



# MENOPAUSE (*RAJONIVRTTI*) - AYURVEDIC APPROACH TO HEALTHY AGING

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## ABSTRACT:

*Rajonivrtti* is a natural, age-related physiological transition characterized by the permanent cessation of menstruation, usually occurring between 45 and 55 years of age. In modern medicine, menopause is attributed to depletion of ovarian follicles and decline in oestrogen levels, leading to various vasomotor, psychological, urogenital and metabolic symptoms. Ayurveda describes this phase as *Rajonivrtti*, a *Swabhavika Kalaja Avastha* occurring due to *Jara* and progressive *Dhatu kshaya*. Although not considered a disease entity, *Rajonivrtti* is associated with multiple distressing manifestations primarily due to *Vata dosha* predominance and imbalance of *Raja* and *Tama guna*.

*Ayurveda* emphasizes a holistic and preventive approach to ensure healthy aging during menopause. Management is aimed at *Vata-shamana*, *Dhatu-poshana* and enhancement of *Satva* through appropriate *Ahara*, *Vihara*, *Rasayana therapy*, *Panchakarma*, *Yogasana* and *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*. *Rasayana* drugs help in delaying degeneration, improving immunity and maintaining physical and mental strength, while *Panchakarma* procedures-especially *Basti*-play an important role in correcting *Vata* imbalance. Yogic practices and *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* contribute significantly to psychological well-being by reducing stress, anxiety and sleep disturbances.

This review aims to compile classical *Ayurvedic* concepts of *Rajonivrtti*, correlate them with modern understanding of menopause and highlight the role of *Ayurveda* in promoting healthy aging and improving quality of life in menopausal women through a comprehensive, safe and integrative approach.

*Index Terms* - *Rajonivrtti*, Menopause, Healthy Aging, *Rasayana*, *Vata*.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Menopause is defined as the permanent cessation of menstruation due to loss of ovarian follicular activity, usually occurring between 45–55 years of age. In Ayurveda, menopause is described as *Rajonivrtti*, a *Swabhavika Kalaja Avastha* (natural age-related condition) resulting from *Jara* and *Dhatu-kshaya*. (1) *Acharya Sushruta* states that *Artava* naturally ceases around the age of fifty years. *Rajonivrtti* is dominated by *Vata Dosa prakopa*, with associated depletion of *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Asthi* and *Majja Dhatus*. *Ayurveda* emphasizes a holistic approach involving *Ahara*, *Vihara*, *Rasayana*, *Panchakarma* and *Sattvavajaya*

**Chikitsa** to ensure healthy aging and prevent degenerative disorders during this phase. (2) *Rajonivṛtti* involves gradual decline of *Ojas*, alteration of *Agni* and increased vulnerability to psychosomatic disturbances. Predominance of *Vata* leads to instability of *Sharirika* and *Manasika* functions, presenting as hot flushes, sleep disturbance, anxiety, joint pain, dryness, fatigue and mood changes. *Ayurveda* views this transition as a physiological milestone requiring preventive care rather than disease-oriented treatment. Adoption of appropriate *Ahara*, *Vihara*, *Dinacharya* and *Ritucharya*, along with *Rasayana*, *Panchakarma* and *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa*, helps maintain dosha balance, delays degenerative changes, promotes healthy aging and improves quality of life in postmenopausal women.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### Aims

- To review and analyze the *Ayurvedic* concept of *Rajonivṛtti* and its role in promoting healthy aging.

### Objectives

- To study classical *Ayurvedic* references related to *Rajonivṛtti*
- To understand the *dosa-dhatu* involvement in *Rajonivṛtti*
- To correlate menopausal symptoms with *Ayurvedic* concepts
- To review *Ayurvedic* management strategies for *Rajonivṛtti*

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Sources of Data

- Classical *Ayurvedic* texts: *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Astanga Hrudaya*, *Kasyapa Samhita*
- Commentaries of *Dalhana*, *Chakrapani* and *Arunadatta*
- Modern textbooks of Gynecology
- Published research articles and review papers

### Method of Study

- Relevant references were collected, compiled, analyzed and critically reviewed to establish conceptual and clinical correlations between *Ayurveda* and modern science.

## AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE

- Rajonivṛtti* is explained as a natural outcome of *Jara* and *Dhatu-kshaya*. Due to *Vata-pradhanya* in old age, degeneration of tissues occurs, especially *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Asthi* and *Majja Dhatu*. Psychological symptoms are attributed to imbalance of *Rajo* and *Tamo Guna*.

## DEFINITION

- Rajonivṛtti* refers to the permanent cessation of *Raja* (menstrual flow). It is considered a *Kalaja* phenomenon occurring naturally due to aging.

### Kala of Rajonivṛtti

- पञ्चाशत् वर्षे नारीणां रजो निवर्तते ध्रुवम् ।  
जरा पाकवशात् तस्मात् नष्टं भवति शोणितम् ॥ (*su sha 3/7*)
- Acharya Sushruta* states that *Artava* ceases around the age of 50 years due to *Kala prabhava* and *Dhatu-kshaya*. This is comparable to the modern age range of menopause (45–55 years).

**Dosa Involvement (3)(4)**

- “बाल्ये कफः, मध्ये पित्तम्, अन्ते वातः”
- Predominant *Vata dosha* due to aging
- Relative decline of *Kapha*
- Variable *Pitta* involvement leading to vasomotor symptoms

**Dhatu Involvement (5)(6)**

- “वयस्थे तु शरीरस्य धातूनां हानिरिष्यते”
- *Rasa kshaya* → dryness, fatigue
- *Rakta kshaya* → hot flushes, irritability
- *Asthi kshaya* → osteoporosis, joint pain
- *Majja kshaya* → anxiety, insomnia

| <i>Lakshana (charaka, Sushruta-sushra chi)</i> | <i>Ayurvedic Interpretation</i>             | <i>Dosa–Dhatu Involvement</i>      |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| <i>Usnanubhava</i>                             | <i>Vata-pradhana anubandha</i> <i>Pitta</i> | <i>Vata–Pitta Dosha</i>            |
| <i>Ratri-sveda</i>                             | <i>Pitta vriddhi</i>                        | <i>Pitta Dosha</i>                 |
| <i>Anidra</i>                                  | <i>Vata vriddhi janya Nidra-nasha</i>       | <i>Vata Dosha, Manovaha srotas</i> |
| <i>Cittodvega</i>                              | <i>Rajo–Tamo guṇa vriddhi</i>               | <i>Vata–Pitta, Manas</i>           |
| <i>Vishada</i>                                 | <i>Mano-avasada</i>                         | <i>Satva kshaya, Vata</i>          |
| <i>Yoni-sushkata</i>                           | <i>Rasa kshaya janya Vata prakopa</i>       | <i>Vata Dosha, Rasa Dhatu</i>      |
| <i>Maithuna-asahatva</i>                       | <i>Yonivedana</i>                           | <i>Vata Dosha</i>                  |
| <i>Sandhi-shula</i>                            | <i>Asthi dhatu kshaya</i>                   | <i>Vata Dosha, Asthi Dhatu</i>     |
| <i>Asthi-sausthava-hani</i>                    | <i>Asthi kshaya</i>                         | <i>Vata Dosha</i>                  |
| <i>Kaṭi-shula</i>                              | <i>Apana Vata dushti</i>                    | <i>Vata Dosha</i>                  |
| <i>Daurbalya</i>                               | <i>Balahani</i>                             | <i>Ojas kshaya</i>                 |
| <i>Smruti-bhramsha</i>                         | <i>Majja dhatu kshaya</i>                   | <i>Vata Dosha, Majja</i>           |
| <i>Hṛt-spandana</i>                            | <i>Vāta vriddhi</i>                         | <i>Vata Dosha</i>                  |
| <i>Medo-vṛddhi</i>                             | <i>Medo dhatu dushti</i>                    | <i>Kapha–Medas</i>                 |
| <i>Tvak-rukshata</i>                           | <i>Rasa dhatu kshaya</i>                    | <i>Vata Dosha, Rasa</i>            |

**MANAGEMENT****1. Ahara**

- *Pathya*- Soya, Dadima, milk, fish, grains etc. *Snigdha, Ushna, Vata-shamaka* foods
- *Apathya*- Avoid dry, cold and excessively spicy foods

**2. Vihara****Yogasana-****1. Tadasana**

- Improves posture and balance
- Helps in *Asthi-dhatu* nourishment
- Useful in preventing osteoporosis

## 2. *Vrikshasana*

- Enhances neuromuscular coordination
- Promotes mental concentration
- Reduces anxiety related to *Vata prakopa*

## 3. *Baddha Konasana*

- Improves pelvic circulation
- Beneficial for urogenital symptoms
- Relieves stiffness and fatigue

## 4. *Pascimottanasana*

- Pacifies *Vata dosha*
- Improves digestion and sleep
- Reduces stress and irritability

## 5. *Bhujangasana*

- Stimulates endocrine glands
- Reduces fatigue and back pain
- Improves spinal flexibility

## 6. *Setu Bandha Sarvangasana*

- Helpful in insomnia and mild depression
- Improves pelvic and thyroid circulation
- Supports hormonal balance

## 7. *Shavasana*

- Essential for relaxation
- Reduces stress, anxiety and hot flush frequency
- Enhances parasympathetic activity

## *Pranayama- Anulomana viloma, Bhramari and Dhyana.*

- Avoid excessive stress and overexertion

## 3. *Rasayana Therapy (7)*

➤ “जराव्याधिनिवारणं रसायनम्”

- *Satavari, Asvagandha, Bala, Guduci and Medhya rasayana* like Mandukaparni, Yastimadhu, Sankhapushpi and Guduchi for mental health.
- Improves immunity, strength and longevity.
- धात्र्यार्जुना ऽभयाचूर्णं तोयपीतं रजो हरेत् शैलच्छदमिश्रपिष्टं भक्षणञ्च तदर्थकृत् (भै.र.67/33)
- Powder of *Amalaki, Arjuna* and *Haritaki*, when taken with water, helps in **controlling excessive menstrual bleeding**. The same effect is also obtained by consuming *Lodhra* mixed with these drugs, prepared appropriately.
- *Amalaki- Rasayana, Rakta-stambhaka*
- *Arjuna- Rakta-pittahara, Stambhaka*
- *Haritaki- Balya, Rasayana*

➤ रसाञ्जनं हैमवती वयःस्था चूर्णीकृतं शीतजलेन पीतम् |

रजोविनाशं करोति शङ्कात्रका गर्भसमागमस्य || (भै.र.67/34)

- Powder of **Rasanjana**, **Daruharidra** and **Amalaki**, when taken with **cold water**, **definitely controls excessive menstruation** and also **helps in achieving conception**.
- *Rasanjana* and *Daruharidra- Rakta-pitta shamaka*
- *Amalaki- Rasayana, Garbhasthapaka*

#### 4. Panchakarma (8)

“बस्तिर्वातहराणां श्रेष्ठः”

- **Abhyanga like- Tila taila, Bala taila** helps in alleviating dryness, joint pain, stiffness and fatigue.
- **Svedana - Mrdu svedana** relives musculoskeletal pain, improves flexibility and reduces *vata-kapha* dominance. Like **Nadi sveda** and **pinda sveda** are beneficial.
- **Basti-** It nourishes tissues, improves bone density, relieves constipation and stabilizes neuro-endocrine function.

“वातदोषहराणां बस्तिः प्रधानतमः”

Types of **Basti** Useful in *Rajonivrtti*:

- **Anuvasana Basti** - Nourishing, *Vata-shamaka*
- **Matra Basti** - Safe for long-term use
- **Tikta-kshira Basti** - Beneficial in osteoporosis
- **Shirodhara** for psychological symptoms like insomnia, anxiety, irritability and mood swings. It calms the nervous system and enhances *Satva guna*.
- **Nasya** - Improves neurological and psychological functions by acting on *Urdhva jatrugatha doshas*. *Pratimarsa nasya* with **Anu taila** or **Brahmi ghrta** is beneficial in menopausal women.

#### 5. Sattvavajaya Chikitsa (9)

➤ “मनः प्रसादः स्वास्थ्यस्य लक्षणम्”

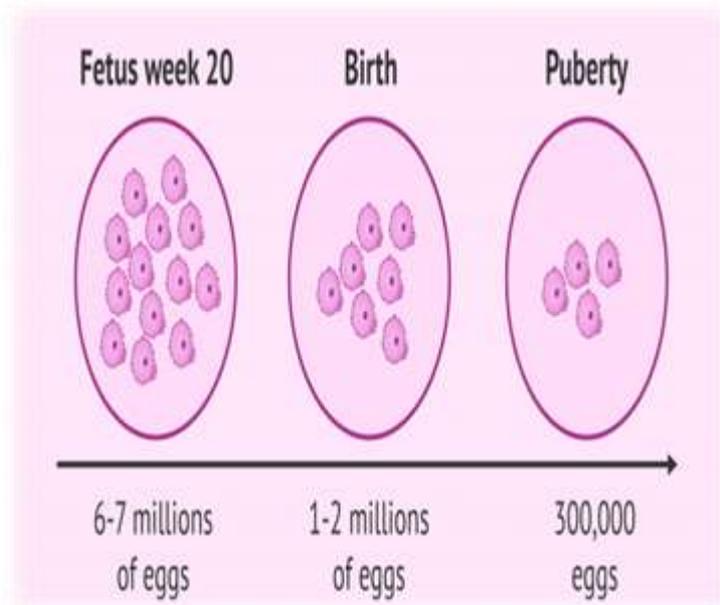
- *Asvasana, Samvada, Smrthi, Dhairya, Dhyana* and *Manonigraha* Stress management should be done.
- Positive attitude towards aging.

#### MODERN PERSPECTIVE (10)

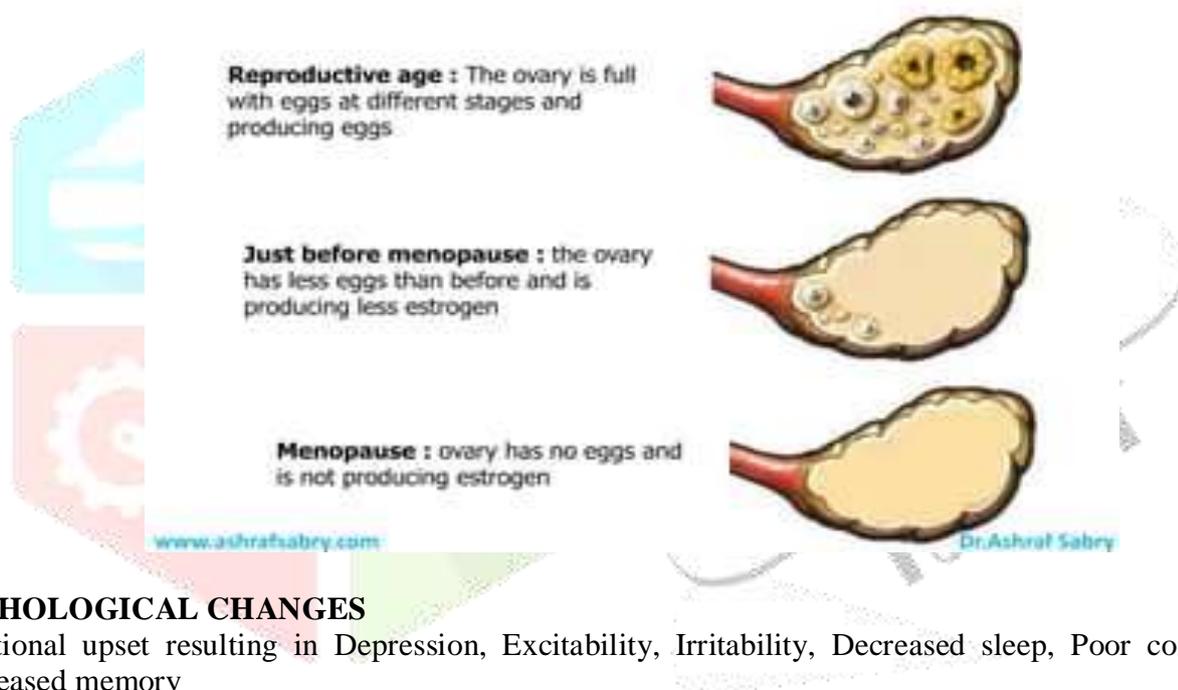
- Menopause results from oestrogen deficiency leading to vasomotor symptoms, urogenital atrophy, osteoporosis, cardiovascular risk and psychological disturbances.

#### PHYSIOLOGICAL changes in menopause

1. **HORMONAL** - Decreased Oestrogen level - Altered Thyroid function - Increased Adrenals secretions - Increased HG due to non-responding ovaries
2. **METABOLIC** - Decreased Bone Calcium - Increased Lipids
3. **ANATOMICAL** - Genital Atrophy - Loss of Mucosal barriers



## Stages of Egg Depletion from the ovary



### **PATHOLOGICAL CHANGES**

Emotional upset resulting in Depression, Excitability, Irritability, Decreased sleep, Poor concentration, Decreased memory

What happens at menopause?

Oestrogen and Progesterone level decrease Risk of Fracture and Heart Disease increase.

Symptoms Associated with Menopausal Transition Changes in Menstrual patterns

- Shorter cycles are typical (by 2-7 days)
- Longer cycles are possible
- Irregular bleeding (heavier, lighter, with spotting)

### **Vasomotor symptoms-**

- Hot flash/ hot flushes, Night Sweats, Sleep disturbances.

### **Psychological and mental disturbances-**

- Worsening premenstrual syndrome, Depression, Irritability, Mood swings, Loss of concentration, Poor memory.

### **Sexual dysfunction-**

- Vaginal dryness, Decreased libido, Painful intercourse.

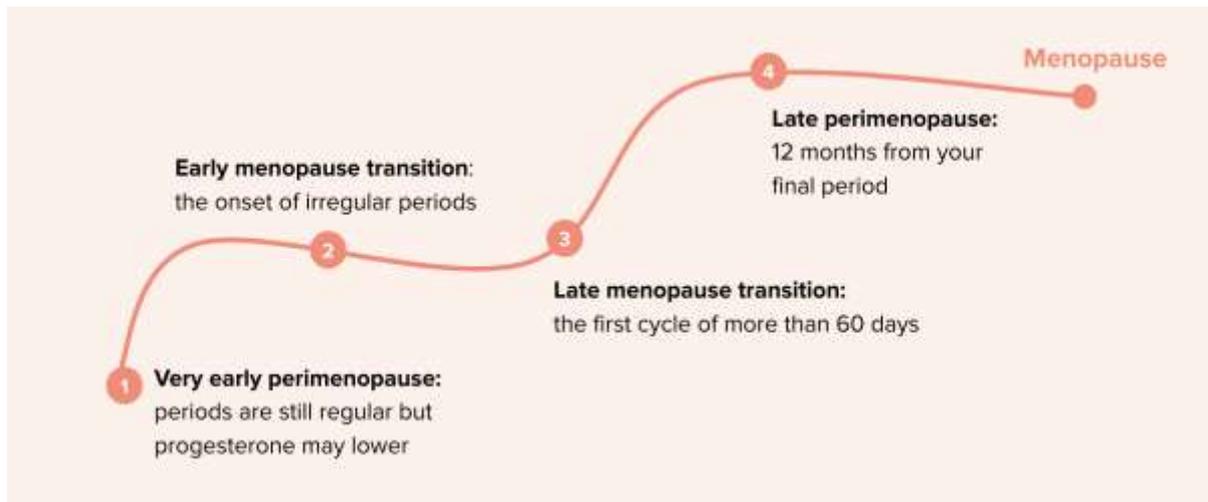
### **Somatic Symptoms-**

- Headache, Dizziness, Palpitation, Breast pain, Joint aches and back pain.

### **Other Symptoms-**

- Urinary incontinence, Dry, itchy skin, Weight gain.

## PHASES OF MENOPAUSE-



### 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 1.2gms of Ca, vitamin A, C, E, D (400 mg) + weight bearing exercises are also necessary
- 2) **HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy)** – Only estrogen 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.

#### • **Drugs used in HRT:**

Estrogen, Progesterone, Tibolone, Raloxifene, Bisphosphonates and Soya.

#### **Estrogen and Progesterone:**

- Designed for women who have a uterus.
- Estrogen is given regularly while progesterone is added on supplementary basis.
- These 2 hormones are given in combination to prevent overgrowth of uterine lining.
- Estrogen alone may irritate this lining which could lead to endometrial cancer.

#### **Commonly used Estrogen and Progesterone:**

- **Estrogen-**
  - Conjugated estrogen (0.625 – 1.23mg/d)
  - Micronized oestradiol (1- 2mg/d)
- **Progestin-**
  - Medroxyprogesterone acetate (2.5 – 5mg/d)
  - Micronized progesterone (100 – 300mg/d)
  - Dydrogesterone (5 – 10mg/d)

#### **Benefits of HRT:**

- Improvement of vasomotor symptoms (70-80%)
- Improvement of urogenital atrophy
- Increase in bone mineral density (2-5%)
- Decrease risk in vertebral and hip fracture (25-50%)
- Reduction in colorectal cancer (20%)
- Possibly cardio protection.

### Disadvantages of HRT:

- By giving oestrogen and progesterone over a long period is known to stimulate cell division and this seem to increase the risk for breast cancer by upto 90%
- HRT increase the risk of heart disease by 24%
- One should use HRT for not more than 5years.

### DISCUSSION

- *Rajonivrtti* represents a natural transition in a woman's life associated with *Jara*, *Dhatu-kshaya* and predominance of *Vata dosha*. *Ayurveda* views this phase not as a disease but as a *Swabhavika Kalaja Avastha*, emphasizing adaptation rather than suppression of symptoms. The Ayurvedic approach to healthy aging during *Rajonivrtti* focuses on maintaining *Dosha-samya*, nourishing depleted *Dhatu*s and strengthening *Satva*.
- Holistic interventions such as *Ahara* and *Vihara* tailored to pacify *Vata* help in minimizing physical degeneration and metabolic disturbances. *Rasayana* therapy plays a crucial role in delaying senescence, enhancing immunity and improving musculoskeletal and neuropsychological health. *Panchakarma*, especially *Basti*, effectively corrects *Vata* imbalance and supports tissue nourishment. Additionally, *Yogasana*, *Pranayama* and *Satvavajaya Chikitsa* address psychological symptoms like anxiety, insomnia and mood fluctuations.
- Thus, *Ayurveda* provides a comprehensive, preventive and promotive framework for *Rajonivrtti*, ensuring healthy aging, functional independence and improved quality of life in menopausal women.

### CONCLUSION

- *Rajonivrtti* is a natural, inevitable stage of a woman's life and should be approached as a process of healthy aging rather than a pathological condition. Ayurvedic principles provide a comprehensive, safe and holistic framework for managing menopausal symptoms through *Vata-shamana*, *Dhatu-poshana* and *Rasayana* therapy. Integrating Ayurvedic wisdom with modern understanding can significantly improve quality of life in menopausal women.

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