

## The Effect And Action Of Rasayana In The Management Of Autoimmune Disorders

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Autoimmune disorders, characterized by the immune system's misguided attack on the body's own tissues, pose significant challenges due to chronic inflammation and progressive tissue damage. Conventional treatments often involve immunosuppressive therapies with potential adverse effects. Ayurveda, an ancient system of medicine, offers Rasayana as a therapeutic approach aimed at rejuvenation and holistic well-being.

**Aim & Objective:** This study aims to explore the role of Rasayana in the management of autoimmune disorders.

**Methodology:** A comprehensive review of classical Ayurvedic texts and contemporary scientific literature was conducted to evaluate the efficacy and mechanisms of key Rasayana herbs and therapies. The study also examines the integration of Rasayana with conventional medical treatments for autoimmune disorders.

**Results:** Rasayana therapies, including herbs such as Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*), Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*), and Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*), exhibit significant immunomodulatory and anti-inflammatory effects. These herbs enhance immune function, reduce chronic inflammation, and promote tissue regeneration. Panchakarma, a detoxification procedure, further supports these benefits by eliminating toxins and restoring balance. Scientific studies corroborate these traditional claims, showing improvements in immune regulation and symptom management in autoimmune conditions.

**Discussion & Conclusion:** Rasayana therapies offer a promising complementary approach to conventional treatments for autoimmune disorders. By enhancing immunity, reducing inflammation, and promoting tissue repair, Rasayana can help manage the symptoms and underlying causes of these conditions. Further clinical research is warranted to fully elucidate the mechanisms and optimize the use of Rasayana in modern medical practice. Integrating Ayurvedic principles with conventional care may provide a holistic strategy for improving patient outcomes in autoimmune disorders.

**KEYWORDS-** Autoimmune disorders, Rasayana, Ayurvedic principles, etc.

### INTRODUCTION

Autoimmune disorders are a group of diseases where the immune system erroneously attacks the body's own tissues, leading to chronic inflammation and progressive tissue damage. These disorders, including rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus, multiple sclerosis, and type 1 diabetes, pose significant challenges due to their complex and often debilitating nature. Conventional medical treatments primarily aim to suppress the immune response and manage symptoms, but they often come with considerable side effects and do not address the root causes of immune dysregulation.[1]

In the quest for more holistic and integrative approaches to managing autoimmune disorders, Ayurveda, an ancient system of medicine, offers valuable insights through its Rasayana therapy. Rasayana, a specialized branch of Ayurveda, focuses on rejuvenation, promoting longevity, and enhancing overall vitality.[2] This therapeutic approach aims to strengthen the immune system, reduce inflammation, and support tissue regeneration, thereby addressing both the symptoms and underlying imbalances associated with autoimmune conditions.[3]

Rasayana therapies involve the use of specific herbs, dietary recommendations, lifestyle modifications, and detoxification procedures. Rasayana herbs such as Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*), Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*), and Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) are known for their potent immunomodulatory, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant properties. These herbs help in modulating the immune response, alleviating chronic inflammation, and promoting the repair and regeneration of damaged tissues.[4]

Scientific research increasingly supports the traditional claims of Rasayana therapy. Studies have demonstrated the efficacy of these herbs in improving immune function, reducing oxidative stress, and managing symptoms of various autoimmune disorders. Additionally, Panchakarma, a detoxification process integral to Rasayana, aids in the removal of toxins and restoration of physiological balance, further enhancing the therapeutic effects.[5]

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Study Design:

This study utilizes a mixed-method approach, combining a comprehensive review of classical Ayurvedic texts with contemporary scientific literature to evaluate the efficacy and mechanisms of Rasayana therapy in the management of autoimmune disorders. The study aims to explore the immunomodulatory, anti-inflammatory, and regenerative properties of Rasayana herbs and therapies.

### LITERATURE REVIEW:

#### 1. Classical Ayurvedic Texts:

- Primary sources include the Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya, which are foundational texts in Ayurveda. These texts provide detailed descriptions of Rasayana herbs, formulations, and therapeutic procedures.
- Specific focus on sections discussing immunomodulation, rejuvenation, and management of chronic inflammatory conditions.

#### 2. Contemporary Scientific Literature:

- A systematic search of electronic databases (PubMed, Google Scholar, Scopus) was conducted to identify peer-reviewed studies on the pharmacological effects and clinical efficacy of key Rasayana herbs.
- Keywords used in the search included “Rasayana,” “autoimmune disorders,” “Ashwagandha,” “Guduchi,” “Turmeric,” “immunomodulation,” “anti-inflammatory,” and “Ayurveda.”

**Selection of Key Rasayana Herbs:** The study focuses on three principal Rasayana herbs known for their therapeutic potential in autoimmune disorders:

- **Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*):** Evaluated for its adaptogenic, immunomodulatory, and anti-inflammatory properties.
- **Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*):** Assessed for its immune-enhancing, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant effects.
- **Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*):** Investigated for its active compound curcumin, which exhibits strong anti-inflammatory and immunoregulatory activities.

### Data Extraction and Analysis:

- For each herb, data on pharmacological properties, mechanisms of action, and clinical outcomes were extracted from selected studies.
- The Ayurvedic descriptions of these herbs were compared with scientific findings to identify correlations and validate traditional claims.

### Panchakarma and Detoxification Procedures:

- Detailed examination of Panchakarma procedures described in classical texts, focusing on their role in detoxification and immune system regulation.
- Analysis of scientific literature on the efficacy of Panchakarma in managing chronic inflammatory and autoimmune conditions.

### Integration with Conventional Treatments:

- Evaluation of existing studies and clinical trials that combine Rasayana therapy with conventional treatments for autoimmune disorders.
- Assessment of the potential benefits, safety, and outcomes of integrative approaches.

### Outcome Measures:

- Primary outcomes include changes in immune function, inflammation levels, and clinical symptoms of autoimmune disorders.
- Secondary outcomes involve patient-reported quality of life, reduction in conventional medication use, and overall health improvement.

#### **Ethical Considerations:**

- Ethical guidelines for conducting literature reviews and handling patient data in cited clinical studies were strictly followed.
- Emphasis on the safety and efficacy of integrating Rasayana therapies with conventional medical practices.

#### **Statistical Analysis:**

- Descriptive statistics to summarize findings from the literature review.
- Meta-analysis, where applicable, to quantify the effects of Rasayana therapies on immune function and inflammation in autoimmune disorders.

This structured methodology ensures a comprehensive evaluation of Rasayana's role in the management of autoimmune disorders, providing a foundation for further clinical research and potential integration into modern medical practice.

### **CONCEPTUAL STUDY ON AUTOIMMUNE DISORDERS**

Autoimmune disorders, where the immune system mistakenly attacks the body's own tissues, present a significant therapeutic challenge. The conventional medical approach typically involves the use of immunosuppressive and anti-inflammatory medications, which can lead to adverse side effects and do not address the underlying immune dysregulation. Ayurveda, an ancient Indian system of medicine, offers Rasayana therapy, a holistic approach that focuses on rejuvenation and improving overall health. This review examines the effects and mechanisms of Rasayana therapy in managing autoimmune disorders, drawing from both classical Ayurvedic texts and contemporary scientific research.[6]

#### **CLASSICAL AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE**

**Rasayana Therapy:** Rasayana therapy in Ayurveda is aimed at enhancing longevity, vitality, and resistance to disease. Classical texts such as the Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya provide extensive descriptions of Rasayana herbs and formulations believed to rejuvenate the body, strengthen the immune system, and promote overall health.[7]

##### **Key Rasayana Herbs:**

- **Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*):** Known for its adaptogenic properties, it is used to enhance strength and immunity.
- **Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*):** Revered for its ability to boost the immune system and act as a detoxifying agent.
- **Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*):** Celebrated for its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.

#### **CONTEMPORARY SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH**

##### **Immunomodulatory Effects:[8]**

- **Ashwagandha:** Studies have shown that Ashwagandha exhibits significant immunomodulatory effects. It enhances the proliferation of lymphocytes and increases the production of key cytokines, which helps in modulating the immune response. A study published in the *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* reported that Ashwagandha could restore the balance of Th1 and Th2 cytokines, which are crucial in autoimmune conditions.
- **Guduchi:** Research indicates that Guduchi has a profound impact on both innate and adaptive immunity. It enhances the function of macrophages, dendritic cells, and natural killer cells, which are essential for a robust immune response. Additionally, Guduchi has been shown to inhibit pro-inflammatory cytokines, thereby reducing inflammation.
- **Turmeric:** The active compound in turmeric, curcumin, has been extensively studied for its anti-inflammatory and immunoregulatory properties. Curcumin inhibits various inflammatory pathways, including NF- $\kappa$ B and COX-2, which are often upregulated in autoimmune disorders. Clinical trials have demonstrated that curcumin can reduce disease activity in rheumatoid arthritis and inflammatory bowel disease.

##### **Anti-inflammatory Properties:[9]**

- **Ashwagandha:** Besides immunomodulation, Ashwagandha also exerts anti-inflammatory effects by inhibiting the expression of pro-inflammatory mediators like TNF- $\alpha$  and IL-6. These effects are crucial in mitigating the chronic inflammation seen in autoimmune diseases.
- **Guduchi:** Its anti-inflammatory action is mediated through the suppression of inflammatory markers and oxidative stress, making it beneficial in conditions like rheumatoid arthritis and systemic lupus erythematosus.
- **Turmeric:** Curcumin's potent anti-inflammatory effects have been shown to significantly reduce markers of inflammation such as C-reactive protein (CRP) and erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR) in patients with autoimmune disorders.

### **Tissue Regeneration and Repair:[10]**

- **Ashwagandha:** Promotes tissue regeneration and repair, which is critical in autoimmune disorders where tissue damage is a primary concern. This is attributed to its ability to enhance collagen synthesis and reduce oxidative stress.
- **Guduchi:** Supports the regeneration of tissues and enhances the function of vital organs. Its antioxidant properties protect cells from damage caused by free radicals.
- **Turmeric:** Facilitates tissue repair through its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, helping in the recovery of damaged tissues.

### **Integration with Conventional Treatments**

Combining Rasayana therapy with conventional treatments offers a holistic approach to managing autoimmune disorders. This integrative strategy can potentially reduce the need for high doses of immunosuppressive drugs, thereby minimizing their side effects. Additionally, Rasayana therapy's emphasis on improving overall health and resilience aligns with the need for long-term management strategies in autoimmune diseases.[11]

## **DISCUSSION**

The management of autoimmune disorders presents a formidable challenge due to the complex interplay of immune dysregulation, chronic inflammation, and tissue damage. Conventional treatments often focus on symptom suppression and immune modulation through pharmacological means, which can lead to significant side effects and do not address the underlying imbalances.[12] In this context, the holistic approach of Ayurveda, particularly through Rasayana therapy, offers promising complementary strategies for managing these conditions. This discussion delves into the mechanisms, benefits, and potential integration of Rasayana in the management of autoimmune disorders.[13]

### **Immunomodulatory Effects[14]**

Rasayana herbs such as Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*), Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*), and Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) have demonstrated significant immunomodulatory properties. Ashwagandha enhances the immune response by modulating cytokine production and promoting the proliferation of lymphocytes. This herb helps restore immune balance, which is crucial in autoimmune conditions where the immune system is hyperactive and dysregulated.

Guduchi, another cornerstone of Rasayana therapy, has been shown to enhance both innate and adaptive immunity. It stimulates macrophages and natural killer cells, essential components of the immune response, while simultaneously inhibiting pro-inflammatory cytokines. This dual action helps in controlling the overactive immune response characteristic of autoimmune diseases.

Turmeric, particularly its active component curcumin, modulates the immune system by inhibiting various inflammatory pathways, including NF- $\kappa$ B and COX-2. This results in reduced production of pro-inflammatory cytokines and a lower inflammatory response, which is beneficial in managing autoimmune conditions like rheumatoid arthritis and inflammatory bowel disease.

### **Anti-inflammatory Properties [15]**

Chronic inflammation is a hallmark of autoimmune disorders, contributing to tissue damage and disease progression. Rasayana herbs possess potent anti-inflammatory properties that can mitigate this aspect. Ashwagandha reduces inflammation by inhibiting the expression of TNF- $\alpha$  and IL-6, key mediators of inflammation. This reduction in inflammatory markers can help alleviate symptoms and prevent further tissue damage.

Guduchi's anti-inflammatory effects are mediated through the suppression of oxidative stress and inflammatory markers. This herb not only helps in reducing acute inflammation but also provides long-term benefits by lowering chronic inflammation levels, thus improving overall disease outcomes.

Curcumin, extensively studied for its anti-inflammatory properties, significantly reduces markers of inflammation such as CRP and ESR. Its ability to inhibit multiple inflammatory pathways makes it an effective adjunct therapy in autoimmune conditions, offering relief from symptoms and reducing the reliance on conventional anti-inflammatory drugs.

### **Tissue Regeneration and Repair [16]**

Autoimmune disorders often lead to significant tissue damage, necessitating therapies that promote repair and regeneration. Ashwagandha has been found to enhance collagen synthesis and reduce oxidative stress, facilitating the repair of damaged tissues. This regenerative property is particularly beneficial in conditions like rheumatoid arthritis, where joint and tissue damage is prevalent.

Guduchi supports tissue regeneration through its antioxidant properties, which protect cells from damage caused by free radicals. This protective effect aids in maintaining the integrity of tissues and promotes recovery from autoimmune-induced damage.

Turmeric's curcumin facilitates tissue repair by reducing inflammation and oxidative stress. Its antioxidant properties help in the regeneration of tissues, making it valuable in the management of diseases that cause chronic tissue damage.

#### **Integration with Conventional Treatments[17]**

The integration of Rasayana therapy with conventional medical treatments offers a holistic approach to managing autoimmune disorders. By combining the immunomodulatory and anti-inflammatory benefits of Rasayana herbs with conventional therapies, patients may experience enhanced therapeutic outcomes and reduced side effects. This integrative approach can potentially lower the required doses of immunosuppressive drugs, minimizing their adverse effects and improving the quality of life for patients.

Moreover, the emphasis of Rasayana on overall health and resilience aligns well with the need for long-term management strategies in autoimmune diseases. The rejuvenative and strengthening properties of Rasayana can help patients maintain better health and cope more effectively with the chronic nature of their conditions.

#### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EFFECT AND ACTION OF RASAYANA IN THE MANAGEMENT OF AUTOIMMUNE DISORDERS**

The management of autoimmune disorders remains a significant medical challenge due to the complexity of immune dysregulation and the chronic nature of these diseases. Conventional treatments, while effective in managing symptoms, often come with substantial side effects and do not address the root causes of immune dysfunction. Rasayana therapy, a key component of Ayurveda, offers a holistic and integrative approach that can significantly enhance the management of autoimmune disorders.

#### **Enhancing Immunity and Restoring Balance [19]**

Rasayana therapy focuses on rejuvenating the body and strengthening the immune system. By modulating the immune response, Rasayana herbs such as Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*), Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*), and Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) help restore balance in the immune system. This immunomodulatory effect is particularly significant in autoimmune disorders, where the immune system is hyperactive and targets the body's own tissues. By restoring immune homeostasis, Rasayana therapy can reduce disease activity and improve patient outcomes.

#### **Anti-inflammatory Properties[20]**

Chronic inflammation is a hallmark of autoimmune disorders, leading to tissue damage and exacerbation of symptoms. The anti-inflammatory properties of Rasayana herbs are critical in mitigating this inflammation. For example, Turmeric's active component, curcumin, has been shown to inhibit key inflammatory pathways, reducing the production of pro-inflammatory cytokines. By alleviating chronic inflammation, Rasayana therapy can help prevent further tissue damage and provide symptomatic relief, thereby improving the quality of life for patients.

#### **Promoting Tissue Regeneration and Repair[21]**

Autoimmune disorders often result in significant tissue damage, necessitating therapies that promote healing and regeneration. Rasayana herbs are known for their regenerative properties. Ashwagandha enhances collagen synthesis and reduces oxidative stress, facilitating tissue repair. Guduchi and Turmeric also support tissue regeneration through their antioxidant effects. These properties are significant as they help repair and restore function in damaged tissues, offering a therapeutic advantage over conventional treatments that primarily focus on symptom suppression.

#### **Holistic and Integrative Approach[22]**

One of the key strengths of Rasayana therapy is its holistic approach, which addresses not only the physical aspects of disease but also the mental and emotional well-being of patients. This comprehensive approach is crucial for the long-term management of chronic conditions like autoimmune disorders. Integrating Rasayana with conventional treatments can lead to a more balanced and effective management plan. This integrative approach can reduce the dependency on high doses of immunosuppressive drugs, thereby minimizing their side effects and enhancing overall patient care.

#### **Potential for Reduced Side Effects[23]**

Conventional treatments for autoimmune disorders often involve long-term use of immunosuppressive and anti-inflammatory drugs, which can lead to adverse effects such as increased infection risk, organ damage, and metabolic disturbances. Rasayana therapy, with its natural herbal formulations, offers a safer alternative with fewer side effects. By potentially reducing the need for conventional medications, Rasayana can help lower the risk of drug-related complications, making it a valuable addition to the therapeutic arsenal for autoimmune disorders.

### Scientific Validation and Future Research

The growing body of scientific research supporting the efficacy of Rasayana herbs in immunomodulation, anti-inflammation, and tissue regeneration underscores the therapeutic potential of this traditional approach. Continued research and clinical trials are essential to further validate these findings and optimize the integration of Rasayana therapy into modern medical practice. This research can pave the way for new treatment protocols that combine the best of conventional and traditional medicine, ultimately leading to improved patient outcomes.

### CONCLUSION

The review of literature underscores the potential of Rasayana therapy as a complementary approach in the management of autoimmune disorders. The immunomodulatory, anti-inflammatory, and regenerative properties of key Rasayana herbs such as Ashwagandha, Guduchi, and Turmeric provide a strong foundation for their use in clinical practice. Further clinical research is warranted to fully elucidate their mechanisms and optimize their integration with conventional treatments, aiming to improve patient outcomes and quality of life in autoimmune disorders.

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST -NIL

### SOURCE OF SUPPORT-NONE

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