



CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF SMRITIBHRANSHA w. s. r. TO DEMENTIA IN GERIATRICS

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ABSTRACT:

Geriatrics is the Greek word in which "Geron" means old man & "Iatros" means healer. Geriatric medicine is a speciality that focuses on health care of elderly people. Ayurveda used the words such as *Vridhha*, *Vardhakya*, *Jara* to denote the aging. In *Ashtang Ayurveda* there are eight divisions from which *Jarachikitsa* is one of the important branch¹.

There are many disorders related to geriatrics including dementia. Dementia is broad category of brain diseases that cause a long term and often gradual decrease in ability to think and remember that is great enough to affect a person's daily functioning². The most common affected area includes memory, visual-spatial, language, attention & problem solving³. Old age is not a disease itself but the elderly are vulnerable to long term diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, stroke, diabetes, musculoskeletal & mental disorders. Many diseases results in dementia.

In Ayurveda classics there is no separate chapter regarding this condition but the

signs along with pathogenesis of dementia can be understood in terms of *Smritibransha*. In this paper the Ayurvedic perspective of pathogenesis of dementia in geriatrics has been discussed & also suggested the guidelines of management of dementia through Ayurveda which can be beneficial for geriatric patients.

KEY WORDS: Dementia, *Smritibhransha*, *Smritihhrass*, Geriatrics.

INTRODUCTION:

In *Ashtang Ayurveda* there are eight divisions from which *Jarachikitsa* is one of the important branches. Geriatrics is the branch of medicine which is concerned with the care & treatment of the elderly people. There are many disorders related to geriatrics including dementia. Dementia is clinical syndrome characterised by decline in cognitive, intellectual and memory functions due to many diseases. In Ayurveda memory is more related with *Mana* (mind) & *Buddhi* (intellect) retention of cognition can be take place under the *Medha* (power of retention), there is recollection or recall occurs with the help of *Smriti* (memory).



Dementia is broad category of brain diseases. The most common cause of dementia is Alzheimer's disease which makes up to 50% to 70% of cases. Other common causes include Vascular Dementia (25%), Lewy body dementia (15%)⁴In cases of dementia with this disease, there is generalized neural loss in the cortex of cerebrum is the main histological changes seen. There is diffuse cerebral atrophy accompanied by senile plaques which is mostly seen in late stage of life. Clinical features includes slow onset of forgetfulness, loss of interest in surroundings, impairment of social skills, difficulty in many functions like problem solving judgment, abstract thinking, orientation, comprehension inability to carry all activities of daily living.

In ayurvedic classics there is no separate chapter regarding this condition but the signs along with pathogenesis of dementia can be understood in terms of *Smritihrass*, *Smritibransha*. In this paper dementia in geriatrics has been discussed in Ayurveda concepts & also, suggested the Ayurveda guidelines which can be beneficial for dementia in geriatrics people.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

MATERIAL:

- 1) Literature review from Ayurvedic Classics.
- 2) Literature review from Modern Text.
- 3) Journals and websites.

METHODS:

The study is based on review of Ayurveda, Modern Text, researches

related to the subject. In this study the following point's are to be discussed.

1. Definition of Smriti & Factors of good Smriti (memory).
2. Mental & Physical changes in Vardhakya .
- 3 Causes of *Smritibransha* & *Smritihrass*.
4. Ayurvedic perspective of pathogenesis of dementia.
5. Dementia according to modern science.
6. Management of dementia through Ayurveda guidelines.

1. Definition of Smriti & Factors of good Smriti (memory)

Smriti is very important factor in the perception of knowledge. The *sannikarsha* of *Atma*, *Indriya*, *Mana* & *indriyaarthas* are responsible for normal functions of *Smriti*. According to Acharya Charaka definition of *Smriti* is-

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*Drusthashrutanubhutanamsmaranatsmriti uchyate*⁵ “.

A memory is nothing, but remembrance of things directly perceived heard (from scriptures) or experienced earlier.

The following points are for good memory⁶

1. *Nimittat* - knowledge of cause
2. *Rupgrhanat*- knowledge of form seeing
3. *Sadrushyat* - knowledge similarity
4. *Saviparyayat* - knowledge of contrast (ugly and beautiful forms)

5. *Satvanubandhanat*- concentration of mind.

6. *Abhyasat* - repetition

7. *Dyanyogat* - attainment of Meta physical knowledge.

8. *Punhashrutat* - subsequent partial communication of an event.

2. Mental and Physical Changes in *Vardhakya*:

1) In *Vardhakyawastha* there are many changes at the level of physical and mental. In *Vardhakyawastha* there is dominance of *Vatadosha*. According to Acharya Charaka, in *jeernavastha* there is diminution of dhatus, strength of sense organs, energy, manliness, and valor, power of understanding, retention, memorising speech and analysing facts. There is gradual diminution of qualities of dhatus and dominance of vata during this age⁷.

2) According to Sharangdhara Samhita there is decade wise diminution of childhood growth, retention, memorising, vision, reproductive power, intellectual power, hearing functions of *indriyas* & mind.⁸.

3. Causes of *Smritibhransha* & *Smritihrras*:

The *sannikarsha* of *Atma*, *Indriya*, *Mana* & *Indriyaarthas* are responsible for normal functions of *Smriti*⁹. *Smritibhransha* is a condition in which there is deviation from normalcy this means disturbances in memory, reduced memory. There are many causes described in our classics-

➤ *Smritibhransha* is a state in which *smriti* is impaired due to a person being overcome by *Raja* and *Tama* on his mind¹⁰.

➤ In second stage of *Madatyaya Vyadhi* there is impairment of memory.¹¹

➤ *Madatyaya* (intoxication due to excessive drinking) is important cause of loss of intelligence, patience & memory¹².

➤ In old age there is dominance of *Vatadosha* and reduced *Kapha* and *Pitta*. *Tarpaka kapha* nourishes all *indriyas* but in old age *Tarpak Kapha* is reduced which leads to reduced functions of *indriyas* which leads to reduced memory.

➤ When *VyanaVayu* covered by *PranaVayu* there is vacantness of all senses diminution of intellect, memory & strength¹³.

4. Ayurvedic Perspective of Pathogenesis of Dementia:

The Cognitive process according to Ayurveda is the *Sannikarsha* of *Atma*, *Indriya*, *Mana* & *Indriyaarthas* which is responsible for normal functions of *Smriti*. *Smriti* is more related with *mana*, *buddhi* & retention of cognition can be take place under the *Medha* (power of retention), there is recollection or recall occurs with the help of *Smriti* (memory).

The earliest stage of dementia is called Mild cognitive impairment which is neurological disorder seen in older age.

The age is most important risk factor for dementia. According to ayurveda as discussed previously there is degeneration of memorising during the passing each



decade of life from birth, so there is degenerative changes started in old age which affects on functioning of Smriti. In old age there is prominence of *Vatadosha* & diminution of *Tarpak Kapha* leads to reduced function of *indriyas*. Thus these all pathological events leads in impairment of memory which causes dementia.

5. Dementia according to Modern Science¹⁴:

Dementia is clinical syndrome characterised by loss of previously acquired intellectual function in absence of impairment of arousal. There are many different potential causes of dementia but cerebral atrophy, usually due to is Alzheimer's disease.

Causes of Dementia:

Type of cause	Common
Vascular	Diffuse small vessel disease
Degenerative	Alzheimer's disease
Neoplastic	Secondary deposits
Traumatic	Chronic subdural haematoma
Toxic/Nutritional	Alcohol
Infective	Unusual cause-HIV, Syphilis.

The most common affected areas include memory, visual-spatial, language, attention & problem solving. The behavioural & psychological symptoms include balance problems, tremor, speech difficulty, memory distortions, restlessness, and perception problems.

Treatment: Anticholinergic drugs are used to improve cognitive function in Dementia.

6. Management of Dementia through Ayurveda Guidelines:

In Ayurveda there are many types of *chikitsa*. In Dementia the following treatment is explained in the form of *Dravyarooopa Chikitsa* & *Adravyarooopa Chikitsa* -

➤ *Dravyarupa chikitsa-*

❖ *Rasayanchikitsa-*

Rasayanachikitsa not only help in improving brain functions but also rejuvenation of body. *Rasayanchikitsa* is promotive treatment for attaining longevity, memory, intelligence, optimum strength of physique & sense organs, respectability etc¹⁵. According to this sutra it affects on memory & intelligence. *Medhya Rasayana* includes four *dravyas* *Mandukaparni*, *Guduchi*, *Shankhapushpi* & *Yasthimadhu*. In this group all four drugs are *Madhur Vipaki*, *Sheetavirya* except *Guduchi*.

These Madhur Vipakidravayas can help in functioning of *Tarpak kapha* in *Masthishka* hence leads to proper nourishment of *Indriyas*, thus help in impairment of memory.

➤ *Adravyarup Chikitsa-*

❖ *Satvavajaya Chikitsa-*

Withdrawal of mind from harmful objects constitutes psychic therapy. It is



the most important modality of management of mental disorders. It is useful to improve impairment of social skills, difficulty in many functions like problem solving judgment etc.

- ❖ *Aacharrasayan & Yoga*- these both chikitsa strengthens the physical, mental & social parts of health.
- *Panchakrama Chikitsa*- There are many *upakramas* like *Shirodhara*, *Shirobasti*, *Nasya*, *Shiropichu* which are useful in nourishing *masthishka* & proper functioning of *indriyas* leads to proper functioning of *smriti*.

DISCUSSION:

According to modern science there is no specific treatment exists for dementia but at some extent Anticholinergic drugs have recently been introduced which appear to improve cognitive function in it¹⁶. The central nervous system is very sensitive to anticholinergic side effects due to substantial decrease in cholinergic neurons on receptors in the brain of older individuals. Most commonly side effects of anticholinergic drugs which may be more pronounced in elderly includes the drowsiness, blurred vision, confusion, falls, and constipation etc¹⁷. So in this condition the *Medhya Rasayan*, *Satvavajaya chikitsa*, *Panchakrama* procedures etc may be beneficial in Dementia in elderly people. *Nasya* is one of the important *panchakarma* procedures. In *Ayurveda Nasa* (nose) is said to be the main doorway to *Shira*. *Nasya dravyas* reaches to the brain via nasal route and may be beneficial in preventive the

degenerative changes in brain which is seen in aging.

CONCLUSION:

This conceptual study light on the aspects of *Ayurvedic* perspective of pathogenesis & treatment of Dementia. It is important to realize the Dementia is not a normal finding in elderly but important to diagnose for effective care & prevention. *Ayurveda* focused all treatment aspect of Dementia, through the use of *Madhya Rasayana & Panchakarma* procedures to improve the mental health in old people.

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