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AN NARRATIVE REVIEW ON THE EFFECT OF RASAYANA THERAPY IN RASA SHASTRA

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ABSTRACT:

Rasayana, a cornerstone of Rasa Shastra, the ancient Indian science of alchemy and rejuvenation, holds profound significance in fostering health, vitality, and longevity. This abstract elucidates the effects of Rasayana therapies on the human body according to Rasa Shastra principles, integrating insights from classical texts and modern research. Various types of Rasayana, as described in Ayurveda, contribute to a long and vibrant life. However, before initiating Rasayana treatment, certain prerequisites such as age (Vaya), constitution (Prakriti), adaptability (Satamya), and the status of Doshas, Dhatus, Agni, Ojas, and Strotas must be considered.

Rasayana therapies have been shown to facilitate cellular regeneration, enhance immunity, optimize metabolic function, and promote overall well-being. Furthermore, this abstract explores the therapeutic potential of Rasayana in managing chronic diseases, improving quality of life, and augmenting longevity. By amalgamating ancient wisdom with contemporary science, Rasayana in Rasa Shastra offers a holistic approach to health and wellness that transcends cultural and generational boundaries.

KEYWORDS: Rasayana, Rasa Shastra, Rasa Chikitsa, Rejuvenation, Ayurveda, longevity, holistic well-being

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INTRODUCTION:

Embedded within the fabric of ancient healing traditions lies the profound science of Rasayana, which emanates from Ayurveda, the traditional Indian system of medicine. The term "Rasayana" stems from the Sanskrit words "Rasa," signifying essence or juice, and "Ayana," denoting path or journey. It represents the sacred pursuit of unlocking the fountain of youth, reclaiming the dormant essence of vitality within each individual. As we embark on a journey to unravel the depths of Rasayana, we delve into its ancient wisdom, transformative potential, and timeless relevance in our pursuit of health, longevity, and inner harmony.

The Ayurvedic branch of Rasayana is dedicated to preserving longevity and fostering good health. By focusing on enhancing the quality of Rasa Dhatu and other bodily tissues, Rasayana aims to slow down the aging process, cultivate physical and mental strength, and enable individuals to lead long, ailment-free lives. Sharngadhara and Acharya Gopal Krishna Bhatta characterize Rasayana as a remedy that retards aging and promotes "Ojas," the essence of vitality, in healthy individuals.

The origins of Rasa Shastra can be traced back to the sixth and seventh centuries, with Nagarjuna, a Buddhist sage, credited as one of the pioneers in utilizing metals and minerals, particularly mercury, for healing purposes. Various classical texts such as Rasatarangini and Rasa Ratna Samucchaya provide insights into the pharmacological properties and preparations of Rasayana medications. These texts delineate disease-specific Rasayana formulations, offering a comprehensive understanding of rejuvenation therapies. Rasayana in Rasa Shastra epitomizes a harmonious blend of ancient wisdom and modern scientific inquiry, offering a holistic paradigm for promoting health, vitality, and longevity. By embracing the principles of Rasayana, individuals can embark on a transformative journey towards enhanced well-being, transcending barriers of time and culture.

DEFINITION OF RASAYANA

रसायनं शब्दोऽयं संस्कृते प्रयुक्तः। इत्येवं रसस्य आयनं यस्मिन् सर्वं तद् रसायनं। रसो हि अन्नम् अयनम् अस्य इति। (चरक संहिता चिकित्सा स्थान, अध्याय 1, श्लोक 2)

"रसायनं च एतत् स्यात् सर्वरसस्य चायनम्।" (चरक संहिता चिकित्सा स्थान, अध्याय 1, श्लोक 5)

"रसायनं हि वैदेयो नरः यः प्रत्युदक्त्वात्।" अत्र, रसायनं अर्थात् रसस्य आयनं यस्मिन् सर्वं तद् रसायनं इति भाष्यम्।

The term "Rasayana" denotes a form of rejuvenation therapy within Ayurveda, the ancient healing system originating from India. It encompasses a diverse array of herbal, dietary, and lifestyle practices aimed at fostering longevity, vitality, and overall well-being. Rasayana therapies are meticulously crafted to bolster the body's innate healing mechanisms, bolster immunity, and decelerate the aging process. Derived from Sanskrit roots, "Rasa" translates to essence or juice, while "Ayana" signifies path or journey. Thus, Rasayana can be aptly described as the pathway to acquiring and preserving the core essence of vitality and health.

Rasayana serves as the means through which one may achieve mastery over the various Dhatus (bodily tissues) and Rasa Dhatu, the vital fluid formed post-digestion. Within the realm of Ayurveda, the Rasayana Tantra branch is dedicated to leveraging Rasayana practices for the purposes of healing ailments, enhancing cognitive faculties and resilience, retarding the aging process, and extending lifespan.

METHDOLOGY

The material of Rasayana was collected from different authentic tikka's, literature, articles, manuscripts, and authentic websites like PubMed etc.

RASAYANA IN RASA SHASTRA

The term "rasayana" encompasses a wide range of potent medicinal compounds mentioned in the ancient texts of rasa shastra. In addition to the various formulations described in the "Rasayanadhikara" section, there are numerous other substances that possess rasayana properties and are particularly suitable for specific therapeutic purposes. These compounds often consist of a combination of several ingredients with rasayana qualities, such as swarna bhasma (gold ash), ras sindoor (red sulfide of mercury), components of maharasa (great metals), and various gemstones, among others.

Mercury, known as Parad in Ayurveda, is considered a highly effective medicine when processed correctly. It has a calming effect on the body, balances the three doshas (biological energies), and retards the aging process. Mercury nourishes the body's vital organs and strengthens the eyes. It is described as an aphrodisiac (vrishya), tonic (balya), rejuvenator (snigdha), antimicrobial (krimighna), wound healer (vrana shodhana), and

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wound sealer (vrana ropana). When combined with certain herbs, its therapeutic benefits are further enhanced. Mercury is renowned as the ultimate destroyer of diseases and is believed to promote a robust physique and stable mind. Besides mercury, many other metals and minerals also exhibit rasayana properties. Like plants, minerals have their own distinct tastes (rasa) and therapeutic effects. For example, swarna (gold) is sweet in its post-digestive effect (vipaka), cold in potency (virya), oily and astringent in quality (guna), and astringent in taste (rasa). Its actions include promoting skin health, acting as an antibacterial and antipyretic agent, and preventing tissue degeneration. Similarly, rajat (silver) has sour and astringent tastes and strengthens the brain, stomach, and heart. It is recommended for conditions such as palpitations, premature ejaculation, vertigo, insanity, and intoxication. Therefore, the scriptures of rasa shastra provide detailed descriptions of various herbo-mineral combinations and rasayana substances.

PRACTICE OF RASAYANA THERAPY

Before beginning Rasayana therapy, certain prerequisites must be met, including age (Vaya), constitution (Prakriti), adaptability (Satamya), and the state of doshas, dhatus, agni, ojas, and srotas, among others. It's essential to consider not only one's financial status but also factors like strength (Bala), mental clarity (Satva), type of illness, and other relevant aspects. There's a strong recommendation for undergoing Samshodhana Karma, a purification process, as a crucial preparatory step before starting Rasayana therapy. Just as dyeing a dirty cloth won't allow the color to shine brightly, a person who hasn't undergone purification treatments before Rasayana therapy isn't suitable for or doesn't benefit from it.

Rasayana therapy can be used to promote health and vitality in healthy individuals (Kamya Rasayana) or as an adjunct to specific medical treatments for particular conditions (Naimittika Rasayana). It helps eliminate doshas, leading to a thorough cellular cleansing of the body, which contributes to overall well-being. Naimittika Rasayana isn't a targeted treatment for a specific ailment but rather a customized Rasayana suitable for a particular individual based on their condition. When administering Rasayana, it's crucial to consider the pharmacological properties of the formulation, including taste (Rasa), qualities (Guna),

potency (Virya), post-digestive effect (Vipaka), and special effects (Prabhava), as these factors influence how the drug acts in the body. These elements should be taken into account to ensure effective and safe administration of Rasayana therapy.

INDICATION OF RASAYANA

There are two methods utilized for administering Rasayana drugs: the kutipravesika method and the vatatapika approach. While Kutipravesika Rasayana has specific indications, the Vatatapika approach can be utilized by anyone for Rasayana administration. Before opting for Kutipravesika Rasayana, an individual should possess the following qualities:

1. **Physical Weakness:** Rasayana is recommended for individuals experiencing physical weakness and a general feeling of unwellness.
2. **Signs of Aging:** Rasayana can help alleviate signs of aging such as graying hair, physical frailty, and other age-related symptoms.
3. **Boosting Immunity:** Rasayana enhances the body's immunity, aiding individuals in fighting against various diseases.
4. **Increased Energy Levels:** Rasayana supplements are known to boost energy levels, making individuals more active and vibrant.
5. **Mental and Emotional Well-being:** Rasayana supports mental and emotional health, providing stability and peace of mind.
6. **Environmental Stress:** In cases of environmental stress, fatigue, or stress-related issues, Rasayana can be beneficial.
7. **Prevention of Degeneration:** Rasayana is employed to prevent degeneration and slow down the aging process.

CONTRAINDICATION OF RASAYANA

Here are some considerations to keep in mind before starting Rasayana therapy:

1. **Pregnancy and Breastfeeding:** It's important to note that Rasayana formulations might not be suitable for pregnant or breastfeeding women, as their safety during these conditions has not been established.
2. **Acute Illness:** Individuals suffering from acute illnesses, infections, or fevers may need to postpone Rasayana therapy until their condition improves.
3. **Severe Chronic Conditions:** Patients with severe chronic conditions, such as advanced stages of cancer, kidney disease, or liver disease, should use Rasayana formulations cautiously and under the guidance of a healthcare professional.
4. **Allergic Reactions:** Individuals with known allergies or hypersensitivity to any of the ingredients in Rasayana formulations should avoid their use to prevent allergic reactions.
5. **Digestive Disorders:** Rasayana may worsen symptoms in individuals with severe digestive disorders such as gastritis, ulcers, or inflammatory bowel diseases.
6. **Hormonal Imbalances:** Rasayana formulations that affect hormone levels may not be suitable for individuals with hormonal imbalances or endocrine disorders without proper medical supervision.
7. **Medication Interactions:** Some Rasayana herbs may interact with certain medications, affecting their effectiveness or causing adverse effects. It's crucial to consult with a healthcare professional before starting Rasayana therapy, especially if you're taking other medications.
8. **Unsupervised Use:** Rasayana should not be used without proper guidance or supervision from a qualified Ayurvedic practitioner or healthcare provider, as improper use may lead to adverse effects or complications.

SCOPE OF RASAYANA

Rasayana therapy encompasses a wide range of health benefits, covering various aspects of well-being. Here are some key areas where Rasayana therapy holds significant scope:

1. Anti-aging: Rasayana therapy aims to rejuvenate the body and slow down the aging process, focusing on enhancing vitality, promoting longevity, and maintaining youthful vigor.
 2. Enhanced Immunity: Rasayana formulations boost the body's immune system, making it more resilient to infections, diseases, and environmental stressors.
 3. Preventive Healthcare: Rasayana therapy plays a crucial role in preventive healthcare by promoting overall wellness and reducing the risk of diseases, helping maintain optimal health and preventing various ailments.
 4. Stress Management: Rasayana formulations have adaptogenic properties that help the body cope with stress, improving resilience to mental and emotional challenges, promoting mental clarity, emotional stability, and overall well-being.
 5. Longevity: Rasayana therapy promotes longevity by enhancing the body's natural healing mechanisms, slowing down degenerative processes, and maintaining cellular health.
 6. Enhanced Vitality: Rasayana formulations improve energy levels, stamina, and vitality, enhancing physical strength, endurance, and overall performance.
 7. Mental Health: Rasayana therapy promotes mental health by improving cognitive function, memory, concentration, and emotional balance, alleviating stress, anxiety, and depression, and fostering a positive outlook on life.
 8. Holistic Wellness: Rasayana therapy addresses the holistic well-being of an individual, focusing on physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of health, promoting balance and harmony within the body, mind, and spirit.¹⁴
- Jara Nivartaka
 - Vyadhi Nivartaka
 - Prashasta Dhatu

VYADHI NIRVARTAKA- Rasayana therapy offers medicinal treatment (Vyadhihara) and therapeutic approaches in the forms of pathya, prasamana, and prakritisthapana. While

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most Ayurvedic Rasayanas serve as broad immunomodulators, they also frequently aim to enhance the overall immune system, optimizing both the quantity and quality of immune system constituents to the highest degree possible.

They promote the growth of robust and healthy immune system components, such as cells and immunoglobulins, acting as immune-stimulants. Additionally, they regulate the immune system, preventing autoimmune responses and various inflammatory non-autoimmune diseases.

Many Rasayanas described in Ayurvedic texts, particularly those found in chapters dedicated to specific ailments like Prameha (diabetes), Rajayakshma (tuberculosis), and Jvara (fever), offer broad immunomodulatory effects. However, for targeted immunological responses, Rasayanas containing minerals or other compounds from rasa shastra (as well as herbal Rasayanas) are more commonly recognized. Their proposed mode of action is more precise, targeting specific systems, organs, tissues, or even individual immune system components.

PRASHASTA DHATU

Rasayana can enhance metabolism, promoting optimal biotransformation and the development of superior body tissues. It rejuvenates the entire organism by maintaining the essential balance between anabolic and catabolic processes. This encompasses various aspects, including sustaining a healthy appetite, ensuring proper digestion and absorption of nutrients, and facilitating assimilation and utilization at the cellular level.

The mention of several Rasayanas in Rasayanadhikar for conditions like pandu (anemia), rakta-pitta (bleeding disorders), kshaya (emaciation), and shosha (consumption), along with their effects such as balya (strength-giving), kantikara (improving complexion), vrishya (aphrodisiac), and jara (anti-aging), clearly illustrates their hematopoietic and anabolic activities.

BENEFIT TO SOCIETY FROM RASAYANA- The benefits of Rasayana extend beyond individual health to positively impact society as a whole. Here are several ways in which Rasayana therapy contributes to the well-being of society:

1. **Improved Public Health:** Rasayana therapy promotes preventive healthcare and strengthens immunity, leading to fewer instances of illness in society. This results in reduced sick leave, lower healthcare expenses, and heightened overall productivity.
2. **Enhanced Quality of Life:** By fostering healthier, more active lives, Rasayana therapy enriches individuals' quality of life, fostering a happier and more vibrant society.
3. **Longevity and Aging Population:** Rasayana therapy supports healthy aging, contributing to a growing population of elderly individuals. This demographic shift presents opportunities for intergenerational knowledge exchange, economic development, and social cohesion.
4. **Reduced Healthcare Costs:** Emphasizing preventive healthcare and wellness, Rasayana therapy helps lower healthcare expenses linked to managing chronic diseases and age-related conditions.
5. **Environmental Sustainability:** Many Rasayana formulations utilize natural ingredients sourced from medicinal plants and herbs, promoting sustainable cultivation and conservation practices. This aids in environmental preservation and biodiversity conservation.
6. **Empowerment of Local Communities:** Rasayana therapy often incorporates traditional knowledge and practices from local communities, empowering them and preserving cultural heritage.
7. **Holistic Health Approach:** Rasayana therapy adopts a holistic approach to health, recognizing the interconnectedness of body, mind, and spirit. This approach fosters a comprehensive understanding of health and well-being in society.
8. **Cultural Exchange and Global Collaboration:** Rooted in ancient wisdom and traditional healing systems like Ayurveda, Rasayana therapy encourages cultural exchange and global collaboration, facilitating advancements in healthcare and well-being worldwide.

DISCUSSION

Rasayana is a nutrition science. It provides nourishment to all seven Dhatus. It is a highly specialized approach that involves rejuvenation recipes, dietary limitations, and distinctive

conduct and behavior that promotes health, in addition to pharmaceutical therapy. The general benefits of rasayana include prolonging life, increasing cognition and intelligence, improving voice quality, and enhancing the body's luster-aura. It also provides the body with a tremendous level of strength and ensures that all of the various sensory organ systems are functioning correctly. Rasayana therapy requires several conditions to be satisfied, including the Vaya (age), Prakriti (constitution), Satamya (adaptability), Dosha, Dhatu, Agni, Ojas, Strota, Satva, kind of sickness, and Bala of the individual. Samshodhana Karma has been suggested as a necessary pretreatment before the administration of Rasayana therapy because it helps eliminate Doshas, which leads to efficient cleaning of the body at the cellular level. This quantity enhances metabolism and absorption, resulting in faster and more efficient drug action on the body.¹⁸

Exploring the Wonders of Rasayana Therapy

In the ancient texts of Ayurveda, there exists a treasure trove of wisdom—a roadmap to vitality, longevity, and holistic well-being. At the heart of this ancient healing tradition lies Rasayana therapy—a profound science that holds the promise of rejuvenation and renewal. Join me as we embark on an enlightening journey to unravel the mysteries and marvels of Rasayana.

The Essence of Rasayana: Rasayana, derived from the Sanskrit words "Rasa" (essence) and "Ayana" (path), embodies the pursuit of optimal health and vitality. It is a holistic approach to wellness that seeks to rejuvenate and revitalize the body, mind, and spirit. Rooted in the ancient wisdom of Ayurveda, Rasayana therapy offers a pathway to unlock the fountain of youth and attain a state of vibrant well-being.

The Science of Rejuvenation: Rasayana therapy operates on the fundamental principle of enhancing the body's innate healing mechanisms. It recognizes that the human body possesses an inherent capacity for regeneration and renewal—a capacity that can be nurtured and stimulated through the judicious use of Rasayana herbs, lifestyle practices, and dietary modifications. By promoting cellular rejuvenation, Rasayana therapy enables individuals to transcend the limitations of age and embrace vitality at every stage of life.

The Power of Rasayana Herbs: Central to Rasayana therapy are Rasayana herbs—nature's potent elixirs renowned for their rejuvenating properties. From the golden glow of Turmeric to the restorative prowess of Ashwagandha, these botanical treasures offer a rich tapestry of therapeutic benefits. Whether consumed as herbal formulations, decoctions, or dietary supplements, Rasayana herbs infuse the body with vitality, boost immunity, and promote longevity. Their synergistic action nourishes the dhatus (tissues), balances the doshas (bioenergies), and harmonizes the body-mind complex, paving the way for optimal health and well-being.

The Journey of Transformation: Rasayana therapy is not merely a treatment—it is a journey of transformation—a sacred quest to awaken the body's latent potential and unleash the divine spark of vitality within. Through disciplined practice, self-awareness, and mindful living, individuals embark on a voyage of self-discovery—a journey that transcends the boundaries of age, illness, and limitation. With each step along the path of Rasayana, they reclaim their birthright to radiant health, boundless energy, and enduring vitality.

The Promise of Rasayana: In a world beset by the ravages of stress, pollution, and modern-day maladies, Rasayana therapy offers a beacon of hope—a promise of renewal and rejuvenation. It empowers individuals to reclaim control of their health, embrace the wisdom of nature, and embark on a transformative journey towards holistic well-being. As we delve deeper into the mysteries of Rasayana, let us heed the call to awaken the healer within and embark on the quest for eternal youth—a quest fueled by the timeless wisdom of Ayurveda and the boundless power of the human spirit.

Therapeutic Modalities: Rasayana therapy employs a variety of modalities to achieve its rejuvenating effects. This may include the use of herbal preparations, dietary modifications, lifestyle practices, detoxification techniques, and mental rejuvenation exercises such as meditation and yoga. Each Rasayana formulation is carefully selected and tailored to the individual's constitution, imbalances, and health goals.

Benefits and Outcomes: The benefits of Rasayana therapy are manifold and extend beyond mere physical health. It is believed to enhance immunity, increase vitality, improve cognitive function, boost energy levels, promote longevity, and slow down the aging process. Rasayana therapies also support emotional well-being, mental clarity, and spiritual growth, fostering a sense of harmony and wholeness within the individual.

Challenges and Considerations: Despite its numerous benefits, Rasayana therapy faces several challenges in the modern world. One of the primary challenges is the lack of scientific validation and standardized protocols for Rasayana formulations. Additionally, the commercialization and adulteration of herbal products have raised concerns about their safety and efficacy. Furthermore, the integration of traditional knowledge with modern healthcare practices remains a complex and ongoing process.

Future Directions: Moving forward, there is a growing interest in exploring the potential of Rasayana therapy within the context of integrative medicine. Researchers are increasingly investigating the pharmacological properties of Rasayana herbs and their mechanisms of action. There is also a renewed focus on preserving traditional knowledge, promoting sustainable practices, and ensuring the accessibility and affordability of Rasayana therapies for all.

CONCLUSION

Rasayana therapy facilitates achieving optimal states of physical endurance, mental clarity, longevity, immunity, and sensory acuity. By nourishing the entire body and bolstering the immune system, it enhances natural resistance to illness. In today's era of modernized Rasa Chikitsa, with diseases like AIDS, TB, and diabetes mellitus becoming increasingly prevalent, Rasayana therapy's importance has escalated significantly. Rasayana therapy offers a holistic approach to health and wellness, addressing the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of human existence. While rooted in ancient wisdom, it continually evolves and adapts to society's changing needs. By embracing Rasayana principles, individuals can forge a deeper connection with their innate healing potential and embark on a journey toward optimal health and vitality.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST – NIL

SOURCE OF SUPPORT -NONE

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