

AYURVEDA- A RAY OF HOPE IN GERIARTICS CARE

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Article Received on 20/04/2022

Article Revised on 10/05/2022

Article Accepted on 30/05/2022

ABSTRACT

Introduction: The world population of the elderly is growing significantly and by the year 2050, adults older than 65 years will comprise 1/5th of the global population. Changes with age are irreversible, universal, intrinsic, progressive and deleterious. The elderly most frequently suffered from cardiovascular disease, dementia, cancers etc. **Material and method:** This is a reviewed article based on ayurvedic texts that is used in this study as well Samhita Granth. **Result:** Branch of Ayurveda and its prophylaxis therapies are helpful in preventing ill effects of ageing and aid longevity, improved harmony and intelligence, disease free youthful vigor with optimum strength of physique. **Discussion and conclusion:** Rasayana are primarily of promotive value and are essentially meant to rejuvenate the body and mind to impart longevity against ageing and immunity against disease. Rasayana Dravyas are rich in antioxidants which removes free radical from body. Free radicals in body produces progressive damage to body tissue and play important role in developing many disease like cardiovascular disease, neurogenerative disorders etc. Rasayana revitalizes and rejuvenates functional dynamics of body systems.it promotes good quality body tissues. Hence as an antioxidant activity, the Rasayana karma must be taken into account.

KEYWORDS: Ageing, Geriatrics problems, lifestyle, Rasayana.

INTRODUCTION

Ageing is a complex multifactorial and inevitable process, which begins before birth and continues throughout the entire life span. It is essentially a physiological phenomenon which results because of the involuntary changes occurring in the mind-body system. Twenty-first century is witnessing a gradual decline in fertility, and with increase in life expectancy, the society will need to grapple with issues of longevity. The World population of the elderly is increasing and by the year 2050, adults older than 65 years will comprise 1/5th of the global population. In India 3.8% of the population are older than 65 years of age. With the rise in elderly population world over including India, it is now felt necessary to develop newer strategies for Geriatric health care. Geriatric care has to address two-fold problems, firstly the basic anti-ageing care to retard the rate of physiological ageing and secondly the medical management of diseases specifically occurring in old age. The conventional modern medicine is apparently strong in terms of the second aspect, although the final outcome may not be as significant. Ayurveda, on the other hand has got the potential for prevention of diseases by promotion of health and management of diseases occurring in old age. It has a focused branch

called Rasayana which deals with the problems related to ageing and methods to counter the same. It's unique therapeutic methodology delays ageing and minimizes the intensity of problems occurring in this degenerative phase of life by restoring physiological processes that influence metabolic and immunological status. Such interventions are significant in the context of geriatric care.

Physiological Changes of Ageing Described in Ayurveda Acharya Sushruta gives an elaborate and systemic classification of age, where he described old age as above 70 years. Achaya Charaka on the other hand mentioned old age above 60 years. As per fundamental principles of Tridosha, Vata is the predominant dosha during old age. It precipitates atrophy and involution of tissues and is responsible for most of the manifestation of ageing. With the advancing age, the depleted agni leads to decrease in the vigor and vitality with decay and atrophy due to defective metabolism. During this period, there is gradual decline of all the dhatu, virya, indriya, ojas, bala and utsaha along with loss of hair, wrinkling of skin, chronic and recurrent cough, shortness of breath, inability to perform routine activities etc.^[7] Ayurveda considers ageing as the Swabhavaja vyadhi i.e. it is inherent nature of the living being to get old.^[8]

Sarangadhara Samhita presents an interesting scheme of loss of different biological factors during different decades of life as a function of ageing (see table below).^[9] This is especially significant because it can provide a guideline for selection of age-specific organ-protective Rasayana to retard aging.

Problems in Vrudhāvastha

Advancement of age usually creates numerous problems in the individual. Geriatric problems may be mainly divided into four categories: physical, psychological, emotional, and social.

Physical problems

The following are some very common physical disorders of the old age:

- Cardiovascular - hypertension, MI, CCF
- Respiratory - asthma and bronchitis
- Musculoskeletal - osteoporosis, spasm, drooping shoulder
- Gastro-intestinal - dyspepsia and flatulence
- Genito-urinary - nocturia, prostate enlargement
- Locomotor system - osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, gout
- Endocrinological - diabetes is one of the major endocrinological problems found in old age.
- Ophthalmic - senile cataract and glaucoma are very common in old people
- Hearing - loss of hearing and hard hearing are the major hearing problems of old age
- Nervous - insomnia is commonly found old age problems
- Problems of hair - hair loss and baldness
- Cancer - Cancer incidence and severity increases with age
- Menopausal - in addition to all these, ladies experience menopausal health disorders
- Psychological – dementia is commonly noticed in old age peoples. Disregard or negligence from family lead them into depression and others psychological disorders.

Prevention Of Old Age Disorders With The Help Of Ayurveda

It's not the aging but the consequences of ageing which make panic the peoples in old age. By acquiring some basic principles of Ayurveda we can attain a healthy aging. Broadly all types of conduct in Ayurveda are described as Aahara (Diet), Vihaara (activities). These are wholesome set of rules which can retard premature ageing as well as troubles associated with it. Maintenance of healthy life by proper and acceptable actions in physical and mental level is Swasthavritta. By adaptation of Swasthavritta, one can achieve a healthy life. Elaborate description of Swasthavritta is available in Ayurveda. These can be- →

- Follow the proper dincharya⁷ (daily activities) as per Ayurveda e.g. Anjana, Abhyanga
- Follow the proper Ritucharya⁸ (seasonal regimen)

- Never suppress the natural urges(which are described 13 in number)⁹
- Follow the proper diet rule as per day and season which is very well accent on elderly peoples health.
- As elderly people has different nutritional requirement as compare to younger ones. Old age peoples are more vulnerable to malnutrition as anorexia, dementia, and poor dentition; delayed gastric emptying and many other disorders may develop with ageing Dehydration is also very common. Hence these should be supplemented in a proper manner prior to development of any disease.
- Code of conduct should be followed in order to maintain mental wellbeing along with physical health. Stress is an inherent part of most people's lives These can be overcome by following proper ethical code of conduct in life.

Concept of Rasayana (Rejuvenation)

Rasayana has broad meaning indicating qualitative and quantitative improvement of dhatu (tissues). Vayasthapana are specialized Rasayana drugs that reverse degenerative changes, increase life span with quality health.^[13] The main utility of Rasayana therapy is in functional and degenerative disorders that have a chronic or long-standing nature. In such cases, in fact, Rasayana is the only solution from the point of view of effective management in any system of medicine. Rasayana becomes more fruitful and effective, if it is preceded with suitable Panchakarma (purificatory therapy). The reason we see mixed results in many cases where Rasayana is employed is because of the fact that, either this purification is not done or improperly done. Some evidence-based research –

- *Butea monosperma* root distillate in the management of age-related immature cataract: The root distillate drops of *Butea monosperma* developed as per I.P Standards has shown significant improvement in visual acuity and quality of vision (disturbance in vision viz haziness and diplopia) in the subjects of age-related immature cataract (n=52).^[14]
- Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*) as immunomodulatory agent: Clinical studies of Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*) have shown significant efficacy in the cases of obstructive jaundice.^[15]
- Sallaki (*Boswellia serrata*) in Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA): Sallaki 600 mg trice daily and 50 mg of diclofenac sodium 3 times in a day were given in treated and control groups respectively for 4 weeks. The efficacy of sallaki was found to be comparable to that of diclofenac sodium in the patients of Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA), who demonstrated predisposition for gastric intolerance with anti-inflammatory medication.^[16]
- Guggulu (*Commiphora wightii*) in hyperlipidemia: Cardinal clinical manifestations of disease like precordial pain and dyspnoea were relieved in most

of the cases in a clinical study tried with guggulu in the dose of 8 gm/day. Substantial fall in lipid fractions like cholesterol 27%, triglycerides 36%, phospholipids 20% and free fatty acids 37% indicated the possibility of regression of atherosclerosis. The reversal of ECG changes substantiated the anti-ischaemic effect of the drug in the treatment of ischemic heart diseases.^[17]

- Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) on the process of aging: Root powder of Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) was administered in the dosage of two tablets three times daily with milk for one year showed statistically significant increase in haemoglobin, RBC count, hair melanin and seated stature and decrease in serum cholesterol and ESR.^[18]
- Management of hemiplegia by panchakarma: Comparative study of 744 hemiplegics revealed that 552 subjects who received Panchakarma therapy showed significant recovery from illness, with improvement in motor functions and quality of life in comparison to subjects who received Shamana therapy (palliative therapy) alone.^[19]
- Multi-faceted protective role of Chyawanprasa: Chyawanprasa showed significant immunomodulatory activity (decrease in Ig G, C3 and C4 levels in patients of recurrent cough and cold), cytoprotective action (cancer patients receiving radiation therapy showed a protective role against radiation induced tissue damage) and Genoprotective action (significant reduction in Mitotic Index (MI) and Chromosomal Aberrations (CA)).^[20]
- Anti-anxiety effect Mandukaparni (*Centella asiatica*), Yastimadhu (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) and Jatamansi (*Nordostachys jatamansi*): A double blind sequential cross over clinical trial with an Ayurvedic compound containing Mandukaparni (*Centella asiatica*), Yastimadhu (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) and Jatamansi (*Nordostachys jatamansi*) as trial drug, diazepam as control and placebo was carried out on 12 patients of anxiety neurosis. The compound formulation is more effective in enhancing the perceptual discrimination and psychomotor performance over placebo and control drug.^[21]
- Other compound formulations that are available in the market with a multipronged action are being listed below: Brahmi Rasayana, Ashwagandha Lehyam, Maha Triphala Ghrita, Triphala Churna, Ashwagandha Churna, Narasimha Rasayana, Agastya Rasayana, Amalaki Rasayana

CONCLUSION

To live a long and healthy life is every individual's wish. Due to changing lifestyle and thus not able to follow the rules of dietetics human beings have led to an emergence of varied problems for the elderly in India. It is obvious that the process of ageing was elaborately described in ayurvedic texts and a separate medical discipline called

Rasayana tantra was developed which described a variety of methods and measures to promote healthy longevity. Undoubtedly, it is the strength of ayurveda in the context of geriatric care Rasayana is a therapy which bestows excellent rasa which ultimately results in promotion of longevity, alleviation of old age and diseases so as to enjoy the full span of life. Government of India has also launched a national campaign to popularize the strength of Ayurveda and Yoga in geriatric health care. It is the demand of the hour to develop an effective holistic protocol for geriatric care by combining Rasayana, Panchkarma, Dietetics, Ayurvedic medicines and lifestyle and Yoga.

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