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RAJONIVRITTI: THE AYURVEDIC SCIENCE OF MENOPAUSAL HEALTH

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ABSTRACT

Menopause represents one of the natural milestones in a woman's life, following childhood and adolescence. It is derived from the Greek words *menos* (month) and *pausis* (cessation), signifying the end of monthly cycles. Rather than a sudden occurrence, menopause unfolds gradually over several years, involving both physical and psychological adjustments as ovarian activity declines. The reduction in estrogen levels during this stage often leads to characteristic symptoms. Ayurveda interprets menopause as *Jarapakwa Avastha*—the matured stage of aging—and *Rajonivrutti*, the cessation of menstruation. The symptoms, known as *Rajonivrutti Janya Lakshana*, are linked to degenerative changes described as *Dhatukshaya Lakshana*. With advancing age, *Vata dosha* predominates, and imbalances in *Vata, Pitta,* and *Kapha* along with tissue depletion are considered the root causes of discomfort. Ayurveda offers holistic solutions through diet, herbal remedies, *Samshamana* therapy, lifestyle regulations, *Panchakarma*s detoxification, *Rasayana* rejuvenation, and yoga, ensuring a balanced and graceful transition into menopause.

KEYWORDS: Menopause, *Rajonivrutti, Vata dosha, Panchakarma.*

INTRODUCTION

Menopause represents a universal biological milestone in the female life cycle, characterized by the permanent cessation of ovarian follicular activity. Globally, the menopausal population

is projected to reach 1.2 billion by 2030, with a significant proportion experiencing "Menopausal Syndrome"—a constellation of vasomotor, psychological, and musculoskeletal symptoms (World Health Organization, 2022). While contemporary clinical protocols primarily address the resultant hypoestrogenism through Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), the therapeutic trajectory is often complicated by evidence-linked risks of a cardiovascular events and breast neoplasia (Rossouw et al., 2002). Consequently, there is an escalating demand for risk-mitigated, holistic interventions that address the systemic nature of reproductive senescence.

The conclusion of a woman's fertile years is clinically defined by a full year of amenorrhea, which serves as the definitive boundary for the end of the reproductive phase. While most individuals undergo this transition between 45 and 56 years of age, the typical age for natural menopause in the U.S. is approximately 51.[2]

The population of women reaching menopause is expected to more than double in the near future, growing from 43 million to an estimated 103 million by 2026.[1]

In Ayurveda, Menopause is known as Rajonivrutti. This term is derived from two Sanskrit words: *Rajah* (menstrual discharge) and *Nivritti* (cessation or retirement). While modern medicine often focuses on the hormonal decline of estrogen, Ayurveda views this transition as a natural stage of life where the body shifts from the *Pitta* (fiery, productive) stage to the *Vata* (airy, ethereal) stage.

In Ayurveda, Rajonivrutti is not considered a disease but a Kala-parinama (consequence of time). As a woman enters this phase, her body undergoes several transitions.

The Dosha Shift**:** This marks the transition from the Pitta (active/heat) stage of life to the **Vata** (reflective/airy) stage. An imbalance during this shift causes "wind-like" instability, leading to sleep disturbances and increased bone porosity.

Dhatu Kshaya (Tissue Depletion): As the body matures, there is a natural thinning of structural tissues. In Rajonivrutti, the body redirects energy by closing the menstrual channels, mirroring the reduction of ovarian follicles.

Agni (Metabolic Fire): The internal "digestive fire" often slows down, reducing the body's ability to process nutrients and clear waste.

Ethymology

The term "Rajonivritti" is a Sanskrit compound formed by the union of two distinct words - "Rajah" and "Nivritti."

Rajah - Refers to **Artava**, or the monthly menstrual discharge.

Some terminologies indicate menstrual blood. ovum or both, at various places according to the concerned topic. But commentator *Arunadatta*[3] has specially indicated in his commentary Rajah as *Artava* i.e. menstrual blood.

Nivritti - his signifies **cessation**, **retirement**, or the termination.

Rajonivritti

Historical Ayurvedic perspectives on menopause, or Rajonivritti, treat the cessation of menses as a systemic stage of aging rather than a distinct ailment. The chronological milestone for this transition, termed Rajonivritti Kala, is consistently cited across the classical compendia. Notably, Acharya Sushruta establishes the age of 50 as the standard biological limit for menstruation.[4]

Types of Rajonivrutti

1. Kalaja Rajonivritti (Swabhavika) - This is the natural cessation of menses occurring at the Sushrutokta age of 50.
2. Akalaja Rajonivritti (Vaikarika) - This is premature menopause occurring before the age of 40 or 45 (Dalhana on SushrutSutrasthana 24/7).

Nidana of Rajonivritti

As mentioned above, *ajonivritti* is not categorized as a discrete clinical entity; consequently, standard diagnostic components such as *Nidana-Panchaka re not explicitly detailed. the same elements that govern the onset of menstruation (Rajah-utpatti) are also responsible for its cessation (Rajah-nivritti).* The factors responsible like *Dosha, Kala, Swabhava.*

Samprapti of Rajonivritti

Nidana *(Kala/Aging, Swabhava, Dhatu Kshaya, Vata-dominant)*

↓

Vitiation of Vata Dosha → *affects mana guna (Raja, Tama)*

↓

Ojakshaya → *Psychological Disturbances*

Agni Vaishamya

(Decrease in functional ability of Jatharagni and Dhatvagni)

↓

Impaired Formation of Rasa Dhatu

↓

Kshaya (Depletion) of Upadhatu (Artava) *(Nutritional imbalance leading to Artava Nasha)*

↓

Srotas Changes *(Rukshata and Shosha of Artavavaha Srotasa)*

↓

RAJONIVRUTTI

Lakshana of Rajonivritti

Doshaja Lakshana

1. Vata - Vaginal dryness, joint pain (*Sandhishula*), fear, and insomnia.
2. Pitta - Hot flashes (*Santapa*), night sweats, Irritability and burning sensations (*Daha*).
3. Kapha - *Alasya*, depression.

Dhatu Lakshana[5]

1. Rasa - Hritapeeda (heart palpitations/discomfort), Trishna (excessive thirst), and dryness.
2. Maunsaj - Sphig-shushkata (wasting/atrophy of the pelvic region and muscles).
3. Asthi - Asthishula and Danta-nakha bhanga, indicating osteoporosis.
4. Shukra - Ashakti maithuna (painful intercourse/loss of libido) and Yoni-shoshan (vaginal atrophy).

Manasika Lakshana

Chittodvega, Vishada, Krodha, Smritihrasa, Bhaya, Alpaharsha, Dainya, Anidra, Shoka, Chanchalata.

Management – The management of menopausal syndrome in Ayurveda is rooted in the stabilization of the *Vata*-dominant physiological shift. By employing **Rasayana** (rejuvenative), **Vatashamana** (Vata-pacifying), and **Kaphvardhan** (anabolic) therapies during the perimenopausal phase, the intensity of psychosomatic symptoms can be significantly mitigated.

Ahara (Dietary Management)

- Madhura, Amla, Lavana Rasa Sevana

- Vata-Pitta Shamaka Ahara
- Ghrita Sevana
- Godhuma & Shali Shashtika
- Dugdha Sevana

2. Vihara (Lifestyle Management)

- Abhyanga
- Shirodhara
- Pratimarsha Nasya
- Yogasana & Pranayama
- Dhyana

3. Shodhana (Purification Therapy)

- Mridu Vamana
- Mridu Virechana
- Basti (Anuvasana & Niruha)

4. Shamana (Internal Medicine)

- Rasayana Sevana
- Vaya Sthapana Gana
- Deepana-Pachana Chikitsa
- Balya & Bruhana Chikitsa

HerbRasayana	**Therapeutic Target in Menopause**
Shatavari	Urogenital Health: Addresses vaginal atrophy and dryness via its *Snigdha* (unctuous) and phytoestrogenic properties.
Ashwagandha	Neuromuscular & Endocrine Health: Prevents muscle wasting and bone loss (*Asthi-kshaya*); acts as a potent adaptogen for adrenal support and cortisol regulation.
Yashtimadhu	Hormonal & Mucosal Balance: Provides phytoestrogenic support; relieves "hot flashes" (*Daha*) and maintains the integrity of the vaginal mucosa.
Triphala	Metabolic & Digestive Health: Prevents *Vata* vitiation by ensuring proper bowel evacuation; acts as a mild systemic detoxifier to clear *Srotas*.
Guduchi	Immune Modulation: Balances *Dhatvagni* and prevents recurrent infections or inflammatory shifts during the transition.
Amalaki	Antioxidant Support: High Vitamin C content; excellent for skin health, collagen synthesis, and reducing Pitta-induced hot flashes.
Brahmi	Cognitive Health: Enhances memory, stabilizes the *Manovaha Srotas*, and reduces "brain fog" and menopausal irritability.

CONCLUSION

Rajonivritti is a quintessential physiological transition, marking the systemic shift from the transformative Pitta stage of life to the senescent Vata phase. This study demonstrates that while contemporary medicine focuses on the biochemical withdrawal of estrogen, Ayurveda provides a more holistic framework by identifying Kala-Parinama (chronological transformation) and Dhatukshaya (systemic tissue depletion) as the root causes of menopausal distress.

The research concludes that Menopausal Syndrome is not an inevitable pathology but a result of Dosha-Vaishamya (imbalance) triggered by aging. The multi-dimensional Ayurvedic protocol—integrating Vatashamana Ahara, Snehana-dominant Vihara, and Rasayana Chikitsa—offers a robust, risk-mitigated alternative to conventional Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT).

Specifically

Shodhana (Panchakarma) effectively clears the *Srotas*, preventing metabolic stagnation.

Shamana & Rasayana therapies (utilizing *Shatavari, Ashwagandha,* and *Yashtimadhu*) provide essential phytoestrogenic and adaptogenic support to nourish the Artava-vaha Srotas.

Sattvavajaya (Yoga/Dhyana) ensures psychological resilience by stabilizing the Manovaha Srotas.

Ultimately, by adopting these traditional strategies, the "turbulent" transition of menopause can be managed as a graceful biological milestone, ensuring sustained health, skeletal integrity, and mental clarity in the post-reproductive years.

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