

NECESSITY OF RASAYANA IN WOMEN EYE CARE – A CONCEPTUAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Womens are more prone to hormonal imbalance diseases. Mainly after intake of contraceptive pills and during menopause, there will be abrupt decline in oestrogen secretion. This oestrogen imbalance is one of the causes for many eye diseases. In Ayurveda, hormonal balance can be maintained by *rasayana dravya*.

Keywords: *Rasayana*, Eye, Women, Oestrogen

INTRODUCTION: Among *Ashtanga Ayurved*, *rasayana* treatment is having major role in restoring and maintaining the human health. It is curative, preventive and also protective by delaying the disease process. It destroys the old age diseases.¹ One more added quality is good for eyes.² *Rasa & Ayana* makes the word *rasayana*. *Rasa* means *rasa*, *rakta* etc *dhatus* and *Ayana* means nourishment of all the cells by its regular movement.³

Chakshushya rasayanas in Women?

Prevalence rate of age related eye diseases are more in women. Women bear approximately two-thirds of the global burden of blindness, with cataract being the major cause in developing countries.⁴

Why womens are more prone?

Intake of Contraceptive pills, oestrogen imbalance during menopause are some of the causes for early degenerative changes in women's eye. Those contraceptive pills are not only given as birth control pills but also prescribed in Menorrhagia, Dysmenorrhoea, PMS (premenstrual syndrome), Hirsutism, Alopecia, Breast cyst, Ovarian cyst etc. According to the study women who have used birth control pills for three years or longer have a 5%

risk of developing glaucoma and dry eye.⁵ So women's are more prone to above said eye diseases which are major causes for blindness in present era. Unfortunately awareness about this heightened risk is very less.

How this Oestrogen imbalance affects eye?

There are oestrogen receptors (ER) present in ciliary body, iris, lens epithelium, retina and they are named as ER alpha. It is having maintenance effect on retinal ganglion cells in the eye. So, in women one who stops intake of contraceptive pills and one who is in menopausal stage, there will be sudden decrease in hormonal activity. This abrupt decline of oestrogen will affect ER alpha which disturbs the cells of the eye. The presence of ER alpha suggests that the sex steroid hormone axis may play a role in the pathogenesis of certain ocular diseases.⁶

To overcome this type of eye diseases HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy) came to existence. HRT decreased the incidence of ocular disease but shown other side effects like nausea, headache, leg cramps, depression etc.⁷

DISCUSSION: In Ayurvedic view, *kapha* and *rasa dhatu* are interrelated. Because *kapha* and *rasa dhatu vruddhi lakshanas* are same.⁸ Also, whenever there is *kapha kshaya* there is *vata vruddhi*. If this decreased oestrogen condition taken as *rasa kshaya* as well as *kapha kshaya*, naturally there will be *vata vruddhi*. *Vruddha vata* causes *indriya balahani* which is nullified by *rasayana dravyas* because they are *indriya balakara*. To avoid degenerative eye diseases Antioxidant and Neuroprotective drugs are more beneficial. These Antioxidants and Neuroprotective agents are rich in *rasayana dravya*.

Some of the *rasayana dravyas* which are good for eyes as well as oestrogen balance. *Amalaki- Chakshushya*.⁹

Yashtimadhu- Chakshushya, Balakrut, Kshayapaha.¹⁰

Varahikanda- Balya, Rasayani.¹¹

Shatavari- Netrya, Balya, Kshayapaha.¹²

*Nirgundi- Netrahita*¹³, *Kshayapaha*.¹⁴

Bhrungaraja- Netrarogahara, Balya.¹⁵

Amalaki contains broad-spectrum antioxidants and free radical scavengers, helping to reduce disease and slow the aging process.¹⁶ *Yashtimadhu* and *Varahikanda* are rich in Phyto oestrogens like isoflavonoids, lignans and saponins. Major bioactive constituents of *Shatavari* is a group of steroidal saponins.¹⁷ *Nirgundi* also contains saponins.¹⁸ A new triterpene saponin, named eclalbatin was isolated from *Bhrungaraja*.¹⁹ Structurally steroidal oestrogen hormones and saponins are similar.¹⁷

Rasayana yogas in classical texts:

Some of the references regarding *rasayana yogas* like *Chyavana prasha, Beejaka saradi yoga, Somaraji rasayanam*²⁰ etc might give more result in the above said conditions compared to other *rasayana*

kalpa. Because these are indicated in *stree roga, jara vyadhi* and *netra roga/ indriya vikara*.

CONCLUSION: Age related eye diseases are more in women. But awareness is very less. Don't know each and every women takes contraceptive pills or not, but when she reaches menopausal stage there will be sudden decline of oestrogen. That affects ER alpha and it may end up with visual problems. To maintain that Oestrogen level, instead of HRT let us start using *rasayanas*. *Rasayana dravyas* are an inexpensive solution to more expensive modes of treatment in these days. Awareness program and research activities are very much essential in this area.

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