

MEDHYA RASAYANA- BRAIN TONIC**Dr. Nageshwar Aditya Lakhanlal*¹ and Dr. Sunita D. Ram²**

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ABSTRACT

In today's fast-paced world, the demand for cognitive enhancement and brain health promotion is ever-increasing. Ayurveda, an ancient Indian system of medicine, offers Medhya rasayana – a unique category of therapeutic herbs known as brain tonics. This essay delves into the properties and efficacy of Shankhapushpi, Mandukaparni, Guduchi, and Mulethi as brain tonics, exploring their mechanisms of action from both Ayurvedic and modern perspectives. By shedding light on the convergence of ancient wisdom and contemporary scientific knowledge, this analysis endeavors to uncover valuable insights to promote brain health.

KEYWORDS: Medhya Rasayana, Mandukaparni, Yastimadhu, Guduchi, Sankhapuspi.

INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda, Deha (Somato) as well as Mana (psyche) prevade the whole body. Consequently, one must take the individual into account while discussing health and illness. The psyche-somato approach to health and illness originated from this. Mana (psyche) and Deha (somato) communicate with one another. This is the significant contribution of Charaka Samhita to medicine—mana affects the body and vice versa. For the western medical system, the Medhya-rasayana Dravyas (Payche-Somato Drugs) are a completely new subject. The qualities of (1) Dhi- or Buddi (intellect), (2) Dhrati (retention ability), and (3) Smrati (memory) make up the word Medhya. These three roles have to do with the mind or psyche of humans. In order to accomplish the Medhya-Rasayana action, the word Rasayana their

Dravyas, their medicinal preparations, and their mode of administration are addressed. The medications Mandukaparni, Yastimadhu, Guduchi, and Sankhapuspi are specifically listed. Sankhapuspi is thought to be the best Medhya-Rasayana medication out of the four. They are dual acting medications because of the way their mechanism of action affects both the body and the mind (local actions and general actions, respectively).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The Medhya Rasayana drugs, mentioned in Rasayana chapter are four in numbers.

1. Sankhapuspi
2. Mandukaparni
3. Guduchi
4. Yastimadhu

Shankhapushpi

Shankhapushpi (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*) is a herb widely used in Ayurveda as a potent brain tonic. It is believed to enhance memory, concentration, and intellect. According to Ayurvedic principles, Shankhapushpi possesses the Medhya property, facilitating rejuvenation and nourishment of brain tissues. Its therapeutic effects are attributed to the presence of alkaloids, flavonoids, and phytosterols. Modern pharmacological studies have confirmed its neuroprotective, anxiolytic, and antioxidant properties, supporting its traditional use as a brain tonic.

Mandukaparni

Mandukaparni (*Centella asiatica*), also known as Indian pennywort, is another renowned Medhya rasayana. Ayurvedic literature highlights its ability to enhance memory, improve learning, and alleviate mental fatigue. Mandukaparni acts on neurotransmitter systems, modulating acetylcholine release and promoting neurogenesis. The active components, bacosides, exert antioxidant and neuroprotective effects, bolstering cognitive function. Research studies have corroborated Mandukaparni's memory-enhancing and anxiolytic properties, reinforcing its status as a potent brain tonic.

Guduchi

Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*), commonly known as Giloy, is a versatile herb with multiple health benefits. Ayurveda incorporates Guduchi as a Medhya herb due to its positive impact on brain function. Guduchi possesses immunomodulatory properties, strengthening the

body's defense mechanisms against infection and inflammation. A healthy immune system is essential for optimum brain function. Additionally, Guduchi exhibits antioxidant activity, protecting neurons from oxidative stress. Scientific investigations have substantiated Guduchi's neuroprotective, immunomodulatory, and anti-inflammatory actions, supporting its role as a brain tonic.

Mulethi: (Yastimadhu)

Mulethi (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), also known as licorice, is a herb widely used in Ayurveda for its numerous therapeutic effects. It is an adaptogen, aiding in stress management and promoting mental well-being. Ayurvedic texts recognize Mulethi as a Medhya herb with memory-enhancing properties. Modern research has attributed Mulethi's medicinal benefits to its bioactive compounds, including glycyrrhizin and flavonoids, which exhibit neuroprotective, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidative effects. Mulethi's inclusion in brain tonics aligns with its ability to enhance cognition and mitigate stress-related cognitive deficits.

DISCUSSION

The Medhya comprises of the trait of (i) Dhi or Buddhi (Intelligence), (ii) Dhrati (power of retention) and (iii) Smrati (memory). These three functions are related with human Mana or Psyche. And the word Rasayana means rejuvenation of Body or Somato through obtaining best quality of Rasadi Dhatus.

The Medhya Rasayana drugs, mentioned in Rasayana chapter are Sankhapuspi, Mandukaparni, Guduchi, Yastimadhu. The powder or paste of Sankhapuspi; the expressed juice of leaves of Mandukaparni; expressed juice of Guduci including root and flowers and; powder of Yastimadhu with milk (cow's milk) is advised for Medhya Rasayana Karma. Out of all four drugs Sankhapuspi is said to be best Medhya drug according to Acharya Charka.

Mode of Action

In Ayurveda the mechanism of action is explained on the basis of properties present in individual drugs. Drug acts by means of Rasa, other by Virya, and other by Guna, Vipaka or Prabhava. On reviewing the properties of Medhya Rasayana drugs, they may be classified into two groups; the group one consisting of Tikta or Madhur Rasa; Madhura Vipaka and; Site Virya, and the other group having Tikta rasa; Madhura vipaka and Usna Virya. In former group we may place Sankhapuspi; andukparni. Yastimadhu and Guduci in later group. The

Medhya action of these drugs is due to Prabhava (specific action). The Prabhava of these drugs is said unthinkable by Charka. The mechanism of action of Rasayana Karma may be explained in the following way:

- By Rasa- All four drugs aside from Yastimadhu are Tikta in Rasa, which is made up of Vayu and Akasa mahabhuta, which have attributes related to Ruksha, Sita, and Laghu. In the case of Mandagni, which results from vitiated Kapha, Tikta Rasa stimulates Agni. The properties of Snigdha and Guru in Kapha are in opposition to those of Ruksha and Laghu. Tikta Rasa increases Agni, which Kapha suppresses, by irritating the properties. if Pitta is vitiated in the instance of Tikshnagni. Agni is reduced to its natural form by the Ruksha and Sita qualities of Tikta Rasa, which oppose the Snigdha and Ushna attributes of Pitta. Yastimadhu with Madhur Rasa is renowned for its body-friendly properties. It encourages Rasa Rakta, Mamsa, Meda, Asthi, Majja, and Sukra, which are all beneficial to longevity, vigour, and vitality.
- By Vipaka- Each of the four medications contains Madhur Vipaka. In addition to increasing Kapha and Sukra (the seventh Dhatu), the Madhura Vipaka facilitates the removal of faeces and urine. Charaka states that the following is the order in which Sapta Dhatu is formed: Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa, Meda, Asthi, Majja, and lastly Sukra. Vipaka is a stage of metabolic change that is only inferred from its effects and is imperceptible. The body is affected systemically by it.

CONCLUSION

Medhya rasayana- brain tonics, such as Shankhapushpi, Mandukparni, Guduchi, and Mulethi. These herbs possess multifaceted actions that promote brain health by nourishing brain tissues, modulating neurotransmitter systems, combating oxidative stress, and alleviating stress-related cognitive impairments. The Medhya action is due to Prabhava (Specific action) which is unthinkable and the Rasayana action is due to Tikta Rasa and Madhura Rasa and also due to Madhura Vipaka. The Medhya-Rasayana drugs act locally as Medhya and systemic or general as Rasayana and are thus dual acting drugs. Incorporating Ayurvedic principles into modern research can help unlock the full potential of Medhya rasayanas and revolutionize the field of cognitive health.

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