ABSTRACT
Purpose: Jara is generally venerable to all of us. In today’s era most of the people are suffering from premature aging because of changing life style, unbalanced diet, physical and mental stress etc. Rasa Vagbhata has also mentioned Pantha (excessive walking) and Manas Pratikulata (unfavorable condition to mind) as specific causes of Akalaja Jara in each decade of life. Old age is a stage of Dhatu Kshaya (due to Kala Prabhava) where the destructive (Hrasa) phenomenon occurs due to Rukshadi Gunas of Vata Dosha. The factors mentioned in Svastha Chatuṣka of Charakasamhita helps to achieve and maintain Arogya and Tarunya, ruling out the principle of ‘Shiryate Iti Shariram’. Ayurveda advocates an excellent approach Abhyanga, which is a unique therapeutic methodology to delay Akalaja Jara and to minimize the intensity of problems occurring in this degenerative phase of one's life. Results & Conclusion: Ayurveda reckons Abhyanga as a daily regimen owing to its univocal properties like Jaraapaha, Pushtririt (nourishing), Shramahara, Drishtrikara, Prasadkara, Ayu-pushthikara (prolonging age), Swapnakara, Vata shamaka. It is mentioned that Abhyanga should at least be done to the head, ears and feet regularly. Old age people experiencing physical, mental and emotional stress that can contribute to feeling of emotionally disconnected with each other, and from the world. Abhyanga encompasses basic relaxation, stress relief and is also a beneficial tool in fighting many of the symptoms of aging. The chief aim of Jara is to “Add life to years” rather than “years to life.”

KEYWORDS
Abhyanga, Ayurveda, Akalaja Jara

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INTRODUCTION
As the incidence of premature aging is increasing globally, it has become a burning issue to take major steps for its prevention. The elderly population of India is increasing and by the year 2050 population will cross 340 million\(^1\). The government recently stated in Parliament that India will have 34 crore people above 60 years of age by 2050 that would be more than the total population of the US\(^2\). Ayurveda, has explained many potential to slower down the aging process as well as to lead a comfortable life in the old age. Abhyanga is one among the Dīnāchārya and it is a kind of Bahyāsneha. It gives strength to the body, nourishes the sense organs, increases longevity etc. It is the most natural and powerful method of relaxing and at the same time rejuvenating the body. Abhyanga preserves the body energy and saves the individual from degeneration. It also works as a cleanser and helps the individual in expelling the toxins out of the body through sweat, urine and mucus, thus rejuvenating the body. It is done to whole body or to a particular part of the body (Shīra, Karna, Pada etc). Abhyanga has been highlighted with its wide spectrum of usage both for preventive and curative purpose.

AIM
To review the literature regarding prophylactic effect of Abhyanga in Akalaja Jara.

MATERIALS & METHODS:
Information was extracted and documented from relevant Ayurvedic literatures & online published research articles.

LITERARY REVIEW
Jara
Jara is a term which indicates the declining phase, especially old age or aging process\(^3\). In other words, it is a catabolic procedure. Old age is generally venerable to all of us. But, it has more than its due share of undesirable aspects. It is also considered to be a stage of mental and physical degeneration. In old age there is progressive diminution of Dhatu, strength of sense organs, vigor, masculinity, and bravery, power of understanding, retaining and memorizing, speech and analyzing facts. There is gradual diminution in the qualities of Dhatu also\(^4\).

Hence it would be a great boon to humanity at large, if there was a device for the prevention of degeneration,

Type of Jara\(^5\)
Sushruta has described that Jara is natural phenomenon of human body. It is divided in two types i.e. Kalaja Jara and Akalaja Jara.
1. **Kalaja Jara** - The manifestations of age related symptoms are reflected after certain age. The *Kalaja Jara* is *Pari-Rakshana – Krita*, which means that it occurs at the proper age even after following the daily and seasonal routine described in *Swasthavritta* and use of *Sodhana* at the proper time. However, this type of ageing may be of less intensity and slow progressing and thus may not be very troublesome.

2. **Akalaja Jara** - The symptoms which manifests before certain age due to various etiological factors, the ageing process is rapid. This type of *Jara* is said to be due to *Apari-Rakshana-Krita*, which means that is occurs before the mentioned age due to not taking the proper care of personal hygiene (*Swasthavritta*) and not undergoing *Sodhana* at proper time. This type of *Jara* may be of greater intensity and rapidly progressing, if no care is taken to check it through proper treatment.

**Causes of Akalaja Jara**

- *Pantha*
- *Shitam*
- *Kadannam*
- *Vayovridha Yoshitah*
- *Manasah Pratikulta*

**Table 1**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>Vagbhattabh</th>
<th>Sharangadhara</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Balyavastha</td>
<td>Balyavastha</td>
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<tr>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Vriddhi</td>
<td>Vriddhi</td>
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<tr>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Chhavi</td>
<td>Chhavi</td>
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<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Medha</td>
<td>Medha</td>
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<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Twak</td>
<td>Twak</td>
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<tr>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Shukra</td>
<td>Drishti</td>
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<tr>
<td>7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Drishti</td>
<td>Shukra</td>
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<tr>
<td>8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Vikrama</td>
<td>Vikrama</td>
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<td>9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Buddh</td>
<td>Buddh</td>
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<td>11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Chetasa</td>
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<tr>
<td>12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Jivitam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pathology of Jara**

The three basic constituents of human body, *Vata, Pitta* and *Kapha*, in a balanced state structurally and functionally, maintain the health and in an imbalanced state produce disease.

**Aging and Dosha**

Amongst, these *Dosha*, *Vata* is predominant in *Vriddhavastha*. In the old age, many syndromes are observed which are the result of imbalance in the body constituents i.e., *Vata, Pitta* and *Kapha* to a lesser or greater extent. This imbalance varies in velocity and intensity depending upon many factors such as life style, habits, age etc. Thus, these variations are observed in the psychosomatic constitution of a person.

The various functions of *Vikrita Vayu* mentioned in *Caraka Cikitsasthana* such as *Shramsa, Bhramsa, Sanga, Bheda, Sada, Toda, Vyatha, Parusya, Shosha, Supti, Vishlesha, Samkocha* etc are observed in old age.

**Aging and Dhatu**
The next component of Sharira is Dhatus, which are responsible to maintain a state of equilibrium with the help of Dosha and Mala. "Heyamana Dhatu" is a feature of old age. They basically perform two functions:

a) **Dharana**

b) **Poshana**

In old age due to Vikrita Vata, Vishamagni, Ksheena Kapha, the first Dhatu Rasa is not formed properly and its function of Preenana to the rest of the Dhatu is not performed, resulting in sequential weakening of all the Dhatu i.e., Dhatukshaya. Hence, due to this malformed Rasa, it sets off a chain of malformed Upadhatu and Dhatumala. The Kshaya of Saptadhatu naturally leads to Ojokshaya also.

**Aging and Agni**

Charaka in Chikitsasthana states that Agni is responsible for Ayu, Varna, Bala, Svasthya, Utsaha, Upachaya, Prabha, Ojas, Prana etc. In old age, due to the predominance of Vata Dosha, Vishamagni prevails leading to Visamagnijanya Rogas. Due to Vishamagni, defective metabolism occurs within the body leading to involuntary changes such as Kshaya and 'Shosha'.

**Aging and Mala**

Malas are equally important as that of Dosha and Dhatus. They arise out of Kittapaka at the Pachakagni and Dhatwagni levels. These play a vital role in the body dynamics, as elimination of Mala is an index of life activities. Hampered Agni in old age leads to Malakshaya.

So the concept of Jara has been dealt with, keeping in view of the Tridosha, Saptadhatu, Mala, Agni and Oja. When all of these are in homeostasis the body functions well. But due to old age, increase of Vata, vitiation of Pitta and decrease in Kapha causes an impact on the various other components of body, thus allowing the aging to take over.

**Preventive aspects of Jara**

- It means programming of lifestyle in such a way that Akalaj Jara can be avoided and Kalaj Jara can be delayed.
- The factors mentioned in Svastha Catuska Of Charakasamhita helps to achieve and maintain Arogya and Tarunya, ruling out the principle of ‘Shiryate Iti Shariram’.

These includes

- **Ritucharya**
- **Dinacharya**
- **Abhyanga** is one of the important aspect of Dinacharya and it is a kind of Bahyasneha.

**Abhyanga**

Abhyanga is derived from “Abhi+Anja Ghanj Krutvam” which means-
Movements which perform by hands on bodily part to absorb the Snehadrayva.

**Needs of Abhyanga in graceful aging**
- For health & protection
- For emotional well being
- For beauty purposes

**Types of Abhyanga**
According to Vatsayana Kamasutra
- Samvahana- whole body massage
- Keshamardana- head massage
- Utsadana- massage with Kalka /Sneha

According to Tiruka (author of Angamardana)
- Shushkangamardana
- Tailangamardana
- Ksheerangamardana
- Swayam Angamardana
- Yamalangamardana

According to Charaka Samhita
- Shiroabhyanga
- padabhyanga

According to Ashtanga Hrudaya
- Shiroabhyanga
- padabhyanga
- karnapoorana

**Character of Oil**
Luke warm Sesame oil is the best of oils for strength and unction according to Charaka.

**Abhyanga Technique**
The technique of Abhyanga is not elaborated in the major classics of Ayurveda. First indication about the technique of Abhyanga is found in Rigveda in which Abhyanga is told to be done by hands and digits and the stroke or touch should be gentle. Here, gentle touch should not be taken as the non-application of pressure and rubbing but it implies that these processes should be limited to a point that is easily tolerated by the individual.

**Table 2** Types of oil according to Prakriti

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Si.No</th>
<th>Prakriti</th>
<th>Taila</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Vatapittaj</td>
<td>Himasagara Taila, Ksheerabala Taila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pittakaphaj</td>
<td>Chandanaadi Taila, Tila Taila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kaphavataj</td>
<td>Tila Taila, BruhatSaindahvad Taila</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3** Oil according to Ritu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Si.No</th>
<th>Ritu</th>
<th>Taila</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Shishira &amp; Hemantha</td>
<td>Laksjhauadi Taila, Karpooraudi Taila, Tila Taila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Vasanta</td>
<td>Triphala Taila, Bruhat Saindahvad Taila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Greeshma &amp; Varsha</td>
<td>Ashvagandha Bala Lakshadi Taila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sharat ritu</td>
<td>Chandanadi Taila</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4** Oil according to Dosha Shamaka properties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Si.No</th>
<th>Dosha</th>
<th>Taila</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Vata</td>
<td>Tila Taila, Mahanarayan Taila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pitta</td>
<td>Bhringraj Taila, Brahmi Taila, Narikela Taila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kapha</td>
<td>Sarshapa Taila</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Direction of Abhyanga 23

Abhyanga should be performed in Anulomagati for the proper absorption of the oil by follicles. Tiruk has also talked about the direction of Abhyanga according to the Dosha.

Penetration of Sneha to different Dhatu 24

➢ It is mentioned that it takes 300 Matrakala (approximately 1.5 mts) for Sneha to penetrate Romakupa, 400 Matrakala (2.1 mts) to penetrate Twak, 500 Matrakala (2.6mts) to penetrate Rakta, 600 Matrakala (3.1 mts) for Mamsa, 700 Matraka (3.6 mts) for Meda, 800 Matrakala (4.2 mts) for Asthi and 900 Matrakala (4.7 mts) for Majja. So for the complete benefits of Abhyanga one should perform it at least for 5 mts.

➢ Mode of action of Abhyanga

During Abhyanga, Romakupa opens up due to the heat produce by the procedure and warm Sneha. Then Sneha penetrates through Romakupa. Arunadutta the Commentator of Ashtanga Hridaya has described the Bhrajaka Pitta and its functions like Deepana and Pachana25. The substances applied on the skin by Abhyanga are being digested by the Bhrajaka Pitta. After that the digested Sneha reaches to each Dhatu with the help of Vayu. Dashadhamani which starts from Hrudaya makes many networks and finally opens into Romakoopa. So oil is absorbed in skin and circulates through Dhamani. The Taila used for Abhyanga nourishes the tissues, gives strength and increases the Agni.

Charaka explained that, Vayu is predominant in Sparshanendriya which resided in Twacha26. He also described the important link between Mana, Sparsha touch, and all the Indriya. The Sparshanendriya alone pervades all the Indriya and is also associated inherently with Mana27. Therefore, Abhyanga is the most beneficial therapy for skin and balancing mind.

Benefits of Abhyanga

Shirobhhyanga 28,29

➢ Kapala and Indriya Tarpana
➢ prevents Shirashoolahara, Khalitya , Palithya, Keshapatana
➢ Increases the Bala of Shira and Kapalaa
➢ Hairs will be strong black and long
➢ Indriyaprasada
➢ Good for skin and renders sound sleep.

Karna Abhyanga /Poorana 30, 31

➢ Hanu, Manya, Shira, and Karna Shoolaghna
➢ The person will not suffer from Vataja Karnaroga
➢ Person will not suffers from Uchashruti or Badhirya

Padabbyanga 32, 33

➢ Kharatwa, Rooksata, Shrama and Suptata of Pada will be relived.
- Increases the *Sukumarata, Bala* and *Sthairya of Pada*.
- Improves the vision, mitigates *Vata*.
- Person will not suffer from *Gridhrasi, Padasputana, Sira* and *Snayu Sankocha*.

**When not to do an Abhyanga?**
- *Abhyanga* should not be done in the following conditions -
  - Fever
  - Indigestion
  - *Kapha* aggravation
  - In ‘*Ama*’ conditions
  - In any acute illness
  - In extreme emotional states
  - Dehydration

**DISCUSSION**

The concept of *Abhyanga* is very much antiquated. It is one of the earliest forms of healing developed over years of constant observations and experiences. In modern era, the word *Abhyanga* is taken for massage but massage is a broad term. The idea of massage is concentrated on techniques of proper way of rubbing and manipulation of body while *Abhyanga* precisely stands for massage with oil or some unctuous substance.

The basis of *Abhyanga* is the touch and there are increasing medical evidences showing the great value of touch. Prime evidence of healing through *Abhyanga* is found in *Veda* which has been shown to have effect through touch therapy.

In old age the status of *Agni* is *Vishmagni* which mainly causes -

1. Deterioration of *Bhootagni* and *Dhatwagni*.
2. Qualitative impairment of the *Adya Dhatu “Rasa”* which lost its function of *Preenana* leads to *Dhatukshaya*.

*Dhatukshyaya* is a feature of old age. *Dosha, Dhatu, Malakshaya* entities leads to *Balakshyaya*. Due to *Vikruta Vata* and depletion of *Kapha* the *Satwa* declines with age leading to decrease in its normal power of *Grahana, Dharana, Vachana, Smarana*.

*Abhyanga*, very delicate and sophisticated protocol for *Vruddhavastha*. *Astangsamgraha* has been quoted “*Abhyangamacharetnityam*” as daily practice of the therapy evident to delay ageing, cures tiredness and *Vata* disorders, improves vision, complexion, nourishes, lead to healthy life, sound sleep, lustrous skin etc. All these benefits can be achieved due to the proper *Dhatu Poshana* by *Abhyanga*.

**CONCLUSION**

Once signs of *Akalaja Jara* creeps into the body, it is difficult to reverse the aging process, because it takes a lot of time to restore the human body back to its top shape.
even with the general treatment. Therefore, best way to stay healthy to prevent the signs of premature aging is following the proper daily regimens. So an ideal preventive health package should include Abhyanga as a daily regimen owing to its properties like Jaraapaha, Prasadkara, Ayu-Pushtikara (prolonging age), Vata Shamaka. This ancient regimen include the “Art of Self Love” that can heal and manage human physiological disconnections.
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