



Review Article

ROLE OF NASYA THERAPY IN GERIATRIC HEALTH

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ABSTRACT

WHO has defined 60 years of age as the cut-off for old age. The number of elderly people worldwide is rapidly growing, which causes a progressive decline in their physical and mental abilities as well as an increase in their risk of illness. In Ayurveda, *Vridhhaavastha* begins after the age of 60. Acharya *Sarangadhara* mentioned the loss of various biological factors during aging. In Ayurveda *Nasa* is mentioned as a gateway to the head region and can be helpful in old age. In this review article, various textbooks and journals were searched and screened to gather details regarding geriatrics and *Nasya* therapy. This therapy relaxes the mind and enhances the quality of life in old age. It is the most effective way to reduce and relieve the imbalanced doshas in the upper body.

INTRODUCTION

Aging has been most comprehensively defined by Miller as the process that converts fit adults into frailer adults with a progressively increased risk of illness, injury and death. With time, certain changes take place in an organism and these changes eventually lead to death. World Health Organization (WHO) has defined 60 years of age as the cut-off for old age. The world population of the elderly is increasing and by the year 2050, adults older than 65 years will comprise 1/5th of the global population. In India, 3.8% of the population are older than 65 years of age. According to an estimate, the likely number of elderly people in India will be 324 million by the year 2050. According to Ayurveda the lifespan of an individual is divided into three parts known as *Vaya*. These are *Balavastha* (childhood) which lasts up to the age of 16 years, *Madhyavastha* (young and middle age) which lasts from the age of 16 to 60 years and *Vridhhaavastha* or

Jirnavastha (old age), which refers to the period after 60 years. Every person will pass through a period when various decaying changes will take place and this period is known as *Vridhhaavastha*. To make that old age journey easier and healthier Ayurveda offers lots of medicines and preventive therapies. *Nasya* therapy is one of the most wonderful therapies that can be used in old age.

Methodology

A critical review has been done to explore geriatrics and *Nasya*. Materials on geriatrics, *Vaya*, lifestyle for aging and other relevant subjects have been gathered. Various *Samhita* as well as any available commentaries on these, serves as the principal Ayurveda texts used in this review article. To gather knowledge on the relevant topics various modern texts, journals, and numerous websites have been explored.

The process of aging

As per Acharya *Sarangadhara*, there is an interesting process of loss of different biological factors during life as a function of aging. During the approximate hundred years of the total span of life.

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1.	The first decade of life	<i>Balya</i>	Childhood
2.	The second decade of life	<i>Vrddhi</i>	Growth
3.	The third decade of life	<i>Chabi</i>	Beauty
4.	The fourth decade of life	<i>Medha</i>	Intellect
5.	The fifth decade of life	<i>Tvak</i>	Healthy of skin
6.	The sixth decade of life	<i>Drsthi</i>	vision
7.	The seventh decade of life	<i>Sukra</i>	Sex
8.	The eighth decade of life	<i>Vikrama</i>	Strength
9.	The ninth decade of life	<i>Buddhi</i>	Wisdom
10.	The tenth decade of life	<i>Karmendriya</i>	Activity

The Ayurvedic concept of aging has been deal with *Tridosha*, *Saptadhatus*, *Malas*, *Srotas*, *Indriyas*, *Again* and *Ojas*. When all of these are in homeostasis the body functions well. However, due to old age an increase of *Vata*, vitiation of *Pitta* and a decrease of *Kapha* causes an impact on the body and all those changes in body allowing the aging to take over.

As per WHO, at the biological level aging is the result from impact of the accumulation of a wide variety of molecular and cellular damage over time. This leads to a gradual decrease in physical and mental capacity, a growing risk of disease, and ultimately death. These changes are neither linear nor consistent and they are only loosely associated with a person's age in years. The diversity seen in older age is not random. Beyond biological changes, aging is often associated with other life transitions such as retirement, relocation to more appropriate housing, the death of friends and partners.

The common conditions in old age comprise loss of hearing, vision impairment, cataract, back and neck ache, osteoarthritis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, depression, dementia and co-morbidity increases with age. Exposure to adversity, severe loss of intrinsic capacity and functional ability can not only result in psychological distress but also lead to a poor quality of life. As many as a quarter of people over 65 are socially isolated or lonely, increasing the risk of loneliness but also mental health problems. Life gets tougher and hampers the day-to-day activity.

So, aging is not a disease that we can cure, it is a natural process of life that can't stop but we can make it healthier and more peaceful by some therapies that are mentioned in Ayurveda.

Nasya karma can improve quality of life in old age, relax the mind and it is a part of *Dincharya*. In Ayurveda it is mentioned that "*Nasa hi sirso dwaram*".

Therefore, *Nasya karma* is a therapeutic measure where the medicated oil, *Kwatha*, *Swarasa*, *Churna* etc. are administered through the nose to eliminate the vitiated *Dosha* situated in *Shira*.

According to Ayurveda, the human body is metaphorically likened to an inverted tree, with the head being its primary component. Every part of the body, including organs, functions as branches, allowing the head to oversee all systems and the application of medical treatments. The practice of *Nasya karma* can treat various ailments affecting different body regions. The Bhagavad Gita suggests that *Nasya* is the most effective way to reduce and relieve the imbalanced *Doshas* in the upper body.

Probable Mode of Action of *Nasya Karma*

The passage of drugs through the nasal mucosa is the first step in the absorption of drugs in the nasal cavity. Un- charged as well as small particles easily pass through the mucus while charged as well as large particles are more difficult to cross. The two mechanisms that can be considered are mechanism of drug absorption involves an aqueous route of transport (paracellular route). The paracellular route is slow and passive. The second mechanism includes the transport of the drugs through a lipoidal route (transcellular route). The transcellular route is responsible for the transport of lipophilicity.

Nose-to-brain drug delivery.

There are three mechanisms at work in direct nose-to-drug delivery and there could be one intracellular transport-mediated route and two extra-cellular transport-mediated routes.

Intracellular Transport

The intracellular transport route is a long one with intranasal-delivered drugs typically taking hours to reach the olfactory bulb. The olfactory neuron in the olfactory epithelium could uptake the molecules by such processes as endocytosis, which could reach the olfactory bulb by axonal transport.

Extracellular Transport

The two likely extracellular transport routes help in rapid entrance of the drug into the brain, which can occur within minutes of intranasal drug administration. The first extracellular transport-based route, the intranasally administered substance, first crosses the gap between the olfactory neurons in the olfactory epithelium which are subsequently transported to the olfactory bulb. In the second extracellular transport-based route, the intranasal administered substances may be transported along the trigeminal nerve to bypass the blood-brain barrier. After reaching the olfactory bulb or trigeminal nerve region, the substance may enter other regions of the brain by diffusion which may also be facilitated by the “perivascular pump” that is driven by arterial pulsations.

Benefits of Nasya Therapy for Geriatric Health

Respiratory Health: Elderly individuals often experience respiratory issues such as sinusitis, allergies, or congestion. *Nasya karma* helps clear the nasal passages, alleviate congestion and reduce inflammation thus improving respiratory function.

Cognitive Function: Cognitive decline is a significant concern in aging populations. *Nasya karma* is believed to enhance mental clarity, memory, and concentration by stimulating the brain and nervous system.

Joint Health: Arthritis and joint pain are prevalent among older adults. *Nasya* therapy can help alleviate pain and inflammation in the head and neck region, potentially benefiting overall joint health.

Stress Reduction: Older adults often face stress related to health issues, isolation or life changes. *Nasya karma* includes gentle massage techniques that promote relaxation, reduce stress levels, and support emotional well-being.

CONCLUSION

The process of aging has its challenges to be met. Extensive research is trying to explore and find protective factors to enhance and facilitate a better experience for the senile. *Nasya* therapy offers a unique approach to enhancing geriatric health by addressing physical, mental and emotional aspects

of well-being. While it is not a replacement for conventional medical treatments, it can complement existing therapies and contribute to a comprehensive care plan for elderly individuals.

By embracing holistic practices like *Nasya karma*, we can empower older adults to maintain optimal health and vitality in their later years. By using ancient wisdom with modern understanding, *Nasya* therapy represents the breeze between traditional healing practices and contemporary healthcare, paving the way for improved geriatric health outcomes in our aging society.

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