AYURVEDIC ASPECT OF MENOPAUSAL SYNDROME AND ITS MANAGEMENT

1*Dr. M. S. Bhalgat and 2Dr. Pooja Dinkar Patil

1H.O.D. of Department of Streeroga Prasutitantra, SVNHT Ayurvedic Mahavidyalaya, Rahuri, A. Nagar.
2M. S. Scholar, Department of Streeroga Prasutitantra.

ABSTRACT

Menopause is defined as cessation of menstruation as well as ovarian function for 12 months. In Ayurveda this stage is called as ‘Rajonivrutti’. There is no reliable laboratory test to predict when woman will experiences menopause. Average age of menopause in India is 45 to 55 years. Due to changing lifestyle, food habits, pollution, lack of awareness about health, lack of exercise and stressful life age of menopause is decreasing. Ayurveda is science of life advocating the holistic treatment for menopausal syndrome, which corrects hormonal imbalance by appropriate diet, Shaman therapy, Panchakarma therapy, Yoga – Pranayama and Rasayana. By taking all this into consideration all references available into Ayurvedic samhita’s efforts have been made to review critically.

KEYWORDS: Menopausal syndrome, Ayurveda, Rajinivrutti.

INTRODUCTION

A woman goes through many phases in her life right from her birth, adolescence phase, pregnancy, puerperal phase, motherhood phase and menopause. Like these all other natural phases menopause is also normal part of woman’s natural biological ageing process, not a disease, though the risk of certain diseases rises after menopause. Menopause means permanent cessation of menstruation due to loss of ovarian follicular activity. [1] In other words we can also say that menopause means end of natural fertility of women. Average age of menopause in India is 45 to 55 years. [2] Premenopausal phase begins 2-5 years before...
woman’s last menstrual period. Postmenopausal period means when one year passed without menstruation after woman’s last menstrual period.

In Ayurveda menopause is called as ‘Rajonivrutti’. In this ‘Rajah’ means artav and ‘Nivrutti’ means cessation. It does not describe separately in Ayurvedic samhita’s but ‘Rajonivrutti kala’ is described by all Acharya’s as 50 years.[3] Menopausal transition is characterized by varying degree of physical, mental and emotional changes. Irregular periods, hot flushes, night sweating, vaginal dryness, irritability, mood swinging etc are the typical and common symptoms of menopausal phase. Osteoporosis, diabetes mellitus, hypertension, heart disease etc are long term hazards of menopause. The group of signs and symptoms associated in this phase are called as menopausal syndrome.

SYMPTOMS OF MENOPAUSE

Hot flushes, irritability, anger, short temper, depression, insomnia, palpitation, night sweating, urinary incontinence, weight gain, anxiety, constipation, mood swinging, vaginal dryness, osteoporosis.

AYURVEDIC PATHOLOGY OF MENOPAUSE.[4,5]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. no.</th>
<th>Lakshana</th>
<th>Dosha – dhatu awastha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hot flushes</td>
<td>Pitta prakopa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Irritability, mood swinging</td>
<td>Vata – pitta prakopa, Rasa kshaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Anger, Short temper</td>
<td>Pitta prakopa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>Vata prakopa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Insomnia</td>
<td>Vata – Pitta prakopa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Palpitation</td>
<td>Vata – pitta prakopa, Rasa kshaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Night sweating</td>
<td>Pitta prakopa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Urinary incontinence</td>
<td>Vata prakopa, Dhatu kshaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Muscle and joint pain</td>
<td>Vata prakopa, Dhatu kshaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td>Vata prakopa, Rasa kshaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Constipation</td>
<td>Vata prakopa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Vaginal dryness</td>
<td>Vata prakopa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Osteoporosis</td>
<td>Vata prakopa, Kapha kshay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AYURVEDIC MANAGEMENT OF MENOPAUSE

In Ayurveda menopausal symptoms are regarded as ‘imbalance of dosha’ which occurs as natural and gradual consequence of aging. Most of menopausal symptoms are due to vata prakopa followed by other dosha factors. And as the basic principle of Ayurveda is ‘prevention is better than cure’ so that in premenopausal phase it is better to balance dosha’s.
By this menopausal symptoms will reduce or even can be negligible. For this one should follow the diet, lifestyle, medicines regularly.

1] Treatment as per dosha
A) For vata prominence - In vata prakopa ahar, aushadhi of usha, snigdha guna are benificial.
- Regular timings of meals.
- Avoid coffins, cold drinks, salted food, dry food, alcohol, smoking or any other addictions.
- Herbs – cumin, cardamom etc are used in routine cooking and medicine.
- Other herbs includes aloevera, ashwagandha, arjuna, lashuna, guggul, yasthimadhu, keshar, chandan etc.
- Ashawagandha is useful in osteoporotic symptom of menopause because it improves the degenerative changes by enhancing osteoblasts.
- In case of tenderness of yoni, use of laghuphala ghrita orally indicated.
- Snehana with vatahar oil and swedana.[6]

B) For pitta dominance – Increase water intake in the form of plane water, fruit juices, coconut water etc.
- Sheeta virya food. Avoid cold drinks and cold food.
- Avoid spicy & oily food, alcohol, smoking or any other addictions.
- Herbs- alorvera, amalaki, chandan, arjuna, usher, ashwagandha, bramhi etc.
- Limited exercise.
- Goghrita is used for massage as well as for intake as it is pitta shamak.[7]

C) For kapha dominance – Laghu, ushna, ruksha guna aahar.
- Use of spices little bit more. Fasting once in a week.
- Avoid sugar, meat, oily food, sheeta guna aahar.
- Exercise regularly. Massage by kaphashamak oil.
- Herbs – guggul, haritaki, sarshapa, nagarmotha, etc.
- By using all this we can avoid weight gain, fatigue, and other kapha pradhan symptoms in menopause.

2] VIHAR DURING MENOPAUSE
Eat regular meals. Avoid to eating in between meals (adhyashana). Eat with prasanna mana. Don’t eat during worries, nervousness. Going to bed early i.e avoid jagrana and rise up early
in the morning in ‘Bramhamuhurta’, it helps to balance all dosha.\(^8\) Avoid ‘Adharniya vega dharan’. Avoid excessive exercise, stress, addictions, lifting heavy weights, diwaswap.

3] **Shaman therapies** – Agnideepan, aampachan, anuloman, balya chikitsa, rasayan chikitsa.

4] **Panchakarma chikitsa**

Therapies in Panchakarma chikitsa helps to purify the physical and mental impurities from body and mind.

Snehan and swedan beneficial in curing many signs and symptoms in menopause. Snehan followed by light swedana helps in shaman of prakopit vata and vata related symptoms, improves circulation, help to reduce weight. Relief in symptoms like constipation, vaginal dryness and osteoporosis.

Shirodhara acts on psychological, emotional and endocrinal symptoms in menopause. It is very effective in symptoms like mood swinging, depression, insomnia, irritability, palpitation, anxiety etc. It helps to calm CNS and hormonal regulation.

Kati basti, janu basti, greeva basti are effective in joint pain and osteoporosis.

Basti helps mainly in vata prakopa. It is also called as ‘Ardhachikitsa’\(^9\). Basti, yonidhavan, yonipichu, yonidhupan are beneficial in vaginal atrophy and vaginal dryness.

Mridu virechana – virechana is main treatment on pitta prakopa so it helps to reduce pitta dominant symptoms in this phase.

5] **Yoga and pranayama**

Yoga calms the nervous system, decrease stress and helps in menopausal symptoms on major extent. A sedentary lifestyle is an established risk factor in many common conditions including obesity, diabetes mellitus, hypertension, heart disease, insomnia, low back pain etc. It gives physical, mental, spiritual and moral wellness.

There are 8 branches of yaga shastra – yam, aasan, pranayama, pratyahar, dharna, dhyan, Samadhi.\(^10\) In this commonly performed are aasan, pranayama and dhyan.
Women will benefit from yoga during menopause in terms of decrease risk of cardiovascular diseases, insulin resistance and loss of bone density. It improves psychological wellness, sleep pattern, mood swinging and emotional modulation.

6) Rasayana
Rasayana brings youthfulness to person. It increases life span, memory, health, complexion, strength, immunity. Rasayana achieve all this goals by strengthening all 7 dhatus.\(^{[11]}\) Classical anti-aging formulations i.e chawanprash, bramha rasayana also act effectively in menopause.

**Triphala** – Consist of haritaki, aamalaki, bibhitaki. It is effective on all the 3 doshas and balances them. It also act great in vayasthapan.\(^{[12]}\)

**Ashwagandha** – Act as powerful antioxidant and immune modulator. It also improves strength, muscle mass relieves stress. In menopause patient it controls vasomotor symptoms like hot flushes, night sweating and palpitation effectively.\(^{[13]}\)

**Yastimadhu** – It has antioxidant, immune-modulator, antidepressant, memory enhancing properties. It promotes voice, hair, complexion and strength.\(^{[14]}\)

**Shatavari** – Shatavari proves to be beneficial to women in all stages of her life. Aacharya Charak categorized it as balya, vayasthapana and shukrajana. It also rasa and mans dhatu poshak. It contains natural phytoestrogens and so can be used as an alternative to synthetic hormones, genetically and naturally rebalancing estrogen levels.\(^{[15]}\)

**Mdhya rasayana** - Aacharya Charak described 4 medhya rasayanas- shankhapushpi, mandukparni, guduchi and yastimadhu.\(^{[16]}\) This act on nadisansthan of body and reduce stress. It act greatly on mood swinging, depression, disturb sleep pattern, palpitation, insomnia and impaired memory in menopausal women.

**DISCUSSION**
Menopause is associated with large number of symptom which disturbs women’s routine life. Menopause comes in vata dosha dominated stage of life. Therefore symptoms in menopausal phase are like insomnia, anxiety, urinary incontinence, osteoporotic changes due to vata dosha dominance. Pitta dosha dominance symptoms are also there like hot flushes, irritability, anger and short temper. Degenerative changes are explained in Ayurveda as Dhatu kshaya lakshana. Aacharya Sushruta has explained that there is Shareera shithilata in
Vrudha awastha. The dominance of vata dosha specially with Laghu and Ruksha guna results in reduction of dravata of rasa dhatu. This leads to further dhatu kshaya and respective upadhatu kshaya. As raja is upadhatu of rasa, due to rasa kshaya raja kshaya (amenorrhea) also takes place.

The prakopit vata dosha also disturbs the other sharir as well as manas dosha (raja and tama). Thus in menopausal stage some psychological and emotional changes also occurs. To combat this all physical, mental, emotional and degenerative changes Aacharya’s described ahar, vihar, Panchakarma therapies, shaman therapies, yoga, pranayama and rasayan therapies.

CONCLUSION
Each phase of woman’s life is beautiful and should be give importance for her further healthy life. Ayurveda is an excellent solution for safe and happy transition into menopause due to its holistic approach. The basic concept of Ayurveda is prevention is better than cure. As we discuss above aahar, vihar, panchakarma, yoga, rasayana helps in prevention of major diseases and cure symptoms which occurs in menopausal phase. All this help in making menopausal phase graceful and easy.

REFERENCES
5. Tripathi Bramhanand, Charak Samhita, edited with commentary Charak Chandrika, Sutrasrthana 17/ 64 – 73.
12. Dr. A. P. Deshpande, Dr. R. R. Jalvalgekar, Dr. S. Ranade, Dravyagun Vidnyan, Reprint 2011, Proficient Publishing House, Pg. No. 275.
13. Dr. A. P. Deshpande, Dr. R. R. Jalvalgekar, Dr. S. Ranade, Dravyagun Vidnyan, Reprint 2011, Proficient Publishing House, Pg. No. 685.
15. Dr. A. P. Deshpande, Dr. R. R. Jalvalgekar, Dr. S. Ranade, Dravyagun Vidnyan, Reprint 2011, Proficient Publishing House, Pg. No. 814.