete and different type of treatment method by *Acharya Charaka*. *Rasayana chikitsa* is a health promoting procedure in healthy persons as well as diseased (though secondary to health promotion). After birth, growth, senescence and death are inevitable process. But all these processes occur at different pace in different species and even in different individual of the same species. The basis behind this, having different states of *dhatu* in the body.

Rasayana prayoga makes the body *dhatu* healthy along with the *dhatuvaha srotas*. *Dhatu* are the main *dusya* in the body and *dosha-dusya sammurchana* is the most important step in process of pathogenesis. So if *dhatu* are healthy then *dooshan prakriya* (pathogenesis) of *dhatu* by *dosha* gets hampered, therefore either disease will not happen or it will be happened in weaker form.

According to age, many changes occur in the body. They are of 2 types - one are anabolic and the other are catabolic changes. Through anabolic reactions, *dhatu* of body get nourished and *mala* get rid of from body. Through anabolic reactions, debilitated *avayava* (part) of body get degenerated regularly. These two processes occur simultaneously in the body. But from childhood to adulthood, anabolic process and from young age to old age, catabolic processes dominate. Every person like the state of young age and feel in better health during this phase. For youthful and energetic body, *dhatu* should be in healthy state. *Sharir* and *mana* are regularly affected by various factors like *ahara vihara* etc. Due to

these factors *vridhhi* or *kshaya* happen in the body. But effect of these factors seem different on different people. Same factor may put different effects on different people because every person has different physical and mental status of body i.e, every person has different status of *dosha dhatu* etc. in body. There are two sites described as sites of *roga* in Ayurveda, these are *sharir* and *mana*. Disease occur only when *dosha-dushya samurchna* occurs so, *sharir* and *mana* are the sites for *dosha-dushya samurchna*. Being the main *dushya* in body, *dhatu* must be in that state where *dosha* may not be able to effect it. For this purpose different procedures are described in *dincharya* and *ritucharya* in the form of *ahara* and *vihara*. *Rasayana* are also described for the same purpose in the form of *sharira Rasayana* and *medhya Rasayana*. *Medhya Rasayana* mainly act on *bhavas* like *dhi*, *dhriti*, *smriti*, *medha* etc. and other *Rasayana* act on *sharirika dhatu*. These *Rasayana dravya* causes anatomical changes in *dhatu* and make them physiologically healthy. That's why *Rasayana* are said as *urjaskar* for *swastha* .

Conclusion

1. *Dhatu* are the site which are affected by *prakupita* (vitiated) *dosha*. *Prakupita dosha* meets *dhatu* at the site where *dhatuvaha srotas* are not healthy (*Kha vaigunya*) and may cause disease by *dosha dushya sammurchna*.
2. *Rasayana* causes structural improvement of *sapta dhatu* i.e, *Rasayana* regenerates the cells in body.
3. *Rasayan dravya* potentiates the health status of *dhatu* so that body could withstand disordered/diseased phase with ease and rapidity causing establishment of normal body physiology.

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