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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### GERIATRIC CARE THROUGH AYURVEDA JOB SATISFACTION

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#### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the holistic science of life and longevity. Aging is a multi dimensional process of physical, physiological and social changes. Population aging is a matter of great significance because of its likely impact on public health and socioeconomic growth of the nation. Ayurveda offers a great treasure of geriatric care. In geriatric care Ayurveda works for prevention of disease and delaying the process of aging to achieve a healthy aging life. With numbers of measures mentioned in our texts as like rasayana therapy, time to time panchakarma, use of herbal drugs, Swasthavritta, Sadvritta, Yoga and spirituality. There is a need to generate awareness among the mass about the consequences of population aging and about the strength of ayurveda in geriatric health care. So that prevention and management of health problems could help the elderly to improve quality of life and remain self dependent for their daily activities to maximum possible extent. This can be a step towards a healthy nation.

**Key words:** Ayurvedajo, Swasthavritta, Sadvritta, Yoga and spirituality.

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#### INTRODUCTION

The recent years have shown significant increase in the no. of elderly in the population world over due to the declining birth rate of death in elderly age group. Most of the world believe that population aging is going to remain the most significant demographic trend of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which will influence a wide range of public issues of our time warranting newer strategies of socioeconomic and health care management.<sup>1</sup> Like many countries, there is significant increase in the elderly population in our country. This demands development of newer health care strategies for the growing section of the elderly population as the coming decades will encounter large no. of victims of age related disorders. Ayurveda is the most ancient science of life, health and cure, practised in India for thousands of years based on its own unique fundamental principles, material medica and pharmacy. Promotion of health, prevention of diseases and promotion of longevity are its main concern. Because of its pronature holistic approach and its safe cost effective green pharmacy and rejuvenative measures like Panchakarma and Rasayana therapy, Ayurveda is becoming more and more popular today. Ayurveda which is holistic system of health care also deals with Geriatric problems in a cost effective and safe manner. House-hold remedies, traditional food, simple ayurvedic preparations and Yoga practices have important role to play in Geriatric care.

Considering the obvious strength of Ayurveda, it is need of today to make a concrete plan for the management of Geriatric care through Ayurveda.



INDIA AGEING			
POPULATION	121 crore	WOMEN	58.76 crore
Over 60	10.39 crore	Over 60	5.28 crore
% share	8.6%	% share	9%
MEN	62.3 crore	Over 60 in 2001	7.6 crore
Over 60	5.11 crore	Over 60 in 2011	10.3 crore
% share	8.2%	% increase	35.5%

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## Elderly and aging phenomenon

As per United Nation & Consensus criteria:-60 years or above are ELDERLY.<sup>2</sup> The life is a time bound phenomenon. The man is born, grows to adulthood, passes to senility and ultimately dies. Still a long healthy life is the most cherished wish for man for which Vedas to pray “Jivema Saradah Satam, Pasyema Saradah Satam “ and so on.<sup>3</sup> According to Ayurveda Aging is the Swabhava of life. Besides the “Swabhava factor” of aging, there can be range of environmental factors which accelerates aging process such as nutritional deficits, stress, climatic factors, immune disorder and endocrinal factors. Ayurveda believes that aging occurs only in the body and mind, not in the real essence of life i.e its conscious component which is eternal and it only changes the body which is created by nature for one life span and ends there through aging and death. Ayurveda links the phenomenon of aging with the doctrine of Tridosha. In principles the childhood is embedded with the kapha in the body, adulthood with pitta and old age with vatadosa. Vatadosha, by nature, dries and decays the body and produces senile changes. Thus the phenomenon of aging can be evaluated in terms of Tridosh theory with yukti of samanya and visesa.

Age	Tridosh predominance
Young age	Kapha
Adult age	Pitta
Old age	Vata

Other important factors of aging process are weakening of Agni, loss of integrity of Srotamsi and Ojabala. Hence geriatric care warrants management of agni, ama and ojabala at biological level. Western biosciences have been trying hard to identify the causes of aging. A no. of theories and observations have been given as like Genetic theory of aging, Immunological theory, Free radical theory, stress theory and so on. But none of those have yet been proven. However, research had proved that aging is multifactorial phenomenon.<sup>4</sup>

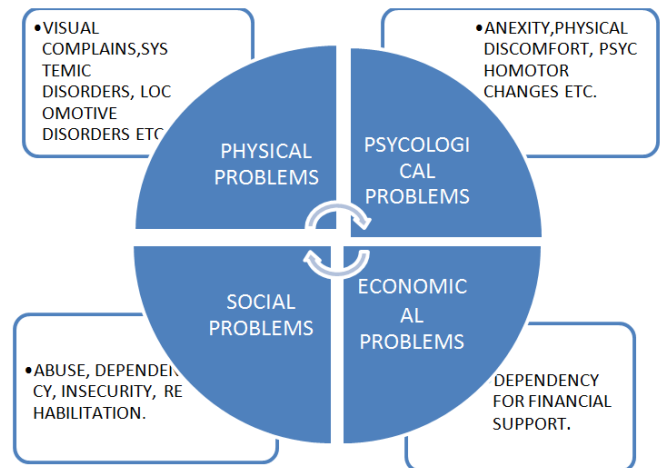
## Issues in geriatric health care

Geriatric problems are usually multifactorial. In Elderly mostly disease are reported late due to socio economic factors, dementia or marking of symptoms by comorbidities. Clinical features of disease have to be differentiated from those due to normal ageing or disuse phenomenon. Certain pattern of presentation of disease is mostly particular to elderly<sup>5</sup> i.e



- Immobility,
- Instability (falls),
- Incontinence and
- Intellectual impairment.

Geriatric problems are usually 1/3<sup>rd</sup> Normal aging +1/3<sup>rd</sup> Disuse + 1/3<sup>rd</sup> Disease. Functional decline due to disease and disuse parts can be managed and reversed to a large extent; but normal aging process is irreversible.<sup>6</sup> Significant health problems of Elderly can be grouped as:-



We have to take effort to address all these issues, so that we can make a good geriatric health care system.

## Dimensions of geriatric health care

- Promotion of health and longevity.
- Management of disease of old age.<sup>7</sup>

Management of disease of old age is quite tough as most of the diseases of old are multifactorial, including more than one organ and are incurable. Modern medical system has upper hand in this field. Ayurveda is notably strong in terms of the 1<sup>st</sup> dimension of the problem as it has rich potential to promote health of the elderly, besides the scope of rejuvenation and promotion of longevity. Ayurveda deliberates on the process of aging and sequential senile changes in different manner. Vagbhata and Sarngadhara described a unique scheme of biological aging in a ten-decade frame speculating the specific sequential loss of certain bio-values specific to respective decades of life. This information opens the possibility of developing specific Rasayana to restore the likely losses of the particular decade. If Rasayana therapy is planned in relation to age, there is a great possibility to retarding the aging process. Besides this also Rehabilitative Panchakarma therapy and use of Drugs has promising abilities in the field of management of diseases of Elderly.

## Rasayana therapy in elderly

Rasayana is the central consideration in Ayurvedic Geriatrics. The Rasayana karma has comprehensive scope to positive nutrition, immune-enhancing, longevity and sustenance of mental and sensorial competence.<sup>8</sup> Besides promotion of mental and physical health with rejuvenation potential, Rasayana karma affords a preventive role against all range of diseases through improved immunity and bio strength. Our Ayurvedic texts are full of many Rasayana drugs for longevity of life.

We all know, Ayurveda works for two principles as:-

- Preventive and
- Curative.

Rasayana therapy at specific age can work as promotive and preventive mechanism in Geriatric health care. The following table gives light on the pattern of age related bio losses and proposes certain Rasayana for the purpose:-<sup>9</sup>

S.No.	Life span	Natural Bioloses	Suggested Rasayana for
1.	0-10	Balya-Corpulence.	Gambhari, Ksira, Ghrita.
2.	10-20	Vrdhhi-Growth.	Bala, Amalaki.
3.	20-30	Chavi-Lusture.	Amalaki, Haridra.
4.	30-40	Medha-Intellect.	Brahmi, Sankhapuspi.
5.	40-50	Twak-Skin quality.	Bhrngaraja, Haridra.
6.	50-60	Drsti-Vision.	Triphala, Jyotismati.
7.	60-70	Sukra-Virility.	Asvagandha, Kapikacchu, Pippali.
8.	70-80	Vikram-physical strength.	Amalaki, Bala.
9.	80-90	Buddhi-Thinking.	Brahmi, Sankhapuspi.
10.	90-100	Karmendriya-Locomotion	Bala, Sahacara.

Our ayurvedic texts also projected disease specific Rasayana under the term Naimittika Rasayana i.e Vyadhi Nimitta Rasayana as like Silajatu, Haridra in Diabetes mellitus and so on. There is a long list of such Rasayana drugs which are of great value in specific disease. This all shows that Rasayana procedures and recipes are of great current values in promotive, preventive and therapeutic aspects of Geriatric health care.

### Rehabilitative panchakarma therapy

Panchakarma is the ultimate mind –body healing experience for detoxifying the body, strengthening the immune system and restoring balance & well-being. It is the most effective healing modality in Ayurvedic science. By its unique approach it promotes detoxification and rejuvenation. In Geriatric field Ayurvedic doctors uses selective Panchakarma therapy as per need. Several measures like Abhyanga, Sveda, Pindasveda, Kaya seka, Sirobasti and Sirodhara are very useful in elderly too for imparting physical fitness and rehabilitative effect. The Panchakarma procedures should be planned with due care in elderly taking an eye on the age, prakrti, satmya, vyadhibala and other physiological consideration of the persons.

Panchakarma therapy	Indicated disease
Sirodhara Karma	Psychosis, Epilepsy, Insomnia, confusion etc
Sirobasti	All type of headache, speech disorders etc.
Katibasti	Katisula.
Snehna, Svedna	Skin problems, locomotive disorders.
Vaman, Virechna, Basti	Other systemic disorders.
Nasya	Urdhvajatrugaroga.

Karelia Panchakarma has a wide range of opportunity in the field of Geriatric health care.

### Mental health care in elderly

Mental health is the ability to balance feelings, desire, ambitions and ideals in one's daily life. It is an integral part of our complete health. In old age when man has passed prime of his energy, he develops poor memory, eyesight, hearing and neuro-degenerative disorders. So mental health care is of great importance and is needed very greatly.

Ayurveda shows various specific techniques for promotion of mental health in Elderly as such:-

- Sadvrittapalan,
- To follow Achara Rasayana,

- Use of Medhya Rasayana,
- Physical exercise,
- Practise of Yoga techniques,
- Spiritual therapy.

### Challenges and remedies in field of geriatric care

- Elderly will have multiple problems, lots of which are amenable to treatment. The care plan must address all the problems detected.
- During treating Elderly, Drug choice and dosages are considered with due care.
- Treatment goals have to be individualised. In most of the circumstances the 1<sup>st</sup> goal is to control the disease and make patient functionally independent.
- Treatment priorities shall be based upon –
  1. Life expectancy of the patient.
  2. Effectiveness of therapeutic intervention.
  3. Co-morbidities.
  4. Goal of care set by patient and attendant.
- Under treatment in Elderly is quite common due to fear of side effect, so this must be taken in consideration.

### Proposed plan for geriatric health care through Ayurveda

Ayurveda has a great potential in Geriatric health care due to its holistic approach. The proposed plan may consist of:-<sup>10</sup>

1. Recording of overall health status to help in planning the geriatric care.
2. To follow swasthavritta and sadvritta in life.
3. Regular exercise a/c to vyayama- sakti.
4. Dietary regime as per Geriatric nutrition.
5. Selective Panchakarma therapy.
6. Yoga and meditation.
7. Rasayana therapy – considering the individual need.
8. Regulated life with rest and relaxation.
9. Individualised treatment goals.
10. Proper mental health care monitoring in elderly.
11. Geriatric counselling and social support.
12. Supportive therapy and care of spiritual health.

### Conclusion

Population aging is a matter of great significance because of its likely impact on public health and socio-economic growth of a nation. Ayurveda as a holistic medical science has a great opportunity in the field of Geriatric care having primary goal of longer life and healthy aging. The life science of Ayurveda explains that the process of aging is naturally under the influence of time (kala).

The central focus of Ayurveda in Geriatric care swings around the concept of Rasayana therapy which compensates the age related biological losses and has preventive and promotive role in Geriatric health care.

Combining Rasayana therapy, rehabilitative Panchakarma, Yoga and Spirituality is the base bone of Ayurvedic Geriatric care. Development of new Geriatric health care management strategies is the need of today.

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