

A REVIEW ARTICLE ON ROLE OF AYURVEDA IN GERIATRIC HEALTH CARE W.S.R TO KAYACHIKITSA

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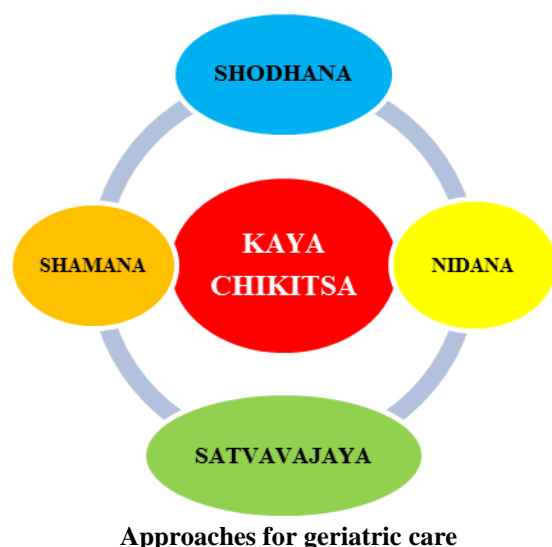
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ABSTRACT

Kayachikitsa is branch of Ayurveda that considers various aspects such as Nidana, Shamana, Shodhana and Satvavajaya for the management of diseases and overall health restoration. The approaches of Kayachikitsa such as; medications, counselling and use of detoxification measure, etc. helps to manage good health. Ayurveda imparts longevity thus offers great response in geriatric care. Kayachikitsa involves use of various internal medicines for the management of ageing or geriatric care. Ayurveda Kayachikitsa mentioned different practices towards the Agni, Oja and Dhatu thereby balances Doshas at biological level. These all approaches not only help to cure symptoms of early ageing but also overall immunity thus prevent from acute infections. The use of natural rugs along with general principles of Ayurveda offers health benefits in case of ageing or geriatric health issue. Considering the point here we summarize an Ayurveda aspect towards geriatric care w.s.r to Kayachikitsa.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Kayachikitsa, Geriatrics, Geriatric care, Rasayana etc.



Approaches for geriatric care

mentioned different approaches for geriatric care including use of internal medicine.

Geriatric care has to address two-fold problems, firstly the basic anti-aging care to retard the rate of physiological ageing and secondly the medical management of diseases specifically occurring in old age such as hypertension, ischaemic heart disease, diabetes, senile dementia, Alzheimer's disease, parkinsonism, osteoporosis, prostatic enlargement, degenerative eye diseases which cause major morbidity in old age. Ayurveda, the Indian traditional holistic health science has got the potential for prevention of diseases by promotion of health and management of diseases occurring in old age. Ayurveda gives top priority to geriatrics. It has a focused branch called Rasayana (Rejuvenation) which deals primarily with geriatric problems.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is one of the oldest system that comprises different branches for specific health purpose, Kayachikitsa is one of them. The Kayachikitsa involves general principles and approaches related to the treatment procedure and use of internal medicine. The treatment of body (Kaya) by virtue of Ayurveda medication and principle is general aim of branch Kayachikitsa. The ageing or problems related to old age also need to be care and in this regards Ayurveda

WHAT IS AGEING

Ageing is essentially a physiological phenomenon which results because of overwhelming of inherent evolutionary processes by the involutionary changes occurring in the mind-body system. Such changes begin right in the beginning of life and get more and more overt with advancing chronological age. The progressing involution ultimately precipitates into extreme senescence and finally death. Thus life-span is a timebound entity and everybody is mortal. The main

issue in geriatric care is not merely the concern about the physiological phenomenon which is inevitable, rather it is more the medical health problems and diseases specifically afflicting an individual in old age warranting medical management in order to sustain a comfortable and healthy ageing.

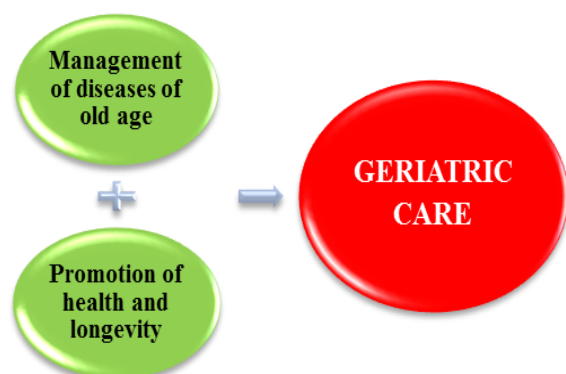
NEED OF THE STUDY

Living longer has been a goal of mankind since antiquity and ancient scholars working in the area of health have concentrated on the measures for promotion of longevity. The cause of morbidity and mortality world over is shifting from communicable diseases a few decades ago to non-communicable diseases. The leading causes of mortality among aged people comprise respiratory problems, heart diseases, cancer and stroke. Significant causes of morbidity among this group are chronic inflammatory and degenerative conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, osteoporosis, depression, psychiatric disorders, Parkinson's disease and age related urinary problems. To provide an adaptable and comfortable medical management to retard the process as well as to provide a healthy aging with the help of evidence based Researches has become the need of the hour.

DIMENSIONS OF GERIATRIC CARE

Geriatric Care has two distinct dimensions

1. Management of diseases of old age.
2. Promotion of health and longevity



The conventional modern medicine is strong for the second dimension, although the final outcome may not be significant because most of the diseases of old age are incurable. Ayurveda is notably strong in terms of the first dimension of the problem as it has rich potential to promote health of the elderly, besides the scope of rejuvenation and promotion of longevity. As stated earlier Ayurveda is essentially the Science of life and longevity. The foremost classic of Ayurveda, the Charaka Samhita begins its deliberations in its very first chapter with Deerghanjivitiya Adhyaya.

Ayurveda considers ageing as the Swabhava of life. In other words senescence is the Swabhava or inherent nature of the living being, because the life is time-bound and it is inherently mortal. Ayurveda believes that ageing occurs only in the body and mind, not in the real essence

of the life, i.e. its conscious component which is eternal and it only changes the body which is created by the Nature for one life-span and ends there after through aging and death. Ayurveda considers Ageing as the Jaivika Swabhawa i.e. biological nature of the living being and believes in the natural cycle of birth-senescence-death-rebirth as the very destiny of life.

SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL ISSUES IN THE ELDERLY

A. SOCIAL ISSUES

Various issues influence the status of health in elderly and also physician's ability to deliver timely and optimum health care services. Marital status, financial status, work history, education, responsibilities, living atmosphere and arrangements are the prime issues to be considered while addressing the issues of elderly. Elderly patients living with their family members may face fewer problems when compared to others who are living alone. Because physical, economical and social health care services are provided by the family members.

- Loneliness from losing a spouse and friends.
- Inability to independently manage regular activities of living.
- Difficulty coping and accepting physical changes of ageing.
- Frustration with ongoing medical problems and increasing number of medications
- Social isolation as adult children is engaged in their own lives.
- Feeling inadequate from inability to continue to work.
- Boredom from retirement and lack of routine activities.
- Financial stresses from the loss of regular income.

These changes may cause multiple problems with regard to physical, social, mental wellbeing. In addition, physical abuse, psychological abuse, neglect, financial abuse etc. are common on elderly patients, which further add to the agony.

B. SPIRITUAL ISSUES

In the elderly patients, religion and spirituality plays an important role. Belief on god, hopeful and positive attitude about the life and illness influence the health. Active involvement in religious activities helps the patient in active life style and socialising, which in-turn minimize the problems arising from isolation and chronic diseases. Religious and spiritual persons tend to recover from diseases more quickly. Elderly persons attending religious activities remain motivated to stop addictions like smoking, alcohol, which help in better health and social status. The common spiritual interventions are praying, reading religious books, visiting auspicious places, attending religious rituals, meditation, etc. This will increase the socialization, reduce isolation and promote the feeling of belongingness.

ETIOLOGICAL FACTORS OF AGEING

A. Related To Dietary Habits - Lavana (salt), Amla (sour), Katu (spicy) rasa pradhana, Kshara (alkali), Suska shaka & Mamsa (dry vegetable & Meat), Tila Samyoga, Pista Anna, Viruddha Anna (Incompatible Diet), Asatmya Anna (Unfavorable Diet), Ruksha Anna (Dry Cereal), Abhisyandi Anna, Klinna & Guru Anna (Heavy Diet), Puti & Paryushita Anna (Polluted & Out dated Diet), Vishamashana (Improper Eating Habits), Adhyashana (Over Eating).

B. Related To Life Style - Atimarga Gamana (Excessive Walk), Diwa Swapna (Day Sleeping), Nitya Stri Sevana (Excessive Intercourse), Nitya Madya Sevana (Excessive Intake of Alcohol), Vishama Vyayama Sevan (Improper Exercise).

C. Related To Disturbed Mental Health - Bhaya (Fear), Krodha (Anger), Shok (Sorrow), Lobha (Greed), Moha (Affection), Ruksha Vani (Harsh words), Kalah Priya Bharya (Quarrelsome Wife), Kuputra/ Kuputri (Maladroit child).

GERIATRICS NUTRITION

Elderly people have different nutritional requirements compared to the normal adult population. With increasing age, people become more vulnerable to malnutrition for many reasons including Arocaka (anorexia) due to ageing, medication, disease like Smriti Nasha (dementia), Manoavasada (depression), stroke, Kampavata (Parkinson disease) and other neurological disorders, poor dentition, delayed gastric emptying, ill fitting dentures, swallowing problems, oral infections, taste changes and diminished smell sensation. Older individuals tend to respond to thirst much less than the younger ones, predisposing to dehydration particularly in case of fever and diarrhoea. Therefore fluid intake is necessary to replace physiological losses, better digestion and intestinal function and for renal clearance. There is no change in absorption of fats and carbohydrates, whereas vitamin D and calcium absorption is impaired, which leads to their deficiency. Calcium intake along with vitamin D is necessary to prevent bone mineral loss in elderly. Diet containing dairy products, fish, legumes, nuts, eggs, etc. are full of vitamin D and calcium.

AYURVEDIC MANAGEMENT OF DISEASES OF OLD AGE

Besides the rejuvenative approaches Ayurveda has notable potential to afford significant complementary therapeutic care in a range of diseases of the elderly and the same needs to be known to the practicing physicians of all streams. Arjuna, Guggulu and Puskarmula as cardioprotectives in cases of Ischaemic heart disease, Brahmi and similar other Medhya drugs in treatment of senile dementias, Varuna and Sigru in treatment of senile enlargement of Prostate, Triphala in senile visual disorders, Kapikacchu in treatment of Parkinsons disease, Amrita and Amalaki in immunodeficiency, Sirodhara and Sirobasti in tension headaches and

different kinds of neurodegenerative conditions are some of the potential areas where Ayurvedic treatment has promise. Similarly the Pindasweda procedure of Keraliya Panchkarma therapy is known for its rehabilitative effect in many neurodegenerative conditions and myopathies.

A SUGGESTED PACKAGE OF GERIATRIC CARE

The Ayurveda-based package of geriatric care may consist of:

1. Recording of the Prakrti, Vaya, Agni & Ojas status, Vyadhi and overall health status to help in planning the geriatric care.
2. Swasthavrtta & Sadvrtta i.e. codes of personal and social hygiene.
3. Dietary care avoiding too much of fat and heavy proteins preferring easily digestible nourishing sattvika diet.
4. Regular exercise according to Vyayama-Shakti.
5. Regulated rest and relaxation
6. Yoga and meditation
7. Geriatric Panch karma Therapy.
8. Rasayana therapy
9. Medical management of associated age - related diseases if any.
10. Supportive therapy and socio-economic support and care of social and spiritual health.

CONCLUSION

The complete management of health comes under approaches of Kayachikitsa that mainly involves diagnosis and treatment of health ailments using medicine and other modalities. Aging and the increasing number of elders in the population is a matter of great significance because of its likely impact on public health and socioeconomic growth of a nation. Ayurveda, being fundamentally the science of life and longevity, seems to have addressed these issues in a unique holistic manner involving not merely the biological care, rather also encompassing the psychosocial and spiritual dimensions. There are strong possibilities to develop a safe and cost-effective package for geriatric care on the basis of Ayurvedic life-style management, Rasayana therapy and practice of yoga. These therapies help to maintain balance of Vata, Pitta and Kapha, potentiate Dhātu, enhance nourishment, regularize circulatory process and detoxify body thus prevent disease prevalence and also combat against adverse effect of degenerative ageing.

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