

PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS IN THE GERIATRICS STAGE AND ITS MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Aging is an universal process, which begins with the origin of any life form. Due to the accumulation of various deteriorating changes occurring with an aging throughout the life, body functions gets impaired whether they are physical, psychological or social. According to the WHO there has been a rise of 13% in psychological health conditions from the last decade which further worsen due to the COVID 19 pandemic period. The United Nation has also given, a report of how the number of people worldwide of age 60 years or above will increase from 1 to 10 currently to 1 in 5 by 2050. So, the psychological problems of these problems. This demographic shift demands us to confront the changes associated with aging whether psychological or other problems. For which, the *Ayurveda* is one of the best and oldest proven system for treatment of the geriatric related psychological and other problems, *Kayachikitsa*, *Panchakarma*,

Swasthavrista, *Rasayana* are the different branches of *Ayurveda* for prevention and management of geriatric related problems.

KEYWORDS: *Jara*, *Ayurveda*, *Rasayana*, *Panchakarma*, *Yoga*.

INTRODUCTION

During the old age, an individual has to face many physical mental intellectual and social difficulties. The term **Geriatric** derived from Greek word *Geri* meaning old age and *latrics* means *Care*, which represents the care and management of elderly persons. This Geriatric term also resembles with Sanskrit word *Geeryadi* meaning *degeneration*, as it was mentioned

by *Acharya Sushruta* and *Acharya Charaka* that the person above an age of 70 or 60 years respectively, below to the old age in which one's body starts to degenerate in many forms.

As we all know, an aging is the inevitable process which can be made slow or less discomforting with the *Ayurvedic* management. In *Ayurveda* aging is known as “*Jara*” which means becoming old by continuous wearing out of body. During the geriatric period, *Prana* meaning the energy of body to perform various biological processes decreases. *Prana* governs two subtle essence i.e. *Ojas* and *Tejas*. *Ojas* which is responsible for the immunity and mental health balance consists of the seven *dhatu*s or bodily tissues necessary for the proper longevity. *Tejas* is the essence of a very subtle fire or energy that carries out the biological metabolism through enzymatic reactions. *Tejas* is necessary for the nourishment and transformation of *dhatu*s for the body needs. *Agni* is central fire or energy promotes digestion, absorption and assimilation of food to maintain the level of various *dhatu*s for *Tejas*. With aging balance amongst the *tridosha* i.e. *vata*, *pita* and *kapha* gets disturbed and thus the various psychological and physical problems occurs.^[1] The *tridosha* plays important role in the maintenance of cellular health and longevity. *Kapha* maintains the longevity on the cellular level. *Pitta* governs digestion and nutrition. *Vata* which is related to maintaining life energy and governs all the life functions.^[2] Psychological problems which generally faced by the old people are such as **Depression, Impaired memory, Emotional disturbances, Decreased learning capabilities, Rigid personality, Non rhythmic sleep patterns, and others such as Dementia, Alzheimer's diseases** etc.

DEMENTIA

Dementia is the loss of cognitive functioning - thinking, remembering, and reasoning -to such an extent that it interferes with a person's daily life and activities. Some people with dementia cannot control their emotions, and their personalities may change. Dementia ranges in severity from the mildest stage, when it is just beginning to affect a person's functioning, to the most severe stage, when the person must depend completely on others for basic activities of daily living, such as feeding oneself.^[3]

Alzheimer's disease (AD)

Alzheimer's disease is a neurodegenerative disease that usually starts slowly and progressively worsens. It is the cause of 60–70% of cases of dementia. The most common early symptom is difficulty in remembering recent events As the disease advances, symptoms

can include problems with language, disorientation (including easily getting lost), mood swings, loss of motivation, self-neglect, and behavioural issues.^[4]

Anxiety disorder

^[4]Nervousness, sweating, affects thinking, perception, learning, causes confusion, reduces concentration, reduces memory. *Ayurveda* has also given similar types descriptions for mentioning the problems of old age.^[5] **Charak acharya**, while describing the classification of *Vaya* in the *Vimanasthan*, quotes that 'one who lives for a hundred years during old age, lacks *dhatu* (tissue element), power of senses, energy, effort, valour, power of understanding, retention, remembering speech and analyzing facts that may be related to decreased cognitive functions of dementia'.^[6] **Acharya Sushruta** describes '*Jara Sosha*' in *Uttartantra* where *Jejjatta* comments that the symptoms described under *Jara Sosha* are not normal characteristics of old age. Psychological symptoms such as *manda virya* (i.e. lack of enthusiasm), *manda buddhi*, *manda indriya* force are described in the context of *Jara Sosha*^[7] and *Sutrasthan* describing the distinctive features of old age. While describing the causative factors of *Nidranasha*, **Charakacharya** mentions that there is physically less sleep in old age. *Chakrapani* comments on the word "*kala*" as "*Vardhakya*". The ancient scholars *Vagbhata* and *Sarangadhara* present an interesting scheme of the loss of various biological factors during life as a result of aging in different decades. *Ayurveda* helps in the correction of this imbalance through, *Rasayana*, *Balance Diet*, *Yoga*, *Panchkarma* which in turn makes the old age related psychological and other problems less discomforting and more subtle.

MANAGEMENT AND TREATMENT APPROACH

Rasayan therapy; *Rasayana* the branch of *Ayurveda* focus on the rejuvenation which exclusively deals with the problems related to aging. During **geriatrics or Jara Rasayana** helps in controlling / slowing down / arresting the aging process in human being during the degenerative phase of one's life. *Rasayana* is normally advised during this degenerative phase which starts from around 45 yrs in both male and female.

A holistic system like *Ayurveda* approaches this condition through two-way methods. Firstly, **Radical approach** through *Kutipraveshika Rasayana* in which *rasayana* recharges the whole metabolic process of body by eliminating toxins from the system over a period of three to four months through rigorous and organized process. However, this process is seldom practiced due to the extreme management and care has to be taken in consideration by the physician and subject including the environment where the treatment is done.

The second approach is **Vataatapika Rasayana** – which is quite a normal way of treatment and popular one these days. The type of *Rasayana* is relatively easy mode of administration and without any restrictive pre-conditions. The main utility of *Rasayana* therapy is in functional and degenerative disorders that have a chronic or long standing nature such as Alzheimer's, dementia, insomnia and others. In such cases, *rasayana* is the best 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.^[8]

Some evidence based research Brain and Memory Disorders:- Brahmi (*Becopa monnieri*), Mandooka Parani (*Centela asiatica*), Jyotishmati (*Celastrus paniculata*), Kapikachhu (*Mucuna pruriens*), Tagara (*Valeriana wallichii*). Some compound formulations Cyawanprasa, Brahmi Rasayana, Aswagandha Lehyam, Mahatriphala Ghrita, Triphala Curna, Aswagandha Curna, Pranada Gutika, Agastya Rasayana, Amalaki Rasayana.

Brahmi (*Becopa monnieri*) – brahmi acts as memory enhancer especially in the case of age related memory loss, it enhances overall mental activity and refreshes brain by decreasing the level of nor epinephrine and dopamine in the brain.

Mandooka parani (*Centela asiatica*) – Mandooka used as anti depressant, anti convulsant and even in disease like Alzheimer disease, as due the certain compound called triterpenes present in mandukaparni. It could also increase the level of the dopamine in the brain which helps to deal with the depression. It helps to show a reduction in seizures and improvement in learning deficit caused by seizures.

Jyotishmati (*Celastrus paniculata*) – It improves brain functioning that strengthens the mind. It shows a significant reduction in the depression and anxiety. Helps to cope up with anxiety, emotional stress and physical tiredness and also an effective mood alleviator. It is well known brain tonic that helps increase memory.

Kapikachhu (*Mucuna pruriens*) – It controls the central nervous system, enhance mood, increase dopamine level lower stress, and even helps in treatment of Parkinson disease. It contains L DOPA which plays a vital role in motivation, attention, memory, mood relaxation, sleep and many other areas.

Tagara (*Valeriana wallichii*) – It aids in healing neurological, psychological, and digestive disorders. Tagara calms the mind, strengthens nerves, and prevents convulsions. It is effective in insomnia, epilepsy, osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. Tagara use for sleep wellness and decreasing the psychological stress including hysterical states, excitability, migraine.

Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) – It is a renowned adaptogenic herb, which means it is used to help the body resist physiological and psychological stress by adapting to the needs of the body. It has the dual capacity to energize and calm at the same time. It reduces the stress and helps to promote sound, restful sleep. Ashwagandha is also used as anti-anxiety medication.

Triphala – In Sanskrit, Triphala means ‘three fruits’. Triphala is a combination of three different fruits; Indian Gooseberry Bibhitaki, and Haritaki. It is a healer in nature used for various purposes including anti aging and stress reduction.

Chyawanprash – It is an *Ayurvedic* formulation which helps in general well being, vitality and help in delaying ageing process. There are few studies available on the usefulness of chyawanprash in the cognitive functions however, studies on management of dementia in human being is less adequate. For cognition improvement i.e. alertness, attention and concentration it is found quite effective.

Amalaki Rasayana – Amalaki or Amla is a supplement derived from the gooseberry. It is used for various purposes but also effective in age related conditions. It helps in maintaining the length of DNA telomeres, structures located at the ends of chromosomes to protect them from damage. As the cell divides telomeres tend to become shorter, they eventually become too short for the cells to divide, meaning they age, so, the cell.

Swarna bhasma – Swarna bhasma has anti stress and anti depressant properties which can help in dealing with stress, anxiety, depression and insomnia. It works by reducing inflammation in the brain while also supporting brain health. When kapha becomes inactive or aggravation of vata dosha occurs, the poor memory results. Small doses of swarna bhasma when taken for the prescribed duration are known to increase the memory power because of *vata* balancing and rejuvenating properties.

Yastimadhu (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) – It has many benefits but also use as anti aging and brain tonic.

Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*) - It is strong neuroprotective. Alongside of Ashwagandha, Guduchi is revered as one of the most important adaptogenic herbs in the Ayurvedic framework. It is an incredibly calming herb that soothes the nervous system, and helps with stress, anxiety, burnout, overwhelm and fatigue. It is also a great energy tonic for increasing physical and emotional energy and vitality, particularly when used alongside of ashwagandha.

Diet and nutrition

The diet should be regulated taking into account the Habitat, season, age, and according to one's digestive capacity. Following points may be considered while planning/advising dietary and other life style regimen.

1. Food should be tasty, nutritious, fresh and good in appearance.
2. Too spicy, salty and pungent food should be avoided.
3. It should neither be very hot nor very cold.
4. Liquid intake should be more frequent and in small amount.
5. Heavy food can be prescribed in a limited quantity.
6. Heavy food should not be given at night. The proper time for Night meals is two to three hours before going to bed. After Dinner, it is better to advice for a short walk.
7. Heavy physical work should be avoided after meals.
8. Mind should be peaceful while eating.
9. Eating only whenever hungry and avoidance of over eating.
10. Inclusion of sufficient amount of vegetables and fruits in diet.
11. Daily intake of vegetable soup and fruit juices.^[9]

Panchakarma

The *Panchakarma* therapies and their pre-therapies are play an important role in the management and prevention of diseases in geriatric people. *Vamana* and *Virechana karmas* are contraindicated or can be given only with utmost precautions. *Nasya* in the form of *Pratimarsha* dose can be given. But the *Basti* can be given From new born to the aged. In *Basti* many drugs can be combined and complications are also very less. It Is also the main therapy for vitiating Vata and its disorders. In old age the functional disorders of *Vata* is most common which causes the physical and psychological Problems, for which some special form of bastis are given like different '*Yapana Bastis*' for '*Ayush Yapana*' meaning longevity of life (prevention of Old age) but also for curing, old age related psychological problems. The *Panchakarma* procedures like *Padabhyanga*, *Sarvanga Abhyanga*, *Shiroabhyanga*, *mastikya*

etc. can also be used for the treatment of geriatric Psychiatric problems. In *Ayurvedic* classics for the prevention and promotion of Health the *Sadvritta*, *Achara Rasayana* and *Satwavajaya Chikitsa* are also important and helpful in the Prevention and cure of old age psychiatric problems.^[10]

Yoga

Yoga provides a good balance, blood stream and tissue liveliness through the enhanced flexibility and core stabilization. Regular yoga helps to avoid many Geriatric problems. Yoga makes the brain functions proper and relax the person from within thus decreasing the psychological issues. Person learns to control his body and able to analyze his or her emotional status about his or her problem. He gains ability to cope with the symptoms faced. It reduces sympathetic activity with relaxing techniques. Pain, fatigue, depression and stress decrease with relaxing response. Memory becomes retentive. Yoga has found a place as an alternative medicine approach within geriatric and rehabilitation programmes due to its countless beneficial effects and it has started to be practiced to improve physical health, to inform, to cope with and to support in various supportive programmes; to help people on issues such as pain, fatigue, stress, nutrition, exercise, sleep and patient caring. Some of the yogic practices for the better results during geriatrics management are mentioned below, and should be performed only under the guidance of qualified Yoga therapist.^[11]

1. **Asanas:** Surya Namaskar, Pavanamuktasana, Ardha Matsyendrasana, Bhujangasana and Shavasana.
2. **Pranayama:** Nadisodhana, Kapalabhati, Bhramari, Neti, Bhastrika and Tratak. 3) **Mudras:** Khechari mudra removes diseases and old age problems. Dharana, Dhyana, Swadhyaya and Iswara Pranidhana.

CONCLUSION

As we already know in the upcoming decades the world population of 60yrs or above will increase more than 50% that means one major part of the society will be aged. So the physical debility and mental debility due to which they are more vulnerable for both physical and mental disorders. Geriatric period of is just like second childhood period like children they need more care, love and affection. *Ayurveda*, as mentioned medicine and therapies which definitely gives solution for these problems. The geriatric psychiatric problems are increasing worldwide, more severely after the COVID 19 pandemic because of social, cultural and environmental problems. *Ayurvedic Rasayana* and *Panchakarma* therapies if used

properly are best and most effective method to cope up these JARA / Old age psychological and other problems.

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