A REVIEW ARTICLE: AYURVEDIC APPROACH FOR A MENOPAUSAL WOMEN'S LIFE

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ABSTRACT- Each phase of a women's life is beautiful and should be considered as gracious. Right from the moment that she entered the world, or when she steps in adolescence which makes her capable to be prepared to experience motherhood, or finally the transition to menopause. 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. Needless to say that 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-- all 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. The group of signs and symptoms associated with the phase of menopause are termed as menopausal syndrome. In *Ayurveda*, Menopause condition is termed as *'Rejonivrutti''* (and menopausal syndrome as Rajonivruttianubandhajavyadhies). In Ayurveda, Menopausal symptom are regarded as imbalance of the Dosha [Vata, Pitta, Kapha] and Dhatukshya which occurs as a natural & gradual consequence of aging. Ayurveda has excellent solution for a safe & happy transition into menopause. Ayurveda, the science of life, 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

Keyword: Menopause, Rajonivrutti, Rasayan, Yoga, Dhatukshaya

I. INTRODUCTION

Each phase of a women's life is beautiful and should be considered as gracious. Right from the moment that she entered the world, or when she steps in adolescence which makes her capable to be prepared to experience motherhood, or finally the transition to menopause. 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. Menopause means permanent cessation of menstruation at the end of reproductive life due to loss of ovarian follicular activity. (1) Needless to say that this phase also marks the end of natural fertility in a woman. Irregular periods, hot flushes, night sweats, vaginal dryness and mood swings all 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. The group of signs and symptoms associated with the phase of menopause are termed as menopausal syndrome. Menopause has become an inevitable phenomenon in a woman's life and many years are spent in the postmenopausal phase. In this millennium, a woman perceives menopause as an opportunity to concentrate on new activities and bring out the best in her. Consequently, treatment of this transitional phase has now gained more importance than ever before.

Cause of Menopause- Menopause is a natural process that occurs as the ovaries age and produce less reproductive hormones. The body begins to undergo several changes in response to lower levels of:

- estrogen
- progesterone
- testosterone
- follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH)
- luteinizing hormone (LH)

One of the most notable changes is the loss of active ovarian follicles. Ovarian follicles are the structures that produce and release eggs from the ovary wall, allowing menstruation and fertility. In some cases,

menopause is induced, or caused by injury or surgical removal of the ovaries and related pelvic structures. Common causes of induced menopause include:

- bilateral oophorectomy, or surgical removal of the ovaries
- ovarian ablation, or the shutdown of ovary function, which may be done by hormone therapy, surgery, or radiotherapy techniques in women with estrogen receptor-positive tumors
- pelvic radiation
- pelvic injuries that severely damage or destroy the ovaries

Menopausal symptoms-

- less frequent menstruation
- heavier or lighter periods than you normally experience
- vasomotor symptoms, including hot flashes, night sweats, and flushing
- insomnia
- vaginal dryness
- weight gain
- depression
- anxiety
- difficulty concentrating
- memory problems

Diagnosis of Menopause:-

- $1. \ Cessation \ of \ menstruation \ for \ consecutive \ 12 \ month \ during \ climacteric.$
- 2. Appearance of menopausal symptoms "hot flush "and "night sweat".
- 3. Vaginal cytology showing maturation index of at least 10/85 /5 (feature of low estrogen)
- 4. Serum estradiol; 40 mlU/ ml (three value at weeks interval required) (2)

Complication of Menopause:

- vulvovaginal atrophy
- dyspareunia, or painful intercourse
- slower metabolic function
- osteoporosis, or weaker bones with reduced mass and strength
- mood or sudden emotional changes
- cataracts
- periodontal disease
- urinary incontinence
- heart or blood vessel disease

Ayurvedic view for Menopause-

In *Ayurveda* classics Menopause condition is termed as "*Rajonivrutti*& Menopausal symptoms (*Rajonivruttianubandh vyadhies*) the whole term *Rajonivruttimeans* end of *Artava Pravritti* or cessation of menstruation.

Rajonivrutti Kala (Age of Menopause): Though *Rajonivrutti* as a diseased condition is not described separately in the classic, *Rajonivruttikala* is mentioned by almost all *Aacharya* without any controversy. According to *Sushruta* and various other references (*Astanga Hridayam*) to 50 years is mentioned as the age of *Rajonivrutti* (3) (4) when the body is fully in grip of senility.

In *Ayurveda* Menopausal symptoms are regarded as "imbalance of the *Dosha (Vata, Pitta, Kapha*) which occurs as a natural and gradual consequence of aging.

Nidana of Rajonivrutti:

According to *SwabhavaparamVada* "No cause exists behind destruction of anything. Absence of factors responsible for production of it may be a cause for its destruction". (Theory of natural destruction)

"Pravruttiheturbhavana na nirodhestikaranam|

Kechittaatropimanyatehetunhehoravartanam||"

So, by understanding the "Rajah Utpatti Hetus", we would explore the cause of Rajonivritti. This are–Kala, Swabhava, DhatuParipurnata, Karma, Vayu.

Kala

Ayurveda has always given much emphasis to this factor. *Kala* remains present everywhere and are considered as a major factor behind any process or activity. In *Ayurvedic* science, Kala is mentioned at various places as a causative factor like.

Cause of Kshaya and Vriddhi. (Cha. Su. 17/77)

Cause of Garbhavakranti (Cha. Sha. 2)

Cause of GarbhaVriddhi (Cha. Sha. 2)

Cause of onset of *Prasava (Su. Ni.* 8/7-8)

Cause of Bala, Taruna and Vriddhaavastha (Cha. Vi. 8)

Cause of Mrityu (Cha. Sha. 1/115) etc.

In *Ayurveda*, the "*Vaya*" is described on the basis of *Kala* only. The characteristics of particular age or the changes taking place in different stages of age have to attribute to the *Kala. Acharya Charaka* also beautifully explains that the same foetus after passing of sometime becomes child, young and old. Thus; it is clear that after a specific time, female body manifest "*Rajonivritti*" at the age of 50 years then process of aging starts.

Swabhava

Swabhava means a natural phenomenon or a specific feature, which is difficult to explain with Karya-Karana Vada. Ayurveda has considered "Swabhava" as a causative factor in a generalized way. (e.g. In regard to Sristi Utpatti etc.)

It is a *Swabhava* of *Tarunavastha* or *Dhatuparipurnaavastha* of female to produce "*Rajah*".

It is a *Swabhava* of body to degrade every moment. Rajah is also a physiological entity, which is having *Swabhava* of degradation and ultimately manifests in *Rajonivritti*. Moreover, according to the *Swabhavoparamvada*, (Theory of natural destruction) a substance, which is produced and got an existence, will deteriorate and ultimately get vanished naturally. Nothing is eternal in this universe. So,

Rajah too produced and manifested at a particular age and it will be vanished by nature termed as Rajonivritti.

Vayu

"Vayu" as an active substance in the body as well as in the universe, which is assumed to be a major factor behind every process. Initiation, Progress, Division and Destruction are of a prime importance for any activity, which is carried out by Vayu. In human body, out of five types of Vayu, "ApanaVaya" and "VyanVayu" are mainly responsible for the functions related to Artava. All the body functions are under the control of "VyanaVayu". So, normal functions of yoni and Garbhashaya are also carried out by VyanaVayu. As Artava is related to "Artavavahasrotas", it comes under the activity field of ApanaVayu. ApanaVayu helps in all excretory activities like Mala, Mutra, Shukra, Artava and GarbhaNiskramana, and also, helps to control these activities during the conditions of stress. So, it can be concluded that combined effect of these two Vayus are responsible for Rajah Utpatti as well as its cyclic expulsion at every month. Hence, it can be considered as a causative factor for Rajah Nivritti also, and any vitiation of these factors may alter this process. Vitiated stage Vayu in the body is very well understood in the case of Rajonivritti. Factors like Vriddhavastha, generalized Dhatukshaya, generalized Rukshata and Shosha will lead to Vatavriddhi. Hence, a vicious cycle will come into play and all the functions of Vata will be affected including Rajah Utpatti, which may be manifested as Rajaonivritti. In this way, Vayu is responsible for Rajonivritti.

Dhatukshaya

Dhatu nourishes the body and holds the body. Normality of this substance in the body will be manifested, as 'Swasthya" and any vitiation will hamper the normal activity of the body.

Dhatuparipurnata is considered as a responsible factor for "Rajah Utpatti". For human being, reproduction is ultimate goal, in Balyavastha, this cannot be achieved because the condition of Dhatus are not mature, and so that the Rajah and Shukra are also not manifested. But, in Taruna or Yuvaavastha, Dhatu attains the stage of Paripurnata or maturity and manifested as Rajodarshana, which marks the starting of reproductive life for a woman. The same thing is true for Rajonivritti also, with the advancement of age, the condition of Dhatus deteriorates day by day. (I.e. Dhatukshaya) As a result, Upadhatu Artava is not formed in a normal way and it gradually ceases, so quality of reproduction vanishes, which is termed as Rajonivritti. So, it can be concluded that, immature stage of Dhatu, which is characteristic of childhood and deteriorating stage (Kshaya) of Dhatu, which is characteristic of Artava. Acharya Kashyapa also supports the above statement by quoting.

"Heenyonyastubalayakayangachanti shoonitam|

Athapurnaswabhavayaha kayan yoni cha gachanati|"

Abhighata

Acharya Sushruta has mentioned that the Viddhata of the roots of Artavavaha Srotas i.e. Garbhashaya and Aartavavhi Dhamanis (uterus and uterine or ovarian arteries) will lead to Artavanasha. This Viddhata may take place due to any direct or indirect trauma (Abhighata) to the Artavavaha Srotas, and will directly lead to Artavanasha and manifests as Akalaja Rajanivritti.

Karma/activities

Ayurveda has considered Karma as a generalized factor for any activity. Karma is considered by two ways. First is Purvajanmakrita and other is, Aajanmakrita (Karma of this life). The prior is responsible for many things, because the science believes in the concept of Atma and Punarjanama. The later one has a direct relationship between Karana and Karya, which includes all the Pragyaparadhas for diseased condition and vice a versa.

In *Rajah*, the importance of karma is described by *Acharyas* in various contexts, like "Yathachagnirdarushusarvagataha prayatnabhannopalbhyatetatha stripunsayoho shonit shatruke kalavekshaswakarmaveksha cha bhavata|" (including Aharaja and Viharaja) may affect the *Rajoniuritti*. Moreover, *Acharya Charaka* has described the factors, which are responsible for growth; these include *Kalayoga* (Opportunity), *Swabhava Sansiddha* (Favorable disposition of the nature), *Ahara Saushthava* (Excellence of properties of food) and *Avighata* (absence of inhibiting factors). People are naturally strong; birth at a time when people naturally gain strength; favorable disposition of time; excellence of the quality of the sperm ovum and uterus etc. are also considered as primitive of health. This environmental, *Aharaja* and *Viharaja* factors also influence on *Rajoniuritti*. In contrary, *Acharya Charaka* has also quoted that a person will lost his strength luster etc. unnaturally before the age due to *Mithya Ahara* and *Vihara*, unable to enjoy a healthy and full span of life. These some *Nidanas* may become causes for *Akalaja Rajoniuritti*. From above description, it can be inferred that some of the favorable and unfavorable circumstances also play an important role for *Rajoniuritti*. It is little for imagination that a woman living under unfavorable conditions is likely to develop aging earlier and gets *Rajonivritti* also earlier. Modern science also believes that severe malnourished women or women living in high altitude get an earlier Menopause.

Types of Rajonivrutti-

Ayurvedic science has divided all diseases into 4 major types- Agantuj, Sharira, Manas and Swabhavika (6). Concentrating on "Swabhavika "Type, it is described that this type includes all those conditions, which are naturally occurring. Acharya Sushruta has mentioned a group of naturally occurring diseases under the heading of Swabhava bala pravritta includes Kshudha (Hunger), Pipasa (thrist), Nidra (sleep), Jara (aging) and Mrityu (Death) (7). Although these disease are naturally occurring diseases, but sometimes they are being acquired also, which is described as "Doshaja" So they are further divided into two types- Kala krita&Akalakrita. In the some manners, Rajonivrutti too is a naturally occurring condition in every woman as that of Jaravastha etc. SwabhavikaVyadhies. So Rajonivrutti also can be divided into two types:

1) Kalaja Rajonivrutti

2)AkalajaRajonivrutti

KalajaRajonivirutti- If Rajjonivrutti occurs at its probable age (i.e. around 50 year of age) it is called as *Kalaja Rajonivritti*. According to *Aacharya Sushruta*, the timely *Rajonivrutti* (i.e. natural diseases like aging) occurs only when the protective measurements of healthcare are being practiced. This condition is *Yapya* by *Rasayana*.

Akalaja Rajonivritti-If Rajonivrutti occurs before or after its probable age (i.e. around 50 years) it is termed as Akalaja Rajonivrutti.

Menopausal symptoms in Ayurveda (Rajoniviruttianubandhlakshan) (8)-

- a) *Vata* dominant menopausal symptoms- dryness in vagina, extremities get cold, difficulty in getting sleep, mild to variable hot flushes (Invariable), anxiety, panic, nervousness, mood swings, dry skin, palpitations, bloating and constipation
- b) *Pitta* dominant menopausal symptoms- Angry, irritable, excess hot flushes, night sweats, extremely heavy periods with burning sensation, skin rashes, associated complaints such as UTI (urinary track infection).
- c) *Kapha* dominant menopausal Symptoms- Weight gain, heavy, lethargy, depression, lack of motivation, hormonal changes such as Thyroid malfunction, fibrocystic changes in uterus or in the breast and excessive fluid retention.

Lakshanas of Rajonivritti:

As there is no direct reference available regarding Lakshanas of Rajonivritti in the Ayurvedic classics, the clinical symptoms manifested by the patients of Rajonivritti are the manifestations of Dhatukshayaja Lakshanas along with vitiated Doshas.

On the basis of available symptoms, differentiation can be done by applying *Doshic* theory to facilitate management of menopausal syndrome as *Vataja Lakshanas*, *Pittaja Lakshanas and Kaphaia Lakshanas*. As

this condition is characterized by generalized *Vatavriddhi, the Vataja Lakshanas* are more dominantly observed that *pittaja and Kaphaja Lakshanas*.

Vataja akshana

Shirahshoola (Headache), HridSpandana (Palpitation), HastaPadaSuti (Numbness), ShabdaAsahishnuts (Noise- Intolerance), Bala-Kshaya (Weakness), Adhmana (Distension of abdomen), Vibandha (Constipation), Anidra/Alpanidra (Sleepnessness), Bhrama (Vertigo), AnavasthitaChitatvam (Mood swing), Vaichitya (Loss of concentration), Vishaada (Depression), Chinta (Anxiety), Smritimandhya (Decreased memory), KrichchhraVyavayata (Loss of libido), Maithunaasahishnuta (Dyspareunia), Vak sang (Change in voice), Vali (Wrinkling of skin), Asthivedana (Pain in bones), Katishool (Low backache), SandhiVedana (Joint pain), Vamanatvam (Loss of ht.), Angamarda (Body ache), Yoni vedana (Pain in vagina), Yoni shushakta (Vaginal dryness), prabhutamutrata (Frequency), Urge incontinence, Mutrakrichhrata (Pain in micturition).

Pittaj lakshana

Osha (Hot flushes), Atisveda (Sweating), Amarsha (Irritability), Yoni daha (Burning sensation), Yoni daurgandhya (Foul smelling), Mutradaha (Burning sensation in Urine).

Kaphaja lakshana

Atisthaulaya (Weight gain), Yoni kandu (Itching), Yoni srava (Vaginal discharge).

II. AYURVEDIC MANAGEMENT FOR MENOPAUSAL SYNDROME:-

Most of the Menopause Symptoms are due the *Vata* aggravation followed by other *Doshic* factors. The basic concept of Ayurvedic medicine is "Swasthsyaswastyarakshanam and aturasyavikaraprasamanam cha" prevention is better than cure. In the early pre-menopause stage it is better to balance the aggravated or underplay the factors, so that the intensity of the menopause symptoms will be far less or even can be negligible. In order to achieve this one should follow the *Dosha* based diet and life style principles followed by Ayurvedic herbs on regular basis. If still symptoms persists, it better to undergo "Panchakarma" (Ayurvedic detoxification), which helps in the elimination of vitiated humours or Doshas to bring them to balanced stage, then it is advisable to take few Ayurvedic herbs or decoctions and other preparation to make the transition more graceful. Ayurveda has excellent solution for a safe and happy transition into menopause. Ayurvedic Treatment for Menopausal Symptoms involves correcting Dosha imbalance with appropriate diet, samshamana therapy, internal detoxification (panchakarma therapy/samshodhan therapy), Sattvayjayachikitsa, Yoga therapy, Rasaya n therapy. 1. Ayurvedic diet and herbs- (a) For Vata Dominant Menopause- Diet - Increase warm food and drinks, regular meals, and use spices such as fennel and cumin. Decrease caffeine and other stimulants, refined sugar, cold drinks, salads. Lifestyle - Early bedtime, oil massage using almond and olive oil, meditation, yoga, Regular exercise like walking Herbs- Ashwagandha (Withaniasomnifera), Arjuna (Terminaliaarjuna), Cardamom (Elettariacardomam), Garlic (Allium sativum), Guggulu (Commiphoramukul), Sandalwood (Santalum alba) and Zizphus (ziziphusjujube.

(b) For *Pitta* Dominant Menopause- Diet - Increase cooling foods, water intake, sweet juicy fruits (grapes, pears, plums, mango, melons, apples,) zucchini, yellow squash, cucumber, organic foods. Use spices such as cinnamon, cardamom and fennel. Avoid hot spicy foods, hot drinks and alcohol. Lifestyle - Oil massage using coconut and sesame oil. Use Meditation and other techniques to reduce anger, hatred and resentment. Exercise and exposure to the sun are limited. Herbs - Aloevera, *Arjuna* (Terminaliaarjuna), *Amla* (Emblicaoffcinalis), Saffron(crocus sativus), Sandalwood and Use spices such as cinnamon, cardamom and fennel.

(c)For *Kapha* Dominant Menopause- Diet – Prefer light, dry and warm food, Consume fruits, whole grains, legumes, and vegetables. Use spices such as black pepper, turmeric and ginger. Avoid meat, cheese, sugar, cold foods and drinks. Weekly fasting is helpful. Most or all of the daily food should be consumed before 6 p.m. Lifestyle - Get up early. Mustard oil and linseed oil are often recommended for massage. Herbs-

Cinnamon, *Guggulu*(Commiphoramukul), Mustard(Brasscianigra), Haritki (Terminaliachebula), Nagarmotha (Cyperusrotundus).

- 1. Samshamana Therapy- Agnideepana, Amapachana, Anulomana, Balya,
- 2. Sattvavjaya Chikitsa- counseling and Reassurance
- 3. Panchkarma therapy- Panchkarmachikitsha are physical therapies that thoroughly cleanse and purify the physical and mental impurities from the body and mind. The general purpose of the Panchakarma therapies is to loosen, liquefy and remove the vitiated substances and Doshas from their abnormal sites in peripheral tissues via their natural pathway of elimination. More serious symptoms, such as frequent hot flashes, continual sleep disturbance, and moderate to severe mood swings, are signs of deeper imbalances. Ayurveda describes that these stubborn symptoms are usually due to the build-up of wastes and toxins, referred to as "Aama," in the body's tissues. In this case, a traditional Ayurvedic detoxification programs "Panchakarma" may be needed to clear the body's channels and gain relief. This internal cleansing approach is also the treatment of choice for more serious problems such as osteoporosis and high cholesterol. Panchakarma- Abhyanga (Massage), Mriduswedana, Shiro dhara, MriduVirechan, Basti
- 4. Yoga therapy-Yoga is an original & ancient holistic art of living that include physical, mental, moral, spiritual spheres. The Sanskrit word yoga means to "join or union" and the practice of yoga beings this union to all levels of one's self. The eight limbs of yoga Yama, Niyam, Aasana, Pranayama, Pratyahar, Dharana, Dhyana, Sama dhi. The most commonly performed yoga practices are postures (Aasana),controlling breathing (Pranayama) & Meditation (Dhyana)Asana Shavasana , Padhmasana , Varjasana Pranayama -Sheetali Pranayama , Ujjayi pranayama Yoga Therapy is a useful adjunctive complementary & integrative for menopausal women. Current evidence indicates that women will benefit from yoga therapy during menopausal transition in term of decrease risk of cardiovascular disease, insulin resistance & loss of bone mineral density as well as improved psychological well being, sleep patterns & emotional modulation.
- 5. Rasayana Therapy- Rasayana therapy is not only preventing the aging changes, but it brings in youth fullness to a person. It increases life span, memory, & intelligence health; improve color & complexion, Strength & performance of the organs of cognition & conation. Rasayana drugs act by strengthening all seven Dhatus. According to Aacharya Charaka, Rasayana produces long life lasting memory, talent, healthy physique, youth, luster bright complexion, good voice, strength of body and senses, truthfulness, respect, and glowing body(9). Aacharya charaka has described "Rasayana" as a means to promote vigour and health which is mainly virilific and primitive of vitality(9). Maharsi Susruta has defined 'Rasayana "as the method which retards the aging process, increases longevity, talent, vitality and makes the body fit to overcome the factors causing ailments(10) Many drugs act as Rasayana properity- Triphala:-Triphala consisting of Haritaki (Terminaliachebula), Vibhitaki (Termanaliabelerica), Amalaki (Embelica officianalis), pacify all the three Doshas & also is an excellent Vayasthapana (anti-aging agent) It is a powerful antioxidant Ashwagandha (Withanasomnifera)- & immune modulator. It is one that improves strength, muscle In Menopause patient, it controls effectively the vasomotor symptoms (Hot mass, relieves stress. Flushes, night sweats, palpitation) It is another Rasayana drug which is Yasthimadhu(Glycerrhizaglabra)- It is an excellent antioxidant, Immune prescribed for Menopause.

CHYAVAN PRASHA & BRAHM RASAYAN Medhya Rasayana-The Ayurvedic texts describe certain rasayana drugs which specially influence the Medha and promote mental competence. Such rasayan are called as Medhya Rasayana. Aacharya Charak has described four Medhya rasayanas namely Sankhpushpi, Mandukaparni, Guduchi, and Yastimadhu.(11) Such medhya rasayana drugs have been scientifically studied in recent years and they have been reported to possess varying degree of Anxiolytic and psychotropic activity besides restoration of intelligence and memory.

III. CONCLUSION

Each phase of a woman's life is beautiful and should be considered as gracious. Ayurveda has excellent solution for a safe and happy transition into menopause. The basic concept of *Ayurvedic* medicine is "Swasthsyaswastyarakshanam and aturasyavikaraprasamanam" prevention is better than cure. Panchkarma therapy (such as Shirodhara & Basti), Yoga therapy & Rasayan therapy (Chyavanprash&bramhrasayan) and Medhya Rasayanais very beneficial for graceful menopause.

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