



## UTILITY OF RASAYANA IN GERIATRIC DISEASES

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**ABSTRACT**

Ayurveda being the science of life and longevity, Geriatric health care is its prime concern which reflects well in its Rasayana Tantra which is one of the genre of Ashtanga Ayurveda that promotes health and prevents and cure diseases and disabilities in elderly. In old age, there is a series of decline due to Saptadhatu kshaya due to which many disorders can be seen such as Sandhi saumyata, Asthi kshaya, Sira-dhamani shaithilya, Mandacheshta, Vishamagni, and visible mental changes like Anidra, Atipralapa, Visada etc. Multiple diseases co-exist together in elderly. A study was conducted using the NSSO data (2017-18) underlines that there was 277 older adults (aged 60+) per 1000 population who reported their multi morbidity. According to Acharya Sushruta, aging or Vardhakya is a Swabhavaj Vyadhi and this can be restrained to some extent with the use of Rasayana Therapy. The rules-regulations, herbs, minerals by which one attains longevity, memory, intelligence, lustre, complexion, immunity and by means of which best quality of dhatus are formed, all those measures are called Rasayana and their mode of application are known as Rasyana therapy. By proper administration of Rasayana therapy we can protect elderly from early onset of Jara Janita Vyadhi (Geriatric Diseases).

**KEYWORDS** : Ayurveda, Geriatric Diseases, Jara Chikitsa, Rasayana, Dhatukshaya.**INTRODUCTION :**

In Ayurveda, Ayu is defined as span of life or the continuation of consciousness. It starts with the union of shukra-shonita and ends with departure of consciousness from the body. It is a natural phenomenon for every living being on earth. Ayurveda deliberates on the process of aging and sequential senile changes in different contexts such as Balya avastha, Madhya avastha and Vriddhavastha hallmarked by Kapha, Pitta and Vata activities respectively. Vata is the drying and decaying force and is the main dosha in the aging process. In Balya Avastha, progressive change of developmental phase takes place while in Vriddhavastha there is progressive decline of functional status with varying degree also called as senility. Acharya Charak has considered age above 60 years to be Vriddhavastha but Acharya Sushruta and Vabhata considered it as age more than 70 years. Due to early aging there are several diseases due to loss of dhatus which should be treated in time.

The aging disorders like respiratory problems, depression, atherosclerosis, hypertension, poor vision, hearing loss, neurosis are common these days. Certain diseases like Ischemic heart disease, Stroke, Osteoarthritis are common in elderly while others like Parkinson's disease, Multisystem dystrophy of CNS, Alzheimer disease, Polymyalgia rheumatica is seen only in elderly. Geriatrics is the branch of medicine concerned with the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of diseases in older people. In Ayurveda, it is known as Jara Chikitsa or Rasayana Tantra. It is a unique therapeutic methodology to delay ageing and to minimize the intensity of problems occurring in this degenerative phase of one's life. During old age, we cannot enhance the capacity of dhatus but they can be protected and rejuvenated by proper administration of Rasayana Therapy.

**Characteristics of Senility :**

Due to Saptadhatukshaya, many symptoms are seen in elderly like:

- Hritpida (cardiac pain), Kampa (tremor), Trishna (thirst), Sira dhamani shaithilya (venous and arterial changes)
- Sandhi saumyata, Asthikshaya (osteopenia), Asthishula (pain in bones), Alparaktata (low haemoglobin), Maithun ashakti (loss of libido).
- Mandacheshta (diminished activity), Rukshata (dryness in body), Nisprabhata (lack of lusture), Mandoshma (diminished body heat), Vishamagni (irregular appetite), Anidra (insomnia).
- Visible mental changes like Atipralapa (excessive talking), Adhairya (intolerance), Bhaya (fear), Vishada (sorrow), Shoka (grief), etc.
- Certain pattern of presentation of diseases are particular to old people i.e., immobility, instability, incontinence and intellectual impairment. These four are have been designated as giants of geriatrics.

**Significance of Rasayana :**

The term Rasayana comprises of two words i.e. Rasa and Ayana. Rasa

signifies excellence of Rasa Raktadi Dhatu of body or Rasa, Virya, Vipaka of drug for preservation and maintainence of healthy life and Ayana signifies a measure to provide special benefit to the body.

The rules- regulations, herbs, minerals, by products etc. which enable an individual to retain health, youthfulness, vigour upto the old age or by which one attains longevity, memory, intelligence, resistance, immunity, lusture, complexion, solid physique, voice and by which a full ideal personality has been developed, all those medicines and measures are called Rasayana and their mode of application are known as Rasayana Therapy.

**Mode of Action of Rasayana :**

Rasayana directly act as a nutrient itself increases the nutritional value of Poshaka Rasa Dhatu.e.g. Shatavari, Ghrita, Mukta etc. Rasayana promotes the digestive fire of body and improve digestive and metabolic functions.e.g. Pippali, Shunthi, Chitraka. They also induce microcirculation and tissue perfusion and has Srotoprasadana effect e.g. Guggulu.

Thus, they establish positive nutritional status in the body, helps in healthier tissue formation, improves immunity, imparts good mental health, hence prevents early aging and old age related diseases.

**Classification of Rasayana :**

Rasayana Therapy can be categorized in the following manner :

A. As per method of use :

1. Vatatapika Rasayana or outdoor practice.
2. Kutipraveshik Rasayana or indoor regimen.

B. As per scope of application :

1. Kamya Rasayana : For promotion of health of a healthy person.
2. Naimittika Rasayana : To impart biostrength in a diseased person.

C. Rasayana Therapy without medicine such as exercise, yoga, Achar Rasayana, Ajasrika Rasayana (Ghee, milk, vegetables, fruits,etc.)

**Drug Substance of Plant Origin Used as Dhatuposhaka:**

Aendri (Bacopa monnieri), Kapikacchu (Mucuna pruriens), Shatavari (Asparagus racemosus), Payasya (Holostemma rheedei), Kshiravidari (Ipomoea digitata), Ashvagandha (Withania somnifera), Bala (Sida cordifolia), Atibala (Abutilon indicum), Amrita (Tinospora cordifolia), Abhaya (Terminalia chebula), Dhatri (Embllica officinalis) Jivanti (Leptadenia reticulata), Mandukaparni (Centella asiatica), Sthira (Desmodium genticum), Punarnava (Boerhavia diffusa).

**Drug Substances of Mineral Origin used as Dhatuposhaka:**

Svama (gold), Rajata (silver), Tamra (copper), Yashada (zinc), Vanga (tin), Loha (iron), Abhraka (mica). Mineral origin drugs are mostly used in the form of Bhasma.

**Dietary substances administered as Dhatuposhaka:**

**Vegetable Origin :** Jivanti-saka (leaves of *Lepadenia reticulata*), Punarnava saka (leaves of *Boerhavia diffusa* and *Boerhavia verticillata*), Satavari ankura (young shoots of *Asparagus racemosus*), Balapatra (leaves of *Sida cordifolia*), Varahikanda (bulb of *Dioscorea bulbifera*), Kharjura (fruit of *Phoenix dactylifera*), Aksota (endosperm of *Juglans regia*), Vatada (endosperm of *Prunus amygdalus*), Mridvika (dried fruit of *Vitis vinifera*).

**Animal Origin:** Mamsa of Aji (goat), Avika (lamb), Varaha (pig), Chataka (sparrow), Kukkuta (male chicken) and (egg), Matsya (fish).

The commonly used dietary supplements as Dhatuposhaka are: Chyavanaprasha, Amritaprasha, Brahmarasayana, Amalakavaleha, Bhallataka Kshira etc.

**Planning Disease Specific Rasayana :**

Selected Diseases	Suggested Rasayana
Diabetes Mellitus	Shilajatu, Haridra, Amalaki Rasayana
Skin Diseases	Tuvarak, Haridra, Somraji
Respiratory Diseases	Haridra, Shirisha, Pippali Rasayana.
Hypertension and IHD	Sarpagandha, Pushkarmula, Arjuna
Urinary Disorders	Punarnava, Gokshura
Arthritis	Amrit Bhallataka, Eranda, Guggulu
Neurodegenerative Diseases	Aendra Rasayana, Ashwagandha
Dementia	Brahmi, Shankhapushapi Swaras, Guduchi Swaras
Immunodeficiency	Amalaki, Brahma Rasayana, Chyawanprasha
Malignancy	Bhallataka, Amalaki Rasayana

On the basis of mode of action, different Rasayana can be used in Geriatric Diseases:

**Achara Rasayana for preservation of good mental health of Elderly:**

Rules and regulations for positive physical and mental health has been widely described in Ayurveda such as Ritucharya, Dincharya, truth, non violence, personal and public cleanliness, devotion, spirituality, compassion, yoga and exercise. All forms of Sadvritta, Achara and Sattvavajaya produce a Rasayana effect in body in a non-pharmacological way. This can be practiced alone or in combination with material substance Rasayana Therapy. They help in preservation of good mental health in old age and prevents elderly from mental impairments such as depression, stress, anxiety which are common these days in old people after retirement due to change in lifestyle, associated physical illness, loss of strength, loneliness, etc.

**CONCLUSION :**

The mean life expectancy has changed significantly in the past decades. The growing number of older people has made a significant impact on the health care system as well as the socioeconomic condition of the country. It is the time to reveal the potential of Rasayana Therapy in Ayurveda to minimize the sufferings of our elders and maintain their health with the help of Rasayana Therapy by avoiding psycho somatic injuries.

Besides promotion of physical and mental potential, Rasayana karma affords a preventive role against all range of diseases through improved immunity and biostrength. Thus Rasayana is the central consideration in Ayurveda Geriatrics.

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