

## GERIATRIC HEALTH CARE BY USE OF RASAYANAS

Singh Reeta,<sup>1</sup> Singh S.P.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Reader, Samhita Sanskrit and Siddhant L.H.S. Ayurvedic P.G. College, Pilibhit (U.P.) ,India

<sup>2</sup>Asst. Professor Swasthvrita Gurukul Campus, Uttarakhand Ayurved University Haridwar  
,Uttarakhand, India

### ABSTRACT

*Geriatrics is the branch of medicine concerned with the care and treatment of elderly. In human body Dhatus get degenerated as the age advances due to prolonged structural and functional changes. During old age we cannot enhance the capacity of Dhatus, but they can be protected and rejuvenated. According to Ayurveda the drugs used for promoting and preserving health, strength and longevity in a healthy person are called Rasayana. They increase Bala and Ojas in healthy persons or recognized as on Ojaskara (vitalizer) in healthy subjects In general, they also subside the symptom of different diseases. The Rasayana maintain the entirety of Saptadhatu and optimum strength of body and senses promote memory, intelligence, and bodily glow, preserve youth age, lusture, complexion, voice and generosity. These effects of Rasayans can be proved by their antioxidant and adaptogenic properties. Adaptogens show the similar effects like Medhya, Pushtikara, Dhatuvridhikara, Dehindriyadridhikara, Jivniya and improve immune system of body. Rasayanas act as immuno stimulatants, anabolics and geriatric remedies. The present article takes review on use of Rasayanas in Geriatric health care.*

**Key Words:** Rasayana – Solution for premature aging or a branch of Ayurveda which deals with geriatric care and rejuvenation. Chakshushya - Related with vision, Pushtikara - Promoting growth

### Introduction

Geriatric problem is becoming a challenge to the society. Aging is a phenomenon which indicates that as one is growing older, he is loosing his age or nearing death the end of life. It has been an earnest desire of a man to have a disease free, long and happy life, from time immemorial. In the blown up human civilization of present era, in the midst of increased susceptibility to various stresses, it is natural to anticipate majority of population as having undesired health problems resulting in short life span. This was envisaged by our reverend *Acharyas* and they have found the solution thousands of years ago after an extensive search to explore the means and methods for *Hitayu*, *Sukhayu* and *Dirghayu* in the concept of *Rasayana*. This not only helped to attain

Longer, healthier life but also helped to curtail some of the dreadful diseases. The *Aushadhi* is of two types the first category of drug has been stated to promote and preserve health, strength and longevity in a healthy person. The second one has got capacity to cure the diseases of the ailing and afflicted people.

The **first object**, related to an increase in *Bala* (The physical and immunological strength of the body) and *Ojas* (a vitalizing agent or life principle) in healthy person is achieved by resort to *Rasayana* and *Vrishya*.

The **next object** is obtained mostly by subduing the curative properties of the drug.

The term *Rasayana* comprises of two words i.e. *Rasa* and *Ayana*. Here the first one signifies either *Rasa Raktadi Dhatu* of the body or *Rasa, Virya & Vipakas* of drug or an excellence of the same for the preservation and maintenance of healthy life etc the second one conveys the sense of *Apyayana*-which suggests a measure or methodology to saturate or

enrich or to conduce a special benefit to the body. It has been said that one which has capacity to enrich the seven body tissues or the drug possessing the qualities to saturate or replenish the body tissue, by means of their Rasa, Virya and Vipaka or that which can provide benefit and keep an excellence of life and its other causative factors with the help of some qualities of the drug, is to be designated as *Rasayana*. Hence the *Rasayana* thereby can be taken as measure to infuse the vigour and strength to the body tissues by saturating them with vitalizing nutrients.

**Basic concept of Rasayanas:** *Ayurveda* has paid special attention to improve the natural process of resistance not only to a disease but also to prevent the old age and preserve the youthfulness in healthy persons. The underlying theory is that, if the waste products of the tissue metabolism are removed from the body and the body is made quite free and pure to accept the vitalizing and replenishment therapy, the youthfulness could be preserved and the life may be prolonged to its optimum. *Rasayana* has got its special qualities to contribute in the above said manner by preventing the old age and destroying the causes of usual occurrence of diseases. It is the only measure by which one can meet and control the natural wear and tear process of the body through full filling the requirements. It increases the *Jivaniyashakti* (vital energy) in the body and by restoring it; man can enjoy long life, full of vigour and vitality.

#### Significance of Rasayana

- It aims specially at the promotion of strength and vitality in body.
- It acts as a measure to contribute an excellence and maintain the integrity of Saptadhatus of the body and thus increases the longevity.
- It helps in the promotion of memory, intelligence and *Arogya* (diseases free State), preservation of youth age, lusture, complexion, voice, generosity, and maintenance of optimum strength of the body and senses.
- It confers the capacity to get accomplished spoken words, command of the respect

and regard of the people and promotion of the bodily glow. It is a measure by which an excellence of *Rasadi Dhatus* is achieved and maintained.

- It was for the great sages, the seers, who were votaries of *Rasayana*, lived for thousands of years without being afflicted with old age, infirmity, disease and even death itself. A regular use of *Rasayana* in the prescribed manner, not merely attains longevity on the earth but goes by the auspicious way of the devine stages and finally reaches to imperishable *Brahma*.

#### Concept of aging as a necessity of Rasayana

**Therapy:** Aging is a multidimensional natural process of personalized biological phenomena of individuals. In childhood progressive change of developmental phase take place. While after attainment of age there is progressive decline of functional status with varing degree.

The process of anabolism and catabolism are occurring in body but anabolic activity gains the upper hand over catabolic activity in the earlier phase of life and as the age advances, it becomes vice versa i.e. when the age moves towards middle age, the anabolic activity is counter poised by catabolic activity. With age advancing, anabolic activity becomes over powered by catabolic activity triggering of degenerative changes ending in death. *Chakrapani* while commenting on the (Ca.Sa 7/17) verse says that by governing union (*Sanyoga*) and disunion (*Vibhaga*) *Vayu* plays a vital role in *Sharirarambha* and *Shariravinasha* process. These two words points at anabolic and catabolic process taking place in life. The definition of *Kaya* indicates the underlying anabolic activity. While its synonym *Sharira* indicates towards catabolic activity. Likewise the synonyms given for *Ayu* also show total body's metabolic activity, such as *Dhari*, *Jivitam*, *Nityaga*, and *Anubandha*.

#### Levels of Rasayana Effect

1. *Rasa* :Promote nutrient value of Plasma.
2. *Agni* :Promote biofire system responsible for digestion and metabolism

3. *Srotas* : Promote micro circulation and tissue perfusion.

### Types of Rasayanas

#### 1. Organs Specific

- a. *Medhya Rasayana* : *Shankhapushpi, Gudduchi, Mandhukaparni* etc.  
b. *Hridya Rasayana* : *Arjuna*

The decade wise losses and advised *Rasayana* are given below:

Age in years	Loss	Suggested <i>Rasayana</i>
0-10	Corpulence	<i>Vacha, Kashmiri</i>
11-20	Growth	<i>Kashmari, Bala, Ashwagandha</i>
21-30	Lusture	<i>Amalaki</i>
31-40	Intelect	<i>Brahmi, Shankhapushpi</i>
41-50	Skin Glow	<i>Bhringraja, Jyotishmati</i>
51-60	Vision	<i>Jyotishmati, Triphala</i>
61-70	Virility	<i>Kapikachhu</i>
71-80	Strength	Not Effective
81-90	Mentia	Not Effective
91-100	Locomotion	Not Effective

#### 3. Use specific

a) ***Kamya Rasayana*** – Used in healthy persons for promotion of health.

- i) *Prana Kamya* (longevity)  
ii) *Sri Kamya* (Body lusture)  
iii) *Medhya* (Mental competence)

b) ***Naimittika Rasayana*** : Disease specific e.g. *Shilajita* in diabetes

#### Method of use specific:

1) ***Kutipraveshika*** – Indoor regimen it is adopted after biopurification by Panchkarma in well controlled conditions.

2. ***Vatatapika***- Outdoor regimen

#### 5. Life style specific

- i) *Achara Rasayana* or *Nitya Rasayana*- Healthy life style  
ii) *Ajasrka Rasayana* - Content of daily diet. E.g. Taking of milk and *Ghrta* Constantly (Dal. Su.chi. 27/1)

#### Indications of *Rasayana*

The medicinal preparations purposely made for prolonging the span of life and destroying the old age problems, result fruitful only in those:-

- Who are self-controlled
- ⇒ Disciplined
- ⇒ Perfectly purified by their physique and mind. In this reference *Charaka* has stated that one who practices the therapy without

c. ***Chakshushya Rasayana: Triphala***

2. **Age specific:** *Vaghatta* and *Sharangdhara* have mentioned that an individual goes on losing the age related qualities and if this loss is compensated by a specific *Rasayana* in specific age groups the rate of aging can be reduced to some extent and can produce longevity.

getting eliminated his physical and mental disturbing factors, gains only its gross and general benefits and not the details and specified one.

Consecrated to austerity, celibacy meditation and peace. These are the code of conducts of life which are essentially required to have the maximum benefit of the *Rasayana*. *Charaka* have stressed that *Kuti praveshika Rasayana* is administered only in those. Who are physically, mentally and economically well prepared?

#### Contraindications

- ⇒ Preoccupied in other than spiritual or moral endeavour.
- ⇒ Not self-controlled or the persons who are particularly engaged in irregular dietary habits and sexual happiness.
- ⇒ *Sushruta* has mentioned that the persons those who have not gone under the purification process should not be given *Rasayana* Therapy
- ⇒ He has further advocated the unfitness of seven types of persons : (1) Who are not self-restrained (2) Slothful (3) Indigent (4) Heedless (5) Indulged in sinful acts (6) Addicted to any vice (7) Pays disregard to the drugs. Hence these above said points deserve a special consideration while insti-

tuting the therapy with the real sense of benefits.

**Age of Rasayana administration :**

*Charaka* Says that total growth and development is incomplete up to 30 years. So *Rasayana* administered during the earlier phase of *Yauvana* can increase the nourishment to all *Dhatus* thereby improving the defense system of body. *Madhyam Vaya* is endowed with complete growth and development of all the body tissues as well as total functioning of mental faculties. The individual will be having good strength and there will be no deterioration of tissue elements. In such a stage, *Rasayana* administration can boost the immune system and delay the aging process. No *Acharya* have told that *Rasayana* should not be given in *Vridhdha Vastha*. But it is clearly understood that *Vridhdhavastha* is not the proper age for starting the administration of *Rasayana* because after 60 years naturally there occurs the declamation of body functions. As a result, the assimilation, absorption and movement of essence to all *Dhatus* gets diminished leading to incomplete achievement of the desired effect. Therefore the views of *Charaka* arrived at a conclusion that *Rasayana* supplementation yields its maximum beneficial effects in early adulthood. *Sushruta* has emphasized that young or who have reached middle age are best ones for *Rasayana* intake (Su. Chi. 24/3)

**Factors diminishing the effect of Rasayana**

1. **Presence of *Virodhakara Bhava* :** Due to this *Rasayana Dravya* does not render the essence necessary for all *Dhatus* thereby reduces the formation of *Prashata Dhatu*.  
***Shodhana in Balaya Vastha and Vridhdhavastha:*** *Shodhana Karma* indicated before *Rasayana* therapy is contraindicated in *Balyavastha* and *Vridhdhavastha* because it results in *Dhatu Kashaya* leading to destabilization of whole body functions and derangement of *Agni* eventually hampering *Dhatuvridhhi*.

The *Rasayana* therapy aims specially at promotion of health, strength and vitality in the body. It contributes an excellence and maintains the integrity of *Saptadhatu*s (body tissues) of the body and thus increases the longevity. The *Rasayana* therapy has got its special qualities in preventing old age and destroying the causes of usual occurrence of diseases. Aging occurs as a result of constant biological activities through out living period. As the age advances the anabolic activities become over powered by catabolic activities triggering of degenerative changes ending in death. Therefore *Rasayana* therapy is the only measure by which one can meet and control the natural wear and tear process of the body through full filling the requirements. The process of aging can be justified on the theory of free radical or oxidant theory. These free radicals or very reactive molecules are produced endogenously through normal metabolic process or exogenously from sources such as air pollution, radiation and foods we consume. They easily react with vital molecules in the body such as DNA causing mutations and leading to development of aging. The *Rasayanas* consist of substances that provide the much needed stability to the free radical by allowing the pairing of electrons. Therefore the *Rasayana* therapy counter acts the free radical attack. These are non toxic and also show anti stress property. Thus they indicate about having antioxidants properties (R. Govindrajan et.al.)

Recent advances also justify their adaptogenic action because adaptogens are substances that normalize body functions, strengthen systems and functions compromised by stress and have effect against a wide variety of environmental and emotional stresses. This elite class of herbs impart strength energy, stamina, endurance and improve mental clarity. Like wise *Rasayanas* also possess the qualities of *Medhya*, *Pushtikara*, *Dehindriyadradhikara*, *Bramhaniya*, *Jivniya* etc and improve body's defense system.

Adoptogens can normalize body imbalances by supporting adrenal function. They

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**DISCUSSION**

counter act the adverse effect of stress. They enable the body cells to access more energy. The cells eliminate toxic by products of the metabolic process and help the body to utilize oxygen more efficiently (Dr. Frank et.al.)

### CONCLUSION

- Geriatrics is emerging as a challenging specialty because of over growing population of aged people all over the world.
- Traditional remedies or herbal informants of *Rasayanas* are the only answer to meet out the problems. *Emblica officinalis*, *Curcuma longa*, *Withania somnifera* are high promising plant species useful for old age.

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### CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

**Dr. Reeta Singh**

Reader, Samhita Sanskrit and Siddhant L.H.S. Ayurvedic P.G. College, Pilibhit (U.P.), India

**Email: spsingh181967@gmail.com**

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