AYURVEDIC APPROACH FOR MENOPAUSE – A REVIEW ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

The word ‘Menopause’ comes from the Greek word ‘Menos’ (month) & ‘Pausis’ (cessation). Menopause is a natural phenomenon occurs at the age of 45-55 years. After the age of 40 years, ovaries reduce their production of sex hormones. As a result, the menses as well as other body functions are disturbed. Finally the menses cease permanently. This ultimate pause is described as menopause. This phase also marks the end of natural fertility in a woman. Irregular periods, hot flushes, night sweats, vaginal dryness and itching, and mood swings etc. These are typical symptoms of menopause. Osteoporosis, heart disease and Alzheimer's disease (progressive loss of memory and concentration) are the long-term hazards of menopause. This group of signs and symptoms termed as menopausal syndrome.

In Ayurveda, Menopause condition is termed as ‘Rajonivrutti’. In Ayurved, Menopausal symptoms are regarded as imbalance of the Dosha and Dhatukshya which occurs as a natural & gradual consequence of aging. Ayurveda advocates a holistic treatment of Menopausal syndrome by modification of diet & life style, utilizing various herbs and minerals and offers a reliable option to the convention treatment. Ayurvedic treatment for menopause involves correcting hormonal imbalance with appropriate diet, Samshamana therapy, internal detoxification (Panchakarma therapy), Rasayan therapy and Yoga therapy.

Keyword: - Menopause, Rajonivrutti, Rasayan, Yoga, Dhatukshya

Introduction:

Cessation of menstrual cycles and end of reproductive phase of life are not the only highlights of menopause. It also has equally strong before and after math which influence women’s health for
their lifetime. Rajonivritti is not described separately as a pathological condition or severe health problem in Ayurvedic classics. The ancient Acharya’s termed it as a normal physiology.

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

Rajah - According to Sanskrit language the root word for "Rajah" is given, which means to give color to the substance\(^1\). The word Rajah is used synonymously for various substances but here it is taken as Artava or Stripushpa (Menstrual blood).

Nivritti - Hemchandra have coated the synonyms of the word "Nivritti" like Apravritti, Uparama, Virati, Vyaparati and Uparati. In the present context, the meaning of Nivritti is understood as end or ceasing. Thus, the whole term Rajonivritti means end of Artava Pravritti or Cessation of Menstruation.

Rajonivritti Kala Rajonivrittikala is mentioned by almost all Acharyas without any controversy, few direct reference regarding the age of menopause, Acharya Sushruta said that menarche occur at the age of 12 years and due to the effect of aging menopause occur at the of 50 years\(^2\). Vagbhata and Bhavamishra mentioned the same age for Menarch and Menopause. Here is an attempt to review ayurved approach for Menopause.

**Features of Menopause:**

Menopause is because by the nature declining function of the ovaries . Which gradually produces lower and lower levels the hormones estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone.

**Causative factors for Rajonivrutti :**

- Kala
- Vayu (Apan and Vyan)
- Dhatukshaya
- Swabhava
- Karma or Environment
- Rajastrav
**Menopausal symptoms:** Hot flushes, Night sweats, Trouble sleeping /Insomnia, Joints pain, Fatigue, Depression, Palpitation, Vaginal dryness, Mood swing, Loss of libido, Impaired memory, Urinary incontinence.

**Ayurved Approach:**

When treating women going through perimenopause and menopause, it is important to first learn what symptoms are being experienced. Then manage the condition accordingly as lifestyle changes & treatment modalities.

**Lifestyle Changes:**

When managing menopause Ayurveda would first look at lifestyle and dietary habits.

- Vata pacifying diet
- Warm water
- Madhur Rasatmak Ahar for Dhatu Balya
- Freshly cooked food
- create routines and rituals around mealtime

Along with changes in diet habit there is addition of other lifestyle changes in routine are

- Abhyanga (self oil massage)
- shirodhara are the best ways to keep Vata under control.

The foremost objective of chikitsa (therapy) in Ayurveda is Dhatusamya (homeostasis) and is the most important component of preventive medicine. Observing Dinacharya (daily regimen), Ritucharya (seasonal regimen) and regular removal of aggravated Dosha according to Ritu (season) by Panchakarma are the means to keep dosha in harmony.

**Discussion:**

Ayurveda recognizes the falling level of sex hormones beginning around age 35. While western medicine equates the symptoms of menopause to these declining hormonal levels, Ayurveda interprets the symptoms to also be part of the aging process.

Ayurveda considers aging Nishpratikriya (changes cannot be resisted) and Swabhavabal Roga (natural disease). Rajonivritti (menopause) occurring in Jarapakva Shareer (aged body) at the age of 50 years is comparable to the present day studies showing the mean age of
menopause to be 51 years. With advancing age there is a gradual diminution in the qualities of Dosha, Dhatu, Mala, Agni and Oja. In conclusion, we see that many of the symptoms associated with perimenopause and menopause are not only due to declining sex hormones but also due to the natural process of aging. Expanding on the ayurvedic interpretation that there is a gradual decline in the qualities of Dosha(one of three bodily humors that make up ones constitution), Dhatu(Tissue), Mala(Waste), Agni(Digestive Fire), and Oja(Immunity) for women beginning in their early 40’s and 50’s, leads us into further investigation as to what is the pathology of the symptoms of menopause and the natural process of aging.

**Conclusion:**

Menopause is not a disease but a phase of a woman’s life it should be considered as beautiful. Ayurveda has excellent solution for a safe and happy transition into menopause. The basically concept of “Swasthyaswastyarakshanam and aturasavyikaraporasamanam” is suitable approach for menopause. Healthy lifestyle, Food, Panchkarma therapy, Yoga & Rasayan therapy are very beneficial for treating Menopause.

**References:**

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