



AYURVEDA PERSPECTIVE TOWARDS THE GERIATRIC CARE: RECENT ADVANCEMENT

Arundhati Dewangan*¹ and R. N. Tripathi²

¹Dept. of Swasthavritta, S. B. L. D. V. B. G. M., Sardarshahar, Rajasthan, India.

²Dept. of Kayachikitsa, Govt. Ayurvedic College Raipur, C.G., India.

*Author for Correspondence: Arundhati Dewangan

Dept. of Swasthavritta, S. B. L. D. V. B. G. M., Sardarshahar, Rajasthan, India.

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ABSTRACT

Aging is a progressive decline in physiological functional of body. The cell degenerative process becomes faster than regeneration and functionality of body organs decreases significantly. Aging varies person to person depending upon *prakriti* of individual. The prevalence of disease conditions increases with ageing since immunity and restoration capability of body reduces remarkably. Ayurveda considered ageing (*Jara*) as a part of life and the traditional text of ayurveda described various approaches to overcome process of ageing like; utilization of rejuvenating herbs along with *panchakarma*, *yoga* and *rasayana* therapies. Ayurveda also suggested that onsideration of *dinacharya* and *ritucharya* play vital role to delay process of *jara*. This article summarizes role of ayurvedic treatment in geriatric care.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Geriatric Care, Jara, Rasayana.

INTRODUCTION

The old age condition involves easy prevalence of disease and degenerative conditions which termed as geriatric syndrome. Ayurveda considered ageing as outcome of *kala*. *Vata dosha* is the most important contributory factor in the ageing. The term geriatrics means old age care, it concerned with the care and treatment of elderly. As per ayurveda body consisted of various constituents such as; *rasa*, *raktha*, *mamsa*, *medas*, *asthi*, *majja* and *sukra*. The *dhatus* get degenerated due to the prolonged structural changes of body. As the ageing proceeds the capacity of *dhatus* decreases. As per ayurveda the *nidan parivarjana*, *pranayama*, *yogic* exercises along with appropriate *dincharya* and *ritucharya* offers beneficial effect in ageing.^[1, 2]



Figure 1. Consequences of Ageing (*Jara*)

Ayurveda suggested various approaches to delay process of Jara (ageing) which are as follows.

- *Rasayana*
- *Dinacharya*
- *Ritucharya*
- *Trayopastambha*
- *Panchakarma*
- *Vayasthapana Herbs*

RASAYANA

The *rasayana* therapy is a most important approach of ayurveda for geriatric care. *Rasayana* prevent chances of premature ageing and improve longevity also possess resistance against various geriatric disease conditions.^[3] There are various *rasayana* drugs such as; *Amalaki*, *Madooka parni*, *Shatavari*, *Shilajatu*, *Lashuna*, *Vacha*, *Bhallataka*, *Pippali*, *Haritaki*, *Guduchi*, *Bhibitaki* and *Ashvagandha*. Different *rasayana* drugs acts differently like;

- *Acharya Rasayana* acts as psycho immuno-modulator and thus reduces stress.
- *Gambhari* improve nitrogen balance and promote tissue building.
- *Ashvagandha* and *Shilajatu* reduces stress
- *Amalaki* offers antioxidants effect which scavenge free radicals and reduce chances of tissue damage.
- *Guggulu* opens the *shrotas* (channels) and improve nutritional supply to all tissues.

Rasayana Formulation

Rasayana formulation also used as age stabilizer and these type of formulation contains herbs like; *Guduchi*, *Haritiki*, *Amalki*, *Shweta*, *Jeewanti*, *Atirasa*, *Mandookparni*, *Punarnava* etc. These formulation mainly also contains *dhatu* in the form of *bhasma* and this combination of *dhatu* (*bhasma*) along with herbs offers significant rejuvenating effect which enhance longevity and anti-ageing property.

The advantages of rasayana therapy in Jara (ageing) are as follows

1. Improve function of *pancha bhoutik agni* by enhancing *jataragni* and *dhatvagni*.
2. Removes *kleda*, *ama* and other waste products which may cause ageing if accumulated in body.
3. Rasayana offers anti oxidant properties and removes free radicals from the body; which reduces prevalence of tissue damage.
4. It increases *ojas* and strength of the body.
5. It maintains balances of *doshas*.^[4, 5]

DINACARYA

The ayurvedic regimen of discipline day to day life and control life style referred as *dinacarya* which help to maintain healthy disease free life style. Ayurveda described various rule of *dinacarya* need to be followed to delay process of ageing, these rules are as follows.

➤ Early wake-up

Wake up in early morning offers many beneficial effects of body including supply of fresh air.

➤ Shodhna

Drinking water early in the morning cleanses the body through eliminating toxic wastes.

➤ Nasya

It offers benefits like calmness, proper sleep, consciousness, diseases prevention and improve circulation.

➤ Sadvritta

It maintains balance between mind and body. *Sadvritta* increases *sattvika* mind quality which offers healthy mental status and delay process of mental retardation associated with ageing.

➤ Dhyana

This integrates physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual power. *Dhyana* helps in *chitta vritti nirodha*. This improves mental stability in degenerative older age.

➤ Yoga

Regular exercise improves resistance against disease, clears the *srotas* of body and increases the circulation process. Exercise also helps to improve efficiency of organs, promotes appetite and prevents prevalence of disease related to the obesity. These all beneficial effects reduce tissue denegation and thus delay ageing.

RITUCHARYA^[6]

According to ayurveda seasonal variations may affects physiological function of body greatly since *doshas* are predominant as per season and thus inappropriate routine which is not as per the seasonal requirements may leads *doshic* imbalance and various degenerative conditions including early ageing; thus rule of *ritucharya* need to be followed for geriatric care which suggest life routine as per seasonal variation, *ritucharya* means seasonal routine which encompasses various rules which need to be followed in different seasons; in *Varsha Ritu* there is *vata dosha prakopa* thus light digestible food to be taken. Pulses, soups and old grains also recommended for geriatric care while in *Sharat Ritu*; *pita* aggravates thus food like green gram, honey and sugar recommended for elderly person while heavy food, curd and oil must be avoided in this season.

TRAYOPASTAMBHA

As per ayurveda, *ahara*, *nidra* and *brahmacarya* are regarded as the three pillars of healthy living. Ayurveda suggested that intake of appropriate *ahara*, regular sleeping and controlled sex helps to ensure long and healthy life, the consideration of *trayopastambha* rules delay ageing process and improve resistance towards geriatric syndrome. This practice preserves health and also prevents various ailments of old age.

➤ Ahara (Nutrition for geriatric care)

Fluid intake is necessary in older person for renal clearance. Calcium intake with vitamin D is necessary to prevent bone mineral loss in elderly thus diet containing dairy products, fish, legumes, nuts, eggs, etc. if digestible then must be incorporated in the diet plan of elder person. Diet containing roasted cereals like gram, peanuts, pulses, puffed rice, butter milk and fruits are considered healthy for elderly individual. In older age spicy, salty and pungent food should be avoided similarly heavy food should not be given at night.

➤ Nidra

The proper time for sleep is two to three hours after meal. Ayurveda also suggest that minimum 8 hrs. night sleep is essential to acquire complete mental and physical relaxation. Sleeping at late night and excess sleeping should be avoided to minimize degenerative process associated with ageing.

➤ Brahmacarya

Ayurveda believe that excess of sexual activity leads *dhatu kshaya* and *ojas kshaya* which are the responsible for early ageing thus *brahmacarya* (*sativik pravriti*) need to be adopted as part of control sex life, *brahmacarya* applies rules of controlled sexual activity for the restoration of *dhatu* and *ojas* which protect body from the noxious effects of early ageing.

PANCHAKARMA

Ayurveda believe that *sodhna* (purification) play vital role in healing process through detoxification. These

sodhna therapies promote longevity and prevent disease condition. *Panchakarma* is one of the important therapies of amongst various *sodhna* (purification) procedures, which effectively removes toxins from body. This detoxification process helps to maintain normal circulatory function of body. *Panchakarma* offers balancing of complete organic system and synchronization of mental and physical activity through opening of *shrotas* which improve circulation throughout the body. Detoxification through *panchakarma* eliminates toxic waste and delay ageing since accumulation of such toxic waste leads many degenerative processes associated with ageing.^[7]

VAYASTHAPANA HERBS

The *dravyas* that offers anti-ageing property which nourishes skin and improve physiological functions called *vayasthapana*, the *vayasthapana* herbs maintain youthfulness through balancing *doshas*. *Amrita*, *Abhya*, *Dhatri*, *Mukta*, *Aprajita*, *Jeewanti*, *Shatavari*, *Mandookparni*, *Sthira* and *punarnava*, all of these offers anti ageing property and protect body from disorders associated with early ageing.

The herbs used in *vayasthapana* as age stabilizers

- *Centella asiatica* is important *vayasthapana* herb which enhances collagen synthesis.
- Gum resin exudates of *Boswellia serrata* used in the management of several inflammatory conditions associated with ageing.
- *Amalaki* is also considered anti-ageing drug which offer potent antioxidant property due to the presence of vitamin C, tannin and gallic acid.
- *Ajara* offers beneficial effects in ageing.
- *Ayushprada* prolongs cell life and reduces tissue degeneration.
- *Sandhaniya* improves cell migration and cell binding thus enhances regenerative process.
- *kantikara* improves complexion and thus improve physical appearance.^[8]

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