

## Ayurvedic Review Article on Rajonivrutti W.S.R to Menopausal Syndrome

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### ABSTRACT

Menopausal symptoms are alarming call to more sincere attention to elderly women's health. As lifespan is increased with developed medical facilities, women are living around 30 years in postmenopausal state with all the complaints of menopause and geriasis. In Ayurveda, menopause is depicted as "*jarapakwa avastha*" and *rajonivrutti*. *Rajonivrutti janya laksana* is a group of symptoms produced by degenerative changes in the body. Degenerative changes are *dhatukshaya lakshana* in Ayurveda. *Vata dosha* is dominant in the *vridhha* stage of life. Symptoms in menopausal phase like insomnia, anxiety, urinary symptoms, and osteoporotic changes are due to dominance of *vata dosha*. Along with that *pitta dosha* symptoms like hot flushes, irritability etc are seen, during this phase, here in this we are going to study menopause (*rajonivrutti*) and its ayurvedic management.

**KEYWORDS:** Menopause, Rajonivritti, Shirodhara, Dhatuparipurnata

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### INTRODUCTION

Women always remain subservient to men though older women in India do enjoy a measure of respect as the senior member of the family. Unfortunately this enhanced status does not make it easier for women to talk about or seek help for menopause. Though menopause is a natural event as a part of the normal process of aging, it is turning into a major health problem in recent years in developed as well as developing countries like India. Every woman faces varied physiological and psychological changes during this "Change of Life" resulting from hormonal derangement. Sometimes such disturbances attain the stage of disease or syndrome called as "Menopausal Syndrome" which is accompanied by various vasomotor, psychological, genital, locomotors and GIT related symptoms and hence require management. Menopausal Syndrome is prime among women of age group of 50 to 55 years. Ayurvedic literature has noticed menopause as natural phenomenon in life of women as Rajonivritti. [1]

Women with menopause are designated as "Nishphala", "Gatartava" and it has been recognized as onset of old age. This phase of life in women is commonly associated with Vata and Kapha Vridhhi and Pitta Kshaya, a phenomenon which seems to be responsible for most of the physical and psychological ailments in women.

### Factors influencing on the age of Menopause

The age of natural Menopause appears to be determined genetically and does not seem to be related to age of menarche or age at last pregnancy. It is also not related to number of pregnancy, lactation or ovulations; use of contraceptives; or failure to ovulate spontaneously. It is also unrelated to race, height, weight, socio-economic conditions, education heavy physical work etc.

Clinical impression has suggested that mothers and daughters tend to experience Menopause at the same age, and there are two studies indicating that

daughters of mothers with an early Menopause (before age 46) also have an early Menopause.

### Etymology

The term 'Rajonivritti' is made up of two different words viz. "Rajah" and "Nivritti".

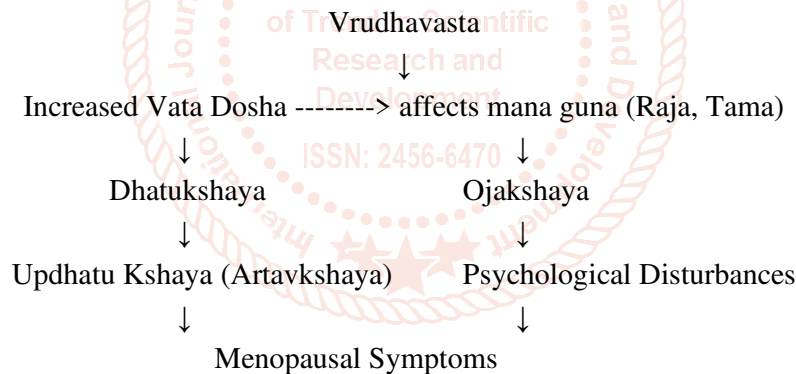
### Rajah

According to Sanskrit language means to give colour to the substance. The word Rajah is used synonymously for various substances (Amarkosha) like, [3] Artava or Stripushpa (Menstrual blood), Raja Guna (A type of Manas dosha), Parag (Pollen grains of flower) etc. Here, in the context of this subject, the meaning of Rajah is Artava and Stripushpa i.e. menstrual blood.

### Nivritti

Shabdakalpdruma page-900) The word Nivritti is derived from Sanskrit Varnas. Acharya Hemchandra have coined the synonyms of the word Nivritti like Apravritti, Uparama, Virati, Vyparati, Uparati etc. Meaning of these all words can be summarized as [4] Accomplishment, Fulfillment, Completion, End, Discontinuance of the influence of one rule over another, Here, in the present context, the meaning of Nivritti is understood as end or ceasing.

### Samprapti of Rajonivritti



### Lakshanas of Rajonivritti

**Doshaja lakshana:** According to available symptoms, differentiation can be done as Vataja lakshanas, Pittaja lakshanas and Kaphaja lakshanas. As this condition is characterized by generalized Vata vriddhi, the Vataja lakshanas are more dominantly observed than other two (Pittaja and Kaphaja) lakshanas.

**Dhatukshayaja lakshanas:** As this condition is a sequel of generalized Dhatukshayajanya avastha, the symptoms of Dhatukshaya are also observed in the patients of Rajonivritti, which can be grouped according to the individual Dhatukshayaja lakshanas.

**Manasika Lakshanas:** Krodha, Shoka, Bhaya, Dwesha, Smritihra, Utsahani, Dhairyahani,

### Rajonivritti

Thus, the whole term Rajonivritti means end of Artava pravritti or cessation of menstruation. Rajonivritti Kala is mentioned by almost all Acharyas without any controversy. (Su. Sha. 3/9) According to Sushruta and various other references too (A.S. Sha. 1/11, A.H. Sha 1/7, B.P. Pu. 3/1, 204), 50 years is mentioned as the age of Rajonivritti, when the body is fully in grip of senility.[5] Acharya Arundatta opines that the age mentioned above is a probable age and not a fixed one. There may be some variation in this regards: Arundatta on (A.H. Sha. 1/7)[6,7]

### Nidana of Rajonivritti

As it is already mentioned that Rajonivritti is not described in the classics as a separate disease. There is no information available regarding its Nidana, Purvarupa, Rupa, Samprapti etc. Concentrating on the probable Nidanas (etiological factors) regarding the condition Rajonivritti, few factors can be squeezed out. Some of these factors are mentioned by Acharyas in the context of "Rajah utpatti hetu", too. These factors like kala, swabhava, dhatuparipurnata, karma, vayu can be considered as Rajah nivritti hetu also.

Shirah-Shula, Vishada, Chinta, Medhahras, Alpaharsha etc.

Though Menopause is a natural biological process and neither an illness nor a disease, various physical and psychological changes take place in women's body due to waning ovarian function and process of ageing.

### A. Physical Changes

Although in 50% of women, the effect of Menopause is temporarily delayed by a trickle of estrogen from the adrenal gland, the female body including genitalia reacts to waning ovarian function by atrophy, inactivity and retrogression.

In Ovary: The ovaries shrink in size, becomes wrinkled and white.

In Fallopian tubes: The fallopian tubes show feature of atrophy.

In Uterus: The uterus gradually gets smaller in size and the ratio between body and cervix reverts to 1:1.

In Cervix: The cervix becomes smaller in size.

In Vagina: The vagina becomes narrower and smaller due to gradual loss of elasticity

### General Changes :

In addition to the local atrophy of the generative organs, certain general disturbances develop which are caused by alterations in the endocrine balance and as a part of ageing.

- Woman becomes coarser in build and appearance.
- She develops features suggestive of a mild degree of acromegaly. The shoulders become flat and the waistline is lost.
- The skin becomes wrinkled, thin, more prone to damage and infection as skin collagen content is reduced in Menopause.
- A slight growth of hair can be seen on the face especially around the lips and chin.
- Body hair become sparse later in life and this is a part of senile changes affecting all organs. Axillaries and pubic hair are not much shed because these depend on the adrenal rather than the ovary.
- Fat is deposited around the breasts, hips and abdomen (in fatty women).
- In most cases the blood pressure rises and cardiac irregularities and tachycardia some times occur.
- Arthritic changes often develop in the joints and in some women a well-marked osteoporosis may be seen, particularly in the spine and pelvic girdle, which renders these bones liable to fracture.

Also vasomotor symptoms like hot flashes & night sweats are seen.

### B. Psychological changes

A Menopausal woman may experience varied types of emotions ranging from mild concern to frank denial due to following factors.

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Tension
- Headache
- Irritability
- Nervousness
- Feeling unhappy

### Chikitsa (Management of Menopausal Syndrome)

In Ayurveda chikitsa is broadly classified into

**Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa** (Spiritual therapy/ use of divine methods like mantra, offerings to God etc.),

**Sattvavajaya Chikitsa** (restraining mind from unwholesome objects/ psychotherapy)

**Yuktivyapashray Chikitsa** (rationale therapy).

Yukti is a method of analysis that targets multiple variables. Yuktivyapashray Chikitsa means complex multicomponent clinical interventions. It consists of Nidan Parivarjan (avoidance of causative factors), Samshodhan Chikitsa (cleansing of body by Panchakarma/purifying measures) and Samshaman Chikitsa (palliative therapies). Samshaman Chikitsa is indicated for the patient not fit for Samshodhan and is also used after Samshodhan Chikitsa. It includes Ahara (wholesome food), Vihar (wholesome activities) and Aushadha (medicament). As there is natural vitiation of vata dosha with advancing age it is important to avoid the provocative causes of Vata doshas as a preventive measure. Tolerance of adharniya vega (unsuppressible urges) and intolerance of dharaniya vega (suppressible urges), excessive and single use of Amla, Lavana, Katu, Tikta, and Kashaya rasa in diet, diva swap (day sleeping) and ratri jagaran (night wakefulness), daily coitus without Vaajikarana (aphrodisiacs), over indulgence in alcohol drinking, excessive physical work, unrestrained mental and emotional fluctuations, etc. should be avoided.

### Samshaman

Menopause starts in late stage of Madhyamavastha i.e. 45 - 55 years of age and then continued in Vruddhavastha. In Vruddhavastha Dosha aggravated is Vata and Kapha is decreasing. Ageing and Dhatukshaya is main cause of Vata aggravation. So management of Vata is of very much important. At the beginning of menopause there is also associated Pitta Dosha. So symptoms like hot flashes, sleeplessness etc can be controlled by managing Pitta Dosha. Daily consumption of ghee, milk, which increase kapha, can delay the onset of menopause 'Ghritaksheeradi nityasu muditasu kaphatmasu| Aartavam tishthati chiram viparitasvato-anyatha||' (Ashtang Samgraha, Sharir 1/69) Ghrita is Vata-pitta shamaka (pacifying), Balya (strengthening), Agnivardhaka (promoting digestion), Madhura, Saumya (agreeable), Sheeta-Virya (cooling in effect), Shulahara (pain relieving), Jwar-hara (antipyretic), Vrishya (aphrodisiac) and Vayasthapaka (age stabilizer). Thus, it not only pacifies Vata and Pitta but also improves the general condition of the body and acts as a rejuvenator of the body. Ghrita is Yogavahi. (special affinity to carry and to potentiate the actions of the main drug to which it is mixed) and



thus helps in increasing bio-availability of other drugs without losing its own property.

### **Samshodhan**

#### **Role of Agni**

Agni is important integral part of the body. Agni is causative factor for life span, colour and complexion, strength and enthusiasm. Derangement in Agni causes disturbances in all above factors. Postmenopausal females are more prone for Agnidushti due to Dhatukshaya, ageing and aggravating Vata. For purvakarma before shodhan Agni must be maintained by using various agni deepana and pachana dravyas.

#### **Role of Abhyanga**

Abhyanga is said to be Jarahar, Shramhar, Vatahar, Drishtiprasdakar, Pushtikar, Ayushyakar, Swapnakar, Kleshsahntwa, Kapha Vata Nirodhan. It has considered as important part of the external Snehana. By the Abhyanga with oil, human body become strong and smooth-skinned. It becomes unsusceptible to the disease of Vata and resistant to the exhaustion and exertion. If the body of an individual is oiled properly through Abhyanga then he lives for a long time without any decay of disease. It helps to prevent and arrest the ageing process by rejuvenation.

#### **Role of Shirodhara**

In this procedure Medicated oil, milk or butter milk are poured in continuous straight over head. It is mainly useful in premature greying of hairs, fatigue, sleeplessness, stress and psychological disorders. Research conducted on this has proved its utility in management of Manasika Bhavas.

#### **Role of Basti**

Vata dosha is the major factor contributing in kshaya of all dhatus occurring in menopausal age. Vata is responsible for controlling all the central nervous functions in the body. It also controls neuro-muscular activities and the mind. Basti (medicated enema) is one among the most important Panchakarma therapies for maintenance of Vata, which is also considered as “Chikitsardha” (half of entire treatments). It possesses multidimensional action. Matra Basti is useful in menopausal female as less quantity of Sneha is used and can be given at all time without any complications.

#### **Management of Dhatukshaya Through Rasayan Chikitsa (rejuvenation therapy)**

Rajonivrutti is a phase of dhatukshaya and Rasayana provides a comprehensive physiologic and metabolic restoration for aging. The word Rasa in rasayan has multiple references; it refers to the Rasa Dhatu in the context of Rasadi Sapta Dhatu (body tissues) and to the pharmacodynamic properties of a drug in the context of Rasa Guna etc. Ayana means circulation,

the measures by which one is capable of getting the nourishing Rasa. Acting through a complex and comprehensive mechanism of rasa-samvahanan (circulation of nutrient juices), dhatu, agni and srotas, it nourishes bodily tissues through micro-nutrition, thus helping in regeneration, revival and revitalization of Dhatu. they act by enriching the nutritional value of the circulating plasma. Acting at the level of Agni i.e. at the level of digestion and metabolism, acting at the level of Srotams (the microcirculatory channels carrying nutrition to the tissues) These Rasayana cleans and activate the micro-circulatory channels i.e. Sroto Shuddhi leading to improved tissue health and their quality .

#### **Actions of Vayasthapaka Dravyas**

Dravyas like Amrita/ Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*), Abhaya/ Haritiki (*Terminalia chebula*), Dhatri/ Amalki (*Emblica officinale*), Yukta (*Pluchea lanceolata*), Shweta (*Clitoria ternatea*), Jeewanti (*Leptadenia reticulata*), Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*) may possess age sustaining and health promotive properties. Prevent senile degeneration, Stimulate metabolism, Promote body resistance and immunity, Improves memory and intelligence, Increase vitality, Freedom from disease, Restore health and increase long life. Maintenance of Mansik (mental) health. The aggravated Vata with Rasa Dhatukshaya affects the mental health of menopausal female. Hence it is very important for a physician to appreciate and understand the psychological state of the female .

#### **Pathyapathya (Diet and lifestyle advice for menopause)**

Ayurveda advocates that “prevention is better than cure”. Intake of healthy diet, regular exercise and reducing stress provides the foundation of wellbeing for everyone. Ayurvedic recommendations for menopause include:

- Intake of Vata-Pitta pacifying diet, that is warm, light, cooked, fresh and unctuous (containing ghrita and taila) food.
- Avoid dry, cold, fermented, left-over foods, refined sugar and red meats.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine.
- Regular, mild-moderate exercise is good to combat the symptoms. Exercises that relax the nervous system, such as walking, Yoga and meditation are excellent.
- To stabilize Vata, it is very important to maintain regular routines of sleep, food, work, exercise and family time.

- Daily self-massage with warm oil (Abhyanga) and nasal medication (Nasya) where you place some drops of oil in each nostril can assist with hormonal balancing.

## DISCUSSION

The objective of the present study entitled, "Management Of Rajonivritti Lakshanas w.s.r to menopausal Syndrome" were searched and analyzed. On the basis of Ayurveda as well as Modern fundamentals after analyzing the above facts, Both the term Rajonivritti and Menopause nearly convey same meaning. In modern science Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) is one and only alternative for this health hazard by which one can get spectacular achievement in combating the disease, but it has a wider range of secondary health complications. Thus it can be concluded that Ayurvedic management of Menopausal Syndrome is very much effective with no untoward side effects, it is cost effective and increase the longevity.

The Rajonivrittijanya avastha is one of the phases of Ageing in woman, which is a naturally occurring condition, under the influence of Kala and Swabhava. Menopause and Ageing are seen with the advancement of the age and both of these conditions mainly represent Kshayavastha (Declining condition of Dhatus). Rajonivritti can be considered as one of the initial symptoms of aging manifestation, and the end of female reproductive life. As Rajonivritti too, is a naturally occurring condition and having good number of similarities with the process of aging, so it should be managed with the principles of Ageing, giving much emphasis on the Rasayana Therapy.

In Rajonivritti, as the Vata Dosha is dominant, majority of symptoms occur due to Vatavriddhi resulting in degeneration of bone or Asthi Dhatu (osteoporosis). Aggravation of Pitta Dosha cause increase in ushnata, sarata and Katu Rasata of Rakta Dhatu resulting in hot flashes.

In addition to the physical symptoms, psychological impact of menopausal syndrome shows importance of head, hence treatment procedures for head like Nasya Karma, Takra Dhara, Medya Rasayanas are helpful.

Based on patients Dosha Dhatu Mala Agni and Sharira pramana further treatment should be decided.

Thus Abhyanga followed by light Swedana helps to pacify Vata and improves circulation. Shirodhara particularly is very effective in hot flashes and psychological disorders like mood swings, anxiety, and depression etc. Basti therapy, Yoni Pichu, Yoni Dhoopana and Yoni Prakshalana (vaginal douching) are beneficial in vaginal atrophy, vaginal dryness and dyspareunia etc.

## CONCLUSION

Menopause is not a disease but transitory phase, It is the phase where Dhatukshaya starts and Vata Dosha turn out to be Predominant Dosha. Management of vitiated Vata and Dhatukshaya through Rasayan chikitsa, Abhangya, Basti, Shirodhara, Use of Bruhaniya, Balya and Vayasthapan drugs along with maintenance of physical and mental health with the help of Yoga and meditation definitely helps menopausal females to change annoying menopause to healthy and happy menopause.

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