

AYURVEDA IS A BOON FOR GERIATRIC HEALTH CARE

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ABSTRACT

Geriatric is the branch of medicine dealing with the problem of aging and disease of the elderly. Geriatrics is emerging as a major medical specialty globally. The conventional system of medicine has nothing much to offer in the core area of geriatric care except the medical management of diseases of old age. Ayurveda is a science of life and longevity and has a broad spectrum of preventive measures for fighting against the aging process. The present time demands to development of an effective holistic protocol for geriatric care by combining Rasayana, Panchakarma, Dietetics, Ayurvedic medicines, and Lifestyle and Yoga.

Keywords: Geriatric, Ageing, *Jara*, *Vardhakya*, *Vriddhavastha*

INTRODUCTION

The word GERIATRICS has been derived from the Latin word 'Gera' meaning "To grow old". Geriatric is the branch of medicine dealing with problems of aging and diseases of the elderly. Aging is the multi-dimensional and unavoidable irreversible process of physical, psychological, and social changes, which begins before birth and continues throughout the entire lifespan. During the last few decades, there has been a gradual decline in fertility and a noticeable rise in the average life expectancy of the people which leads to an obvious shift in age distribution denoting population-aging. By the year 2050, one-fifth of the global population will become older than 65 years of age. In India, 3.8% of the population is older than 65 years of age.

Due to the increased geriatric population, the prevalence of diseases related to elder age is also increasing. Now a need is felt to develop newer strategies for geriatric health care through Ayurveda which slow down or delay the process of aging in human beings during the later stages of life when degeneration of body tissues and senses occurs at an enhanced rate. Ayurveda promotes healthy aging through principles of daily and seasonal regimens, and code of conduct like Sadvritta, Rasayana Chikitsa, and Panchakarma.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

To study and discuss the various concepts related to aging and to understand the geriatric specific disease and its care through Ayurveda.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

This review article in this material related to aging (Jara), Rasayana, Panchkarma, and other relevant topics has been collected from Ayurveda texts such as Charak Samhita, Ashtanga Samgraha, Ashtanga Hridaya, Bhavaprakash, and Sharangdhara Samhita and available commentaries on these. For this.

CONCEPT OF AGEING (JARA)

Ayurveda has prominently described the concept of aging as Jara. The word Jara is derived from 'Jru' which means decline stage or old age. Jara is a Swabhava Bala pravritta roga which is defined as becoming old by the act of wearing out. It is also known as Vardhakya. According to Acharya Charak Vridhavashta is between 60-100 years and whereas according to Acharya Sushruta and Vagbhata vridhavashta is above 70 years of age.

Vridhavashta is the last part of the lifespan and is mainly characterized by degenerative changes. This stage is characterized by decay of Dhatu, loss of strength of sense organ, potency, retention power, and memory. During this phase, there is a predominance of Vayu dosha which cause various changes such as Vali, Khalitya, Palitya, Kampa, Agnimanda, Drishtimandya, Ojakshaya, and Ayushya, etc, and psychological changes like Depression, Anxiety, and Stress, etc.

COMMON DISORDERS OF OLD AGE

In old age, in the human body, many chronic inflammatory and degenerative conditions occur. Among old age people respiratory problems, Heart diseases, Stroke, and Cancer, etc are a major cause of mortality common disorders of old age are

S.No.	System	Disorders
1.	Respiratory System	Bronchial asthma, Bronchitis, Emphysema, Pulmonary Tuberculosis
2.	Cardiovascular System	Hypertension, Ischemic Heart Disease, Cerebrovascular Accident, Chronic Heart Failure.
3.	Gastrointestinal System	Indigestion, Acidic peptic disease, Constipation
4.	Musculoskeletal System	Osteoarthritis, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Spondylosis
5.	Genito -Urinary System	Nocturia, Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia
6.	Ophthalmic System	Senile Cataract, Glaucoma
7.	Auditory System	Deafness
8.	Neuro System	Anxiety, Depression, Dementia, Insomnia, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinsonism.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

In Ayurveda, the principle of "Shreeyite ite shariram" can be ruled out by strategies mentioned in Swastha chatuska such as Dincharya, Ratricharya, Ritucharya, and by Rasayana therapy mentioned in Rasyanadh-yaya. Ayurveda provides healthy blissful aging and peaceful death by use of Panchkarma, Vyadhi Pratyneek Hithahara Vihara, and Yoga.

LIFESTYLE REGIMEN

For prevention of early aging and disorders of old age, it is important to include principles of Dinchar-ya, and Ritucharya in his daily routine such as Anja-na, Nasya, Snehan, Gandusha, Cleansing of feet and external orifices, exercise, and so on.

Sadvritta

Sadvritta could be defined as a moral reasoning code of ethics or good conduct and is required to guide daily living and maintain a balanced state of mental and physical life, thus preventing early aging.

Geriatric Diet

According to Ayurveda, our personality is deter-mined by what, when, where, and how we eat. Ayur-veda insists that conscious eating favors optimal dig-estion that directly and swiftly corrects imbalances and in doing so prevents diseases and delays the ag-ing process. The balanced diet of elderly people should be planned individually in considering the following principles like Prakrti, Vaya, Kaal, Agni, Bala, etc which influence and impact digestion, me-tabolism, and lifespan.

Sleep (Nidra)

Ayurveda cautions that poor sleep patterns can be debilitating as it triggers age-related pathological con-ditions that can hasten the aging process. In Ayur-veda, Nidra is one of the main pillars of good health as it endows the body with strength, complexion, and healthy growth that continues throughout life

RASAYANA THERAPY

Rasayana is a boon for geriatric care, especially deal-ing with the science of nutrition, geriatrician, and rejuv-enation. It stands as an answer to preventing pre-mature aging and solving the problem due to ag-ing. It influences fundamental aspects of the body ie. Dhatu, Agni, and Srotas thereby enrich the nutritional

value of circulating plasma, improve digestion, ab-sorption, and metabolism and enhance the microcir-culation and tissue perfusion. Rasyana drugs are like-ly to be nutritional tonics, antioxidants, anti-stress, and immune modulators that overall show anti-aging effects. Popular single Rasyana drugs such as Aama-laki, Ashwagandha, Shatavari, Brahmi, Mandukparni, Shankhapuspi, Madhuyashti, Guduchi, Haritki while popular compound formulations are Chyavanaprasha, Brahma Rasyan, Amalaki Rasyana have shown anti-aging efficacy. Rasayan like Shilajatu for Diabetes Mellitus and Tuvarak for leprosy is Naimittika Ra-sayan as it induces specific immune and bio-strength to fight against particular disorders. Achara Rasyana is a non-pharmacological approach that describes the mode of living, social behavior, and Sattvika Aahar leading to the longevity of health. Ajasrika Rasyana refers to continued consumption of nutrient diet such as milk ghee etc, it is a way to get optimum nutrition. Thus, Rasayana therapy of Ayurveda promotes pre-ventive strategies and can delay age-related disability and make elderly people healthier and happier.

PANCHKARMA

Panchkarma is the therapeutical method of periodic detoxification, purification, and rejuvenation. It cleans the microcirculation of the body and enables better nutritional status which has rejuvenating activi-ty and pacifies age-related health issues. Snehan and Swedan neutralize Vata which causes aging. Vaman and Virechana of mridu types and Matra Basti are best suited for old age individuals. Shirodhara and Shirobasti are useful in anxiety, insomnia, psychiat-ric, and other neurodegenerative diseases.

CONCLUSION

Increased life expectancy, rapid urbanization, and lifestyle changes have led to the emergence of varied problems for the elderly in India. An increasing num-ber of elders in the population is a matter of great significance because of its likely impact on public health and the socioeconomic growth of the nation. Ayurveda being the science of life and longevity must be a part of geriatric health care. The central focus of strength of Ayurvedic geriatric care swings

around the concept of Rasyana therapy, Panchkarma, Dietic, Ayurvedic medicine, and Lifestyle and Yoga.

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