

Aphrodisiacs of Bhavaprakasha Lexicon: A Review

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Abstract

Aphrodisiac is a specialized branch considered to be one among 8 branches of Ayurveda gaining more popularity in present days. A huge information regarding various concepts of Aphrodisiacs & its utility was found well scattered in the Ayurvedic classics like Bruhatrayis, Laghutrayis, Rasa literatures. Bhavamisra was the author of Bhavaprakash nighantu (Lexicon) which is one of the Laghutrayis (Sharanghadara, Madhavanidana and Bhavaprakash). This text considered as karmapradhanagrantha (practical medicine) & drug index of Ayurveda. A variety of drugs with many actions obtained from different origins like herbal, minerals & animals for various sexual disorders have been mentioned in this text. Sexual disorders is one of the leading cause for more than 53 diseases and in India around 30 million people are suffering with sexual disorders. Individual habits with stressful life, wrong dietary habits, and sedentary life are the main cause of disease and no satisfactory treatment is available in conventional system. Hence there is need to explore alternative system of Indian medicines like Ayurveda for the benefits of sufferers. Thus present study was designed to screen the drugs with different vajikarana properties from bhavaprakasha which were well thought-out in the treatment of sexual disorders. Out of 426 drugs, 248 drugs were utilized in the management of various sexual disorders which includes herb, mineral as well as animal origin. These screened drugs were the handy reference for the treatment of sexual disorders which provides great information for the researchers in the field.

Keywords: Ayurveda; Aphrodisiacs; klaibya; Sexual disorders; Vajikarana.

Introduction

Decreased sexual vigour and infertility remain two basic common problems in male sexual life. According to WHO Infertility is defined as inability to conceive a child. A couple may be considered infertile if, after two years of regular sexual intercourse, without contraception, the woman has not become pregnant.[1] It is estimated that about 40 percent of the issues involved with infertility are due to the man, another 40 percent due to the woman, and 20 percent result from

complications with both partners.[2] Although male infertility has been found to be the cause of a couple's failure to conceive in about 50% of cases, the social burden "falls disproportionately on women,".[3] The main cause of male infertility is low semen quality which is due to endocrine problems, drugs, radiation, or infection.[4] Decreased sexual vigour in men causes a feeling of sexual insecurity which can further cause them to question their masculinity. As a result, low self-esteem can generalize to other areas of the relationship. After repeated failed attempts at intercourse, men may feel powerless, defeated, frustration, guilt, anger, depression and fear of rejection. These negative feelings can be intense and illogical.[5] The increased incidence in decreased sexual vigour, male infertility, and ineffective modern remedies have necessitated the need to search for treatment in alternative system of medicine. Vajikarana (Aphrodisiacs) is one among 8 branches of Ayurveda. According to sushruta the author

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of sushruthasambhita defines vajikarana as that science which deals with treatment of alpa (less), dushta (vitiated), kshina (reduced), vishushka (dried) retas (semen).[6] The use of vajikarana medicines was advocated for two purposes one to increase the sexual vigour & other to increase fertility.[7] Those medicines helps for getting the healthy progeny, which nourishes the body tissues as well as improves sexual performance like horse. Even after attaining old age there will not be shukrakshaya (decreased semen). Charaka says that a person not having progeny is like a shadeless tree having no branches, fruits and with bad smell is said to be vyartha (useless).[8] By the use of these vajikaranaushadhas a person will have progeny which is the ultimate aim of vajikarana.[9] Vatsayana the author of kamasutra utilized these vajikaranayogas mainly for to derive maximum pleasure in mating & for the better harmonious sexual married life.

About Text

The most appreciated text among lexicon is Bhavaprakash Nighantu, written in 16th century by Bhavamishra because the Lexicons which are found to be developed later on are based upon Bruhatrayi and Bhavaprakash is deemed to developed this from all samhita (text) and scientifically used for various classification of the drugs found in ancient drug related text of Ayurveda. First part of this lexicon part (Nighantu) includes explanation of 426 drugs in 22 Vargas (classification). Author was the Pioneer of Drug Abhava pratinidhi dravyaas (Substitute drugs) i.e. Astavarga and its substitutes and added new drugs to Ayurvedic pharmacopeia e.g. Dwipantaravacha (Smilax china) to Ayurveda. In Dravyagunashastra (pharmacology) all the definitions related with action of drugs started from Charaka than Vagbhata up to lexicon are the same which are used in modern Ayurvedic pharmacy. More than 1750 action words were used in the text hence this text is considered as Karmoushadhi Pradhan nighantu (drugs with therapeutic action) and also as Drug Index of Ayurvedic clinical pharmacology.

Drugs mentioned for purpose of vajikarana from whole Bhavaprakash Nighantu were screened. Few actions shows the same meaning & some are peculiar indicates different action which are tabulated in the given table 1 & 2.

Discussion

After screening the lexicon it is found that out of 426 drugs mentioned in the text from 23 Vargas 246 (57.74 %) drugs were mentioned highlighting 32 different terms for the vajikarana action. Among the 32 terms some possesses the same action like sukraashodhana, shukravishodhana & veeryakrut, shukrakarini, veeryakara etc. In that some are peculiar like shukralaparam, kamabalam, vyavayasakta etc. Out of total 246 drugs Aphrodisiacs are 136 (55.28%), Potent aphrodisiac 7 (2.84%), Purifies semen 2 (0.81%), Increases semen 14 (5.69%), Produces the semen 90 (36.58%), Stimulate ejaculation 2 (0.81%), Strengthens sexual desire 1 (0.4%), Potent semen producer 1 (0.4%), Instant seminal production 1 (0.4%), Stimulates fertility 1 (0.4%), Improves sexual performance 1 (0.4%). In the enumerated 246 drugs it contains 136 drugs of Aharadravyas & 110 are of Aushadhadravys from Herbal, Animal, and Mineral origins. After going through all the drugs it can be inferred that Aharadravyas are more compared to that of Aushadhadravys.

Conclusion

Bhavapraksha nighantu is a karmapradhana grantha which speaks about the practical utility of the various dravyas which includes Herbal, Animal as well as Mineral origin. After going through the lexicon it can be stated that this text contains more than half of the total drugs mentioned are given for the treatment of the various sexual problems. Among 246 drugs 136 are food items this clearly highlights that aharadravyas are equally important as compared to aushadhadravys.

On the contrary in modern science only medicines are being used as aphrodisiacs but they are not upto the mark and have many side effects. So, use of aphrodisiac foods in daily routine life can prevent the infertility, sexual inability and may be followed to maintain the fertility and sexual vigour. At present major sexual problems such as infertility, erectile dysfunction and premature ejaculation are attacking the younger generation due to the busy schedule, stressful life and improper food habits. In these circumstances modern science has minimal role to win over these conditions. On the contrary alternative medicines like Ayurveda offers many more options to maintain the sexual vigour and making the childless couples to have a healthy progeny.

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