

ROLE OF AYURVEDA IN GRACEFUL AGEING: A REVIEW**Dr. Dinesh Sharma***

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Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur.**ABSTRACT**

If we see the world with different age groups, humanity has been concerned with developing and preserving youthful vigour, and extending longevity by stopping or delaying the aging process. The process of Ageing is a part of life cycle. The ageing process involves multidimensional changes in physiological, pathological, social, and psychological illness of an individual and this change over from youth to death comprises of many painful, trustworthy episodes - that makes the human life miserable. According to Ayurveda Jara (ageing), being a Swabhavabala pravritta roga, happens due to vyadhi-hetu called

Kala/Parinam. The great maharshi like Charaka and Vagbhata called the very first chapter of their samhita granthas as Deerghanjivitiyam and Ayushkamyam respectively. Longevity and old age are to five times more healthcare services associated to the younger population. In ayurveda, the concept of anti-aging is described as rasayana, which aims at maintaining excellent physical and mental health in mature age through a combination of a nourishing diet, wholesome activities, and rejuvenating properties of Drugs are being used. Hence an attempt has been made to recollect the references of Ageing mentioned in classical text of Ayurveda.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Drugs, Ageing, Review.**INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The chronological age of a human subject can often be estimated to within a decade or soon the basis of physical appearances alone. This is true at all ages and is certainly true in the elderly. Ageing is defined as a progressive generalized impairment of function resulting in

the loss of adaptive response to stress and growing risk of age associated disease. Concept of ageing is not new as the same has been explained in the prayer of Lord Dhanawantari (god of Ayurveda) as he is prayed to mitigate the fear of ageing, pain and death. Ageing comes under the names of Jaravastha, Jara and Vardhakya etc. Shareera as explained in the texts of Ayurveda is one which is getting old day by day or in which continuous destruction is going on and that definitely leads to ageing. Jaravastha or ageing is the state where all the body activities slow down due to the weakening of the Dhatus of the body and the body is unable to do its routine activities. Ageing is not a single entity as it contains a series of various changes even at molecular level and these series of changes are nothing but a state of age or we can call it ageing.

OBJECTIVES

The paper broadly brings out the role of Ayurveda in graceful ageing. In particular, it culls different dimensions of Ayurveda which can be brought to the forefront to provide holistic health to the aged population.

Ayurveda and Ageing

Ayurveda itself means the science of life or the science of longevity as it considers *Hitayu* and *Sukhayu* concept wherein “*Hita*” implies healthy living while “*Shukha*” is contented and delightful life. The Ayurveda believes in prevention rather than cure. As is well known from the *Charak Samhita*, a human being has a life span of approximately 100 years provided a lifestyle regimen related to diet, sleep and other health conduct (comprising of *Charyalike Dinacharya, Ritucharya, etc.*) and other principles of Ayurveda are rigorously followed.

Attitude Towards graceful ageing should be by following;

- Physical and Mental Exercise
- Dinacharya
- Ritu Charya
- Sadvritta
- Regulated Panchakarma
- Use of Rasayana and Vajikara Medicines
- Spiritual thoughts
- Positive Emotions
- Meditations

It is worthwhile to focus and explore these concepts in detail.

Dinacharya (daily Regimen)^[1] in fact comprises of life style from getting-up to sleep. It is a unique concept of Ayurveda which can be correlated directly to the aged population to make the aged life happy and contented.

➤ **Brahma MuhurtaKaala**

Ayurveda emphasises an added importance of *Brahma Muhurta* wherein every healthy person is expected to get-up from his bed during the two hours prior to dawn as Brahma denotes *Buddhi* (intelligence). Both the physical and mental functions are extremely sharp and active during this time. As regards the aged, direct benefits percolate from getting-up in the Brahma Muhurata. These benefits include but are not limited to boosting the immune system, increase in energy level, helps maintain the balance of blood pH, relieves pain, soreness, and cramps and enhances the absorption of minerals and vitamins.

➤ **Danta dhavana & Jihva nirlekhana (Cleansing of the teeth and tongue clean)**

Ayurveda has clear focus on the Danta Dhavana and Jihva Nirlekhana. It has been empirically proved that more than 90 percent of aged population above 65 years in developing countries have untreated cavities which is a major cause of tooth decay, pain in gums and several other infections and diseases related to mouth. Ayurveda emphasised on using sticks such as Nimba, Khadira and Miswak, etc. which should be practiced after every meal in addition to early morning and before going to bed. Tongue can be eviscerated with scrapers of metal or plastic or any other suitable matters such as wood-stick. This will remove the dirt, bad taste and odour of tongue, mouth, and teeth; and produces better taste, cleanliness of the mouth, and dispels the diseases of the tongue, mouth, and teeth.

➤ **Ushahpana (Drink water in the morning)**

It is often observed during clinical visits that aged population remain mostly dehydrated due to less water in-take which results in several diseases such as constipation, dehydration and even urinary disorders. Ayurveda points out at the importance of drinking warm or room temperature water on an empty stomach as a *Dincharya*. Regularly drinking water in Brahma muhurta cures disease like piles, IBS, excessive fat and help in detoxifying the body by flushing out metabolic waste. Proper evacuation is a sign of a healthy person and any natural urge should not be suppressed as proper urination, defecation and sweat are signs a healthy body.

➤ **Gandusa and kaval (Oil holding and gargling)**

Ayurveda emphasises an added importance on Gandusa and kaval as keeping the mouth filled with oil daily will prevent cracking and roughness of lips, dryness of mouth disease of the teeth and disorders of voice. Decoction of Khadira, Kshiri Vrksas etc. used daily for Kavalgraha (mouth gargles) will cure loss of appetite, bad taste, dirt and excess salivation. Dhumapana (Herbal smoking): Dhumpan means medicated smoking. It is totally different from cigarette smoking. It strengthens the hair, skull bones, sense organ and voice. The ailments pertaining to the head and neck arising out of Vata and Kapha Dosha do not affect the person who does Ayurvedic herbal smoking. Nasya (Nasal drops): Person who begin to use Nasya daily, will have their skin, shoulders, neck, face and chest strong/firm, raised and good looking ; their mouth having pleasant smell, voice also pleasant, sense organs clean and efficient and they become devoid of wrinkles, grey hair and black patches.

➤ **Eye Care**

Aacharya charak mentioned Anjana at first in dincharya so mentioning at first describes its utmost importance. Anjana should be applied to daily; use of collyrium removes burning sensation, itching, dirt, moistness and pain of the eyes; bestows brightness, good appearance and ability to bear breeze and sunlight and no diseases of the eye develop. Regular eye wash with Triphala and Yashtimadhu Kwath is also beneficial for eye health.

➤ **Abhyāṅga (Oil Massage)**

Regular oil massage (*Abhyanga*) with warm oil that is often infused with the individual's constitution-specific herbs is beneficial for maintaining good health and to delay age-associated pathological changes. *Abhyanga* can be incorporated as a daily routine as it restores the balance of the *Doshas* and enhances well-being and longevity.^{[2], [3], [4]} *Abhyanga* is also recommended for CNS conditions including brain-related injuries, dementia and mental stress. Significant brain functional activation changes together with increased cerebral blood flow were observed in participants who received oil massage. Massage reduced the levels of stress-related hormones with a concomitant increase in circulating lymphocytes and regional cerebral blood flow.^{[5],[6]} Researchers are of the opinion that application of medicated oil followed by a gentle massage could relax the tight junctions between endothelial cells in the CNS vessels and facilitate the entry of solutes and other components into the CNS.

➤ **Karṇatarpaṇa (Ear Care)**

Karna-purana can be used every day by saturating ears with oil, ear disease due to Vata, stiffness of back, neck and jaws do not simply occur and senile deafness also does not develop.

➤ **Vyayama (Exercise)**

Vyayama has its vital role in Dincharya. Vyayama (exercise) is defined as any bodily activity that enhances or maintains the physical fitness and overall health and wellness. Regular exercising makes the body light, improves work efficiency, enhance digestive fire, makes the body strong with proportionate musculature and helps in preventing the diseases of affluence such as cardiovascular disorders, Type-2 DM, obesity and reduces the risk of osteoporosis. It may also helps to prevent depression, promote or maintain positive self-esteem, improve mental health. Daily walking (Adhva) is the best exercise that can be advised to old people.^[7]

➤ **Snana (Bath):** Snana improves appetite, span of life, valor and forte; remove itching, dirt, exertion, sweat, stupor, thirst, burning sensation and sin. Thus, helps in graceful ageing.

➤ **RITUCHARYA**

In Tasyashitya chapter of Charaka Samhita, it is said

Tasya Shitadiya Ahaarbalam Varnascha Vardhate.

Tasyartusatmayam Vaditam Chestaharvyapasrayam,

Which means the strength and complexion of the person knowing the suitable diet and regimen for every season and practicing accordingly are enhanced. Main theme of this chapter is to make people aware concerning the methods to live in accordance with the environment, thus helps in graceful ageing.^[8]

➤ **PANCHKARMA**

Periodical detoxification, purification, and rejuvenation therapies classified as panchakarma therapies in Ayurveda, are highly recommended as they provide the strength and nourishment to the deeper tissues (*Dhatus*) and pacifies age-associated health issues. Oleation and fomentation therapies are important as they neutralize the *Vata*-triggered coldness and dryness that accompany aging. Panchakarma therapies ensure rapid blood circulation, continuous cerebral blood flow and efflux of toxic matter through increased lymphatic drainage.^{[9],[10]}

➤ **AAHAR**

- Due to predominance of Vata dosha in old age as functioning of agni is impaired one should take laghu and sattvik ahar. Indigested food leads to Ama and amadosha is the root cause of all disease.
- Regulate eating and sleeping patterns as much as possible so that body can adjust without stress. As Aahar and Nidra are considered as pillars for healthy life. Sleep is also important for physical as well as mental health.
- Emotions and thinking patterns have the effect on digestion. In the same way wrong digestion will upset our mind and emotions. While taking food, We need to be mentally in the state of happiness While eating one should enjoy the tastes, the appearance, the smell, the textures etc. which gives emotional satisfaction.
- The term Ahara Vidhi Vidhana is used first by Aacharya Charak in Vimanasthana 1st chapter. Though many other classics have elaborately mentioned the same rules, they have explained them under different headings like Bhojana Vidhi, Annavidhi etc.

1. "USNAM ASNIYAT"
2. "SNIGDHAM ASNIYAT"
3. "MATRAVAT ASNIYAT"
4. "JIRNE ASNIYAT"
5. "VIRYA AVIRUDDHAM ASNIYAT"
6. "ISTE DESE, ISTA SARVA UPAKARANAM ASNIYAT"
7. "NA ATIDRUTAM ASNIYAT"
8. "NA ATIVILAMBITAM"
9. "AJALPAN"
10. "AHASAN"
11. "TANMANA BHUNJITA"

➤ **Another Most Important Mode Is**

Achara Rasayana (Code of Conduct/behaviour/etiquettes)

As dinacharya helps in maintaining the age of the person physically but mentally if a person is happy he will surely control on his/her age. It originates from two words "Sad" which means good and "Vṛtta" which means solution. It aims to develop the right equilibrium between one's mind and body for the growth of a person. Sadvritta could be defined as moral reasoning, code of ethics or good conduct and is required to guide daily living and maintain a balanced state of mental and physical life. It includes guiding principles of proper conduct

that helps to reflect on the importance of an individual's life extending beyond the single individual. Sadvrita allows the individual to examine one's values, interpersonal and social behavior. Cultivating these ethical regimens help to strengthen mental health and sustain the balance between an individual's mind and body.^{[11],[12],[13]} All these do's and don'ts are prescribed in Sadvrita. These regimens of right conduct and behavior will not only help individuals to obtain and maintain their health but also help to build a most civilized society and nation, worthy of emulation. Acharya Charaka has mentioned the Achara Rasayana for perfect mental, physical, social, spiritual health of human being. Achara Rasayana is a right code of socio-behavioural conduct; such as worship to God, speaking truth, speaking sweet words, practicing Mantra-Japa, avoiding excessive alcohol, balanced sleep, regular use of milk, ghee and other nourishing element of diet, practicing meditation and studying religious text; abstinence from anger, violence, jealousy etc. By adopting these measures, a person can be free from the emotional disturbances, physical and mental stress are reduced and life becomes blissful.

Some medicinal plants rejuvenate us are:

Suggested drugs	Karma	Indication
Triphala	Chakshushya	Eye disorders
Bala Aswagandha, Satavari,	Balya	Good for immunity and in c/o Debility and Low immunity
Amra, Arjuna, Puskaramula	hrydya	Good for heart and can be used in Ischaemic Heart disease, CV disorders
Vacha, mulethi, pipali, Draksha	Kanthya	Good for throat disorders such as Throat and speech related problems
Haridra, Khadira, Chandana	Twachya	Good for skin problems
Brahmi, shankhpushpi, giloy	Medhya	Dementia, insomnia
Tulsi, Shirish, hingu	Swasahara	Good for respiratory disorders
Amla, haritaki, giloy, shatavari	Vyayasthapana	Anti ageing

The Ayurvedic treatment of living person is intended for upkeep of well-being and accomplishment of a long, well active life, it relieves from discomfort and disease there by attaining satisfactory delight of life and attainment of self-realization.

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda has altered holistic approach to keep healthy and long life. A well mind is as significant for healthy body. Factor like social, cultural, and ecological features that are

inspiration for person to gain the ageing process. Ayurveda has two chief objects first to preserve the well state and second to cure the disease. The chief preventive Ayurvedic approaches for maintaining and improving the quality of life includes Dincharya, Ratricharya, Ritucharya, Sadvrita, Rasayan therapy and specific Aushadha varga. Acceptance of ideal life style has confident impact on mind and body, and improves the quality of life and pleasure. There have been few studies indicating physiological benefits to *Panchakarma*. Ayurveda defines various rejuvenate therapies with help of special class of medicinal preparations called *Rasayana* that are believed to rebuild the body, mind, prevent degeneration and postpone aging or somewhat reverse the aging process. *Charaka* has described two methods of rejuvenation, the first method—intramural (*kutipravesika*) required the subject to continue inside a chamber in isolation and second process which was less rigorous and was carried out in open air—extramural (*vatatapika*). Ayurveda has mentioned rasayan to maintain the age as constant and person looks younger. All these methods are so easy to do and maintain our life aspects more beautiful.^[14-17]

CONCLUSION

While there are various theories and approaches to management of aging, the traditional knowledge remains important both in sympathetic the process and effective management. Several interventions have been tried for treatments of various conditions primarily arising because of aging. Since aging process has been experienced by human beings for several generations, the traditional knowledge from various parts of the world provides easy, natural, and holistic ways for healthy aging. Ayurveda, the countless Indian tradition also suggests conceptual framework on various theories and concepts of aging procedure. Ayurveda also offers time tested therapies for healthy aging. With the vast information available in Ayurvedic literature on aging and skin care, one can explore the possibilities of developing new antiaging or antiwrinkle treatments with the natural ingredients for topical applications. Hence an attempt has made to collect general steps with anti-ageing effects.^[18]

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