

A REVIEW ON GUNA AND KARMA OF AYURVEDIC DRAVYAS USED FOR JARA  
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Article Received on 21/12/2024

Article Revised on 11/01/2025

Article Accepted on 01/02/2025

## ABSTRACT

Acharya Sushruta categorized *Jara* as a natural process, putting it under *Swabhavabalapravritta Vyadhi*. Preeminence of *Vata dosha* and the malfunction of *Rasa* and other *Dhatus*, *Strotas* and *Agni*, is responsible for many degenerative alterations and body function decline as a whole. In Ayurveda, anti-aging is included under *Rasayana* therapy, which is intended to retard the aging process and reverse its ill effects. *Rasayana* therapy increases longevity, enhances immunity, and enhances mental and intellectual functions. Ancient Ayurvedic literature mentions different single and composite preparations with *Rasayana* activity, which is important in the nourishment of various *Dhatus*. *Vatahar*, *Madhur*, *Amla*, *Ruchikar*, *Ushna*, *Dipan*, *Kaphavatahara* and *Balya* trait of Ayurvedic medicines enhances vitality, skin health, intelligence and metabolism, thus provides advantages in early aging. This article describes role of *Guna* and *Karma* of Ayurvedic *Dravyas* recommended for *Jara Chikitsa*.

**KEYWORDS:** Ayurveda, Jara Chikitsa, Guna, Vayasthapana, Rasayana.

## INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, which is the art of life and longevity, incorporates *Jara Chikitsa* as a central aspect of *Ashtanga Ayurveda*. Aging can be described as a progressive worsening of the capacity of the body to sustain homeostasis and cope with stressors. In old age, *Vata dosha* inherently predominates and *Rasa Dhatus* deplete with degenerative alterations and physical wear and tear. In contemporary times, the acceleration of the process of aging was caused by incorrect eating habits, inactive lifestyle, excessive stress, and absence of physical activity leading to the earlier onset of degenerative changes at a younger stage of life.<sup>[1-3]</sup>

Aging effects usually manifest after the reproductive phase, as structural and functional changes occur in the body's organs and systems. Ayurveda provides holistic approaches to the encouragement of longevity, postponing aging, and its management. Geriatrics has become an important and demanding specialty because of the fast-increasing population of the elderly across the globe, including India. Population aging is drastically transforming global demography, led by advances in social, economic, public health, and medical progress that have helped raise life expectancy.

Aging is a multifaceted, multidimensional process with physical, psychological, and social transformations. In *Vridhdhavastha* several degenerative processes occur, influencing overall health and vigor. An individual is usually old beyond the age of sixty because this phase is characterized by the gradual weakening of *Dhatus*, functioning of the sensory organs, bodily strength, virility, courage, intellectual faculties, memory, speech, and analytical mind. According to Ayurveda, after the age of seventy a person gradually loses strength of *Dhatus*, as well as their physical strength. In addition, aging can show up externally as baldness, wrinkles, whitening of the hair and a diminished capacity for physical labor. This stage witnessed symptoms of *Agnisada*, *Slathasara*, *Mansa Sandhyasthita*, *Twapaurushya*, *Shvasa*, *Valita*, *Khalitya*, *Twapaurushya*, *Avanama* and *Vepathu*.<sup>[3-6]</sup>

## Ayurveda for Geriatric Care

*Aahar* and *Vihara* are the key aspects of *Jara Chikitsa* along with other principles of therapy as depicted in **Figure 1**, which includes *Brimhana Chikitsa*, *Vata Dosha Chikitsa* and *Ojakshaya Chikitsa*. These all aspects resolved by using *Rasayana* therapy which play vital role in the retardation of aging effect.

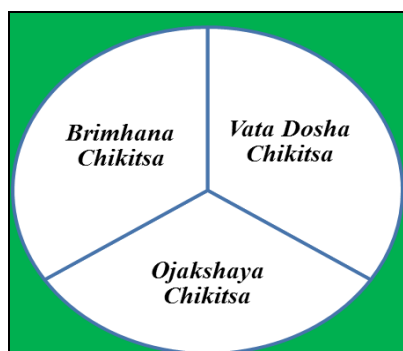


Figure 1: Ayurvedic principles of Jara Chikitsa.

The *Brimhana Chikitsa* is considered appropriate in old age because one of the main indications for this therapy is *Vridhnavastha*. Its primary objective is to strengthen and nourish compromised tissues. *Vata Dosha Chikitsa* is used to control vitiated *Vata Dosha*. As a degenerative stage of life, aging is marked by the inherent dominance of *Vata Dosha*. A diet high in *Amla*, *Lavan* and *Swadu* tastes is advised to balance *Vata*. *Ojakshaya Chikitsa* involves utilization of essential substance that gives power and energy. The substances (drugs) which are used for *Brimhana* and *Ojakshaya Chikitsa* possesses specific properties which play key role in the retardation of early aging.<sup>[5-7]</sup>

#### Guna and Karma of Dravyas used for Jara Chikitsa

The characteristics of different substances are responsible for stability, nourishment, and overall well-being.

- ✓ Substances with *Madhur*, *Guru* and *Tridoshagna* characteristics increase strength and stability.
- ✓ Substances with *Snigdha* and *Bruhan* qualities are responsible for deep nourishment and increased endurance.
- ✓ *Vrushya*, *Snigdha* and *Ushna* attributes provide energy and strength, whereas *Kashay*, *Guru* and *Ruksha* attributes aid digestion and overall nutrition.
- ✓ *Vataghna*, *Bruhan* and *Shukrala* qualities have a role to play in complexion, strength and fertility.
- ✓ *Laghu*, *Ushna* and *Agnivardhan* qualities benefit digestion and keep all three *Doshas* in equilibrium.
- ✓ Drugs with *Ushna*, *Asnigdha* and *Vatahara* attribute aid in circulation and provide nourishment.
- ✓ *Snigdha*, *Balavardhana* and *Dipan* qualities improve vigor and digestion.
- ✓ *Varna*, *Vrushya* and *Balvardhan* qualities enhance the complexion, nervous function and general strength.
- ✓ *Ushna*, *Hrudya* and *Vatapittahara* properties enhance heart health and balances *Dosha*.
- ✓ *Guru* and *Balaprada* properties increase vitality and facilitate nourishment.
- ✓ *Rochan*, *Dipan* and *Vatakaphahara* qualities facilitate digestive and respiratory wellness.
- ✓ *Katu* and *Ushna* qualities of drugs enhance detoxification and digestive process, thus improves process of nourishment.

The varied effects noticed in *Rasayana* therapy in most instances could be a result of improper or insufficient cleansing prior to administration. Empirical studies emphasize the necessity of proper cleansing prior to *Rasayana* therapy in order to reap maximum benefits.<sup>[6-9]</sup>

#### Role of Specific Drugs<sup>[9-11]</sup>

- ✚ *Vacha* promote dynamism and physical strength.
- ✚ *Ashwagandha* boosts resilience and promote functioning of organs.
- ✚ *Amalaki* is considered good for brilliance and it also rejuvenates skin tone.
- ✚ *Shankhapushpi* and *Jyotishmati* boost cognition, facilitating mental sharpness.
- ✚ *Bhringaraja* and *Bakuchi* care *Tvaka*, provide nutrition and youthfulness.
- ✚ *Atmagupta* maintain sexuality vitality and ensure strength.
- ✚ *Shatavari* gives physical strength and vigor.

#### CONCLUSION

Ayurveda lays major importance on knowing and controlling the aging process, and it presents precious chances for the improvement of quality of life during old age. Ayurvedic drugs help in the creation of *Shreshtha Rasadi Dhatus* and are full of antioxidants, which are responsible for the removal of free radicals from the body. Ayurvedic drugs considered useful in musculoskeletal diseases in elderly due to their *Vata-shamaka* effect. Ayurvedic herbs enhance vitality and resistance. These Ayurvedic drugs chiefly play a promotive role, with the intention of rejuvenating body and mind and promoting longevity and immunity. They also help in normal sensory function and improve brilliance. These actions of Ayurvedic drugs as anti aging agents occurs due to their *Brimhana*, *Vrishya*, *Balya*, *Vata-shamaka*, *Medhya*, *Rasayana* and *Dhatu-Poshaka* properties.

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