



APPLICATION OF MEDHYA RASAYANA IN ASTANGA AYURVEDA: A REVIEW

Sushruth Kumar Jain M J¹, Savitha H P², Suhas Kumar Shetty³

¹PG scholar, SDM College of Ayurveda, Hassan, Karnataka, India

²Associate Professor, SDM College of Ayurveda, Hassan, India

³Professor, SDM College of Ayurveda, Hassan, Karnataka, India

*Corresponding Author Email: sushruthjain@gmail.com

DOI: 10.7897/2277-4572.05638

Received on: 14/10/16 Revised on: 21/10/16 Accepted on: 24/11/16

ABSTRACT

Medhya rasayana are those drugs which improve comprehension. Medhya rasayana mentioned in Charaka Samhitha are Mandukaparni Swarasa (freshly extracted juice of *Centella asiatica* leaves), Yashtimadhu choorna with Ksheera (Powder of *Glycirriza glabra* root) with milk, Guduchi Swarasa (freshly extracted juice of *Tinospora cordifolia* leaves), Shankhapushpi Kalka (Paste of *Convolvulus pleuricaulis* panchanga). Other drugs in practice for Medhya benefit are: Brahmi (*Bacopa monniera*), Jatamansi (*Nardostachys jatamansi*), Jyothishmati (*Celastrus panniculata*), Kushmanda (*Benincasa hispida*), Vacha (*Acorus calamus*). Some poly herbal preparations promoting Medha are Kalyanaka Ghrita, Panchagavya Ghrita, Mahapaishachaka Ghrita, and Saraswatharishta. These drugs have intellect promoting activity. They also have plenty of other clinical applications, apart from promoting Medha. Their applications are seen in all eight branches of Ayurveda. i.e. Kayachikitsa, Balaroga, Graha, Shalaky Tantra, Shalya Tantra, Agada Tantra, Jara and Vrisha Chikitsa. This paper attempts to emphasize upon the wide range of clinical applications of these Medhya drugs.

KEY WORDS: Rasayana, Ashtanga Ayurveda, Medhya rasayana

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is ancient system of traditional medicine which aims at prevention and cure of diseases with its holistic approach. Rasayana concept of Ayurveda is considered as unique approach through its rejuvenation and revitalization methods. Rasayana is defined as the means of achieving the finest quality of Rasadidhatu (body tissues) where it increases life span, improves Medha (intelligence), cures disease, stabilizes youthfulness, improves lustre, complexion, voice and makes body and senses strong and healthy etc¹. Rasayana is classified into three varieties^{1,2}.

1. Naimittika rasayana – This is curative type of Rasayana. This is used in the treatment of specific diseases.
2. Ajasrika rasayana- Used to maintain good health and improve the quality of life through daily intake of dietary supplements like milk and ghee.
3. Kamyas rasayana- This is described as to fulfil a wish or desire or to serve a special purpose. It is of three types:
 - a. Prana Kamyas- Best quality of Prana (life energy) in the body.
 - b. Medha Kamyas- enhancing the memory and intellect.
 - c. Shree Kamyas – aimed at attaining good wealth and physical beauty

So, Medhya rasayana is included under Kamyas Rasayana. Those who are desirous to attain Medha are advised with Medhya Rasayana. Medha is defined as Granthaavadhaarana karshana Saamarthyam³ i.e. the capacity to retain information and comprehend it.

Medha has four components viz Viveka Shakti (power of discrimination), Grahana Shakti (power of grasping), Dharana

Shakti (power of retention) and Smarana Shakti (power of recollection)⁴. And usage of Medhya Rasayanas enhances the functioning of these components.

MEDHYA RASAYANA

Medhya rasayana are those drugs used to improve comprehension ability. They are group of drugs widely used in Ayurveda since with manifold benefits specifically to improve memory and intellect by their Prabhava. Medhya rasayana mentioned in classics of Ayurveda are Mandukaparni Swarasa (freshly extracted juice of *Centella asiatica* leaves), Yashtimadhu choorna (Powder of *Glycirriza glabra* root) with milk, Guduchi Swarasa (freshly extracted juice of *Tinospora cordifolia* leaves) and Shankhapushpi Kalka (Paste of *Convolvulus pleuricaulis* panchanga)⁵.

Yet other drugs used in practice for Medhya benefit are Brahmi (*Bacopa monniera*), Jatamansi (*Nardostachys jatamansi*), Jyothishmati (*Celastrus panniculata*), Kushmanda (*Benincasa hispida*), Vacha (*Acorus calamus*). Some polyherbal preparations promoting Medha are Kalyanaka Ghrita⁶, Panchagavya Ghrita⁷, Mahapaishachaka Ghrita⁸ and Saraswatharishta⁹. The benefits of these medicines are seen in all the eight branches of Ayurveda. These Medhya drugs are efficiently used in Ayurveda in treating neuropsychiatric and psychosomatic diseases.

The eight branches of Ayurveda¹⁰ are Kayachikitsa –General medicine, Balaroga- Paediatrics, Graha- Science of evil spirits, Shalaky Tantra- Upper clavicular diseases, Shalya Tantra- General Surgery, Agada Tantra- Toxicology, Jara chikitsa- Rejuvenatory science and Vrisha chikitsa- Aphrodisiacs. A

review on Medhya rasayana in eight branches of Ayurveda is dealt below.

KAYACHIKITHSA

Kayachikithsa is the branch of Ayurveda which focuses on diagnosing and treating somatic illnesses. But body and mind are interconnected. It is quoted that Shareeramapi Satwamanuvidheeyate Satvam Cha Shareeram¹¹ Though the seat of illness is body in some of illnesses like bronchial asthma, psoriasis, ulcerative colitis, irritable bowel syndrome impaired mental factor will be the cause of illness. So, treating the mental faculties along with Shaareerika dosha is needed for effective intervention of these diseases.

Diseases like bronchial asthma, psoriasis, ulcerative colitis, Irritable bowel syndrome etc have involvement of psychological factors in the manifestation of disease. These psychological factors influence on the prognosis as well. Hence treating mental faculties are very much essential in these diseases.

Disease	Drugs advised
Bronchial asthma	Yasthimadhu Prayoga
Psoriasis	Shweta avalguja Prayoga
Irritable bowel syndrome	Brahmi Ghritha
Ulcerative colitis	Brahmi Ghritha

BALAROGA

Balaroga chikithsa is the branch which deals with growth and development along with diseases of children. Medhya rasayana like Vacha, Guduchi, Suvarna and Ghrita are used in promoting cognitive growth and development. Swarnaprashana is known to be beneficial in children by improving Medha (intellect), Agni (digestive fire) and Bala (strength). In neuropsychiatric diseases like attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, mental retardation, cerebral palsy and enuresis Medhya rasayanas have proven efficient. Medhya preparations like Kalyanaka Ghritha, Brahmi Ghritha, Mahapaishachika Ghritha¹², Saraswatharishta, are regularly used in paediatric practice to attain better mental health.

GRAHA CHIKITHSA

Graha chikithsa is unique branch which deals with the study of diseases caused by unnatural forces, unpredictable events or evil spirits. This branch has description about mental diseases Unmada, Apasmara and Atatwabhinivesha. Medhya drugs are extensively used in the treatment of these psychiatric illnesses. Bhoota grahas resemble behavioural illnesses in presentation. Medhya drugs act at the level of higher mental functions and cognition. Different Medhya medicinal preparations like Kalyanaka Ghrita, Panchagavya Ghrita, Saraswatharishta and Manasamitra Vati have proven effective in the management of these diseases.

SHALAKYA TANTRA

Shalakya Tantra deals with diseases of the upper clavicular region i.e. eye diseases and ear, nose, throat disorders. In the pathogenesis of eye diseases like Adhimantha, there is involvement of psychological components. Chittodwega or anxiety and stress are found to be a causative factor for Shirashoola (head ache of vata and Pitta origin) and also aggravating factor for the same. Medhya rasayana are judiciously used in the treatment of such disorders. Medhya rasayana like Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) soothes the mind and reduce the symptoms.

SHALYA TANTRA

Shalya Tantra is a branch in which various surgical interventions are done. During surgeries anxiousness can be observed which is termed as preoperative anxiety¹³. To relieve the pre-operative anxiety Medhya drugs like Jatamansi (*Nardostachys jatamansi*) are prescribed.

AGADA TANTRA

Agada tantra deals with management of toxicity. Visha or toxins have an intimate relationship with psychological presentations. Vishaja Unmada (Psychosis due to psychoactive substances) and psychosis caused due to intake of certain drugs like Dhatura (*Datura metel*) are mentioned in the classics. In the cases of snake bite, to relieve this Mahakalyanaka Ghritha which is a Medhya promoting drug is advised as a first line of management. Vishaja Unmada¹⁴ is caused by Dooshi Visha. It needs to be treated with Medhya drugs along with other Vishahara drugs.

JARA CHIKITHSA

Jara chikithsa deals with management of diseases of old age. Old age is a hub of various psychological illnesses like dementia, delirium, depression and so on. Medhya drugs are used to prevent the psychological symptoms of old age along with managing them. In old age dementia is common disorder. To improve the quality of life by promoting memory and in old age Medhya drugs are advised. In old age Vishada, Kampavata, Chittodwega are also commonly observed diseases. In the management of these cases also Medhya drugs like Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) are having prominent role.

VRISHA CHIKITHSA

In Vrisha chikithsa is the branch which deals with the promoting sexual vigour of a person. It is told that good mental health acts as aphrodisiac. Manasika klaibya (psychological erectile dysfunction) is mentioned in classics¹⁵ as one of the causes for infertility. In the treatment of psychosexual disorders where mental faculties will be affecting the sexual activities, Medhya drugs like Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) are advised.

DISCUSSIONS

So, Medhya drugs are beneficial in various fields along with improving Medha factor. They need to be utilized in all those areas which are mentioned above for the better management of those conditions. Nowadays increased stress level are observed in everyone's life due to the competition in the world. Those who are having illness will be still more stressed in order to come out of illness as soon as possible to get back to normalcy. The Involvement of psychological factors needed to be assessed, even though the presenting features are seated in the body. Wherever psychic factor involvement is seen prescribing the Medhya drugs will be beneficial to patients.

CONCLUSION

Medhya drugs and their above mentioned wide ranged utilities are needed to be understood and incorporated by every clinician for better clinical practice. Their effective utilization at proper dose and conditions will lead to better management of psychosomatic and psychiatric illnesses. Their utility as comprehension promoters are also at great needs in this highly competitive era by improving memory, intelligence, academic performances and interpersonal skills.

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How to cite this article:

Sushruth Kumar Jain M J, Savitha H P, Suhas Kumar Shetty. Application of medhya rasayana in Astanga Ayurveda: A review. J Pharm Sci Innov. 2016;5(6):

Source of support: Nil, Conflict of interest: None Declared

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