

EARLY MENOPAUSE – AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Menopause means complete stoppage of menstrual cycle for 1 year. It is the natural and physiological phenomenon in woman's life. The average age of menopause is 50 years, but when it appears at the age of 30s or 40s then it is called as early menopause. Menopause is the stage of transition from middle age to old age, according to *Ayurveda* this transition is from *Pitta Aadhikya Kaal* to *Vata Adhikya Kaal*. So this change reflects some signs and symptoms on body but in early menopause these signs and symptoms become worse as it happens in *Pitta Aadhikya Kaal* which is natural but carry the predominance of *Vata Dosha*. According to modern science there is severe imbalance in the levels of sex hormones- oestrogen, progesterone and testosterone. Ovaries slows down their production of oestrogen below 30 mIU/ml so levels of FSH get increased up to 40mIU/ ml. So the early menopause increases the risk of several diseases in women and hence she need extra medical, physical, emotional and mental concern. In this paper, the plans are discussed upon how she will be comfortable with early menopause. *Ayurveda* focuses on strengthening and rejuvenating the reproductive system through *Aahar*, *Vihaar* and lifestyle modification, this principle will be ease her signs and symptoms.

KEYWORDS: Early menopause, *Vatadosha*, *Rajonivrutti*, FSH, Oestrogen.**INTRODUCTION**

Menopause is defined as the complete absence of menstrual cycle which happens in the reproductive age of every woman for one year, not even spotting throughout the year. The average age of menarche and menopause (*Rajonivrutti*) is 12 years and 50 years respectively.^[1] It is considered as normal but when it present at around 30-40 years is called as early menopause or premature menopause. It can not be predicted when will it begin, it is the natural flow of excess *Pitta*² in the form of menstrual flow. It is associated with the mid life transition and *Vata* stage of life. The most successful approach to achieve a graceful menopause is to start with accepting it as a Nature's wakeup call to let you know that the time has come to take special care of yourself. During reproductive age, *Pitta Dosha* predominance is there. Menopause is a natural transition in women that occurs normally at the age of 50 years however in some cases it is noticed below 40 years age, here severe imbalance of *Tridosha* with increase in *Vata Dosha* may be observed.

AIM

To study the early menopause through *Ayurvedic* perspective.

OBJECTIVES

1. To understand menopause and early menopause.
2. To review menopause through *Ayurveda*.
3. To percept the theory and change in physiology of *Tridoshas* in early menopause.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Oestrogen plays a key role in maintaining the health of all the connective tissues of blood vessels, skin, ligaments and bones. When ovaries slow down their production of oestrogen below 30 mIU/ml, the levels of FSH is increased (40mIU/ ml).

a. Causes of early menopause

- **Ovarian failure:** It may be due to premature ovarian failure, damage to ovaries by chemotherapy, radiation etc. Surgical removal of ovaries also causes the premature menopause.
- **Kaal:** Transition from *Pitta Avastha* to *Vata Avastha* - In *Ayurvedic* texts, it has been elaborated that everyone passes through three stages of life i.e. *Balyavastha*, *Tarunyavastha* and *Wardhakyavastha* and predominance of *Doshas* in this stages is *Kapha Dosha*, *Pitta Dosha* and *Vata Dosha* respectively.^[3]
- **Aam:** It blocks channels and worse the problems.
- **Physical, mental and emotional Stress :** Overuse of mind, body, emotions, continuous daily stress and

doing strenuous work that is very much heavy for her body, constant tremendous emotional stress are also leading causes for the same.

- **Inadequate sleep:** Sleep is important for everybody but specially the women going towards menopause,

already suffer from the imbalance of *Vata* and *Pitta Dosh*. Inadequate sleep increases *Vata Dosh* which can further worsen sleep problems.

b. Signs and symptoms of early menopause

Signs & symptoms	Common	Uncommon
Signs	Less production of oestrogen by ovaries, reduced levels of testosterone, oestrogen, thinner vaginal wall	General joint pain, water retention due to increased progesterone levels, loss of interest in activities or hobbies, fluctuating levels of oestrogen and progesterone, changing levels of oestrogen, usually low level of oestrogen, dryness, nails break or split easily, aging of skin, hypothyroidism.
Symptoms	Frequent UTI, hot flashes, night sweats, reduced libido, irregular periods, mood swings, vaginal dryness, depression, memory problems, insomnia.	Aching, bloating, depression, hair loss, dizziness, burning tongue, brittle fingernails, tinnitus.

c. Risk factors for early menopause

As loss of estrogen is there the women has more risk of ovarian and colon cancer, cataract, tooth loss, periodontal diseases, heart disease, osteoporosis, parkinson's like symptoms, depression, dementia and premature death.

d. How to ease the early menopause: *Ayurveda* focuses on strengthening and rejuvenating the reproductive system through *Aahar*, *Vihaar* and lifestyle modification.

1. Proper food

- One should consume food rich in phyto-oestrogens for this use plenty of soya beans, legumes, tomatoes, pomegranates, watermelon, berries. To maintain bone health the food rich in Magnesium (whole grain, cereals, nuts, dairy products, bananas, chlorophyll rich vegetables), calcium (dried fig, milk and milk products, beans, pulses, potatoes, cauliflower), vitamin D (egg yolk, animal liver), vitamin K (green vegetable, cereals, animal food) magesene (cereals, bran, nuts and tea) and *Praval Bhasma* may be consumed.

- Avoid excess salt, chillies, spices, sour foods, pickles.
- Reduce use of caffeine, stimulants, refined sugar, cold drinks.
- Stop consuming junk food, carbonated drinks.
- Increase intake of warm foods, drinks, maintain regular meals, use spices as fennel and cumin.

2 Sound sleep

Take sound sleep for at least 6-7 hours best time is between 10 pm to 6 am. For this bedtime massage with almond oil will work.

3 Modified lifestyle

One should keep positive attitude towards life which can ease early menopause, also practicing yoga and meditation regularly can add a better day in early menopause transition.

e. Early menopause signs and symptoms and its relation with *Tridoshas*

During the age of 40- 50 years both *Pitta* and *Vata Dosh* are aggravated so measures should be done to pacify these *Dosh* first. Predominance of *Dosh* show specific characters as following.

<i>Vata</i> predominance	Nervousness and affected sleep, vaginal dryness, memory problems, mood swings, dryness of hair and nails, loss of interest, depression, anxiety, insomnia.
<i>Pitta</i> predominance	Hot flashes, night sweats, thinner vaginal wall, anger, irritability, skin breakouts and rashes, hyperacidity.
<i>Kapha</i> predominance	Weight gain, laziness, listlessness, feeling mental and physical heaviness.

DISCUSSION

Without *Vata Dosh*, remaining two *Dosh* are not capable to move from their own places.⁴ Imbalance in *Vata Dosh* leads to make imbalance in *Pitta* and *Kapha*

Dosh, expressing their signs and symptoms and this condition is physiological in menopause but in early menopause sometimes these signs and symptoms become more worse and need extra care of women as in

very low age she has to face the predominance of *Vata Dosh*a along with vitiation of remaining two *Dosh*as. According to modern view in menopause the hormonal changes are there, FSH causes ovaries to produce oestrogen, when they slow down their production of oestrogen, the levels of FSH increase. The best test to diagnose early menopause is the blood test to measure FSH level in blood.

CONCLUSION

From above verses, the conclusions can be drawn-

1. Though the menopause is natural transition of women's life, she should be aware that sometimes the signs and symptoms need medical help and physical, mental and emotional concern from friends and family members.
2. In case of early menopause these conditions are more bad as in very low age the *Vata Dosh*a aggregation is observed.
3. Already in this condition *Vata Dosh*a predominance is present care should be taken to pacify the same first, if not problem may worsen.
4. Proper food, Sound sleep, Modified lifestyle are some measures to make cool move through early menopause.

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