

RASAYANA THERAPY: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW ON ITS ROLE IN PROMOTING OVERALL HEALTH AND LONGEVITY

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ABSTRACT

Background: *Rasayana* therapy is a fundamental concept in *Ayurveda* that emphasizes rejuvenation, longevity, and enhancement of immunity. Classical *Ayurvedic* texts describe *Rasayana* as a therapeutic measure capable of improving the quality of life by promoting physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. **Objective:** The present review aims to analyze the concept, classification, pharmacological properties, and clinical importance of *Rasayana* therapy in maintaining overall health. **Materials and Methods:** This review is based on classical *Ayurvedic* texts such as *Charaka Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, and *Sushruta Samhita* along with modern scientific literature describing pharmacological and clinical studies on *Rasayana* drugs. **Results:** *Rasayana* therapy enhances immunity, delays aging, improves mental functions, strengthens body tissues, and increases vitality. Several *Rasayana* herbs possess antioxidant, adaptogenic, neuroprotective, and immunomodulatory properties. **Conclusion:** *Rasayana* therapy represents an important preventive healthcare strategy that can significantly contribute to healthy aging and improved quality of life.

KEYWORDS: Rasayana, Ayurveda, Rejuvenation, Immunity, Anti-aging, Preventive

healthcare.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is one of the oldest systems of medicine in the world and provides a holistic approach to health and disease management. The primary aim of *Ayurveda* is to maintain the health of healthy individuals and treat diseases in affected persons.^[1] *Rasayana* therapy plays an essential role in achieving this objective.

The term *Rasayana* is derived from the *Sanskrit* words *Rasa* and *Ayana*. *Rasa* refers to the primary nourishing fluid formed after digestion, while *Ayana* refers to movement or circulation. *Rasayana* therapy therefore ensures proper circulation of nutritional essence and optimal nourishment of body tissues.^[1,2]

Classical *Ayurvedic* texts describe *Rasayana* therapy as a measure that enhances longevity (*Dirghayu*), intellect (*Medha*), memory (*Smriti*), immunity (*Vyadhikshamatva*), strength (*Bala*), and complexion (*Varna*).^[1,2] It also improves resistance to disease and delays the aging process.

In modern times, increasing stress, environmental pollution, unhealthy dietary habits, and sedentary lifestyle have significantly contributed to the rise of chronic diseases and lifestyle disorders. *Rasayana* therapy offers a preventive approach by strengthening immunity and improving physiological resilience.^[3,16]

Modern scientific investigations have shown that several *Rasayana* herbs possess antioxidant, adaptogenic, anti-inflammatory, and immunomodulatory activities. These findings support the classical claims regarding the rejuvenating effects of *Rasayana* therapy.^[7,9,11]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This review article is based on an extensive analysis of classical *Ayurvedic* literature and modern scientific publications related to *Rasayana* therapy.

Primary sources included classical *Ayurvedic* texts such as *Charaka Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, and *Sushruta Samhita* which describe the principles, classifications, and therapeutic benefits of *Rasayana* therapy.^[1,2,4]

Secondary sources included peer-reviewed research articles, review papers, and

pharmacological studies describing biological activities of *Rasayana* drugs.^[7-18]

The collected information was systematically analyzed to understand the mechanisms, therapeutic benefits, and clinical applications of *Rasayana* therapy.

RESULTS

The literature review indicates that *Rasayana* therapy provides multiple health benefits and plays a crucial role in maintaining physiological balance.

Enhancement of Immunity - *Rasayana* therapy improves immune function and increases the body's resistance against infections and diseases. Many *Rasayana* herbs demonstrate immunomodulatory effects that strengthen the body's defense mechanisms.^[7,9,12]

Anti-aging Effects - Aging is associated with degeneration of body tissues and decline in physiological functions. *Rasayana* therapy delays aging by promoting tissue nourishment, cellular regeneration, and improved metabolic functions.^[10,16]

Improvement of Cognitive Functions - Certain *Rasayana* drugs known as *Medhya Rasayana* enhance memory, concentration, learning ability, and mental clarity.^[14]

Enhancement of Physical Strength - *Rasayana* therapy increases stamina, vitality, and physical endurance by nourishing tissues and improving metabolism.^[10,15]

Promotion of Healthy Skin - *Rasayana* drugs contribute to improved complexion, healthy skin, and better tissue regeneration.^[7,18]

CLASSIFICATION OF RASAYANA

(A) Two types have been mentioned in Ca. Ci. 1/1/16.

(i) Kutipravesika

(ii) Vatatapika

This classification is based on the mode of administration. Kutipravesika is one in which *Rasayana* is given with the person staying inside a closed Kuti, whereas Vatatapika is that in which *Rasayana* is administered with the patient exposed to Vata and Atapa. In other words, Kutipravesika is an indoor administration while Vatatapika is an outdoor administration of *Rasayana*.

Dronipravesika is similar to Kutipravesika with slight modification wherein the individual is made to stay in a Droni (made out of Palasa) for six months, consuming a milk diet (Ca. Ci. 1/4/7).

(B) Two types, as mentioned by Dalhana, based on their mode of action

- (1) Samsodhana - 'Dosasya Samsodhanadi Samsodhanam'
- (2) Samsamana - 'Samsamanam Nagabaladi Prayogadikam' Samsodhana and Samsamana, both are curative. Samsodhana type of Rasayana expels the aggravated Dosas, whereas Samsamana type pacifies the accumulated ones.

(C) Three types as per Dalhana's opinion

- (1) Kamyā
- (2) Naimittika
- (3) Ajasrika

This classification is probably based on the utility of Rasayana.

Kamyā Rasayana is subdivided into Pranakamiya, Srikamiya, and Medhakamiya Rasayanas. i.e., to increase the life span, to prolong the life span, and to increase the cognitive abilities of the mind, respectively. "Naimittikam Vyadhinimittam," i.e., Naimittika type of Rasayana, is nothing but Rasayana specific to a disease. "Ajasrikam Ksiraghrtabhyasadikam," i.e., Ajasrika Rasayana, deals with the daily intake of milk, ghee, etc. Rasayana is to promote the body's immunity.

(D) Susruta has classified them into four types

- (1) Sarvopaghata Samaniya
- (2) Medhayuskamiya
- (3) Svabhavavyadhi Pratisedhaniya
- (4) Nivrtta Santapiya

In this, Sarvopaghata Samaniya deals with Rasayana to counteract the disease process. Medhayuskamiya is one way by which an individual can increase their intellect and prolong their life. Svabhavavyadhi Pratisedhaniya delays the onset of Svabhavika Vyadhis like Ksut, Jara, Pipasa, Mrtyu, etc., and Nivrtta Santapiya Rasayana rebuilds the physical and mental faculties following their disturbance due to the disease process.

It can be further classified into five types based on their benefits (Caraka Sutrasthana, 4th

chapter).

- (1) Dirghayuskara - Jivaniya and Brmhaniya
- (2) Tarunyakara – Vayahsthapana
- (3) Balakara – Balya
- (4) Medhakara – Medhya
- (5) Rogahara - Roganut (specific to disease)

One more Rasayana variety has been mentioned in Ca. Ci. 1/4/36, i.e., Acara Rasayana or Nitya Rasayana, where an individual follows Sadvrta and Swasthavrtta strictly and gets the beneficial effects.

Persons who are truthful and free from anger, alcohol and sexual indulgence; who do not indulge in violence and over exercise; who are peaceful and pleasing in speech, who practice Japa, Tapa, cleanliness, charity; who are stable and steady; who regularly offer prayers to Gods, cows, brahmanas, teachers, preceptors and aged people; who are compassionate and merciful; who go to sleep and awake at regular time; who habitually take ghee and milk; who are experts in the knowledge of rationality; who are free from ego; whose conduct is good; who are not narrow minded; who love spiritual knowledge; who have excellent sense organs, respect for elders; who believe in the existence of Gods; who have self control and who regularly study Dharmasastras will get best out of rejuvenation therapy. If persons endowed with these qualities practise rejuvenation therapy, they get all the rejuvenation effects described above.

Table 1: Classification of Rasayana.

Type of Rasayana	Description
<i>Kutipravesika Rasayana</i>	Administered in a specially designed hut under controlled conditions
<i>Vatatapika Rasayana</i>	Administered under normal environmental conditions

Table 2: Important Medhya Rasayana Drugs.

Drug	Botanical Name	Major Action
<i>Brahmi</i>	<i>Bacopa monnieri</i>	Memory enhancer
<i>Shankhapushpi</i>	<i>Convolvulus pluricaulis</i>	Improves cognitive function
<i>Mandukaparni</i>	<i>Centella asiatica</i>	Neuroprotective activity
<i>Yashtimadhu</i>	<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i>	Improves mental performance

Table 3: Clinical Uses of Rasayana Therapy.

Clinical Condition	Role of Rasayana
Aging	Delays degenerative changes
Stress disorders	Improves stress tolerance
Immune deficiency	Enhances immunity
Cognitive decline	Improves memory and mental clarity
General weakness	Improves strength and vitality

DISCUSSION

Rasayana therapy represents a unique preventive healthcare strategy in *Ayurveda*. It focuses not only on disease treatment but also on maintaining health and improving quality of life.

The mechanism of *Rasayana* therapy can be explained through several physiological processes described in *Ayurveda*. *Rasayana* drugs improve *Agni* (digestive fire), which ensures proper digestion and metabolism. Proper digestion leads to the formation of high-quality *Rasa Dhatu* which subsequently nourishes other tissues.^[1]

Another important mechanism involves enhancement of *Ojas*, which is considered the essence of immunity and vitality. Increased *Ojas* results in improved resistance to diseases and better overall health.^[2]

Modern scientific research has demonstrated that several *Rasayana* herbs possess antioxidant, adaptogenic, neuroprotective, and immunomodulatory activities.^[7,9,11,18] These pharmacological properties support the classical *Ayurvedic* claims regarding *Rasayana* therapy.^[10,12,14,15]

Rasayana therapy may therefore play an important role in preventive healthcare, especially in the context of modern lifestyle disorders such as diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, and stress-related conditions.^[16,17]

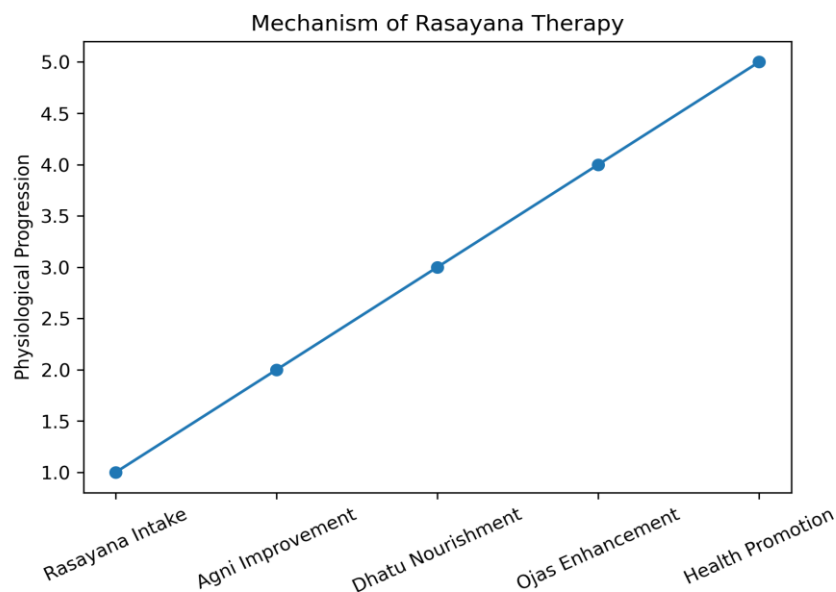


Figure 1: Mechanism of *Rasayana* Therapy.

CONCLUSION

Rasayana therapy is a vital component of *Ayurvedic* healthcare that promotes longevity, immunity, and overall well-being. By improving digestion, nourishing body tissues, and enhancing resistance against diseases, *Rasayana* therapy helps maintain physiological balance.

In the modern era of increasing lifestyle disorders and stress-related illnesses, *Rasayana* therapy offers a promising preventive strategy for maintaining health and promoting healthy aging.

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