

Preventive Health Care in Geriatric through Ayurved Rasayan Chikitsa

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ABSTRACT

Preventive health care is essential in geriatric medicine because it focuses on early detection and management of health issues before they become severe. Regular check-ups, screenings, and immunizations help maintain independence and improve quality of life for older adults by addressing health problems proactively. It also reduces the risk of complications from chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes, and cancers. Additionally, preventive care encompasses health education, fall prevention, and medication management, all supporting aging healthfully. By actively managing health, seniors can avoid costly emergency interventions, which leads to better health outcomes and lower healthcare expenses. Overall, prioritizing prevention fosters healthier, more active aging. Ayurveda plays a crucial role in geriatric care by utilizing various Rasayana (rejuvenate) herbs and formulations that enhance strength, immunity, cognitive function, and overall vitality¹. Ayurvedic interventions, including Medhya Rasayana (nootropic herbs), Balya and Brimhana Dravyas (strength-promoting substances), and age-specific dietary regimens, are effective in preventing and managing common geriatric disorders such as Sandhivata (osteoarthritis), Smriti Hani (memory loss), Pandu Roga (anemia), and Jatharagni Mandya (digestive weakness). Along with herbal medicine, therapies like Panchakarma, Abhyanga (oil massage), Swedana (herbal fomentation), and Shirodhara play a significant role in promoting physical and mental well-being in old age.² This article explores the role of Rasayana in holistic geriatric care, highlighting Ayurvedic pharmacological principles, therapeutic herbs, and formulations that support healthy aging and longevity.

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KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Geriatrics, Jara, Rasayana Therapy, Healthy Aging.

INTRODUCTION

Prevention is a cornerstone of effective healthcare because it reduces the risk of developing diseases and disabilities. It involves implementing evidence-based services such as vaccinations, screenings, and health assessments to detect health concerns early. These efforts help improve treatment success and prevent disease progression. Initiatives like Healthy People 2030 emphasize increasing access to preventive services to close disparities based on age, race, and economic status. Geriatric medicine is the specialized branch of medicine that deals with the problem of elderly persons. Increase in average life span due to enhanced medical facilities has resulted in

demographic shift towards older age. Also, a lot has been stated in Ayurveda texts regarding longevity and vitality in terms of Jarachikitsa and Rasayan. This study was undertaken to critically review the Ayurveda texts and re-evaluate the concept of rasayana and to analyze the various considerations and therapeutic interventions which have promotive, preventive and curative effect on diseases of old age. The three main texts of Ayurveda, i.e., Brihatryi were explored regarding the aspects of ageing and non-pharmacological as well as drug approaches were studied.^{3,4} Analyses of the texts revealed that the preventive aspects of ideal regimen, healthy dietary

habits, use of Rasayana drugs and Panchakarma purification procedures, if adopted in daily routine can have a positive effect in improving vitality and longevity of the body. This also improves the quality of life especially in the elderly.

MATERIALS AND METHODS- THE RASAYANA THERAPY AND ITS MODE OF ACTION:

Rasayana (Rasa =nutrition+ Ayana= circulation and promotion) specially deals with the science of nutrition, geriatric care and rejuvenation. Rasayana signifies not a single drug or medication, rather refers to a rejuvenate regimen which of course uses rejuvenative remedies or drugs, dietetics and overall healthy life-style and positive psychosocial conduct. The use of Rasayana measures and remedies produces best qualities of Dhatus, i.e. body-tissues by acting through one or all of the following three principal levels of biological system with net result of improved nutritional status leading, in turn, to better qualities of tissues, longevity, immunity, resistance against disease and improved mental faculties. The primary levels/modes of Rasayana effect are {3-11 16 1s)⁵

1. At the level of Rasa (Promoting directly the nutrient value of plasma).
2. At the level of Agni (Promoting bio fire system responsible for digestion and metabolism)
3. At the level of Srotas (Promoting microcirculation and tissue perfusion)

DISEASE SPECIFIC RASAYANA:

Some Rasyanas are also disease-specific and are used in specific disease states as they induce specific immune and bio-strength to combat a particular disease. Such Rasyanas are called Naimittika Rasyana. The classical Naimittika Rasyanas are Silajatu for diabetes mellitus and Tubaraka for skin diseases and leprosy. There can be many other Naimittika Rasayanas identifiable by proper yukti.^{6,7}

AGE SPECIFIC RASAYANA:

Some Rasyanas are also age-specific and can be prescribed for particular age groups. As stated, earlier Ayurveda describes the qualities of each decade of the 100 years of estimated life-span. During the process of aging an individual goes on losing these age-related bio-qualities and if this loss is compensated by age-specific Rasyana in specific age groups the rate of aging can be retarded to some extent and one can promote longevity. Aging is a natural and inevitable process, but Ayurveda provides a holistic approach to maintaining health and vitality in old age. Among various branches of Ayurveda, Dravyaguna Vigyana plays a crucial role in geriatric care by offering evidence-based herbal solutions for

age-related disorders. The use of Rasayana herbs like Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*), Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*), Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*), and Brahmi (*Bacopa monnieri*) helps in rejuvenation, neuroprotection, and immunity enhancement, addressing the root causes of aging-related decline.^{8,9}

preventive strategies such as Dinacharya, Ritucharya, personalized diet, and Panchakarma therapies are further strengthened by the intelligent use of medicinal plants. Herbal formulations like Chyawanprash, Triphala, and Guggulu preparations play a significant role in maintaining metabolic health, improving digestion, and preventing oxidative stress. The therapeutic potential of these Dravyas extends beyond symptomatic relief, as they help in strengthening tissues (Dhatus), enhancing cognitive function, and balancing Doshas to promote longevity¹⁰.

Rasayana Therapy

Rasayana formulations help delay aging, improve immunity, and maintain physiological functions. These formulations are recommended for geriatric care to nourish Dhatus and enhance vitality.

Common Rasayanas for Geriatrics:

- Chyawanprash: A potent rejuvenator that strengthens immunity & supp. respiratory health (Charaka Samhita, Chikitsa Sthana 1/1-2).
- Brahma Rasayana: Enhances cognitive function and mental clarity.
- Amalaki Rasayana: A powerful antioxidant that improves digestion and skin health.¹¹

Medhya Rasayana (Cognitive Rejuvenators)¹²

These formulations are beneficial in preventing cognitive decline and neurodegenerative disorders like dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

- Brahmi Ghrita: Supports memory retention and relieves stress.
- Vacha Churna: Helps in speech disorders and improves mental sharpness
- Mandukaparni Rasayana: Strengthens neural pathways and promotes relaxation.

Vata-Pacifying Formulations¹³

Aging is predominantly a Vata disorder, leading to joint issues, insomnia, and neurological imbalances. These formulations help in balancing Vata Dosha.

- Mahayogaraj Guggulu: Beneficial for osteoarthritis and musculoskeletal health.
- Ashwagandha Churna: Reduces stress, strengthens muscles & improves energy levels.

- Dashmoolarishta: Effective in reducing generalized weakness and inflammatory conditions.

Digestive & Metabolic Health Formulations¹⁴

Aging weakens Agni (digestive fire), leading to indigestion, constipation, and metabolic imbalances. These formulations enhance digestion and nutrient absorption.

- Triphala Churna: Regulates bowel movement and acts as an antioxidant.
- Avipattikar Churna: Helps in managing hyperacidity and sluggish digestion
- Hingwashtak Churna: Aids in relieving bloating and digestive discomfort.

Cardio-Protective & Circulatory Formulations¹⁵

Cardiovascular disorders are common in aging due to Rasa Dhatu and Srotas Dushti. These Ayurvedic formulations support heart health and circulation.

- Arjuna Ksheer Pak: Strengthens cardiac muscles and lowers cholesterol.
- Punarnavadi Kwath: Helps in edema and supports renal function.
- Lasuna Rasayana: Reduces blood pressure and prevents arterial blockages.

Besides the rejuvenative approaches Ayurveda has notable potential to afford significant complementary therapeutic care in a range of diseases of the elderly and the same needs to be known to the practicing physicians of all streams. Arjuna, Guggulu and Puskarmula as cardioprotective in cases of Ischaemic heart disease, Brahmi and similar other Medhya drugs in treatment of senile dementias, Varuna and Sigu in treatment of senile enlargement of Prostate, Triphala in senile visual disorders, Kapikacchu in treatment of Parkinsons disease, Amrita and Amalaki in immunodeficiency, Sirodhara and Sirobasti in tension headaches and different kinds of neurodegenerative conditions are some of the potential areas where Ayurvedic treatment has promise. Similarly, the Pindasweda procedure of Keraliya Panchkarma therapy is known for its rehabilitative effect in many neurodegenerative conditions and myopathies.

Rasayana Therapy for Longevity-

- Rasayana therapy is a rejuvenation treatment aimed at improving strength, immunity, and longevity. It nourishes tissues (Dhatu), enhances mental clarity, and prevents premature aging. Some well-known Rasayana herbs include:
- Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*): A potent immunomodulator that enhances vitality and reduces oxidative stress.

- Pippali (*Piper longum*): A respiratory and digestive tonic that supports metabolic health and reduces inflammation.
- Mandukaparni (*Centella asiatica*): Known for its neuroprotective effects, it enhances cognitive function and prevents neurodegenerative diseases.
- Shilajit: A mineral-rich adaptogen that improves energy levels, reduces fatigue, and supports musculoskeletal health.

DISCUSSION-

Preventive care significantly improves health results, extends lifespan, and enhances life quality among seniors by enabling early intervention for chronic conditions. Regular screening, immunizations, and health assessments help prevent the onset or worsening of diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, and cancers. This early management reduces hospitalizations and disability, supports functional independence, and maintains mental health. Evidence indicates that seniors who engage in preventive measures experience higher satisfaction with aging and tend to live longer healthier lives. Personalized prevention strategies that incorporate lifestyle modifications, nutrition, and physical activity further strengthen these benefits. Overall, proactive prevention helps seniors stay active, independent, and fulfilled. Many diseases such as cancers, infectious diseases, and chronic conditions like cardiovascular disease and diabetes can be prevented through targeted strategies. Vaccinations-including influenza, pneumonia, shingles, and COVID-19-offer protection against infectious illnesses. Regular screenings for cancers, cholesterol, and blood pressure facilitate early diagnosis and treatment. Lifestyle modifications like quitting smoking, eating a nutritious diet, engaging in physical activity, managing stress, and ensuring proper sleep are vital components. Utilizing electronic health records and integrated care teams helps identify risk factors early. Managing blood pressure, high cholesterol, and blood sugar effectively reduces the likelihood of developing serious diseases. In summary, early intervention and healthy habits are key to lowering disease incidence among seniors.

A SUGGESTED PACKAGE OF GERIATRIC CARE-

The Ayurveda-based package of geriatric care may consist of:

1. Recording of the Prakrti, Vaya, Agni & Ojas status, Vyadhi and overall health status to help in planning the geriatric care.
2. Swasthavrtta & Sadvrtta i.e. codes of personal and social hygiene.

3. Dietary care avoiding too much of fat and heavy proteins preferring easily digestible nourishing sattvika diet.
4. Regular exercise according to Vyayama-Shakti.
5. Regulated rest and relaxation
6. Yoga and meditation
7. Geriatric Panch karma Therapy.
8. Rasayana therapy
9. Medical management of associated age - related diseases if any.
10. Supportive therapy and socio-economic support and care of social and spiritual health.

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CONCLUSION-

General awareness should be created among people regarding these preventive aspects and various rasayan modalities must be included in practice. This will go a long way in increasing the happiness quotient of our population. There are strong possibilities to develop a safe and cost-effective package for geriatric care on the basis of Ayurvedic life-style management, Rasayana therapy and practice of yoga. These therapies help to maintain balance of Vata, Pitta and Kapha, potentiate Dhatu, enhance nourishment, regularize circulatory process and detoxify body thus prevent disease prevalence and also combat against adverse effect of degenerative ageing. Preventive strategies such as Dinacharya, Ritucharya, personalized diet, and Panchakarma therapies are further strengthened by the intelligent use of medicinal plants. Herbal formulations like Chyawanprash, Triphala, and Guggulu preparations play a significant role in maintaining metabolic health, improving digestion, and preventing oxidative stress. The therapeutic potential of these Dravyas extends beyond symptomatic relief, as they help in strengthening tissues (Dhatus), enhancing cognitive function, and balancing Doshas to promote longevity.

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