

ROLE OF RASAYANA IN THE MANAGEMENT OF GERIATRICS

Review article

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ABSTRACT

The development of any country depends on the number of youths, but with the continuous improvement in life expectancy, the number of older persons has been increasing regularly over the past few decades. With the increase in the number of elderly people, the problems of old age is also increasing. Therefore, there is an urgent need to consider this area. Geriatric in Ayurveda is the branch of medicine that deals with aging problems. The word *Rasayana*(*rasa+ayana*) refers to the nourishment and formation of best qualities of the *Dhatus*, promotes *Jatharagni* and *Dhatwagni*. It rejuvenate the body on both physical and mental health. So *Rasayana* is one of the best *Vayasthapak*(increase healthy life span) and complete health care measures for old aged people. The present article takes review on use of *Rasayana* in Geriatric health care.

Key words: Ayurveda, Jara, Rasayana, Geriatric, Ayu

INTRODUCTION:

Old age (*Jara*) is an inevitable phenomenon of life. It is a *Swabhavabalapravrittavyadhi* (instinctive disease) like *Kshuda* (hunger), *Pipasa* (thirst), *Nidra*(sleep) and *Mrityu*(death).¹ Synonyms of old age has been referred as *Vriddha*, *Vriddhakaya*, *Jara*etc.

Acharya Charak has classified life span in to three categories²-

- *Balyawastha* (childhood)=0-16 yrs
- *Madhyawastha*(middle age)= 16-60 yrs
- *Jeernawastha* (old age)= above 60 yrs

Acharya Sushruta has also classified life span in to three categories³-

- *Balyawastha* (childhood)= 0-16 yrs
- This *balyawastha* is further classified as *Kshirap*, *Kshirannad*, *Annad*.
- *Madhyawastha*= 16-70yrs
- *Jeernawastha*= above 70 yrs

Jeevan and *Ayu* are two completely different words which are similar to the

Ayurvedic words '*Ayu*' and '*Vaya*'. '*Ayu*' is a continuous process whereas '*Vaya*' is that part of life which has been enjoyed or is being enjoyed.

Types of aging-

1. ***Kalaja***(Natural Aging)-Which is due to age i.e. happens on or after 60 years and even after following the daily and seasonal routines described in our *Samhitas* and use of *Shodhana*(purification) in due course (*parirakshanakrita*).⁴ It is slowly progressive, of low intensity and not very troublesome.

2. ***Akalaja*** (premature Aging)-Which occurs before the age of 60 years and is caused by improper observance of personal hygiene and purification.⁵ It is more intense and rapidly progressive and is said to be treatable with *Rasayana* therapy according to the *Dosha* and diseases or the stage of aging.

Jaravastha usually progresses slowly and begins around age 60 and the effects are

most visible by age 70.

Table 1. Showing qualities lost in every decade of life

Decades of life	According to Sharangadhara ⁶	According to Ashtanga Sangraha ⁷
I st	<i>Balya</i> (childhood)	<i>Balya</i> (childhood)
II nd	<i>Vriddhi</i> (Growth)	<i>Vriddhi</i> (Growth)
III rd	<i>Chavi</i> (lusture)	<i>Prabha</i> (lusture)
IV th	<i>Medha</i> (intellect)	<i>Medha</i> (intellect)
V th	<i>Twak</i> (skin)	<i>Twak</i> (skin)
VI th	<i>Shukra</i> (reproduction)	<i>Akshi</i> (Vision)
VII th	<i>Akshi</i> (Vision)	<i>Shukra</i> (reproduction)
VIII th	<i>Shruti</i> (hearing)	<i>Virya</i> (valour)
IX th	<i>Manas</i> (mind)	<i>Buddhi</i> (reasoning)
X th	<i>Sarva-Indriyani</i> (sensory and motor)	<i>Karmendriya</i> (motor organs)
XI th	-	<i>Manas</i> (mind)
XII th	-	<i>Ayu</i> (life)

The progressive physiological changes in physical and mental health- During this period decline in *Dhatu* (tissue), *Indriya* (sense organs), *Bala* (strength), *Virya* (virility), *Grahana* (acquisition), *Dharna* (retention), recollection, *Vachana* (speech), *Vigyan* (knowledge), *Agni* (digestion and metabolism), *Utsaha*, *Vali* (wrinkled skin), *Palitya* (grey hairs), *Khalitya* (baldness), *Kasa*, *Swasa*, *Vepatu* (tremors) and understanding generally or gradually degenerate. This phase is predominated by *Vayu*.⁸⁻¹⁰

Jara is not only a decomposition of biosystem, but it also predisposes to a set of diseases and disorders requiring specialized medical care in the older person. Gerontology thus becomes an important clinical discipline whose professional load is increasing significantly with the increasing number of older people in the population in India as well.

Classification of *Rasayana*-

A. According to the mode of administration¹¹-

1. *Kutipraveshik Rasayana* (Indoor Regimen)

2. *Vatatapika Rasayana* (Outdoor Regimen)

B. According to the object-

1. *Kamya Rasayana*¹²- for promotion of general, mental and physical health of healthy persons.

- *Prankamya*-One who promotes longevity and life span.
- *Medhyakamya*-Who improves mental faculties.
- *Shrikamya*-Which improves beauty and lusture of body.

2. *Naimittika Rasayana*-Used to cure some particular diseases.

3. *Ajasrika Rasayana*-Dietary *Rasayana*

C. Specific *Rasayana* according to activities-

1. *Medhya Rasayana*- For rejuvenation of brain and mental health.

2. *Achara Rasayana*- Practicing good conduct and desirable behaviour in every aspect of life is a type of *Rasayana* therapy and provides the person with all the benefits of using *Rasayana*.

Rasayana for Geriatric care/Healthy aging: *Rasayana* is one of the eight clinical specialities of classical Ayurveda¹³. The mainstay of *Rasayana* is prompt and proper nutrition which improves the biological potential of the body. *Rasayana* for geriatric care is not a drug therapy but a special process which is carried out in the form of rejuvenating recipes, dietary regimens and special health promoting practices and behaviours

(*Achar Rasayana*). The speciality of *Rasayana* is a quick and proper nutrition which improves the biological potential of the body. It increases longevity without senile decay, enhanced intelligence and memory, good health, youthfulness, complexion, voice, excellence of lusture, improved body strength, pleasant beauty, sense perception (*Vak-Siddhi*) and freedom from diseases.¹⁴

Table 2. Rasayana drugs description from classical texts-

Rasayana description in Charak Samhita¹⁵(ch.chikitsasthana 1)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ChayavanaPrasha</i> • <i>Amalaka Ghrita</i> • <i>Amalaka Rasayana</i> • <i>Amalaka Churna</i> • <i>Amalakavaleha</i> • <i>Vidangavaleha</i> • <i>NagabalaRasayana</i> • <i>AtibalaRasayana</i> • <i>Amrita Rasayana</i> • <i>Mukta Rasayana</i> • <i>SthiraRasayana</i> • <i>BhallatakaKshira</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>LauhadiRasayana</i> • <i>MandukaRasayana</i> • <i>PippaliVardhmanaRasayana</i> • <i>ShilajatuRasayana</i> • <i>BalaRasayana</i> • <i>AguruRasayana</i> • <i>DhatriRasayana</i> • <i>MandukparniRasayana</i> • <i>PunarnavaRasayana</i> • <i>BhallatakaGuda</i> • <i>AindraRasayana</i> • <i>PippaliRasayana</i> • <i>TriphalaRasayana</i>

Table 3 Rasayana description in Sushruta Samhita¹⁶

Rasayana description in Sushruta Samhita¹⁶(Chikitsasthana chp.27-28)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>MandukaparniRasayana</i> • <i>Brahmi GhritaRasayana</i> • <i>BalamoolRasayana Yoga</i> • <i>VarahikandRasayana Yoga</i> • <i>AayuvardhakaRasayana</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ShatapakaVachaGhrita</i> • <i>Brahmi SwarasaRasayana</i> • <i>VachaRasayana</i> • <i>VijayasaraadiRasayana Yoga</i>

Table.4 Rasayana description in Ashtanga Hridaya

Rasayana description in Ashtanga Hridaya¹⁷(Uttara tantra 39)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Amalaki Swarasa</i> • <i>Punarnava Kalk with Dugdh (milk)</i> • <i>Shatavari Ghrita</i> • <i>Bhringaraja Swarasa</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Amalakyadi Churna</i> • <i>Muraadi Kalk</i> • <i>Ashwagandha with Dugdh and Ghrita</i> • <i>Vacha with Dugdh, tail and Ghrita</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Langlyadi Vati Narsimha Taila 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narsimha Ghrita
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Rasayana drugs according to Vaya
(Age)-According to Acharya Sharangadhar a person loses his *Balya*, *Vridhi*, *Chavi*, *Medha*, *Twaka*, *Drishti*,

Shukra, *Vikrama*, *Buddhi*, *Karmendriya* in the ten phasic sequential decades of life. These all may be restored by age specific *Rasayana* drugs.

Table 5. The decade wise losses and advised Rasayana ¹⁸⁻

Age Group	Loss	Suitable Rasayana Dravyas
1-10	<i>Balya</i> (corpulence)	<i>Vacha</i> , <i>Swarna</i> , <i>Kashmari</i>
11-20	<i>Vridhi</i> (growth)	<i>Kashmari</i> , <i>Ashwagandha</i> , <i>Bala</i>
21-30	<i>Chavi</i> (lusture)	<i>Amalaki</i> , <i>Lauha</i>
31-40	<i>Medha</i> (intellect)	<i>Jyotishmati</i> , <i>Shankhpushpi</i>
41-50	<i>Twaka</i> (skin glow)	<i>Tuvaraka</i> , <i>Bhringraja</i> , <i>Jyotishmati</i>
51-60	<i>Drishti</i> (vision)	<i>Jyotishmati</i> , <i>Lauha</i> , <i>Triphala</i> , <i>Shatavari</i>
61-70	<i>Shukra</i> (virility)	<i>Atmagupta</i> , <i>Ashwagandha</i> and other <i>Vajikarana</i> drugs
71-80	<i>Vikrama</i> (strength)	Not effective
81-90	<i>Buddhi</i> (reasoning)	Not effective
91-100	<i>Karmendriya</i> (motor organs)	Not effective

Rasayana drugs according to specific Dhatu- *Dhatus* decreases due to degeneration in old age. Specific *Rasayana* for specific *Dhatu* provide nourishment and prevention from diseases.

Table 6. showing Rasayana drugs according to specific Dhatu

1.	<i>Rasa Dhatu</i>	<i>Draksha</i> , <i>Kasamari</i> , <i>Kharjura</i>
2.	<i>Rakta Dhatu</i>	<i>LauhadiRasayana</i> , <i>Bhringaraja</i> , <i>Amalaki</i> , <i>Palandu</i>
3.	<i>Mansa Dhatu</i>	<i>Bala</i> , <i>Nagabala</i> , <i>Salaparni</i> , <i>Ashwagandha</i> , <i>Mansa</i>
4.	<i>Medha Dhatu</i>	<i>Amrita</i> , <i>Haritaki</i> , <i>Gugullu</i> , <i>Shilajatu</i>
5.	<i>Asthi Dhatu</i>	<i>PrishnaParni</i> , <i>Laksha</i> , <i>Shankha</i> , <i>Shukti</i> , <i>Vanshlochana</i>
6.	<i>Majja Dhatu</i>	<i>Vasa</i> , <i>Majja</i> , <i>Lauha</i>
7.	<i>Shukra Dhatu</i>	<i>Atamgupta</i> , <i>Ashwagandha</i> , <i>Shatavari</i> and other <i>Vajikarana</i> drugs.

Naimittika Rasayana (Disease specific Rasayana)-Although *Rasayana Chikitsa* is primarily a positive health discipline, Ayurvedic literature places great emphasis on the scope of *Rasayana Chikitsa* in the

management of specific diseases. These are known as *Naimittika Rasayana* and they are very important. It should be very clear that *Naimittika Rasayana* is not a specific medical treatment for a particular

disease, rather it is an adjunct to a specific therapy.

Table 7. Some of the Naimittika Rasayana in specific diseases¹⁹

1.	<i>Drishti Mandhya</i>	<i>Yashtimadu, Triphala, Shtavari, Jyotishmati</i>
2.	<i>Kushtha</i>	<i>Bhallataka, Tuvaraka, Vidanga, Somaraji, Gandhaka</i>
3.	<i>Raj Yakshma</i>	<i>Pippali, Shilajatu, Rasona, Nagabala</i>
4.	<i>Shwasa</i>	<i>Bhallataka, Shirish, Haridra, Agastya Rasayana</i>
5.	<i>Prameha</i>	<i>Shilajatu, Haridra, Amalaki, Guduchi, Jambu, Methika</i>
6.	<i>Hridroga</i>	<i>Arjuna, Guggulu, Shalaparni,</i>
7.	<i>GrahnievamGulmRoga</i>	<i>Bhallataka, Pippali</i>
8.	<i>Pandu</i>	<i>Lauha, Mandura, Makshik</i>
9.	<i>VataVyadhi</i>	<i>Gugullu, Bala, Nagabala, Rasona</i>
10.	<i>MedoRoga</i>	<i>Gugullu, Haritaki, Vcha, Puskarmula</i>

***Achara Rasayana*²⁰-**

It is important to emphasize that *Rasayana* is not just a medicine. It is an approach which can be achieve by *Rasayana* diet, *Rasayana* behaviour and conduct as well as *Rasayana* drugs. An individual who is truthful, free from anger, devoid of wine and sex indulgence, non violent, relaxed, calm, soft spoken, engaged in meditation and cleanliness, perseverance, observing charity, penance, worshiping gods, cow, *Brahmanas*, *Gurus*, preceptors and elders, loving and compassionate, regular periods of awakening and sleep, consumes routinely ghee extracted from milk, considering the measure of place and time with propriety, un-conceited, well behaved, simple, with his senses well concentrated to spirituality, keeping company of elders, positivist, self restrained and devoted to holy books should be regarded as using the *Rasayana* forever.

An aspirant who leads such a life and practices virtue, attains the *Rasayana* effect i.e. longevity, immunity and intellectual power without the use of any medicine for that purpose. Possibly the code of *Achara Rasayana* keeps the aspirant free from emotional disturbances and allows a less stressful life with a

pronounced anabolic state for proper health and happiness. *Ayurveda* appears to be very emphatic on this issue, which is why it introduces the concept of *Achara Rasayana* as a rejuvenating practice.

***Medhya Rasayana*²¹-**

In principle, all the *Rasayana* agent are promote both body and mind and thus promote *Medha*, an important attribute of *Buddhi Rasayana*. However *Ayurvedic* texts describe certain *Rasayanas* that specifically affect *Medha* and promote mental ability. Such *Rasayana* are called *Medhya Rasayana*. In *Charak Samhita* four *Medhya Rasayana* are described they are:

1. *MandukaParnee Swarasa*
2. *Mulethi Choorna*
3. *Guduchi Swarasa*
4. *Shankhpushpi*.

All of these drugs provide psychotropic, tranquilizing and hypotensive effects in the body, thus improving sleep, memory and work capacity of individuals with a promotional effect on mental health.

DISCUSSION-

Rasayana is one of the eight clinical speciality of classical *Ayurveda*. It appears to have been practiced in ancient times as an important feature in rejuvenation and geriatric care. The main objectives of

Rasayana therapy are; to counteract the vitiation of *Vata* during old age, inhibit the tissue depletion (*Dhatukshaya*) and maintain the qualities of tissue (*Prashast Dhatus*), enhance the strength (*Bala*) and promote the digestion and metabolism (*Jatharagni* and *Dhatvagni*). *Rasayana* is not a drug therapy, but a special process which is performed in the form of rejuvenating recipes, dietary regimen and special health promoting conduct and behaviour i.e. *Achara Rasayana*. The word *Rasayana* (*Rasa+Ayana*)refers to nutrition and its transport in the body. Such a state of improved nutrition is claimed to lead to a variety of secondary properties such as resistance to disease, prevention of aging and longevity, psychic ability, increased vitality and body radiance.

CONCLUSION-

Jara is a natural phenomenon. It cannot be stopped but it can be delayed by proper use of *Rasayana*. As long as it is an integral part of an integrated lifestyle with *Aushadha* (medicine), *Aahara* (diet) and *Achara* (conduct), *Rasayana* has all the components to rejuvenate and build up the physiology in a harmonious manner. *Rasayana* is not a magic bullet. As exam time is not the right time for *Medhya Rasayana* (improvement of intelligence), old age is also not the right time for *Vayasthapana* (to stop the aging process). It should be taken systematically from the beginning of life to prevent premature aging or to achieve healthy aging.

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