

A DEEP INSIGHT INTO ANCIENT HUMAN LIFE EXTENSION METHODS AND PROCESSES

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Abstract

Life extension science is the study of slowing down or reversing the processes of aging to extend both the maximum and average lifespan. Recently the medical community has been talking about a new discipline: anti-aging, a collection of methods to help slow down the aging process. In addition to the numerous lifestyle suggestions, based on the latest scientific discoveries, one of the pillars of anti-aging treatments, for men and women, is hormone replacement therapy. The aim of this type of treatment is to restore deficiencies through the use of medicines, as well as through vitamins and trace elements. "Fortunately the Ayurvedic anti-aging methods are free from side-effects". The present-day of life consist of full of strain, tension, anxiety, and fear. All these will affect the life span of person. Today the average life span of a person is 64 yrs. This can be extended much more by using ancient life extension methods & Processes. There are many life extension methods & processes described in ancient Ayurveda and Yogic science. This paper addresses all the Ancient Human life extension methods & processes.

Key words: Life extension methods; Ayurveda; Yogic Science; Anti aging; Life span.

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INTRODUCTION

Life extension science, also known as anti-aging medicine, experimental gerontology, and biomedical gerontology, is the study of slowing down or reversing the process of aging to extend both the maximum and average life span. Recently the medical community has been talking about a new discipline: anti-aging, a collection of methods to help slow down the aging process. In addition to the numerous lifestyle suggestions, based on the latest scientific discoveries, one of the pillars of anti-aging treatments, for men and women, is hormone replacement therapy. The aim of this type of treatment is to restore deficiencies through the use of medicines, as well as through vitamins and trace elements. "Fortunately the Ayurvedic anti-aging methods are free from side-effects". The present-day of life consist of full of strain, tension, anxiety, and fear. Because of all these they will get palpitation, perspiration fainting, anger, etc. That results in memory loss, inefficiency, lack of confidence, lack of concentration, failure. All these lead to insomnia, headache, asthma, allergy, diabetics, high blood pressure, back pain, etc. All these will affect the life span of man. Today the average life span of a person is 64 yrs. This can be extended much more by using these ancient life extension methods & Processes.

The Sanskrit word Ayurveda means "knowledge of life". "Ayus" means life and Veda means "knowledge". It is translated as "the knowledge of long life". There are many methods described in ancient Ayurveda and yogic sciences about life Extension Methods & Processes. The main methods are, Shodhana karma, Rasayana Therapy, sadaachaara, Rutucharya, Dinacharya in Ayurveda and, Yama, Niyama, Yogaasana, Pranayama, Suryanamaskara, Dhyana, Yoganidra, and Sattvic Diet in Yogic sciences.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

1. To emphasize and discuss the Ancient Life extension Methods in Ayurveda and yoga classical literature.
2. To evaluate the processes of Ancient Life extension Methods in Ayurveda and yoga classical texts.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Basically this article is review of various Ayurvedic and Yoga classical texts. Materials related to ancient life extension methods and processes in Ayurveda, Yoga and other related topics have been collected from various Ayurvedic and Yoga classical texts. The references were compiled, analyzed and discussed for a thorough and in-depth understanding of the ancient life extension methods and processes in Ayurveda and Yoga. The samhitas used in the present study were Charaka samhita, Shushruta samhita, Astanga Sangraha with commentaries on them and Kriya Yoga Sutras of Patanjali's, B.K.S. Iyengar's Light on Yoga etc. The modern medical literatures as well as other various related information were collected from related websites.

Analysis

Ayurveda turns out to be the mother of anti-aging treatments. The extension of life span has been the main goal of Ayurvedic treatments for thousands of years. The life extension methods described in Ayurveda are:-

Shodhanakarma

Shodhana treatments are purificatory methods and also called Pancha karma is suggested to take place a couple times each year, as the seasons turn. Shodhanatherapy consists of Poorva karma, pradhana karma, Pashchat karma. In Poorva karma the patient will be prepared for Pradhana karma by Snehana and

Sweda karmas both internally and externally. Following the Pradhana karma, there is not only the complete elimination of toxins, but also the depletion of ojas. Thus, a corresponding rasayana (rejuvenative) treatment is begun shortly after pradhanakarma. That is called Pashchat karma^[1] or Samsarjana karma. The rationale of Shodhana is perhaps best illustrated by the “simile of the cloth.” If we have a length of cloth that we wish to dye, we must first clean the cloth before dyeing it. If we do not, the dirty areas on the cloth will become stains, fixed forever by the chemical agents of the dye. Thus, if we wish to rejuvenate the body, we must first purify it completely, or else we end up driving toxins deeper into the body.

The Pradhanakarma (Panchakarma) is composed of Vamana (vomiting), Virechana (purgation), Vasti (medicated enema), Nasya (nasal irrigation,) and Rakta mokshana (blood letting).

1. Vamana therapy

Vamana is also known as emesis therapy, and ancient therapeutic method for eliminating accumulated kapha through the oral pathway. The kapha toxins accumulated in the body and the respiratory tract are effectively removed by Vamana karma.^[2]

Process

During the treatment, kapha aggravating foods are given to the patient, in the morning. Thereafter, heat is applied to the chest and back, in order to liquefy kapha. A drink made by mixing madanaphalam (*Randia dumetorum*), licorice (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), honey or Vacha (*Acorus calamus*) root kashayam (decoction) is given to the patient, after the kapha is liquefied. Consumption of the drinks which triggers vomiting in the patient is administered. After performing Vamana therapy, the patient should take rest and not consume heavy food. Fasting is highly

recommended immediately after Vamana therapy.

2. Virechana therapy

Virechana means removal of body doshas through anal route^[3] and thus, brings health back. Virechana is a specified treatment for pitta dosha disorder. When there is excess pitta dosha in the body, it closes the channels of the body. This leads to accumulation of waste substances in the body. Through virechana karma, this accumulated pitta is made watery and then ejected out through the exit passage of the body. This treatment is the easiest procedure and is also not painful.

Process

The drugs used for the purgation therapy are vitiating the doshas and bring them into the abdomen. During the procedure, the patient is subjected to oleation first, then fomentation, which is followed by emesis and Samsarjana Karma (post operative). The internal Oleation is followed for three to seven days. Thereafter, a medicated steam bath is performed for three days. A light and warm diet is prescribed for the patient, a day before starting Virechana karma. Certain factors like body and mind constitution, age of the person, mental condition should be considered, while opting for Virechana karma.

3. Bastikarma

One of the main procedures of Panchakarma Cikitsa is Basti karma, concentrates on the elimination of the loosened vata dosha out through the rectum. The treatment involves the introduction of medicinal substances, such as herbal oils and decoctions in a liquid medium, into the rectum of the person. Most of the diseases in the body are caused by vitiated vata dosha only. The Vasti karma is the only treatment which subside the vitiated vata dosha.^[4]

4. Nasya karma

One of the Panchakarma mentioned in Ayurveda, Nasya therapy is a process wherein the drug is administered through the nostrils⁵. Since nose is the gateway to the cerebral, sensory, and motor functions of the body. The disorders associated with movement of prana are usually corrected by nasya therapy. Excess kapha stored in the throat, nose, sinus, and head are also removed from the body as a result of nasya herbal powders, depending on the dosha and the nature of disorder. The therapy is highly effective in curing a number of diseases pertaining to the head, if it is performed systematically.

Types of Nasya karma

Pradhamana Nasya (Shiro Virechana)

In this type of Nasya karma, dry powders (rather than oils) are blown into the nose with the help of a tube to treat kapha types of diseases.

Snehana nasya (Bruhmana Nasya)

This treatment uses ghee, oils, salt, Satavari (*Asparagus racemosus*) ghee, Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) ghee and medicated milk to cure vata disorders.

Shamana Nasya (Sedative Nasya)

It is mainly administered to treat pitta-type disorders. Generally, herbal medicated decoctions, teas and medicated oils are used as the medicine in this type of Nasya karma.

Navana Nasya (Decoction Nasya)

This type of therapy is used in vata-pitta or kapha-pitta disorders. Decoctions and medicated oils are used in this treatment.

Marshya Nasya (Ghee or Oil Nasya)

The therapy is administered for a particular reason, which may not be disease, but a condition of uneasiness arising from a particular disease.

Pratimarshya (Daily Oil Nasya)

This type of therapy is administered by dipping the clean little finger in ghee or oil and inserting into each nostril. The nasal passage is lubricated and given a gentle massage, the deep nasal tissues are opened up. By doing Pratimarshya on a regular basis, stress can be released to a great extent.^[6]

5. Raktamokshatherapy (Blood letting)

Raktamoksha is performed to eliminate the toxins from the bloodstream through the gastrointestinal tract. It is a safe, painless and highly effective form of Panchakarma. Raktamoksha entails the refinement of blood, hence administered to treat disorders pertaining to skin. The process of blood letting stimulates the spleen in order to produce anti-toxic substances that can help the stimulation of immune system of the body. Thus, Raktamoksha therapy cures a number of blood-borne diseases. It is of two types. Shastraprayoga is in order to drain the accumulated blood from a particular point of the body by using shastras (instruments). Anushastraprayoga is of four types, based on vitiated dosha. In Jaloukprayoga, leech is applied, in Sringaprayoga horn is used, in Alabuprayoga alabu is used, and in Ghati Yantraprayoga Ghati yantra is used to extract the blood from body.

Rasayana therapy

Rasayanatantra aims at achieving a long and healthy life. It includes longevity, improved memory, intellect, freedom from diseases, youthfulness, excellence of luster, complexion, voice, generosity, strength of

body and senses.^[7] Rasayana forms the seventh of eight subdivisions of Ayurveda earliest extant text, Charaka Samhita.^[8] But in fact are central to Ayurveda and its key concept of health promotion. Rasayana therapy is the branch of Ayurvedic science, which deals with various aspects of preventive health care. This branch of Ashtanga Ayurveda aims at achieving a long and healthy life. Rasayana improves the metabolic activities and results in best possible bio-transformation. Jara Cikitsa or Rasayana Tantra is the rejuvenating therapy, which promotes rejuvenation in a healthy person and cures the disease of an unhealthy person. Amalaki (*Embllica officinalis*), Haritaki (*Terminalia chebula*), Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*), Yukta (*Pluchea lanceolata*), Shweta (*Clitoria ternatea*), Jeewanti (*Leptadenia reticulata*), Satavari (*Asperagus racemosus*), Mandookparni (*Centella asiatica*), Sthira (*Desmodium giganticum*), Punarnava (*Boerhaavia diffusa*) are few out of the long list of herbs that are called rasayanakar or Vayasthapana (anti-aging) herbs.^[9] In short Rasayana chikitsa is rejuvenation of the soul. It provides a long, disease free and vigorous life to the persons.

Methodology of Rasayana therapy

Rasayana Therapy basically promotes the nutrition through three modes. One is the directly enriching the nutritional intake of the body through increasing the consumption of Satavari (*Asperagus racemosus*), milk, ghee, etc. Second one is by improving Agni i.e. digestion and metabolism through Bhallataka (*Semicarpus anacardium*), Pippali (*Piper longum*) etc, thereby promoting nutrition. The Third one is by promoting the capability of srotas or microcirculatory channels in the body through herbs like Guggulu (*Commiphora mukul*), Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*), and so on.^[10]

Types of Rasayana therapy

There are 3 types of Rasayana therapies. Vatatapikamu, Kutipravesika, Aachaara Rasayana.^[11]

Vatatapikamu

The first type of Rasayana Chikitsa Vatatapikamu is mainly for people, who cannot dedicate long hours and are short of both enthusiasm and effort. Such types of patients are given a short package of rasayana, so that they continue their routine life simultaneously. In this process, patients generally undergo a dietary change and also a change in their regular lifestyle.

Kutipravesika

The second type Kutipravesika is more complicated process and involves total reformation of the body. In such a therapy, the patient is isolated from his/her routine life and is kept in a Kuti (hut), which is specially designed for rasayana-chikitsa, under the observation of an Ayurvedic specialist. The whole lifestyle of the person is continuously monitored. It is believed that when the person comes out of the Kuti, his/her body is completely rejuvenated. All the old tissues are replaced by new and lively tissues. The therapy can be termed as the reincarnation and reinvigoration of the soul.

Aachaara Rasayana

The third type which was told by Charaka is Aachaara Rasayana, That is 'The persons who ever follow the rules and regulations of society & morals of life which were told in dharmashastras such as Rutucharya, Dinacharya, Sadaachaara, Pranayama, Yogaasana etc, will become Aachaara Rasayana means, their body becomes healthy with high resistant and immunity power.

Sadvrta (Regimen of good conduct)

Sadvrta which mentioned in ancient classical texts like Ashtanga Sangraha makes the life longer and healthy. Those are,

1. One should strive to bring happiness to all. This attitude is termed as Hitaya, which is characteristic of our cultures.
2. One should keep away from sins viz. bodily, speech and mental. Bodily sins are theft, injury to others and Vyabhichara, rape etc. Speech sins are telling lies, harsh words, to open secret of others and irrelevant talk. Mental sins are jealousy, bad thought etc.
3. One should help the needy, handicapped and crippled as best as possible.
4. One should respect the intellectuals and the educated, elderly persons, physicians or Vaidya, guests and cows and help balanced mind. Avoid arrogance when rich, and grief and envy when poor.
5. One should ponder on the cause and not on the effect.
6. Actions should be planned in such a way that all the three achievements viz. Dharma (religion), Artha (money) and Karma are achieved.
7. One should take bath regularly and put on clean clothes.
8. One should keep handkerchief around the nostrils and mouth while sneezing or yawning to avoid spread of infection.
9. One should not sleep under a tree at night.^[12]

Rutucharya (Seasonal Regimen)

Rutu means season. The Rutucharya is different in each Rutu. Following Rutucharya flushes the pollutants from body and makes the life longer and disease free. A year consists of six rutus. The six ritus are Shishira (Cold and dewy season), Vasanth (Spring

season), Greeshma (Summer season), Varsha (Rainy season), Sharad (Autumn season) and Hemanta Rutu (Winter season).^[13] (Table 1 and Table 2)

Dinacharya

In Sanskrit, Dina means daily, Charya means – regimen, the word Dinacharya means daily routine. Main aim of Ayurveda is protecting healthy person's health and protecting him from diseases.^[15]

Waking up in the morning

It suggests the healthy person, in order to protect his life, should get up from his sleep in the Brahma muhurta (any time from 3.00 A.M. to 6.00 A.M.), after considering the condition of digestion of food of previous night whether properly done or not.^[16]

Malotsarga (voiding the excrements)

After getting the urge of urine and faeces naturally, the person should eliminate them, facing north and if still dark, facing south; silently, sitting in hygienic conditions and not corrupting any beautiful or public place. The point to note here is neither to initiate the urges voluntarily nor to suppress it when manifest. Both these are the causes for many diseases.^[17]

Acamana (purificatory rite)

Acamana (sipping small quantity of water) should be done after contact with inauspicious things like tissues (blood, muscle, fat etc.).^[18]

Danta dhavana (cleaning of teeth)

Twigs of roots (branches) of Vata (*Ficus benghalensis*), Asana (*Pterocarpus marsupium*), Arka (*Calotropis procera*), Khadira (*Acacia catechu*), Karaveera (*Pongamia pinnata*), Sarja (*Vateria indica*), Irameda (*Acacia farnesiana*),

Table 1: Seasons & Tastes

Ritu	Seasons	Powerful Taste
Shishira	Cold and dewy season	Tikta (bitter)
Vasanth	Spring season	Kashaya (astringent)
Greeshma	Summer season	Katu(pungent)
Varsha	Rainy season	Amala (sour)
Sharat	Autumn season	Lavana (salty)
Hemanta	Winter season	Madhura (sweet)

Table 2: Seasons - Diet & Life style

Rutu (Season)	Diet	Lifestyle ^[14]
Hemanta Ritu (Winter Season)	Sweet, Sour and Salt helps reducing the vata. Wine prepared from jiggery Wheat/gram flour products, milk products, sugarcane products and edible oils	Massage with oil, Udvartan (dry massage) with fine paste/powder of kumkum (kesar), Exercise (vyayama), Clothing-leather, silk and wool, exposure to sunlight and fire to keep you warm.
Vasanth Ritu (Spring Season)	Should consume easily digestible food because increased kapha is liquefied by the heat of sun which causes diminished agni (digestive activity) causing diseases.	Physical exercise, Dry massage, Avoid sleeping during day time.
Greeshma Ritu (Summer Season)	Because of powerful Sunrays Kapha decreases vata increases day by day. Food which are sweet, fatty, cold and liquid should be taken, take corn flour mixed with cold water and sugar after taking bath in cold water.	Anoint body with chandan paste and take bath with cold water. Stay in cool places. Wear light dresses
Varsha Ritu (Rainy Season)	The agni (digestive activity) weakens further and gets vitiated by doshas. Hence all methods to mitigate doshas And measures to enhance digestive activity can be followed. Easily digestible food to be taken.	Avoid daytime sleeping. Panchakarma can be done
Sharat Ritu (Autumn Season)	Bitter, astringent and sweet taste can be included in food. Take easily digestible food	Udvartan with chandan powder, Bath with warm water.
Shishira (Cold and dewy season)	More intake of sweet, sour and salt helps reducing the vata. Wine prepared from jaggery , Wheat/gram flour products, milk products, sugarcane products and corn flour, edible oils can be taken	Massage with oil. Udvartan with fine paste/powder of kumkum (kesar). Exercise (vyayama). Clothing-leather, silk and wool. Exposure to sunlight and fire to keep yourself warm.

Apamarga (*Achyranthes aspera*), Kakubha (*Terminalia arjuna*) or such other known trees which possess astringent, bitter and pungent tastes; the twigs should be the thickness of the little finger, straight, devoid of knots and obtained from the trees grown in good place, it should be of twelve anguli in length. It's one end is made like a brush by chewing and the teeth cleaned with it in the morning and after meals, twice daily. Next the tongue is to be cleaned by scraping it, comfortably with a tongue scraper (made from metal etc.). This will remove the dirt, bad taste and smell of the

tongue, mouth and teeth. The lower row of teeth should be brushed first. Keeping the mouth filled with water for gargling. The eyes are to be splashed with water every morning with cold water which reduces the tension and tiredness of the eyes and improves vision.^[19]

Abhyangam

Every day we have to massage the body with oil (Abhyangan), how all the machines will work properly when we pour the oil regularly, the same way human body will become

smooth and strong .Daily we have to apply til oil or coconut oil to the head. It prevents hair loss, splitting of hair, gray hair, and headache and reduces tensions.^[20]

Karnapurana

Every day we have to put the til (*Sesamum indicum*) oil drops in the ears (Karnapurana). It prevents from ear diseases.^[21]

Yogic science

Yoga was designed in part to give the ancient yogis a healthy body so they could live long enough to advance spiritually as far as they possibly could. Controlling of mind is called yoga.^[22] The aging process, which is largely an artificial condition caused mainly by auto-intoxication of self poisoning, can be slowed down by practicing yoga. Yoga therapy is successful because of the balance created in the nervous and endocrine systems which directly influences all the other systems and organs of the body. Asana is defined as a stable and comfortable posture which helps attain mental equilibrium. Asanas helps attain mental equilibrium. Pranayama is yogic Breathing, It regulates, Extends and controls the breath. Suryanamaskaras are a set of postures, which gives complete health and harmony. The practice of yogic relaxation has been found to effectively reduce tension and improve psychological well being of people suffering from anxiety. Yogic science provides Mental, physical fitness to body and gives long life.

Yogic diet

Food is of three categories, Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic. Sattvic aahara is the yoga diet. Sattva is quality of harmony, the balancing force. Rajasa is the active quality, the simulating or positive force that initiates change, and disturbs the equilibrium. Tamas is the passive quality, the obstructing or negative force that resists change. Indirectly diet has

connection with the mind. Milk, butter, cheese, tomatoes, honey, dates and fruits are all Sattvic foodstuffs. They render the mind pure and calm. Fish, eggs, meat, salt, chillies and asafoetida are Rajasic foodstuffs. They excite passion. Beef, wine, garlic, onions and tobacco are Tamasic foodstuffs. They fill the mind with anger, darkness and inertia. Sattvic diet is best for yoga practitioners which keeps the mind calm and body healthy.^[23]

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda, the science of life, emphasizes on the adoption of a number of preventative and healing therapies, which can purify and rejuvenate the body, mind, soul and helps in extension of life. Ayurveda and Yoga aims at increasing the longevity of people of all ages. Shodhana treatments are Ayurveda procedures, powerful and capable of flushing pollutants from the body and scientists have discovered it can even eliminate environmental contaminants that have been embedded in fat tissue for decades. Rasayana treatments help in repairing the wear and tear of the body, due to aging or diseases. It rejuvenates the tissues of the body gives the person young look. Though it is difficult to follow a stringent Dinacharya in this fast moving life, it is highly recommended by Ayurvedic physicians, because it increases the life span of a person. The very essence of yoga lies in attaining mental peace, improved concentration powers, a relaxed state of living and harmony in relationships, thus helps in longevity of life.

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