

EMBRACING MENOPAUSE MINDFULLY

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INTRODUCTION

Men and women reach old age with different prospects for older age. For women each phase of her life is beautiful and should be considered as gracious. Menopause, a phenomenon unique to women and a unique experience for every woman, is the ending of a woman's monthly menstrual period and ovulation. It is a normal part of a woman's life just like puberty. The age of menopause is agreed as around 50yrs in ayurveda as well as in modern science. An ovary stops producing eggs and reduces the production of estrogen and progesterone hormones. It represents a major milestone in a woman's biological life, signifying the end of her reproductive life. The ancient Greek roots of the term menopause are "men" + "pauin". The word "men" means month which is closely related to word for moon "mene" because the months were measured by the moons. The word "pauin" means to cease or stop. According to our science lifespan of every individual is divided into three avastha (stages) as Bala, madhya and vridhha avastha. Kapha, pitta and Vata dosha dominate bala, Madhya and vridhhavastha respectively. Rajonivritti is the last stage of the reproductive life i.e the end of the madhayamavastha and the beginning of the vridhhavastha, we enter the third phase of our life which is vata dominated period. She experiences different changes in the body and behavior. Many studies concluded that the most difficult symptoms are the manasika ones; they face the challenges of not being in control of their emotions. After 50 yrs, because of the age the integrity of dhatus are lost leading to kshaya of rajas and stanya etc. During menopause most of the women experience irritability, insomnia, mood swings, depression, foggy memory etc. many woman don't know what is taking place and what their options are. Ayurveda can do miracles in menopause. We will see how Psychological menopausal symptoms through panchakarma, vedic meditation, asanas, mantras, yoga nidra etc will embrace menopause.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Ayurvedic view on rajonivritti (jaraavastha)
2. To study the manasika changes what woman undergoes during rajonivritti.
3. Management with ayurveda and other alternatives.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Charak Samhita, Susuruta Samhita. Astang Hridaya, Ayurvedic maulika siddhant and other internet sources.

DISCUSSION

The term 'rajonivritti' is derived from rajah+nivritti meaning cessation of artava pravritti. Rajah is considered as artava or stripushpa i.e menstrual blood. Artava along with stanya is mentioned as upadhatu of rasa dhatu. The age of onset is uniformly considered as 50 years by all the acharayas where there is kshaya of artava due to

kshaya of all dhatus. Rajonivritti is classified under svabhavika vyadhi occurring at the beginning of jaraavastha. We can see in the following phrases –

जायन्ते हेतुवैषम्याद्विषमा देहधातवः।

हेतुसाम्यात समास्तेषां स्वाभावोपरमः सदा॥ (च.स.सू.१६/२७)

Hetu's vishamata gives utapatti of dhatu vishamata similarly sama hetu sevana will lead sama in deha and dhatu but the destruction (vinasha) will be due to swabhava.

स्वभावबलप्रवृत्ताः क्षुतिपिपासाजरा मृत्युनिद्राप्रभृतयः। (सु.सू.२४/७)

Acharaya Sushruta has mentioned a group of naturally occurring diseases under the heading of swabhavabalapravitta which includes kshuda, pipasa, nidra, jara and mrityu.

कालस्य परिणामेन जारामृत्युनिमित्तजाः।

रोगाः स्वाभाविका वयः परिणामात्-बालानाम् शुक्रप्रादुर्भावः शमश्चादिप्रादुर्भावः ।
कन्यानामार्तवं च । स्तनगर्भाशयादिषूपचयः ।

जरठानां-शुक्रक्षयः-रजोनिवृत्तिश्च । (अयुर्वेदिक मौलिक सिद्धान्ताः ४)

दृष्टाः स्वभावो निष्प्रतिक्रियः ॥ (च.स.श.१/११५)

Charak also opines that as the jara and mrityu are swabhabhik in nature, they will come under **kalaja** category. Rajonivritti can be classified under two categories

1. Kalaja rajonivritti and
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 Akalaja Rajonivritti.

Here we can see how gracefully author has described the adolescent and aging stages. Male will get bhava of shukra, shmashru etc as his age progresses similarly female will get pratham *rajodharshana (atarva)* and her *stanya* and *garbhashaya* development will be initiated and in jaraavastha-- shukra kshaya and **rajonivritti** will take place.

Jaraavastha is span of life which is dominant of vata as mentioned earlier and vata is responsible for kshaya of all dhatus. This generalized kshaya of dhatus will cause kshaya of upadhatus, hence leading the kshaya of artva i.e Rajonivritti. In samprapti of rajonivritti, vata is found to be predominant. During madhayavastha piita is predominant and here vata will starts overpowering pitta dosha and leads to kshaya of all dhatus. Gradual decline of all the dhatus during jaraavastha is a natural process. Vata dosha manifests all symptoms by its Ruksha, Laghu, Khara etc gunas

Manasika lakshanas observed in a woman during rajonivritti are-

Vata dosha manasika lakshanas --

Nervousness, anxiety, mood swings, insomnia

Pitta dosha manasika lakshanas --

Irritability, prone to hot temper, anger

Kapha dosha manasika lakshanas --

Laziness, depression, lacking motivation

There is very important interrelation between Vata and Manas. The aggravated Vata which is Rajogunapradhan along with Rasa Dhatukshaya affects the mental health of menopausal female. Hence it is very important for physician to understand the psychological state of the female. Timely performed samshodhna karmas will help in relieving the women from suffering. Sense, mind and intellect will be clear. Abhyanga is said to be jarahara

and vatahara. Basti is best therapy it is again vatahara, it induces sound sleep and improves intellectual power and provides clarity of mind. Shirodhara helps in sleeplessness, stress and other mansika bhavas. Rasayana therapy reduces the oxidatives stress and reduces the free radical injury, empowers mental competence; promote memory, calmness and delays aging. Observing dinacharya, ritucharya and regular removal of aggravated Dosha according to Ritu by panchakarma are the means to keep dosha in harmony. Women in their late 20's and early 30's to begin incorporating these regimens into their daily routines are an effort to minimize the symptoms of menopausal syndromes later in life. Yoga will affect the body in ways similar to antidepressants and psychotherapy. It will influence brain chemical known as neurotransmitters, lower the inflammation, reduce oxidative stress and produces a healthier balance of growth factors. Some of the yogas beneficial here are Savasana, Salamba Sirsasana, Vipartika Karani, Ardha Chandrasana, Matyasana, Vrksasna, Balasana. Meditation like Anulom Vilom, Bhramari, etc will help reduce the manasika lakshanas. Yoga nidra is a sleep based meditation technique for stress, anxiety, insomnia etc which can be practiced by woman for the relief from the above said symptoms. Even Music therapy is an intervention sometimes utilized to promote emotional health, help woman to cope with stress, boost psychological well-being, insomnia etc. Mediated music soothes the mind. Chanting mantras like "Om" will help in calming a mind. The mantras will make our mind focus only on the loud, resounding vibration in our body making other manasika lakshanas to vanish and relaxes mentally and emotionally.

CONCLUSION

Menopause is a significant landmark for women. Health problem at menopause represents imbalances in the body. All women will travel through menopause, as it is a rite of passage. Rajonivritti is categorized under svabhavika vyadhi. Menopause is a biomarker of aging in women. Ayurveda will have holistic treatment of menopausal syndrome by modification of diet & lifestyle. It with treat by correcting the hormonal imbalance with appropriate shodhana,

shamshmana therapy, rasayana therapy, yoga, meditation, chanting mantras etc. "Starting to think about menopause only when it hits is a little like trying to dig a well only when you are thirsty. Better to dig little by little so the water is available when you need it."

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