

Concept of Rasayana therapy with special reference to AIDS

BANAMALI DAS* V. K. KORI** M. S. BAGHEL***

Central Council for Research in Ayurveda & Siddha, New Delhi.

ABSTRACT : The word Rasayana means the way for attaining excellence of Rasadi dhatus. The attributes of Rasayana therapy as mentioned in the Ayurvedic texts are to bestow longevity, impart strength, Oja and Bala etc. Oja is the factor responsible for Vyadhikshamatva (immunity) of an individual. Rasayana therapy has been classified differently in Ayurveda viz. i) Kutipravesika (Indoor) Rasayana vidhi and Vatatapika (Out door) Rasayana vidhi ii) Kamyā, Naimittika and Ajasrika Rasayanas iii) Shodhana and Shamana types etc. Achara Rasayana is also a variety of Rasayana therapy, which is just like a code of good conduct and habit. This is a non-drug approach to Rasayana. By this without using a pharmacological recipe, one can gain all the benefits of Rasayana. Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a dreadful disease, constituting a great challenge to public health. The full consequence of this phenomenon may not be evident for several years because of the silent spread and slow evolution of this infection. The disease is as mentioned, produced due to the infection of HIV virus, which has the ability to destroy the T-helper cells that play an important role to maintain the immunity of the body. After the infection with HIV virus, the person gradually loses his immunity, as a result of which other opportunistic pathogenic organisms affect the person and gradually the health deteriorates and ultimately he dies with one of the manifestations. Therapeutics need to be found out to maintain the immune system of the body of the person suffering from HIV/AIDS. Rasayana drugs are considered to play a vital role in improving the immune system of the body, that way it may be helpful to promote the health of the person suffering from AIDS.

Key words- Rasayana, Dhatu, Vyadhikshamatva, Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome.

INTRODUCTION

*Shatam jeeva sharado Vardhamanah
Shatam Hemantan Shatam Vasantan
Shatamahashmenam Indrogni Savita Bruhaspati Ta
Shatayusha Havishaharhmenam* [1]

Rasayana therapy is one of the branches of Ashtanga Ayurveda. The word Rasayana means the way for attaining excellent Rasadi dhatus². Such a phenomenon is conducive to promotion of the qualities of the dhatus. The improved nutritional status and the better qualities of the dhatus lead to a series of secondary attributes of Rasayana which bestow longevity, impart strength, Ojabala etc. Oja is the factor responsible for Vyadhikshamatva of an individual. Rasayana therapy has been classified by Charaka into two groups: a) Kutipravesika (Indoor) Rasayana vidhi and b) Vatatapika (Out door) Rasayana vidhi. According to the requirement of an individual the Rasayana drugs are divided into three groups, viz. Kamyā, Naimittika and Ajasrika Rasayanas. According to the mode of action the Rasayana drugs are divided into Shodhana and Shamana types. Achara Rasayana is just like a code of good conduct and habit. This is a non-drug approach to Rasayana. In this, without using a pharmacological recipe, one can gain all the benefits of Rasayana.

The emergence and pandemic spread of the Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) constitute the greatest challenge to public health in modern times. The full consequence of this phenomenon may not be evident for several years because of the silent spread and slow evolution of this infection. But it is truly global in its magnitude and is unlikely to spare any continent, nation, race or political system. The disease AIDS is mentioned to be produced due to the infection of HIV virus, which has the ability to destroy the T-helper cells that play an important role to maintain the immunity of the body. After the infection with HIV virus, the person gradually loses his immunity, as a result of which other opportunistic pathogenic organisms affect the person and gradually the health deteriorates and ultimately one dies with one of the manifestations. In modern medical science no medicine has been found to maintain the immune system of the body of the person suffering from AIDS. As Rasayana dravyas are considered to improve Vyadhikshamatva of the body, it may be helpful to promote the health of the person suffering from HIV/AIDS.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The Nirukti of the word Rasayana says “*Rasasya Ayanam Rasayanam*” (Shabda Kalpadruma). Rasa means the nutritional fluid, which keeps on circulating throughout the body, the whole day and night³. Ayana means Marga i.e. the channels of circulation. So the word Rasayana refers to nutrition or nourishment at all levels.

* Research Officer (Ay), CCRAS Head Quarter, Institutional area, opp. D Block, Janakpuri, New Delhi.

** Lecturer, Dept. of Kaumarabhritya, I.P.G.T. & R.A., Jamnagar.

*** Director, I.P.G.T. & R.A., Guj. Ayu. Uni., Jamnagar.

Rasayana is a specialised treatment influencing the fundamental aspects of the organs i.e. Dhatus, Agni and Srotamsi, leading to overall improvement in the organism, which affords prevention of ageing, resistance against diseases, bodily strength and improvement in mental faculties. The mode of action of Rasayana dravyas can be considered through the following three ways:

1. By improving the nutritional value of the Rasa dhatu (Asthayee), in turn by improving the Dhatu poshana, e.g. Dugdha, Ghrita, Shatavari etc.
2. By improving the Agni vyapara in the body, thereby responsible for proper Dhatunirmanam in the body like Chitraka, Bhallataka etc.
3. By Shrota Shodhana in the body, this improves Dhatu poshana kriya like Guggulu.

Rasayana-Vyadhikshamatva :

Ayurveda conceives a unique concept of Ojas, which is the quintessence of all the Dhatus and is responsible for vital strength of the body and resistance against the disease i.e. immunity, says Sushruta:

*Tatra rasadinaam shukrantaanaam dhatunaam yat param tejas tat khalu Ojas, tadeva balamiti uchyate swa shastra siddhantaat.*⁴

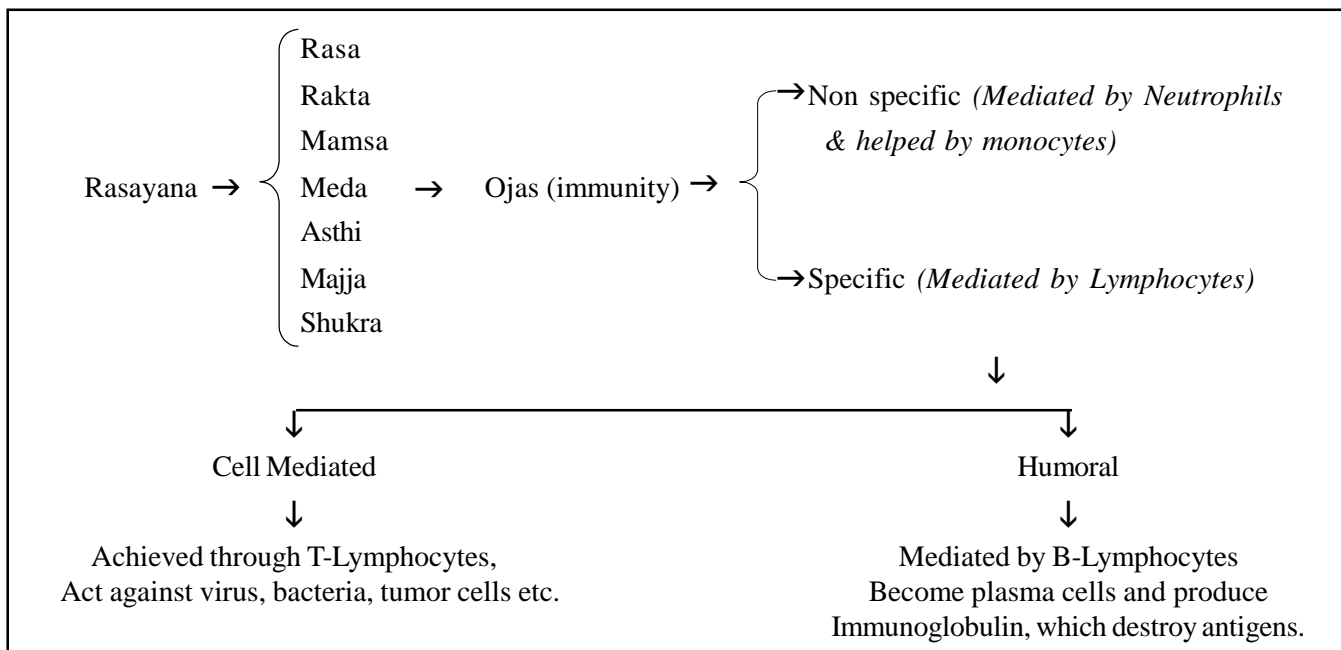
Rasayana is believed to promote the process of Dhatu poshana and enrich Ojas leading to Vyadhikshamatva. The defence mechanism present in the body allows us to survive in the potentially hostile world of infectious agents. This constitutional order is

immune system. Any change in this order can lead to diseases.

After the discovery of antibiotics it was thought that man has conquered the infectious diseases, but their limitations surfaced. At that time it was realised that rather than having war with disease, preventive defence mechanism is better. Treating disease with synthetic immunomodulators still looks like a distant dream. The cost and side effects outweigh the present synthetic immunomodulators. The concept of strengthening of inherent defence mechanism in our body exists in Rasayana therapy.⁵

The disease AIDS is considered as a fatal multisystem disease, which causes break down of a part of the body's immune system making it vulnerable to a variety of unusual life threatening illnesses. It usually affects a relatively young population and it has major psychological, ethical and financial ramifications. When the virus enters the body, the condition is described as HIV infection. At this stage the person may appear absolutely normal and may not be aware the disease is present in his body. The next stage is known as AIDS related complex (ARC). All the generalised symptoms are produced in this stage. In ARC, there is an increased susceptibility towards infections, which usually become severe. Ultimately, patients develop more serious complications associated with full-blown AIDS. The presenting complaints vary, but are often due to opportunistic infections like protozoans, fungus, bacteria etc.⁶

CHART NO. 1 : HYPOTHESIS DEPICTING RELATION OF RASAYANA AND OJAS :



It has been stated that HIV invades and kills the helper T-Lymphocytes of the body. Helper T-cells identify the foreign substances, that enter into the body and help produce more and more T-cells by spleen and lymph nodes to fight the infection. HIV incorporates itself into the infected cells where it remains hidden for long periods of time, eventually replicating itself and destroying the host cells thus undermining Cellular Immunity. So fighting with HIV is very much difficult.⁷

DISCUSSION

When the aetiology of AIDS is discussed carefully, it is observed that, it is a disease caused due to the Agantuka karanas and coming under the Adhibhautika or Sanghata bala pravrutta vyadhi, which is an Aupasargika roga. Sushruta has clearly mentioned regarding Aupasargika roga that-

*Tatra Aupasargiko naama yah poorvotpanna vyadhi jaghanya kaalajaato vyadhirupasrujati, sa tanmoola eva upadrava samjnaah*⁸.

Hence AIDS is Sanghata bala pravritta in origin, implying Bhootas or living creatures or viruses etc are the causative agents and the disease can be transmitted from one person to another person.

Diseases are of two types viz. Nija and Agantuja. In Nija vyadhis the doshas are vitiated first and they are responsible for formation of the disease by causing derangements in Dushyas, Srotas and Agni. Therefore the clinical manifestation also depend on these factors like Dosha, Dushya, Srotas and Agni. In case of Agantuja Vyadhis the Doshas get involved later in the disease process⁹ and the clinical manifestations accordingly will be produced at the later stage. Whatever the condition may be, in all types of diseases, Doshas get involved following the involvement of Dushyas, Srotas and Agni.

Ayurveda has given prime importance for Kshetra(soil i.e. body environment)pradhana chikitsa, rather than Beeja (seed i.e. the micro-organism) pradhana chikitsa. This seed and soil theory persists since the vedic period. From the vedic period, the Acharyas were well aware about the presence of beeja, which we can consider as the Vyanjaka nidanas of several diseases (living organisms like viruses etc.).¹⁰

In different Samhita granthas description about living organisms like Krimis are also mentioned. It is mentioned that different diseases like Kushtha, Shosha, Netrabhishyanda etc. are produced by the Krimis, which

are Aupasargika (communicable) in nature and can be transmitted from one person to another. Even though the ancient Acharyas were well known about various living pathogenic organisms, they have not given much importance to them during the treatment. The Beejas (living pathogens) are omnipresent and their entry to the body cannot be checked. The environmental conditions in our body are of greater importance. Because, if the environmental condition in our body is suitable for the pathogenic organisms, they can grow inside and produce disease, otherwise not.¹¹

The internal environment of our body is controlled by the Doshas. Whenever the Doshas will be in normal conditions, they maintain the body properly by keeping the Dooshyas, Srotas as well as Agni in normal position. But when the aggravation of Doshas occur they lead to the derangement of the Dooshyas, Srotas Agni, there by causing the disease. Acharya Charaka also has mentioned that-

*Nidana dosha dooshya visheshebhya vikaravighata bhavaabhava prativisheshah bhavanti*¹².

The *Vikara vighata bhava*(factors responsible to oppose the manifestation of diseases) and *Vikara vighata abhava*(the absence of vikara vighata bhava) are depend on three factors like *Nidana, Dosha and Dooshya*. Among these three factors Dosha is important because it controls the internal environment of the body. As it is said-

Teshaam sarveshaameva Vata Pitta Shleshmaanah pradushta dooshaitaro bhavanti dosha svabhavaat iti.¹³

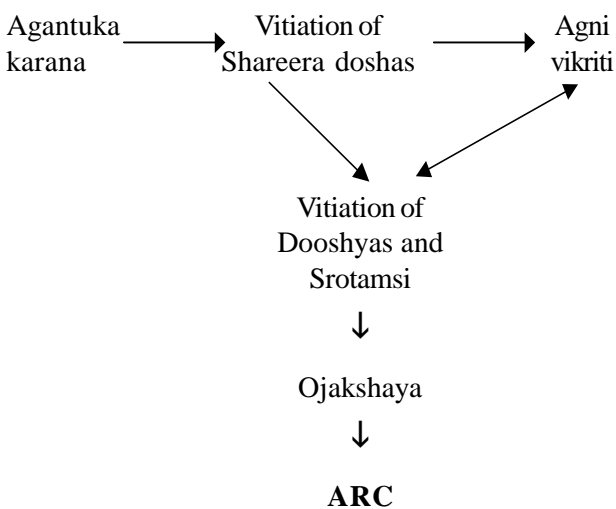
Derangement of internal environment of the body occurs, when Doshas get aggravated by taking the suitable Nidanas (Ahita ahara viharas). If the internal environment of the body is maintained properly, it will not be suitable for growing up the Beeja (pathogens) to produce the disease. This depends on the *Vikara vighata bhava* otherwise known as *Vyadhikshamatva* of the body.

Vyadhikshamatva is interpreted as *Vyadhi bala virodhitva* (antagonistic to strength and virulence of disease) and *Vyadhi utpada prativandhakatva* (the capacity to inhibit or neutralise or resist or overcome disease causing agents). This *Vyadhikshamatva* depends on the presence of Bala or Oja in the body. Oja represents vitality, vigour and capacity to resist decay and disease. Ojas is the Sara or essence of the Dhatus.

It is responsible for promoting the stability and strength of the organs of the body. The loss or deficiency of Ojas leads to wasting, decay and degeneration. AIDS is as mentioned, produced due to HIV infection, which manifests its symptoms prior to loss of immunity or Vyadhikshamatva.

As per another classification diseases are of two types viz. Sadhya and Asadhya. While describing the symptoms of Asadhya vyadhis, Charaka has told that the diseases which are deeply seated, affect many Dhatus, affect the Marmas, produced due to the vitiation of all the three Doshas at a time, not showing the signs of amelioration to any therapy and involving almost all the srotamsi and produces anxiety, uneasiness and destroying the functions of sense organs and accompanied by fatal signs particularly in weak patients are Asadhaya (incurable) in nature¹⁴ All the above signs and symptoms are found in AIDS. Therefore, it is considered as an Asadhya vyadhi.

The signs and symptoms of AIDS can be found in Ojakshaya. Emaciation, confusion, loss of consciousness, stupor, delirium and death are found in Ojakshaya and AIDS related complexes (ARC) both. Therefore the samprapti of ARC can be made hypothetically as:



Both Shareerika and Manasika doshas are involved in AIDS. Therefore all the three types of therapeutics viz. Daiva vyapashraya, Yukti vyapashraya and Sattvavajaya will be helpful for the preventive as well as promotive aspects of AIDS. All the above types of therapeutics can be achieved by the application therapy. As AIDS is considered as an Asadhya vyadhi, Rasayana therapy may not be helpful for the curative aspects of it, but in accordance

with the mode of action of the Rasayana dravyas the disease can be maintained in Yasya (paliabile) condition. For this purpose, Kamyas rasayanas, Naimittika Rasayanas and Ajasrika Rasayanas can be used. The above types of Rasayana dravyas can be helpful for the promotion of the Rasadi dhatus and responsible for increase of Oja. For the preventive aspect of the disease Achara rasayana sevana can be done, which can decrease the spread of the disease. In this way the internal environment of the body can be maintained and the disease process can be checked.

CONCLUSION

1. AIDS is an Asadhya type of Vyadhi and can not be cured absolutely. By the use of Rasayana dravyas it may remain in paliabile condition.
2. Rasayana dravyas will be helpful for the promotion of health of AIDS patients in accordance with the mode of action of the drugs.
3. Application of Achara rasayana will be helpful for the prevention of the said disease.

REFERENCES

1. Atharvaveda, Shripad Sharma (Santwalekar), edition 1943, Vasant Sharipada Santwalekar, Aaurdh Nagar, Satara Pradesh, Mumbai pant 3/11/4, page 39.
2. Chakrapanidatta, Ayurveda Dipika Commentry, Charaka Samhita, eight Edition, 2005 by Vd. Yadavaji Trikamji Acharya, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, Chikitsa Sthana 1/1/8, page 376.
3. Sushruta Samhita, Commentary by Dalhana, Chaukhambha Orientalia publication, 8th edition, 2005, Sutra Sthana 14/13, page 62.
4. Ibid, Sutra Sthana 15/11, page 71.
5. Anantanarayana R. and Panikar C.K.J., Text Book of Microbiology, 5th Edition.
6. Shankar P.S., Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome, Quarterly Medical Review, October 1989.
7. Shankar P.S., Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome, Quarterly Medical Review, October 1989.
8. Sushruta Samhita, Commentary by Dalhana, Chaukhambha Orientalia publication, 8th edition, 2005, Sutra Sthana 35/18, page 152.
9. Chakrapanidatta, Ayurveda Dipika Commentry, Charaka Samhita, Edited by Vd. Yadavaji Trikamji Acharya, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, Reprint 2004, Chikitsa Sthana 20/7, page 555.
10. Baghel M.S., Krimi alias micro and macro organisms described in Ayurveda page 84.
11. Baghel M.S., Krimi alias micro and macro organisms described in Ayurveda page 84.
12. Chakrapanidatta, Ayurveda Dipika Commentry, Charaka Samhita, Edited by Vd. Yadavaji Trikamji Acharya, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, Reprint 2004, Nidana Sthana 4/4, page 272.

13. Chakrapanidatta, Ayurveda Dipika Commentry, Charaka Samhita, Edited by Vd. Yadavaji Trikamji Acharya, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, Reprint 2004, Vimana Sthana 5/9, page 251.
14. Chakrapanidatta, Ayurveda Dipika Commentry, Charaka Samhita, Edited by Vd. Yadavaji Trikamji Acharya, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, Reprint 2004, Sutra Sthana 10/18-20, page 67.

हिन्दी सारांश

विशेष रूप से एड्स के संदर्भ में रसायन चिकित्सा सिद्धांत

बनमाली दास, वीरेन्द्र कुमार कोरी एवं एम. एस. बघेल

रसायन का अर्थ उत्तम रसादि धातुओं को प्राप्त करने की पद्धति है। रसायन चिकित्सा द्वारा दीर्घायु, बल, ओज आदि की प्राप्ति होती है। शरीर के व्याधिक्रमत्व के लिये ओज एक महत्वपूर्ण घटक है। आयुर्वेद में रसायन चिकित्सा को अनेक प्रकार से विभाजित किया गया है। जैसे-(१) कुटि प्रावेशिक रसायन विधि और वातातपिक रसायन विधि (२) काम्य, नैमेत्तिक और अजाश्रिक रसायन (३) शोधन एवं शमन रसायन आदि, इसी प्रकार आचार रसायन भी रसायन चिकित्सा विधि का एक प्रकार है। जो योग्य आचार एवं अनुशीलन के द्वारा तथा बिना औषधि प्रयोग के रसायन के सभी गुणों को प्राप्त करने की एक विधि है। आजकल समाज में एड्स एक भयानक व्याधि है जो जनस्वास्थ्य के लिये निरन्तर सर्वप्रमुख विकट चुनौती बनती जा रही है। मंथर गति से संक्रमण तथा अनजाने में प्रसार होने के कारण कई वर्षों तक इस व्याधि का संपूर्ण विकृति विज्ञान संबंधी ज्ञान नहीं हो सका। जो व्याधि उल्लेखित है वह एच.आई.वी. के संक्रमण के बाद रोगी में क्रमशः व्याधिक्रमत्व का हास होता जाता है जिसके फलस्वरूप समयसाधक विकृति उत्पादक जीव मनुष्य को प्रभावित कर लेती है, और क्रमशः स्वास्थ्य बिगड़ता जाता है और अंत में उसी के कारण उसकी मृत्यु हो जाती है। आधुनिक चिकित्सा विज्ञान में एड्स ग्रसित व्यक्ति में व्याधिक्रमत्व को बनाये रखने लिये कोई प्रभावी चिकित्सा उपलब्ध नहीं है। रसायन शरीर में व्याधिक्रमत्व की वृद्धि के लिए कारगर पद्धति है। अतः यह एड्स से ग्रसित व्यक्ति के स्वास्थ्य रक्षा के लिये सहायक हो सकता है। प्रस्तुत आलेख में रसायन के योगदान का विवेचन किया गया है।

गुजरात आयुर्वेद युनिवर्सिटी