



MENOPAUSAL SYNDROME AND IT'S MANAGEMENT : A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT:

Each phase of women life is very important one of which is the menopausal phase. The word menopause comes from the greek word Menos means month and pausis means cessation. So menopause is defined as the time of cessation of ovarian function resulting in permanent amenorrhoea. It takes 12 months for confirmation of amenorrhoea and occurs at the age of 45-55 years. After the age of 40 years, ovaries reduces the production of sex hormones which finally results into cessation of menses. According to *ayurvedic* classics it is termed as *rajonivritti* which causes due to imbalance of *doshas*. Menopause is the natural phenomenon but when it get disturbed it produces symptoms related with vasomotor, psychological, urogenital, skeletal and cardiovascular system which causes discomfort to women that affects both the body and mind. Therefore this condition required proper treatment which is available in both *ayurvedic* classics and modern science. Modern treatment includes counselling, diet, mild tranquillizers and hormonal replacement therapy. In *ayurveda* for menopausal symptoms we can used drugs having *rasayana*, *ojovardhaka*, *vata – pitta shamaka*, *hrudya*, *vatanulomaka*, *deepniya*, *balya* and *bruhniya* properties. Also *yoga* therapy, *rasayana* therapy is indicated.

KEY WORDS: Menopause, *Rajonivritti*, *Rasayana*, *Yoga*.

INTRODUCTION:

In human beings women has great importance because of her reproductive ability. And reproductive age is between menarche and menopause .i.e. the age between 12-14yrs upto 45-50 years. Menopause means permanent cessation of menstruation at the end of reproductive life due to loss of ovarian follicular activity^[1]. Menopause is a natural phenomenon occurs at the age of 45-55 years. Few decades ago, menopause was considered as a normal physiological process and associated symptoms were not treated. But with changing time, life expectancy of females has increased. Sixty million women in India are above the age of 55 years. With women living longer than, before majority would spend one – third of their life in the post menopausal stage^[2]. The health problems

cropping up during this period and related to oestrogen deficiency of menopause are now obvious and better understood. Therefore there is need of proper attention to problem of menopausal women and need of proper medication so that these women can lead an enjoyable and healthy life. *Rajonivritti* is not described as a separate entity or any severe health problem in *ayurvedic* classics. It is made up of two words i.e. "*Rajah*" and "*Nivrutti*". According to Sanskrit *Rajah* means to give colour to the substance. It is the *sar bhaga* (pure part) of *rasadhatu*, that reaches the uterus and comes out 4-5 days every month. Thus *Rajah* indicates *aartava* or *strepushpa* and *Nivrutti* means end or ceasing so *rajonivritti* means end of *aartava pravritti* or cessation of menses. According to *Aacharya Sushruta*

menarche occur at the age of 12 year and menopausal age is 50 year^[3]. *Aacharya Vagbhata*^[4] and *Bhavamishra* also mentioned the same age of menarche.

Aims and Objectives -

- 1) To study the multidimensional aspect of menopause.
- 2) To study the treatment in the management of menopausal syndrome.

MATERIAL AND METHODS:

It is not describe as a separate entity in the *ayurvedic* classics so its *nidana*, *symptoms* etc. are not explained anywhere. To considered all these factors certain basic principles have to considered here. Probable causative factors of *rajonivritti* are^[5] -

- *Kala (Jarapakvasharira)*
- *Vayu*
- *Dhatukshaya*
- *Swabhava*
- Effect of *dosha*
- *Abhighata*

Types of *Rajonivritti* :

According to *Aacharya Sushruta* all the diseases are divided into four major types. These are *Aagantu*, *Sharira*, *Manasa* and *Swabhavika*^[6]. Considering the '*Swabhavika*' type, it is described as all the naturally occurring diseases. According to *Aacharya Sushruta* it includes *Kshudha* (Hunger), *Pipasa* (Thirst), *Nidra* (Sleep), *Jara* (Aging) and *Mriyu* (death)^[7]. As the diseases are sometime acquired these are further classified into two types i.e. *kalkrita* and *akalakrita*^[8]. As *rajonivritti* is naturally occurring change due to *jaravastha* in the women body. It can also divided into two types i.e.

- 1) *Kalaja Rajonivritti* - Alongwith the following of health measures if *rajonivritti* occurs at probable age (i.e. around 50 year of age) it is called as *Kalaja Rajonivritti*.
- 2) *Akalaja Rajonivritti* - Alongwith the following of health measures if *rajonivritti* occurs before or after its probable age it is called as *Akalaja Rajonivritti*.

Probable *Samprapti* of *Rajonivritti* :

Raja is the *updhatu* of *rasdhatu*^[9]. During *proudhavastha* i.e. 45-55 yrs there is natural dominance of *pitta* with *madhyam vata* and decrease in *kapha*. Whereas during *vridhdhavastha* there is *vata* dominance with *madhyam pitta* and *kapha kshaya*. During menopausal period woman is entered from *proadhavastha* to *vridhdhavastha* so that *vata dosha* is getting aggravated^[10]. Further this *vikrita vata* causes *vishamagni*, as a result *aadidhatu*

rasa is get affected and unable to perform its function of "*Preenana* (nourishment)"^[11] properly. So there is decrease in *rasaraktadi dhatus* which ultimately results in decrease of *updhatu aartava*. Due to this *dhatukshaya* and increased *vata dosha*, *rukshatva* and *shosha of aartavvaha strotasa* takes place which results into *aaartava nash* which is called as *rajonivritti*.

Menopausal symptoms in *Ayurveda (Rajonivrittianubandhlakshan)*^[12]:

1) *Vata* dominant menopausal Symptoms -

Dryness in vagina, extremities get cold, dry skin, difficulty in sleep, hot flushes, mood swing, anxiety, nervousness, palpitation, constipation etc.

2) *Pitta* dominant menopausal Symptoms -

Excess hot flushes, heavy period with burning sensation, skin rashes, night sweat, anger, irritable etc.

3) *Kapha* dominant menopausal Symptoms -

Weight gain, hormonal changes such as thyroid malfunction, fibrocystic changes in uterus or breast, lethargy, depression etc.

Modern view^[13] -

Menopause is defined as the time of cessation of ovarian function resulting in permanent amenorrhoea. It takes 12 months of amenorrhoea to confirm that menopause has set in. Menopause normally occurs between the age of 45 and 50 years; the average age being 47 year. Climacteric is the phase of waning ovarian activity, and may begin 2 to 3 years before menopause and continue for 2 to 5 years after it. During the climacteric phase, ovarian activity declines. Initially ovulation fails, there is no formation of corpus luteum and no progesterone secretion from the ovary. Therefore the premenopausal cycles are often anovulatory and irregular. After some time graffian follicle also fail to develop causing reduction in endometrial activity and this endometrial atrophy leads to amenorrhoea.

Menopausal Symptoms^[14] :

1) Immediate -

A] Vasomotor Symptoms -

- The characteristic symptom of menopause is hot flush which is characterised by sudden feeling of heat followed by profuse sweating.

- Palpitation, fatigue, weakness, perspiration, vasodilatation.

B] Pshychological Symptoms –

- Frequency of anxiety, headache, insomnia, irritability, dysphasia, depression
- They also suffers from dementia, mood swing and inability to concentrate.

C] Urogenital Symptoms –

- Urinary incontinence, recurrent urinary tract infection, dysurea, urgency of micturation.
- Vaginal infections, dryness, dyspareunia, prolapsed of genital tract, pruritus, leucorrhoea, minimal trauma may cause vaginal bleeding.
- Decrease sexual desire.

2) Long term –

A] Skeletal System –

- The main symptom is ‘Osteoporosis’ in menopausal women which leads to back pain, loss of height and kyphosis.
- Fracture of bone is a major health problem which may involve the vertebral body, femoral neck or distal forearm (Colle’s Fracture).

B] Cardiovascular Diseases –

- Ischaemic heart disease, coronary artery disease

C] Skin and Hair Changes –

- Thining, loss of elasticity and wrinkling of the skin.
- “Purse String” wrinkling around the mouth and “Crow feet” around the eyes.
- loss of pubic and axillary hair and slight balding.

Management of menopausal symptoms :

1] Conselling :

Every women with post menopausal symptoms should be adequately explained about the physiologic changes. This will remove her fears, and minimise the symptoms of anxiety, depression and insomnia^[15]. Thus it is important to maintain her physical and mental status.

2] Diet :

- Diet should include at least 1.2 g of calcium, Vit.A, Vit. C, Vit. E and Vit. D 400 mg.

- Weight bearing exercises (walking and aerobic) prevents or delay osteoporosis.
- Cessation of smoking and alcohol is necessary.

3] Mild Tranquillizers :

- These relieve the woman anxiety, sleeplessness and depression.
- Antidepressant like sulpride may be needed.

4] HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy)^[16]:

- Short term therapy is required to relieve the women of hot flush, night sweats, palpitations and disturbed sleep.
- Oestrogen should however be given in the smallest effective dose for a short possible period of 3 to 6 months.
- Only oestrogen replacement is not sufficient to overcome this problem.
- Long term oestrogen therapy is beneficial in delaying osteoporosis and reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease in a postmenopausal women.

Risk of HRT :

- 1) Endometrial Cancer
- 2) Breast cancer
- 3) Venous Thromboembolic (VTE) Disease
- 4) Coronary Heart Disease (CHD)
- 5) Lipid Metabolism
- 6) Dementia
- 7) Alzheimer Disease

Ayurvedic Management For Menopausal Syndrome :

The basic concept of *Ayurvedic* medicine is “*Swasthasya swastya rakshanam*” and “*aturasya vikara prashamanam cha*” i.e. prevention is better than cure. In menopause *vata* aggravation is the main factor so balancing this aggravated *vata* in the pre - menopausal stage results into decreasing the symptoms. *Ayurvedic* treatment for menopausal symptoms involves correcting *dosha* imbalance with appropriate diets, *samshaman* therapy, internal detoxification (*panchakarma* therapy), *Sattvavajay chikitsa*, *Yoga* therapy, *Rasayana* therapy.

A] Ayurvedic treatment for vata dominant menopause :

- Increase warm food and drinks, Decrease caffeine and other stimulant, cold drink etc.

- Oil massage with *vataghn dravya* medicated oil
- Regular exercise like walking.
- Herbs like *Guggulu (Commiphora mukul Hook ex Stocks)*, *Rasona (Allium sativum Linn.)*, *Arjuna (Terminalia arjuna Roxb.)*, *Cardamom* etc.

B] Ayurvedic treatment for pitta dominant menopause :

- Increase cooling foods (*sheeta dravya*), sweet juicy fruits
- Avoid hot, spicy, oily food, alcohol
- Herbs like *Amlaki (Emblica officinalis Gaertn.)*, *Chandana (Santalum album Linn.)*, *Kumkuma (Crocus sativus Linn.)* etc.

C] Ayurvedic treatment for kapha dominant menopause :

- Warm food, consume fruits, grains, vegetables
- Avoid meat, cheese, sugar, cold foods etc.
- Herbs – *Guggulu (Commiphora mukul Hook ex Stocks)*, *Haritaki (Terminalia chebula Retz.)*, *Nagarmotha (Cyperus rotundus Linn.)* etc.

D] Samshana Therapy : Agnideepana, aampachana, vatanulomana, balya.

E] Sattvavajya Chikitsa : Councelling and reassurance

F] Panchkarma Chikitsa :

In menopause mainly *vata dosha* is aggravated so *vatshamka chikitsa* is mainly helpful.

Following *panchkarma* are advised -

- *Abhyanga* (Massage)
- *Mriduswedana*
- *Mriduvirechana*
- *Basti* (Enema)
- *Shirodhara*

G] Yoga Therapy^[17] :

Yoga is gentle and helps to relax both the mind and body. It combines *asanas*, *pranayama* and relaxation techniques to achieve this balance. *Yoga* exercises can help to strengthen and stretches the muscles. Following *asanas* are indicated in menopausal period.

- *Padangushthanasana* -
- *Baddha Konasana*
- *Adho mukha swanasana* -
- *Uttitha Trikonasana*

- *Janu Shirsasana* -
- *Virasana*
- *Halasana* -
- *Supta Baddha Konasana*
- *Paschimottanasana* -
- *Uttanasana*

H] Rasayana (promoting longetivity by delaying aging) Therapy :

Rasayana therapy prevents the process of aging, reduces the diseases and also bring youth fullness to a person. According to *Aacharya Charaka*, intake of *rasayana aushadhies* produces long life lasting memory, talent, healthy physique, youth, lustre bright complexion, good voice, strength of body and senses, truthfulness, respect and glowing body^[18]. *Aacharya Sushruta* defined *rasayana* as the method which retard the aging process, increases longevity, talent, vitality and makes the body fit to overcome the factor causing ailments^[19]. Following are the drugs having *rasayana*, *deepniya*, *ojovardhaka*, *vatpittahara* properties which can be used in the menopausal treatment.

1) *Ashvagandha* - (*Withania somnifera Linn.*)

- It is powerful antioxidant and immune modulator.
- In menopause patient, it controls effectively the vasomotor symptoms
- The herb promotes hormonal balance after working on the central nervous system
- It has positive effect on mood swing, insomnia, anxiety and depression.

2) *Shatavari* - (*Asparagus racemosus Willd.*)

- It acts as *balya*, *rasayana* and *vaya sthapana*^[20].
- *Shatavari* helps to pre menopausal womens in reducing hot flushes and mood swing.
- Post menopausal women get benefit from *Shatavari's* rich source of phyto- oestrogen.
- It also helps to lubricate and moisten the dry reproductive tissue which are the the results of aging.

3) *Yashtimadhu* - (*Glycyrrhiza glabra Linn.*)

- It is the *rasayansa* drug which is prescribed for menopause.
- It is an excellent antioxidant, anti depressant, memory enhancer.

4) *Triphala* - It consists of
Haritaki (Terminalia chebula Retz.),
Bibhitaki (Terminalia bellirica Roxb.)
 and *Amlaki (Emblica officinalis Gaertn.)*
 - *Triphala* pacify all three *doshas* and also
 act as *vayasthapana*.

5) Alongwith these *Shatpushpa (Anethum sowa Kurtz.)* having *dhatvagnideepana* property,
Chandrashura (Lepidium sativum Linn.) which is
balavardhaka and *pushtikara*; *Bala (Sida cordifolia Linn.)* having *rasayana*, *brihana*, *balya*
 properties can be used.

6) Classical anti- aging formulations like *Chyavan Prasha rasayana* [21], *Brahm rasayana*[22] can be used.

7) *Ayurveda* classics also described *medhya rasayana* which specially influences the *medha*.

According to recent scientific studies it is reported that these *medhya rasayana* posses varying degree of anxiolytic activity. These are -

- *Mandukparni (Centella asiatica Linn.)*
- *Guduchi (Tinospora cordifolia Miers ex Hook. f. & Thoms)*
- *Yashtimadhu (Glycyrrhiza glabra Linn.)*
- *Shankhpushpi (Convolvulus pluricaulis Chois.)*

DISCUSSION:

Menopausal changes affects the women life adversely. Although it is a naturally occurring physiological condition in the women but due to aging, improper dietary habits, improper lifestyle ultimately there is aggrevation of *vata dosha* in the body. This *vikrita vata* leads into *vishmagni* and further malformation of *rasa dhatu* which finally results into cessation of menses. In *ayurveda* first line of treatment is to balance the aggrevated *vata dosha*. It also includes *shmsamana chikitsa*, *sattvavajayaa chikitsa*, *panchakarma* therapy, *yoga* therapy and *rasayana* therapy. According to modern science it happens due to declination of ovarian activity they suggest hormonal replacement therapy. It helps in reducing the menopausal symptoms.

CONCLUSION :

Menopause is the significant landmark in female. It marks the end of menstrual life i.e. reproductive life. Generally menopause occurs at the age of 45-55 years. It is the results of gradual failure of ovaries to

produce oestrogen and progesterone. And results into various symptoms related to both mind and body of the women. Modern science and *Ayurvedic* classics both have effective treatment for menopausal symptoms which helps the women to get relief from menopausal symptoms and live healthy and happy life.

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