

IMPORTANCE OF GHRITA IN OLD AGE

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ABSTRACT :

Aged state is a condition in which decline of functional capacity; physical, mental or both has become manifest, measurable and adoptively significant. Currently, population ageing is occurring at a rapid rate particularly in the developing regions of the world like India. Consequently more and more people are surviving into old age, having increased life expectancy. Hence a multi dimensional approach is essential to provide a good quality life to older people. It comprises not only curative but also non-curative methods of care such as preventive, rehabilitative and terminal care. In Ayurveda, *Ghrita* is indicated in old age being best among all the *Snehas* and *Vayasthapana*. *Ghrita* plays an important role in controlling *vata dosha*, which is the main causative factor of old age. The presence of Mahabhutas and *Gunas* in *Ghrita* helps to maintain the health of old age persons from deterioration. Being best among all the *Snehas* and *Vayasthapana*, maintains the normal functions of *Doshas*, *Dhatus*, *Malas* and adds to the essence of *Ojas*. Hence *Ghrita* is considered as par excellence and drug of choice in old age.

Key words: Ghrita. old age, senile problems

INTRODUCTION: Ageing is a slow process that refers to the impact of passage of time on structure and function of different systems of body. Full growth potential is realized up to the third decade of life beyond which significant structural and functional changes of ageing slowly begins to appear. By age 50 or 60, these changes begin to clinically reflect as functional limitations like reduced power, vision, memory, locomotory function, exertional breathlessness¹.

Different opinion to consider an individual old. Age > 70 yrs (Sushruta), Age > 60 yrs (Charaka), Age > 65 yrs (WHO)¹.

The ageing process described by Acharya Sharangadhara states the decline of structural and functional components of body in every decade of life from birth to death².

Age in years	Loss of impact
01-10	Balya
10-20	Vridhhi
20-30	Chavi

30-40
40-50
50-60
60-70
70-80
80-90

Medha
Twak
Drushti
Shukra
Vikrama
Buddhi
Karmendriya

Currently, population ageing is occurring at a rapid rate particularly in the developing regions of the world like India. Consequently more and more people are surviving into old age, having increased life expectancy. Out of the global population of 6 billion people, 600 million are elderly. This figure will increase in next 25 yrs, implying the growth rate of older population. Hence a multi dimensional approach is essential to provide a good quality life to older people. It comprises not only curative but also non-curative methods of care such as preventive, rehabilitative and terminal care³. In Ayurveda, *Ghrita* is indi-

cated in old age being best among all the Snehas and Vayasthapana.

METHODOLOGY:

*Vayo ahoratri bukthanam te anta madhyadigaha kramat*⁷.

In old age, vata dosha is predominant causing vataja disorders.

Sarpihi vatapitta prashamananam (shreshtam) 5. As Ghrita is having opposite gunas of vata it is considered as best to mitigate vata.

Ghrita contains Prithvi and Jala Mahabhutas.

The karmas of these are: Tat sthairya bala gourava sanghata upachayakaram vishesatascha adhogati swabhavamiti⁶.

Tat snehana hrladana kledana bandhana vishyandana karamiti⁶.

Prithvi and Jala Mahabhutas helps in nourishment of the body, promotion of strength, downward movement of vata. Hence useful in restriction of muscle wasting, general weakness, loss of strength in old age.

Ghrita Contains Snigdha and Guru Gunas!

The karmas of these are:

*Snehamardavakrit snigdho balavarna karastatha*⁶.

Snigdha and Guru Gunas helps in mitigation of Vata dosha and maintenance of Kapha dosha, hence useful in physical inactivity, myalgia, fatigue, constipation in old age.

*Ghrita as Madhura rasa*⁵.

Ghrita having Madhura rasa which is *Saptadhatu vardhaka, Marutaghna, Tarpana,*

Balakara, Shadindriya prasada. Hence useful in weight loss, decreased sensorial Functions, insomnia, impaired memory in old age.

*Madhuryat avidahitwat janmadhyeva cha shilana*⁷.

Due to *Madhurata, Avidaahita, Ghrita* can be used right from the birth onwards. Then why not in old age?

Shastikashali mudganscha saindhavamalake yavan.

*Antariksham payaha sarpi jangalam madhu cha abhyaset*⁵.

Ghrita can be taken along with other food items even in old age.

Use of *Ghrita* along with food items.

Snigdamashniyat Snigdam hi bhujyamanam swadatte, bhuktam cha anudirnamagnim udirayati, kshipram jaram gachati, vatam anulomayati, shariram upachinoti, dhrdi karoti indriyani, balabi vridhim upajanayati, varna prasadam cha abhi nirvartayati; tasmāt Snigdamashniyat 5.

Bhujyamanam swadatte - Old age persons can take the food with pleasant mind.

Anudirnamagnim udirayati - Useful in loss of appetite.

Kshipram jaram gachati - Helps to digest the food quickly.

Vatam anulomayati - Useful in constipation.

Shariram upachinoti - Useful in under-nourishment.

Dhrdi karoti indriyani - Useful in decreased sensorial functions.

Balabi vridhim upajanayati - Useful in loss of strength.

Varna prasadam nirvartayati - Useful in decreased complexion.

Fat in the diet is needed for efficient absorption of crucial lipid soluble vitamins such as A, D, E, and K. The stomach lining which protects the stomach from the acids secretes to help breakdown foods, needs fat to maintain a healthy coating by balancing excess gastric acid. A totally fat free diet can actually accelerate ageing of the skin, nerves and brain

cells. Without an adequate quantity of the right kind of fat in the diet, cell regeneration can be adversely impacted. Hence diet containing fat is needed to check the ageing process⁴.

*Snehasaro ayam purushaha pranashcha sneha bhuyishtaha*⁶....

Due to predominant of vatadosha in oldage, snehamsha will be decreased which leads to generalized weakness, insomnia, constipation, fatigue, myalgia etc. So Ghrita, which is Sneha dravya is to be taken in oldage to protect the life from senile problems.

Snehashcha dhatun sansushkan pushnatyashu upayojitaha.

*Balamagnibalam pushtim pranashchasya abhivardhate*⁷.

Nutritional status of older persons is commonly inadequate. In India, 38% of 70+ individuals suffer from Chronic energy deficiency and 47.4% from Anaemia.

As Ghrita is best Sneha dravya is useful in undernourishment and loss of strength in old age.

Snehat vatam shamayati, shaityat pittam niyachati.

Ghritam tulyagunam dosham sansakarattu jayet kapham.

Nanyaha snehastatha kashchit sansakaram anuvartate.

*Yatha sarpirataha sarpihi sarva snehottamam matam*⁵.

Ghrita is not only useful in Vataja disorders but also in Pittaja and Kaphaja disorders in oldage.

Ghrita as Vaya Sthapana.

*Snehanam uttamam sheetam vayasaha sthapanam param*⁷.

Ghrita is best Vayasthapana dravya, hence necessary in old age.

The definition of Vayasthapana is

Yavat ayuhu sukham jivet prani yena jaram vina.

*Tavathadapi vijneyam vayasaha sthapanam param*⁸.

That which makes life happier without causing any Senile problems are termed as Vayasthapana.

As Ghrita controls vata dosha which is necessary to sustain all the activities of the body, maintains saptadhatus which is necessary to perform all the functions of the body and adds to ojas which is essential to lead a life. Hence Ghrita which maintains the normal health and delays ageing process is considered as best Vayasthapaka.

Ghrita as Shoshahara:

Jara shoshi krisho manda veeryabudhibalendriyaha.

Kampano aruchiman bhinnakansyapatra hataswaraha.

Shtivati sleshmana hinam gourava aruchi piditaha.

*Sanprasrutasya nasakshaha suptaruksha malachavihi*⁶.

As Ghrita is Brimhana, Snehana, Medhya, Balakara, Chakshushya,

Marutaghna, Swarya, Mridukara is useful in Jara shosha.

Yada purusho atimatram shokachinta parigata hridayo bhavati,

Irshyotkantha bhaya krodhadibhirva samavishyate, krisho va san

Ruksha annapanasevi bhavati, durbala prakritihi anaharo alpaharo

Va bhavati, tada tasya hridayasthayi rasaha kshayamupaiti, sa tasya

*Upakshayat shosham prapnoti*⁵.....

Ageing is one of the biological phenomenon affecting physical as well as mental disorders in people. Rasa dhatu residing in the heart gets diminished due to the following factors.

Shoka – Due to loss of occupation, loss of adaptation, loss of status and loss of skill.

Chinta – Due to loss of physical strength and loss of income.

Krodha – Due to loss of freedom and loss of confidence.

In fact, loneliness, depression, events of bereavement and negative attitude of family and society are other accompaniments. Also, intake of food in lesser quantity or fasting due to above reasons. From the above factors, due to diminution of *rasadhātu*, the individual will be afflicted with *Shosha*. As *Ghrita* is *Shoshahara*, Hence advisable in old age to combat with Problems of Senility.

DISCUSSION: Aged state is a condition in which decline of functional capacity; physical, mental or both has become manifest, measurable and adoptively significant. Hence a necessary check to resist old age problems is needed.

Ghrita plays an important role in controlling vata dosha, which is the main causative factor of old age. The presence of *Mahabhutas* and *Gunas in Ghrita* helps to maintain the health of old age persons from deterioration. The *madhura rasa* of it not only nourishes the body and maintains strength but also initiates the desire of intake of food. Being best among all the *Snehas* and *Vayasthapana*, maintains the normal functions of *Doshas, Dhatus, Malas* and adds to the essence of *Ojas*.

Hence *Ghrita* is considered as par excellence and drug of choice in old age.

Cholesterol in the body serves functions that are crucial to health, such as building cell membranes, hormones and bile balance. It is when cholesterol is damaged by harmful free radicals that it leads to clogged arteries and heart problems. Low levels of antioxidants may enhance the production of oxidized LDL and are important independent risk factors for coronary disease. Population is advised to eat a mixed diet with fruit and vegetables as

well as meat and dairy products, to prevent coronary disease.

As Ghee contains antioxidants can be used in the diet to maintain the health. Thus Ghee is necessary in restriction of ageing process and related disorders.

CONCLUSION: Hence *Ghrita* play a vital role in old age by combating with senile problems and delaying ageing process.

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Declared

