

Ayurvedic Insights of Geriatrics in Relation To Apan Vayu

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Abstract

As age progresses physiological and pathological patterns change in the body. One becomes prone to multiple physiological and psychological disorders. In *ayurveda tridoshas* are explained which are the basis for basic body function and vitiation leads to multiple *rogas* or diseases. *Swastha rakshan* preserving one's health is the basic line of management in any disease according to ayurveda. *Jara is kala of vata*, it should be taken care of, specifically *apan vayu*. Objective- To study the concept of gerontology according to ayurveda, diseases involved, prevention, management, *apan vayu its sthana, vaigunya lakshan*. To assess *jara avastha in special relation with apan vayu*. Materials and method-literature from various ayurvedic classics, modern texts, research articles and papers were reviewed. Result- In view of ayurveda, old age is the time when an individual is having *vata dosha vikruti due to swabhava*. Even though all the 5 types of *vata are vitiated, apan vayu seated at basti* and functions for defecation, urination and flatus, needs to be taken extra care. As in old age constipation, urine incontinence, uterine prolapse, etc are most observed, measures to preserve *apan vayu* needs to be taken.

Key words - *apan vayu, jara, basti, guda, mutra, mala*

Introduction –

Study of the physiological and psychological changes that occur in old age is called Gerontology and clinical gerontology or Geriatric is clinical care given to old. In *devi bhagavad* mentioned about “*Jara*” as slow process of degeneration of *rasadi dhatu is called Jara*.¹ In *shrimad bhagvad* also said that due to effect of *kala* slow degeneration of *rasadi dhatu is called jara*. In India the older population will increase dramatically over the next

four decades. The share 65 and older is expected to increase from 5 percent to 14 percent, while the share in the oldest age group (80 and older) will triple from 1 percent to 3 percent. There are so many healthcare problems which need to be addressed by the society and medical fraternity.² compared to old young individuals, people in old age have decreased physiological reserve, and are prone to chronic diseases, disability, frailty, and a few social issues like isolation, familial detachment and issues related to psychiatrics. The five top diagnostic categories found in old age are- Cardiological, Psychiatric, Musculoskeletal, Eye, ENT and Hormonal. There are so many aspects unrevealed aligning to this. Ayurveda and its fundamentals can

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offer the conceptual reasoning to many such geriatrics issues and aid in prevention and treatment of the same. The three pillars -Dosha, dhatu, and mala are the basis of the physiological and pathological doctrines in Ayurveda. The three doshas explained are *vata, pitta, kapha*. *Vata dosha* i.e prana to apan is the basis for survival. *Apana vata* being one among five subdivisions of vata has more importance as its *sthana is in Pakvasaya*, which itself is the capital sthana of vata. Thus any vitiation in the normal state of *Apana vata* or the *Pakvasaya* leads to the vitiation in the normal physiological functions of the other *vatas* such as *prana, apan samana* or *udana*, also vitiates other doshas *kapha* and *pitta* leading to many diseases. *Sushruta* mentions *jara* in group of naturally occurring disease named *kshudha, pipasa, nidra, jara, mrityu* and *prakruti*.³ These diseases non treatable, but when there is *dosh anubandha* needs to be treated.

Aim :

To study and review *Ayurvedic* insights of Geriatrics in relation to *Apan Vayu*.

Objective :

1. To study concept of gerontology as described in ayurveda, physiology, diseases involved, prevention and treatment.
2. To study *apan vayu its sthana, vaigunya lakshan*.
3. To analyze and document *apan vayu* in special relation with *jara avastha*.

Materials :

Literature regarding *apan vayu* and *jara* was reviewed from various *Ayurvedic* classics, research articles, research articles and books from contemporary science.

In *chikitsa sthana* of *charak samhita* chapter named *Rasayana Adhyaya Prankamiyama Rasayanpadam* mentions treatment and prevention of *Akalaja Jara* and *Kalaj Jara*. Classification of *vaya-Acharya charak* has divided *vaya* in three major parts. 1) *Balyawastha 1 to 30yrs*. 2) *Madhyamawastha 31 to 60yrs*. 3) *Jirnawastha 61 to 100yrs*. *Acharya sushruta* has classified the *vaya* in three parts. 1) *Bala 1 to 16yrs*. 2) *Madhya 17 to 70yrs*. 3) *Vrুদ্ধha 70 to 100yrs*.

Sthan and karma of Apan Vayu

Acharya	Sthan	Karma
Charak ⁴	<i>Vrishana (testicles), Vasti (urinary bladder), Medhra (penis) and inguinal region(vakshana), Nabhi(umbilicus), Uru (thighs), Guda(anus)</i>	It eliminates shukra, mutra, mala, Aartava and garbha at a definite time.
Sushrut ⁵	<i>Pakvadhana (Large intestine)</i>	It eliminates mala, shukra, garbha, Aartava from the lower part of the body.
Ashtang Sangraha ⁶	<i>Rectum, urinary bladder, pelvis, penis, scrotum, and groin</i>	It circulates in Shroni, vasti, medra, vrashana and uru and eliminates shukra, Aartava, Mala, mutra, garbha
Ashtang Hridaya ⁷	<i>Apana Desha (perineal region) and also pass Sroni (pelvis), Vasti (urinary bladder), Medhra (external genital apparatus of each sex) and Uru (thighs)</i>	It circulates in shroni, vasti, medra, uru and eliminates shukra, Aartava, mala, mutra and garbha.
<i>BHAVPRAK ASH</i>	<i>Malashaya (pakvashaya)</i>	It eliminates mala, mutra, shukra, garbha and raja outside the body.

Pathophysiology Of Vitiation of *Apan Vayu*-

Etiology of *Apana vayu vitiation*-ingestion of dry and heavy foods, suppression of urges or over expression of urges such as straining while defecating, urinating, passing flatus,etc , excessive travelling ,either riding on animals or vehicles, sitting or walking for long time etc.⁸ leads to many difficult diseases of large intestine(Pakvasaya) such as crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, disorders of semen, diseases of urine such as urinary infection,renal calculi,etc, hemorrhoids,fissure, infertility and prolapse of rectum, prolapse of uterus, etc. The term vitiation as defined as vaigunya does not mean only vrddhi or ksaya, but also indicates qualitative and quantitative disturbances of the *Apana vata*. *Apana vaigunya* is one of the causes of *paratantra vyadhis*. *Apana vayu vaigunya appearance* varies from mild cases of constipation to severe cases of mental disturbances.

Pathophysiology Of Jara According To Ayurveda-Hetu-

Consumption of *Gramya-Ahara* (a deficient and unplanned diet such as eating junk food,food not properly cooked, eating late at night, eating even when not hungry, etc).in ayurveda rules regarding diet and lifestyle is mentioned, when it is not followed i.e when there is indulgence in day sleep, daily coitus without *Vajikarana* (aphrodisiacs), daily alcohol drinking, excessive physical work, lack of exercise, *vega dharana*, mental and emotional fluctuations, eating *virudha ahara*,etc. Due to these causes (as mentioned by *Acharya Charak* in the second *Pada of Rasayan* there is vitiation of *Tridosha* that leads to various progressive pathological change resulting jara (mostly *akalaj jara*)⁹ .

Pathological changes include :

There is loss of compactness of the muscle, looseness of joints, vitiation of *Rakta* (blood) causing changes in viscosity and physical changes of rakt, excessive production of meda(fatty tissue)

leading to obesity,thyroid changes and other metabolic changes, failure of *Majja* (marrow) accumulation in bones leading osteoporosis and other blood disorders, failure of production of *Shukra* (semen), loss of *Oja* (vitality)¹⁰.

Symptoms :

In old age ,one experience no enthusiasm ,drowsiness, and lethargy,The respiratory rate is increased,Their is inability to initiate and perform physical and mental work,The memory, intellect, and complexion ,aura deteriorate.The person become susceptible to multiple life-threatening or life debuting diseases and cannot attain complete lifespan.¹¹

Kalaja Vriddhavastha (natural aging) :

When all the changes mentioned above is produced according to *kala* and *swabhava* is called *kalaja vridhavastha*.it can be delayed or managed but cannot be avoided treatment mentioned in texts are difficult to follow in this era.

Akalaja vriddha vastha :

As mentioned earlier in pathophysiology,changes are produced due to defective diet and lifestyle, signs of aging are visible early defined as *akalajavridha avastha*.it can be treated and managed according by ayurveda methods as mentioned in texts.¹²

Principles of Management-

It is *Yapya* (palliative).charak has explained *agrya dravya* (foremost) d in *ch. su.ch25*, accordingly jara is *yapya*.once jara old age commences it should be managed actively as they are susceptible to many diseases. One should follow an ideal lifestyle as prescribed by Ayurveda. One should avoid the causes leading to *Kshaya* (degeneration) and *Vata vitiation .activities such as* excessive physical and mental work, vigorous exercise, tolerance of non suppressible urges, intolerance of suppressible urges,etc.one should follow the rules regarding diet

like having only *Laghu* (light) and *Santarpaka* (nutritive) diet. one should follow rules of *Rasayana*, *Vajikarana*, and *Yapana Vasti* (a type of enema having palliative property, specifically designed for *vrudha*, *durbala* or weak individuals) regularly. one should follow the principles of *Sadvritta* and *Achara Rasayana explained in sutrasthana of charak*. one should involve oneself in the prayers or meditation and lean to Supreme Power (God) or the eternal truth by any means to increase level of *satva* in mind. All the regimes from diet to daily routine, if followed improves mental and physical immunity. If any disease persists or manifests, treatment should be taken promptly.¹³

Diseases Associated In Old Age :

The leading cause of mortality among aged people comprises mainly of respiratory problems, heart diseases, cancer and stroke. And leading causes of morbidity among this group is chronic inflammatory and degenerative conditions such as Arthritis, Diabetes, Osteoporosis, Alzheimer's disease, Depression, Psychiatric disorders, Parkinson's disease and age related urinary problems, etc¹⁴. The diseases involved in old age where *vata*, specifically *apan vayu* is involved are - *Vata vyadi with complaints of* Contraction, stiffness of joints, pain in bones and joints, horripilation, delirium, etc; *Kostas Ritha vata presenting with* Excessively aggravate *vata inside kostha* that causes retention of urine and stool, *bradhna (hernia)*, *cardiac diseases*, *gulma*, piles and pain in both the flanks, *Gudagatha vata presents with* Retention of stool, urine and flatus, colic pain, tympanitis, calculus, gravels, pain and emaciation in the calf region, thighs, sacral region, legs, and back; *Pakvasayagata vata* presents with gurgling sound in the intestines, colic pain, tympanitis, dysuria, constipation, flatulence and pain in the lumbar region; *Khanja and pangu*; *Gridhrasi, -sciatica*; *Adhmana-ascites*; *Arsas -piles*; *Vataja Bhagandara (Shatta Ponoka)-fistula*; *Unmargi*; *Gulma-abdominal mass/lump*, etc. The basic

*purpose of the article is to draw attention to the importance of apan vayu in old ages, as most diseases occurring in old age involve apan vayu in etiology. Thus almost all the diseases occurring in old age have apan vayu as etiology.*¹⁵

Conclusion :

According to *Sushruta* after seventy years old age initiates and in there is gradual decline and degradation of *dhatu*s, sensory and motor organs, strength, vitality and enthusiasm. It is characterized by development of wrinkles in the skin, grey hairs, baldness. Presenting complaints of cough, dyspnoea and inability to do daily activities, a person becomes like a worn out house in the rain. According to *Vagbhata* there is a gradual decline in the functioning of *dhatu*, sensory system and motor system. *jara* is associated with cough, dyspnea, development of wrinkle, baldness, sluggish functions of *agnis*, looseness of muscles and bone, roughness in skin, forward bending of body, tremors, etc. The diseases arising out of temporal factors that bring about old age and death are to be considered as natural ones and natural manifestations are irredeemable. Hence *Swabhavika Jara is Nishpratikriya* i.e. unavoidable and it should be preserved and should be protected by all means. The diseases encountered in *jara awastha* have common etiological factor that is *vata dosha*. *There is vata dosha anubandha and kshaya of all the dhatu*s. Amongst subtype of *doshas apan vayu* is most important because of *sthan* similar to *vata* in general i.e. *basti*. As all the diseases are pertaining to *apana vata* etiology. It needs to be taken care of particularly in old age. This can be achieved by avoiding causative factors of *apan vayu vaigunya* such as *vega dharana of mala, mutra, shukra, apan, avoiding ruksha and vatakarak ahar sevan, atiyana*, etc as mentioned above. Also following *sadavitta, ritucharya, dinacharya* according to ayurveda classics lets one maintain old age without any disease. In any scenario if *apan vayu* vitiates should be managed with the measures discussed above.

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