



Review Article

NIDANA VIVECHANA IN AKAALAJA JARA – REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Aging is defined as process of growing old, damage to cells, tissues and organs with the passage of time. Ayurveda being ancient system of medicine, clearly described about *Jara* and defined it as “*Vayakrita slathamamsadi avastha*” with other *Lakshanas* like *Khalitya*, *Palitya*, *Smritinasha*, *Ksheenabala* etc. In the blown up human civilization of present era and in the midst of increased various stress, improper diet, lack of exercise, low quality of food grain etc has adversely affected on the process of aging and may cause signs of premature aging, which is definitely an alarming sign and it may indicate the shorten lifespan.

In Ayurveda prevention of disease has given utmost importance. To prevent any of the diseases one must know the causative factors properly, where *Nidanaparivarjana* is considered as first line of treatment in most of the diseases.

“Everyone grows old”, *Jara* is an inescapable part of life but premature aging is an unnatural, untimely process. Prevention of this *Akaalaja jara* is possible only by understanding its *Nidanas*.

There are so many internal and external factors which contribute for premature aging and this article is intended to explore those factors like *Aharaja*, *Viharaja*, *Manasika nidanas* to aim for targeted treatment.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda being an ancient science has told the goal of life is to achieve *Purusharthas*. (*Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kaama* and *Moksha*). To attain these *Purusharthas* one must be healthy¹ and energetic, where youth is considered to be possessing maximum potential.²

Acharya Charaka in his *Chikitsa sthaana* while explaining the benefits of *Rasayana* mentioned that *Tarunam vayah* that means *Rasayana* is used mainly to inhibit the aging process.³ it shows the importance of maintenance of an individual's energy.

Jara

Jara is defined as the stage where *Mamsadi dhatu* will be in *Shlathavastha*.⁴ It is said to be *Kaalaja* and *Parirakshanakrita*, because they appear due to time factor inspite of taking all precautions and as such they can't be cured but are only palliative by diet, *Rasayana* etc.⁵ Acc to *Brihatrayis* there are some specific *Lakshanas* which indicates

the aging process such as *Vali*, *Kalitya*, *Palitya*, decreased strength, grasping and memory power etc. *Vata* will become more predominant in this age.^{6,7} Based on Age it has been considered that after 60years (70 years) an individual is said to be in his old age.⁸

Akaalaja Jara

“*Akaalaja asamaye jaata ityarthaha*” Whatever the *Lakshanas* has said for old age, if it has happens in one's early life (before 60 years) then it is considered as *Akaalaja jara*.

It is said to be *Aparirakshanakrita*, those which occur due to lack of effort in precautionary measures. They should be managed acc to *Dosha* and disorder.⁹

Nidanas for Akaalaja Jara

It can be understood through *Samanya nidana* (general cause) and *Vishesha nidana* (specific cause).

Samanya Nidana

“Sarvesham ca vyaadhinaam vata pitta sleshmaana eva mulam.” of all diseases Vata, Pitta and Kapha are verily the root; because of having their symptoms, their subsidence and scriptural evidence.¹⁰

“Kaalarthakarmanaam yogo
heenamthyaatimatrakah

Samyagyogascha vijneyo rogaarogyakakaaranam”¹¹

The Heena (inadequate), Mithya (improper) and Ati (excess) Yoga (association) of these three things

1. Kaala (season)
2. Artha (senses)
3. Karma (activities) are main reason of occurrence of diseases.

For today's scenario it can be understood in terms of exposure to blue light which emitted from smart phones, TV, computers etc. Some of the studies has proved that macular degeneration will accelerate because of these gadgets.¹² Noise Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL) can also be understood under this context. Some of the sources mentioned are target shooting and hunting, listening to MP3 players at high volume through headphones, playing in a band and attending loud concerts etc.¹³

Sudden changes in weather/climate (raining at improper season or no rain at all, excessive heat, too cold) etc can be understood as Kaala atiyoga, Ayoga and Mithyayoga.

Karma in terms of Kaya (physical), Vak (speech), Chitta (mind) which are reduced, excessive or improper like not doing any exercise, forceful suppression of urges, falling, slipping, talking too much or talking in between having food, desires hatred and fear which are improper etc are considered as Samanya nidana for vitiation of Tridoshas.

In Vishesh Nidana it can be classified as Aharaja, Viharaja, Manasika and Others.

Aharaja Nidana: it can be understood as follows

- Atisevana of particular rasa

- Maatra of ahara
- Rasaja bhava
- Improper dietary habits

Atisevana of Particular Rasa

In our classics we get the reference of excessive usage of particular Rasa which leads to specific lakshanas.¹⁴

Lavana rasa – Greying of hair, baldness, wrinkles, loosening of tooth

Amla rasa – Does the Shithilikarana of Kaya

Tikta – Decreases strength

Kashaya – Does the Karshana of Deha

Katu – Decreases strength

Food articles which posses above mentioned Rasas like salted biscuits, chips, sour soups, tea, coffee, spicy and Masala edibles etc can be considered.

Acharya Charaka in his Rasa Vimana Adhyaya says that three things which should not be taken excessively i.e., Pippali, Kshara and Lavana. In the context of excessive intake of Lavana we will get the reference of Shithila mamas shonita, Aparikleshaha, Akala kalitya, Palitya and Valaya.¹⁵

Maatra of Ahara

The food in deficient quantity is said to be causing loss of strength, complexion and development, unsaturation, upward movement of Vayu, harm to life span, virility and immunity, damage to body, mind, intellect and sense organs, inflicting Saara, causing inauspiciousness and causative for eighty disorders of Vata.¹⁶

Rasaja Bhava

While formation of the foetus there are few entities which plays an important role, Rasaja bhava is one among that. The food which is taken by the pregnant woman will form the Rasaja bhava. It is helpful in growth of body, nourishment, complexion, energy etc of the baby which is going to be born. If the food is not taken properly then there will be defect in formation of these entities, which can be understood as premature aging.

Table 1: Rasaja Bhava

Features	C.Sh.	Su.Sh.	A.S.Sh.	A.H.Sh.	K.Sh.
Origin of body or manifestation of different body parts	+	-	+	+	-
Growth of body	+	+	+	+	+
Attachment of life or strength of body	+	-	-	-	+
Contentment	+	-	+	+	+
Nourishment	+	-	+	+	+
Enthusiasm	+	-	+	+	-
Energy or strength	-	+	-	-	-
Health and unhealthy state	-	+	-	-	-
Complexion	+	+	-	-	-
Maintenance of body	-	-	+	+	+

Improper Dietary Habits

Disobeying the *Ashtavidhaahara ayatana niyamas*,¹⁷ consuming *Viruddha ahara*, excessive usage of *Ruksha anna, Kshara, Tila, Klinna* and *Guru ahara, Sheeta* (Cold or Frozen food), *Kadanna* (food articles devoid of *Jeevaniya* properties),¹⁸ *Adhyashana, Asatmya bojana* etc leads improper nourishment of *Dhatus*.

Viharaja nidana

Not only the food we take but also the activities we do will affect the body. Some of the *Vihaaras* mentioned by our Acharyas are Excessive walking,¹⁹ day sleep, excessive indulgence in sexual act, excessive and improper exercise, *Rajaswala Charya nindana* like *Avalekhana* (Combing hair during menstruation) etc.²⁰

Manasika nidana

In the context of *Aruchi* some of the *Manasika bhavas* has been explained as *Nidanas* like

Shoka, Bhaya, Lobha, Krodha, Ahridya, Ashuchi Gandha, Manas Pratikulata etc. If an individual fails to take proper food because of distaste then there won't be proper nourishment to the *Dhatus*.

Even the wholesome food also taken in proper quantity, does not get digested due to anxiety, grief, fear, anger etc psychological emotions.²¹ Gradually it will lead to *Dhatu kshaya* and symptoms like debility, lethargy, incapability to concentrate, loss of enthusiasm etc may appear which can be correlated to *Akaalaja jara*.

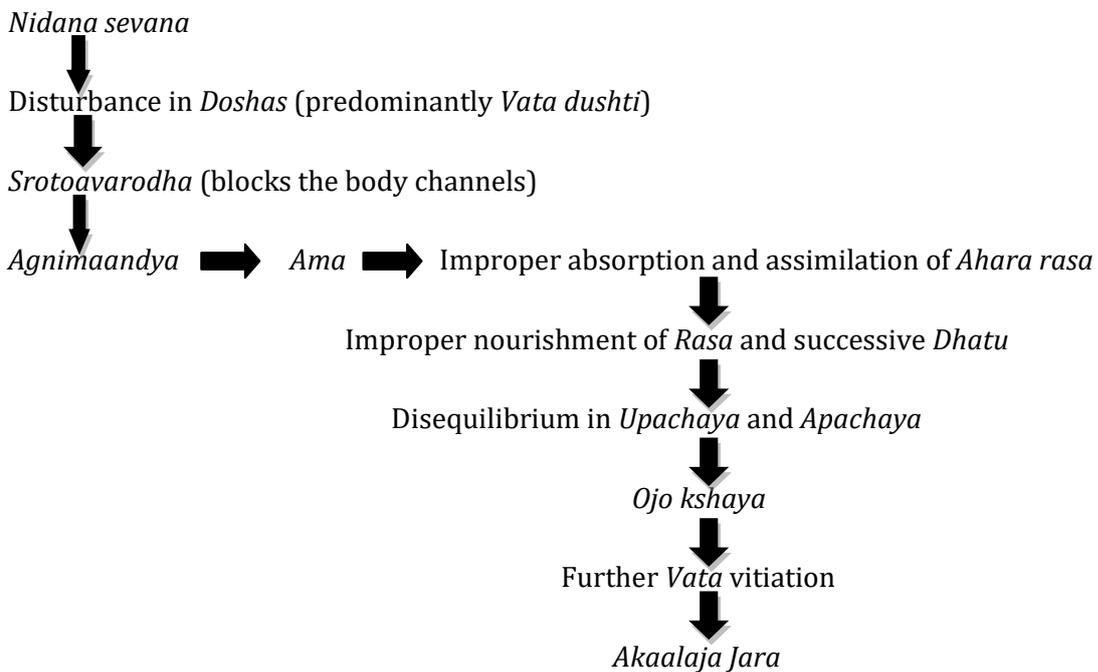
Pitrija Bhava

It can be understood as genetic factors as in our classics it has explained that these are the factors inherited from father, such as *Kesha, Loma, Nakha, Smashru, Asthi, Danta, Sira, Snayu, Dhamani, Shukra*. (Table no 2) If any defects in these factors will end up in premature aging symptoms.

Table no 2 - Pitrija Bhava

Features	C.Sh.	Su.Sh.	A.S.Sh.	A.H.Sh.	K.Sh.
<i>Kesha</i>	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Smashru</i>	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Loma</i>	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Nakha</i>	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Danta</i>	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Asthi</i>	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Sira</i>	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Snayu</i>	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Dhamani</i>	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Shukra</i>	+	+	+	+	+

Samprapti



Ayurvedic theories to understand *Akaalaja jara* *Shareeravridhikarabhava-abhava*

This theory explains that our body needs some essential factors to grow up which are known as *Shareeravridhikara bhava*. i.e., *Kala Yoga* (time), *Swabhavasamsiddhi* (natural phenomenon), *Ahara-saushtava* (food which is taken) and *Avigatha* (absence of devastating causes). The gradual reduction or absence of these factors may lead to reduced growth of person there by aging occurs.²² If this phenomenon occurs in the early age of an individual then it leads to *Akaalaja jara*.

Tridosha Siddantha

For proper growth and nourishment of an individual *Tridoshas* should be in normal state.²³ Whereas in aged people *Vata* will be predominant. In premature aging also due to *Vatakara nidanas*, it disturbs the balance in *Doshas*. Because of *Ruksha* (dry), *Laghu* (light), *Vishada* (non slime), *Khara* (rough) properties of *Vata* it decreases lusture of skin, lessens body strength, dries up the body, hastens aging process.

Role of Agni

Due to *Nidanas* there will be *Vata* vitiation predominantly and it affects *Jataragni* results in *Vishamagni*, hence *Ahara rasa* won't be formed properly. As there will be disturbance in *Dhatvagni* too there will be improper utilization of formed *Ahara rasa*, which leads to *Uttarottara dhatu kshaya* and results in *Akaalaja jara lakshanas*.

Contemporary Theories to Understand *Akaalaja Jara*

In contemporary science also there has been lot of research work done to understand the aging process. As a result there evolved so many hypothesis and theories.

1. The cross linking/Glycation hypothesis of aging
2. The evolutionary senescence theory of aging
3. Theory of mitochondrial aging
4. The genome maintenance hypothesis of aging
5. The Neuro endocrine hypothesis of aging
6. The oxidative damage/ free radical hypothesis of aging
7. The Replicative senescence hypothesis of aging etc.

Based on these theories one can understand the premature aging concept also, as the causative factors mentioned above will accelerate the aging process and the intention of these theories is to identification of the mechanism that affect aging could lead to intervention that slow or alter aging.²⁴

DISCUSSION

At the biological level, aging results from the impact of the accumulation of a wide variety of molecular and cellular damage over time. This leads to gradual decreases in physical and mental capacity, a growing risk of disease, and ultimately death. Whereas in premature aging this happens at young/early age. In our Samhitas we can get scattered references of *Nidanas* for *Akaalaja jara*.

The food which we take should be *Saatvika*, of proper quantity and other qualities which have mentioned under *Ashtavidhavishshaayatana*. As the *Shareera* mainly depends on the *Aahara* for its growth and nourishment. In the same way *viharas* and *Manasika bhavas* also plays its role in *Shareera vridhhi*. If any individual involves in *Mithya vihara* are does the *Adhaarana of Manasika vegas*, finally it leads to vitiation of *Doshas* and results in *Krishha, Kality palitya* etc *Akaalaja jara lakshanas*.

Some of the *Nidanas* like *Pitrija bhava* can be understood as genetic defect as it is inherited by paternal gene.

CONCLUSION

In the present era premature aging has become a burning issue for which there are many causes. These *Nidanas* can be understood as *Aharaja, Viharaja, Manasika* and others. It can also be considered as *Bahya* and *Abyantara* which plays an important role in vitiation of *Vata* along with other *Doshas*.

Tridosha siddantha, role of Agni, *Shareeravridhikara bhava abhava* etc are some contexts which has been explained in our classics through which we can understand *Akaalaja jara*.

Nidana panchakas are considered as tools for *Roga pareeksha* where *Nidana* plays very important role. Before giving treatment to any patients a wise physician must understand the *Nidanas* properly as *Nidana parivarjana* itself act as main treatment in most of the conditions.

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