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Review Article

AYURVEDIC WAY OUT TO MENOPAUSE (*RAJONIVRUTTI*).

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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. 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 disease (progressive loss of memory and concentration) are the longterm 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 '*rajonivrutti*' (and menopausal syndrome as *rajonivruttianubandhajavyadhies*).

In Ayurved, menopausal symptoms 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 (*panchakarmatherapy*), *rasayantherapy* and *yoga therapy*.

KEY WORDS: Menopause, *rajonivrutti*, *rasayan*, *yoga*, *dhatukshaya*.

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. 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 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-

1. Menopause is because by the nature declining function of the ovaries which gradually produces lower levels the hormones oestrogen, progesterone, and testosterone.
2. Other causes include surgery that removes both the ovaries or some type of chemotherapy

Menopausal symptoms-

1. Hot flushes
2. Night sweats
3. Trouble sleeping /insomnia
4. Joints pain
5. Fatigue
6. Depression
7. Palpitation
8. Vaginal dryness
9. Mood swing
10. Loss of libido
11. Impaired memory
12. Urinary incontinence

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 ;<20pg /ml
5. Serum FSH and LH> 40 mlu/ ml (three value at weeks interval required)

Complication of menopause :

1. Cardiovascular disease
2. Osteoporosis
3. Urinary incontinence
4. Sexual Dysfunction
5. Weight gain

Ayurvedic view for menopause-

In ayurvedic classics menopause condition is termed as "rajonivrutti" & menopausal symptoms (rajonivruttianubandhvyadhies) the whole term rajonivrutti means end of artavapravrittior cessation of menstruation.

Rajonivruttikala (age of menopause)

Though rajonivruttias a diseased condition is not described separately in the classic, rajonivruttikalais mentioned by almost all aacharyawithout any controversy according to sushrutaand various other references (astangahridayam) upto 50 years is mentioned as the age of rajonivrutti, 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:

The specific reasons for rajonivruttiare not described in the ayurvedic texts. But the most probable reasons for it to occur are:

- (1) Swabhava
- (2) Jarapakvasharira due to kala
- (3) Dhatukshaya
- (4) Effect of dosha
- (5) Vayu
- (6) Abhighata

Types of rajonivrutti-

Ayurvedic science has divided all diseases into 4 major types- Agantuj, Sharira, Manasand Swabhavika. Concentrating on "swabhavika" type, it is described that this type includes all those conditions, which are naturally occurring. Acharyasushrutahas mentioned a group of naturally occurring diseases under the heading of swabhavabalapravrittai includes kshudha(hunger), pipasa(thirst), nidra(sleep), jara(aging) and mrityu(death) .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- kalakrita& akalakrita. In the same manners, rajonivruttitoo is a naturally occurring condition in every woman as that of jaravasthaetc. swabhavikavyadhies. So rajonivruttialso can be divided into two

Types:

- 1) Kalajarajonivirutti-

If *Rajonivrutti* occurs at its probable age (i.e. Around 50 year of age) it is called as *kalaja-rajonivrutti*. According to *Aacharyasushruta*, the timely *rajonivrutti* (i.e. natural diseases like aging) occurs only when the protective measurements of healthcare being practiced. This condition is *yapya by rasayana*.

2) Akalajarajonivrutti-

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

Menopausal symptoms in Ayurveda (*rajonivrutti anubandhlakshan*). Physiologically according to doshas related to age, in body, there is dominance of *vata dosha*, then *pitta dosha* and there is *kshaya of kapha dosha*.

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 tract 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.

Ayurvedic management for menopausal syndrome:-

Most of the menopause symptoms are due to the *vata* aggravation followed by other doshic factors. The basic concept of ayurvedic medicine is - "*swasthasya swasthyarakshanam and aturasya vikaraprasamanamcha*"

prevention is better than cure. In the early pre-menopause stage it is better to balance the aggravated or under playing 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

doshasto 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 *dosh imbalance* with -

1. Appropriate diet,
2. *Samshaman* therapy, internal detoxification (panchakarma therapy/
3. *Samshodhan* therapy),
4. *Sattvavjayachikitsa*,
5. *Yoga* therapy
6. *Rasayan* 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* (*Terminalia arjuna*), *Cardamom* (*Elettariacardamom*), *Garlic* (*Allium sativum*), *Guggul* (*Commiphoramukul*), *Sandalwood* (*Santalum alba*) and *Ziziphus* (*Ziziphus jujube*).

(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* (*Terminalia arjuna*), *Amla* (*Embllica officinalis*), *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, 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, Guggul (*Commiphora mukul*), Mustard (*Brassica nigra*), Haritki (*Terminalia chebula*), Nagarmotha (*Cyperus rotundus*).

2. Samshamana therapy- Agnideepana, Amapachana, Anulomana, Balya,

3. Sattvavjaya chikitsa- Counselling and Reassurance

4. Panchkarma therapy-

Panchkarmachikitsa 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 "ama," in the body's tissues. In this case, a traditional Ayurvedic detoxification programme "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, shiroDhara, 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* brings this union to all levels of one's self. The eight limbs of *yoga* - *Yama, Niyam, Aasana, Pranayama, Pratyahar, Dharana, Dhyana, Samadhi*. The most commonly performed *yoga* practices are postures (*aasana*), controlling breathing (*pranayama*) & meditation (*dhyana*).

Asana - shavasana, padmasana, varjyasana.

Pranayama - Sheetalpranayama

Ujjayipranayama 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. *Rasayanatherapy-Rasayana* therapy is not only preventing the aging changes, but it brings in youthfulness to a person. It increases life span, memory, & intelligence, health, improve colour & complexion, strength & performance of the organs of cognition & conation. *Rasayan* drugs act by strengthening all seven *dhatu*s according to *Aacharyacharaka*, *rasayan* produces long life lasting memory, talent, healthy physique, youth, lustre bright complexion, good voice, strength of body and senses, truthfulness, respect, and glowing body. *Aacharyacharaka* has described "rasayana" as a means to promote vigour and health which is mainly virilific and promotive of vitality. *Maharsi Sushruta* 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. Many drugs act as *rasayan* properly-

Triphala- *Triphala* consisting of *Haritaki* (*terminalia chebula*), *Vibhitaki* (*terminalia bellerica*), *Amalaki* (*embelica officinalis*), pacify all the three doshas & also is an excellent *vayasthapana* (anti-aging agent)

Ashwagandha (Withaniasomnifera)-

- It is a powerful antioxidant & immunomodulator.
- It is one that improves strength, muscle mass, relieves stress.
- In Menopause, it controls effectively the vasomotor symptoms (hot flushes, night sweats, palpitation)

Yasthimadhu (Glycyrrhizaglabra)-

- It is another *rasayan* drug which is prescribed for menopause.
- It is an excellent antioxidant, immunomodulator & anti-depressant, memory enhancer.
- It is described as a promoting agent for life, voice, hair, complexion, Strength & libido.

Shatavari-

Shatavari is widely recommended in Ayurveda. There is hardly any chapter in ayurveda literature that does not mention its use. *Shatavari* has been used for many diseases with a multi-dimensional approach as per ayurvedic pharmacodynamics which help to enrich nutrition, increasing plasma and white blood count in the blood. The root contains phytoestrogen, helping to regulate estrogen from ovaries and the skin.

CONCLUSION:

Each phase of women life is beautiful and should be considered as gracious. Ayurveda has excellent solution for a safe transition into menopause . The basic concept of ayurvedic medicine is “ *swasthasya swasthyarakshanam andatursyavikaraprasamanam*” prevention is better than cure. *Panchkarmatherpy, yoga therpy and rasayantherpy* very beneficial for menopause.

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