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## AYURVEDA PERSPECTIVES ON AGEING AND NATURAL DRUGS RECOMMENDED TO COMBAT AGING

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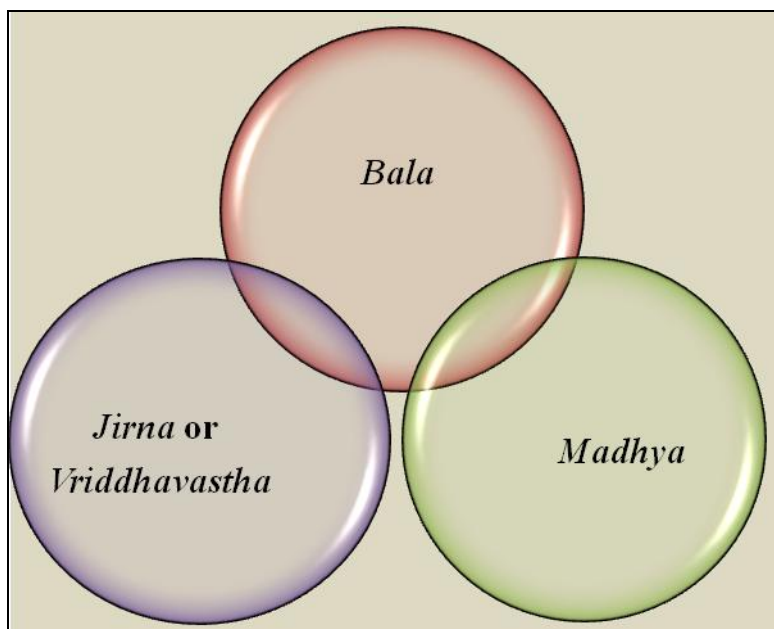
### Abstract

Ayurveda is globally accepted science of Indian medical system which provides ways of long and healthy living. Ayurveda mentioned several principles related to the health and diseases, Ayurveda not only focuses towards the physical well being but also paid huge emphasis towards mental and spiritual well being. As per Ayurveda body constitution depends upon five basic elements; *Panchamahabhuta* (space, air, fire, water, and earth). *Prakriti* (internal constitution) of person depends upon predominant combination of *Panchamahabhuta* and *Doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta* & *Kapha*). The vitiation or imbalances in *Doshas* may lead pathological and degenerative manifestations including ageing (*Vardhakya* / *Jara*). The ageing mainly depends upon time (*Kala*) since degenerative changes arises when person crosses middle of his/her ages. The ageing not only depends upon time but sometimes depletion of *Dhatus* and vitiation of *Doshas* may causes symptoms of ageing in early or middle age. Ayurveda drugs offer great advantages to combat against such situation. Ayurveda drugs such as; *Gotu-Kola*, sandalwood, *Amalaki*, *Guduchi*, *Brahmi*, *Turmeric*, *Ginseng* and *Ashwagandha*, etc. offers *Vayasthapana*, *Varnya*, *Tvachya* and *Shothahara*, etc. effects thus gives advantages to combat against ageing.

**Key-Words:** Ayurveda, Ageing, *Vardhakya*, *Jara*, Drugs.

## Introduction

The *life span of person from birth to death described as Ayu* and this period of lifespan can be divided into three parts as depicted in **Figure 1**. *Bala* is described as early stage of life and *Madhya* resembles middle stage of life while *Jirna* or *Vriddhavastha* is described as later stage of life. These stages differ from each other in terms of level of growth, enthusiasm and decay. The *Jirna* or *Vriddhavastha* considered as aging which resembles process of decaying and various degenerative changes. This degenerative change mainly arises with ageing process after middle age but sometimes many causative factors induce manifestations of early aging. Ayurveda described many approaches including balanced conduction of *Ahara-Vihara*, utilization of *Vayasthaprana drugs*, *meditation and Yoga*, etc. These all approaches of helps to maintain *Dhatusamya* (homeostasis) thus prevent consequences of early aging [1-5].



**Figure 1: Various stages of life as per Ayurveda**

### Ayurveda perspective on Ageing (*Jara / Vardhakya*):

*Jara* or *Vardhakya* (aging) is defined as degenerative stage of life that witnessed symptoms like loss of appetite, lack of enthusiasm, loss of luster, deficient mortar activities and physical weakness, etc. As per Ayurveda natural destructions

(*Swabhavoparamavada*), depletion of *Dhatus* and suppression of *Agni*, etc. can leads manifestation of ageing. As per Ayurveda *Shareera*, *Indriya*, *Satwa*, *Agni*, *Bala* and *Ojas*, etc. mainly get affected as aging progressed. The degenerative changes associated with *Jara* are considered as natural changes (*Kalaja Vriddhavastha*-natural aging). Sometimes these degenerative changes arise in early age resulting in *Akalaja vriddhavastha* (pathological aging) associated with mental and physical illness. Some of the factors that affect healthy aging are *Kala Parinama*, *Prakruti*, *Doshas*, *Ahara*, *Achara* and *Jatharagni*, etc [4-7].

*Kala Parinama* means time dependent transformation that significantly affects *Jara* or aging, *Kala Parinama* resembles physical and mental transformation associated with progressive time. The early and unhealthy transformation may triggers events of rapid aging, thus Ayurveda advocated balanced conduction of dietary and daily regimen to prevent early consequences of *Kala Parinama*.

*Prakruti* denotes biological constitution of person which includes anatomical, physiological and psychological constitution of an individual. *Prakruti* resembles strength of metabolism, immunity and digestive power, etc. thus, *Prakruti* affects biological transformation and person with weakened digestive and metabolic strength may become vulnerable to early ageing.

*Doshas* described as biological energy of systems that keeps person healthy if remain in balancing state, but disharmony of *Doshas* can leads pathological events including consequences of early ageing. *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* are three *Doshas* of body that controls anabolism and catabolism in body, thus *Doshas* can provokes or delays the process of aging.

*Prana*, *Tejas* and *Ojas* are considered subtle elements of body which performs specific role. *Prana* is subtle life energy, *Ojas* is subtle immunity and *Tejas* refers subtle vitality. *Prana* controls breath, *Tejas* represents overall strength while *Ojas* gives vitality and immunity. The lifespan and events of aging greatly depends upon status of *Prana*, *Tejas* and *Ojas*.

*Ahara* means diet is one of the important factor that influences overall health as well as aging (*Jara*) of person. *Gramya Ahara* (deficient food stuffs) along with disharmonious

lifestyle can triggers vitiation of *Doshas* leading to the pathological changes and ageing. Poor dietary practices, improper timing of food intake, processed & refined food and incompatible foods, etc. can decreases overall lifespan.

*Achara* is another factor that affects process of ageing; *Achara* resembles daily routines or life style regimen. The daily routine controls circadian rhythm that play vital role in the aging process. Ayurveda suggested some guidelines including *Dinacharya*, *Ratricharya* and *Ritucharya* for balancing daily routine and circadian rhythm. Harmonious lifestyle routines can helps to delay biological aging while awful conduction of life regimen can triggers early aging.

*Jatharagni* at biological level is one of the vital factors that affects health of individual and regulates the digestion, absorption and assimilation of *Ahara*. *Jatharagni* if works properly then it helps to nourish body therefore restore normal health and delay aging process. The disturbance of *Jatharagni* may affect process of digestion leading to the malabsorption and malnourishment which may results early ageing [6-9].

## **Ayurveda for Aging:**

### ***Skin Restoration:***

The major anti-aging therapies include *Urjaskara* (promotive) and *Vyadhihara* (curative) approaches. The skin that is *Vata* predominant possesses symptoms of dryness as aging gets progressed in such case nourishing and rehydrating drugs advocated. Warm oil massage helps to moisturizers skin, *Pitta* skin is susceptible for the situation like sun burn and itching, here cooling and soothing therapies are advises for curing skin. The *Kapha* predominate skin can be managed using oil massage and cleansing of skin also advocated for restoring skin health.

### ***Rejuvenation Therapy:***

Rejuvenation therapy of Ayurveda helps to establishes homeostasis (*Dhatusamyā*) thus maintains equilibrium in body. Health promoting *Rasayana* drugs and *Panchakarma* therapy rebuild the body, prevent degeneration and delay aging process. *Rasayana* maintain physical and mental health,

nourishes whole body, clears channels of body, boost immunity, circulation, strength and metabolic activities therefore suppresses degenerative changes responsible for early aging [8-12].

#### ***Anti-aging Herbs/Drugs:***

- ***Guduchi***
- ***Guggulu***
- ***Brahmi***
- ***Amalaki***
- ***Turmeric***
- ***Ginseng***
- ***Ashwagandha***

#### **Categories of Anti-aging herbs based on their Action:**

- ✚ ***Vayasthapana*** herbs preserve youthfulness and delay aging process. *Gotu-Kola* is *Vayasthapana* herb that enhances collagen synthesis.
- ✚ ***Varnya*** herbs brighten the skin's complexion. Herbs such as sandalwood, Indian madder and Indian sarsaparilla offers this effect.
- ✚ ***Sandhaniya*** herbs support repair mechanism and enhances process of regeneration thus boost up overall health of skin.
- ✚ ***Vranaropana*** herb cures lower layers of the skin and improves natural healing process.
- ✚ ***Tvachya*** herbs keeps skin hydrated and maintain moisture to the skin. Silk cotton tree, costus and rose petal, etc. are useful to impart ***Tvachya*** effect. Grapefruit extract nourishes skin and prevent aging since it is a source of vitamins A, C and E.
- ✚ ***Shothahara*** drugs gives anti-inflammatory action, these herbs protect skin from toxic chemicals and allergens. Aloe Vera and turmeric are important drugs which give *Shothahara* effect and promote skin appearance.

✚ ***Tvachagnivardhani*** herbs produce shining and luster in the skin and promotes intrinsic metabolism. *Centella asiatica* improves circulation, removes *Ama* and suppress effect of allergens thus prevent consequences of allergic skin responses.

✚ ***Tvagrasanaya*** herbs refine skin features and alleviate chronic ailments. *Amalaki* gives ***Tvagrasanaya*** effect since it is a source of Vitamin C, tannins and gallic acid thus imparts adaptogenic property.

## Conclusion

The aging is natural process which arises in due course of time and degenerative changes in body leads physiological events associated with aging. Sometimes aging may occur in early stage due to the indulgence in many causative factors including physical & mental exertion, anxiety, environmental pollutants, drug abuse, alcoholism and smoking habits, etc. These all factors along with awful conduction of *Ahara-Vihara* can vitiate *Doshas* and causes depletion of *Dhatus* thus leads consequences of early aging. Ayurveda suggested many drugs which helps to delay aging process, restore skin health, possess anti-oxidant effects, boost immunity against infective organism, prevents allergic response, gives anti-inflammatory and anti-stress properties thus resist pathological consequences of aging. ***Guduchi, Guggulu, Brahmi, Amalaki, Turmeric, Ginseng and Ashwagandha, etc. are important Ayurveda drugs which gives Vayasthapana, Varnya, Sandhaniya, Tvachya, Shothahara and Tvachagnivardhani effects. These Ayurveda herbs along with disciplinary conduction of Ahara-Vihara provide health benefits against aging.***

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