

ETYMOLOGICAL STUDY OF SHAREERA, INDRIYA, AND SATTVA IN RELATION TO AGING

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<https://doi.org/10.46607/iamj2811072023>

(Published Online: July 2023)

Open Access

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Article Received: 13/06/2023 - **Peer Reviewed:** 09/07/2023 - **Accepted for Publication:** 22/07/2023.



ABSTRACT

Aging is a multifaceted process characterized by the gradual decline in vitality and the breakdown of adaptive responses over time, ultimately resulting in death. Various theoretical frameworks have been proposed to explain the mechanisms underlying aging. Biological aging encompasses the physiological changes associated with the aging process. Contemporary lifestyles and habits can contribute to the manifestation of early or premature aging. According to Ayurveda, the components of *Shareera* (body), *Indriya* (senses), and *Sattva* (mind) play critical roles in determining the Ayu (span of life). Understanding the effect of etiological factors on *Shareera*, *Indriyan*, and *Sattva*, we can provide a technical perspective on the multifaceted nature of aging. This knowledge aids in developing strategies to understand aging and mitigate the adverse effects of aging on the body, senses, and mind, fostering overall well-being.

Keywords: Ayu, *Shareera*, *Indriyan*, *Sattva*, Aging

INTRODUCTION

Aging is characterized as the cumulative occurrence of physiological changes that gradually culminate in the eventual demise of an individual. It is an intrinsic and unavoidable process accompanied by a decline in viability, rendering us more susceptible to various diseases and, ultimately, death. As we advance age, there is a progressive deterioration of physiological function, resulting in reduced capacity and reproductive ability. Human aging undoubtedly encompasses a diverse array of physiological and cellular transformations that impede our normal functions and heighten our vulnerability to mortality. In *Ayurveda*, these changes can be studied in relation to the factor that determines *Ayu*. The definition of '*Ayu*' as given by *Acharya Charka* states that '*Ayu*' is *Sanyog* of *Shareera*, *Indriyan*, *Satva*, and *Atma*^[1]. So, to understand the effect of aging as per *Ayurveda*, we need to understand its effect on each of the components separately. Since *Atma* is invisible (*Avyakta*), neither has a beginning nor an end (*Anadi-Nidhana*) and is imperishable (*Akshara*),^[2] So we will look at the effect of aging on the other three components-

1. *Shareera*
2. *Indriyan*
3. *Sattva*

“*Sheeryate anena iti Shareeram*” The one that continuously deteriorates or undergoes catabolic changes is known as *Shareera*^[3]. This definition of *shareera* seems appropriate as our physical bodies undergo constant deterioration and degeneration as time passes, and the aging process takes its toll. The Sanskrit word *Indriya* means – “that which is related to or originated from '*Indra*' or created by the supreme power.” It means *Prana* or vital life force^[4]. Generally, “*Indriya*” refers to the sensory faculties (*Jnanendriya*), ie. *Shrotrendriya*, *Sparshanendriya*

Chakshurindriya, *Rasanendriya*, *Ghranendriya*, and motor faculties (*Karmendriya*), ie. *Hasta*, *Pada*, *Guda*, *Upastha*, *Vaak*. The word *Sattva* means *Manas*^[5]. *Chitta* and *Chetas* are synonyms. *Manas* is the apparatus through which awareness (consciousness) and ignorance (unconsciousness) of knowledge manifest. The sense organs (*Indriya*) can perceive their respective objects (*Arthas*) only when they are activated by the mind. Without the interaction between the mind, sense organs, and their objects, understanding the subject is not possible. The mind serves as the driving force for all the sense organs, yet it cannot be directly perceived by them. Hence it is referred to as “*Atindriya*.” The mind connects the sense organs with the self (*Atma*), resulting in the perception of knowledge. It possesses two distinctive qualities: *Anutvam* (ability to move swiftly everywhere) and *Ekatvam* (capacity to perceive only one object at a time). Due to these attributes, the mind can move rapidly but focuses on one object exclusively.

Discussion

Throughout one's life, an individual undergoes various changes in different stages or periods. *Baalya*, *Madhya*, and *Vruddha*. These transformations are recognized by *Acharya Vagbhatta*^[6] and *Acharya Sharangdhara*^[7], who documented the observation of these changes in the development and decline of certain bodily functions. *Acharya Vagbhatta* and *Acharya Sharangdhara* introduced the concept of '*Ayu Hraas Krama*' to describe the progressive reduction of different components of the human body during different decades of life. This framework offers an intriguing perspective on the gradual loss of various biological factors as one ages through different stages of life.

Decades	Years	Loss Mentioned	
		<i>Acharya Vagbhatta</i>	<i>Acharya Sharandhara</i>
First	1-10	<i>Balyam</i>	<i>Balyam</i>
Second	11-20	<i>Vruddhi</i>	<i>Vruddhi</i>
Third	21-30	<i>Prabha</i>	<i>Chavi</i>
Fourth	31-40	<i>Medha</i>	<i>Medha</i>

Fifth	41-50	Twak	Twak
Sixth	51-60	Shukra	Drushti
Seventh	61-70	Akshi	Shukra
eighth	71-80	Shruta	Vikrama
Ninth	81-90	Manas	Buddhi
Tenth	91-100	Sarvendriya	Karmendriya

These changes can also be categorized under *Shareera*, *Indriya*, and *Sattva*. *Shareerik* Factors can include *Vruddhi*, *Prabha*, *Chavi*, *Twak*, *Shukra* and *Drushti*. *Shruta*, *Vikrama*, *Manas*, and *Buddhi* can be considered under *Sattvik* factors, And *Sarvendriya* under *Indriya*.

The effect of Aging on *Shareera*, *Indriya*, And *Sattva* is discussed below-

1. *Shareera*- Acc to *Acharya Shusruta Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala* sustain the *Shareera*^[8] in collaboration with other components such as *Srotas*, *Dhamnis*, etc. To study the effect of aging on *Shareera*, we will look into the effect on each *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala*.

- *Dosha*- There are three *Shareerik Dosha*, ie. *Vata*, *Pitta* and *kapha*. At ama, awastha *Dosha* conducts vital activities in the body, but the sensitive nature of *dosha* makes them prone to vitiation at the slightest provocation from external/internal stimuli. *Acharya Vagbhatta* also mentioned the predominance of different *Dosha* at different stages of life. *Kapha Dosha* is predominant in childhood, *Pitta* in middle age, and *Vata* in old age^[9].

Vata- *Vata* is the most important factor to be considered in old age because of its natural predominance at that stage of life. *Acharya Chakarpani* justifies the importance of *Vata* as "pradhantvat prakritiyo vayu ruchyate." *Acharya Charka* mentioned the *Prakrutik Karma* of *vayu* as *Utsha*, *Uchwasa*, *Niswasa*, *Chesta*, and *Dhatusamgati*^[10]. And with old age, there is a loss in the *Prakrutik Karma* of *Vayu* is seen.

Pitta- *Prakrutik Karma* of *Pitta*, as mentioned by *Acharya Charka*, are *Dharsan*, *Pakti*, *Ushma*, *Kshut*, *Trishna*, *Deh Mardav*, *Prabha*, *Prasad*, and *Medha*^[11]. *Agni* is present in the form of *Pitta Dosha* in the body.^{[12][13]} It is a separate entity

from *Pitta Dosha*, as observed through various references. *Pitta Dosha* can be considered as the facilitator for the process of *Agni*. *Jathraagni* converts *Ahar Rasa* into *Ras Dhatu*, which then nourishes other *Dhatu*s with the help of their respective *Agni*. So as with aging, there is a decrease in the *Prakrutik* activity of *Pitta* which, as a result, there is a decrease in the activity of *Agni* due to which proper *Ras Dhatu* formation does not occur, which leads to a decrease in the formation of another *Dhatu* as well. The effect of all this is further 'DhatuKshaya.' This condition is generally seen in old age.

Kapha- As *Acharya Charaka* mentioned in *Sutra Sthan*, "Prakritastu Balam Sleshma"^[14], *Shleshma*, in its physiological state, represents the potential source of strength and resistance to disease. *Prakrutik Karma* of *Kapha* as mentioned by *Acharya Charka* are *Snehana*, *Sandhibandhan*, *Sthairya krit*, *Gauravam*, *Balakrit*, *Vrisya*.^[15] As mentioned earlier, there is a natural predominance of *Vata Dosha* in old age, as the *Guna* of *Vata*, ie. *Ruksha*, *Laghu*, *Khara*, and *Chala* are opposite the *Guna* of *Kapha Dosha*. Due to this, *Kaphakshay*'s condition is seen in *Vardhikya*. That is why the loss of *Bala* or strength is one of the dominating features of old age. Also, due to *Kapha Kshay*, the Binding mechanism and fluid supply are deranged to a large extent in old age-related problems.

- *Dhatu*- The second component of *Shareera* is *Dhatu*; the Body is constituted of seven *Dhatu* as *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Meda*, *Asthi*, *Majja*, and *Sukra*. The function of *Dhatu* in the body is to maintain a homeostatic state, but they are highly liable to vitiations which is why they are also known as *Dooshya*. As stated earlier, due to *Vikrita Vata*, *Vishmagni*, and *Ksheena Kapha*,

first, *Dhatu Rasa* itself get malformed and does not perform its function of *Preenana* to the rest of *Dhatu* and the body. This leads to the sequential weakening of *Dhatwagnis* at the *Saptdhatu* level. The effect of all this is further '*DhatuKshaya*.' This condition is generally identified with aging.

- *Mala*-The term *Mala* is defined as “*Mrijyate Shodhyate*,” meaning 'to cleanse' or 'to purify.' But the elimination of Toxins alone does not seem to be the only function of *Mala*. *Mala* also plays a vital role in body dynamics, as the elimination of *Mala* is an index of life activities. Ham-

pered *Agni* in old age leads to *Malaksaya*. As a result, *VardhikyaAlpmutra* (Oliguria) and *Mutrakricha* (Dysuria) are seen as symptoms of *Mutraksaya*. Also, *Twak Shosh*, *Sparshgyan Abhav*, and *Twak Sphutan* are seen due to *Swdaksaya*.^[16]

2. *Indriyam- Indriyas* are of two types – 1. *Jnanendriyas*, 2. *Karmendriyas*, the governing *Vata*, and the nourishing *Kapha* are deranged in old age, as seen earlier. This results in *Indriyapradoshaja Rogas* –

S.NO.	<i>Indriya pradoshaja Rogas</i>	<i>Hetu</i>
1.	<i>Sarvendriyashoonyatva</i>	<i>Pranvrutudana Vata</i> ^[17]
2.	<i>Indriya Vadha</i>	<i>Vata Prakopa</i> ^[18]
3.	<i>Aksha Glani</i>	<i>Mamsakshaya</i> ^[19]
4.	<i>Indriya Dourbalya</i>	<i>Pitta Vriddhi</i> ^[20]
5.	<i>Sarvendriya Upaghata</i>	<i>Pranavrutvyana</i> ^[21]

Karmendriya are also observed to be affected adversely in *Vradhikya* i.e.-

S.NO.	<i>Indriya</i>	<i>Vikara</i>	<i>Hetu</i>
1	<i>Vak</i>	<i>Vakparushya</i>	<i>Vata Nanatmaja</i> ^[22]
		<i>Vak Graha</i>	<i>Kaphavruta Udana</i> ^[23]
2	<i>Hasta</i>	<i>Hasta sankocha</i>	<i>Vridha Vata</i> ^[24]
		<i>Pani Graha</i>	<i>Vata Nanatmaja</i> ^[25]
		<i>Karma Nasa</i>	<i>Udanavruta Apana</i> ^[26]
		<i>Chesta Sanga</i>	<i>Pittavruta Vyana</i> ^[27]
3	<i>Pada</i>	<i>Pada Bhramsa</i>	<i>Vata Nanatmaja</i> ^[28]
		<i>Pada Sankocha</i>	<i>Vikrita Vata</i> ^[29]
		<i>Gati Sanga</i>	<i>Kaphavruta Vyana</i> ^[30]
4	<i>Payu</i>	<i>Guda Bhramsa</i>	<i>Vata Nanatmaja</i> ^[31]
		<i>Malasang</i>	<i>Gudasrita Vata</i> ^[32]
5	<i>Upastha</i>	<i>Pumstwabhramsa</i>	<i>Vikrita Vayu</i> ^[33]

4. *Sattva*- The word “*Sattva*” is derived from two terms, ‘*sat*’ and ‘*tva*,’ *Satto Bhava*^[34]. “*Satvam hitakarakamiti bhava*” (*shabdakalpadrum*). *Manas* should ideally be dominated by the *Sattvik* (pure and balanced) quality to withstand emotional challenges. However, as a person gets older, their *Sattvik* quality decreases due to imbalances in the *VataDosha* and depletion of the nurturing *KaphaDosha*. This decline in *Sattvik*'s quality affects their normal abilities, such as per-

ception, concentration, communication, memory, and understanding. It also makes them more vulnerable to mental disturbances like confusion, rambling speech, fear, grief, and feelings of low self-worth.

CONCLUSION

The Ayurvedic perspective considers the concept of Aging (*Jara*) in relation to the balance of *Shareera* (*Tridoshas*, *Saptadhatus*, *Malas*), *Indriyas*, and *Sattva*. When these elements are in harmony, the body

functions optimally. However, as old age sets in, there is an increase in *Vata*, an imbalance in *Pitta*, and a decrease in *Kapha*, which negatively impact the various components of the body, leading to the onset of aging. Ayurvedic principles provide a comprehensive understanding of the biology of aging and its effects on the body. Aging is an inherent part of life, yet it poses a universal dilemma as no one desires to experience the process of growing old. According to Ayurveda, any state that disrupts the equilibrium of the body's internal balance, whether temporary or persistent, is defined as a disease. Consequently, *Jara* is also regarded as a disease, falling under the classification of *Swabhavik Roga*^[35]. These natural diseases arise from the *Swabhava* and depend on *Kala*. *Acharya Charaka* Also mentioned *Vardhikya* as “*Yapyanam*” in *Agrya dravya*^[36]. Therefore, efficiently managing the phase of aging becomes crucial since it is a period characterized by heightened vulnerability to numerous chronic and degenerative illnesses. While it is impossible to evade the process of aging, it is indeed possible to make modifications to it. Various Lifestyle modifications, i.e., *Din Charya*, *Ratri Charya*, *Ritu Charya*, also *Rasayana* therapy, can help in preventing Untimely Aging.

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Source of Support: Nil

Conflict of Interest: None Declared

How to cite this URL: Tarun Deoli et al: Etymological Study of Shareera, Indriya, and Sattva in Relation to Aging. International Ayurvedic Medical Journal {online} 2023 {cited July 2023} Available from: http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/1652_1657.pdf