

Rasayana in Geriatrics : A Review

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Abstract

Ayurveda is basically the science of life and longevity. Geriatrics is the branch of medicine concerned with the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease in older people. Jara Chikitsa is one among the Ashtanga of Ayurveda which is specifically dedicated for geriatric care. In human body Dhatus get degenerated as the age advances due to prolonged structural and functional changes. During the old age we cannot enhance the capacity of Dhatus, but they can be protected and rejuvenated. According to Ayurveda the drugs used for promoting and preserving health, strength and longevity in a healthy person are called Rasayana. They increase Bala and Ojas in healthy persons or recognized as an Ojaskara. The Rasayana maintain the entirety of Saptadhatu and optimum strength of body and promote memory, preserve youth age. These effects of Rasayana can be proved by their antioxidant and apoptogenic properties. Rasayanas act as immuno stimulants, anabolic and geriatric remedies

Keywords: Rasayana – Solution for premature aging, Jara – Ageing, Geriatric.

Introduction:

The term geriatrics is derived from Greek word, Geri-old age and iatrics-care. Ageing is defined as a result of natural changes of the body that progressively leads to the death of individuals. It is also defined as the intrinsic, and irreversible age-related loss of viability^{1,2} In *Ayurveda* our body is presented as a living subject where the wear & tear phenomenon is continuous. Ageing is not a pathological condition but a physiological action like hunger, thirst and sleep. *Swabhavoparamavada* (*Swabhava* = natural and *Upama* = destruction) which means natural destructions. The concept described by *Acharya Charaka* is that there is a cause for the equilibrium and non-equilibrium state of *Rasadi Dhatu* but there is no cause for their destruction, since death following birth is a state of natural flow³. *Rasayana* therapy is a unique therapy used to delay ageing process and to reduce the strength of diseases, which occurring this older phase of life. *Rasayana* is a special therapy in present scenario to prevent premature ageing and to treat the manifestations occurred due to ageing process; it also ensures healthy life span including

mental health and better resistance against various geriatric disease.

Objective:

- To understand the concept of ageing.
- To understand and elaborate preventive measure of *rasayana* therapy in geriatrics.

Materials And Methods:

The literatures reviewed in this article are taken from the modern medical science journals and classical text books & samhita's of *Ayurveda*. Published information from several articles, of which few review articles and cross-references were collected. All publications containing original data and an adequate detailed description of methodology were considered in the present review.

Phenomenon Of Ageing⁴ :

Ageing is basically a physiological process which results because of time bound inherent evolutionary processes by the evolutionary changes occurring in the mind-body system. Such changes start right from the beginning of life and get worsen and worsen with progress of chronological age. The main point in the management of manifestations in

elderly phase of life is not merely the concern about the natural process which is not preventable; rather it is more the health issues and problems mainly affecting elderly phase of lifewarning medical interventio to enhance a blissful ageing. Thus the medical management in elderly phase of life is facing mainly two type of problems, firstly the delaying of natural ageing process and secondly the therapeutic cure of disease conditions and disorders specifically manifest in old age such as hypertension, ischemic heart disease, diabetes, senile dementia, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson disease, degenerative osteoarthritis, osteoporosis, opportunistic infections, prostatic enlargement, degenerative eye diseases like cataract, a range of angiopathies, neuro-degenerative diseases and senile psychoses which results mass morbidity in elderly phase of life.

Ayurveda And Science of Ageing

1. Kala Parinama:

Kala Parinama refers to the physical and mental transformation that occurs as a function of time and as we age ⁵. Time affects all individuals from beginning of life till the end, and this period of time is called Ayush (life span). Ayurveda divides Ayush into various stages of life, Bala-16 years, Vivardhamana-16-20 years, Youvana-20-30 years, Sampoonata-30-40 years, Parihani-40-60 years and older adults Vriddhavastha ⁶.

2. Prakriti:

Prakruti is concern to the nature of body constitution (Vatadi dosas and satva, raj, tam) of a subject. Thus, nature interfere a subject's strength for changes at the level of kaayik, vaachik and maansik owing to the responses with internal and external stimuli that affects the ageing process ⁵.

3. Doshas:

Vatadi Doshas affects the life span at the molecular level. Vata, Pitta and Kapha Doshas are Prana, Ojas and tejas that are essential for blissful life span ⁷.

4. Ahara:

It is one of the most important factors that affects ageing. A poordietary practice like improper timing, bad habits of food mixing of inappropriate food materials with inappropriate

lifestyle disturb equilibrium state of Vatadi Doshas leading to disease conditions and finally death ⁸.

5. Achara:

Ayurveda has contributed a great concept of Achara Rasayana (Ayurvedic lifestyle modification). It is a behavioral therapy for calm mind and long life. It is a unique Ayurvedic concept of mind rejuvenation. It controls and maintains the circadian rhythm of the body clock that results in good health, vitality and immunity, all of these slow the physiological ageing process ⁹.

6. Agni:

Jatharagni is among the chief agni among all agni present in the body. Jatharagni serves as the main digestive element and is the main contributor for all anabolic and catabolic process in the body. If Jatharagni is not strong, the digestion of food stuff is improper that results in impaired absorption and formation of Ama Dosh. If Jatharagni is powerful then it destroys all the related tissues and resulting in degeneration of tissue. Thus, the state of Jatharagni influences the ageing process ¹⁰.

Rasayana Therapy:

The word Rasayana derived from root "Rasa" and "Aayana". Rasa has several meaning such as Rasa Dhatu, Aahara Rasa, Shadrasa etc. But in this context, it can be taken as Rasa Dhatu itself and word Aayana means 'to move' so it means Rasayana is a dynamic process which nourishes the body from properly formed Dhatus and increases the vital process and prevents the degenerative process.

Classification Of Rasayana:

- (I) As per method of use ¹¹
 - a) Kuti Praveshika (indoor use)
 - b) Vatatapika (outdoor use)
- (II) As per Scope of use ¹²
 - a) Kamyas Rasayana (promotor of normal health)
 - i. Prana Kamyas (promotes longevity)
 - ii. Medha Kamyas (improves mental faculties)
 - iii. Shri Kamyas (improves lustre of body)
 - b) Naimittika Rasayana
 - c) Ajasrika Rasayana
- III. According to Modalities ¹³

1. Achara Rasayana (Behavioural modalities).
 2. Ahara Rasayana (Dietary modalities).
 3. Dravya Rasayana (Drug based modalities).
- IV. According to Dravya¹³
1. Dravyabhuta Rasayana.
 2. Adravyabhutas Rasayana.

Benefits of Rasayan Chikitsa¹⁴ :

From promotive treatment, one attains longevity, memory, intelligence, freedom from disorders, youthful age, excellence of lustre, complexion and voice, optimum strength of physique and sense organs, successful words, respectability and brilliance. Rasayana (promotive treatment) means the way for attaining excellent rasa (dhatus). The person using Rasayana in early ages lived for thousands of years unaffected by old ages, debility, illness. and death.¹⁵

Mode of Action:

As per our classics Rasayana therapy works on Agni which inturn leads to proper formation of Rasadi Dhatus, Hence responsible for creation of Ojas it is considered as prime essence of these Rasadi Dhatus¹⁶. It is responsible for proper working of immune system of body in terms of Vyadhi Kshamatva, Hence Rasayana plays a crucial role in prevention of aging and old age-related disorders. It also enhances bodily and mental strength. Different classics of Ayurveda have defined Rasayana in different words but in same central theme.

We can say that probable mode of action of Rasayana therapy are as per follows,

1. Antioxidant action – Amalaki.
2. Immunomodulatory action – Guduchi.
3. Haematopoietic effect – Amalaki, Bhringaraja, Mandura, Lauha Bhasma.
4. Adaptogenic action- Ashwagandha.
5. Antiaging action – Ashwagandha, Bala.
6. Anabolic action –Vidarikanda.
7. Nutritive function –Gritha, Ksheera.
8. Neuroprotective action – Ashwagandha, Swarna Bhasma, Rajata Bhasma.

Discussion:

Ayurveda contributes most important role in geriatric care, as it is one among the branch of Astanga of Ayurveda. Rasayan chikitsa is one of the

effective tool in Jara Chikitsa to prevent the geriatric diseases. As mentioned earlier the qualities of Rasayana therapy are one which nourishes the sapta dhatu to enhances the longevity & also it enhances Smiriti, Medha, which maintains good physical & mental health helps to prevent early aging

Conclusion:

As the prime aim of Ayurveda is Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshnam. Thus, Rasayana therapy is a unique therapeutic science to delay ageing process and to reduce the intensity of problems occurring this elderly phase of life. From the above discussion we can conclude that, To be healthy in old age according to Ayurveda one should use of Rasayana in all decade of life.

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