ABSTRACT
In the present era, women have a multidimensional attitude and special place in the society by reaching all kind of heights by their excellent physical and mental performance in almost all fields but they lost their strength in near about forty plus due to change in reproductive life by permanent cessation of menstruation called menopause or Rajonivrutti. They face various physiological and psychological changes due to hormonal derangement.\(^n\) 54% of postmenopausal women and hysterectomized women reported bothersome symptoms. Sometimes such disturbances attain stage of a group of signs and symptoms which is called as Menopausal syndrome. It requires medical care for various symptoms. The aim of this article is to manage various presenting features of this phase of Rajonivrutti (Menopausal Syndrome) with the help of ayurvedic therapies which are useful and understand them.

KEYWORDS: Menopausal Syndrome, Rajonivrutti, jara vyadhi.

INTRODUCTION
World Health Organization defined menopause as permanent cessation of menstrual periods that occur naturally or is induced by surgery, chemotherapy or radiation. Natural menopause is recognized after 12 consecutive months without menstrual periods that are not associated with a physiologic or pathologic cause. Rajonivrutti is not described separately as a pathological condition or severe health problem in ayurvedic classics. Acharya termed it as a normal physiology.

Incidence and prevalence rate of postmenopausal syndrome is 78% of population, but only
19.5% of the symptomatic women take treatment. During reproductive years, women are protected by female hormones, estrogen and progesterone. In menopause women, an estrogen deficient phase accelerates, the aging process resulting in symptoms of menopause with decreasing life expectancy. Also, Regression of ovarian function occurs, causing depletion of primordial ovarian follicles resulting in diminished estradiol levels. This diminished hormonal levels lead to the various symptoms seen in menopausal phase. Here an attempt is made to study ayurvedic literature about Rajonivrutti and manage it by ayurvedic approach.

Need of topic
Large number of patients suffering from this, are unsatisfied with the existing management of modern drugs. Therefore it is essential to look for alternative medicine.

Method

Rajonivrutti Kala

*Rajonivrutti kala* is mentioned by almost all Acharyas without any controversy, few direct reference regarding the age of menopause, Acharya Sushruta said that menarche occur at the age of 12 years and due to the effect of aging menopause occur at the of 50 years (*Sushruta Sharirasthana 3/9*).\[1\] Vagbhata and Bhavamishra mentioned the same age for Menarche and Menopause.

Nidana of Rajonivutti

Concentrating on the probable *Nidanas* (Etiological factors) regarding the condition Rajonivrutti, few factors can be squeezed out. Some of these factors are mentioned by Acharyas in the context of "Rajah Utpatti hetus" too. These factors can be considered as Rajah Nivrutti hetus also. Besides this, some very specific factors also can be considered as the causative factors for Rajonivrutti which all are enlisted below.

- *Swabhava*
- *Kala*
- *Vayu (Apan and Vyan)*
- *Dhatukshaya*
- *Karma* or Environment

Types of Rajonivruiti

Ayurvedic science has divided all diseases into four major types - *Agantu, Sharira, Manas* and *Swabhavika* (*Sushruta Sutrasthan 1/24*).\[1\]
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 Swabhavavaka Pravritta includes Kshudha (Hunger), Pipasa (Thirst), Nidra (Sleep), Jara (Aging) and Mrityu (Death) (Sushruti Sutrasatha 1/24 & 28/8). In some manner, Rajonivrutti too is a naturally occurring condition in everywoman as that of Jaravastha and Swabhavika Vyadhis. So Rajonivrutti also can be divided into two types, Kalaja Rajonivrutti and Akalaja Rajonivrutti.

1) Kalaja Rajonivrutti
If Rajonivrutti occurs at its probable age, it is called as Kalaja Rajonivrutti. According to Acharya Sushruta (Sushruti Sutrasatha 28/8), the timely Rajonivrutti (Natural diseases like aging) occurs only when the protective measurements of healthcare being practiced. This condition is Yapya by Rasayana.

2) Akalaja Rajonivrutti
If Rajonivrutti occurs before or after its probable age, it is termed as Akalaja Rajonivrutti. Akalaja Rajonivrutti takes place due to absence of the protective measurements of health care. In this type of Rajonivrutti, symptoms are very acute and medical attention should be given to avoid its hazardous effects. According to Acharya Dalhana, they should be treated on the basis of nature of illness (Roga) surfaced due to pathology of Rajonivrutti and on the basis of dosha involved in it. (Dalhana on Sushruta Sutrasatha 24/7). This Akalaja Rajonivrutti is more likely treatable than Kalaja Rajonivrutti. This magnitude of Kalaja and Akalaja Rajonivrutti vary from person to person on the basis of Prakriti as noted by Acharya Charaka himself in Vimana Sthana. Therefore, ultimately the responsibility of deciding Kalaja or Akalaja Rajonivrutti should considered upon physician's experience.

Probable Samprapti of Rajonivrutti
‘Rajah’ is described as updhatu of Rasadhatu - ‘Rasat stanya tato raktam’ (Cha. Chi. 15/17). With aging out of three doshas, vayu increases significantly and causes decline in pitta, kapha and sevan dhatus starting from rasa. It causes particular rasa rakta dhatu kshay and shosha of Artavavaha strotas take place. These things will lead to artavanash and manifest as Rajonivrutti.
Samprapti of Rajonivrutti (Menopausal syndrome)

\[
\begin{align*}
Jara\ avasta & \quad \Downarrow \\
\text{Increased Vata dosha} & \quad \Rightarrow \quad \text{affects the Manas guna (Raja and Tama)} \\
Dhatukshaya & \quad \Downarrow \\
Upadhatu kshaya (Artava kshaya) & \\
\text{Menopausal symptoms} & \quad \Downarrow \\
\text{Psychological disturbances} &
\end{align*}
\]

**Clinical Features**

There is no specific description regarding clinical features of Rajonivrutti as Ayurveda consider Rajonivrutti as natural change in body. We can consider symptoms of menopausal syndrome under jaravyadin. Therefore, lakshan of dhatukshaya and vatapittakapha dominance are mainly seen along with some manasiklakshana.

**Ayurveda Constitution and Dosha in Menopause**

During a vata-dominated menopause, you will likely be experiencing any of the following symptoms;

- Nervousness
- Anxiety
- Insomnia
- Mild hot flashes
- Depression
- Poor skin tone
- Constipation
- Vaginal dryness.

Women whose menopause is dominated by pitta may generally experience any or all of the following symptoms;

- Angry outbursts
- Irritability
- Short temper
- Hot flashes and night sweats
- Urinary tract infections (UTI’s)
- Skin rashes

Women whose menopause is dominated by kapha, It’s natural elements, water and earth, can manifest as a ‘heavy menopause,’ where you’re feeling tired a lot, have difficulty concentrating or just can’t seem to shake that ‘heavy feeling.’ Other symptoms may include:

- Weight gain
- Sleepiness
Manasika Lakshana’s

After considering the clinically observed features of Rajonivrutti through Ayurvedic point of view, Psychological symptoms also commonly observed due to vitiation of Manovaha srotas. So these symptoms can be grouped under the heading of manasika lakshanas as follows-

- Krodha
- Bhaya
- Smriti Hras
- Dairya Hani
- Vishada

Alpa Harsha and Priti

MODERN VIEW

Menopause is defined as permanent cessation of ovarian function resulting in permanent amenorrhoea. It takes 12 months of amenorrhoea to confirm that menopause is not set in. Menopause is generally occurring between age of 40 - 45 years and the average is 47 years. Climacteric is phase of weaning ovarian activity and may begin 2 - 3 years before menopause and continue for 2 – 5 years after it. During the phase there occurs decline in ovarian activity. In starting ovulation fails, therefore no corpus luteum and hence no progesterone is secreted by the ovary. Therefore, menopause is often preceded by anovulatary and irregular menstrual cycle. After some time graffian follicle formation also stops, estrogen activity and finally atrophy of endometrium leads to amenorrhoea. As the result of fall in estrogen level, there is rebound increase of FSH and LH by ant pituitary gland.

Menopausal Symptoms

1. Immediate

These symptoms relate to vasomotor, psychological, sexual and urogenital symptoms.

- Vasomotor symptoms
Hot flushes, night sweats palpitations and headache is the most distressing symptoms of menopause. These are more severe after surgical menopause. These are attributed to pitta and vata doshas.

- Psychological symptoms
Many females are affected with anxiety, depression, decrease in libido and dementia. Ayurveda hypothesis them occur to the imbalance of *vata*.

- **Urogenital symptoms**
  Urinary incontinence (stress and urge) vaginal dryness and prolapsed of uterus are very important. Ayurveda described *shushka yoni* (dry vagina with atrophy of urogenital tract) and *Maha yoni* (uterovaginal prolapse).

2. **Long Term**
Skeletal system and cardiovascular system are adversely affected.

- **Skeletal system**
  Osteoporosis occur rapidly after menopause in women. It is responsible for the greater incidence of fracture of spine, proximal femur, and distal radius. Bone forming units are responsible for skeletal growth, repair, & replacement. They are under the influence of variety of regulatory factor i.e. parathormone, calcitonin, vitamin D, growth factor, gonadal steroids calcium and phosphate etc. ERT (Estrogen replacement therapy) therefore only partially helps the re-mineralization of bones and prevention of fractures.

According to Ayurveda osteoporosis can be explained on the basis of excess *vata* formation in *pakvashaya* and *asthi dhatu*. Therefore, we give *agnivardhan*, *deepen* and *pachan* drugs.

- **Cardiovascular disease**
  The decline of *ojas* (*ashta bindu-para ojas*) and *avalambak kapha* due to excess of *vata* is the cause of cardiovascular disease.

**Management of Menopausal Syndrome**

1) **Counselling**
It is very important to maintain her physical and mental status. She should be educated about proper diet. Diet should include at least 1.2 gms of Ca, vitamin A, C, E, D (400 mg) + weight bearing exercises are also necessary.

2) **HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy)**
Only oestrogen replacement therapy is not sufficient to overcome this problem. Because many other hormones eg. DHEA, melatonin and various systems are affected in menopause. Moreover, menopause is the natural process of transition to a new phase of life for a woman.
Therapy needed in woman who are - Symptomatic for 3-6 months. High risk for CVD (Cardiovascular Disease), osteoporosis, Alzheimer’s disease. After surgical oophorectomy, premature menopause. WHO demand prophylactic HRT estrogen should be given in smallest effective dose for a short possible period of 3-6 months.

Short term oestrogen therapy is beneficial in delaying osteoporosis & reducing the risk of cardiovascular diseases in post-menopausal woman.

**Risks of HRT**

Adverse cardiovascular status. Malignancy and thromboembolic disease. Endometrial cancer if E2 is taken alone. Breast cancer is due to progestogens if HRT is taken over 5 years. A study published in Lancet by Tungstal et al in 1998 clearly published that these are no beneficial effects occurred by HRT on cardiovascular disease. Moreover, these are reports suggesting the increased incidence of malignancy and thromboembolic disease. HRT can be at best be used for a short term to overcome some of the troublesome symptoms like hot flushes. Again not all the patients are benefited with ERT because of genetic characterization of E2 receptor. This finding supports the concept of individualization of therapy in Ayurveda based on individual constitution i.e. Prakriti.

**Management by Ayurveda**

**Rasayana Therapy**

According to jara rog chikitsa, rasayan is the only way to contribute symptoms associated with rajonivrutti. Rasayana is a specialized type of treatment influencing the Dhatus, Agnis and Strotas of the body leading to an overall improvement in the formation and maintenance of the living tissues and helps in the prevention of ageing, improving of resistance against diseases, bodily strength and process of improving mental faculties. Daily consumption of ghee, milk which increase kapha can delay the onset of menopause. ‘Ghritaksheeradi nityasu muditasu kaphatmasu’

Aartavam tishthati chiram viparitasvato- anyatha|| ‘(Ashtang Samgraha, Sharir 1/69) [4]

**Rasayanas** are of three types

1) Aachara Rasayana

It is basically related to lifestyle management. According to Ayurved Sadvritta and Swasthavritta, by following Dinacharya, Ratricharya and Ritucharya along with taking
measures to relieve stress-strain aging process can be delayed & symptoms associated with menopause can be minimized. *Surya-namaskara*, exercise, yoga pranayama can be proved very beneficial effect by relieving stress. They also improve muscle tone & hence improves urinary troubles.

2) *Aahara Rasayana* (food as drug)
In Menopause related to *dhatukshaya* that means *ojas-kshaya*. Dietary articles consisting of black grams, milk, ghee & meat soups are useful. Ghee has a special role in improving *sukradhatu*.

3) *Dravya Rasayana* (Drug therapy)[5]
*Shatavari*-*Shatavari* contains natural phytoestrogens and so can be used as an alternative to synthetic HRT, gently and naturally rebalancing estrogen levels.

*Chandrasur*- Its seeds are useful in are used in bloating, irregular periods, estrogen deficiency. *Chandrasur* – it alleviates *kapha doshas*. It is Balya, Vatashaman.

*Shankhpushpi*- *Shankhpushpi* that has traditionally been used as a cognitive enhancing herb. It has a great remedy when pitta dosha is involved in excess.

*Dashmoo la*- it is known herbal combination to balance the Vata dosha.

*Bala*-it is an excellent anti-oxidant.

*Ashwagandha*- some clinical studies have established that if used singularly in menopausal patients it controls effectively the vasomotor symptoms.

*Yastimadhu*- it is *Rasayan* drug.

*Gokshur*- it is aphrodisiac, anabolic anti-inflammatory; Saponin in it, promote libido.

*Amalaki*- it contains highest amount of stable vitamin C conjugated with gallic acid, this complex is powerful antioxidants cytoprotective and immune-modulatory action which promotes anti-aging action.

Preparations like

*Ashwandha ghrita*
*Shatavari ghrita*
*Rason kshirpak*
*Bramhi ghrita*
*Saraswatarishta*
*Chyawanprash*

2. Panchakarma
Snehan- Bala oil, Mahanarayan oil.

Swedan- using Dashmul decoction, Pottali pind sweda.

Shirodhara- Shirodhara found to be effective in the management of disturbed psychological symptoms. Shirodhara with Shatavari oil, Takradhara, Dashmool kwath can be helpful.

Nasya-Panchendriya vardhan oil, Anu taila.

Uttarbasti- (medicated oil is instillation through the vaginal or urethral opening) Yastimadhu taila.

Pichu- (medicated tampons kept in the vagina) Shatavari taila, Shatdhaut ghrita.

Basti- specially Anuvasan Basti

CONCLUSION

Only few scattered references are available in ancient literature on Rajonivrutti. All the Acharyas have mentioned fifty years as the age of Rajonivrutti. The logic behind the age of Rajodarshana and Rajonivrutti is that Raja is byproduct of Rasadhatu which function better in Tarunavastha and its function reduces in Praudhavastha. Rajonivrutti is a physiological process but when it causes discomfort either to mind or body it attains Vyadhisvarupa and becomes a disease status which requires medical interference. Both the term Rajonivrutti and Menopause literally convey same meaning.

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