



## **15. Concept of menopause and its management through ayurveda: A review**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The word 'Menopause' comes from the Greek word 'Menos' (month) & 'Pausis' (cessation). Menopause is a gradual and natural transitional phase of adjustment between the active and inactive ovarian function and occupies several years of a women's life and involves biological and psychological changes adjustments. It occurs at the age of 45-55 years. . During the period of menopause, the women enter an oestrogen deficient phase which leads to the aging process along with various symptoms such as irregular menstruation, hot flashes, vaginal dryness, urinary problems, mood swings, sleep disturbances, palpitations, changes in sexual desire, osteoporosis and heart diseases etc. The group of symptoms associated with the menopausal phase are termed as menopausal syndrome. Menopause as a diseased condition is not described separately in the classical texts of Ayurveda. It is termed as 'Rajonivritti' and only 50 years is mentioned as the age of Rajonivritti.. Acharyas described as it is normal physiological state in transition from the madhymavastha to the vridhnavastha of body, which is Vata Dosha dominance stage of life. In Ayurveda, Menopausal symptoms are regarded as imbalance of the Dosha [Vata+++, Pitta++, Kapha+] and Dhatukshya which occurs as a natural & gradual consequence of aging. In modern medicine the only treatment for menopausal symptoms is Hormone replacement therapy (HRT), which is not a long-term therapy to be given as it has side effects on the overall health of the women. Ayurveda has excellent solution for a safe & happy transition into menopause. This article deals with the role of Ayurveda in managing the menopausal symptoms through various methods. Ayurvedic interventions focus on Dosh-Dhatu samya through diet & lifestyle modification, shanshman chikitsa, Srotosodhana chikitsa and Rasayana chikitsa .*

*Key words: 'Rajonivritti', Dhatukshya, Dosh-Dhatu samya, shanshman, Srotosodhana, Rasayana*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Menopause, a phenomenon unique to women is naturally occurs at the age of 45-55 years. Menopause means permanent cessation of menstruation at the end of reproductive life due to loss of ovarian follicular activity<sup>1</sup>. This phase also marks the end of natural fertility in a

woman. In Ayurveda literature there is no detailed description of *Rajonivritti* or menopause except the age of *Rajonivritti* is given as 50 years<sup>ii, iii, iv</sup>.

### **Need of the Study :**

An estimated 80% of females experience physical or psychosocial symptoms while approaching menopause, leading to change in their quality of life<sup>v</sup>. Symptoms found related to menopause are hot flushes, irritability, mood swings, insomnia, dry vagina, palpitation, fatigue, mental confusion, stress incontinence, urge incontinence, osteoporotic symptoms, anxiety, depression, headache, etc. combinedly called menopausal syndrome. In modern science, hormonal replacement therapy (HRT) is the only alternative for menopausal syndrome, but it has a wider range of secondary health complications like vaginal bleeding, breast cancer, endometrial cancer, gallbladder diseases, etc. Non-hormonal pharmacologic therapies have been shown to be less effective than hormonal therapy and to be associated with their own adverse events that restrict their use for many women<sup>vi</sup>. Therefore, many menopausal women use complementary therapies to cope with their symptoms. There comes the role of Ayurveda. Ayurveda is a science of life which deals with physical, psychological as well as spiritual wellbeing of an individual. Ayurveda on one hand emphasizes on maintenance of health whereas on the other hand have very scientific and sound fundamental principles for curing the ailments. Ayurveda involves a holistic physiological system based on balance, with its cardinal doctrine of human physiology being constituted by “*Vata*”, “*Pitta*” “*Kapha*” and “*Dhatu*”. So, Ayurveda gives a non-hormonal and cost-effective treatment for *Rajonivritti* or Menopause.

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

1. To study and compile a comprehensive assessment of Ayurvedic and modern literature on menopause.
2. To find out a better alternative of hormone replacement therapy in management of menopausal symptoms, according to Ayurveda.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Available References of menopause have been collected from Ayurvedic Samhitas, Ayurvedic textbooks and modern text books, different websites, published articles, and critically examined.

### **AYURVEDIC CONCEPT OF MENOPAUSE**

Menopause, known as *Rajonivritti* in Ayurveda, is a natural physiological transition in a woman's life. It is not a disease. It is *Jarajanay vikara*, that means age generated phenomenon in women by the age of 50 years. Ayurvedic science has divided all diseases into four major types *Agantuj*, *Sharirik*, *Manasik* and *Swabhavika*<sup>vii</sup>. Acharya Sushruta has mentioned a group of naturally occurring diseases under the heading of *swabhavika vyadhi*.

So, *rajonivritti* or menopause can be considered as *swabhavika vyadhi* as are *jara*(aging), *kshudha*(hunger), *pipasa*(thirst), *nidra*(sleep), *mritayu*(death)<sup>viii</sup> .

### Causes of rajonivritti

The specific causes for *Rajonivritti* are not described in the Ayurvedic texts. But Some of the factors described by the Acharyas in the context of "*Rajah Utpathi*" *Hetus*, such as *swabhav* (natural process) *kala* (end of *balavastha*-12 to16yrs) *dosha* ( Kapha predominance), *dhatu paripurnata* (rasa and rakta dhatu ) etc. Depletion of these factors can lead to *Rajonivritti*. So most probable causes for it is *swabhav* (natural process), *kala* (end of *madhyavastha* and *jaravastha*), *dosa* ( *vata* predominance), *dhatukshaya* (*rasa* and *rakta dhatu* )<sup>ix</sup>.

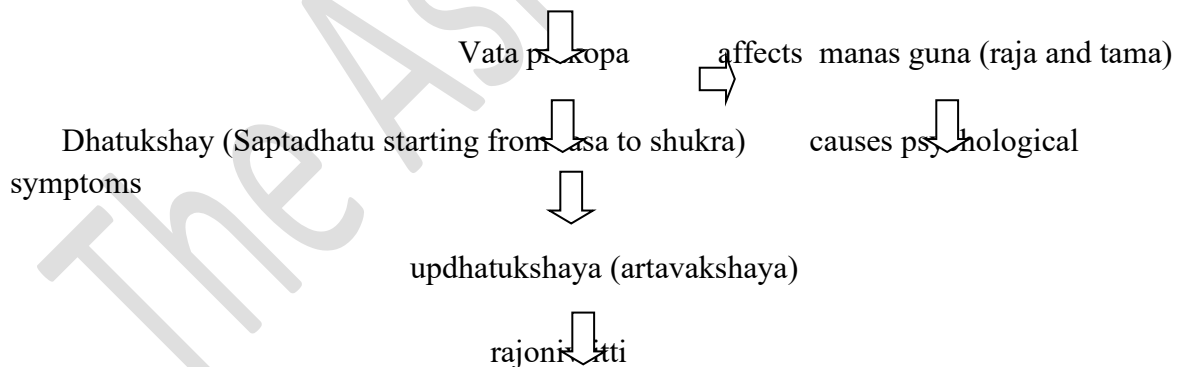
*Rajonivritti* can be classified under two categories:

1. *Kalaja rajonivritti*
2. *Akalaja rajonivritti*.

*Rajonivritti* which occurs as per the *swabhava* and *kala*, is timely, at probable age of 50, is ***Kalaja rajonivritti***. Certain dietary factors, lifestyles and *abhigata* can lead to *Rajonivritti* before or after its probable age (i.e. around 50 years) it is termed as *Akalaja Rajonivritti*

### Probable Samprapti of Rajonivritti

*Swabhava* and *Kala*(*end of madhyavastha*, and *Jaravastha* ), as biological stimulants for *rajonivritti*



### ***Rajonivritti janya lakshanas* :**

Life span of every individual is divided into three stages as *Bala*, *Madhya* and *Vridhdha* in our classics<sup>x</sup>. For women, her *madhyavastha* has again sub divided in *Vridhdhi*, *Youvan*, *Sampurnata*, *Hani*<sup>xi</sup>. These sub divisions indicate the puberty, beginning and end of reproductive period. Also, during these stages, all the physiological and psychological

changes are attributed to status of *Dhatu* and *Doshas* in the body. Dominant *Dosha* of particular stage of life governs all the functions of body, also these dominating *Dosha* are responsible for maximum number of diseases.

**Stages of life of women with status of *Dosha* <sup>xii</sup>**

Stages of life	Substages of life	Status of doshas
<i>Balyavastha</i> (Up to 16 years)	<i>Bala</i> - 10yrs	K+++ , P & V+
	<i>Kumari</i> -10-12 yrs	K+++ , P++ , V+
	<i>Rajomati</i> -12-16yrs	K&P+++ , V+
<i>Madhymavastha</i> (16 to 60 or 70 yrs)	<i>Vruddhi</i> – 16-20yrs	P+++ , K++ , V+
	<i>Youvan</i> - 20-30yrs	P+++ , V++ , K+
	<i>Sampurnata</i> ( <i>Dhatu maturity</i> ) -30-40yrs	P+++ , V++ , K+
	<i>Hani</i> (Beginning of Decline) -after 40yrs	V+++ , P++ , K+
<i>Vriddhavastha</i> (After 60yrs or 70 yrs)		V+++ , P++ , K+

While all three *doshas*, *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* are always present in the body, their dominance changes according to season, age, time of day and the individual's particular constitution. For menopause we will concentrate on age. In Ayurveda, menopause marks the transition from the *madhymavastha* (*Pitta* stage of life) to the *vriddhavastha* (*Vata* stage of life) So that most of the symptoms of menopause have to do with *Vata dosha* with some variable signs of *Pitta dosha* and *kapha dosha*.

***Vata pradhan rajonivrittijanya lakshanas*<sup>xiii</sup> :**

*Shirahshoola* (Headache), *Hrid Spandana* (Palpitation), *Bala-Kshaya* (Weakness), *Anidra/Alpanidra* (insomnia), *Anavasthita Chitatvam* (Mood swing), *Vaichitya* (Loss of concentration), *Vishaada* (Depression), *Chinta* (Anxiety), *Smritimandhya* (Decreased memory), *Krichchhra Vyavayata* (Dyspareunia), *Maithunaasahishnuta* (loss of libido), *Vak Sang* (Change in voice), *Vali* (Wrinkling of skin), *Katishool* (Low backache), *Sandhi Vedana* (Joint pain), *Yoni Vedana* (Pain in vagina), *Yoni Shushakta* (Vaginal dryness) etc.

***Pittapradhan rajonivrittijanya lakshanas* :**

*Osha* (Hot flushes), *Atisveda* (perspiration), *Amarsha* (Irritability), *Yoni Daha* (Burning sensation in vagina), *Mutradaha* (Burning sensation in Urine).

***Kaphapradhan rajonivrittijanya lakshanas :***

*Atisthaulaya* (Weight gain), *Yoni Kandū* (vaginal Itching), *Yoni Srava* (Vaginal discharge).

***Dhatukshayaja Lakshanas:***

<i>Rasa Kshaya</i>	<i>Rakta Kshaya</i>	<i>Mamsa Kshaya</i>	<i>Meda Kshaya</i>	<i>Asthi Kshaya</i>	<i>Majja Kshaya</i>	<i>Shukra Kshaya</i>
<i>Shabdasaḥ -atva</i>	<i>Twaka rukshata</i>	<i>Sphik-Gandadi Shushkata</i>	<i>Anga Rukshata</i>	<i>Asthitoda</i>	<i>Asthi Saushirya</i>	<i>Yoni vedana</i>
<i>Hridravatva</i>	<i>Sira shaithilya</i>	<i>Toda</i>	<i>Shrama</i>	<i>Danta, Nakha, Kesha, Roma, Rukshata</i>	<i>Asthitoda</i>	<i>Shrama</i>
<i>Shula</i>		<i>Rukshata</i>	<i>Shosha</i>	<i>Sandhi-shaithilya</i>	<i>Daurbalya</i>	<i>Daurbalya</i>
<i>Shrama</i>		<i>Glani</i>	<i>Krusata</i>		<i>Brahma</i>	<i>Panduta</i>
<i>Shosh</i>		<i>Sandhi Vedana</i>			<i>Tam o dars han</i>	
<i>Trishna</i>		<i>Dhamani shaithilya</i>				

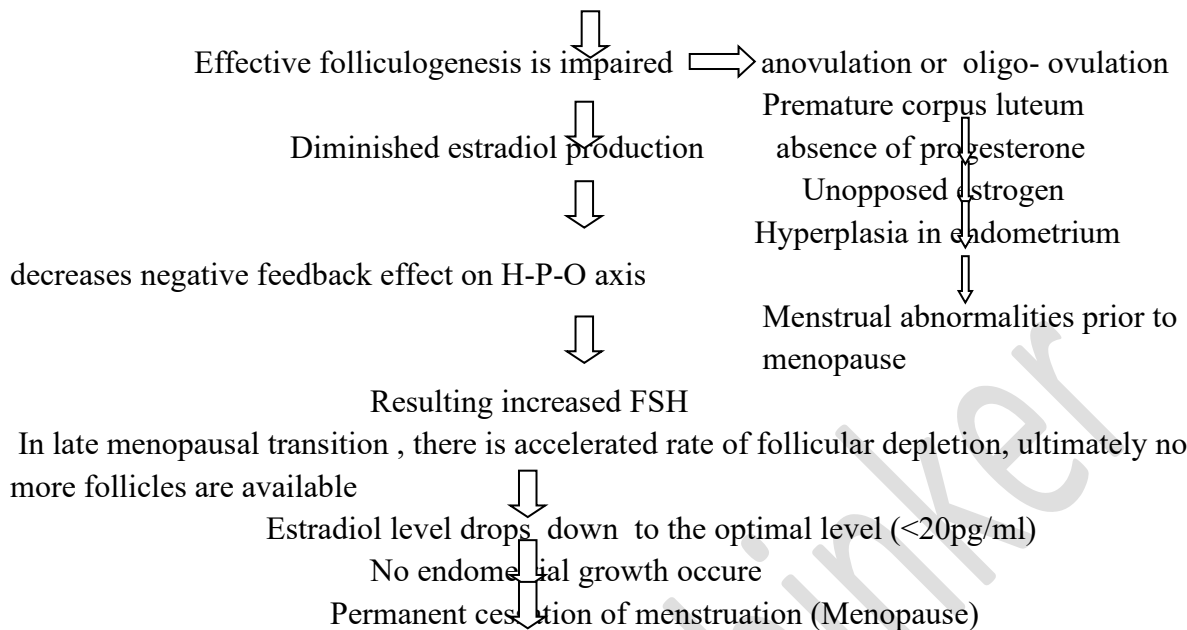
**MODERN CONCEPT OF MENOPAUSE**

Menopause means permanent cessation of menstruation at the end of reproductive life due to loss of ovarian follicular activity. The menopause is a gradual and natural transitional phase of adjustment between the active and inactive ovarian function and occupies several years of a women's life and involves biological and psychological changes.

Age of menopause ranges between 45 -55years, average being 50 years.

**Endocrinology of menopause transition and menopause<sup>xiv</sup>**

Few years prior to menopause along with depletion of ovarian follicles, the follicles become resistant to pituitary gonadotropins



In some cases, menopause is induced. Common causes of induced menopause include:

- Bilateral oophorectomy
- Ovarian ablation, or the shutdown of ovary function, which may be done by hormone therapy, surgery, or radiotherapy techniques in women with oestrogen receptor positive tumours
- Pelvic radiation.
- Pelvic injuries that severely damage or destroy the ovaries.

During reproductive years, women are protected by female hormones, i.e. estrogen and progesterone. With menopause, women enter an estrogen deficient phase in their lives, which accelerates the ageing process resulting into greater vulnerability to psychosomatic problems.

### **Organ changes in menopause –**

Ovaries shrink in size, wrinkled and white, Fallopian tubes show atrophy, cilia disappear. Uterus becomes smaller, endometrium become thin and atrophic, cervical secretion becomes scanty, Vagina becomes narrow due to loss of elasticity, vaginal pH becomes alkaline due to absence of glycogen and Döderlein's bacillus. Breast fat is reabsorbed and become flat. Bladder and urethra epithelium become thin and prone to infections.

### **Menopausal symptoms:**

**Menstrual symptoms-** Short cycle and irregular cycle in perimenopause, absence of menstruation in menopause

**Vasomotor symptoms –** Hot flashes, perspiration, night sweat, palpitation, fatigue, weakness, insomnia etc

**Urogenital symptoms -** Dryness and irritation in vagina, dyspareunia, loss of libido, incontinence, urgency, dysuria etc

**Psychological symptoms-** Irritability, mood swings, dementia, anxiety, depression, headache etc

**Skin and hair symptoms** – Loss of skin collagen content (wrinkles), hair loss

**Others-** Backpain , joint pain

### **Diagnosis of Menopause**

1. Cessation of menstruation for consecutive 12 month during climacteric.
2. Average age of menopause:50 years
3. Appearance of menopausal symptoms “hot flash “and “night sweats”.
4. Vaginal cytology - showing maturation index of at least 10/85 /5 (feature of low oestrogen)
5. Serum estradiol <20pg/mL
6. Serum FSH> 40 mIU/ ml (three values at weeks interval required)

### **Complications of menopause:**

Post-menopausal women run a high risk for fracture of bones due to **Osteoporosis**, and **Cardiovascular diseases** due to deficiency of Estrogen. Estrogen prevents osteoclastic activity and increases absorption of calcium from the gut to prevent osteoporosis. Estrogen increases high density lipoprotein (HDL) and decreases low density lipoprotein (LDL) and total cholesterol. Estrogen prevents atherosclerosis by antioxidant property.

### **Management of menopause in modern science**

#### **Nonharmonal –**

- **Life style modification-** Increased physical activity(exercise), nutritious diet, decreased caffeine intake , smoking and alcohol consumption, adequate calcium intake in diet .
- **Supplementary Calcium and VitaminD3 and Vitamin E**
- **Bisphosphonates and Calcitonin**
- **SERMs(Selective Estrogen Receptor Modulators):**In some specific cases.



### **Hormonal -**

**Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)** is more effective in comparison of non hormonal therapy in all symptoms of menopause.

In modern science, hormonal replacement therapy (HRT) is the only alternative for menopausal syndrome, but it has a wider range of secondary health complications like vaginal bleeding, breast cancer, endometrial cancer, gallbladder diseases, etc. Non-hormonal pharmacologic therapies have been shown to be less effective than hormonal therapy and to be associated with their own adverse events that restrict their use for many women. On the other hand, this therapy is not much effective in the psychological manifestations of this stage. Allopath manages them by the long-term use of sedative, hypnotics, and anxiolytic drugs, which may lead to various side effects like drowsiness, impaired motor function, loss of memory, allergic reactions, non-social behaviors, drug dependence, etc. Therefore, Ayurveda finds out a safe and effective management of menopausal syndrome without creating any adverse effect.

### **Management of menopause in Ayurveda**

As such no treatment of *Rajonivritti* has been given anywhere in Ayurvedic classics, being a *Swabhavaja* state of life. But on the basis of *samprapti* and *Lakshanas*, ***Vata-Pittahara Chikitsa***, combined with ***Srotosodhana*** and ***Rasayana chikitsa***, can be beneficial in the treatment of menopausal symptoms.

The basic concept of *Ayurveda Chikitsa* is “*Swasthsya swastyarakshanam* ((to maintain the health) and *Aturasyavikara prasamanamcha*” (if any symptoms manifest or persist, to treat it accordingly). It is preferable to balance the aggravating elements in the early menopause period, so that the intensity of menopausal symptoms is significantly less or even non-existent.

### **Preventive Measures:**

The first and foremost objective of *chikitsa* in Ayurveda is *Dosha and Dhatu samyata*. Follow proper *Dincharya* (daily regimen), *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen), regular removal of aggravated *Dosha* according to *Ritu* (season) by *Panchakarma* and regular utilization of *Rasayana* (rejuvenation therapies) are the means to keep *dosha and dhatu* in harmony.<sup>xv</sup> These preventive measure incorporated well in time at the advent of middle age, it may not only prevent symptoms related to hormonal changes affecting the body but also save from

*Akalaj Vridhhavastha* (untimely degenerative changes) and other troublesome outcomes related with aging .

As there is natural vitiation of *vata dosha* with advancing age it is important to avoid the provocative causes of *Vata dosha* as a preventive measure. 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), overindulgence in alcohol drinking, excessive physical work, etc. should be avoided.

### **Therapeutic interventions:**

*Chikitsa* in Ayurveda 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) and *Yuktivyapashray Chikitsa* (rationale therapy)<sup>xvi</sup>. *Yuktivyapashray Chikitsa* means complex multi component clinical interventions. It consists of *Nidan Parivarjan* (avoidance of causative factors), *Samshodhan Chikitsa* (cleansing of body by *Panchakarma*) and *Samshaman Chikitsa* (palliative therapies). *Samshaman Chikitsa* includes *Ahara* (wholesome food), *Vihar* (wholesome activities) and *Aushadha* (medicament)<sup>xvii</sup>.

### **Management of Dosha:**

Menopause starts in late stage of *Madhyamavastha* and then continued in *Vridhhavastha*. In *Vridhhavastha Vata dosha* aggravates and *Kapha dosha* decreases . So management of *Vata* is very much important. At the beginning of menopause there is also associated *Pitta dosha*. So symptoms like hot flushes, sleeplessness etc can be controlled by managing *Pitta dosha*.

***Snehan Karma*** is recommended treatment for *Vata- vitiation*; it can be done externally (*Abhyanga*) and internally (*snehpan*).

***Abhyanga*** is said to be *Jarahar*, *Shramhar*, *Vatahar*, *Drishtiprasadakar*, *Pushtikar* and *Ayushyakar*. By *Abhyanga* with various medicated oils such as *Mahanarayan Taila*, *Ksheerbala Tail* or *Masha Taila* regularly as daily routine to check vitiating *Vata* and body become strong and smooth- skinned.

***Snehpan*** (internal use of *Ghrita* ) can be recommended. *Ghrita* is *Vata-pitta shamaka* , *Balya* , *Agnivardhaka* , *Madhura*, *Saumya* , *Sheeta-Virya* , *Shulahara* , *Vrishya* and *Vayasthapaka*<sup>xviii</sup>. 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<sup>xix</sup>. Medicated *Ghrita* such as *Amalak ghrita*, *Shatavari ghrita*, *Guduchi ghrita*, *Chitraka ghrita*, *Panchakola ghrita* and *Panchatikta ghrita* are various medicated *Ghrita* preparations suitable for menopausal women.

**Basti Chikitsa** : Basti is the supreme treatment, to treat vitiated *Vata dosha* and thus considered as *Ardhachikitsa*<sup>xx</sup>. *Vata dosha* is the major factor contributing in *kshaya* of all *dhatu*s occurring in menopausal age. *Matra Basti* with medicated oils such as *Sukumara ghrita*, *Dhanvantari tail* etc. is useful in menopausal female as less quantity of *Sneha* is used and can be given at all time without any complications. *Basti* with *Tikta Dravya ghrita* and *Kshira* is recommended in *Asthi kshaya*<sup>xxi</sup>. *Tikta Rasa* by its *Deepana*, *Paachana* and *Rochana* properties increases the *Dhatvagni*. With increased *Dhatvagni*, nutrition of all seven *Dhatu* is improved and thus it checks *Asthi kshaya*. *Tikta Rasa* by its *Lekhana* (scraping) property helps in the weight reduction and thus supports the management of Osteoarthritis<sup>xxii</sup>. *Madhutailika basti* and *Vayasthapana gana siddha ksheerapaka basti* also be used to treat menopausal symptoms as they are *Vata Shamaka Bastis* having *Jeevaniya* and *Brimhana properties*.

**Murdhni Taila**<sup>xxiii</sup> : It is a procedure of external administration of *Sneha* on head region, in which medicine remain in contact with the scalp for fixed duration of time. It is of four types.

- **Shiro-abhyanga** -Application of medicated or non medicated *Taila* or *Ghrita* on the head.
- **Shiro Seka** -continuous pouring of medicated oil, milk, or buttermilk in a particular manner on the head, especially on the forehead.
- **Shiro Pichu** -placing layers of cotton soaked with oil on scalp.
- **Siro-Basti** -The retention of medicated oil on the head for a prescribed period.

These procedures control the vitiation of *Vata Dosha* in the *Murdha*. It is mainly useful in premature greying of hairs, fatigue, sleeplessness, stress and psychological disorders.

### **Nasya Karma**

Nose is considered as the gateway of *Shira*<sup>xxiv</sup>. So, medicines administered through nasal route is known as *Nasya*. So, through the *Sukshma Shrotas* in the nasal route, *Sneha* reaches *Shirogata Marma* (mainly *Shringhatak Marma*) and spreads throughout the whole *Mastishka* (brain), assisting in the removal of vitiated *Doshas*. *Nasya Karma* can thus be used to manage the emotional and psychological aspects of menopause. *Brimhana Nasya* balances the *Vata* and *Pitta Doshas* so useful in managing hot flash. *Nasya Karma* can be administered using medicines such as *Ksheerabala Taila*, *Brahmi Ghrita*, *Madhukadi Taila*, and others. *Nasya* with *Brahmi Ghrita* helps to reduce emotional problems associated with menopause.

**Sthanik chikitsa** : *Yoni Pichu* and *Yoni Prakshalana* ( vaginal douching) are beneficial in vaginal atrophy, vaginal dryness and dyspareunia etc



### **Management of *Dhatukshaya* Through *Rasayan Chikitsa*:**

As *Rajonivritti* is categorized under *Swabhavika Vyadhi*. According to Acharya *Caraka*, '*Swabhavo Nishpratikriyaha*' i.e. by nature they are incurable. *Chakrapani* while commenting on the word '*Nishpratikriya*' says that these diseases cannot be managed with any treatment other than *Rasayana*<sup>xxv</sup>. *Rasayana* therapy is the only way to overcome symptoms related to *Jara*.

*Rasayana* is one of the eight branches of *Ayurveda* which is related with the protection of health and longevity. *Rasayana Chikitsa* has importance from both preventive and curative aspect of the disease.

*Rasayana* is a regimen or the substance with the help of which one can attain, metabolize and channelize the better quality of *Rasa Dhatu* and other *Dhatu*s up to the smallest unit of the body. Resulting in an overall improvement in the formation and maintenance of *Sapta dhatu*s and prevents ageing, Immunity thereby improving of resistance against diseases, body strength and improves mental status.

Acting through a complex and comprehensive mechanism of *rasa , dhatu, agni and srotas*, nourishes bodily tissues through micro- nutrition, thus helping in regeneration, revival and revitalization of *Dhatu*.

Acting at all levels of *Rasa* are the drugs such as *Draksha* (*Vitis vinifera* Linn.), milk, *Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*), *Salparni* (*Desmodium gangeticum*) etc. 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 are the drugs such as *Pippali* (*Piper Longum* Linn.), *Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula*), *Citraka* (*Plumbago zyleneica*), etc. they improves the digestion, absorption and metabolism, and has some anabolic effect.

Acting at the level of *Srotamsi* (the microcirculatory channels carrying nutrition to the tissues) are the drugs such as *Guggulu* (*Commiphora mukul*), *Pippali* (*Piper Longum* Linn.), *Rasona* (*Allium cepa*), etc. These *Rasayana* cleans and activate the micro- circulatory channels i.e. *Sroto Shuddhi* leading to improved tissue health and their quality<sup>xxvi</sup>.

**On the basis of drug, diet and lifestyle, *Rasayana* is divided into 3 types –**

#### ***Ahara Rasayana* – Based on diet and nutrition**

*Aahar* is *dhatuposhak* and *dhatu* is responsible for the maintenance of compactness and strength. *Dhatu* reflects in the terms of *Sara* (absoluteness of body tissues), which makes a person look young and beautiful<sup>xxvii</sup>.

The *Rasayana* diet consists of wholesome, unprocessed, and nutrient rich food which are simple to digest. This entails lots of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and healthy fats. Menopausal women should refrain from *Vata* vitiating food. *Laghu* (light) and *Santarpaka* (nutritive) diet is recommended.

#### ***Acharya Rasayana* – Based on conduct, behavior and lifestyle**

Ayurveda also mentions a drugless (*adravya bhuta*) form of *Rasayana*, the ***Acharya Rasayana***<sup>xxviii</sup>, which literally means righteous physical and mental conducts of human. *Acharya rasayana* includes; **a) Personal behavior** - always speaking truth, not getting angry easily, avoiding alcohol intake etc.; **b) Social behavior**- non violence, sweet spoken, respecting elders, teachers etc.; **c) *Satvika ahara and vihara***- viz. daily consumption of ghee and milk, having proper sleep and not awakening in night unnecessarily. So, *Acharya Rasayana* may act as *Rasayana* in three dimensions, i.e. in improving the personality, social relationship and physical health.

#### ***Aushadha Rasayana* – Based on drugs and herbs**

Some specific herbs use as *Rasayan dravya* that are particularly renowned for their revitalizing ability. Some of the most preferred ones are *Ashwagandha*, *Shatavari* and *Brahmi* etc.

Specific *Rasayan Dravya* useful in menopause:

Herbs	Probable action
<i>Aswagandha</i> ( <i>Withania somnifera</i> )	At menopausal age, <i>Ashwagandha</i> can provide the support that the body needs to function normally and, in particular, to reduce nervousness, lower anxiety, and improve sleep patterns. Due to its ability to increase energy levels and rejuvenation, it becomes an effective partner in overcoming fatigue caused by menopause
<i>Shatavari</i> ( <i>Asparagus racemosus</i> )	<i>Shatavari</i> is known for its phytoestrogenic properties that mimic estrogen activity, thus alleviating vasomotor symptoms like hot flash, night sweat etc. It nourishes the female reproductive system and controls menopausal symptoms
<i>Yashtimadhu</i> ( <i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i> )	Due to its phytoestrogenic nature, <i>yashtimadhu</i> can imitate the activity of the natural estrogen hormone. This can be especially effective in leveling hormones and eliminating the symptoms of menopause, like hot flashes, mood swings, and irritability.
<i>Amalaki</i> ( <i>Emblica officinalis</i> )	<i>Amalaki</i> Rich in Vitamin C and antioxidants, <i>Amalaki</i> supports skin hydration and health, enhancing moisture levels in tissues.



Gugglu ( <i>Commiphora mukula</i> )	<i>Guggulu</i> enhances osteoblastic activity, thereby promoting bone health and reducing the risk of osteoporosis, which is prevalent post-menopause.
Brahmi ( <i>Bacopa monieri</i> )	<i>Brahmi</i> is the sovereign herb for the brain. it exhibits properties like anti-depressant and anti-oxidant. In menopausal women memory retrieval or concentration can be enhanced by <i>Brahmi</i> . It also improves mood and cognitive functions.

### Role of yoga in menopause:

Yoga is one of the important mind body therapies, which is found to be more effective in improving quality of life with minimal health risks and no side effect. Yoga keeps body and mind in sound health. Women practicing yoga from their middle age period they hardly notice the onset as well as passing away of the menopause period. Yoga can help to eliminate many of the uncomfortable physical and emotional feelings associates with menopause. The most commonly performed Yoga practices are *Aasana, Pranayama & Dhyana*. *Suryanamaskar* (a series of specific asanas) help in reducing both physical and mental symptoms related to menopause. The regular practice of *Suryanamaskara* in conjunction with breathing exercises and mantras, help in reducing the excessive weight gain and toning of all the body's joints and muscles so found to be helpful in reducing joint and muscle pain. It will aid in the relief of psychological menopausal symptoms such as mood swings, dipression and anxiety attacks. It improves sleeping pattern also. *Pranayama* practices like *Nadishodhan pranayam* are effective in treating a variety of stress problems, improvement of cardio-respiratory and endocrine functioning as well as the control of autonomic nervous system activity. The hormonal changes during menopause are linked to a shrinking of the body's thermoregulatory zone. This narrowing indicates that when body temperature rises, hot flashes are more likely to occur<sup>xxix</sup>. *Sheetli pranayam and Ujjayi pranayam* may thus lead to improved thermoregulation and hence help to reduce the vasomotor symptoms. *Dhyana* improves psychological wellbeing, sleep patterns & emotional modulation as well as beneficial in relieving stress.

### Discussion

Menopause is a part of every woman's life. It is the stage when the menstrual period permanently stops signifying the end of her ability to have children. Due to estrogen deficient state it is associated with large number of symptoms which disturbs women's routine life. In Ayurveda ,there is no detailed description of *Rajonivritti* or menopause except the age of *Rajonivritti* is given as 50 years. It can be understood thoroughly on the basis of *Dosha* and *Dhatu*. Menopause marks the transition from the *madhymavastha* (*Pitta* stage of life) to the



*vriddhavastha* (*Vata* stage of life), so that most of the symptoms of menopause have to do with *Vata dosha* with some variable signs of *Pitta dosha* and *kapha dosha*. *Vriddhavastha* is span of life which is dominant of *Vata* as mentioned earlier and *Vata* is responsible for *kshaya* of all *dhatu*s. This generalized *kshaya* of *dhatu*s will cause *kshaya* of *upadhatus*, hence leading the *kshaya* of *artva* i.e. *Rajonivritti*. Aggravated *Vata dosha* and *dhatukshaya* produces many physiological and psychological symptoms like Palpitation, Weakness, insomnia, Mood swing, Loss of concentration, Depression, Anxiety, Decreased memory, Dyspareunia, Loss of libido, Wrinkling of skin, Low backache, Joint pain, Vaginal dryness etc. aggravated *Vata* along with vitiated *Pitta* causes hot flushes, excessive sweating, irritability, vaginitis and recurrent urinary infections.

Non-hormonal pharmacologic therapies have been shown to be less effective than hormonal therapy and to be associated with their own adverse events that restrict their use for many women. Thus hormonal replacement therapy (HRT) is the only alternative for menopausal syndrome, but it has a wider range of secondary health complications like vaginal bleeding, breast cancer, endometrial cancer, gallbladder diseases. On the other hand, this therapy is not much effective in the psychological manifestations of this stage. Allopath manages them by the long-term use of sedative, hypnotics, and anxiolytic drugs, which may lead to various side effects like drowsiness, impaired motor function, loss of memory, allergic reactions, non-social behaviors, drug dependenc.

Ayurvedic wisdom and logic is more health-oriented than disease-oriented. Started during midlife as component of preventive health care, management of menopausal symptoms based on Ayurvedic principals can not only reduce the menopausal symptoms but can also effectively address the aging and allied problems. It can improve the quality of life as well as life expectancy of aging female population. It provides wide range of treatment options in the form of single herbs, formulations, therapeutic procedures and life style modifications, which can be utilized as per individual needs. On the basis of *samprapti* and *lakshanas*, *Vata-Pittahara Chikitsa*, (combined with *shanshman chikitsa* and *Srotosodhana chikitsa*) and *Rasayana chikitsa*, can be beneficial in the treatment of menopausal symptoms. *Yoga* and *meditation* can also help to eliminate many of the uncomfortable physical and emotional feelings associates with menopause.

### **Conclusion**

Each phase of a woman's life is beautiful and should be considered as gracious Nowadays, symptoms related to menopause are becoming a major problem; for which a safe and effective line of treatment is necessary. Menopause is not a disease but transitory phase, It is the phase where *Dhatukshaya* starts and *Vata Dosha* turn out to be Predominant *Dosha*. At the *Dosha* level, this involves transition from *Pitta* dominant phase to *Vata* dominant phase of life So management of vitiated *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Dhatukshaya* through *Vata-pittahara chikitsa* (through *Shanshman chikitsa* and *Srotosodhana chikitsa*) and *Rasayana chikitsa*,



along with maintenance of 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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