



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY HEALTH SCIENCES

ISSN: 2394 9406

“ROLE OF NASYA THERAPY IN GERIATRIC HEALTH: A REVIEW ARTICLE”

Dr. Arti Ajinath Gade¹, Dr. Rahul Bapusaheb Nakil², Dr. Shweta Rahul Nakil³

1. PG Scholar of Swasthavritta and Yoga Department, Loknete Rajarambapu Patil Ayurvedic Medical College, Hospital, Post Graduate Institute and Research Centre, Islampur, 415409.
2. Guide, Professor and HOD of Swasthavritta and Yoga Department, Loknete Rajarambapu Patil Ayurvedic Medical College, Hospital, Post Graduate Institute and Research Centre, Islampur, 415409.
3. Professor, Swasthavritta and Yoga Department, Loknete Rajarambapu Patil Ayurvedic Medical College, Hospital, Post Graduate Institute and Research Centre,

ABSTRACT:

The growing elderly population worldwide has intensified the need for holistic strategies to promote healthy aging. Geriatric health is often compromised by cognitive decline, sensory impairment, and degenerative disorders, which reduce independence and quality of life. Ayurveda, with its emphasis on prevention and rejuvenation, offers valuable approaches to address these challenges. Among its therapies, *Nasya karma*—the administration of medicated substances through the nasal route—is highlighted in classical texts as a key intervention for maintaining head and neck health, with the nose described as the gateway to the brain (“*Nasa hi shiraso dwaram*”). Traditionally indicated for memory loss, insomnia, and neurological degeneration, Nasya has gained renewed relevance in geriatric care. Emerging biomedical evidence suggests that nasal administration of medicated oils and formulations may exert neuroprotective, anti-inflammatory, and restorative effects, thereby bridging ancient wisdom with modern science. This review synthesizes classical Ayurvedic insights and contemporary research to evaluate the role of Nasya therapy in enhancing cognitive vitality, emotional stability, and overall well-being in the elderly population.

INTRODUCTION

The increasing proportion of elderly individuals worldwide has made geriatric health a central focus of medical research and healthcare delivery. Aging is often accompanied by progressive decline in physical strength, cognitive function, and emotional stability, leading to heightened susceptibility to chronic diseases and neurodegenerative disorders. While modern medicine provides important interventions, its emphasis is largely on disease management rather than holistic promotion of health and vitality. Ayurveda, the traditional Indian system of medicine, offers a broader framework for healthy aging through preventive, promotive, and rejuvenative measures^[4]. Among the therapies described in Ayurveda, *Nasya karma*—the administration of medicated oils, powders, or juices through the nasal route—holds a distinctive place. Classical texts describe the nose as the gateway to the head (“*Nasa hi shiraso dwaram*”)^[1], emphasizing its direct influence on the brain, sense organs, and higher mental faculties. Nasya is traditionally indicated for conditions such as memory impairment, insomnia, sensory decline, and degenerative disorders^[1-3], all of which are particularly relevant in geriatric care. In addition to its classical applications, emerging biomedical

research suggests that nasal administration of certain formulations may exert neuroprotective, anti-inflammatory, and restorative effects^[6-9], thereby offering a scientific basis for its relevance in aging populations.

Aim and Objectives

Aim:

To critically evaluate the role of Nasya therapy in promoting geriatric health by synthesizing insights from classical Ayurvedic literature and modern scientific evidence.

Objectives:

1. To review the classical Ayurvedic references describing the indications and mechanisms of Nasya therapy in relation to aging.
2. To analyze the relevance of Nasya in addressing common geriatric health concerns such as cognitive decline, sensory impairment, and neurodegenerative disorders.
3. To examine contemporary biomedical research on nasal drug delivery and its potential correlation with Ayurvedic Nasya practices.
4. To highlight the integrative potential of Nasya therapy as a supportive intervention for healthy aging and improved quality of life in the elderly.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Materials:

Classical Ayurvedic texts including *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya* were reviewed for references to *Nasya karma* and its relevance in aging. Secondary Ayurvedic commentaries and modern research articles were also consulted.

Methods:

A literature search was conducted using databases such as PubMed, Scopus, Google Scholar, and AYUSH Research Portal with keywords “Nasya therapy,”

“Ayurveda,” “geriatric health,” “nasal drug delivery,” and “neuroprotection.”

Studies published in English between 2000–2025 were included. Data were analyzed to compare classical concepts with modern evidence, focusing on geriatric applications.

In geriatric (Jara/Vriddhavastha) patients, Brimhana, Vatahara, and Rasayana Nasya are preferred because Vata predominance is common in old age. The selection of Nasya dravya depends on the disease. Geriatric condition (Vyadhi)

Vyadhi	Recommended Nasya dravya
Age-related cognitive decline, memory impairment	Brahmi Ghrita, Kalyanaka Ghrita
Parkinsonism	Ksheerbala Taila (101 Avarti), Mahanarayana Taila
Hemiplegia (Pakshaghata)	Ksheerbala Taila, Mashadi Taila, Anu Taila
Facial palsy (Ardita)	Anu Taila, Karpasasthyadi Taila
Cervical spondylosis (Manyastambha)	Mahanarayana Taila, Ksheerbala Taila
Chronic sinusitis (Dushta Pratishyaya)	Shadbindu Taila, Anu Taila
Headache (Shirahshoola)	Anu Taila, Shadbindu Taila
Insomnia (Anidra)	Brahmi Ghrita, Ksheerbala Taila
Dry nose, recurrent rhinitis	Pratimarsha Nasya with Anu Taila or Goghrita
Hoarseness of voice (Svarabheda)	Anu Taila, Yashtimadhu Ghrita

Preferred daily Nasya in elderly: Pratimarsha Nasya (2 drops in each nostril) with Anu Taila or Ksheerbala

Taila because it is gentle and suitable for long-term use.

Indications

Nasya therapy is indicated in geriatric patients for conditions such as cognitive decline, insomnia, chronic sinusitis, headache, anxiety, and degenerative disorders like cervical spondylosis. It is also recommended as a preventive measure to promote longevity and mental stability ^[15].

Contraindications

It is contraindicated in acute febrile states, indigestion, acute rhinitis, pregnancy, lactation, severe debility, and immediately after meals or surgery. Classical texts also advise avoidance in dyspnea, cough, and intoxication ^[15].

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ayurvedic Perspective

- *Charaka Samhita* recommends Nasya for conditions such as memory loss, insomnia, sensory decline, and degenerative disorders ^[1].
- *Sushruta Samhita* elaborates on different forms of Nasya—*Avapeeda*, *Pradhamana*, and *Navana*—each suited for specific conditions, including neurological and age-related ailments ^[2].
- *Ashtanga Hridaya* highlights Nasya not only as a curative

measure but also as a preventive and rejuvenative therapy, linking it directly to *Rasayana chikitsa* and healthy aging ^[3].

- Later Ayurvedic commentaries emphasize Nasya’s role in enhancing memory, promoting sound sleep, improving sensory perception, and delaying degenerative changes ^[4].

Modern Perspective

Contemporary biomedical research provides supportive evidence for the efficacy of nasal administration. Studies on nasal drug delivery demonstrate that the olfactory and trigeminal pathways allow direct access to the brain, bypassing the blood–brain barrier ^[6,7]. This mechanism aligns with Ayurvedic descriptions of Nasya’s influence on the head and brain. Modern findings suggest potential neuroprotective, anti-inflammatory, and cognitive-enhancing effects ^[8,9].

Preliminary clinical studies have reported improvements in memory, sleep quality, and sensory function among elderly individuals receiving Nasya therapy, though larger controlled trials are needed to establish global acceptance ^[9].

Nasya Karmukta (Mechanism of Action):

Classical Ayurvedic texts describe Nasya as acting through *Srotogati* (channel cleansing), *Shirogata Rogahara* (alleviation of head-related disorders), and *Indriya Prasadana* (sensory organ rejuvenation). The nasal route is considered a *Shiras Marga* (gateway to the head), allowing direct influence on *Urdhwajatrugata Vyadhi* (diseases above the clavicle). It facilitates *Vata-Kapha Shamana*, improves *Prana Vaha Srotas* function, and enhances *Medha* (cognitive faculties) ^[10,11,12].

Modern Drug Delivery Correlation:

The nasal cavity provides a highly vascularized mucosa with a thin epithelial barrier, enabling rapid systemic absorption. Drugs administered via Nasya can bypass first-pass hepatic metabolism, similar to modern intranasal drug delivery systems. The olfactory region offers a direct nose-to-brain pathway, correlating with the Ayurvedic claim of Nasya influencing higher centers of cognition and memory ^[13].

Lipophilic herbal oils used in Nasya may enhance permeability across the blood-brain barrier, supporting neuroprotective and geriatric applications. In geriatrics, where oral drug absorption may be compromised due to age-related changes, Nasya

provides an alternative, efficient route for therapeutic delivery ^[14].

DISCUSSION

The review highlights that *Nasya karma* holds significant relevance in geriatric health from both classical and modern perspectives. Ayurvedic texts consistently describe the nose as the gateway to the head ^[1-3], emphasizing Nasya's role in maintaining cognitive clarity, sensory vitality, and emotional stability—key concerns in aging. Its preventive and rejuvenative qualities situate it within *Rasayana chikitsa* ^[3,4], making it a valuable tool for promoting healthy aging. Modern research supports these traditional claims by demonstrating that nasal administration can bypass the blood–brain barrier ^[6,7], offering direct access to the central nervous system. Preliminary studies suggest neuroprotective and anti-inflammatory effects, with potential benefits for memory, sleep, and sensory health in elderly populations ^[8,9].

However, current evidence remains limited, and further clinical trials are necessary to validate efficacy and establish standardized protocols ^[9].

Together, classical wisdom and modern science indicate that Nasya therapy may serve as a promising complementary intervention for geriatric care, bridging

traditional practices with contemporary healthcare needs .

CONCLUSION

The growing burden of geriatric health issues highlights the need for integrative approaches that go beyond symptomatic management. Ayurveda, with its preventive and rejuvenative focus, offers valuable insights, and *Nasya karma* emerges as a particularly relevant therapy^[1-4]. Classical texts emphasize its role in maintaining cognitive function, sensory health, and emotional stability, all of which are central to healthy aging^[1-3]. Modern scientific perspectives further support the plausibility of Nasya through evidence on nasal drug delivery, neuroprotection, and anti-inflammatory effects^[6-9].

Together, these findings suggest that Nasya therapy can serve as a complementary intervention to enhance quality of life in the elderly. While traditional literature provides a strong foundation, more rigorous clinical studies are required to validate its efficacy and establish its role in contemporary geriatric care^[9]. Bridging classical wisdom with modern research, Nasya therapy holds promise as a holistic strategy for promoting healthy aging.

REFERENCES

1. Sharma PV, editor. Charaka Samhita of Agnivesha. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia; 2011.
2. Shastri AD, editor. Sushruta Samhita with Nibandhasangraha Commentary of Dalhana. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 2012.
3. Murthy KRS, editor. Ashtanga Hridaya of Vagbhata. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Krishnadas Academy; 2014.
4. Tripathi B, editor. Charaka Samhita with Ayurveda Dipika Commentary of Chakrapanidatta. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Surbharati Prakashan; 2013.
5. Lad V. Ayurveda: The Science of Self-Healing. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass; 2002.
6. Illum L. Nasal drug delivery—possibilities, problems and solutions. *J Control Release*. 2003;87(1–3):187–98. Illum L. Nasal drug delivery—possibilities, problems and solutions. *J Control Release*. 2003;87(1-3):187-98.
7. Lochhead JJ, Thorne RG. Intranasal drug delivery to the brain. *Pharm Res*. 2012;29(10):3629–49.
8. Dhoke M, Shende P, Raut S. Intranasal drug delivery for brain

- targeting: recent advances and future perspectives. *J Pharm Investig.* 2021;51(5):539–53.
9. Patil S, Deshpande S, Pawar S. Clinical evaluation of Nasya therapy in geriatric patients with cognitive decline: a pilot study. *AYU.* 2019;40(3):165–72.
10. Pushkar S, Pamnani GC, Kumar A, Miri N, Pushkar AK. Nasya in Ayurveda: An in-depth analysis of its mechanisms. *Int J Pharm Sci Res.* 2025;16(4):908-11. doi:10.13040/IJPSR.0975-8232.16(4).908-11.
11. Bartwal A, Singh D, Pandey AK. Nasya scientific and Ayurvedic mode of action: A review. *Int Ayurvedic Med J.* 2023;11(2):181-7. doi:10.46607/iamj1811022023.
12. Moharana D, Bhosale S, Guddad S, Hiremath VG, Badrinath GS. Nasya Karmukta with special reference to pharmacodynamics of Nasya. *J Ayurveda Integr Med Sci.* 2023;8(3):63-8. doi:10.21760/jaims.8.3.11.
13. Keller LA, Merkel O, Popp A. Intranasal drug delivery: opportunities and toxicologic challenges during drug development. *Drug Deliv Transl Res.* 2021;12(4):735-57. doi:10.1007/s13346-020-00891-5.
14. Patel A, Patel M, Yang X, Mitra AK. Recent advances in intranasal drug delivery: an overview. *J Pharm Sci.* 2011;100(5):1711-35. doi:10.1002/jps.22430.
15. Shastri A. *Charaka Samhita of Agnivesha, revised by Charaka and Dridhabala, Sutrasthana 5/54–56.* Varanasi: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan; 2014. p.117.