



## RASAYANA THERAPY IN GERIATRICS: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO ADDRESSING THE HEALTH CHALLENGES OF AGING IN THE MODERN WORLD

RICHA KUMARI<sup>1</sup> PRIYANKA KUMARI<sup>2</sup> MAN MOHAN SHARMA<sup>3</sup> SUMAN MEENA<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>P.G. Scholar, <sup>3</sup>Professor, <sup>4</sup>Lecturer, Department of Roga Nidan evum Vikriti Vigyan, M.M.M Govt. Ayurvedic College, Udaipur

<sup>2</sup>P.G Scholar, Department of Kriya Sharir, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur

Corresponding Author Email: [richa1996loyal@gmail.com](mailto:richa1996loyal@gmail.com) Access this article online: [www.jahm.co.in](http://www.jahm.co.in)

Published by Atreya Ayurveda Publications under the license CC-by-NC-SA 4.0

Submitted on- 04-02-24

Revised on- 25-02-24

Accepted on-29-02-24

### ABSTRACT:

**Introduction:** The escalating concerns surrounding the aging population have become a global issue, propelled by advancements in medical services and technology, resulting in increased life expectancy. By the year 2020, the global elderly population is projected to surpass one billion, with over two-thirds residing in developing countries. Ayurveda, recognized as the science of life, encompasses comprehensive principles for health and disease prevention. Rasayana therapy operates fundamentally on nutritional dynamics, revitalizing the body on both physical and mental levels. Amidst the health challenges posed by modernization, Rasayana therapy emerges as a potential solution by fortifying resistance against diseases and fostering psychological well-being. The integration of Rasayana therapy into geriatric care is positioned as a primary line of treatment, aimed at preventing a spectrum of geriatric diseases.

**Materials and Methods:** Understanding of Ayurvedic procedure by modern perspective is necessary for its acceptance for this various classical Ayurveda text like Charaka, Sushruta and Vagbhata with their famous commentary are reviewed thoroughly. Along with modern physiology literature from various articles and books reviewed. This article delves into the codes, conducts, and therapeutic insights outlined in Ayurveda, emphasizing the importance of Rasayana therapy in aligning with the overarching goals of geriatrics – the promotion of life and prevention of disease. As the elderly population burgeons, a comprehensive understanding of traditional practices, such as Rasayana therapy, becomes imperative in crafting effective healthcare strategies for the evolving needs of an aging global populace. **Conclusion-** This article explores the pivotal role of Rasayana therapy, a therapeutic modality within Ayurveda, in promoting longevity and averting age-related ailments.

**Keywords:** Aging, Jara, Vriddhavastha, Rasayana

## INTRODUCTION

Aging is the increasing progressive physiological change in an organism leading to its senescence or fall in biological functions breaking down the adaptation ability of the organism to metabolic stress<sup>[1]</sup>. In a more specific term, it is the intrinsic, unavoidable, and no reversible age-associated loss of viability that render us more susceptibility to number of diseases and death or a progressive functional decline of physiological function and decrease in fecundity with age. human aging is characterized by variety of physiological and cellular changes restricting our normal functioning making us more prone to death. Aging comprises of two major components where the first is Chronological Aging and that it is the actual age of the person in terms of years, months and days. This component of aging is unstoppable, unchangeable and irreversible. The second component is the Physiological/Biological aging that emphasizes a person's development and his changes according to some cellular or molecular parameters<sup>[2]</sup>.

As the global population ages, the pursuit of strategies to enhance the quality of life during the geriatric years become increasingly paramount. In the contemporary world, characterized by sedentary lifestyles and dietary habits that often contribute to

premature aging, the need for holistic approaches to geriatric health is more critical than ever. *Rasayana* therapy, rooted in ancient Ayurvedic traditions, emerges as a promising and comprehensive solution to address the multifaceted health challenges associated with aging.

The term "*Rasayana*" encapsulates a therapeutic approach that aims not only to prolong life but also to promote vitality, cognitive well-being, and overall resilience in the face of aging-related stressors. This article delves into the multifaceted dimensions of *Rasayana* therapy, exploring its historical foundations, principles, and applications in the context of modern geriatrics. By understanding the intricate interplay between traditional wisdom and contemporary scientific insights, we aim to unravel the potential of *Rasayana* therapy as a holistic and effective means of promoting healthy aging in our rapidly evolving world. Join us on a journey through the ancient corridors of Ayurveda to discover how *Rasayana* therapy can offer a renewed perspective on aging, integrating traditional knowledge with the demands of modern geriatric care.

## AYURVEDIC PROSPECTIVE

Aging is known as "*Jarā*" defined as that which has become old by the act of wearing out

“*jīryati iti jarā*”. It is synonymed as “*vārdhakya*” meaning increasing age.

**"Dosa Dhatu Mala moolam hi sariram "**

The three basic constituents of human body, *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*, in a balanced state

**Aging and Tridosha**

<b>Dosa</b>	<b>Balyavastha</b>	<b>Madhyavastha</b>	<b>Vrudhavastha</b>
<i>Kapha</i>	+++	++	+
<i>Pitta</i>	++	+++	++
<i>Vata</i>	+	+	+++

**Vata Dosh and Aging:**

*Vata* is associated with the elements of air and ether, representing qualities like mobility, dryness, and lightness.

As individuals age, there is a natural increase in *Vata*, contributing to characteristics such as dry skin, brittle bones, and a decline in mobility.

Imbalances in *Vata* may lead to issues such as joint pain, stiffness, and an overall sense of instability in the elderly.

**Pitta Dosh and Aging:**

*Pitta* is associated with the elements of fire and water, representing qualities like heat, metabolism, and transformation.

In the aging process, there may be an increase in *Pitta*, contributing to issues such as inflammation, digestive disturbances, and changes in metabolism.

structurally and functionally, maintain the health and in an imbalanced state produce disease<sup>[3]</sup>.

Imbalances in *Pitta* may manifest as conditions like indigestion, acidity, and skin disorders in older individuals.

**Kapha Dosh and Aging:**

*Kapha* is associated with the elements of earth and water, representing qualities like stability, lubrication and structure.

Aging may lead to an accumulation of *Kapha*, contributing to challenges such as weight gain, lethargy and respiratory issues.

Imbalances in *Kapha* may result in conditions like congestion, respiratory disorders and a general sense of heaviness in the elderly.

Amongst, these Dosas, *Kapha* is predominant in *Balya*, *Pitta* in *Madhya* and *Kapha* in *Vardhakya / Vrudhavastha* <sup>[4]</sup>. In old age, many syndromes are observed which are the result of imbalance in the body constituents i.e. *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* to a lesser or greater extent. This imbalance varies in velocity and intensity depending upon many factors such as

life style, habits, age etc. Thus, these variations are observed in the psychosomatic constitution of a person.

#### **Aging and Kala parinama:**

One of the most imperative factors that affect ageing refers to *Kala Parinama* (changes due to time) as it includes all creation. *Kala Parinama* means the physical and mental changes occurring as a function of time resulting in the process of ageing. Time affects all individuals from beginning of life till the end, and this period is called *Ayusha* [5]. *Ayurveda* divides *Ayusha* into various stages of life i.e

*Bala*-16 years,

*Vivardhamana*-16-20 years,

*Youvana*-20-30 years,

*Sampoornata*-30-40 years,

*Parihani*-40-60 years and

older adults- *Vridhdhavastha*.

#### **Aging and Sapta Dhātu**

*Dhatus* are responsible to maintain a state of equilibrium with the help of *Dosas* and *Malas*. "*Heyamana dhātu* " is a feature of old age. They basically perform two functions: *Dharana*, *Posana*.

In old age due to *Vikrita vata*, *Visamagni*, *Kseena kapha* the first *Dhātu rasa* is not formed properly and its function of *Preenana* to the rest of the *Dhatus* is not performed, resulting in sequential weakening of all the

*Dhatus* i.e resulting in sequential weakening of all the *Dhatus* i.e., *Dhatuksya* [6].

#### **Role of Rasayana in Geriatrics**

Modern science defines aging as a progressive failure of adaptive response to the haemostatic body. Such concept of aging has been widely scattered in various texts in the Ayurvedic classics but has been focally concerned under a specialty called *Rasayana*. In fact, it is a reference that specially brings out the science of geriatric care and rejuvenation. *Rasayana* therapy is the strong point of *Ayurveda* in the context of the geriatric care. *Ayurveda* describes various rejuvenate therapies further with help of special class of medicinal preparations called *Rasayana* that is believed rebuild body, mind prevent degeneration, postpone aging or rather reverse the aging process.

#### **Rasayana**

The word *Rasayana* should not be misunderstood as a therapy exclusively related to old age. It could be applied right from pediatrics to geriatrics. *Susruta* defines *Rasayana* as a measure that prolongs and provides positive health. it increases the mental faculties and provides resistance and immunity power against diseases. According to *Charaka*, the ways of obtaining optimum nourishment to the *Dhatus* are called as *Rasayana* [7].

## Types of *Rasayana*

### 1. Organs Specific

a. *Medhya Rasayana*: *Shankhapushpi*, *Gudduchi*, *Mandhukaparni* etc.

b. *Hridya Rasayana*: *Arjuna*

c. *Chakshushya Rasayana*: *Triphala*

2. **Age specific:** *Vagbhatta* and *Sharangdhara* have mentioned that an individual goes a 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<sup>[8]</sup>.

### Mode of Action

*Rasayana* plays a crucial role in prevention of aging and old age-related disorders. It also enhances bodily strength and mental faculties. Different classics of *Ayurveda* have defined *Rasayana* in different words but in the same central theme<sup>[9]</sup>.

The probable mode of action of *Rasayana* therapy as per contemporary science is as follows,

1. Antioxidant action – *Amalaki*.
2. Immunomodulatory action – *Guduchi*.

3. Haematopoietic effect – *Amalaki*, *Bhringaraja*, *Mandura*, *Lauha Bhasma*.

4. Adaptogenic action- *Ashwagandha*.

5. Antiaging action – *Ashwagandha*, *Bala*.

6. Anabolic action – *Vidarikanda*

7. Nutritive function – *Gritha*, *Ksheera*

8. Neuroprotective action – *Ashwagandha*, *Swarna Bhasma*, *Rajata Bhasma*.

### Use specific<sup>[10]</sup>

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

### Life style specific<sup>[11]</sup>

i) *Achara Rasayana* or *Nitya Rasayana* Healthy life style

ii) *Ajasrika Rasayana* - Content of daily diet. E.g, Taking of milk and *Ghrita* Constantly

**Table 1- *Rasayan*s indicated in various Decaeds of life<sup>[12]</sup>**

Age in years	Bio-values Decline	Recommended <i>Rasayana</i>
1-10	Balya (Childhood)	<i>Vacha</i> , <i>Kasmari</i> , <i>Svarna</i> .
11-20	<i>Vridhhi</i> (Growth)	<i>Kasmari</i> , <i>Bala</i> , <i>Ashwagandha</i> .
21-30	<i>Chhavi</i> (Complexion)	<i>Amalaki</i> , <i>Lauha Rasayana</i> .

31-40	<i>Medha</i> (Intelligence)	<i>Shankhapuspi, Yastimadhu, Ashwagandha, Guduchi.</i>
41-50	<i>Twak</i> (Skin Lusture)	<i>Bhringaraja, Somaraji, Haridra.</i>
51-60	<i>Drishti</i> (Vision)	<i>Triphalaghrita, Saptamrtalauha, Kataka.</i>
61-70	<i>Shukra</i> (Semen)	<i>Kapikacchu, Ashwagandha, Musali, Milk, Ghrita.</i>
71-100	.....	These age groups are not fit for <i>Rasayana karma.</i>

**Table 2- Rasayanas indicated for specific diseases** <sup>[13]</sup>

S.N.	Diseases Recommended	<i>Naimittika Rasayana</i>
01	Diabetes Mellitus	<i>Śilajatu, Haridra</i>
02	Leprosy & Dermatoses	<i>Tuvaraka, Haridra, Somarāji</i>
03	Bronchial Asthma	<i>Haridra, Śirīśa</i>
04	Hypertension & IHD	<i>Sarpagandha, Puśkara Mūla, Arjuna</i>
05	Urinary Disorders	<i>Punarnava, Gokśura</i>
06	Arthritis	<i>Bhallātaka, Eranda, Guggulu</i>
07	Neuro-degenerative Diseases	<i>Brahmi, Aśwgandha</i>
08	Dementia	<i>Brahmi, Śankapuśpi</i>
09	Immuno-deficiency	<i>Āmalaki, Guduchi</i>
10	Cancer	<i>Bhallātaka, Āmalaki</i>

## DISCUSSION

Aging is a continuous biological process characterized by the dominance of catabolic activities over anabolic activities as one progresses in age. This imbalance leads to degenerative changes culminating in death. To address this natural wear and tear, *Rasayana* therapy emerges as a crucial remedy. It serves

as a preventive measure against premature aging and treats manifestations of the aging process, promoting a healthy lifespan that encompasses mental well-being and improved immune function against geriatric diseases.

*Rasayana* therapy, particularly utilizing *Vayasthapana* drugs plays a significant role in delaying the biological stimulation of *Vata*

*Dosha*. Aging is a progressive transformation associated with the time, where free radicals contribute to oxidative damage in various biological components, further accelerating the aging process. *Rasayana* drugs like *Withania somnifera* exhibit preventive properties by inhibiting lipid peroxidation and moderating oxidative protein damage.

Furthermore, *Rasayana* therapy acts as an antioxidant, providing protection against oxidative stress and contributing to a more contented aging process. In summary, *Rasayana* therapy serves as a specialized solution in the current context, offering a holistic approach to counteract the effects of aging and promote overall well-being.

In the contemporary world, individuals often adopt sedentary lifestyles and unhealthy dietary patterns, leading to metabolic imbalances and early onset of aging. *Jara Chikitsa* emerges as a valuable preventive measure in today's scenario. As previously mentioned, *Rasayana* therapy possesses qualities that contribute to increased longevity, enhanced cognitive functions such as *Smriti* and *Medha*, the maintenance of overall health and the preservation of youthfulness.

Recent decades of genetic and biochemical research have unveiled a complex network of molecular interactions associated with the

aging process. This suggests that a therapeutic approach based on *Rasayana* principles may be more effective in delaying or even reversing the aging process. In essence, the exploration of *Rasayana*-based therapeutics holds promise as a means to counteract the impacts of a sedentary lifestyle and poor dietary habits, offering a potential solution for addressing metabolic imbalances and preventing premature aging.

As the field of geriatric care evolves, there is a growing recognition of the importance of adopting holistic approaches that address the multifaceted needs of older adults. Integrative healthcare models, which combine conventional medical treatments with complementary and alternative therapies, are gaining traction in geriatric settings. *Rasayana* therapy, with its emphasis on rejuvenation and systemic wellness, represents a valuable addition to this integrative approach.

#### **Personalized Treatment Plans:**

Integrating *Rasayana* therapy into geriatric care involves tailoring treatment plans to meet the individual needs and health goals of older adults. Healthcare providers can conduct comprehensive assessments to identify specific areas of concern, such as cognitive decline, mobility issues, or chronic diseases. Based on these assessments, personalized

Rasayana regimens can be developed to address the unique health challenges faced by each patient.

### **Complementary Approach to Conventional Medicine:**

*Rasayana* therapy complements conventional medical interventions by focusing on enhancing overall health and well-being rather than just treating specific symptoms or diseases. While conventional treatments may target the management of chronic conditions, *Rasayana* drugs work to support the body's innate healing mechanisms and promote resilience against age-related degeneration. Integrating *Rasayana* therapy into geriatric care allows for a more comprehensive and holistic approach to health maintenance and disease prevention.

The mode of action of *Rasayana* therapies or substances can vary depending on the specific herbs, formulations, or practices involved. However, there are some general mechanisms through which *Rasayana* is believed to work:

**Balancing Doshas:** *Ayurveda* views health as a balance of three fundamental energies or *doshas*. *Rasayana* therapies aim to balance these *doshas*, promoting overall well-being.

**Enhancing Agni:** *Rasayana* formulations often strengthen the digestive system, which is considered crucial for absorbing nutrients and

eliminating waste properly. A healthy digestive system is integral to overall health and vitality.

**Antioxidant Properties:** Many *rasayana* herbs possess potent antioxidant properties. They help neutralize free radicals, reduce oxidative stress, and prevent cellular damage, which can contribute to aging and various diseases.

**Promoting Tissue Regeneration and Repair:** *Rasayana* therapies are believed to facilitate the regeneration and repair of tissues throughout the body. This can lead to improved organ function, healthier skin, and better overall vitality.

**Detoxification:** Some *Rasayana* herbs and practices support detoxification processes in the body, helping to remove accumulated toxins and waste products. This purification is thought to rejuvenate cells and tissues.

**Nourishing and Rejuvenating the Dhatus:** *Rasayana* therapies are aimed at nourishing all seven *dhatu*s of the body, from the outermost layer (skin) to the innermost (bone marrow). By replenishing and rejuvenating these tissues, *Rasayana* promotes overall health and vitality.

**Strengthening Ojas:** In *Ayurveda*, *Ojas* is considered the subtle essence of the body that governs vitality, immunity, and overall well-being. *Rasayana* therapies are believed to enhance *Ojas*, leading to increased energy, mental clarity, and resilience.

**Stress Reduction:** Many *Rasayana* herbs possess adaptogenic properties, meaning they help the body adapt to stressors and promote a state of balance or homeostasis. By reducing stress, *Rasayana* therapies indirectly support overall health and longevity.

## CONCLUSION

*Ayurveda* contributes most important role in geriatric care, as it is one of the branch of *Astanga of Ayurveda*. As the aim of *Ayurveda* is *Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshnam*, so to maintain the healthy state of a person one should follow the *Rasayana therapy*. *Ayurveda* considers aging as a natural and inevitable process and gives time-tested *Rasayana* therapies for healthy aging. As 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 *Rasayana* are the only answer to meet the problems.

In conclusion, *Rasayana* therapy stands as a beacon of hope in the realm of geriatric care, offering a holistic and time-tested approach to address the health challenges associated with aging. As the world navigates the complexities of an aging population, embracing the principles of *Rasayana* therapy may pave the way for a healthier, more resilient, and fulfilling aging experience. Recent scientific research provides a bridge

between ancient wisdom and modern understanding. By investigating the molecular and cellular mechanisms involved in *Rasayana* therapy, scientists are uncovering its potential in delaying or even reversing the aging process. This integration of traditional knowledge with contemporary scientific inquiry establishes *Rasayana* therapy as a valuable subject for further exploration and validation.

## REFERENCES

1. Peter Brian Medawar. An Unsolved Problem of Biology; 1<sup>st</sup> edition, H.K. Lewis publisher, London; 1952
2. Shukla R. Geriatric Care in Ayurved: Evidence-Based Review. *Alternative, Complementary & Integrative Medicine*. 2015 Dec 3;1(1):1–4.
3. Kanjiv Lochan. *Aṣṭāṅga hṛdayam of Vāgbhaṭa : Sūtra sthāna*, chapter 6, verse no.258, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, New Delhi: Chaukhambha Publications; 2008
4. Devi D, Srivastava R, Dwivedi BK. A critical review of concept of aging in Ayurveda. *Ayu* [Internet]. 2010 [cited 2020 Apr 22];31(4):516–9. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3202253/>
5. S. Suresh Babu. Geriatrics in Ayurveda-The Pathophysiology of Ageing; Reprint Edition Chaukhambha Orientalia, Varanasi;2013; 41-45.
6. S. Suresh Babu. Geriatrics in Ayurveda-The Pathophysiology of Ageing; Reprint Edition Chaukhambha Orientalia, Varanasi;2013; 3-48.
7. Sharma K Ajay. *Kayachikitsa*;1st Edition, Volume 4, Varanasi; Chaukhambha Publications;2006;206
8. Sharma PV, Rāmakaraṇa Śarmā, Bhagwan Dash. *Caraka-saṃhitā : Agniveśa's treatise refined and annotated by Caraka and redacted by Dṛḍhabala* : text

Richa Kumari, Priyanka Kumari, Man Mohan Sharma, Suman Meena. Rasayana Therapy in Geriatrics: A holistic approach to addressing the health challenges of aging in the modern world. *Jour. of Ayurveda & Holistic Medicine*, Vol.-XII, Issue-II (Feb. 2024).

with English translation, Chikista Sthana ,Chapter 1, Verse no. 505, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia; 2014.; 4: 9

9. Devi D, Srivastava R, Dwivedi BK. A critical review of concept of aging in Ayurveda. *Ayu* [Internet]. 2010 [cited 2020 Apr 22];31(4):516–9. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3202253/>

10. Sharma PV, Rāmakaraṇa Śarmā, Bhagwan Dash. Caraka-saṃhitā : Agniveśa’s treatise refined and annotated by Caraka and redacted by Dṛḍhabala : text with English translation, Chikista Sthana ,Chapter 1, Verse no. 507, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia; 2014.; 4: 9

11. Śārṅgadhara, Srikanthamurthy KR. Śārṅgadhara-saṃhitā : a treatise on āyurveda,2<sup>nd</sup> edition,Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia; 2016;308

12 Yagyik Mishra, Negalur Vijay, Thakor Krunal, Bhat Nagaraj, Shubhasri B. Role of Rasayana in Geriatric Care - A Review. *Journal of Ayurveda and Integrated Medical Sciences*. 2016 Jun 30;1(01):52–5.

13. Singh AK, Gupta AK, Manish, Singh PK. *Rasayana Therapy: A Magic Contribution Of Ayurveda For a Healthy Long Life*. *International Journal of Research In Ayurveda & Pharmacy*. 2014 Mar 4;5(1):41–7.

#### CITE THIS ARTICLE AS

Richa Kumari, Priyanka Kumari, Man Mohan Sharma, Suman Meena. Rasayana Therapy in Geriatrics: A holistic approach to addressing the health challenges of aging in the modern world. *J of Ayurveda and Hol Med (JAHM)*. 2024;12(2):47-56

**Conflict of interest:** None

**Source of support:** None