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# A review on *Rasaushadhi* in Geriatrics as a *Rasayana*

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## ABSTRACT

Worldwide the elderly population is increasing and geriatrics is emerging as a challenging speciality. It is now felt necessary to develop newer strategies for geriatric healthcare. The conventional system of medicine focusing more in the area of management of diseases of old age. Ayurveda has broad spectrum of preventive measures for combating the ageing process. *Rasayana Tantra* is a branch of Ayurveda, exclusively devotes to *Jarajanya Vyadhi*. *Rasaushadhis* are being the backbone of Ayurveda due to its *Rasayana* and therapeutic properties. Here is an attempt is made to discuss *Rasayana* property of *Rasaushadhis* in geriatrics.

**Key words:** Geriatrics, Ageing, Rasayana, Rasaushadhi.

## INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is basically the science of life and longevity. It presents a good concept of Ageing and its management. *Rasa Shastra* can be described as Ayurvedic pharmaceuticals, which deals with the drugs of metal, mineral and herbo-mineral origin, their varieties, properties, processing techniques and their therapeutic uses.

Ageing is a complex multi-factorial and inevitable process. As per Ayurveda ageing is a *Swabhavaja Vyadhi* means it is inherent nature of living being to get old. Ageing is a natural process that begins at birth, or to be more precise, at conception, a process that progresses throughout one's life and ends at

death. Constant predictable process that involves growth and development of living organisms. Unavoided, but how fast we age varies from one person to another. How we age depends upon our genes, environmental influences, and life style. Globally there are an estimated 605 million people aged 60 years and above. From the morbidity point of view, almost 50 % of the Indian elderly have chronic diseases and 5 % suffer from immobility.<sup>[1]</sup>

In *Ayurveda Rasa Shastra* considered as more effective and useful when it compared to herbal preparations. *Rasa* medicines have immense therapeutic applications, among them some are prevention of ageing and reduction in age related diseases.

### *Rasaushadhis*

*Rasa Shastra* is a branch of Ayurveda that was mainly developed in the medieval period. *Rasa Shastra* incorporates not only *Rasa*, but also *Maharasa*, *Uparasa*, and *Sadarana Rasa* etc. Hence the formulation which consists above as one of the constituents can be termed as *Rasaushadhi*.<sup>[2]</sup>

### Importance of *Rasaushadhis*

According to *Rasa Sara Samgraha*<sup>[3]</sup>

- Very quick in action.

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- Small dose is required as compared to herbal dose.
- Easy to take, so patient's acceptability is more.
- Long shelf life as compared to herbal medicines.

#### According to Rasa Sara Samgraha

We should treat *Sadya* types of diseases by using any type of medicine, but in case of *Asadya Rogas*, *Rasaushadhis* are best choice.

#### According to Rasapaddati

Treatments are three types

- *Daivi* –Treatment which carried out with *Rasa Dravyas*.
- *Manushi*- Treatment carried out with *Churna, Sneha, Kashaya, and Lehyas*.
- *Asuri* –Treatment carried out with *Sastras*.

**Table 1: Types of Rasaushadhi with example**

SN	Rasaushadhi	Example
1.	<i>Khalvi Rasa</i>	<i>Kajjali, Tribhuvanakeerthi Rasa, Aarogyavardini Vati.</i>
2.	<i>Parpati Rasa</i>	<i>Rasa Parpati, Panchamritha Parpati, Swarna Parpati.</i>
3.	<i>Kupipakwa Rasa</i>	<i>Makaradhawa Rasa, Rasa Sindhura, Sameerapannaga Rasa</i>
4.	<i>Pottali Rasa</i>	<i>Hemagarbha Pottali, Rasagarbha Pottali</i>
5.	<i>Bhasma and Pishti</i>	<i>Abhraka Bhasma, Swarna Bhasma, Pravala Pishti, Mukta Pishti.</i>
6.	<i>Lauha and Mandura</i>	<i>Sapthamrutha Lauha, Punarnava Mandura.</i>

#### Advantages of Rasashastra and Rasoushadhis

In Ayurvedic practice the *Rasaushadhis* has been considered as more useful and effective when compared to herbal preparation. It is said that the *Rasa Shastra* has immense therapeutic applications some of which are prevention of ageing and reduction in age related disorders. The assimilation of *Rasa*

preparations in the body is much faster because the preparation undergoes different processes called *Samskaras*.<sup>[4]</sup> This helps in active and quick assimilation of even the minute doses in the body. Apart from mercury there are a lot of minerals and metals described in *Rasashastra* with *Rasayana* properties. For eg: *Swarna, Rajata, Shilathu* etc.

#### Geriatrics

Geriatrics or geriatric medicine is a specialty that focuses on health care of elderly people. It aims to promote health by preventing and treating diseases and disabilities in older adults.

Ageing is the process that occurs during life which culminates in changes that decreases an individual's ability to cope with biological changes. The rise in elderly population world over including India, it is now felt necessary to develop newer strategies for geriatric health care.

Ayurveda it has a focused branch called *Rasayana* which deals with the problems related to ageing and methods to cure them. It is unique therapeutic methodology delays ageing and related problems.

The physiological changes of ageing are elaborated in Ayurveda. According to *Acharya Susruta* old age described as above 70 years. *Acharya Charaka* mentioned old age above 60 years. *Vata Dosha* is predominant during old age as per the fundamental principle of *Tridosha*. During old age there is gradual decline of all the *Dhatu, Veerya, Indriya, Ojas, Bala* and *Utsaha* along with loss of hair, wrinkling of skin, chronic and recurrent cough, shortness of breath, inability to perform routine activities etc.

In Ayurveda, *Sarangadhara Samhita* presents an interesting scheme of loss of different biological factors in different decades of life as function of ageing.<sup>[5]</sup> It can provide a guideline for selecting specific protective *Rasayana* to retard ageing.

**Table 2: Loss of different biological factors in different decades as per Sarangadhara**

SN	Decades	Age Related Loss of Biological Factors
1.	0-10	Loss of Childhood

2.	11-20	Loss of Growth
3.	21-30	Loss of Complexion
4.	31-40	Loss of Intellect
5.	41-50	Loss of Skin Texture
6.	51-60	Loss of Vision
7.	61-70	Loss of Virility
8.	71-80	Loss of Strength
9.	81-90	Loss of Cognitive Power
10.	91-100	Loss of Locomotive Ability

### Jara and Jara Chikitsa

Jara the term indicates to the loss in the period of life span the deduction from the remaining half of the expected duration and every pent year would be considered as a loss in the age.

### Types of Jara<sup>[6]</sup>

1. *Kalaja Jara* - Jara coming at proper age (after 60), *Dhatu Kshayajanya Jara*
2. *Akalaja Jara* - concept of premature ageing. Due to not taking proper care of personal hygiene, *Margawarodhajanya Jara*.

*Jara Chikitsa* is one among the eight branches of *Ashtanga Ayurveda* and it deals with diseases and conditions associated with old age. Ayurveda Geriatric procedures are aimed to cure the physical, emotional and behavioural disturbances with the help of well-planned Ayurvedic *Chikitsa* procedures. In Ayurveda Geriatric Health Care is termed as "*Vridhopacharaneeyam*".

### Rasayana Therapy

*Rasayana* is a Sanskrit word, which is made up of two words *Rasa* and *Ayana*.

*Rasa* indicates *Rasa Dhatu* and remaining six *Dhatus* like *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Meda*, *Asthi*, *Majja* and *Sukra*, *Ayana* means the path or road or way or movement.

*Rasayana* or rejuvenation therapy is one of the eight branches of *Ayurveda*. As per *Dalhana*, *Rasayana* is enabling a person to complete his normal life span

100 years and which prevents aging thus establishes youth for a longer period. According to *Sharanghadara*, *Rasayana* is which cures the aging and diseases, given examples like *Guduchi* and *Haritaki*. *Rasayana* influences the fundamental aspects of the body, viz, *Dhatus*, *Agni* and *Srotas* thereby enriches the nutritional value of the micro-circulation and tissue perfusion.<sup>[7]</sup>

In brief *Rasayana* which provide;

- Gives long life.
- Delays ageing.
- Increase intelligence, memory and lustre.
- Excellence in the body tissue helps in maintaining normal physiology of the body.

### Mode of Action of Rasayana

*Rasayana* basically promotes the nutrition through four modes;

- By directly enriching the nutritional intake of the body through increasing the consumption of *Amalaki*, *Satavari*, Milk, Ghee etc.
- On *Agni* - by improving *Agni* i.e., digestion and metabolism through *Bhallataka*, *Pippali* etc. there by promoting nutrition.
- *Srothovishodhana* - by promoting the capability of *Srotas* or micro circulatory channels in the body through herbs like *Guggulu*, *Haritaki*, *Tulasi* and so on.
- By its *Vishagna* property.

### Concept of using Rasaushadhis as a Rasayana in Geriatrics

In *Rasa Shastra* there are a large number of medicines which are described as *Rasayana*. Apart from a number of combinations in *Rasayanadhikara* there are lot of compounds described in various other chapters that work principally as *Rasayana* but are better indicated in particular diseases. They mostly contain various substances having *Rasayana* property. *Parada* is considered to be very powerful medicine. When it properly processed, it balances *Tridoshas*, prevents diseases and old age. Nourishes vital parts of

the body. When it compounded with specific herbs it heightens its medicinal properties.

### Concept of Rasa Rasayana

- The use of the term 'Rasa' and 'Rasayana' together is indicative of the fact that the 'Rasaushadhis' were prepared and consumed in the initial days (tantric period) only for Rasayana effect.
- Since, 'Rasasastra' originates from tantric cult, all the efforts put into the preparation of rasa medicines was either for Rasayana or Vajikarana.
- The wide range of Rasa medicines prepared now, are having wider therapeutic applicability. They are known for their faster action in smaller doses, quicker assimilation, excellent therapeutic values, longer shelf life and easy preservation.

**Table 3: Rasa Shastra elements indicated as Rasayana**

SN	Elements of Rasa Shastra	Reference
1.	Parada	R.T 7/88
2.	Abhraka	R.T 10/12
3.	Vaikranta	R.T23/167,R.R.S 2/56
4.	Makshika	R.T 21/26,R.R.S 2/80,A.P 4/9
5.	Shilajatu	R.T 22/84,A.P 4/123
6.	Sasyaka	R.R.S 2/128
7.	Gandhaka	R.T 8/37,R.R.S 3/16
8.	Haratala	R.T 11/55
9.	Manashila	R.T 11/116
10.	Nilanjana	R.R.S 3/104
11.	Tutta	R.T 21/128
12.	Hingula	R.R.S 3/140
13.	Swarna	R.T 13/69,R.R.S 5/8,A.P 3/25
14.	Rajata	R.R.S 5/24

15.	Lauha	R.R.S 5/88
16.	Vanga	R.T 18/39
17.	Hiraka	R.T 23/24
18.	Manikya	R.T 23/57
19.	Suryakanta	R.T 23/184, A.P 5/10
20.	Rajavarta	R.R.S 4/6
21.	Vatsanabha	R.T 24/26

R.T. - Rasa Tarangini, R.R.S. - Rasa Ratna Samuchaya, A.P. - Ayurveda Prakasha.

### Sagandha and Nirgandha Moorchitha Parada Yoga

Any Sagandha Moorchitha Parada Yoga may be administered for longer duration even after the diseases symptoms subside. By doing so, one can anticipate desired Rasayana effect out of the medicine. In such prolonged administrations also, the medicine does not exhibit any toxic effects (of mercury) in the body. In Nirgandha Moorchitha Parada Yoga if administered for longer duration, the chances of toxic effects cannot be ruled out. Here the Rasayana effect cannot be anticipated out of prolonged administration.

**Table 4: Major Rasaushadhi formulations and their indications in geriatrics**

S N	Rasaushadhi	Indication	Dose	Doshaghna ta	Anupana
1.	Suvarna Bhasma	Vrushya, Prameha	125 mg	Tridosha ara	Madhu, Ghrita
2.	Abhraka Bhasma	Raktaalpat a Impotency Memory loss	125 mg	Tridosha Shamaka	Madhu
3.	Vanga Bhasma	Balya, Bruhana, Mehaghna	125-250 mg	Kaphapitt ahara	Madhu, Ghrita, Guduchi

					Swarasa
4.	Chandraprabha Vati	Rakta Pradara, Shukra Vikara.	500 mg	Tridosahara	Tandulodaks, Sheetajala
5.	Suvarna Raja Vangeshwara	Dhatwagni Vardhaka, Vrushya.	125-250 mg	Thridoshahara	Godugdha
6.	Suvarna Makshika	Madumeha, Sukrakshaya.	125-250 mg	Kaphapittahara	Salsaradi Gana Kashaya
7.	Suvarnaraj Vangeshwara	Mutradaha, Bahumutra	125-250 mg	Tridosahara	Madhu, Godugdha
8.	Suvarna Sutshekhara	Grahani, Amlapitta.	125 mg	Pittahara	Ghrita, Madhu.
9.	Vasanthakusumakara Rasa	Prameha, Smritibhramsha.	125-250 mg	Vatapittahara	Godugdha
10.	Bruhatvata Chintamani Rasa	Bhrama, Pralapa, Pakshaghata.	125 mg	Vatapittahara	Ajaksheera, Guduchi Swarasa
11.	Mahalakshmi vilasa Rasa	Kshayaroga.	125 mg	Tridosahara	Madhu, Godugdha.

#### Scope of Rasaushadhis as a Rasayana in Geriatrics

- Jara Nivartaka (delay ageing process) & Deergha Ayushkara (provide longevity)
- Vyadhi Nivartaka (prevents diseases)
- Prashastha Dhatu (promotes health)

#### DISCUSSION

The Rasayana therapy has principle aims to promote rejuvenation, retard ageing process, defend body

from various diseases, regulate metabolism and provide mental and physical strength. In the present scenario better techniques of drug analysis have come up which can help us in authenticating the Rasayana and their effects on health. The branches of Ayurveda, Rasa Sastra and Rasayana gets standardized, it will bring a revolution in society. There is a need to generate awareness among the society about the consequences of population -ageing and about the strength of Ayurveda in geriatric healthcare.

#### CONCLUSION

The Rasaushadhi's as Rasayana therapy helps to attain longevity, immunity, mental competence, physical strength, sharpness of sense organs and qualities of Dhatus. It nourishes whole body and improves immune system and hence natural resistance to infection will be more. There are a large number of potent medicines in Rasa Shastra which are described as Rasayana. Undoubtedly, Rasaushadhis as Rasayana strength of Ayurveda in the context of Geriatric care.

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