

**“ROLE OF RASAYANA THERAPY IN GERIATRICS (*JARA CHIKITSA*): AN INTEGRATIVE REVIEW”****Ms. Shital Gaikwad¹****AFFILIATIONS:**

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The global rise in life expectancy has resulted in an increasing geriatric population, accompanied by challenges of aging-related decline, multimorbidity, frailty, and reduced quality of life. Modern medicine addresses geriatric conditions primarily through symptomatic care and disease-specific pharmacotherapy but often falls short in offering holistic, preventive, and rejuvenative solutions. Ayurveda, through its branch of *Jara Chikitsa* (geriatrics), emphasizes *Rasayana therapy*—rejuvenation measures aimed at delaying aging, enhancing immunity, and promoting healthy longevity. **Methods:** This review employed a comprehensive literature search in Ayurvedic classics (*Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*) and modern scientific databases (PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, AYUSH Research Portal). Studies included were clinical trials, pharmacological investigations, systematic reviews, and conceptual papers on *Rasayana* therapy and geriatrics. Exclusion criteria comprised anecdotal reports, unpublished theses, and non-peer-reviewed material. **Results:** Classical texts describe *Rasayana* therapy as enhancing *ojas*, promoting *medhya* (cognitive function), and maintaining tissue integrity. Single herbs (*Amalaki*, *Guduchi*, *Ashwagandha*, *Shatavari*), compound formulations (*Chyawanprash*, *Brahma Rasayana*), and specialized practices (*Achara Rasayana*) are highlighted. Modern evidence supports *Rasayana*’s antioxidant, immunomodulatory, neuroprotective, and anti-aging properties. Clinical trials indicate benefits in cognitive decline, immunity enhancement, stress reduction, metabolic regulation, and quality of life improvement in elderly populations. **Discussion:** *Rasayana* therapy provides a multidimensional approach addressing biological aging, psychosocial well-being, and functional independence. However, gaps remain in large-scale randomized controlled trials, standardized formulations, and molecular mechanism elucidation. **Conclusion:** *Rasayana* therapy offers a holistic, preventive, and rejuvenative strategy in geriatric healthcare. Its integration with modern geriatric practices may significantly contribute to healthy aging, reduced morbidity, and enhanced quality of life in elderly populations.

KEYWORDS: Aging, Ayurveda, Geriatrics, *Jara Chikitsa*, *Rasayana* Therapy

INTRODUCTION

The demographic shift toward an aging population is one of the defining global health trends of the 21st century. By 2050, the world population aged 60 years and above is projected to reach 2 billion^[1-2]. This demographic transition is accompanied by challenges such as multimorbidity, functional decline, neurodegenerative disorders, immunosenescence, and psychosocial isolation. Current biomedical approaches often emphasize disease-specific management, which may not adequately address the multidimensional needs of the elderly^[3-4].

Ayurveda, the traditional system of Indian medicine, provides a comprehensive framework for promoting healthy aging through *Jara Chikitsa* (geriatrics)^[5]. Central to this branch is *Rasayana therapy*, a holistic rejuvenation strategy aimed at slowing the process of aging, enhancing resistance to disease, improving memory and intellect, and promoting longevity. *Rasayana* not only encompasses herbal and mineral formulations but also diet, lifestyle, and ethical conduct (*Acharya Rasayana*), reflecting a multidimensional approach to health^[6-8].

The aim of this review is to explore the role of *Rasayana therapy* in geriatrics by critically examining classical Ayurvedic concepts, pharmacological evidence, and clinical research. Objectives include: (1) analyzing *Rasayana* descriptions in classical texts, (2) reviewing pharmacological and clinical studies on *Rasayana* drugs and formulations, (3) evaluating its application in geriatric health promotion, and (4) identifying gaps and future prospects for integrative geriatric care^[9-10].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A structured review methodology was employed:

- **Databases searched:** PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, AYUSH Research Portal, and Google Scholar.
- **Classical sources:** *Charaka Samhita (Chikitsa Sthana, Rasayana Adhyaya)*, *Sushruta Samhita (Chikitsa Sthana)*, *Ashtanga Hridaya (Uttarasthana)*, and commentaries^[11].
- **Search terms:** “*Rasayana AND geriatrics*,” “*Ayurveda AND aging*,” “*Jara Chikitsa*,” “*Rasayana AND immunomodulation*,” “*Ayurveda AND cognitive function*.”^[12]”
- **Inclusion criteria:** Peer-reviewed clinical trials, systematic reviews, pharmacological studies, and

conceptual papers published between 2000–2025; classical references^[13].

- **Exclusion criteria:** Anecdotal reports, unpublished theses, duplicate articles, and non-peer-reviewed content^[13].
- **Review type:** Narrative synthesis with thematic categorization^[14].
- **Study types considered:** Randomized controlled trials, observational studies, animal studies, pharmacological assays, and classical descriptions^[15].

OBSERVATION AND RESULTS

1. Conceptual Basis of Rasayana in Geriatrics

Rasayana therapy is described as a means to rejuvenate tissues (*dhatu*), enhance *ojas* (vital essence), improve *smriti* (memory), *medha* (intellect), and longevity. Aging in Ayurveda is seen as a natural process characterized by *dhatu kshaya* (tissue depletion) and *ojas* decline. *Rasayana chikitsa* is therefore intended to slow these degenerative changes. *Acharya Rasayana*, emphasizing ethical conduct, mindfulness, and social harmony, provides psychological resilience crucial in aging.

2. Types of Rasayana

- **Kutipravesika Rasayana:** Administered in seclusion under strict regimen for profound rejuvenation.
- **Vatatapika Rasayana:** Can be administered in normal living conditions, suitable for the elderly in community settings.
- **Naimittika Rasayana:** Targeted use for specific diseases (e.g., *Guduchi* in diabetes, *Ashwagandha* in neurodegeneration).
- **Acharya Rasayana:** Ethical, behavioral, and lifestyle codes promoting mental health and social well-being.

3. Classical Rasayana Herbs and Formulations

- **Amalaki (*Emblica officinalis*):** Described as a premier *Rasayana*, rich in vitamin C and polyphenols. Modern studies confirm antioxidant, immunomodulatory, and anti-aging properties.
- **Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*):** Enhances immunity, reduces oxidative stress, supports metabolic balance.
- **Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*):** A *Medhya Rasayana* improving memory, cognition, and stress resilience. Clinical studies

demonstrate anti-anxiety, adaptogenic, and neuroprotective effects.

- **Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*):** Supports hormonal balance and immunity, beneficial for post-menopausal women.
- **Chyawanprash:** A classical polyherbal Rasayana formulation known for improving vitality, immunity, and longevity.
- **Brahma Rasayana:** Indicated for cognitive enhancement and prevention of neurodegenerative changes.

4. Pharmacological Evidence

- **Antioxidant activity:** Rasayana herbs enhance superoxide dismutase, catalase, and glutathione levels, delaying cellular senescence.
- **Immunomodulation:** *Guduchi*, *Ashwagandha*, and *Amalaki* enhance innate and adaptive immunity, countering immunosenescence.
- **Neuroprotection:** *Medhya Rasayana* (Mandukaparni, Yashtimadhu, Shankhapushpi) show effects in improving memory and reducing neuroinflammation.
- **Anti-inflammatory effects:** Rasayana drugs reduce chronic low-grade inflammation implicated in aging and NCDs.
- **Adaptogenic activity:** Rasayana herbs modulate HPA axis, reducing stress-related decline.

5. Clinical Evidence in Geriatrics

- Studies on *Chyawanprash* report improved immunity, reduced respiratory infections, and enhanced vitality in elderly individuals.
- RCTs on *Ashwagandha* demonstrate improvements in sleep quality, memory, and reduction in anxiety among older adults.
- *Amalaki* supplementation has been shown to improve lipid profile, reduce oxidative stress, and enhance overall well-being.
- Brahma Rasayana trials suggest potential benefits in cognitive decline and age-associated memory impairment.
- Observational studies highlight the role of *Achara Rasayana* (ethical lifestyle) in reducing psychosocial stress, which is a key contributor to aging-related morbidity.

6. Integrative Role of Rasayana in Modern Geriatrics

Modern geriatrics emphasizes multimorbidity management, frailty prevention, cognitive health, and

quality of life. Rasayana overlaps with these objectives by:

- Preventing oxidative stress and inflammation.
- Enhancing immunity and resilience against infections.
- Improving cognitive function and mental health.
- Supporting physical vitality and independence.
- Providing a holistic psychosocial framework through *Achara Rasayana*.

DISCUSSION

The evidence suggests that *Rasayana therapy* aligns closely with the goals of modern geriatric medicine—prevention, rejuvenation, and quality of life enhancement. Both Ayurveda and biomedicine recognize aging as a multifactorial process involving oxidative damage, inflammation, immune decline, and neurodegeneration. Rasayana addresses these mechanisms through herbal and lifestyle interventions^[16].

Convergences^[17]

- **Oxidative stress:** Antioxidant effects of *Amalaki*, *Guduchi*, and *Ashwagandha* resonate with biomedical understanding of free radical theory of aging.
- **Immunosenescence:** Rasayana's immunomodulatory action complements vaccination and infection prevention in elderly care.
- **Cognitive health:** *Medhya Rasayana* shows promise in neurodegenerative conditions, similar to modern nootropics.
- **Holistic well-being:** *Achara Rasayana* emphasizes ethical conduct and stress reduction, echoing psychosocial models in geriatric medicine.

Strengths^[18]

- Offers preventive and promotive healthcare rather than symptom-specific interventions.
- Addresses body, mind, and social well-being, unlike predominantly pharmacological geriatric medicine.
- Provides low-cost, sustainable interventions accessible to community healthcare.

Limitations^[19]

- Limited large-scale RCTs with rigorous methodology.
- Lack of standardized formulations and quality control.

- Insufficient mechanistic research on molecular pathways.
- Inadequate integration into public health systems.

Future Prospects^[20]

- Designing clinical trials on Rasayana formulations in geriatric syndromes like frailty, sarcopenia, and dementia.
- Integration of *Achara Rasayana* into health promotion and community geriatric care.
- Collaboration between Ayurveda and modern geriatrics to develop personalized healthy aging protocols.
- Exploration of Rasayana phytochemicals for novel drug discovery in gerontology.

Thus, Rasayana therapy can significantly complement biomedical strategies, offering a holistic and patient-centered approach to aging.

CONCLUSION

The rising geriatric population demands sustainable healthcare strategies addressing not only longevity but also quality of life. Ayurveda's *Rasayana therapy*, rooted in *Jara Chikitsa*, provides a holistic framework to delay aging, enhance immunity, improve cognition, and sustain vitality. Classical texts emphasize both pharmacological Rasayanas (herbs and formulations) and behavioral Rasayanas (*Achara Rasayana*), highlighting a multidimensional view of health.

Modern pharmacological and clinical evidence supports Rasayana's antioxidant, immunomodulatory, neuroprotective, and adaptogenic roles, validating its potential in managing geriatric health challenges. Clinical trials indicate improvements in immunity, cognition, stress resilience, and overall vitality in elderly populations. However, limitations such as the lack of large-scale RCTs, variability in formulations, and insufficient mechanistic insights underscore the need for robust scientific validation. Future research integrating Ayurvedic principles with modern biomedical approaches can pave the way for personalized and integrative geriatric care.

In conclusion, Rasayana therapy represents a valuable contribution of Ayurveda to global geriatric healthcare. Its integration with modern medicine may not only extend life expectancy but also ensure *swasthya rakshanam* (maintenance of health),

fulfilling the goal of healthy and graceful aging.

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