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RACHANA SHARIR IN AYURVEDA: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF ITS EDUCATIONAL, CLINICAL, AND RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a comprehensive medical system in which the understanding of body structure is fundamental to the preservation of health and the management of disease. *Rachana Sharir*, the branch concerned with structural organization of the human body, constitutes an essential component of Ayurvedic education and practice. Classical Ayurvedic literature presents systematic descriptions of anatomical entities such as *Asthi*, *Sandhi*, *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Dhamani*, *Marma*, and internal organs, reflecting a distinct anatomical framework that supports both theoretical knowledge and therapeutic application. The present review critically examines the educational, clinical, and research relevance of *Rachana Sharir* in the contemporary context. In academics, *Rachana Sharir* establishes the conceptual base for undergraduate and postgraduate learners by promoting anatomical understanding, clinical orientation, and comparative interpretation of classical and modern anatomical sciences. Effective teaching of this discipline contributes to improved comprehension of *Sharir*

concepts and strengthens the integration of traditional principles with current pedagogical methods. From a clinical perspective, the principles of *Rachana Sharir* are valuable in the accurate localization of structures, understanding of *Marma* points, execution of *Panchakarma* procedures, surgical interventions, and interpretation of disease manifestations involving specific body regions. Knowledge derived from this branch enhances precision, safety, and rational planning in various Ayurvedic therapeutic procedures. In the field of research, *Rachana Sharir* provides significant scope for interdisciplinary exploration through cadaveric studies, radiological correlation, morphometric evaluation, and textual analysis of classical anatomical concepts using modern scientific tools. Such approaches may help generate evidence-based interpretations and broaden the scientific visibility of Ayurveda. This review concludes that *Rachana Sharir* should be regarded as a progressive and application-oriented discipline rather than a purely descriptive subject. Its continued advancement through innovative education, clinical utility, and systematic research is essential for strengthening the academic excellence and global acceptance of Ayurveda.

Keywords- Ayurveda, Clinical Relevance, Interdisciplinary Research, *Rachana Sharir* etc.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is one of the oldest codified systems of healthcare, emphasizing the maintenance of health, prevention of disease, and restoration of physiological balance through individualized principles of diagnosis and treatment.^[1] The science of Ayurveda is traditionally structured into multiple branches, among which the study of the human body occupies a position of primary importance. Accurate understanding of bodily constitution, structural organization, and functional interrelationship is indispensable for the proper interpretation of health and disease. In this context, *Rachana Sharir* represents the branch devoted to the structural aspects of the body and serves as a foundational discipline in Ayurvedic education.

Rachana Sharir provides systematic descriptions of the external and internal architecture of the human body through classical concepts such as *Asthi* (bones), *Sandhi* (joints), *Sira* (vessels), *Snayu* (ligaments and tendinous structures), *Dhamani*, *Marma* (vital anatomical points), *Kosthanga*, and other bodily components.^[2] These descriptions reflect the observational and analytical approaches adopted by ancient scholars for understanding

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human morphology. Although the terminology and conceptual framework differ from those of contemporary anatomy, many principles retain academic and practical relevance when interpreted through comparative perspectives.

In modern Ayurvedic curricula, *Rachana Sharir* is taught as a core subject during undergraduate and postgraduate training because it establishes the anatomical basis required for advanced clinical subjects. Sound knowledge of this discipline supports learning in areas such as *Kriya Sharir*, *Shalya Tantra*, *Panchakarma*, *Roga Nidana*, and *Kayachikitsa*. It also assists students in developing spatial orientation, clinical reasoning, procedural confidence, and an integrated understanding of body systems. Therefore, the discipline contributes not only to theoretical learning but also to the formation of competent practitioners and researchers.

The clinical significance of *Rachana Sharir* extends beyond academic instruction. Precise anatomical knowledge is essential for the safe performance of therapeutic procedures, localization of disease manifestations, assessment of trauma, interpretation of *Marma* injuries, and planning of surgical or para-surgical interventions. Furthermore, increasing interest in evidence-based traditional medicine has created new opportunities to re-evaluate classical anatomical concepts through cadaveric dissection, radiological imaging, morphometric studies, and interdisciplinary biomedical research.

Despite its importance, *Rachana Sharir* is sometimes perceived merely as a descriptive subject limited to memorization of structures and terminologies. Such a narrow view underestimates its broader role in clinical application, scientific inquiry, and curricular integration. Re-examining the scope of this discipline is therefore necessary to strengthen its relevance within contemporary Ayurvedic education and global healthcare discourse.

The present review aims to critically analyze the educational, clinical, and research perspectives of *Rachana Sharir* in Ayurveda and to highlight its continuing significance as a bridge between classical knowledge and modern scientific understanding.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was designed as a narrative review to critically examine the educational, clinical, and research perspectives of *Rachana Sharir* within Ayurveda. The review

methodology involved systematic identification, selection, and thematic analysis of relevant classical and contemporary literature related to the subject.

Sources of Data

Data for the present review were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included major classical Ayurvedic texts such as *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya* and their standard commentaries, with particular emphasis on sections related to *Sharir Rachana*. Secondary sources included peer-reviewed journal articles, review papers, postgraduate dissertations, conference proceedings, academic textbooks, and indexed electronic databases relevant to anatomy, medical education, and Ayurvedic research.

Search Strategy

A structured literature search was carried out using academic databases and digital repositories. Relevant keywords and combinations of terms were used, including “*Rachana Sharir*,” “Ayurvedic anatomy,” “*Sharir Rachana*,” “*Marma* anatomy,” “Ayurvedic education,” “clinical relevance of *Rachana Sharir*,” and “Ayurveda research.” Manual screening of reference lists from selected publications was also performed to identify additional relevant studies.

Inclusion Criteria

Literature was included in the review if it met the following criteria:

1. Publications directly related to concepts of *Rachana Sharir*.
2. Studies addressing educational, clinical, anatomical, or research applications of the subject.
3. Classical textual references describing structural concepts of the human body.
4. Peer-reviewed articles and scholarly sources available in English, Hindi, or Sanskrit translation.

Exclusion Criteria

The following sources were excluded:

1. Articles lacking relevance to the objectives of the review.
2. Duplicate publications or repeated data.

3. Non-scholarly sources without academic credibility.
4. Studies with inadequate methodological clarity or incomplete information.

Data Extraction and Analysis

Relevant information from the selected sources was extracted and organized under predefined themes, namely educational significance, clinical utility, and research scope of *Rachana Sharir*. Comparative interpretation of classical Ayurvedic descriptions with contemporary anatomical understanding was undertaken wherever appropriate. The collected data were synthesized qualitatively to develop an evidence-informed narrative discussion.

Study Limitation

As this study is based on literature review methodology, findings are dependent upon the availability, quality, and interpretative scope of published sources. No experimental or interventional procedures were undertaken in the present review.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Rachana Sharir has been recognized in classical and contemporary scholarship as an essential branch of Ayurveda that provides the structural basis for understanding the human body. The concept of anatomical knowledge in Ayurveda is not restricted to gross morphology alone; rather, it encompasses the organization, interrelationship, and functional significance of bodily components. Classical compendia describe the body through detailed accounts of organs, tissues, channels, joints, bones, vessels, and vital points, thereby demonstrating a systematic approach to structural science.

Among the foundational texts, *Sushruta Samhita* is widely acknowledged for its elaborate treatment of anatomical principles and practical orientation toward surgical training. Descriptions related to *Asthi*, *Sandhi*, *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Dhamani*, *Garbha Vijnana*, and *Marma* indicate advanced observational understanding and emphasize the importance of direct study of the human body.^[3] The text also highlights the educational value of dissection and hands-on learning, which reflects an early pedagogical model for anatomical teaching.^[4]

Charaka Samhita presents structural concepts in close association with physiology, pathology, and therapeutics. Its descriptions of bodily constituents,^[5] embryological development,^[6] and constitutional variations suggest that anatomical knowledge was

integrated with broader clinical reasoning. This integrated perspective remains relevant in present-day teaching, where anatomy must be understood in relation to function and disease processes rather than as an isolated subject.

Ashtanga Hridaya offers concise yet clinically meaningful references to bodily structures and emphasizes practical applicability.^[7] The text supports the view that knowledge of structural organization is necessary for diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment planning.^[8] Such references continue to influence undergraduate and postgraduate curricula in Ayurvedic institutions.

Modern academic literature identifies *Rachana Sharir* as a foundational discipline for students entering professional education. Several educational studies have emphasized that conceptual clarity in anatomy improves comprehension of advanced subjects such as *Kriya Sharir*, *Shalya Tantra*, *Panchakarma*, and *Roga Nidana*. Contemporary pedagogical approaches recommend the use of cadaveric demonstration, osteology specimens, models, charts, multimedia tools, and integrated teaching methods to enhance learner engagement and retention.

From a clinical standpoint, published reviews have highlighted the significance of anatomical knowledge in procedural safety and therapeutic precision. Application areas commonly discussed include *Marma Chikitsa*,^[9] *Panchakarma* procedures,^[10] *Agnikarma*, *Ksharakarma*, venesection, surgical interventions, and regional assessment of disease manifestations. Understanding anatomical landmarks is considered essential for minimizing procedural complications and improving outcomes.

Recent research trends have expanded the scope of *Rachana Sharir* through interdisciplinary inquiry. Studies involving radiological imaging, cadaveric measurements, morphometric analysis, and correlation of classical anatomical descriptions with modern anatomy have attempted to generate objective evidence. Researchers have also explored embryological concepts, structural variations, and the anatomical basis of *Marma* points using contemporary scientific methods. These developments indicate growing interest in bridging traditional knowledge with biomedical sciences.

Despite these advances, available literature also notes certain challenges, including variability in terminology, difficulties in standardization of classical concepts, limited multicentric research, and inadequate integration of modern research methodology in some settings. Addressing these gaps through rigorous scholarship, updated teaching strategies, and collaborative research may further strengthen the scientific and educational status of *Rachana Sharir*.

Overall, the reviewed literature demonstrates that *Rachana Sharir* is a dynamic and multidimensional discipline with continuing relevance in education, clinical practice, and research. Its historical depth and contemporary applicability justify renewed academic attention and systematic development within the broader framework of Ayurveda.

RESULT

The present review highlights that *Rachana Sharir* constitutes a fundamental and application-oriented discipline within Ayurveda, with significant contributions to medical education, clinical practice, and contemporary research. Critical analysis of classical Ayurvedic literature along with modern educational and scientific perspectives reveals that the scope of *Rachana Sharir* extends beyond descriptive anatomy and serves as an essential framework for understanding structural organization, functional interpretation, and therapeutic application in Ayurveda.

Academic Importance of *Rachana Sharir*

The review demonstrates that *Rachana Sharir* forms the intellectual and structural foundation for the study of various Ayurvedic disciplines including *Kriya Sharir*, *Chikitsa Tantra*, *Shalya Tantra*, and *Panchakarma*. Detailed knowledge of anatomical entities such as *Asthi*, *Sandhi*, *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Dhamani*, *Marma*, and *Kosthanga* provides learners with conceptual clarity regarding the organization of the human body as described in classical texts. It was observed that the integration of traditional anatomical principles with modern anatomy enhances analytical understanding and promotes comparative interpretation among undergraduate and postgraduate students.

The use of cadaveric dissection, anatomical models, radiological demonstrations, and digital learning methodologies was found to improve comprehension, retention, and clinical orientation of anatomical knowledge. Furthermore, interdisciplinary teaching approaches facilitate the scientific interpretation of classical concepts and support competency-based Ayurvedic education in the modern academic environment.

Clinical Relevance and Therapeutic Utility

The findings of this review indicate that *Rachana Sharir* possesses substantial clinical relevance in the diagnosis, localization, and management of disease conditions. Anatomical understanding derived from this branch contributes significantly to the safe and effective execution of *Panchakarma* procedures, *Agnikarma*, *Raktamokshana*, *Ksharakarma*, and various surgical interventions described in Ayurveda. Knowledge of regional anatomy and

structural relations assists clinicians in identifying pathological sites and planning appropriate therapeutic measures with greater precision.

Particular importance was observed in the clinical application of *Marma Sharir*, where detailed anatomical awareness plays a vital role in trauma management, pain modulation, neuromuscular disorders, and rehabilitative procedures. The review further suggests that accurate anatomical orientation minimizes procedural complications and enhances therapeutic safety and efficacy in clinical practice.

Research Potential and Scientific Integration

The review identifies extensive scope for interdisciplinary and evidence-based research within the domain of *Rachana Sharir*. Classical anatomical descriptions can be critically explored and scientifically interpreted through cadaveric studies, morphometric analysis, histological evaluation, and radiological correlation using modern diagnostic modalities such as MRI, CT imaging, ultrasonography, and endoscopic techniques. These approaches facilitate objective understanding and validation of Ayurvedic anatomical concepts from a contemporary biomedical perspective.

In addition, textual analysis and comparative studies involving classical Samhitas and modern anatomical sciences contribute toward standardization, documentation, and academic refinement of Ayurvedic anatomy. Such integrative research methodologies may strengthen the scientific credibility and international visibility of Ayurveda.

Contemporary Relevance

The overall findings of the review establish that *Rachana Sharir* remains highly relevant in present-day Ayurvedic education and healthcare practice. Its integration with modern pedagogical strategies, clinical sciences, and technological advancements enhances both academic quality and practical applicability. The review further indicates that continuous development in teaching methodology, clinical utilization, and interdisciplinary research can significantly contribute to the advancement and global acceptance of Ayurvedic anatomical sciences.

Overall Findings

The review concludes that:

- *Rachana Sharir* serves as the foundational anatomical discipline of Ayurveda.
- Anatomical knowledge derived from this branch strengthens clinical accuracy, procedural safety, and therapeutic planning.

- *Marma Sharir* possesses considerable importance in clinical and surgical applications.
- Integration of classical concepts with modern scientific tools provides substantial opportunities for evidence-based research.
- Innovative educational and interdisciplinary approaches can enhance the academic and scientific status of Ayurvedic anatomy.
- Thus, the present review establishes *Rachana Sharir* as a progressive, clinically relevant, and research-oriented discipline that continues to play a pivotal role in strengthening the educational excellence and scientific advancement of Ayurveda.

DISCUSSION

The present review demonstrates that *Rachana Sharir* occupies a central position in Ayurveda because structural knowledge of the human body is fundamental to education, diagnosis, and therapeutic application. Although often introduced as an anatomical subject, its scope extends beyond the identification of body parts and includes conceptual understanding of bodily organization, regional relationships, developmental aspects, and clinically relevant structural principles. This broad framework supports the view that *Rachana Sharir* should be interpreted as an applied and integrative discipline rather than a purely descriptive branch.

From an academic perspective, the review indicates that *Rachana Sharir* forms the foundation for higher learning in multiple Ayurvedic subjects. Students who develop sound anatomical understanding are generally better prepared to interpret concepts in *Kriya Sharir*, *Shalya Tantra*, *Panchakarma*, *Roga Nidana*, and *Kayachikitsa*. However, traditional teaching methods based predominantly on memorization may reduce conceptual clarity and learner engagement. Contemporary medical education increasingly emphasizes competency-based learning, integrated teaching, case-based discussion, and practical demonstration. Adoption of such approaches in *Rachana Sharir* may improve comprehension, retention, and clinical orientation among learners.

The analysis also highlights the continued relevance of dissection in anatomical education. Direct observation of structures through cadaveric study enhances three-dimensional understanding, spatial orientation, and appreciation of natural variations. For Ayurvedic students, dissection offers an additional advantage by enabling comparative interpretation of classical terms such as *Asthi*, *Sandhi*, *Snayu*, *Sira*, and *Marma* with modern anatomical structures. This may reduce conceptual gaps that sometimes arise from differences in

terminology or translation. Therefore, practical exposure should remain a core component of anatomical training, supplemented by digital resources and simulation-based tools.

Clinically, the importance of *Rachana Sharir* is evident in procedures requiring anatomical precision. *Panchakarma* interventions, para-surgical techniques, trauma assessment, regional examination, and *Marma*-based therapeutic applications all depend upon accurate localization and structural awareness. Inadequate anatomical knowledge may compromise procedural safety and treatment outcomes. Thus, strengthening applied anatomy teaching within Ayurvedic institutions can directly contribute to improved standards of patient care.

The review further suggests that *Rachana Sharir* has substantial research potential. Modern tools such as radiological imaging, cadaveric morphometry, histological analysis, and biomedical modelling can be utilized to explore classical anatomical concepts in an objective manner. Interdisciplinary collaboration between Ayurvedic scholars, anatomists, surgeons, and biomedical researchers may generate stronger evidence and facilitate scientific dialogue. Such research can also support standardization of terminology and better academic communication at national and international levels.

Despite these strengths, certain challenges remain. Variations in interpretation of classical descriptions, limited availability of research infrastructure, insufficient multicentric studies, and inconsistency in pedagogical methods may restrict the full development of the discipline. Addressing these issues requires curriculum refinement, faculty development, updated laboratories, ethical cadaver donation systems, and encouragement of high-quality research methodology.

Dissection occupies a pivotal position in the study of *Rachana Sharir*, as it offers direct, systematic, and experiential understanding of the human body. Ancient Ayurvedic acharyas recognized the importance of practical observation for comprehending anatomical structures such as *Asthi*, *Sandhi*, *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Dhamani*, *Marma*, and visceral organs. By means of dissection, students are able to correlate classical textual descriptions with actual anatomical features, thereby enhancing conceptual clarity and three-dimensional orientation. It further facilitates the study of structural relationships, regional anatomy, and normal anatomical variations essential for clinical application. In contemporary Ayurvedic education, cadaveric dissection serves as an effective bridge between classical Ayurvedic anatomy or *Rachana Sharir* and modern anatomical science, encouraging analytical and evidence-based learning. Moreover, it cultivates observational skill, manual precision, discipline, ethical sensitivity and reverence toward the human body. Hence, dissection

remains an indispensable pedagogical tool for attaining comprehensive knowledge of *Rachana Sharir*.

Overall, the discussion indicates that *Rachana Sharir* retains enduring relevance in the contemporary era. Its future advancement depends upon preserving classical authenticity while embracing scientific pedagogy, clinical applicability, and evidence-based inquiry. Such a balanced approach can strengthen both the academic identity and global credibility of Ayurveda.

CONCLUSION

The present review concludes that *Rachana Sharir* is a fundamental and indispensable branch of Ayurveda, providing the structural basis for understanding the human body and its clinical applications. Its importance extends beyond descriptive anatomy and includes significant roles in education, practice, and research. Academically, *Rachana Sharir* strengthens conceptual understanding, practical skills, and clinical reasoning among students. Clinically, it supports the safe and effective application of *Panchakarma*, *Marma Chikitsa*, para-surgical procedures, and disease localization. The discipline also offers wide scope for interdisciplinary research through cadaveric, radiological, and morphometric studies, which may enhance scientific validation and broader acceptance of Ayurveda. In conclusion, *Rachana Sharir* is a dynamic science that bridges classical Ayurvedic knowledge with modern anatomical understanding. Strengthening its teaching, clinical utility, and research orientation is essential for the continued advancement of Ayurveda.

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