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Role of *Rasayana* in *Netra Roga*

Visakh M. D.¹ Veena Shekar,² Sujathamma K.³

¹Post Graduate Scholar, ²Assistant Professor, ³Professor & HOD, Department of PG Studies in Shalaky Tantra, Sri Kalabyraveswary Ayurvedic Medical College, Hospital & Research Center, Bangalore, Karnataka, India.

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the most ancient medical science in the world and being the science of life, deals with every aspect of the life. The main aim of *Ayurveda* is the promotion of health and prevention of diseases. *Rasayana Chikitsa* is one of the eight branches of *Ayurveda* and the term *Rasayana* is derived from the root word *Rasa* and *Ayana*, which means *Rasa Gamanam* (transportation/transformation of *Rasa*). It is the best means of keeping the *Rasa* and other *Dhatu*s in excellent condition. *Rasayana Chikitsa* helps to achieve long life, better recollection, increased intellect, healthy body and mind, youth fullness, good complexion, good voice, abundance of body and sense organ strength, increased lusture. The main *Rasayanas* adopted in *Netra Chikitsa* are *Naimitika Rasayana* and *Achara Rasayana*. The appropriate use of *Chakshushya* and *Rasayana Dravyas* will help to maintain the health of the *Netra* and prevents age related eye disorders. This article presents various *Rasayana Dravyas* related to *Netra Roga*.

Key words: *Rasayana, Netra, Naimitika Rasayana, Rasayana Dravyas, Chakshushya.*

INTRODUCTION

The main aim of *Ayurveda* is to cure the diseases as well as to maintain the health of a healthy person. *Rasayana Chikitsa* is one of the best treatment modalities for maintaining the health and prevention of diseases. The ultimate aim of *Rasayana* is to maintain equilibrium of *Doshas, Dhatus* and improve the *Agni Bala*. *Rasayana* is essential to attain memory, intelligence, health, longevity, strengthening of sense organs, youthful age, good luster, voice and good speech brilliance.^[1] In the present era, physical and mental health of each individual is disturbed because

of the changing lifestyle with regard to food, daily activities and mental stress. These kinds of *Ahita Ahara* and *Viharas* cause vitiation of *Doshas* and further it will lead to diseases of body and impairment of sense organs. Among the all sense organs *Netra* is the *Pradhana Indriya* because knowledge can be gained only through proper vision. In the current scenario, the prevalence and incidence of blindness is that there are 37 million blind people and 124 million with low vision, comprising a total of over 161 million individuals with visual impairment in the world.^[2] In our classical *Ayurvedic* text books *Acharyas* have mentioned about various *Netra Rogas*, their *Nidana, Samprapti* and the effective treatment modalities and plenty of *Chakshushya* drugs which have both curative and preventive effects.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To explore the classical *Ayurveda* and allied literature for understanding the fundamental concept of *Rasayana Chikitsa* in *Netra Roga*.
2. To find the drugs mentioned in the classical *Ayurvedic* text books which are beneficial for *Netra Roga*.

Address for correspondence:

Dr. Visakh M. D.

Post Graduate Scholar, Department of PG Studies in Shalaky Tantra, Sri Kalabyraveswary Ayurvedic Medical College, Hospital & Research Center, Bangalore, Karnataka, India.

E-mail: drvisakhmdkadal@yahoo.com

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

Classical *Ayurveda* text books, modern text books, journals related to *Rasayana Chikitsa* and the *Rasayana* drugs related to *Netra* were analyzed for understanding the benefits of *Rasayana* in *Netra*.

Review of *Chakshushya Dravyas* mentioned in *Ayurvedic classics*

SUSRUTA SAMHITA

- If a person consumes *Purana Ghrita*, *Triphala*, *Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*), *Patola* (*Tricosanthes dioica*), *Mudga* (*Vigna radiate*), *Amalaka* (*Phyllanthus embilica*) and *Yava* (*Hordeum vulgare*) every day then the person will not have fear of dreadful *Timira*.^[3]
- *Payasa* (Milk pudding) prepared from *Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*) alone; or that prepared from *Amalaka* (*Phyllanthus embilica*) or *Yavaudana* (*Hordeum vulgare*) mixed with ghee, consumed followed by drinking *Triphala Kashaya* cures *timira*.^[4]
- Leaves of *Jivanti* (*Leptadenia reticulate*), *Sunisannaka* (*Marsilea quadrifolia*), *Tanduliyaka* (*Amaranthus viridis*), *Vastuka* (*Chenopodium album*), *Cilli* (*Chenopodium album*), *Mulakapotika* (*Raphanus sativus*) and meat of birds and animals of aired regions are all good for eyesight.^[5]
- Leaves of *Patola* (*Tricosanthes dioica*), *Karkotaka* (*Momordica dioica*), *Karavella* (*Momordica charantia*), *Vartaka* (*Solanum melongena*), *Tarkari* (*Clerodendrum phlomidis*), *Karira* (*Capparis decidua*), *Shigru* (*Moringa oleifera*) and *Artagala* (*Bareria cristata*) cooked with ghee are also good for eyesight.^[6]

YOGARATNAKARA^[7]

According to *Yogaratanakara* the beneficial diet for eyes consist of, *Shashtika Sali* (*Oryza sativa*), *Patola* (*Tricosanthes dioica*), *Shigru* (*Moringa oleifera*), *Draksha* (*Vitis vinifera*), *Vasthukam* (*Chenopodium album*), *Karavellam* (*Momordica charantia*), *Amra* (*Mangifera indica*), *Dhatri* (*Embilica officinalis*),

Dadima (*Punica granatum*), *Matulungam* (*Citrus medica*), *Narikelam* (*Cocos nucifera*), *Pathya* (*Terminalia chebula*), *Kushtam* (*Saussurea costus*), *Bhringarajam* (*Eclipta alba*), *Kumari* (*Aloe vera*), *Musta* (*Cyperus rotundus*), *Usheera* (*Vetiveria zizanioids*), *Purana ghruta*, *Dugdha*, *Dhanwa mamsa*, *Taila*, *Takra*, *Kanjikam*, *Gandhasaram* and *Karpura*.

CHARAKA SAMHITA

Acharya Charaka explained about *Rasayana Chikitsa* in four *Padas*, a person undergoing rejuvenation therapy attains *Deha* and *Indriya Bala*.

Abhayamalakeeyam Rasayana Padam		
Chyavana Prasa	Balamindriyanam	Ch.Chi.1.73
Amalaka Rasayanam	Indiyabala Samudhita	Ch.Chi.1.75
Haritaki Rasayana	Sareerendriya Budhibala	Ch.Chi.1.76
Pranakameeyam Rasayana Padam		
Amalaka Ghrita	Sthirendriyam Cha Atibalendriyam	Cha.Chi.2.5
Karaprachiteeyam Rasayana Padam		
Amalakayasa Brahma Rasayanam	Indriya Balapradam	Cha.Chi.3.6
Lauhadi Rasayanam	Ati Balendriyam	Cha.Chi.3.21
Ayurvedasamudhaneeyam Rasayana Padam		
Dwiteeya Indrokta Rasayanam	Indriya Balapradam	Cha.Chi.4.27

ASHTANGA HRUDAYA

Persons who are fond of their eyes, though healthy, should always adhere to following; grains such as *Yava* (*Hordeum vulgare*), *Godhuma* (*Triticum*

aestivum), *Shali* (*Oryza sativa*) *Swastika* (*Marsilea minuta*), *Kodrava* (*Paspalum scrobiculatum*), *Mudga* (*Vigna radiate*), etc. which are old and which mitigate *Kapha* and *Pitta*, mixed with more ghee; Vegetables and meat of animals of *Jangala Desha*, having similar properties; *Dadima* (*Punica granatum*), *Sita*, *Saindhava*, *Triphala*, *Draksha* (*Vitis vinifera*) and rain water drinking.^[8]

<i>Chyavanaprasa</i>	<i>Balamidriyanam</i>	A.H.Ut.39.41
<i>Langali Rasayanam</i>	<i>Upachitapruthu Gatra Shrotra Netradi Yuktam</i>	A.H.Ut.39.268

GADANIGRAHA

Triphala in the form of paste, decoction and powder is useful in all visual disturbances. *Triphala* mixed with honey helps to eliminate *Kaphaja* diseases; with ghee eliminates *Pittaja* diseases and in *Vataja* diseases with oil.^[9]

BHAVAPRAKASHA

According to *Acharya Bhavaprakasha*, beneficial diet for eyes includes *Shali* (*Oryza sativa*), *Mudga* (*Vigna radiate*), *Yava* (*Hordeum vulgare*), *Jangala Mruga Pakshi Mamsa*, *Vasthukam* (*Chenopodium album*), *Thanduliyakam* (*Amaranthus viridus*), *Patola* (*Tricosanthes dioica*), *Karkotaka* (*Momordica dioica*), *Karavellaka* (*Momordica charantia*), *Navina vartaka* (*Solanum melongena*) all cooked in ghee and also sweet and bitter drugs.^[10]

RASOUSHADHIS

<i>Swarna</i> (gold)	<i>Chakshushyam Ayushpradam</i>	<i>Rasatarangini.15.70</i>
<i>Yashada</i> (zinc)	<i>Nayanamaya Nasakaram</i>	<i>Rasatarangini.19.12 0-123</i>
<i>Kasisa</i> (ferrous sulphate)	<i>Netryam</i>	<i>Rasaratna samuchaya .3.51</i>
<i>Khatika</i> (chalk/pipe)	<i>Netramaya Nishudhini</i>	<i>Rasatarangini.11.21 1-212</i>

clay)		
<i>Samudraphena</i> (cattle fish bone)	<i>Chaksushya</i>	<i>Rasatarangini.12.11 3-114</i>
<i>Loha</i> (iron)	<i>Nayanamayaghn am</i>	<i>Rasatarangini.20.83. 86</i>
<i>Swarnamakshi ka</i> (coper pyrite)	<i>Chakshusyam</i>	<i>Rasaratna samuchaya 2.79-80</i>
<i>Gairika</i> (haematite)	<i>Netryam</i>	<i>Rasaratna samuchaya .3.47</i>
<i>Srotonjana</i> (antimony sulphate)	<i>Netryam</i>	<i>Rasaratna samuchaya .3.102</i>
<i>Kapardika</i> (cowry)	<i>Netrya</i>	<i>Rasaratna samuchaya .3.133</i>
<i>Abhraka</i> (mica)	<i>Chakshusyam, Netryam</i>	<i>Rasatarangini.10.72</i>
<i>Tamra</i> (Coper)	<i>Netramayeshu Uttamam</i>	<i>Ayurveda prakasha.3.145</i>
<i>Vanga</i> (tin)	<i>Chakshushyam</i>	<i>Rasa chudamami.14.134</i>

DISCUSSION

Rasayana Chikitsa is one of the best treatment modalities in *Ayurveda*, which helps to cure the diseases, as well as prevents the occurrence of diseases and helps to maintain youthfulness. The *Dravyas* used in *Rasayana* contain antioxidants which inhibits oxidation process and the production of free radicals which cause damage to the cells. *Ayurveda Samhitas* have mentioned about various *Chakshushya Dravyas* for *Indriya Bala Vardhana* and *Indriya Prasadana* as they promote normal functioning of the sense organs.

In our body each cell membrane is lipid soluble and most of our *Rasayanas* have *Ghritha/Sneha* in one or

the other form and therefore they can cross the blood aqueous barrier and thus reach each and every cell of ocular tissues.

Commonly used Netra Rasayana Dravyas

Kashta Dravyas

Triphala^[11] is a wonderful formulation which is used in different forms in almost all the *Netra Rogas*. Being *Kaphapittaghna*, *Chakshushya* and *Rasayana* it helps to nourish the *Chakshurendriya*. Being antioxidant, it acts as a free radical scavenger which is helpful in the maintenance of transparency of the lens fibers. Vitamin C helps to maintain the normal level of glutathione which is necessary for normal metabolism of the lens.

The content of poly phenols and tannins are responsible for radio-protecting ability in the diseases like pterygium, cataract and catarrhal conjunctivitis. Presence of cystine helps to repair the protein present in the lens and zinc helps to store vitamin A in retina.

Amalaki contains Pyruvate and Vitamin-C which is found to inhibit AR and reduce lens sorbitol levels.^[12]

Amalaki is a potent inhibitor of lipid peroxide formation and scavenger of superoxide and hydroxyl radicals in vitro and is capable to prevent dislipidaemia and oxidative stress in aging process.^[13]

The anti-oxidant activity of *Amalaki* is superior to Vitamin-C due to the presence of low molecular hydrolase tannis - emblicanin A and emblicanin B. It is capable to induce lens regeneration.^[14]

Haritaki exhibited anti-lipid peroxidation, anti superoxide radical formation and free radical scavenging activities in experimental animals.^[15]

Methonolic extract of the drug has been suggested to play a major role in the relief of long term complications of DM in experimental animals due to oxidative stress.^[16] *Vibhitaki* showed anti-diabetic and anti-oxidant properties in vivo.^[17] *E.officinalis* showed greater efficiency in lipid peroxidation and plasmid DNA assay while *T.chebula* has greater free radical scavenging activity. Thus their mixture *Triphala* is expected to be more effective due to the combined activity.^[18]

Honey contains almost all micro-nutrients, twenty fold anti oxidant capacity than vitamin C and richest supplier of anti-oxidant.^[19]

Navaneeta and *Ghrita* are extremely rich in vitamin A and choline with good amount of Vitamin-E, Riboflavin, Niacin and pantothenic acid; Vitamin K, foliate and Vitamin-B12 in small amount. Anti stiffness factor present in butter prevents hardening of arteries and cataracts.^[20]

Various *Chakshushya Dravyas* mentioned in our classics are rich sources of macro and micro nutrients like Vitamin A, Vitamin E, Vitamin C, Vitamin K, vitamin B₁ B₂ B₆ B₁₂ and vitamin D, glucose, fructose, glycogen, glutathione and zinc which helps in maintaining normal functional and structural integrity of the eye. So the proper usage of *Rasayana Dravyas* enlisted in our classical *Ayurveda Samhitas* will help to improve the eyesight, by strengthening ocular tissues and protect the eyes from the free radical damage and prevents age related diseases like cataract and macular degeneration.^[21]

Rasaoushadhis

Commonly used *Rasoushadhis* such as *Swarna Bhasma* (gold), *Rajata Bhasma* (silver) have anti-oxidant, immunomodulatory actions, *Yashada* (zinc) helps to store Vitamin A in retina, *Abhraka Bhasma* (Mica) has cellular regenerative, nerve stimulant and immunomodulator properties. *Bhasmas* of these *Rasoushadhas* also possess analgesic, anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory activity.^[22] By the virtue of their *Sukshma Guna* they can easily penetrate in to deeper tissues by passing through minute channels and quickly bring about the desired effects.

CONCLUSION

A healthy person is one, whose humors and metabolic state are in equilibrium, whose functional activities of the tissues and excretory products are in balance, the soul, senses and mind feel well. With regards to this, *Rasayana* plays an important role in all aspects of attaining health, which is one of the main motto of *Ayurveda*. Because of the changed lifestyle in the present era, more number of people are suffering

from degenerative disorders of the eye. Globally estimated number of blindness (%) due to cataract is 17.6 million (39%) followed by glaucoma 4.5 million (10%) and age related macular degeneration 3.2 million (7%). A person can attain excellent potentiality of body and sense organs by the usage of *Rasayanas*, by the virtue of their cellular regeneration and immunomodulatory qualities. *Chakshushya Rasayana Dravyas* help to delay the degeneration process in the retina and the lens and nourishes the ocular structures and hence helps to get rid off degenerative conditions like cataract and macular degeneration. *Rasayana Chikitsa* is essential to treat nutritional deficiency disorders like xerophthalmia, nutritional optic neuropathy etc. It is also beneficial in certain eye diseases which require immunomodulatory action like uveitis, keratitis etc. Therefore usage of *Rasayanas* has an important role in curing as well as in preventing eye diseases which in turn contributes to prevention of global blindness.

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