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Prevention of Geriatric Disorders through Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT

Aging itself is not a disease however, the risk factors of developing diseases increases with age. The population of the elderly in India was 57 million as compared with 20 million in 1951, as per the 1991 census. There has been a sudden and progressive increase in the number of elderly persons between 1991 and 2001 and it has been projected that, the number of elderly people would rise to about 324 million, by the year 2050. The diseases occurring due to aging in elderly are known as Geriatric disease. Risk factors for geriatric diseases are trauma/injury, development of non-communicable diseases, poverty and social isolation. Common geriatric diseases are Dementia, Mental disorders, Sleep disorders, Osteoporosis, Osteoarthritis, Heart disease, Alzheimer's disease, cognitive impairment, impaired mobility, Chronic pain disorders etc. According to *Ayurveda*, ageing (*Jara*) is considered as *Swabhavaj Roga*. This principle of prevention involves following the *Ayurvedic* daily regimens (*Dincharya*) eg. *Anjana*, *Abhyanga*, *Nasya* etc., Seasonal regimens (*Ritucharya*) and proper dietary protocols which are main elements for prevention of Geriatric disorders. The role of *Rasayan* drugs in prevention and treating geriatric problems is also well proved in various clinical studies.

KEYWORDS

Geriatric disease, Rasayana, Ritucharya, Dincharya, Jara



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INTRODUCTION

Geriatrics is a specialty which concentrates on the health of aged people. It aims for promoting health in aged by preventing and giving treatment of their diseases. Various Geriatric disorders are Dementia, Osteoporosis, Osteoarthritis, Parkinson's disease, Atherosclerosis, Heart disease, Hypertension and Dyslipidemia. The process of Aging is the very nature of the living body. In addition to it many number of environmental factors are present which may accelerate aging process such as Nutritional deficits, Stress, Climatic factors, Free radical injury, Immune disorder and Endocrinal factor etc which are preventable.

AYURVEDIC VIEW

In *Ayurveda*, *Acharayas* have described both concept of *Kalaja-Jara* (Natural ageing) and *Akalaja –Jara* (Premature ageing). *Kalaja Jara* is *Swabhavaja Rogas* so we cannot treat it but definitely make it more comfortable and healthy and can prevent many geriatric and senile diseases. *Vatadosha* and deterioration of *Rasadi Dhatu*, *Srotasa* and *Agni* are main factors responsible for the various degenerative changes including ageing in body. According to *Charaka Samhita* life cycle of a person is divided into 3 phases-

Baala, Madhyama, Vriddha/ Jeerna. According to *Acharya charak 'PurveVayashimadhyeva'* that means *Rasayana* can be given in *poorva* and *madhyama* age prevent premature aging, increase immunity and prevents all diseases.

So it's help to delay the aging process and prevent old age through it's *Dipana, Pachana, Medhya* and immune booster properties. *Ayurveda* quotes human body (*Sharisa*)-as "*Shiryateitishariram*". In *Sushruta samhita*, one chapter is titled "*Swabhavavyadhiparishedhiya*". Where in *Rasayanachikitsa* (Rejuvenating treatment) is explained.

The etiological factors for initiating the early ageing process are clearly explained by *Acharya Charaka* and *Vagbhata*. *Tridosha* plays crucial role to maintain longevity and integrity at cellular level. *Kapha* maintains integrity, *Pitta* governs digestion, *Vata* that is closely related to panic life energy, governs all life functions.

During the old age predominant of *Vatadosha* occur, so give the treatment of *Vata samana*. The *Rasayana* drugs act on mind and body through 3 modes-*Rasa, Agni* and *Srotas* and cause improvement in all age levels. The concept of *Rasayana* which helps to improve digestion and metabolism as well as micro circulation, thus enabling the organisms to procure the best qualities



of different *Dhatu*s. *Rasayana* therapy means the way of achieving excellent *Rasadi Dhatu*s in body.

The more improvement found in nutritional status and the improved qualities of *Dhatu*s lead to a series of secondary attributes of *Rasayana*, that bestow longevity, strength, lustre, intellect, immunity etc.

Principles of prevention of Geriatric disorders-

- *Rasayana*
- *Dinacharya* (Daily regimen)
- *Ritucharya* (Seasonal regimen)
- *Sadvritta & Achara Rasayana* (Ethics)
- *Yoga & Pranaya*

RASAYANA THERAPY

Rasayana therapy is exclusively committed to the science of ageing and its prevention. It consists of drugs and specific therapeutic processes. Ultimately enhances immunity, strength, happiness and intellect. Many *Rasayana* like *Amlaki*, *Ashwagandha*, *Guduchi*, *Satavari*, *Shilajit* etc. have been described in *Charaka* and *Sushruta Samhita*. In old age many mental disorders that may be named as- Anger, Anxiety, Depression, Fear, Worries etc. occur very commonly. *Ashwagandha*, *Vacha*, *Shankhapushpi* improve cognitive abilities, Immune booster, antidepressants and anxiolytic activity.

Giloya, *Yashtimadhu* have immunomodulator, antioxidant effects. *Vidanga* and *Kustha* possess anti-inflammatory, *srotoshodhak* properties. *Bala*, *Ashwagandha*, *Shatavari* have *balya* and nerve tonic activities. *Amlaki*, *Haritaki* have also antiaging (improves metabolism, cleans microchannels) properties.

Medhya drugs are very useful in preventing neurodegenerative disorders like dementia in a long term use. *Chyavanaprash* is very crucial *rasayana* drugs having important immunomodulator and tissue regenerative property.

Thus use of *rasayan* drugs from young and middle age more effective in delaying degenerative changes or *jara* in body. The *Rasayana* drugs act on mind and body through 3 modes-*Rasa*, *Agni* and *Srotas* and cause improvement in all ages levels. *Ahararasa* with its proper circulation through channels is the main concept of *Rasayana* which helps to improve digestion and metabolism as well as micro circulation, thus enabling the organisms to procure the best qualities of different *Dhatu*s. *Rasayana* therapy means the way for attaining excellent *Rasadi Dhatu*s in body. The improved nutritional status and the better qualities of *Dhatu*s lead to a series of secondary attributes of *Rasayana*, which



bestow longevity, strength, luster, intellect, immunity etc.

DINACHARYA

Various elements of *Dincharya* with their specific benefits are-

Gandusha- In *CharakaSamhita*, *Gandusha* gives strength to mandible and Speech, clarity of mouth and clarity of sense organs, Crack of lips, strength of Teeth and Gum, Increase taste sensation and best food taking urge thus help in prevention of disorders related with sensory impairment. Also effective in problems related to dentition in old age.

Nasya- *Astanga Samgraha* 'Nasa Hi Shiraso Dwarama' It is explained that *Nasa* being the entry to *Shiras* (Head), the drug administrated through nostril reaches *Shingataka-* a *siramarma* by *Nasa Srotas* and then spreads in the *Murdha* (Brain) that reaches at a junction place of *Netra* (eye), *Karna* (Ears), *Kantha* (Throat) *Siramukhas* (passage of the vessels) etc. and remove the morbid *doshas* present above supraclavicular part and ejaculate them from the *Uttamanga*.

Through *Nasya* karma work on limbic system and prevent many behavioural and cognitive disorders, Cardiovascular disorders, Alzheimer's disease, Sleep disorders. It nourishes brain, improves eyesight and other sensory functions. *Nasya*

karma also help in preventing premature greying of hair, Wrinkles on skin, strengthens muscles of shoulders, neck and chest. Regular *Nasya* leads to sweet voice, eliminates foul smell from mouth and eliminates *doshas* from head and neck region.

Abhyanga- It is highly beneficial to body massage whole body including scalp with oil everyday to prevent dryness of body and stiffness of joints due to aging in elderly. By taking proper massage it delays aging, cures tiredness, mitigates *vata*, improves vision, promotes strength, increases lifespan and relieves insomnia. *Jara* is the natural and irreversible process of decaying and this manifested by various degenerative changes.

In *Vriddhavastha*, *Rasarakta* *Dhatu*, *Indriya*, *Bala* etc are decreased. Aging related skin changes like *Vali* (wrinkles) *palitya* (grey hair), *Twakparushata* (Dry/lusterless skin), diminished vision, Insomnia are common problems of old age persons. It helps in all these problems by nourishing the *Dhatu*s of the body. *Acharya Vagabhata* stated that *padabhyanga* improves vision.

He also said the advantages of *Abhyanga* as lightness of body, normal duties with enthusiasm, Increase the power of digestion, reduces the fat and body parts become more distinct and firm During



Abhyanga, Serotonin released which helps inducing sleep thus help for sleep disorders in old age. Proponents claim *Abhyanga* helps in joint health, nourishes the *Dhatus* and also brings aggravated *Doshas* balance. The condition of dry, coarse hair and flaky skin is improved by *Abhyanga*. *Abhyanga* improves skin and hair texture. It increases *Ojas*, energy and vitality, reduces pain, slows the aging process, pacifies *vata* dosha, calms the sense organs and in addition the nervous system, Supports restful sleep patterns, nurtures and aids positive feelings and emotions, gives a healthy glow one's body and hair. *Abhyang* produce a rejuvenative and regenerative effects on the skin.

Vyayama –Old age person decreased stamina and physical strength. Regular exercise builds up stamina and clear the channels of body prevent heart disorders and stroke by strengthening heart muscle, improving blood flow, raising HDL levels, back pain.

RITUCHARYA

Ayurveda recognized that seasonal changes have profound effect on old age person health. So seasonal diet formaintains the climatic form of *dosha samya* and give strength to body.

Seasonal variations may have an effect on the elements of the body. Different dosha are more active in different season. Thus

concept of seasonal *shodhana* by various *Panchkarma* procedures by listening to the rhythm of the nature helps is prevention of the diseases and promotion of health by its purificatory action and cellular regeneration.

According to different seasons, for prevention of diseases many *Shodhana* treatment are prescribed. *Ritusamshodhana* as per natural *dosha* predominance in various seasons as *Vamanakarma* in *Vasantrutu*, *Virechana karma* in *Sharadrutu* and *Basti* in *Varsharutu* can help in balancing *doshas* and prevention of many diseases. *Acharya Vagabhatta* quotes that *samyaksamshodhana* leads to *dhatusthirata* (stability of tissues) and delayed aging.

SADAVRITTA & ACHARA RAYSAYANA

Follow the principles of *Sadvritta and Achararaysayana*. Involve oneself in supreme power or the eternal truth through any means because it increases the level of *satva* in one's mind and in elderly persons. *Achara Rasayana* is *Ayurvedic* strategy for maintaining the behavioural social conduct, which ensures a one lives a healthy life in a healthy society.

We cannot be inhibit aging, but we can make healthy and comfortable. This include the factor viz. practice of universal prayer, speaking softly and gently, respect and



compassion for all living beings etc. Old age people suffering from Anxiety, Anger, Social impairment, mental disorders.

So if a person follows *Achara Rasayana* from early age it enhances the mental strength and prevent many mental disorders. The concept of *Vegadharana* and *Vega-Adharana* (urges to be suppressed and not to be suppressed) is also very important. As *vegadharana* of bodily essential urges lead to many disease and non suppression of mental urges like fear, jealousy, anger, greed etc. lead to many psychosomatic disorders.

YOGA & PRANAYAMA

Ayurveda anti ageing therapy is called *Rasayanchikitsa* which is clearly related to *yoga* therapy. Elderly age diseases equanimity between body and mind through *yoga* physical homeostasis and mental equanimity that gives rise to a healthy harmony between the body and mind. Old age people decreased capacity of inhale and exhale the air due to *dhatukshayaavstha* or lung degenerative changes. *Chndranadi pranayama*, *Bhramari*, *Sitakari* etc.

Practices increase the flow of the *prana* and open energy channels. *Yoga* reduces sympathetic activity with relaxing techniques. With relaxing response, Pain, fatigue, depression and stress are decreased and the memory becomes retentive.

DISCUSSION

In *Ayurveda*, disease defined as a “*Dukham AadhitiIty Vyadhi*” which means every condition that leads to disturbance of homeostasis.

It causes physical and mental discomfort. *Jara* is *Swabhavaja Rogas* so we cannot treat it but prevent the *Roga*. The principles that supports a proper well being of the mind and body have been described in *Ayurveda* in the form such as *Dincharya*, *Rritucharya*, Balanced diet and the observance of personal and seasonal conduct.

The *Rasayan* therapy bestows human kind by maintaining them disease free life and helps in uplifting the quality of life. *Rasayan* drugs act on *Dhatu*, *Agni*, *Srotasa* and produce healthy tissues developed the body and in turn of provide longevity, strength and intellect promotion in the mind.

CONCLUSION

Aging is linked with group of the cellular and molecular changes that impair normal structure and physiology of body. *Ayurveda* guides the principles of harmonious living and in tune with environment and individual constitution of *Vatadosha* and worsening of *Rasadi Dhatu*, *Srotasa* and *Agni* have responsible for the various



degenerative changes. Hence it can be concluded from above description that Geriatric diseases can be whole prevented by following the prevents of *Ayurvedic* medicine.



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