EFFECT OF RASAYANA ON MENTAL HEALTH - A REVIEW STUDY

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ABSTRACT:
Since the creation of mankind, human beings are affected by various types of diseases such as sharirikvyadhi (Jwār, Raktaāpita, Rajyakṣma, etc.) and manshikvyadhi (Unmāda, Apasmara etc.). For their remedy, Āyuurvedahās advocated various types of medicines and therapies. Rasayanain Āyuveda, is one of the most highly recommended rejuvenating, promoting and preventive therapies which can cure the above diseases. The mental diseases (anxiety disorders, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, schizophrenia etc.) are increasing very rapidly nowadays. The major causes must be unhealthy life style, foods and drinks. The World Health Organization reported in 2001 that about 450 million people worldwide suffer from some form of mental disorder or brain condition. In India, epidemiological studies based on the data published from 1960 to 2009, report that prevalence rates for psychiatric disorders are varying from 9.5 to 370/1000 population in India. Under such circumstances, rasayana drugs such as bhrāṃhi, sankhapuspi, guduchi, yastimadhu, mandukaparni and their preparations as well as achararasayana can prove effective in curing these mental diseases. Moreover, rasayana drugs can work on the hypothalamus – pituitary -adrenal axis and normalize the secretion of neurotransmitters such as dopamine, serotonin, acetylcholine and thus can improve the mental function.

INTRODUCTION:
Like other somatic diseases such as Cancer, AIDs, Tuberculosis etc, mental diseases are increasing rapidly in India and other countries. The World Health Organization (WHO) reported in 2001 that about 450 million people worldwide suffer from some form of mental disorder or brain condition. One in four people (25%) suffers from mental illness at some time in life according to a report from the WHO(2008)\(^1\). In India, epidemiological studies based on the data published from 1960 to 2009, report that prevalence rates for psychiatric disorders are varying from 9.5 to 370/1000 population in India\(^2\).The common psychiatric disorders which are prevalent in the world are Anxiety disorders, Depression, Obsessive compulsive disorder, Schizophrenia etc. The causes of mental disorders are multi-factorial and are complex, and interact and vary according to the particular disorder and individual. Many factors such as poverty, unemployment, life style, marital disharmony, family disputes, hereditary causes, injuries, society and culture, drugs and various types of chronic ailments such as Rheumatism, Diabetes mellitus, Asthma, Obesity, Hypertension, Alzheimer’s disease etc. Influence mind in many ways. According to Pan American Health Organization Report (2007)\(^3\) 4.8-31% people suffer from anxiety disorders,3.3-21.4% from mood disorders and 1.3-15% from substance use disorders.

Ayurveda has described various kinds of mental disorders such as Unmāda (Insanity), Apasmara (Epilepsy), Atattvaabhinivesha (Obsessive Disorders), Bhaya (Fear), Harsha (Excitation), Shoka (Grief), Udvēga (Anxiety), Avasada (Depression)\(^4\) etc. and has also mentioned many mental and personality disorders according to rajāshik and tamashik prakriti in vivid way.

Mind is an inseparable entity of jīva (Soul). \(^5\) so every mental disease may affect body and vice versa. Ayurveda has stated many psychosomatic disorders such as bhaya and shokaja atisara, shokaja jvara, tamaka svasa etc. These all mental disorders may take place either due to vitiation of vata, pitta, kaphadosha and/or roja, tama manashi kdoshas.

According to Ayurveda, the chief causative factors of all sharirik (somatic) and manasik (mental) disorders are three viz, prajānaparādha, atsuyāyindriyarthā samyoga, and parinama.\(^6\) In prajānaparādha\(^7\) dhi, dhriti, smriti are affected. In atsuyāyindriyarthā samyoga, improper association between jñanendriya, indriartha, atma, and mana
takes place. In parinama, ayoga, atiyoga, mithyayoga of kala takes place. All these factors cause many types of somatic and mental diseases. Except that, suppression of adharaniyavega and inability to suppress dharaniyavegas as well as non-compliance of sadvrutta may also lead to many somatic and mental disorders.

Modern medicine has described vividly the causes of psychological diseases such as head injury, meningitis, encephalitis, CVA, renal disease, liver disease, senile arteriosclerosis, epilepsy, endocrinial disease, genetic cause, derangement in dopamine secretion, stress, etc. and have advocated many psychological treatments such as psycho-analysis, behaviour therapy, cognitive therapy, hypnosis, psychotropic drugs (antipsychotic, antidepressants, anxiolytic etc.). But some psychotropic drugs such as chlorpromazine, trifluperazine, haloperidol, imipramine, amitriptyline etc. show various types of complications, so it needs careful approach to treat the patient.

Ayurveda has kept the treatment schedule of almost all manasika (psychiatric disease), and sharirika (somatic) diseases under the three main categories viz, Daivyayapashreya chikitsa, Yuktiyapashreya chikitsa, and Satvavajayachikitsa. In Daivyayapashreya chikitsa, hymns, holding of pearls, drugs, rituals, sacrifice of animals, prayachhita etc. are included which cure many psychological and somatic diseases. Proper application of diets and medicines are included in Yuktiyapashreya chikitsa which are used to cure both psychiatric disease and somatic diseases. In Satvavajayachikitsa, mind is protected from the effects of various harmful and non conducive substances and activities.

Though Satvavajaya chikitsa is mentioned as special therapy in psychiatric diseases in Ayurvedavedya and Rasayana therapy which comes under Yuktiyapashreya chikitsa mainly, is very useful in psychiatric disorders specially in the patients who are anxious, restless, agitated and suffering from insomnia. In these cases, Medhya rasayana drugs (sankhupuspi, guduchi, yastimadhu, mandukaparni) and other rasayana drugs (Bala, Nagbala, Shilajit etc.) may be very much effective. Rasayana is the seventh branch out of the eight branches in Ayurveda. It differs from the other divisions in that, it not only shows curative effects but also has in addition, the promoting, preventive and rejuvenating effects for even healthy persons. It retards ageing process and keeps up youthfulness even after advancing age and increases life span.

CONCEPT OF HEALTH & RASAYANA

In Ayurveda, per Acharya Susruta, when doshas, agni, dhatus remain in equilibrium state, malas are properly formed, nourished and excreted without impediment and atma, mana and indriyas properly function and remain contented, then this condition is stated as swasthya. Modern Science also defines "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely absence of disease or infirmity".

Considering the effects of drugs on body and how to maintain proper health, acharya Charaka has classified all the drugs into the following three groups viz,
1. Dosa Prashamana - which pacifies the vitiated doshas.
2. Dhatu Pradushana - which vitiates Dhatus
3. Svasthvritta kara - which maintains the proper health.

Rasayana and Vajikarana may be classified under Svasthvritta and Rasayana is particularly concerned with the promotion of physical and mental health.

Description of Mana (mind): Mana (mind) is stated as dravya in Ayurveda. Nirukti of Mana: By which, thought, consideration, hypothesis, attention, determination etc. are performed is called mana (mind).

Paribhasha of Mana: The sense by which feeling of happiness, sorrow etc. is perceived is called mana (mind) (Tarkasamgraha).

Lakshana of Mana: Understanding of a thing and no understanding of a thing are the lakshana (symptoms) of mana (mind).

Location of Mana: As per different acharyas, the locations of mana are Hridaya, Shira in between shira (head) and talu (palate), Chetanawatsharir (Sentient portion of the body), Tvak (skin).

Guna of Mana: Atomicity and oneness are the two attributes of mana.

Artha (objects) of Mana: Things requiring thought, consideration, hypothesis, attention, determination or whatever can be known by means of the mana are regarded as its objects.

Functions of Mana: Control of sense organs, self restraint, hypothesis and consideration are the actions of mana (mind).
Nidanas of manas rogas:
Samanyanidananas: Prajnaparadha [27] (defects in one’s own mental faculty), excessive Brahmayacharya [28] (Excessive control of sense faculties without well regulated practice). Durbala Satva, Durbala Sharira, imbalanced Sharira Doshas (e.g. vatavridhihalkshanasuch as nidranasha, vatakshyalakshana such as apraharsha).

Agantujanidananas: Evil spirit, poison, wind, fire, stale and dirty foods and drinks etc.

Samanya purvarupa of manasa rogas: Perversion of mind, intellect, consciousness, knowledge, memory, desire, manners, behaviour and conduct. Moreover, our acharyas have also described vishista purvarupas of manashik rogas (e.g. Unmada, Apasmara, Murcha, etc.). According to acharya Charak, the purvarupa of Apasmara [29] is contraction of eye-brows, excessive discharge of saliva and nasal excreta, cardiac spasm, unconsciousness, fainting giddiness.

Samanya Lakshana of Apasmara: Occasional unconsciousness with abnormal activities due to perversion of memory, intellect and other psychic faculties.[30]

Samanya Lakshana of Unmada: As per Acharya Charak [31] perversion of intellect, unsteadiness of mind, vacant outlook, impatience, irrelevant talk, fainting are commonly found in unmada roga. All the purvarupas and samanyarupas are more or less derived in many types of manasa rogas.

Etymological derivation of the term ‘Rasayana’:
The meaning of the composite term ‘Rasayana’ is derived from the two separate entities i.e. ‘Rasa’ and ‘Ayana’ which are having special meaning. Ayurvedic classics have stated ‘Rasayana’ as responsible for tissue nourishment and increase of somatic and mental strength caused by nutrient essence which is always nourishing the tissues. From this viewpoint the most appropriate meaning of ‘Rasa’ is here the ‘nutrient essence’ and ‘Ayana’ implies for marga (path) or circumambulation.

Definition of Rasayana:
As per Acharya Charak[32], Rasayanais defined as the means of achieving the finest quality of rasadidhatus (body tissues) where it increases life span, improves medha (intelligence), cures disease, stabilizes youthfulness, improves luster, complexion, voice and makes body and senses strong and healthy etc.

Acharya Susruta[33] has more specifically stated that rasayana therapy improves medha (intelligence), bala(strength), brings vyadhi-kshamata (immunity), and it is ayuskam (life promotion) and vayasthan(stabilising age).

According to Acharya Dalhana[34], Rasayana drugs may increase the body tissues, both qualitatively and quantitatively through its pharmacological properties (i.e. Rasa, Guna, Virya, Vipaka etc). Acharya Sarangdhar [35] has described Rasayana as Jaravyadhi Nashanam i.e. it prevents senility and stabilizes youthfulness and cures diseases.

Acharya Bhavaprapaksha[36] has defined Rasayana as the therapy which prevent ageing and alleviates disease, and which is also Vayastambhakara, Chakshushya, Brimhana and Vrishlya. Though the definition by different authors varies metaphorically yet the meaning remains the same.

Classification of Rasayana drugs:
Rasayana[37] according to mode application is of two types viz, Kutipraveshik (complex outdoor therapy under direct supervision), and Vatatapik or Sauryumarutik (simple outdoor therapy). According to the objectives of Rasayanatherapy, Acharya Dalhana[38] has rationally classified Rasayana in three types i.e. Kamyarasayana (Health promoter), Naiyittikrasayana (immunity booster) such as shilajatu, bhallataka, triphalaetc, and Ajashiktrasayana (Diet like milk, ghee, for regular consumption) or Samsodhana (purificatory) and Samshaman (pacifying) Rasayana. Here, Kamyarasayana is subdivided in Pranakamya (Physical health promoter), Medhakamya (mental health promoter) and Shri kamyapolitical status promoter).

Descriptions of Rasayana available in Ayurveda:
The description of Rasayana is given in first chapter of Chikitsasthana in Charaka Samhita. Four Rasayanapadosaviz, Abhayamalaki, pranakamiya, Karaprachitiya and Ayurveda Samuthaniya, are included in this chapter. Rasayana has been discussed in Susruta Samhita seperately in four chapters namely Sarvoghatshamaniya, Medhavuskamiya, Svabhavayyadhupratisedhaniya and Nivruttatantapiya in Chikitsasthana. In Astanga Hridaya, Rasayana is described in Uttarsthana.

Properties of Rasayana: As the action of Rasayana takes place in the whole body, so changes occurs at both physical and mental level. That is why, these two changes should be considered separately.

1. Improvement in mental qualities:
Acharya Charaka has stated that Rasayana drugs improves intelligence, power of recollection, power of sense organs and perfection in speech. Moreover, Acharya Charaka[39] has described Medhya Rasayana such as Guduchi, Mandukaparni, Yastimadhu, Sankhapuspi which can specially act on Medha and thus can improve mental faculty.

2. Improvement in physical qualities:
Rasayana can also help to regain youthfulness, longevity, complexion, voice, strength, etc. and cure fatigue, Intolerance and excess sleep.

Rasayana[40] is Tridosha Shamaka, Agni Deepana and helps in the formation of bodily tissues

Special Qualities & Mode of Action of Rasayana:
Rasayana is meant to improve health and ojas that produces the best quality of body tissues, checks and prevents the natural process of degeneration and decay and other diseases of old age, enhances life span, memory, intelligence, maintains youth, luster, increases strength of body and sense and beauty. Rasayana remedy which may be a drug, dietary elements of positive life styles, and activities (Acharya Rasayana), promotes and improves bio-nutrition of body. It can remove the impurities (Malas) located in the tissue elements (Dhatus) causing the enhancement of Agni in each dhatu. This enhanced Agni can cause restoration of quality of respective dhatus and their improved qualities can lead to perfect health and longevity in the human being.

Fundamentally, rasayana drugs produce their effect by influencing rasa system or nutritional system, the agni or digestive system and metabolic mechanism as well as the srotamsi or the microcirculation and thus providing nutrition all over the body.

Therefore, mode of action of Rasayana on body can be considered in two ways viz, by controlling the formation of tissue elements (Dhatupaka) and removing the vitiated doshas from different srotas.

1. Formation of tissue elements:
Through our life, body is subjected to continuous destruction of old elements and formation of new elements. This process mainly depends on the amount of food taken and the condition of Agni of each tissue element (Dhatu). But Agni if increased excessively beyond normal level, it destroys dhatus and if it is extinguished, life is destroyed. So, Agni plays an important role in life and it is Rasayana which can keep Agni in normal level by its action. In old age, destructive process is very rapid, even if the subject takes enough food, which leads to weakness of the body. At such stage, if Rasayana drug is used, it controls Dhatupaka. Thus, Rasayana maintains the Dhatupaka and brings back the lost vitality of the body.

2. Removing the vitiated doshas from different srotas:
In Ayurveda, much importance is given on srotas. They play an important role in maintaining the proper health of the body when they are not affected by vitiated doshas[41]. They carry the absorbed food materials to the site of metabolism and remove the waste products formed due to the process of metabolism. But in the process of samprapti when the aggravated doshas get obstructed by vitiated srotas (Vigungunasrotas) then such obstruction produces disease and leads to the improper formation of tissue elements and weakens the body. This obstruction is also responsible for lowering the immunity power of the body. Therefore, in any disease Srotovaigunya is common and under this condition treatment should be given to remove this Srotovaigunya. This can be attained by administering Rasayana therapy which can lead to the regaining of lost immunity power of the body.

Acharya Charak has stated that equilibrium of Agni of Dhatu, Vayu, and Srotas are essential factors for maintaining normal strength, color and longevity of the body which are lost through the catabolic activities of the body[42]. These strength, color etc. can be achieved by Rasayana. In Ayurveda, Medha is described in broad way. Medha may be considered to be consisted of all the three mental faculties such as Dhee, Dhriti and Smriti which are again interrelated with each other. Medha can also be subdivided into the following faculties: 1.Grahanshakti (Power of Grasping); 2.Dharana shakti (Power of Retention); 3.Vivekshakti (Power of Discrimination); 4.Smriti (Power of recollection).

Medhyarasayana drugs have a definite role in the treatment of psychiatric and psychosomatic diseases. The chief aim of this treatment is to attain sedation, calmness, tranquility or a stimulation of activities of brain. Modern researches conducted so far on Medhya Rasayana drugs have established that these drugs have varying degree of psychotrophic action. Many drugs have shown antidepressant, sedative and tranquilizing effects both experimentally and clinically with encouraging results.

Modern concept of immuno-modulation can be correlated with Rasayana which enhances Vyadhikshamatva (i.e. Vyadhibalavirodhitvam-
 Vyadhitupadaprattibhandhakatavam) described in ayurvedic classic and clearly denotes immunity in modern science.

Rasayana drugs such as Amalaki, Haridra, Guduchi etc. may act antioxidant agents and can cure various kinds of manaskik rogas caused by senility. There are some neurotransmitters such as noradrenaline, dopamine, serotonin, adrenaline etc, which are found directly involved in many psychological disorders (e.g. depression, schizophrenia). Rasayana drugs may normalize the above neurotransmitters and cure the concerned diseases.

Hypothalamus, Limbic system are responsible for mood, behaviour, memory, emotion. In manasikvikaras, these bhasas can become altered. In these conditions, rasayana drugs may prove effective but before rasayana therapy, panchakarma therapy may be administered according to disease type and patient condition otherwise rasayana drugs can prove ineffective.

CONCLUSION:
From the descriptions of rasayana available in Ayurveda, it can be concluded that rasayana acts at both mental level as well as at physical level. It replenishes all dhatus and increases life span, improves medha (intelligence), increases longevity, stabilizes youthfulness, improves lustre, complexion and voice and increases vyadhiksamatwa in the body and cures many diseases and thus makes mind and body strong and health.

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