



AYURVEDA PERSPECTIVES ON AGING AND CONCEPT OF *JARA CHIKITSA* W.S.R. TO REJUVENATION THERAPY

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Abstract

Jara Avastha is the phase of later stage of life wherein the most significant decline of bodily elements is noticeable. Several alterations in the organs occur during this phase, which correspond to the periods of *Chhavi*, *Vridhhi*, *Twak* and *Medha*, etc. Ayurveda emphasizes an exceptional approach to promote health, prevent illnesses, and slow down the aging process through various measures. *Jarachikitsa* in Ayurveda represents a distinctive therapeutic methodology aimed at delaying aging and reducing the severity of issues experienced during this degenerative phase of life. *Jara Chikitsa* prevents early aging and delay symptoms of aging. *Jara Chikitsa* serves as a rejuvenating therapy that repairs wear and tear, rejuvenates body tissues, and combats the perpetual process of bodily degeneration. It not only halts the aging process but also imparts radiance to the skin, enriches the blood and tissues, fortifies the immune system and boosts energy, etc.

Key-Words: *Ayurveda, Jara Chikitsa, Aging, Rejuvenating, Rasayana*

Introduction

Jara is a term that signifies the phase of decline, particularly in reference to old age or the aging process, essentially characterizing a catabolic progression. According to *Acharya Charaka*, the vitiation of any substance has a specific cause, directly contributing to the vitiation of body elements. This vitiation always stems from vitiates. *Rasa Vagbhata* suggests that *Jara Avatha* arises due to factors such as excessive walking or traveling, consumption of cold food, intake of food lacking with *Jeevaniya* properties and an improper state of mind, etc. All these factors contribute to *Akalaja Jara*. Other causes associated with *Kalaja Jara* include *Kala*, *Swabhava* and *Karma Swabhava*. The early aging may enhance chances of some diseases which come under the heading of *Jaravyadhi* which mainly arises due to the degenerative process of aging [1-4].

Pathophysiology of *Jaravyadhi*

Srotodushti represents a critical phase in the routine pathogenesis of any disease. The onset of a disease occurs when there is a significant *Dosha-Dushya* amalgamation within a specific *Srotas*. These *Srotas* are responsible for transporting the *Dhatus* undergoing transformation to their intended destination. Consequently, when the *Dhatus* become vitiated, the *Srotas* are naturally affected as well. The *Apraenana Rasa Dhatu* triggers a series of distortions in subsequent *Dhatus*, leading to the gradual weakening of the *Dhatwagnis* at the *Saptadhatu* level. This process ultimately culminates in *Dhatukshaya*, denoting the emaciated condition typically observed in *Jara Vyadhi*.

Role of Ayurveda:

The process of aging encompasses a complex interplay of physical, psychological and social changes, impacting various dimensions of an individual's life. According to Ayurveda, the aging process is an outcome of *Kala*, with *Vata dosha* assuming a pivotal role in the pathophysiology of aging, owing to its natural prominence during this phase of life. Ayurveda presents a wide array of preventive measures to effectively counteract the early aging process. The various drugs or category of drugs (**Figure 1**) can be recommended to combat the symptoms of aging or early aging [4-6].

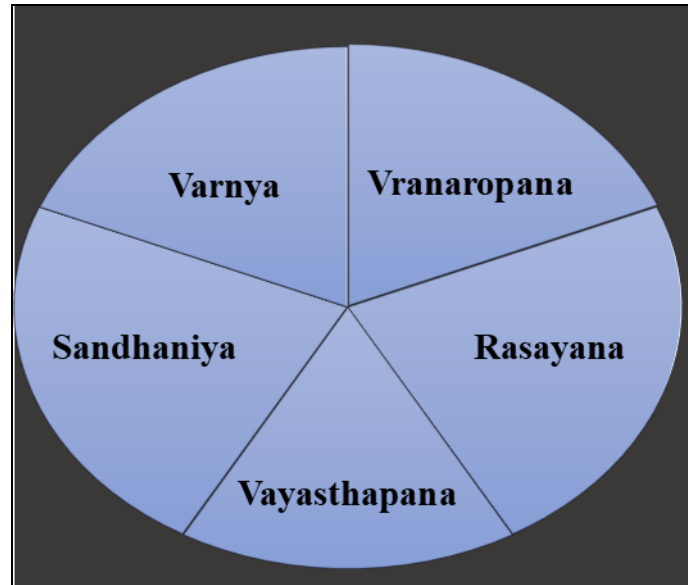


Figure 1: Ayurveda drugs for early aging

Drugs for Aging:

- *Vayasthapana* herbs work to defy the effects of aging, essentially preserving youthfulness or halting the aging process.
- *Varnya* herbs notably enhance the skin's complexion.
- *Vranaropana* herbs heal the skin's deeper layers, promoting overall skin health.
- *Sandhaniya* herbs aids in the repair of damages, facilitating the skin's regenerative functions.
- *Tvachagnivardhani* herbs enhance the skin's natural metabolism, adding an radiance to the skin.
- *Tvagrasanaya* herbs refine skin texture, prevents the onset of persistent skin ailments.
- *Tvachya* herbs provide nourishment to the skin, promoting hydration of skin.

Role of Rasayana / Rejuvenating Therapy:

The *Jara chikitsa* regimen entails a rigorous dietary plan, with herbs such as *Haritaki*, *Trifala*, *Amalaki*, *Brungaraj*, *Punarnava*, *Chitraka* and *Ashwagandha*, etc. These *Rasayana*

medicines are also believed to possess aphrodisiac properties. *Rasayana* not only provides physical rejuvenation but also offers spiritual revitalization, aiding the body in recovering from both natural and man-made setbacks. This therapy essentially enhances the *Ojas* and fortifies the immune system.

Rasayana primarily fosters nutrition through three distinct pathways. These include direct enhancement of the body's nutritional intake, bolstering *Agni* and emphasizes the fortification of the *Srotas* thereby regulate circulatory detoxification process in normal ways. Specific herbs, like *Ashvagandha* and *Shiljatu*, counteract the effects of stress, while others, such as *Gambhari*, enhance nitrogen balance and foster tissue development. *Guggulu* aids in clearing channels and improving nutrition to all tissues and cells. Antioxidant-rich herbs like *Amalaki* and *Bala* assist in scavenging free radicals, whereas *Acharya Rasayana* reducing stress and preventing the release of free radicals. *Rasayana* approach aims to enhance overall immunity, enabling individuals to lead a prolonged, disease-free life, promoting physical and mental well-being. These aspects collectively underscore Ayurveda's belief in fortifying a person's general immunity to combat various illnesses associated with aging [6-8].

The process of *Vaya Sthapna* involves maintaining the physical and mental well-being in alignment with one's age. Within the *Charaka Samhita*, a specific category of medications known as *Vaya Sthapak* is outlined, consisting of some renowned drugs, which includes; *Amrita*, *Abhaya*, *Dhatri*, *Mukta*, *Sveta*, *Jivanti*, *Atirasa*, *Mandukparni*, *Sthira* and *Punarnava*. These drugs are recognized for their ability to promote longevity and overall well-being.

Rasayana preserves the natural and optimal structure and functionality of body cells. Through *Rasayana* therapy, abnormal cells can be normalized, and damaged cells can undergo repair and regeneration. *Rasayana* maintains cells and their constituents in a healthy state, Some *Rasayana* stimulate the generation of new cells or enhance the vitality of aging cells. These therapies should be prescribed based on the condition of *Shareer Dhatu*. *Rasayana*, such as *Amalaki Rasayana* and *Chayvanprash* can be added in daily routines to maintain normal functioning of body and to restore immunity against common

infections. These *Rasayana* works appreciably against the degenerative process of aging and reduces common manifestations of early aging [5-7].

Management of Skin Health in Progressive Aging:

As per Ayurvedic principles, multiple factors contribute to maintaining skin health and preserving its youthful appearance. These encompass the maintenance of adequate moisture balance, efficient functioning of the metabolic mechanisms that govern various chemical and hormonal reactions of the skin, and proper circulation of blood and nutrients to the diverse layers of the skin. The skin's condition often reflects the well-being of three key body tissues: *Rasa*, *Rakta* and *Mamsa*. Any effective anti-aging regimen must offer comprehensive support to these essential areas.

The anti-aging treatment comprises two types of therapies: *Urjaskara* and *Vyadhihara*. For maintaining youthful *Vata* skin, it is essential to utilize skin care products that can effectively nourish and rehydrate the skin, thereby minimizing the risk of wrinkles and premature aging. Incorporating warm oil self-massage and the application of all-natural moisturizers may prove beneficial. In the case of *Pitta* skin, the use of quality sunscreens for sun protection is vital, along with the regular application of suitable facial skin oils. It is advisable to refrain from tanning treatments and therapies that subject delicate, sensitive skin to prolonged exposure to steam or heat. As for *Kapha* skin, a daily warm oil massage and skin cleansing are recommended [7-10].

Conclusion

Jara Chikitsa, the revitalizing therapy, serves the purpose of promoting rejuvenation in healthy individuals and addressing the ailments in diseased person. Its primary objective is to revitalize the body tissues, fostering a sense of youthfulness. *Jara Chikitsa* is often associated with the elderly; it is also utilized preventatively to counteract diseases and undesirable bodily changes. This therapy not only strengthens the immune system and halts the aging process, but it also contributes to maintaining optimal mental faculties, including a sharp memory and robust physical strength. Additionally, it bestows radiance, a

healthy complexion, and a youthful energy, nourishing the body and delay degenerative changes associated with aging process.

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