



Avicenna's Views on Lifestyle Recommendations for the Elderly: Strategies to Address Age-Related Sarcopenia

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ABSTRACT

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In this paper, we are writing to delve into Avicenna's perspective on lifestyle recommendations for the elderly, with a specific focus on addressing age-related sarcopenia. Avicenna, also known as Abu Ali al-Husayn ibn Abd Allah ibn Sina (born August 22, 980; passed away June 22, 1037), was a notable figure in Persian medicine. Avicenna's insights into lifestyle recommendations for the elderly offer valuable guidance for preventing age-related sarcopenia. His emphasis on proper nutrition, physical activity, massage, and stress reduction resonates with current research in the field. Integrating Avicenna's recommendations into geriatric medicine may yield improved outcomes for elderly individuals at risk of sarcopenia.

Keywords: Avicenna, Lifestyle, Elderly, Age-related sarcopenia.

We are writing to delve into Avicenna's perspective on lifestyle recommendations for the elderly, with a specific focus on addressing age-related sarcopenia. Avicenna, also known as Abu Ali al-Husayn ibn Abd Allah ibn Sina (born August 22, 980; passed away June 22, 1037), was a notable figure in Persian medicine (1). Sarcopenia, a significant challenge in geriatric medicine, can lead to severe disabilities (2). Recognized widely, a healthy lifestyle, comprising adequate exercise and suitable nutrition, is considered the most effective approach for both prevention and treatment (3). Avicenna, a prominent figure

in Persian medicine, placed a strong emphasis on healthy living and provided detailed instructions for the elderly (4). In our editorial, we aim to explore some of Avicenna's recommendations for the elderly and assess their potential effectiveness in preventing age-related sarcopenia. To conduct this study, we conducted a systematic search of relevant keywords within reputable electronic databases such as PubMed, Google Scholar, and academic journals, and performed an exhaustive review of Avicenna's seminal work, "Canon of Medicine" (5).

According to Avicenna, individuals over the age of 65 enter old age, marked by a reduction in instinctive heat

required for optimal organ functioning and a decrease in essential body moisture that guards against emaciation (6). Avicenna provided detailed instructions for maintaining both instinctive heat and essential body. In terms of diet, he recommended consuming several small meals per day, focusing on high-quality foods like meat extracts, milk (especially goat or donkey milk) mixed with or without honey, figs, ginger jam, and red grape extracts (7). Physical activity and exercise recommendations were tailored to an individual's physical condition, whether characterized by strength, weakness, or existing diseases (8). Activities ranged from walking and horseback riding to lifting and throwing stones (8). Avicenna also advocated for moderate massage after a night's sleep using moisturizing and strengthening oils like violet and rose oil, particularly before exercise (9). Other recommendations encompassed getting sufficient sleep at night, proper bathing, and reducing mental stress, particularly feelings of sadness (10). Table 1 exposes Avicenna some recommendations for maintaining health and well-being in old age, which may indirectly help prevent age-related sarcopenia.

Avicenna's recommendations for preventing age-related sarcopenia, while not explicitly addressing the condition, encompass various aspects of a healthy lifestyle that can contribute to overall well-being and potentially help in maintaining muscle mass and strength in old age.

Comparing Avicenna's recommendations with contemporary research on age-related sarcopenia reveals the fundamental strategies he endorsed for preventing sarcopenia (11). Recent studies underscore the importance of milk and meat in the diets of the elderly (12, 13), aligning with Avicenna's suggestions.

In conclusion, Avicenna's insights into lifestyle recommendations for the elderly offer valuable guidance for preventing age-related sarcopenia. His emphasis on proper nutrition, physical activity, massage, and stress reduction resonates with current research in the field. Integrating Avicenna's recommendations into geriatric medicine may yield improved outcomes for elderly individuals at risk of sarcopenia.

Table 1

Avicenna recommendations for maintaining health and well-being in old age, which may indirectly help prevent age-related sarcopenia

Recommendation	Avicenna's Advice
Balanced Diet	Consume several small meals per day Emphasize high-quality foods
Dietary Choices	Advocate for milk, especially goat or donkey milk Suggested meat extracts as part of the diet
Nutrient-Rich Foods	Encouraged the consumption of figs, ginger jam, and red grape extracts
Physical Activity	Tailored recommendations based on physical condition Activities ranged from walking to lifting and throwing stones
Massage	Advocated for moderate massage with moisturizing oils like violet and rose oil, particularly before exercise
Stress Reduction	Recommended reducing mental stress, especially feelings of sadness

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Declaration of Interest

The authors declare no competing interests.

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Authors' Contributions

Marzieh Beygom Siahpoosh: Conducted the systematic search, reviewed the literature, and drafted the manuscript; Helmi Ben Saad: critical review of the paper; Soheil Gholibeygi: Provided guidance, reviewed and revised the manuscript.

Ethics Considerations

This study did not involve any human participants or animals. Therefore, ethics approval was not required.

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