

GEREATRIC CARE IN AYURVED**Brijesh Singh^{1*} and Sadhana Singh²**

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INTRODUCTION

Ageing is a process of physical, psychological and social change in multi dimensional aspects. 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. According to an estimate the likely number of elderly people in India by 2026 will be around 173 million. 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.

- Cataract & Visual impairment- 88%
- Arthritis & locomotion disorder-40%
- CVD & HT – 18%
- Neurological problems- 18%
- Respiratory problems including Chronic bronchitis- 16%
- GIT problems- 9%
- Psychiatric problems- 9%
- Loss of Hearing – 8%

Ayurvedic understanding of geriatrics

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. It has a focused branch called Rasayana (Rejuvenation) which deals with the problems related to ageing and methods to counter the same. Geriatrics or Rasayana in Ayurveda is a unique therapeutic methodology to delay ageing and to minimize the intensity of problems occurring this degenerative phase of one's life.^[1]

Contemporary application of ayurvedic geriatrics

Ayurvedic treatment as such is very individualistic and general; sometimes physician may need to prescribe different formulations for patients having the same disease, considering their Prakriti (constitution), Satmya (habit / allergies), Bala (strength), etc. It is difficult to bring out generalised management plans for a particular disease condition and implement the same in a large scale geriatrics population. There is a need to come up with protocols to the strength of Ayurveda in the context of Geriatric care is Rasayana therapy. Rasayana stands as an answer in preventing premature ageing and to solve the problems due to ageing; it also ensures healthful longevity including mental health and resistance against various geriatric disease conditions. The observance of dietetics, rules of hygiene are essential for the success of treatment prescribed for healthy longevity of life and rejuvenation. There are specific Rasayana for different age groups, which help in restoring the loss of specific bio-values of respective ages.

Risk of geriatrics

- Prone for infections
- Prone for injuries
- Need special assistance
- Prone for psychological problems
- Prone for degenerative disorders
- Increased risk for disease
- Increased risk of disability
- Increased risk of death

Geriatric people problems^[2]

Health problems

1. Joint Problems

2. Impairment of Special Senses
3. Cardio Vascular Disease
4. Hypothermia
5. Cancer, Prostate Enlargement, Diabetes&

Accidental Falls

Psychological Problems

1. Emotional Problems
2. Suicidal Tendency
3. Senile Dementia, Alzheimer 'disease
4. Social Problems
5. Poverty, Loneliness, Dependency, Isolation, Elder Abuse, Generation Gap

Rasayana Chikitsa (rejuvenation) is a unique branch of Ayurveda. The word “*Rasayana*” means the way for attaining excellent *Rasadi Dhatus*. The improved nutritional status and the better qualities of *Dhatus* lead to a series of secondary attributes of *Rasayana*, which bestow longevity, impart strength, *Ojabala*, etc.

All the therapies in Ayurveda aim to provide complete health – physical, mental and spiritual. *Rasayana* therapy ensures the same, by promoting health, immunity and in turn longevity. Though there are so many rejuvenation therapies, *Achara Rasayana* is mainly advocated for psychosomatic disorders. This type does not require internal administration of rejuvenating formulas. ‘*Achara*’ literally means “discipline”. Following the rules related to eating, sleeping and celibacy create rejuvenation in a person. In addition, following a *Sattvika* diet and life style, speaking the truth, practising non-violence, living in harmony with the nature, following social ethics and conducts are all included under this category of *Rasayana*. Proper implementation of these principles results in qualitative promotion of the *Dhatus* and increases the quantity and quality of *Ojas*, the vital factor concerned with health and immunity. Hence, a person can get the same benefits as attained by internal administration of *Rasayana*.

Cells and tissues undergo changes by aging in differing degrees; depending on their regenerative potential and sensitivity to outside stimuli. Aging is a process that involves all organs and tissues of the human organism. Approach to heal a disease and rationalize aging process through *Rasayana Chikitsa* is one of the unique principles of Ayurvedic system.

Ayurveda observes that Vata Dosha remains dominant naturally in old age, which leads to dominance in different pathology. Nanatmaja Vikara, Anubhanda, Gata Vata and Avarana are different pathologies explained in Ayurveda. Vata Vyadhi can manifest either due to Dhatukshaya or Avarana. When Dosha or Dhatu obstructs a particular Dosha then, it will give rise to increased signs and symptoms related to the function of that particular Dosha or Dhatu which has obstructed. In fact the knowledge of Avarana plays an integral part in understanding the Samprapti of many diseases.^[38] The treatment of Avarana should aim towards cleaning the Srotasus with medicaments which possess Anabhishyandhi, Snigdha, Kapha-Pitta Aviruddham and Vatanulomana property.^[3] Rasayana Chikitsa plays an integral role in the management of Avarana. Rasayana drugs are commonly used to improve health and longevity by balancing between Tridosha, Saptadhatu and Trimala. Rasayana Chikitsa of Ayurveda is in vogue since antiquity. The specific actions of Rasayana drugs in the Poshaka Rasa level (nutrient supplement), Agni level (metabolic appreciation) and Srotas level (tissue nourishment) are well acceptable.^[4] Organ and tissue specific Rasayana drugs are explained in Ayurveda classics. For example Medhya Rasayanas are specific for brain tissue. Such Rasayanas retard brain aging and help in generation of neural tissues besides producing anti-stress, adaptogenic and memory enhancing effect. Same as, Hridya Rasayana for heart, Chakshusya Rasayana is used for eyes and others. Screening of such drugs that modulate stem cell self-renewal and differentiation, or protect cell death, can be helpful in developing new drugs to treat human neurodegenerative diseases. In the near future, more progress in identifying new drugs that regulate stem cell proliferation and differentiation will be used in neurodegenerative diseases. Good numbers of Rasayana drugs have shown immunomodulatory activity to boost up or restore functional immunity in response to defence mechanism.^[5] The Rasayana drugs have also shown tissue and disease specific immunomodulatory activity. These Rasayana drugs not only play a role in immunity but also exhibits its anti-stress, inotropic and antioxidant activity which helps in the quality-of-life improvement. Hence, may be increased by better or proper care/nourishment to bodily tissue.^[6]

CONCLUSION

Elderly population in India is increasing .Geriatrics is in incipient stage.Elderly people are incompetent and incapable of making decisions or handling their own affairs. Rasayana in Ayurveda is a unique therapeutic methodology to delay ageing and to minimize the intensity of problems occurring this degenerative phase of one's life.

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