

A COMPILATION STUDY ON MEDHYA RASAYANA W.S.R TO CHARAKA SAMHITHA

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda represents an ancient system about 5000 years old of traditional medicine prevalent in India. Rasayana concept of Ayurveda is believed to be useful to overcome Neurological and psychiatric disorders are generally associated with loss of memory, cognitive deficits, impaired mental function etc for prevention and management of age related cognitive disorders. The 'medhyarasayanas' are known to be beneficial to improve the intellectual e.g., Mandukparni swarasa, Yashtimadhuchurna with ksheera, Guduchiswarasa and Shankhapushpikalka. These drugs promote theDhi (Intellect), Dhriti(Retention power) and Smriti(memory).present study to discuss about Medhya Rasayana of Charaka under the light of Modern Era.

It can be concluded that Charakacharya must have designed group of MedhyaRasayana in diseases of Smriti bhramsha. The rasa, veerya, vipaka of these four dravyas are favourable for improving cognition deficits. These four medhyarasayanas are thus of Naimittika type i.e. in specific disorders. And after reviewing the neuro pharmacology of the concerned dravyas, we can opine that this group of dravyas is beneficial in diseases like Alzheimer's. Secondly, regarding their use in different kashayakalpanas and anupana, we can definitely say that for enhancement of their pharmaco therapeutic value Charaka must have stated so. Thus, we get a scientific background for our formulations.

Key words: MedhyaRasayana, Mandukaparni, Shankhapushpi, Guduchi, Yashtimadhu, Dhi, Dhriti, Smriti.

INTRODUCTION

Rasayana have very significant role in disorders related to sedentary life style, work related stress, improper food habits and non-communicable diseases, especially in this modern era. Understanding Rasayana on scientific background infers its acceptance as nutraceutical, anti-oxidant and immuno-modulators. On the whole, Rasayana provide physical as well as mental health to a person.

Ayurveda defines mental health as a state of mental, intellectual and spiritual well-being. It is well established that this state of mental harmony declines with advancing age leading to various degenerative conditions. According to Ayurveda, loss of virility, strength, and cognitive power, is progressively noted from the 6th decade of life. To delay this physiological process, the use of Medhya Rasayanas has been stressed upon in the young and middle age. However, our Acharyas have not contra-indicated the use of Rasayanas in old age. Due to the scientific advancements, the Medhya Rasayanas have proven beneficial in delaying the

deteriorating cognitive changes in old age.

Rasayana is that which enhances the vigour of a healthy person, that is vrisya (aphrodisiac), and rasayana (rejuvenator). Among these two, rasayana particularly allays various illness. "Long life span, (improved) memory, comprehension ability, health, youthful vigour, lustre, complexion, (improved) voice, generosity (in one's mind), energetic body and organs, Vaksiddhi (an ability found in pious people by which their spoken words come out to be true), humility and attractive nature (i:e enchanting beauty/handsomeness) are attained by Rasayana (rejuvenator).

Medhya Rasayana

Medhya Rasayana (Intellectual rejuvenator) is a class of Rasayana (rejuvenator) drugs, that especially act on medha (intellect) to promote its function to the optimum level. And the word Medhya means that which is beneficial to Medha ,produces or improves medha (intellect) in its absence or its deficiency and is purifying. Medhya Rasayana (Intellectual rejuvenator) are the fresh juice of Mandukaparni leaves, powder

of Yasthimadhu root & taken along with milk, extract of Guduchi stem and paste of the whole plant of Shankhapuspi as mentioned by Acarya Charaka.

Discussion

Today is the era of global competition and this competition starts from the very beginning of the childhood of every individual. The ability to remember the things that have been learnt, are known or read, with such alertness or sharpness and the ability to use his knowledge at the right time and at the right place is the only key to achieve success in every step. Thus, in such conditions the person's grasping power and retention power is of prime importance.

Smrti is very near to *Medhā* other than *Dhī* and *Buddhi*. *Smrti* is the power of recollection and *Dalhana's* definition of *Medhā* (*Grañthāvadhāraṇa Śhakti*) is also a kind of recollection. The relation and difference between *Medhā* and *Smrti* has been discussed briefly in the conceptual part. Analysis of classics reflects that *Smrti* is being used in two ways. At one place it has been used as the process of memorizing while at another place, is used as a stage of

recalling, which is a part of the whole memorization process.

Maharsi Caraka has mentioned eight causative factors of *Smrti* in *Sārirasthāna*. These eight are the reasons for recollection or the causative factors that revives the things which seem to be forgotten, back in the memory. On studying, it seems that these are the supporting factors of the 'recalling' process. So, here *Smrti* seems to be used in the sense of 'recall' only. But in the same chapter where *Smrti bhramśa* is described in *Prajñāparādha*, commentator *Gañgādhara Rāi* opines that "the subject to be remembered, is retained only in the absence of *Smrti bhramśa*; and at times if the person due to *Dhī-Dhrti Bhramśa* gets engaged with unrighteous deeds then also he prevents himself from doing so by virtue of proper *Smrti*.

Two points in the aspect of the '*Medhā*' are worth to be noted, *Dalhana* defines *Dhāraṇa* in the context of retention of texts etc. which indicates a large amount of subject matter. The ability to retain lesser data or sentences, which implies to a group of small subjects that can be

remembered easily, is not expressed as 'Medhā'. The word *Avadhāraṇa Śhakti* also draws attention. Here *Avadhāraṇa* means 'retention of knowledge for longer duration'. Śhloka or chapter by reading or repeating can be memorized easily for a short time. Any Śhloka is remembered simply by reading, writing or reciting it four to five times; but then just after a few days or months, it cannot be recalled even after making efforts. Such short term memorization cannot be named as 'Medhā'. In the terms of Modern Psychology, sensory memory, working memory or temporary memory is not *Medhā*. Thus, the definition of *Medhā* given by Dalhana can be elaborated as, an individual's specific intellectual ability to retain a large amount of knowledge (cognition) and for a long time.

Mandukaparni extract and powder may ameliorate H₂O₂-induced oxidative stress by decreasing lipid per-oxidation via alteration of the antioxidant defense system. Thus, it is a general health promoter. It has neuronal dendritic growth-stimulating property. This may help in enhancing concentration power, thus improving

short-term memory. Asiaticoside, an active principle present in *Mandukaparni*, imparts anxiolytic activity, and thus, it helps in reducing the anxiety which is one of the factors affecting the memory. Aqueous extract of *Mandukaparni* is reported to be effective in preventing the cognitive deficits as well as oxidative stress caused by intra cerebro-ventricular streptozotocin.

Madhura and *Shita* qualities and *Vatapitta shamaka* and *Rasayana* effects of *Yashtimadhu* bring about soothing effect, and probably this helps in bringing about *Stairya* and *Dhriti* to establish stability of mind and for enhancing memory. The root of *Yashtimadhu* contains the active principles, glycyrrhizin, glycoside, etc. It is proved that *Yashtimadhu* increases the blood circulation to the central nervous system and balances the sugar levels in the blood. The isoflavones glabridin and hispalglabridins A and B of *Yashtimadhu* have significant antioxidant activity. The antioxidants protect susceptible brain cells from the oxidative stress, resulting in reduced brain damage and improved neuronal

function, there by enhancing the memory. Ethanol extract of *Yashtimadhu* possesses cerebro-protective effect, which may be mediated by its antioxidant effects.

Guduchi, another component of *MedhyaRasayana*, has *Katu, Tikta Rasas* which help in keeping the mind alert, so that things can be remembered properly. By *Tridosha hara* property, it helps to establish a balance and a good co-ordination of grasping, retention, and recall of memory. Further, *Rasayana Prabhava* helps in retaining things. *Guduchi* has active principles such as tinosporone, tinosporic acid, etc. The root extract of *Guduchi* was found to possess normalizing activity against stress-induced changes in nor-epinephrine levels. *Guduchi* enhances cognition (learning and memory).

Sankhapushpi is the most effective among the four *Medhya Rasayana* drugs mentioned by *Acharya Charaka*. It has *Kashaya Rasa* and *Ushna Guna*, which may enhance the alertness and quick understanding and retention of experiences. It has *Tridosha hara* property. *Sankhapushpi* contains

many phyto-nutrients which help in brain stimulation and increase the ability to concentrate. *Sankhapushpi* reduces anxiety and stress by controlling the production of body's stress hormones, adrenaline and cortisol. It is reported to possess anxiolytic and memory-enhancing and mood-elevating effects, and is claimed to retard brain aging.

These drugs should be taken with the specific kashayakalpanas:

a) **Guduchi:** *Guduchi kwatha* is suggested for consumption. The reason behind this is that berberine is fixed only in the stem. So we get a proof as to why this particular *bhaishyajya kalpana* is given in texts because *kwatha kalpana* extracts the most from the stem compared to other *kashaya kalpanas*.

b) **Yashtimadhu:** *Charaka* has suggested using *yashtimadhu churna* along with milk for *medhya karma*. It is probably because *glabridin* is an isoflavone that comes in hydrophobic extract of *Yashtimadhu*. In addition to this, being a phytoestrogen, its estrogen receptor binding function can be enhanced when consumed with milk.

Phytoestrogens are known to arrest ageing and are neuro-protective.

c) **Shankhapushpi:** Charaka has stated to take whole plant for medhya effect. The answer to this is convolvine is present in the whole plant. The extract of whole plant is proven to increase neuropeptide synthesis in brain protein content and increases acquisition efficiency.

d) **Mandukaparni:** *Charaka* has mentioned to use it in the form of swarasa. Leaf extract has highest amount of asiaticosides than petioles and roots. Swarasa extraction is done mainly from leaves of any plant. Aqueous extract prevents cognitive defects and improves memory retention.

CONCLUSION

Charaka must have stated so It can be concluded that Charakacharya must

have designed this combination particularly in diseases of Smritibhramsha. The rasa, veerya, vipaka of these dravyas are favourable for improving cognition defects. These four medhyarasayanas are thus of Naimittika type i.e. in specific disorders. So, we also get an idea of Naimittikamedhyarasayana which exhibit certain organ-specific action related to disease. And after reviewing the neuro pharmacology of the concerned dravyas, we can opine that this group of dravyas is beneficial in diseases like Alzheimer's. Secondly, regarding their use in different kashayakalpanas and anupana, we can definitely say that for enhancement of their pharmaco therapeutic value

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