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ROLE OF RASONA (GARLIC) IN AYURVEDA: A REVIEW ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

The Sanskrit word rasona literally means Lacking one taste, as it contains all of the six tastes-except sour. Rasona is widely used as an important factor in food item. It has been also used as a medicine in India, China & middle east since ages. In Ayurvedic compendia, lahashuna is a drug very widely used in treating many diseases. In Charak Samhita, Lahshuna has been prescribed in different diseases with the combination of various drugs (C. S. Suo 27/ 176). In Ashtanga Hrudaya & in Ashtanga Samhita Lahashuna Acharya Vagbhata has prescribed it to be used as a Rasayana & also given some different mode of administration. Along with oral intake, he emphasized on garlanding & crowning with lahashuna to get the Rasayan effect. (A.S. U. 49/103-105, 108123, A.H.U.-39/115-129) In Sushruta Samhita also the drug is prescribed in Sutrasthan. (S.S. Su. 46/244-245). In Kashyapa Samhita a whole chapter is narrated with the Pharmaceutical preparation of Lahashuna, in kalpasthan. The Mythological story about the birth of Lahashuna is that when the drops of nectar fell down on the earth it got turned into Lahashuna. In another story the birth of lahashuna was meant for getting progeny. Both these stories reveal its significance.

KEYWORDS: Garlic, Allicil, Vegetative propagation.

INTRODUCTION

Garlic is widely used as a flavouring and therapeutic agents sil,1ce ancient times. The unique pungent odour of garlic is the characteristic features of these plant sources which belong to Allium genus. Allium the word derived from the Celtic word 'all', means 'pungent'. This genus is known for the biosynthesis of characteristic allyl organosulphur compounds. Interestingly, the presence of allyl side chain in sulphur compounds responsible for getting the name allium to these medicinal plants. Garlic-(Allium sativum L.), onion-(Allium cepa L.), leek (Allium ampeloprasum L.) and scallion- (Allium fistulosum) are the main sources of genum Allium.

Modern science also accepts Garlic as a well known medicinal plant used as antioxidant, antimicrobial, antiatherosclerotic, ypolipidemic anticarcinogenic, antihypertensive and antithrombotic.

Garlic produces numerous therapeutic agents including characteristic allyl sulphur compounds which stimulate the activities of other carcinogens, suppress cancer cell growth and induce cancer cell death. The sulphur compounds such as diallyl sulphide and ajoene isolated from garlic bulb were found to be involved in stimulation of the enzymatic activities for metabolism of carcinogens and found to be active against hepatotoxicity in vitro and in vivo. Apart from this the sulphur compounds extracted from garlic bulb has been used as an antimicrobial, antifungal, pesticides, mosquito repellent and insecticide since long time in agriculture.

Chemical composition of garlic

Garlic and other members of allium genum such as onion, leek and scallion are well known for their characteristic pungent smell. This pungent smell is because of the presence of heterogeneous sulphur element attached with allyl side chain.

Garlic produces two major secondary metabolites including allin [(+)-S-2- propenyl-L-cysteine S-oxide] and isoallin which is stored in cytoplasm and an enzyme called allinase stored in vacuole. These metabolites participate in transport of essential amino acids across the membrane and playa defensive role against external environmental stimulae and to attract the predators.

When any external stimuli or crushing or grinding affects the cellular organization then the plant cells increase the level of enzyme allinase which intervene in conversion of allin or isoallin into allicin.

The above reaction has been modified from- Eric Block (1992), the Organosulphur Chemistry of the Genus Allium - Implications for the Organic Chemistry of

Sulfur, Angew. Chem. ht. Ed. Engl volume 31, page number 1135-1178.

Extraction of active ingredients- Allyl polysulphides are the major chemical constituents derived from garlic having varying biological activities. The isolation of allyl polysulphides involves crushing of garlic bulb which results in destruction of cell wall to release allicin. Allicin is the precursor for the development of various biologically active allyl polysulphide which is derived frQm enzymatic hydrolysis of allicin and isoallin in the presence of allinase. However recently it has been investigated that allicin or allicin derived compounds are prone to decompose due to chemical degradation of enzymatic activity which results in loss of biological activities.

Medicinal use – External

Sr. No.	Rasona Kalp	External	Effect over body
1.	Juice or pulp of Rasona	External	Applied in rheumatic arthritis, sciatics, paralysis, facial palsy, pleurisy etc. to ameliorate pains & swelling.
2.	Juice	External	Skin diseases like ringworm infestation & skin ailments of Kapha origin.
3.	Fresh juice or oil	Local installation	Instilled into ears to mitigate the earache.
4.	Pup	Local poultice	In Glandular swelling & abscess it is a best solution.
5.	Pulp of Rasona + Chitraka + Sarshapa	Local application	Galena worm infestation (Ranunculus medinensis)
6.	Juice	Local application	In insect bites, application of juice detoxifies the toxins & combat as the itching.

Medicinal use – Internal

Sr. No.	Rasona Kalp	Anupan	Effect over body
1.	Fresh juice of rasona	Ghee	Bronchospasm in asthama
2.	Fresh juice of rasona	With honey	Cold & cough
3.	Fresh juice	With sesame oil	In entric fever
4.	Rasona Kshirpaka (Milk concentrated with Lasuna)	-	healing of fracture
5.	Fresh juice + honey & ghee in an unequal quantity.	-	Night blindness & helps to augment the acuity of vision
6.	Rasona + ghee	-	Vata Vyadhi
7.	Rasona + sugar	-	Pitta Vyadhi
8.	Rasona + honey	-	Kapha Vyadhi

Apart from these Rasona is the drug of choice in Vata diseases like facial palsy, paralysis, sciatica & also as a brain tonic. It is said to improve the memory & intelligence. The rasona is invaluable aphrodisiac, which helps in spermatogenesis & hence alleviates the sexual debility. The dysuria of vata type can be managed well with rasona as it has diuretic property & alleviates vata.

As per Ashtanga Hrudaya, apart from its internal use one should cover whole body with garlands of lahashuna to get rid of Vata Vyadhi.

The recent scientific research reveals it to be very effective in hypercholesterolemia & atherosclerosis. The rasona is benevolent as a rejuvenative (rasayana), especially in the Vata diseases. It is specially recommended in hoarseness of voice (Yoga Ratnakar).

Precautions in use - As it vitiates the pitta dosna If should be Sparingly used in pitta constitutions, pregnancy & raktapitta.

Pathya - The patient should avoid hot, spicy & salty food, exposure to sun & heat.

Patient should not consume Jaggery & more water. As hot, salty & spicy food results in increase of Pitta dosha in the body.

Antidotes

Dhanyaka Hima (coriander fruit cold infusion) is the antidote for ill effects of rasona.

Shodhana - Before consumption, rasona is purified by soaking it in sour buttermilk overnight, then washed with water & dried in shade & can be used.

CONCLUSION

In Ayurveda Lahashna acts as an antioxidant, antimicrobial, Antiatherosclerotic, hypolipidemic, anticarcinogenic, antihypertensive & antithrombotic property. But the Kala & Matra for internal administration is very much specified in Kashyapa Samhita. So, it should be used methodically in Shita (Winter), Hemanta & Shishira Rutu for one month duration in 100/60/50 in numbers which will be according to the tolerance of the particular individual. One who is taking it as a food should take intelligently in proper quantity so that to attain disease free state.

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