



Research Article

Rasayana as a Concept of Preventive Medicine: A Review from Classical Samhitas

Dr. Mukta Chaturvedi ¹, Dr. Rajiv Kumar Tripathi ², Dr. Nitin Urmalia ^{3*}

¹ MO against Assistant Professor, Department of Samhita Siddhant, Rajkiya Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya evam Chikitsalaya, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India

² Professor & Head, Department of Shalakya Tantra, Jeevek Ayurved Medical College and Hospital, Ekauni, Chandauli, Uttar Pradesh, India

³ Associate Professor and H.O.D., Department of Agadatantra evum vidhi vaidyak, Govt. Auto, Ashtang Ayurvedic College, Indore, Madhya Pradesh, India

Corresponding Author: * Dr. Nitin Urmalia

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22174343>

ABSTRACT

Rasayana is one of the important specialized concepts of Ayurveda concerned with preservation of health, promotion of longevity, maintenance of physical and mental strength, improvement of intellect and memory, and prevention of disease. Unlike a purely disease-oriented therapeutic approach, Rasayana emphasizes maintaining the optimal quality and functioning of body tissues, strengthening physiological resilience and promoting healthy ageing. Classical Ayurvedic texts, particularly Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita and Ashtanga Hridaya, provide extensive descriptions of Rasayana therapy and its objectives.

The present review critically examines Rasayana as a concept of preventive medicine through classical Ayurvedic literature and explores its contemporary relevance. The classical concepts of Kamyas Rasayana, Naimittika Rasayana, Ajasrika Rasayana, Kutipravesika Rasayana and Vatatapika Rasayana are discussed. The relationship of Rasayana with Agni, Dhatu Poshan, Ojas, Bala, Vyadhikshamatva, healthy ageing, cognitive health and lifestyle modification is also examined. Contemporary scientific investigations suggest that several Rasayana drugs possess antioxidant, immunomodulatory, neuroprotective and adaptogenic properties. However, the complete classical concept of Rasayana extends beyond pharmacological action and includes diet, lifestyle, behavioural discipline and individualized therapeutic principles.

Rasayana may therefore be considered a comprehensive Ayurvedic framework for preventive healthcare and healthy ageing. Further clinical research using standardized formulations, validated Ayurvedic parameters and modern outcome measures is required to establish its preventive potential scientifically.

Manuscript Information

- ISSN No: 3139-6313
- Received: 13-07-2026
- Accepted: 22-08-2026
- Published: 30-08-2026
- IJCRP:1(4); 2026: 159-166
- ©2026, All Rights Reserved
- Plagiarism Checked: Yes
- Peer Review Process: Yes

How to Cite this Article

Chaturvedi M, Tripathi R K, Urmalia N. Rasayana as a Concept of Preventive Medicine: A Review from Classical Samhitas. Int. J. Creative Res. Publ. 2026;1(4):159-166.

Access this Article Online



www.jcrp.in

KEYWORDS: Rasayana, Preventive Medicine, Ayurveda, Samhita, Healthy Ageing, Vyadhikshamatva, Ojas, Dhatu, Health Promotion.

1. INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is traditionally defined as the science concerned with maintaining the health of the healthy and alleviating disorders in the diseased. The fundamental objective of Ayurveda therefore includes both Swasthya Rakshana and Aturasya Vikara Prashamana. This dual objective establishes prevention as an integral component of Ayurvedic healthcare. The concept of Rasayana occupies an important position within this preventive philosophy. Rasayana is traditionally associated with longevity, strength, intellect, memory, youthful characteristics, excellent complexion, sensory strength and resistance to disease.

Charaka Samhita places Rasayana at the beginning of Chikitsa Sthana, demonstrating its importance within Ayurvedic therapeutics. Rasayana is not merely the administration of a rejuvenating drug; rather, it represents a comprehensive approach involving appropriate diet, lifestyle, behaviour, therapeutic procedures and medicinal preparations.

In contemporary medicine, preventive healthcare focuses on promotion of health, reduction of risk factors, prevention of disease, maintenance of functional capacity and healthy ageing. Several of these objectives show conceptual similarities with Rasayana, although the philosophical and theoretical foundations of Ayurveda and modern medicine remain distinct.

The present review therefore attempts to examine Rasayana from the classical Samhita perspective and discuss its possible relevance to contemporary preventive medicine.

2. AIM

To critically review the concept of Rasayana as a preventive healthcare approach according to classical Ayurvedic Samhitas and explore its contemporary relevance.

3. OBJECTIVES

1. To review the etymology and classical definition of Rasayana.
2. To study the concept of Rasayana in Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita and Ashtanga Hridaya.
3. To analyze the classification of Rasayana.
4. To explore the relationship between Rasayana and health promotion.
5. To understand the role of Rasayana in healthy ageing.
6. To examine the relationship between Rasayana and Vyadhikshamatva.
7. To evaluate the role of diet, lifestyle and behavioural discipline in Rasayana.
8. To discuss the contemporary scientific relevance of Rasayana.
9. To identify research gaps and future research directions.

4. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is a narrative conceptual review based on classical and contemporary literature.

Classical Literature

The principal classical sources reviewed include:

- Charaka Samhita
- Sushruta Samhita
- Ashtanga Hridaya
- Relevant classical commentaries

Relevant chapters dealing with Rasayana, health promotion, longevity, Dhatu nourishment, Ojas, Bala and disease prevention were critically analyzed.

Contemporary Literature

Contemporary scientific publications related to Rasayana drugs, antioxidant activity, immunomodulation, healthy ageing, neuroprotection and preventive healthcare were also reviewed.

The information was thematically organized under the following domains:

Rasayana → Dhatu Poshan → Bala/Ojas → Vyadhikshamatva → Healthy Ageing → Prevention of Disease

5. Etymology and Concept of Rasayana

The term Rasayana is composed of two components:

Rasa + Ayana

Rasa is regarded as the first Dhatu formed from properly digested nutritional material, while Ayana indicates movement, circulation or appropriate nourishment.

Thus, Rasayana can broadly be understood as a systematic approach intended to promote optimal nourishment, quality and functioning of body tissues.

Charaka describes Rasayana as a means of attaining excellence of Rasa and other Dhatus and associates it with longevity, memory, intellect, strength and other desirable attributes.

The concept therefore extends beyond the simple meaning of "rejuvenation." It represents a comprehensive strategy for maintaining physiological excellence.

6. Rasayana in Charaka Samhita

Charaka Samhita provides one of the most detailed descriptions of Rasayana Chikitsa in Chikitsa Sthana, Rasayana Adhyaya.

The classical objectives of Rasayana include:

- Deerghayushya – longevity
- Smriti – memory
- Medha – intellect
- Bala – strength
- Arogya – freedom from disease
- Taruna Vaya – maintenance of youthful characteristics
- Prabha – excellence of complexion
- Varna – healthy appearance
- Swar excellence
- Indriya Prasadana – functional excellence of sense organs

Charaka's description demonstrates that Rasayana addresses multiple dimensions of health simultaneously. It is therefore inappropriate to equate Rasayana only with modern anti-ageing therapy.

7. Rasayana in Sushruta Samhita

Sushruta Samhita also describes Rasayana as an important therapeutic approach for promoting longevity, strength and health.

The classical description emphasizes:

- preservation of youthfulness,
- improvement of strength,
- enhancement of intellect and memory,
- promotion of longevity,
- prevention of disease and
- maintenance of physiological equilibrium.

This demonstrates that Rasayana has both promotive and preventive dimensions.

8. Rasayana in Ashtanga Hridaya

Ashtanga Hridaya incorporates Rasayana within its therapeutic framework and emphasizes the importance of maintaining the strength and functional integrity of the individual.

The broader Ayurvedic approach recognises that longevity and health depend upon the interaction of:

- Ahara
- Agni
- Dosha equilibrium
- Dhatu nourishment
- Bala
- Ojas
- Dinacharya
- Ritucharya
- Sadvritta
- Mental wellbeing

Thus, Rasayana can be interpreted as an integrated intervention rather than an isolated pharmaceutical treatment.

9. Classification of Rasayana

9.1 Kamya Rasayana

Kamya Rasayana is intended for healthy individuals who desire enhancement of desirable qualities.

It may be associated with:

- longevity,
- strength,
- intellect,
- memory,
- vitality and
- general excellence.

It is particularly relevant to preventive medicine because the individual does not necessarily have an established disease.

9.2 Naimittika Rasayana

Naimittika Rasayana is associated with specific disease conditions or particular therapeutic indications.

Its objective is not merely rejuvenation but supporting the restoration and maintenance of health in specific circumstances.

9.3 Ajasrika Rasayana

Ajasrika Rasayana represents regular use of wholesome dietary substances and lifestyle practices that support nourishment and health.

This aspect is particularly relevant to modern preventive medicine because it emphasizes continuous health maintenance rather than episodic treatment.

10. Kutipravesika and Vatatapika Rasayana

Classical literature describes two important approaches based on the method of administration.

Kutipravesika Rasayana

Kutipravesika involves a carefully controlled environment in which the individual undergoes Rasayana therapy under regulated conditions.

The concept highlights:

- controlled environment,
- regulated diet,
- disciplined lifestyle,
- supervision and
- systematic administration of Rasayana.

Vatatapika Rasayana

Vatatapika Rasayana is comparatively less restrictive and allows the individual to continue normal activities.

These two approaches demonstrate the adaptability of Rasayana therapy according to the individual's circumstances.

11. Rasayana and Prevention of Disease

The preventive role of Rasayana can be understood at different levels.

Primary Prevention

Rasayana may support maintenance of health before disease develops through:

- adequate nourishment,
- maintenance of strength,
- promotion of physiological equilibrium,
- healthy lifestyle and
- enhancement of resilience.

Secondary Prevention

Maintenance of physiological strength and tissue integrity may theoretically reduce susceptibility to pathological processes.

Tertiary Prevention

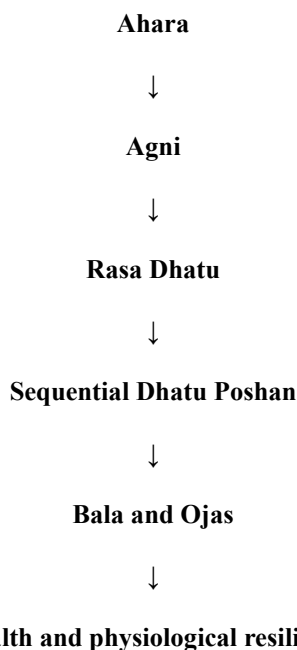
Rasayana may also be considered after disease management to support restoration of strength and maintenance of equilibrium.

Thus, Rasayana may be viewed as operating across the health–disease continuum.

12. Rasayana and Dhatu Poshan

Ayurveda describes health in terms of optimal functioning and nourishment of the Dhatus.

The classical sequence may be represented as:



Rasayana is conceptually associated with maintaining excellence in this process.

Proper digestion and metabolism are therefore considered essential prerequisites for achieving the intended benefits of Rasayana.

13. Rasayana and Agni

Agni occupies a central position in Ayurvedic physiology. Improper functioning of Agni can lead to inadequate tissue nourishment and accumulation of metabolic by-products described within the Ayurvedic framework as Ama.

Therefore, Rasayana should not be considered independently from Agni.

A conceptual model may be expressed as:

Balanced Agni → Proper digestion → Proper Dhatu formation → Adequate nourishment → Strength → Health

This provides a theoretical basis for integrating Rasayana with preventive dietary and lifestyle practices.

14. Rasayana and Ojas

Ojas is traditionally described as an important factor associated with strength and vitality.

Rasayana is conceptually connected with preservation and enhancement of qualities associated with Bala and Ojas.

From an Ayurvedic perspective, adequate nourishment, balanced Doshas, proper Dhatu formation and appropriate lifestyle are essential for maintaining these qualities.

However, Ojas should not be directly equated with any single modern biological entity such as immunity, plasma proteins or hormones. Such correlations require appropriate scientific investigation.

15. Rasayana and Vyadhikshamatva

Vyadhikshamatva is an important Ayurvedic concept related to the capacity to resist disease and withstand pathological processes.

Rasayana's emphasis on strength, nourishment and resilience suggests a conceptual relationship with Vyadhikshamatva.

Modern research has investigated several Rasayana plants and formulations for potential immunomodulatory activities. However, Vyadhikshamatva is broader than the modern concept of immunity, and therefore scientific correlation should be approached cautiously.

16. Rasayana and Healthy Ageing

Ageing is a natural physiological process.

Ayurveda recognizes the progressive changes associated with Jara and describes various approaches intended to preserve strength, vitality and functional capacity.

Rasayana is particularly relevant because its classical objectives include:

- longevity,
- strength,
- memory,
- intellect,
- sensory function,
- youthful characteristics and
- quality of life.

Modern healthy-ageing approaches similarly emphasize maintaining functional ability and independence.

Thus, Rasayana provides an important conceptual framework for research into healthy and active ageing.

17. Rasayana and Cognitive Health

Classical descriptions associate Rasayana with enhancement of memory and intellect.

The concept of Medhya Rasayana specifically focuses on cognitive functions.

Classical Medhya Rasayana drugs include:

- Mandukaparni,
- Yastimadhu,
- Guduchi and
- Shankhapushpi.

These drugs have been investigated in modern experimental and clinical research for possible cognitive, antioxidant and neuroprotective properties.

Nevertheless, further well-designed clinical trials are needed to establish their efficacy and safety conclusively.

18. Rasayana and Mental Wellbeing

Ayurveda does not separate physical health completely from mental health.

Rasayana's emphasis on memory, intellect, emotional stability and behavioural discipline demonstrates its psychosomatic orientation.

The preventive model may therefore include:

Healthy body + healthy mind + disciplined behaviour = sustainable health

This approach has considerable relevance to contemporary preventive healthcare.

19. Rasayana and Lifestyle Modification

An important feature of Rasayana is its integration with lifestyle.

The broader Ayurvedic preventive framework includes:

- Dinacharya,
- Ritucharya,
- appropriate Ahara,
- adequate Nidra,
- regulated physical activity,
- Sadvritta,
- avoidance of harmful habits and
- appropriate mental discipline.

Therefore, Rasayana should not be understood merely as consumption of a herbal formulation.

It can be viewed as a comprehensive lifestyle-integrated health promotion strategy.

20. Rasayana and Nutrition

Ayurveda gives great importance to appropriate nutrition.

Ajasrika Rasayana particularly emphasizes regular use of wholesome nutritional substances.

Food contributes to:

- nourishment,
- strength,
- tissue formation,
- maintenance of Agni and
- overall health.

Thus, nutrition may be regarded as an important foundation of Rasayana therapy.

The principle can be summarized as:

Wholesome Ahara → Proper Agni → Proper Dhatu Poshan
→ Bala → Health

21. Rasayana and Antioxidant Activity

Oxidative stress has been implicated in ageing and several chronic diseases.

A number of plants traditionally classified or used as Rasayana have demonstrated antioxidant activity in experimental studies.

Examples include:

- Amalaki,
- Guduchi,

- Ashwagandha,
- Haritaki and
- Brahmi.

Such findings provide possible biological pathways for further investigation.

However, experimental antioxidant activity should not automatically be interpreted as proof of clinical anti-ageing efficacy.

22. Rasayana and Immunomodulation

Several Rasayana drugs have been investigated for their effects on immune responses.

Guduchi and Ashwagandha, among others, have received substantial scientific attention.

The classical concepts of Bala and Vyadhikshamatva provide an interesting theoretical background for this research.

However, systematic clinical trials are required to determine:

- appropriate dose,
- duration,
- patient selection,
- safety,
- interactions and
- clinically meaningful outcomes.

23. Rasayana and Adaptation to Stress

Modern research has explored the adaptogenic potential of several Ayurvedic Rasayana plants.

Adaptation to physiological and psychological stress is an important component of maintaining health.

Classically, Rasayana aims at maintaining strength and resilience.

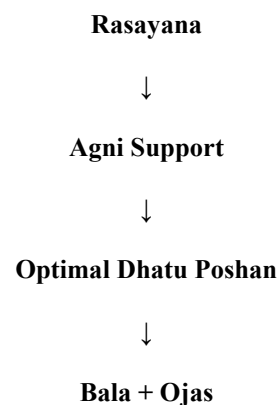
This provides a possible area of interdisciplinary research connecting:

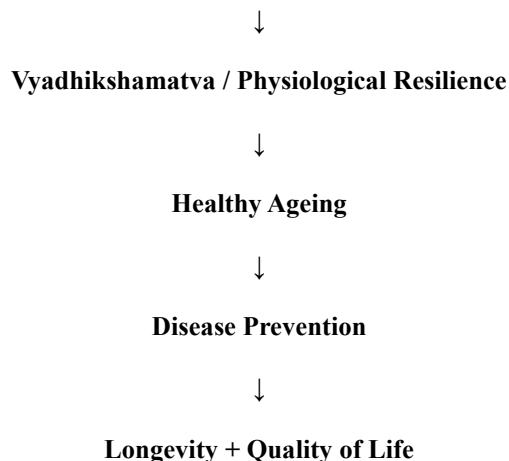
Rasayana → Stress adaptation → Physiological resilience → Health promotion

Such correlations should be investigated using validated clinical and physiological parameters.

24. Rasayana as a Holistic Preventive Model

The classical concept can be represented as follows:





This model illustrates that Rasayana is fundamentally multidimensional.

It includes:

1. Pharmacological interventions
2. Nutritional interventions
3. Lifestyle modification
4. Behavioural discipline
5. Mental wellbeing
6. Preventive healthcare

25. Contemporary Scientific Perspective

Modern scientific research has investigated several biological activities associated with Rasayana drugs.

Important areas include:

25.1 Antioxidant activity

Several Rasayana plants demonstrate free-radical scavenging and antioxidant activity in laboratory studies.

25.2 Immunomodulatory activity

Certain Rasayana drugs have demonstrated potential effects on immune-related pathways.

25.3 Neuroprotective activity

Medhya Rasayana drugs have been investigated for their possible role in cognitive health.

25.4 Adaptogenic activity

Ashwagandha and other Rasayana plants have been studied for their potential role in stress adaptation.

25.5 Healthy ageing

The traditional emphasis on longevity provides a basis for research into functional ageing, resilience and quality of life.

These findings are promising but should be interpreted as areas of scientific evidence development, rather than definitive validation of all classical claims.

26. DISCUSSION

The classical Samhitas establish Rasayana as an important component of health preservation.

A major characteristic of Rasayana is that it is health-centred rather than disease-centred.

The individual is assessed in terms of age, strength, digestive capacity, lifestyle and therapeutic suitability.

The classical approach also recognizes that medicine alone cannot guarantee longevity. Diet, lifestyle, behavioural discipline and mental wellbeing are integral components.

This holistic orientation has similarities with the contemporary movement toward preventive, lifestyle and integrative medicine.

However, the similarities should not be interpreted as proof that the two systems are identical. Ayurveda operates within its own theoretical framework of Dosha, Dhatu, Agni, Ojas and Vyadhikshamatva.

Scientific research should therefore investigate these concepts without forcing them into simplistic biomedical equivalents.

27. Research Gap

Despite extensive classical descriptions, significant research gaps remain.

1. Limited high-quality clinical trials on complete Rasayana protocols.
2. Lack of standardized Rasayana formulations.
3. Limited long-term safety data.
4. Lack of validated biomarkers for classical concepts such as Ojas and Dhatu Samya.
5. Limited research on individualized Rasayana according to Prakriti.
6. Insufficient studies on Rasayana as a complete lifestyle intervention.
7. Lack of large-scale healthy-ageing studies.
8. Limited comparative clinical studies between different Rasayana formulations.
9. Need for standardized quality-of-life outcome measures.
10. Need for multidisciplinary research combining Ayurvedic and modern parameters.

28. Future Research Directions

Future research should move beyond isolated pharmacological studies and evaluate Rasayana as an integrated intervention.

A possible research framework is:

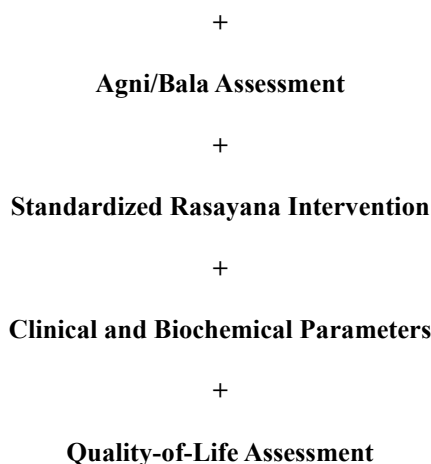
Prakriti Assessment

+

Dietary Assessment

+

Lifestyle Assessment



This approach could help evaluate the classical concept using both Ayurvedic and contemporary research methodologies. Longitudinal studies may be particularly useful for studying healthy ageing and preventive outcomes.

29. LIMITATIONS

The present paper is a narrative conceptual review rather than a systematic review or meta-analysis.

Classical Ayurvedic concepts and modern biomedical concepts arise from different theoretical frameworks. Therefore, direct one-to-one equivalence should be avoided. The evidence concerning individual Rasayana drugs cannot automatically establish the effectiveness of the complete Rasayana system.

Further randomized controlled trials, observational studies and long-term safety studies are required.

30. CONCLUSION

Rasayana represents one of the most comprehensive preventive concepts described in Ayurveda.

The classical Samhitas associate Rasayana with longevity, strength, memory, intellect, tissue nourishment, youthful characteristics, disease resistance and maintenance of health. Its preventive potential is particularly evident because Rasayana addresses the individual before, during and after disease through a combination of:

Ahara + Vihara + Aushadha + Achara + Manasika discipline.

The classical concept therefore extends beyond the modern interpretation of "anti-ageing medicine."

Contemporary scientific studies provide preliminary evidence regarding antioxidant, immunomodulatory, neuroprotective and adaptogenic activities of several Rasayana drugs. Nevertheless, systematic clinical evidence for the complete Rasayana concept remains limited.

Future research should therefore focus on standardized formulations, individualized therapy, validated Ayurvedic parameters, long-term safety and clinically meaningful preventive outcomes.

Rasayana may thus be considered a potentially valuable Ayurvedic framework for preventive medicine, healthy ageing and promotion of quality of life, while its classical principles should be evaluated through rigorous scientific research.

REFERENCES

1. Agnivesha. Charaka Samhita. Revised by Charaka and Dridhabala. Chakrapani Datta, commentator. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia.
2. Sushruta. Sushruta Samhita. With Nibandha Sangraha commentary of Dalhana. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia.
3. Vagbhata. Ashtanga Hridaya. Commentaries by Arunadatta and Hemadri. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia.
4. Balasubramani SP, Venkatasubramanian P, Kukkupuni SK, Patwardhan B. Plant-based Rasayana drugs from Ayurveda. *J Ayurveda Integr Med*. 2011;2(2):53-62.
5. Rege NN, Thatte UM, Dahanukar SA. Adaptogenic properties of six Rasayana herbs used in Ayurvedic medicine. *Phytother Res*.
6. Dahanukar SA, Thatte UM. Current status of Ayurveda in phytomedicine research. *J Ethnopharmacol*.
7. Patwardhan B, Warude D, Pushpangadan P, Bhatt N. Ayurveda and traditional Chinese medicine: a comparative overview. *Evid Based Complement Alternat Med*.
8. Scartezzini P, Speroni E. Review on some plants with antioxidant activity. *J Ethnopharmacol*.
9. Singh RH. Exploring issues in the development of Rasayana therapy as a comprehensive approach to health promotion.
10. Vaidya ADB, Devasagayam TPA. Current status of herbal drugs in India: an overview.
11. Bhattacharyya A, Chattopadhyay R, Mitra S, Crowe SE. Oxidative stress: an essential factor in the pathogenesis of gastrointestinal mucosal diseases. *Physiol Rev*.
12. Kumar S, Yadav A, Yadav M, Yadav JP. Effect of environmental factors on phytochemical diversity of medicinal plants.
13. Sharma R, Martins N, Kuca K, et al. Chyawanprash: a traditional Indian bioactive health supplement. *Biomolecules*.
14. Mukherjee PK, Harwansh RK, Bahadur S, et al. Development of Ayurveda—tradition to trend. *J Ethnopharmacol*.
15. Balasubramani SP, Venkatasubramanian P, Kukkupuni SK, Patwardhan B. Plant-based Rasayana drugs from Ayurveda: current scientific evidence and future directions. *J Ayurveda Integr Med*.

Authors' Contribution

Dr. Mukta Chaturvedi: Conceptualization, classical literature review and preparation of manuscript.

Dr. Nitin Urmalia: Conceptualization, literature review, critical analysis and final revision of manuscript.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Funding: No external funding was received for this review.

Ethical Statement: As this is a narrative review based on published classical and scientific literature and does not involve human participants or identifiable patient data, ethical approval was not required.

Creative Commons (CC) License

This article is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution–Non-Commercial–No Derivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) license. This license permits sharing and redistribution of the article in any medium or format for non-commercial purposes only, provided that appropriate credit is given to the original author(s) and source. No modifications, adaptations, or derivative works are permitted under this license.

About the author



Dr. Nitin Urmaliya is an Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Agadatantra evam Vidhi Vaidyak at Government Autonomous Ashtang Ayurvedic College, Indore, Madhya Pradesh, India. His academic and professional work focuses on Agadatantra, Ayurvedic toxicology, and forensic medicine within the field of Ayurveda.