

JARACHARYA- AN IDEAL LIFESTYLE FOR OLD AGE

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<https://doi.org/10.46607/iamj10p7012022>

(Published Online: November 2022)

Open Access

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Article Received: 22/11/2022 - Peer Reviewed: 10/12/2022 - Accepted for Publication: 16/12/2022



ABSTRACT

In recent years, demographic trends reveal that due to advanced health care facilities, the old age population is growing worldwide. By 2030, 1 in 6 people worldwide will be aged 60 years or over. Old age is an inevitable phenomenon and the most crucial stage in everyone's life because at this age physical strength deteriorates as well as mental stability lessens. Everyone desires a life of good health and peaceful death. So, a need rises to develop a new plan for old age people. *Jaracharya* is the ideal lifestyle based on *Dincharya* for old age people which definitely improves the quality of life in old age.

Key words: *Jaracharya*, *Dincharya*, Quality of life.

INTRODUCTION

Demographic trends reveal that there is a shift in the distribution of a country's population toward older age. According to WHO by 2030, 1 in 6 people in the world will be aged 60 years or over¹. Old age is an inevitable phenomenon and advancement in age causes a gradual decrease in physical/ mental capacity and increase the risk of disease. These changes are not only associated with retirement, and the death of

friends/ near once but also associated with biological ageing.

In Ayurveda, some activities are mentioned under the heading of *Dincharya* (Daily regimen) for the maintenance of health and prevention of disease. Some activities mentioned under the heading of *Dincharya* (daily regimen) are-

1. *Brahma-muhurta jagarana*

2. Ushapaan
3. Danta dhawan, Jivhanirlekhan and Achaman
4. Anjana
5. Nasya
6. Gandusha/ Kawal
7. Abhyanga
8. Vyayam
9. Snana
10. Sleep
11. Bhojan vidhi
12. Tambula sevan
13. Devata puja
14. Dashvidha Paap karma tyag

If this daily regimen is appropriately followed by old age people, it helps to improve their quality of life in the elderly.

CONCEPT OF JARA

Ayurveda has a remarkable description of *Jara*. It is considered as *Swabhavika Vyadhi* and classified as *Kalaj jara* (Natural ageing) and *akalaja jara* (premature ageing).² *Kalaj jara* is an unavoidable and irreversible process. *Jara* is the decline of *Dhatu* (tissues), *Virya* (virility), *Indriya* (senses), *Bala* (strength), *Utsaha* (enthusiasm), associated with *Palitya* (greying of hair), *Vali* (wrinkled skin), *Kasa*

(Cough), *Shwasa* (Breathlessness), *Vepathu* (tremors).³

STATUS OF DOSHA, DHATU, INDRIYA, AGNI AND SATWA BALA IN OLD AGE

Dosha-During old age depletion of *Kapha* occurs and *Vata* increases spontaneously.⁴

Dhatu- In old age due to increased *vata* gradual decrease or involution of all the *Dhatu* occurs.

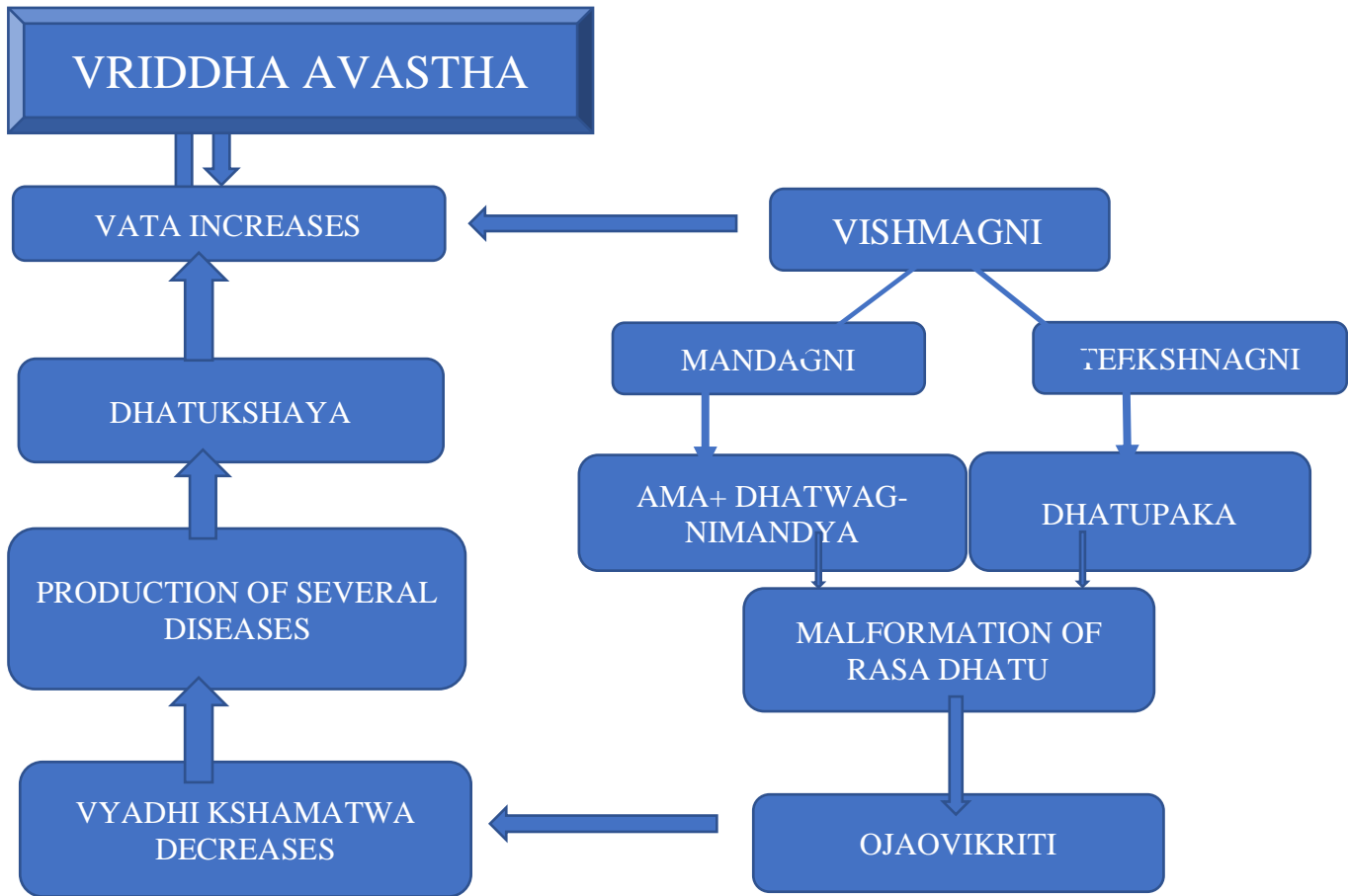
Indriya- As the governing *Vata* and the nourishing *kapha* are deranged in old age, both *Jnanendriya* and *Karmendriya* are affected adversely.

Agni-As the age advances *Vata* increases and *Agni* depleted (*Vishamagni*) which leads to a decrease in vigour and vitality with metabolism.

Satwa- Due to *vikrita Vata* and depletion of sustain *Kapha*, the *Satwa* declines with age leading to a decrease in its normal power of *Grahana*, *Dharana*, *Vachana*, *Smaran*, *Vijnana*, etc. This accounts for the increasing incidence of dementia, and delirium with advancing age.

Bala-*Kapha* and *Ojas* are responsible for strength as well as disease-resistant function. In old age, *kapha* is in *ksheena-avastha* and due to the *kshaya* of *Saptadhatu Ojas* is also *ksheena* thus leading to a decrease in *Vyadhikshamatwa*.

PATHOPHYSIOLOGY OF OLD AGE



JARACHARYA (DAILY REGIMEN FOR OLDAGE)

1. Brahma muhurta jagran (getting up early in the morning)⁵

Try to wake up between 4 am-5 am i.e., 2 hours before sunrise by confirming that dinner is digested properly. This is a very good time for gaining knowledge/ meditation/ *ishwarbhatkti*. At this time environment is clean, the air is fresh and blood circulation to the brain is more, so more oxygen reaches to brain. Cortisol hormone is the maximum at this time, which is responsible for the regulation of metabolism, and the immune system and decreases oxidative stress.

2. Ushapaan (intake of water)⁶ and Malotsarga vidhi⁷

After waking up take warm water or water kept in a copper vessel according to one's capacity. Then

evacuation of urine/ stool must be done when the urge is felt. The urge should not be suppressed otherwise it will cause several problems like *Shirahshoola* (headache) abdominal pain etc. Evacuation should not be done forcefully as it causes piles, rectal prolapsed anal fissures, etc. Everyone knows that all problems beings from the bowels and if the bowel is cleared properly/ timely it detoxifies the body.

3. Danta dhawana (Brushing), Jivha nirlekhan (tongue scrapping)⁸ and Achamana (washing the face)^{9,10}

Brush the teeth properly with the help of *Dantamanjana* or Ayurvedic paste. If possible, use the bark of trees like *Neem, Khadir, Karanja, Madhuk, Malati*, etc. After brushing tongue cleaning should be done with a flexible strip of metal or bark of the tree and wash the face, and eyes with fresh water. Cleaning the teeth and scraping the tongue is useful to get rid

of excessive *Kapha* in the oral cavity, maintain better oral hygiene and keep the teeth and gums strong even in old age. It improves the taste, creates a desire for food, and prevents several oral diseases. *Achamana* cleans the remaining mala present in the eyes, nose, and face which brings freshness.

4. *Anjana* (application of collyrium)^{11,12}

Apply *Anjana* (without chemicals) daily. Regular use of collyrium is pleasing to the eyes and keeps the eye clean/ beautiful with sharp vision. It also prevents or delays degenerative changes that occur in the eyes due to old age.

5. *Nasya* (Instillation of oil drops in the nose)¹³

After *Anjana*, *Pratimarsha nasya* i.e., the instillation of 2 drops of any oil like *anu tail/ tila tail* should be done. *Nasya* is mentioned as “*Indriyanam bala pradam*”. It pacifies the *Vatadosha* and gives unctuousness to the head and neck region. It prevents degenerative disorders of the brain/ sense organ and also prevents *Khalitya* (hairfall), *Palitya* (graying of hair), *Manyastambha* as well as other *Vataj* disorders which are common in old age.

6. *Gandusha/ Kawal* (oil pooling)^{14,15} and *Dhumpana* (medicated smoking)^{16,17}

After *Nasya*, Gargle with hot water, milk, or decoction of *triphala*. Holding liquid medication orally is called *Gandusha*. Then take the medicated Smoking with the nose and expelled from the mouth. *Kawal/ Gandusha* leads to good oral hygiene and lightness in the mouth. It also prevents *Vataj* and *Kaphaj* disorders of the mouth, the crackling of lips, dryness of mouth, *Swarabheda*, etc. *Dhumpana* has benefits like *Hrid shuddhi* and *indriya shuddhi*. It prevents disorders of the head and neck region which are caused by *Vata* and *Kapha* like *Shirogaurava* (heaviness of head), *Shirahshoola* (headache), *Kasa*, *Swasha* (Cough, dyspnoea) *Karna srava* (ear discharge), *Tandra* (drowsiness), etc.

7. *Abhyanga* (Body massage)^{18,19}

Do a massage of 30-45 minutes with *Tila/ Narikel/ Sarshapa* or any other medicated oil every day. During the massage, special attention should be given to *Shiroabhyanga* (massage over the head) *Karnapurana* (put 1-2 drops of oil in the ear), and *Padabhyanga*

(massage of feet)²⁰. While describing the benefits of *Abhyanga*, it was mentioned as '*Sajara-shramavata*. It pacifies *Vata*, nourishes the body tissue, and relieves tiredness. *Shiroabhyanga* is beneficial for hair, nourishes sense organs, and improves sleep. *Padabhyanga* strengthens legs and feet, senses organs, relieves stiffness, cracks, and contraction, and improves vision & sleep. *Karnapurana* will help to strengthen the sense organs and help in the efficient working of the mind and body. *Abhyanga* improves blood circulation and eliminates metabolic waste from the body. Overall, it pacifies *Vata*, strengthens the body, repairs degenerated tissues, nourishes sense organs, and improves sleep.

8. *Vyayam* (exercise)^{21,22,23}

Do any activity which brings up tiredness in the body. According to capacity do any kind of exercise like running, swimming, walking, cycling, gardening, or yoga. Regular exercise improves blood circulation and cleans the *Strotas* of the body. It renders the body light, improves the efficiency of vital organs, and promotes digestion and metabolism. It promotes the overall health and functioning of the whole body as well as the mind.

9. *Snana* (Bathing)^{24,25}

Take bath daily with fresh water or hot water according to the season. The bath should not be taken after food. After the bath, one should wear clean clothes according to the season and use some natural perfumes. Regular shaving, haircut, and nail cut should be done. It cures tiredness, sweat, and impurities of the body and maintains overall hygiene. It enhances virility, longevity, strength, compactness, and *Ojas*.

10. *Sleep*²⁶

After worshipping God take 6-8 hours of sleep in a clean, comfortable bed in a silent place and in a happy atmosphere. The ideal time of sleep is prior to 10 pm. Old-age people may take a small nap in the afternoon. After sleeping body gets to rest and becomes relaxed. Improper sleep upset the entire day's schedule and badly affects wellbeing. Proper sleep is responsible for happiness, nourishment, strength, knowledge, and life. Proper sleep is necessary for maintaining the equilibrium of both body and mind.

11. Bhojan vidhi²⁷

Food should be taken after digestion of the previous meal and when hunger is felt by healthy people. 2 times a meal is enough. Lunch should be taken between about 10 am to 12 noon and dinner should be taken prior to 7 pm in the evening. The evening meal should be light and in small quantity. Meanwhile, a light diet should be taken if feels hungry. Add some spices to the regular diet. Always modify the diet according to the season. In addition to a regular diet take some fruits and dry fruits. Take milk and ghee regularly and add some dietary articles which had Rasayana properties like Amla etc.

12. Tambula sevan (Betel chewing)²⁸

After the meal chew betel leaves with small pieces of Puga (areca nut) and some mouth freshener substances like Lavang (clove) and Ela (cardamom). It refreshes the mouth and enhances digestion. Tobacco, tobacco preparations, and alcohol should be strictly avoided.

13. Devata puja²⁹

A person should remain calm and composed, be charitable, perform religious rites and sacrifices; be merciful, command politely, possess good character and worship those who are to be worshiped, offer respect to a person such as the wealthy, the relatives and those possessing high moral character; more so in the succeeding order.

14. Dashvidha Paap karma tyag³⁰

Hinsa (torture), Steya (stealing), Anyathakam (unlawful sex activity), Paishunya (abusive speech), Parush (harsh speaking), Anrut vachana (scolding, speaking untruth), Sambhinna pralapa (speech causing dissension, separation), Vyapad (hurting others), Abhidya (jealousy, not tolerating good of others) and Drigviparyay (finding fault, misunderstanding, faithlessness), etc. these Dashvidha Paap karmas pertaining to the body, speech and mind should be avoided.

DISCUSSION

Old age is a crucial stage in everyone's life as at this age physical strength deteriorates as well as mental stability lessens. Old age people desire a life with good quality of health.

In old age the main aim is-

1. To counteract the vitiation of *Vata*.
2. Inhibit tissue depletion (*Dhatu Kshaya*) and maintain the qualities of tissues (nourishment).
3. Improve the strength (*Balavridhi*).
4. Promote digestion and metabolism.
5. Enhance mental health (*Jatharagni* and *Dhatwagni*)

In Ayurvedic classics Dincharya- daily regimen is described elaborately. Dincharya is basically related to the equilibrium of the human body with the environment & basically balances the doshas which ultimately results in good health. Jaracharya proposed in this paper is mainly based on the principles of Dincharya. The *charyas* like *Abhyanga* and *Nasya* pacify the *Vata*, nourishes the tissues (Rasa level), and enhance strength. *Danta dhawan*, *Jivha nirlekhan*, *Snana*, *Dhoompana*, and *Vyayam* cleans the body and improves digestion and metabolism. *Bramha muhurta jagran*, *Devta poojan*, proper sleep enhances mental health in old age. Specific *charyas* like *Anjana*, *Nasya*, *Karnapoorana*, *Abyanga*, *Kawal/ Gandusha* & *Dhantadhawana / Jihvanirlekhana* mainly improve the health of *indriyas*.

CONCLUSION

In *Ayurveda*, *Acharyas* has not given the specific *charya* (Daily Regimen) for old age, but the lifestyle mentioned under the heading of *Dincharya* can be adopted with some modifications for the maintenance of the health of old age people. *Jaryacharya* based on *Dincharya* is the ideal lifestyle care model for old age people which improves the quality of life in old age.

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Source of Support: Nil

Conflict of Interest: None Declared

How to cite this URL:Trupti Jain et al: Jaracharya- An Ideal Lifestyle for Old Age. International Ayurvedic Medical Journal {online} 2022 {cited November 2022} Available from:

http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/61_66.pdf