



## HEALTH PROMOTING ASPECTS OF PANCHKARMA FOR JARA

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose**– Aging is a natural process that began with the origin of life. Today's modern life style is being full of stress and directly affecting normal body function. Stress disturbs metabolism of the body. *Ayurveda* advocates *Panchkarma* as a useful tool to eliminate toxins of the body and help to maintain equilibrium of metabolism. *Panchkarma* procedures are proved to be effective in degenerative disorder along with delaying aging process. The present paper is aimed to develop a safe and cost effective protocol for ageing on the basis of *Panchkarma* therapy. **Metho** – The various *Panchkarma* procedures like *Abhyanga*, *Shalishastika Pinda Sweda* and *Basti* which can assist in prevention of premature aging. **Discussion**– From the various classical reviews *Panchakarma* procedures like *Abhyanga*, *Shalishastika Pinda Sweda* and *Basti* were found to be beneficial in premature aging. **Conclusion**– *Panchakarma* procedure are safe and effective thus can be adopted in aging.

**KEYWORDS:** *Panchakarma*, *Abhyanga*, *Basti*, *Shalishastika Pinda Sweda*

## INTRODUCTION

*Jara* (Old age) is one of the eight important branches of the *Ayurveda* system of medicine i.e. *Kaya*, *Bala*, *Graha*, *Urdhavanga*, *Shalya*, *Dranshta*, *Jara*, *Vrashana*.<sup>[1]</sup> *Jara Avastha* is the later phase of life in which maximum decline of body elements is observed. Some organ related changes also take place during this period, which are the decades of *Balya*, *Vridhhi*, *Chhavi*, *Medha*, *Twak* etc<sup>[2]</sup>, and as advances age, several changes take place in the body, in the external appearance, in the condition of *Dhosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala*, *Agni*, *Oja*, and so on<sup>[3]</sup>, as well as in the mental and cognitive functions. Elderly peoples are more prone to several chronic diseases. The problems of the elderly are becoming matter of great concern as increased life expectancy due to improved and advanced technology is resulting in an increasing population of the aged. A/c to WHO in 2010, an estimated 524 million people, were aged 65 or older. By 2050, this number is expected to nearly triple to about 1.5 billion, representing 20% of the world's population.<sup>[4]</sup> It is becoming alarming issue in today's era. The rapid increase in the population of the aged is that there will be an increase in the prevalence of chronic diseases and disabilities, both being conditions that tend to accompany the aging process. This burden is increasing day by day. In Classical texts, a broad description about aging has been mentioned. *Ayurveda* as health science has got potential for prevention of diseases by promotion of health and management of diseases occurring in old age. *Panchakarma* is useful to eliminate the toxins out of the body and help maintain normal metabolism.

*Panchakarma* procedures are proved to be effective in degenerative disorders along with delayed aging process.<sup>[5]</sup> The aim of this article is to review various classical about *panchakarma* procedures like *bhyanga*, *Shalishashtika pinda sweda* and *Basti* related to different aspects of aging.

## Objectives

1. To discuss the geriatric health care measures in *Ayurveda*.
2. To review various classical about *Panchakarma* procedures in *Jara* (Aging).

## Etiological factors

Acharya Charak has explained some factors, which may be considered as factors promoting growth. These factors are given under the *Shareera Vridhikarabhava* (ch.sh.6/12).<sup>[6]</sup>

These are –

1. *Kala Yoga* – Time bounded phenomenon
2. *Swabhava Samsiddhi*- Natural phenomenon as result of invisible process which is responsible for growth.
3. *Ahara Saushthava* - Dietary factors a/c to *Ashta-aharavidhi Visheshayatana*, *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana*, *Dwadash Asana Pravicharna*.
4. *Avighata*- Absence of devastating causes.

The lack of above factors may decrease the growth of an individual, so absence of these factors for growth, may lead to ageing process.

*Jara* is of 2 types-*Kalaj Jara*- Natural aging and *Akalaj Jara*- Premature aging.

The etiological factors for initiating the early aging process according to *Ayurveda* are clearly described by Acharya Charak which can be divided in three categories.<sup>[7]</sup>

1. *Aharatmak Hetu- Asatmya ahara* and different types of *viruddha ahara* (incompatible diet) i.e. *Rasa Viruddha, Vviryā Viruddha, Guna Viruddha* etc. are responsible for initiating of aging process.
2. *Viharatmak Hetu- Divaswapna* (Day sleep), *Ratri Jagran* (Night awakening), *Ativyavay* (Excessive indulgence in sexual act), *Ayas* (Excessive exercise)
3. *Mansik Hetu- Bhaya*(~Fear), *Krodha* (~Angerness), *Lobha* (~Greed) *Shoka* (~Sadness), *Moha* (~Convulsion) etc.

### Pathophysiology of aging<sup>[8]</sup>

Under normal physiological conditions, reactive oxygen species (ROS) serve as 'redox messengers' in the regulation of intracellular signaling, whereas excess ROS may induce irreversible damage to cellular components and lead to cell death by promoting the intrinsic apoptotic pathway through mitochondria. In the aging process, accumulation of mitochondria DNA mutation, impairment of oxidative phosphorylation as well as an imbalance in the expression of antioxidant enzymes result in further over production of ROS. This mitochondrial dysfunction elicited ROS production axis forms a vicious cycle, which is the basis of mitochondrial free radical theory of aging.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

This article is based on a review of *Ayurvedic* texts. Material related to *Jara* (Aging) and its management through *panchakarma* procedures and other relevant topic have been collected. *Panchakarma* procedures like *Abhyanga*, *Shalishastika pinda sweda* and *Basti* can assist in prevention of aging.

**Abhyanga-** *Abhyanga* is a unique form of massage therapy. It is a most common part of *Panchakarma* therapy. A/c to Acharya Vagbhata-*Abhyangaachretniyam, sa jarasramavataha*.<sup>[9]</sup> In older age *Vata dosha* is to be dominant. The properties of *Vata dosha* are described as *Ruksha, Laghu, Sheet, Khara, Vishada*. So *Vata dosha* decreases lustre of skin, body strength and decays the body and hastens aging process. *Abhyanga* mitigates *Vata, Dhatu pusti*, strengthens the bone, reduces both mental and physical fatigue and delays the aging process.

**Basti-** *Basti Chikitsa* is regarded as the prime treatment modality among the *Panchakarma*. It is having not only curative action but also preventive and promotive action.

### Concept of *Yapana basti*<sup>[10]</sup>

'*Ayusho yapanam dirgha kala anuvartanam kurvanti iti yapanam bastaya*'

As per this *Shloka*, the *Basti* which prolongs the life, restores the health is called as *Yapana Basti*. *Yapanam* means prolonging or supporting the life. *Yapana Basti* is defined as that which can be used for longer periods (prolonged use) and that which promotes longevity.

Acharya Charak explains the general characteristics of *Yapana Basti* and the things to be avoided during the course of *Yapana Basti*.

1. It has properties to both *Rasayana* and *Shodhana* properties.
2. It can be utilized for healthy persons, sick people.
3. It does not require *Purvakarma*.
4. It will not create like *Atiyoga* and *Ayoga*.

### *Shashtika shali pinda sweda*<sup>[11]</sup>

It is a type of *Ayurvedic* treatment in which a sweat-inducing massage is given to the patient using a preparation containing milk and rice to provide relief from pain, stiffness and improve the muscles strength. If done in proper manner, *Sweda* makes the body supple, remove stiffness of joints due to diseases of vitiated *Vata* type, cleanses the *Srotas* of the body and improves blood circulation. It improves complexion, increases appetite, improves digestion, and restores relish for food It also removes sluggishness and excessive sleep. It maintains the metabolism in a healthy condition from every point of view. This treatment is found to be very efficacious in subjects suffering from blood pressure and in certain kinds of skin diseases resulting from impurity of blood.

**Nasya Karma-** It is the most important therapy as it is used for the treatment of *Urdhavajatrugata Vikara*, so in some places it has been given first place in the sequence of *Panchakarma* for e.g. in the chapter *Apamarga Tanduliyam* of *Charak Smhita Sutrasthana*.

'*Sarvairindriya vaimalyam balam bhavti chaadhikam*,<sup>[12]</sup>  
*Na chasya roga sahsa prabhvantyaurdhajatruja,*  
*Jiryatuttamangeshu jara na labhte balam*'

As per the *Sloka* All the sense organs will be cleared and greatly strengthened through *Nasya*. There will be no sudden invasion of diseases occurring in the upper part of the body. Aging symptoms are not appears even in old age.

**Shirodhara-** *Shirodhara* is the process in which medicated oil, milk, butter milk, or *Kwath* is poured in a continuous stream of drip on the head, especially on the forehead in a specific manner. It is indicated in stress and psychosomatic disorders (Headache etc.) neurosis, insomnia, hypertension, loss of memory. *Shirodhara* is also considered to be useful in patients of *Vata Vyadhi*. In older age *Vata dosha* is to be dominant.<sup>[13]</sup>

### DISCUSSION

Aging is a natural process, but nobody wants to grow old. In *Ayurveda*, every condition (whether transient or persistent) that leads to a disturbance of homeostasis is

termed as a disease. *Jara* (Aging) is categorized under the head of natural disease. These natural diseases are due to *Swabhav* (Nature) and depend on the *Kala* (Time). A/c to Charak, the natural diseases are *Jara* (Old age) and *Mratyu* (Death). A/c to Acharya Sushruta, the natural diseases are *Kshuda* (Hunger), *Pipasa* (Thirst), *Nidra* (Sleep), *Jara* (Old age), *Mratyu* (Death). Although nobody can escape these diseases, they can be prevented by various *Panchkarma* procedures, *Rasayana* specially deals with the science of nutrition, geriatric care and rejuvenation. It is recommended that, there is a wide scope of research on *Panchakarma* procedures to prove their effect on *Jara* (Aging).

### CONCLUSION

Old age is an undesirable phase of human life. Due to increased elderly population, the prevalence of geriatric specific disease conditions is also increasing. This is creating a big burden on the health care providers. Hence development of new geriatric health care management strategies is the need of the hour. The life science of *Ayurveda* explains that, process of senescence being naturally (*Swabhavoparamavada*) under the influence of time (*Kala*). Through the disturbance in the equilibrium in all the three *dosha* occurs during old age, there is dominance of *Vata dosha* in this age. *Abhyanga* mitigates *Vata*, strengthens the bone, improve the strength of muscle and tendon. It is effective and economically cheaper method is essential considering the economic status of the individuals. During the old age, quality and quantity of all *Dhatu* decreases. The combination of dominant state of *Vata dosha* and deterioration of *Rasadi dhatu*, *Srotas* and *Agni* are responsible for the various degenerative changes and process of decay in the body. *Panchakarma* procedures compensate the age related bio-losses in the body and provide rejuvenating effect.

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