

**A REVIEW ON AGEING AND ANTI-AGEING MEASURES IN AYURVEDA**

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**ABSTRACT**

Ageing is defined as a progressive generalised impairment of function resulting in the loss of adaptive responses to stress and a growing risk of age-associated diseases. *Ayurveda* explains ageing as inevitable and explains the anti-ageing measures as *Rasayana*. *Vaya* explains the ageing process. Decade wise *Hrasa* (loss) is another view of understanding ageing. *Ahara* and *Vihara* are having a specific impact on ageing. So to delay ageing process, *Ahara* and *Vihara* should be proper.

**Keywords:** Ageing, *Vaya*, *Ahara-Vihara*, *Rasayana*.

**INTRODUCTION**

Ageing is the accumulation of changes in a person over time. It is defined as a progressive generalised impairment of function resulting in the loss of adaptive responses to stress and a growing risk of age-associated diseases. India has the second largest aged population in the world. Currently there are an estimated 100 million elderly in India and by 2050 it is said to reach 326 million.

Ageing causes considerable decrease in the functional ability of the organ system resulting in many problems. It is among the largest known risk factors for human diseases. So it is the need of the hour to understand the Ageing in detail to manage it efficiently.

Table No1-Classification of *Vaya* in *Brihat Trayees*.

	<b>BAALYA</b>	<b>MADHYAMA</b>	<b>VRIDDHA</b>
<b>C.S.</b>	Birth to 30 years	30 – 60 years	> 60 years
<b>S.S.</b>	Birth – 16 years	16 – 70 years	> 70 years
	Ksheerapa – till 1 year	Vridhhi- 16-20 years	
	Ksheerannada 1 - 2 years	Youvana-20-30 years	
	Annada – above 2 years	Sampoornata-30-40 years	
		Parihaani -40-70 years	
<b>A.S.</b>	Birth to 16 years	16 – 60 years	>60 years.
	Stanyavritti	Youvana- 16-30 years	
	Ubhayavritti	Sampoornatva- 30-40	
	Aharavritti	Aparihani- 40-60 years.	

**BAALYA**

*Baalyavastha* is extending from birth to 30 years of age. It is further divided into two stages. First stage – extending from birth

The phenomenon of ageing is described in *Ayurveda* as *Svabhavika* (natural) and is inevitable. *Ayurveda*, the science of life was introduced to earth so that man could enjoy a long and healthy lifespan. Ageing can be delayed and the problems related with ageing can be managed with *Rasayana Chikitsa* (rejuvenation therapy).

**Ageing in Ayurveda**

*Ayurveda* explains Ageing process starting from birth to death as *Vaya* (chronological ageing). The chronological age is mainly divided into three stages. i.e., *Baalya*, *Madhyama* and *Vridhdha*. Acharyas have also explained the biological changes occurring during these phases.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

to 16 years and is characterised by *Sukumaarata* (tenderness), *Akleshasahata* (inability to bear stress), *Aparipakva Dhatu* (immature *Dhatu*) and

*Ajaatavyanjana* (Gangadhara explains it as the features like *Shmashru* etc which develops after puberty are not seen). It is the underdeveloped period. This separation of age upto 16 years is done for the *Chikitsa* purpose as in this stage *Alpa*, *Mridu Bhesaja* should only be given due to *Aparipakva Dhatu*. Second stage is the developing period – extending from 16 years to 30 years, in which gradual development of *Dhatu* takes place quantitatively and qualitatively. *Anavasthita Satva* is seen in this period. *Baalyaavastha* is dominated by *Kapha Dosha*.

#### MADHYAMA

*Madhyamavastha* is mentioned as extending from 30 – 60 years. Characteristic features : optimal strength, virility, valour, courage, cognition, retention, recollection, good speech and knowledge and best qualities of dhatu are seen in *Madhyama Vaya*. *Pitta Dosha* is predominant in this stage.

*Vridhhi* is the stage from 16 to 20 years wherein *Vardhana* (development) is seen. *Youvana* is extending from 20 to 30 years. In this stage further development takes place. *Sampoornata* is the stage between 30 to 40 years characterised by the complete nourishment and development of all the *Dhatu*s, *Indriya*, *Bala* and *Veerya*. *Parihaani*, the last stage of *Madhyama Vaya* extends upto 70 years and in this stage all the properties start to decrease or diminish.

#### VRUDDHA

This is the last stage of life. It is also called as *Vaardhakya* and *Jara*. After 70 years of age gradual declination of physical and mental faculties are observed. There will be decrement in *Dhatu*, sensory motor system, strength, virility, enthusiasm associated with wrinkles, greying, baldness, frequent attacks of cough, breathlessness, etc. Mental abilities like perception, retention, recollection, speech and knowledge and physical strength decline gradually. *Vata Dosha* is predominant during this stage. Reduced

digestive capacity and tremors are also seen.

#### Types of Jara<sup>4</sup> :

*Kaalaja Jara* (Physiological Ageing): when the symptoms of Ageing appear on the expected period of time, it is called as *Kaalaja Jara*. After 60 years it is inevitable. *Kaalaja Jara* is *Parirakshana Krita* i.e., It occurs at the proper age even after following the daily and seasonal regimen mentioned in *Swasthavritta*. In *Kaalaja Jara*, one's chronological Ageing and biological ageing occurs at the same time. The speed of ageing depend upon the cumulative effect of genetic, environmental and life style factors.

*Akaalaja Jara* (Premature Ageing) : the Ageing that which occurs before the prescribed time. When the changes of old age occur before 60 years it can be called as *Akaalaja Jara*. This is of *Aparirakshana Krita* ie occurring before the proper age due to not taking proper care of the *Shareera* by *Swasthavritta* and *Sadvritta*. In *Akaalaja Jara*, biological ageing is more intense than that of the chronological ageing.

#### Jara as Svabhavika Vyadhi :

*Svabhavika Vyadhis* are the naturally occurring diseases from which nobody can avoid. *Kshudha*, *Nidra*, *Pipasa*, *Jara* and *Mrityu* are explained as *Svabhavika Vyadhis*.<sup>5</sup> These *Svabhavika Vyadhis* are *Nishpratikriya* (irremediable).

Chakrapani explains that *Svabhavika Vyadhis* can't be treated by any other therapeutic devices except *Rasayana*. Even *Rasayana* can't cure or prevent these *Vyadhis*. *Rasayana* can only delay these diseases. This suggests that after sometime they will relapse. Hence, these are considered *Nishpratikriya*.

Sushruta classifies diseases into three as *Adhyatmika*, *Adhidaivika* and *Adhibhoutika*. *Adhidaivika Vyadhi* includes *Svabhavabalapravrutta Vyadhi* under which the natural diseases like *Kshudha*, *Pipasa*, *Nidra*, *Jara* and *Mrityu* are described. *Svabhavabala Pravrutta Vyadhi* are classified into *Kalaja* and

*Akalaja* types. *Svabhava* or *Prakriti* of an individual is the inherent factor which is very specific to that individual. The nature of an individual within the species varies according to habitat (*Desha*), time or

season (*Kala*) and body constitution (*Prkriti*) and accordingly ageing may appear early, timely or late with less, moderate or more symptoms.

**Decade wise decrease explained in Ayurveda<sup>6,7</sup>.**

**Decade wise decrease of properties :**

Age – decade	A.S.	Sha.Sam.
Birth – 10 years	<i>Baalya</i>	<i>Baalya</i>
10 – 20 years	<i>Vruddhi</i>	<i>Vruddhi</i>
20 – 30 years	<i>Prabha</i>	<i>Chhavi</i>
30 – 40 years	<i>Medha</i>	<i>Medha</i>
40 – 50 years	<i>Tvak</i>	<i>Tvak</i>
50 – 60 years	<i>Shukra</i>	<i>Drushti</i>
60 – 70 years	<i>Akshi</i>	<i>Shukra</i>
70 – 80 years	<i>Shruteendriya</i>	<i>Vikrama</i>
80 – 90 years	<i>Mana</i>	<i>Buddhi</i>
90 – 100 years	<i>Sarvendriya</i>	<i>Karmendriya</i>
100 – 110 years	—	<i>Cheta</i>
110 – 120 years	—	<i>Jeevita</i>

**Shareera Doshas responsible for decrease of lifespan<sup>8</sup> :**

The harmful *Shareera Doshas* are caused by the following *Nidanas*. They are *Gramya Aahara*, *Kshara*, *Shushka Mamsa*, *Tila*, *Palala*, *Pishtanna*, *Viroodha Nava Shooka* etc *Dhanya*, *Vishamashana*, *Adyashana*, *Madyapana* etc. The *Viharaja Nidana* told are *Divasvapna*, *Ativyayama*, *Atisamkshobha*, *Ativyavaya* etc. *Manasika* factors like *Bhaya*, *Shoka*, *Krodha*, *Lobha*, *Moha* also have a role in *Shareera Dosh* production. By all these *Nidanas*, *Shareera Doshas* are produced which are responsible for the unwanted changes in the body. *Mamsa* becomes *Shithila*, *Sandhi Vimochana*, *Rakta Vidaha*, *Meda Vishyandana*, *Asandhaana* of *Majja* in *Asthi*, no *Shukrapravartana*, *Ojo Kshaya* take place. Thus all *Dhatu*s are affected including the *Ojus* and the person will become debilitated, exhausted and will be with *Nidra*, *Tandra* and *Alasya*. He loses initiative, gets dyspnoea and becomes incapable of physical and mental work. He also loses his memory, intellect and complexion and becomes as abode of disease. Thus he fails to enjoy the full life span of his life.

**Anti-ageing measures in Ayurveda :**

***Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya* and *Swasthavrutta***- Regimens which should be followed in day-to-day life is *Dinacharya*. Regimen according to the *Ritu* is *Ritucharya*. These are concerned with the personal aspect of an individual. The codes and conduct which should be followed by a person for a social life is concerned with *Swasthavrutta*. If one follows these measures properly, the physical and mental youthfulness can be prolonged.

**Rasayana**- The methods that give optimum quality of the *Dhatu* and that in turn allow *Dhatu*s to flow all over the body through different *Srotas*, so that the entire body gets proper nourishment is called *Rasayana*. It increases life span, improves (intelligence), cures diseases, stabilizes youthfulness, improves lustre, complexion and voice and makes body senses strong and healthy. There are many *Rasayana yogas* explained which can be adopted as per the condition.

*Nitya Ksheera-Ghrita Abhyaasa*. Daily intake of milk and ghee is said to be providing long and healthy life. It is the best among *Rasayanas*.<sup>9</sup>

**Achara Rasayana-** The physical and mental conduct of an individual designated as *Rasayana*.<sup>10</sup>

**Dravyas-** *Amalaki* is the best *Vayasthapaka dravya*.<sup>11</sup> Use of *Nitya Abhyaasa Dravyas* in proper quantity and avoidance of *Ahita Ahara* helps in maintaining the *swaasthya*.<sup>12</sup>

**Vayasthapana Dashemani-** Acharya has explained ten *Vayasthapana* drugs which can be used for anti-ageing purpose.<sup>13</sup>

They are

*Amruta* (*Tinospora cardifolia*), *Abhaya* (*Terminalia chebula*), *Dhaatri* (*Embilica officinalis*), *Mukta* (*Rasna – Pluchea lanceolata*), *Shveta* (*Rasna Bheda – Alpenia galanga*), *Jeevanti* (*Leptadenia reticulata*), *Atirasa* (*Asparagus racemosus*), *Mandookaparni* (*Centella asiatica*), *Sthira* (*Desmodium gangeticum*) and *Punarnava* (*Boerhavia diffusa*).

## DISCUSSION

Charaka and Ashtanga Samgraha considered *Vridhdhavastha* above 60 years and Sushruta considered it as above 70 years of age. The difference of old age of both scholars may be due to that the process of Ageing has been started at 60 years but it may not be obvious. Ageing further progresses and after 70 years of age the features are clearly visible. Charaka being a physician might have observed the minute changes of ageing which starts at 60 years. So he identified *Vridhdha* above 60 years. *Sushruta*, being a surgeon might have thought to consider old age from 70 when most of the symptoms of ageing are visible. Moreover Sushruta has mentioned that from 40 to 70 years there will be *Hani*. Ashtanga Samgraha mentions from 40 to 60 as *Aparihaani*. That indicates that *Hani* is more visible during 60 to 70 years. So above 60 years can be considered as the *Hani* stage which is included in the *Vridhdha Avastha*.

**Probable mode of action of Rasayana Dravya :**

By *Rasa, Guna, Veerya, Vipaka* and *Prabhava* : A *Rasayana Dravya* acts based

on the *Rasa Panchaka* of the drug. Through the *Ojovardhaka* properties of *Madhura Rasa, Madhura Vipaka, Sheeta Veerya and Snigdha Guna* a drug acts as *Rasayana*.

By *Agnideepana* : *Vayasthapana* through *Rasayana* is mainly brought about by the *Agnideepana*. The increased *Jataragni* does the proper *Pachana*, metabolism and thus removes *Aamadosha* which is the prime cause of the diseases and age associated problems. By doing *Agnideepana* in *Jataragni* level *Dhatvagni* also gets corrected and *Dhatvagnideepana* occurs. Thus the excellent *Dhatu*s are produced by *Rasayana*.

The *Shareera Doshas* formed by the *Ahaaraja* and *Vihaaraja Nidana* are responsible for the changes that are taking place like *Mamsa Shithilata, Sandhi Vimochana, Rakta Vidaha* etc. These *Doshas* also produce different *Rogas*. *Rasayana Dravya* removes these *Doshas* and causes *Vayasthapana*.

*Ghrta* and *Ksheera* are having *Madhura Rasa, Snigdha Guna, Madhura Vipaka* and *Sheeta Veerya*. *Ksheera* is *Aajanmasaatmya* to living beings and is best *Jeevaneeya* also. *Ghrta* is *Ojovardhaka* and best *Snehadravya*.

*Amalaki* is *Amlarasapradhana*. But it does not increase *Pitta* due to *Sheetaveerya* and *Madhuravipaka*. It is best among the fruits. *Bhava Prakasha* explains it as *Traidoshahara-* due to *Amlarasa*, decreases *Vata*, (thus prevents Ageing as *Vata* is the main cause of Ageing) due to *Madhura* and *Sheeta Guna* decreases *Pitta* and due to *Rooksha, Kashaya Guna* decreases *Kapha*. So *Amalaki* is the best *Vayasthapaka Dravya*.

Almost all the drugs which are explained in this *Dashemani* are having *Madhuravipaka, Sheetaveerya* and *Rasayanaguna*. (*Punarnava* is an exception with *Ushnaveerya* and *Katuvipaka*.) Thus *Vayasthapana dravyas* are acting through their *Rasapanchaka* and *Prabhava*. The properties like *Madhura Vipaka* and *Sheeta*

*Veerya* are similar to the *Ojoguna* and thus results in the increase of *Ojus*.

### CONCLUSION

Ayurveda explains Ageing as the process starting right from the birth through different stages of life and ending in the death as *Vaya*. It is inevitable and it can only be delayed.

During this process the *Hrasa* or decline in specific features can be observed in specific decades.

*Ahara* and *Vihara* certainly have an impact on the sudden or delayed manifestation of the *Jara*. So one should avoid *Ahita Ahaara* like *Gramya Ahaara* and should consume *Hita Ahara*. *Vihara* like *Achara Rasayana* should be adopted to delay ageing.

Intake of *Ghrita* and *Ksheera* daily in proper quantity should be practiced from the childhood and can be continued lifelong for maintaining the youth.

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