



**ROLE OF AYURVEDIC MEDICINES, YOGAASANA AND PRANAYAMA IN  
MENOPAUSAL SYNDROME- A CLINICAL STUDY**

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**ABSTRACT**

Women goes through variable stages during her reproductive life. Menarche and Menopause are the landmarks of reproductive stage of woman's life. Menopause is generally defined as cessation of periods for 12 months or a period equivalent to three previous cycles or as time of cessation of ovarian function resulting in permanent amenorrhoea. It represents end of her reproductive life. During this period there is gradual progressive loss of ovarian follicular activity. *Rajonivritti* occurs between the age of 40-55years, aging gracefully isn't always easy, especially when the uncomfortable symptoms of menopause set in. It is often accompanied with psychological symptoms such as mood disturbances, insomnia, anxiety, depression, memory loss, and somatic disturbances. Menopausal syndrome begins with menstrual irregularities and extends to one year after permanent cessation of menses. Modern medicine tries to manage menopausal syndrome with hormones. However hormonal therapy has its own short comings. Stress and modern living conditions disturb this transitional phase in a woman's life and the quality of life gets impaired. This is where Ayurvedic line of treatment can restore the quality of life without any toxic side effects. *Yoga* and *pranayama* have been proved to act effectively to reduce stress. Hereby discussing clinical study where ayurvedic medicines along with *yoga* and *pranayama* is discussed here with fruitful outcomes.

**KEYWORDS:** menopause, amenorrhoea, hormones, *yoga*, *pranayama*, Clinical study.

**INTRODUCTION**

Menopause means permanent cessation of menstruation at the end of reproductive life due to loss of ovarian follicular activity. It is the point of time when last and final menstruation occurs.<sup>[1]</sup> 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. This period is usually associated with unavoidable manifestation of aging process in women. 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 in greater vulnerability to psychosomatic problems. Hot flushes, sweating, changes in mood, depression, memory problems, sleep disturbances, vaginal dryness and libido are some important outcomes affecting the quality of life during climacterium in women which are collectively called as menopausal syndrome. Quality of life covers physical, functional, emotional, social and cognitive variables up to 85% of menopausal women. In Ayurveda, Menopause deals with the Jara Pakwa

Awastha of body. Jara and Rajonivritti are manifested due to progressive reduction in the functional ability of Agni, which results into an inadequate tissue nutrition. This nutritional imbalance triggers the irreversible degenerative changes in 'Sapta Dhatus.'

References regarding menopausal or post-menopausal period of women's life are not described in details in classical texts. *Rajonivritti kala* is mentioned by almost all *Acharyas* without any controversy, few direct references are available regarding it. According to *Sushruta*<sup>[2]</sup> and various other references too,<sup>[3]</sup> 50 years is mentioned as the age of *Rajonivritti*, when the body is fully in grip of senility. *Acharya Arundatta* opines that the age mentioned above is a probable age and not a fixed one. There may be some variations in this regard.<sup>[4]</sup> Though, Menopause is a natural event as a part of the normal process of aging, it is turning into a major health problem in recent years in developed as well as developing countries like India. Being an alarming problem, it needs an effective and safe treatment. In Modern science, Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) is one and only alternative for these health hazard by

which one can get spectacular achievement in combating the disease, but it has a wider range of secondary health complications like vaginal bleeding, breast cancer, endometrial cancer, gallbladder diseases etc. On the other hand, this therapy is not much effective in the psychological manifestations of this stage. *Ayurvedic* medicine like *Ashokarishta*, *Ashwagandha ksheerapaka*, *Kushmanda rasayana*, *manasa mitra vatakam*, *yoga asanas suryanamasara*, *shavasana*, *vajrasana* and *pranayamas* like *anuloma viloma*, *nadi shuddhi*, *shitali* and *ujjayi pranayamas* along with *Yoni pichu* with *dhanvantara taila* for 7days are taken as a trial in 10 female patients in menopause and results are interpreted after 2months of treatment and follow up of 1 month.

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To assess the efficacy of *Ayurvedic* medicines along with *yoga* and *pranayama* practice in treating menopausal syndrome.

### CASE REPORT

10 patients in the age group of 40-55years, both working and house wife by occupation who visited the OPD of SKAMCH & RC, dept of Prasooti tantra and stree roga were considered for the study with the chief complaints of- Hot flushes, Night sweats, Sleep disturbance, Irritability, Vaginal dryness, Mood swings, Forgetfulness since past 5-6 months along with menstrual irregularities.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria: Patients in age group 40-55yrs with symptoms of menopausal syndrome are included. Patients with any psychological disorders, any systemic illness interfering with treatment is excluded from study.

Past, treatment history, family history, occupational history are non-contributory with menstrual history of irregular periods since past 4-5 months with increased or decreased amount of flow.

Necessary investigations like Hb%, RBS was done.

#### Duration of study

- Before treatment: First day of treatment.
- After treatment: after 2months of treatment.
- Follow up: After 1month of completion of treatment.

#### Assessment criteria

Symptoms	Present	Absent
Hot flushes	P	A
Sleep disturbance	P	A
Night sweats	P	A
Irritability	P	A
Vaginal dryness	P	A
Mood swings	P	A
Forgetfulness	P	A

### INTERVENTION

The study was conducted for duration of 2 months which included treatment and follow up study of 1month.

- *Ashokarishta* 2tsp BD (A/F)
- *Ashwagandha ksheerapaka* to be done twice daily.
- *Kushmanda rasayana* 1tsp BD ( bf ) ,
- *Manasa mitra vataka* 100mg pill BD,
- *Yoni pichu* with *dhanvataram taila* for 15days
- *Yoga asanas* and *pranayama: shavasana, vajrasana, pada hastasana, baddha konasana, trikonasana, janu shirshasana setu bandhasana, adho mukha swanasana, marjarasana, viparita karini, shirshasana, anuloma viloma, shitali, ujjayi, nadi shuddhi etc.*

Symptoms were analysed and presence or absence of symptoms were noted and chi square test was done Before treatment (BT) After treatment (AT) and at Follow up (AF).

### RESULTS

There was a remarkable change in various symptoms, as shown below

**Hot flush:** before treatment and after treatment, before treatment and at follow-up the p-value ( $p < 0.001$ ) is statistically highly significant with  $\lambda^2$  values 16.36 and 13.32 respectively

**Sleep disturbances:** before treatment and after treatment, before treatment and at follow-up the p-value ( $p < 0.001$ ) is statistically highly significant with  $\lambda^2$  values 13.32 and 13.32 respectively.

**Night sweat:** before treatment and after treatment, before treatment and at follow-up the p-value ( $p < 0.001$ ) is statistically highly significant with  $\lambda^2$  values 16.36 and 20 respectively.

**Irritability:** before treatment and after treatment, before treatment and at follow-up the p-value ( $p < 0.001$ ) is statistically highly significant with  $\lambda^2$  values 10.76 and 16.36 respectively.

**Vaginal dryness:** Before treatment and after treatment, before treatment and at follow-up the p-value ( $p < 0.01$ ) is statistically highly significant with  $\lambda^2$  values 16.36, and 20 respectively.

**Mood swing:** before treatment and after treatment, before treatment and at follow-up the p-value ( $p < 0.001$ ) is statistically highly significant with  $\lambda^2$  values 10.76 and 16.36 respectively.

**Forgetfulness:** before treatment and after treatment, before treatment and at follow-up the p-value ( $P < 0.01$ ) is statistically highly significant with  $\lambda^2$  values 9.88, and 10.76 respectively.

Menstrual irregularities pertaining to days of cycle and amount of flow was also reduced after the treatment.

### DISCUSSION

In *Ayurveda*, *Rajonivritti* is not described as a diseased condition. It is a naturally occurring condition in every woman observed at the later stage of life when the body is fully in grip of senility. Almost all *Acharyas* have

described the age of Rajonivritti as approximately 50 years,<sup>[5,6]</sup> which is also true in the current era. Rajah is a byproduct of Rasadhatu and the functions of Rasadhatu is better in TarunaAvastha (i.e. Yuvavastha), which subsequently reduces during the Praudha Avastha resulting in Rajonivritti. As Rajonivritti is a naturally occurring condition in female body; it can be categorized under Swabhavika,<sup>[7]</sup> vyadhis as that of Jara (aging); Kshudha (Hunger); Pipasa (thirst); Nidra (sleep) and Mrityu (death) described in the classics.

According to the classical reference kushmanda rasayana,<sup>[8]</sup> has properties like medhya, smriti, bruhmana, bala vardhaka. It has phytoestrogens which helps in reducing anxiety and irritability moodswings during menopause. Mansamitra vatakam,<sup>[9]</sup> has properties like sarva manodoshahara, medhya, pratiba, which inturn helps in reducing the symptoms of menopause like depression, forgetfulness, palpitations, headaches, sleep disturbances. Manasamitra vatakam is indicated in the management of Mano vikaras. The majority of the Lakshanas of Rajonivritti are due to Vata Vriddhi, Kapha Kshaya, Ashayapakarsha of Pitta by aggravated Vata; vitiation of Manovaha Srotas; and Dhatukshaya, which all are manifesting as a part of aging. Considering this stage as a generalized Kshaya Avastha, Rasayana therapy seems to be a treatment of choice, to nourish the Dhatus. However, Rasayana is also not a complete cure of the Rajonivritti Janya Lakshanas, as it can very well check or delay the process of symptomatology for some time and also prevent the adverse effects in the post-menopausal period. As in Rajonivritti, as the Vata Dosha is dominant, majority of symptoms occur due to Vatavriddhi.

*Kushmanda* by its *Snigdha Guna* acts against *Ruksha Guna of Vata Dosha* and pacify it. So, the majority of symptoms of *Rajonivritti* subsides. Moreover, *Agnimandhya* is also, being the common manifestation of *Rajonivritti*. The drug *Kushmanda rasayana* by its *Deepana - Pachana* action, acts on *jatharagni* and relieves the symptom of GIT effectively like *Dyspepsia*, *Decreased appetite*, *Flatulence*, *Constipation*. Here, *Kushmanda*, *shunti*, *pippali*, *ela* are *hridya* and *balya* and act as *rasayana karma* which may cause *dhatu pushti*, which results in *samprapti vighatana* and ultimately lead to *lakshanopshamana*. *Pippali* act as *medhya* and act as *mano indriya tarpaka* which decrease *chinta*, *shoka* and sleep disturbances.

*Manasamitra vatakam* : Most of the drugs are *madhura rasa*, *katu tikta rasa*, *sheeta Virya*, *madhura Vipaka* act as *kaphavatahara*, *balya*, *brmhana*, *hridya*, *rasayana* properties which may cause *dhatu pushti*, which results in *samprapti vighatana* and ultimately lead to *lakshanopshamana*. It tones up the function of brain and reduces the mental fatigue. It also act as antidepressant, antioxidant, antidiabetic, anticancer, anti-inflammatory, hepatoprotective and also acts immunomodulatory and cardioprotective, so it reduces the depression, irritability,

sleep disturbances. It nutritionally supports the brain and normalizes the sleep pattern. *Bilwa*, *shankapushpi*, *guduchi*, *prisanaparni* it nourishes the central nervous system and enhances mental functions and reduces forgetfulness moodswings, depression, anxiety, forgetfulness, irritability. *Haritaki*, *durva*, *gojihwa*, *padmakesara* are *Tikta*, *madhura*, *kashaya rasa* act as *kaphapittahara*, *hridya*, *rasayana*, *sothahara*. *Rasna* is having properties like *Vatakaphahara*, *bramhana*, *balya*, *medhya*, *rasayana*. *Amalaki* having properties like *tridoshashamaka*, *rasayana*, *hridya*. *Manasamitra vatakam* contains ingredients of *jeevaniya gana* and has properties *laghu Snigdha guna*, *sheeta virya*, *vatapittahara*, *balya*, *brimhana*, *rasayana*, *hridya*. It enhances the *rasa dhatu* and nourishes all other *dhatu*s and thereby further harmonizes the *doshas* vitiated.

*Ashoka* is *Kashaya rasa* hence acts as *raktastambhaka* for irregular excessive bleeding occurring during perimenopausal time. It has phytoestrogen which balances estrogen and stops bleeding. It acts as *vayasthapana*, *balya*, *medhya*, *manadoshahara*, *vedanasthapana* properties. Ingredients also are *deepana pachana* corrects *agni* and clears *srotas* and symptoms comes down.

*Ashwagandha* is included under *balya*, *brihmaniya gana*, is *vrushya*, *rasayana*, *pushti-prada*, *vatahara*. It is given in *ksheerapaka* form which also acts to control *vata*. It has *snigdha*, *ushna virya* excellent *vatahara* hence menopausal symptoms come down. *Yoni pichu* with *dhanvataram taila* for 15 days was also done which increases *snigdhatwa* in *yonis* there by pacifies the symptom vaginal dryness by reducing aggravated *vata*.

*Yoga asana* and *pranayamas* are practiced daily for 30 mins to 45mins, *Yoga's* ability to reduce stress, promote a healthy lifestyle, create a positive attitude and regulate and balance the endocrine and hormonal systems make it an excellent therapy to soften the transition into menopause. *Yoga* postures, breathing practices and meditation are all effective methods of stress reduction and management. *Adi mudra* also is beneficial. All these *asana* and *pranayamas* control *vata* which is the main factor responsible for symptoms.

## CONCLUSION

The medicines used was found to be highly effective in the management of menopausal syndrome. It enhances the functional aspect of *rasa dhatu* and improves strengthening to the tissues of reproductive system. They are *deepaka*, *pachaka* and improve *dhatvagni* and enhances the *rasa dhatu* which improves the *snigdhatwa*. They are *vata hara*, *balya* and *rasayana*, *deepaka*, *pachaka* and improve *dhatvagni* and enhances the *rasa dhatu*. All the medicines are *vatahara* in nature. *Yoni pichu* with *taila* which is *vatahara* reduces the symptoms by creating *snehana* effect and controls *vata* which is the main cause for the symptoms. Thus it reduces vaginal dryness, inflammation present in the pelvis, uterus and

vagina, reduces mood swings and sleep disturbances and other symptoms. As this study was done on a small sample, to generalize its effect and prove it with greater efficacy it needs to be studied in a larger sample.

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