

A Review Article on Management of Menopausal Symptoms W.S.R. To Ayurveda

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Abstract: Menopause marks the permanent cessation of menstruation resulting from irreversible changes in the hormonal and reproductive function of ovaries and it is associated with large numbers of symptoms ranging from physical, psychological and after the age of 40 years, ovaries reduce the production of sex hormones, which finally results in cessation of menses. Several symptoms bear an obvious relationship to the changing hormonal activities associated with menopause. The common symptoms include hot flushes, vaginal dryness, disrupted sleep, and also depressive symptoms and cognitive difficulties. According to Ayurveda classics it is termed as *Rajonivriti*, which occurs due to an imbalance of *Doshas*. Menopause is a natural phenomenon, but when it gets disturbed it produces symptoms related to vasomotor, psychological, urogenital, skeletal, and cardiovascular symptoms. Therefore, this condition requires proper treatment. In Ayurveda, we can use drugs having *Deepan-Pachan*, *Rasayan*, *Vatashamak*, *Vayasthapan*, *Bruhan*, *Balya*, *Ojovardhak*, and *Hridya* properties to get rid of common menopausal symptoms, allowing for improved patient care and health outcomes for older female patients.

Keywords- Female, Menstruation, Menopausal symptoms, *Rajonivriti*, Sex hormones.

INTRODUCTION

Menopause marks a significant milestone in a woman's life, marking the permanent cessation of menstruation due to irreversible changes in the hormonal and reproductive functions of the ovaries. Typically occurring after the age of 40, menopause brings about a variety of symptoms, both physical and psychological, as the ovaries reduce their production of sex hormones. These hormonal changes are responsible for the onset of common menopausal symptoms, such as hot flushes, vaginal dryness, disrupted sleep, and even depressive symptoms and cognitive difficulties.

Incidence and prevalence rate of postmenopausal syndrome is 78% of population, but only 19.5% of the symptomatic women take treatment.^[1] Currently, the number of menopausal women is about 43 million and projected figures in 2026 have estimated to be 103 million.^[2]

Understanding Menopausal Symptoms

The symptoms associated with menopause bear an obvious relationship to the changing hormonal activities in a woman's body. Vasomotor symptoms like hot flushes and night sweats are common, as are psychological issues such as mood swings, anxiety, and depression. Urogenital symptoms can include vaginal dryness and urinary incontinence, while skeletal issues may manifest as osteoporosis, and cardiovascular symptoms may increase the risk of heart disease.

Ayurveda's Perspective on Menopause

In the realm of Ayurveda, menopause is referred to as *rajonivriti*, which is believed to be caused by an imbalance of doshas. According to Acharya Sushruta and various other references, 50 years is mentioned as the age of *Rajonivrutti*.^[3] Ayurveda, an ancient system of medicine, offers a holistic approach to managing menopausal symptoms by focusing on restoring balance within the body. According to Ayurvedic classics, menopause can be managed by using specific herbs and treatments that address the underlying doshic imbalances.

Nidana of Rajonivrutti

The specific reasons for *Rajonivrutti* are not described in the Ayurvedic texts. But the most probable reasons for it to occur are^[4]

- Swabhava
- Jarapakvasharira due to Kala
- Dhatukshaya

- Effect of Dosha
- Vayu
- Abhighata

Ayurvedic Treatments for Menopausal Symptoms

Ayurvedic treatments for menopause aim to provide relief from the various symptoms and improve overall health outcomes for older women. The following are some key Ayurvedic treatments and herbs used to manage menopausal symptoms:

1. *Deepan-Pachan*: These treatments focus on improving digestion and metabolism, which can be beneficial in managing weight gain and digestive issues commonly associated with menopause.
2. *Rasayan*: *Rasayan* therapies are rejuvenative treatments that help enhance vitality and overall health. They are particularly useful in combating fatigue and enhancing energy levels.
3. *Vatashamak*: These treatments aim to pacify the Vata dosha, which is often aggravated during menopause. Symptoms such as anxiety, insomnia, and joint pains can be alleviated through *Vatashamak* treatments.
4. *Vayasthapan*: These are age-sustaining treatments that help in maintaining youthfulness and slowing down the aging process, addressing issues like skin dryness and loss of elasticity.
5. *Bruhan*: *Bruhan* treatments focus on nourishing and strengthening the body, which can help combat the loss of muscle mass and bone density.
6. *Balya*: *Balya* therapies are aimed at improving physical strength and stamina, helping women stay active and healthy during menopause.
7. *Ojovardhak*: These treatments enhance Ojas, the vital energy that supports immunity and overall well-being. They can help in improving mental clarity and emotional stability.
8. *Hridya*: *Hridya* treatments support heart health, which is crucial during menopause as the risk of cardiovascular diseases increases.

Deepan-Pachan: Digestive Health During Menopause

Deepan-Pachan treatments in Ayurveda are designed to stimulate and regulate the digestive fire, known as "Agni." During menopause, many women experience digestive issues such as bloating, indigestion, and weight gain. These problems can be exacerbated by hormonal fluctuations that slow down metabolism. *Deepan* (appetizing) and *Pachan* (digestive) treatments work together to improve

digestion and nutrient absorption, which can help manage weight and reduce digestive discomfort. Herbs commonly used in *Deepan-Pachan* treatments include:

- **Ginger**: Known for its digestive properties, ginger helps stimulate the digestive fire and reduce bloating and nausea.
- **Triphala**: A combination of three fruits (Amalaki, Bibhitaki, and Haritaki), *Triphala* aids in digestion, detoxification, and regular bowel movements.
- **Cumin**: *Cumin* seeds improve digestion and reduce gas and bloating.

Incorporating these herbs into the diet, either through herbal teas or as spices in cooking, can help support digestive health during menopause.

Rasayan: Rejuvenation and Vitality ^[5]

Rasayan treatments in Ayurveda focus on rejuvenation and enhancing overall vitality. Menopause can bring about feelings of fatigue and low energy levels, making it challenging for women to maintain their daily activities and quality of life. *Rasayan* therapies aim to restore and rejuvenate the body, providing a sense of renewed energy and well-being

Key *Rasayan* herbs and treatments include:

- **Ashwagandha**: Known as an adaptogen, *Ashwagandha* helps the body adapt to stress and improves energy levels, stamina, and overall vitality.
- **Shatavari**: This herb is particularly beneficial for women, as it supports reproductive health, balances hormones, and enhances vitality.
- **Amalaki**: Also known as Indian gooseberry, *Amalaki* is rich in vitamin C and antioxidants, helping to boost immunity and rejuvenate the body. Regular use of *Rasayan* herbs can help combat the fatigue and low energy levels commonly experienced during menopause, allowing women to maintain an active and fulfilling lifestyle.

Vatashamak:

Calming the Vata Dosha The *Vata* dosha, which is associated with air and space elements, tends to become imbalanced during menopause, leading to symptoms such as anxiety, insomnia, and joint pains. *Vatashamak* treatments aim to pacify and balance the Vata dosha, providing relief from these symptoms and promoting a sense of calm and stability. Effective *Vatashamak* herbs and practices include:

- *Brahmi*: Known for its calming and cognitive-enhancing properties, *Brahmi* helps reduce anxiety and improve sleep quality.
- *Jatamansi*: This herb has a calming effect on the mind and body, helping to alleviate stress and promote restful sleep.
- *Sesame oil*: Regular oil massages with warm sesame oil can help pacify *Vata*, reduce joint pains, and improve skin health. Incorporating these *Vatashamak* treatments into a daily routine can help manage the psychological and physical symptoms associated with menopause.

Vayasthapan:

Sustaining Youthfulness *Vayasthapan* treatments in Ayurveda focus on sustaining youthfulness and slowing down the aging process. Menopause often brings about visible signs of aging, such as skin dryness, wrinkles, and loss of elasticity. *Vayasthapan* treatments aim to nourish and protect the skin, maintaining its youthful appearance and vitality. Key *Vayasthapan* herbs and practices include:

- *Aloe Vera*: Known for its moisturizing and healing properties, *Aloe Vera* helps keep the skin hydrated and reduces signs of aging.
- *Turmeric*: Rich in antioxidants, turmeric helps protect the skin from damage and promotes a healthy, youthful glow.
- *Gotu Kola*: This herb supports collagen production and improves skin elasticity, reducing the appearance of wrinkles and fine lines. Regular use of *Vayasthapan* herbs and practices can help women maintain a youthful appearance and boost their confidence during menopause.

Bruhan:

Nourishing and Strengthening the Body *Bruhan* treatments in Ayurveda focus on nourishing and strengthening the body, which is essential during menopause when women often experience a loss of muscle mass and bone density. These treatments provide the necessary nutrients to support overall health and maintain physical strength. Beneficial *Bruhan* herbs and foods include:

- *Moringa*: Rich in vitamins, minerals, and proteins, *Moringa* helps nourish the body and support muscle and bone health.
- *Almonds*: High in healthy fats, protein, and calcium, almonds provide essential nutrients to strengthen bones and muscles.

- *Milk*: A good source of calcium and vitamin D, milk supports bone health and helps prevent osteoporosis. Incorporating *Bruhan* herbs and foods into the diet can help women maintain their physical strength and prevent the decline in muscle mass and bone density associated with menopause.

Balya:

Enhancing Physical Strength and Stamina *Balya* treatments in Ayurveda aim to enhance physical strength and stamina, allowing women to stay active and healthy during menopause. Maintaining physical activity is crucial for overall health and well-being, and *Balya* treatments provide the necessary support to keep women strong and energetic. Key *Balya* herbs and practices include:

- *Gokshura*: This herb supports muscle strength and endurance, helping women stay active and fit.
- *Bala*: Known for its strength-enhancing properties, *Bala* helps improve physical stamina and overall vitality.
- Regular exercise: Engaging in regular physical activity, such as yoga, walking, or strength training, helps maintain physical strength and stamina. By incorporating *Balya* herbs and practices into their routine, women can stay active and healthy during menopause, reducing the risk of chronic diseases and improving their quality of life.

Ojovardhak:

Enhancing Vital Energy *Ojovardhak* treatments in Ayurveda focus on enhancing *Ojas*, the vital energy that supports immunity and overall well-being. During menopause, women may experience a decline in immunity and an increase in susceptibility to illnesses. *Ojovardhak* treatments aim to strengthen the body's immune system and improve overall health. Key *Ojovardhak* herbs and practices include:

- *Chyawanprash*: A traditional Ayurvedic tonic made from a blend of herbs and spices, *Chyawanprash* helps boost immunity and enhance overall vitality.
- *Tulsi*: Known as holy basil, *Tulsi* has immune-boosting properties and helps protect the body from infections and illnesses.
- Healthy diet: Consuming a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins supports overall health and enhances

the body's natural defenses. By incorporating *Ojovardhak* treatments into their daily routine, women can strengthen their immune system and improve their overall well-being during menopause.

Hridya:

Supporting Heart Health *Hridya* treatments in Ayurveda focus on supporting heart health, which is crucial during menopause as the risk of cardiovascular diseases increases. The decline in estrogen levels during menopause can have a direct impact on heart health, making it essential to adopt measures that support cardiovascular function. Key *Hridya* herbs and practices include:

- *Arjuna*: Known for its cardioprotective properties, *Arjuna* helps strengthen the heart muscles and improve overall heart health.
- Garlic: Garlic has been shown to reduce cholesterol levels and improve blood circulation, supporting cardiovascular health.
- Regular physical activity: Engaging in regular exercise, such as brisk walking, yoga, or swimming, helps maintain heart health and reduces the risk of cardiovascular diseases. Incorporating *Hridya* herbs and practices into a daily routine can help women support their heart health and reduce the risk of cardiovascular issues during menopause.

Lifestyle and Dietary Recommendations In addition to Ayurvedic treatments, adopting a healthy lifestyle and balanced diet can significantly improve the management of menopausal symptoms. The following lifestyle and dietary recommendations can complement Ayurvedic treatments and enhance overall well-being during menopause:

- **Balanced Diet**: Consuming a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats can provide essential nutrients and support overall health. Foods rich in calcium and vitamin D, such as dairy products, leafy greens, and fortified foods, are particularly important for maintaining bone health.
- **Hydration**: Staying hydrated is crucial for overall health and can help alleviate symptoms such as hot flashes and dry skin. Drinking plenty of water and herbal teas can support hydration.
- **Regular Exercise**: Engaging in regular physical activity, such as yoga, walking, or strength training, can help maintain physical strength,

support heart health, and improve mood and energy levels.

- **Stress Management**: Practicing stress-reducing techniques, such as meditation, deep breathing exercises, and mindfulness, can help manage the psychological symptoms of menopause, such as anxiety and depression.
- **Sleep Hygiene**: Maintaining good sleep hygiene, such as establishing a regular sleep schedule, creating a relaxing bedtime routine, and ensuring a comfortable sleep environment, can help improve sleep quality and reduce insomnia.
- **Avoiding Triggers**: Identifying and avoiding triggers that exacerbate menopausal symptoms, such as caffeine, alcohol, and spicy foods, can help manage symptoms more effectively.

CONCLUSION

Menopause is a natural and inevitable stage in a woman's life, but it often comes with a range of challenging symptoms that can impact overall health and quality of life. Ayurveda offers a holistic and comprehensive approach to managing menopausal symptoms by addressing the underlying *doshic* imbalances and promoting overall well-being. By incorporating Ayurvedic treatments, such as *Deepan-Pachan*, *Rasayan*, *Vatashamak*, *Vayasthapan*, *Bruhan*, *Balya*, *Ojovardhak*, and *Hridya*, women can find relief from the physical and psychological symptoms of menopause and improve their overall health outcomes. Additionally, adopting a healthy lifestyle, balanced diet, and stress-reducing practices can complement Ayurvedic treatments and enhance the effectiveness of symptom management. Ultimately, the goal of Ayurvedic treatments for menopause is to provide women with a natural and holistic approach to navigating this significant life transition, allowing them to embrace the changes with grace and confidence while maintaining optimal health and well-being.

Here's the conclusion with the *Ayurvedic* terms italicized:

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