

**MENOPAUSAL ANXIETY: PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT THROUGH
AYURVEDA AND YOGA**Aditi Bhagat^{*1}, Hemangini Waghulade²¹M.D Scholar, Department of Kriya Sharir.²Professor and HOD Department of Kriya Sharir.

D.Y. Patil Deemed to be University School of Ayurveda, Navi Mumbai.

***Corresponding Author: Aditi Bhagat**

M.D Scholar, Department of Kriya Sharir, D.Y. Patil Deemed to be University School of Ayurveda, Navi Mumbai.

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ABSTRACT

Menopause is a natural phase in a woman's life that marks the end of her reproductive years. While it is a natural transition, menopause can bring about various physical and emotional changes. One common issue experienced by many women during this stage is menopausal anxiety. According to Ayurveda, menopausal anxiety is primarily caused by an imbalance in the doshas, which are the fundamental energies governing the body. When the doshas, namely Vata, Pitta and Kapha, are imbalanced, it can lead to emotional disturbances and anxiety. Ayurveda focuses on restoring balance to alleviate these symptoms. In this article, we will explore the Ayurvedic perspective on menopausal anxiety, as well as delve into effective prevention and management strategies through Ayurveda and yoga.

KEYWORDS: Anxiety, Menopause, Menopausal anxiety, Ayurveda, personalised interventions, well-being.**INTRODUCTION**

Menopause is a natural biological process that occurs when a woman's menstrual cycles permanently cease. During this transition, the body undergoes hormonal changes that can lead to various physical and emotional symptoms. One common symptom experienced by women is anxiety, which can significantly impact their overall well-being and quality of life.

According to Ayurveda, menopause is primarily caused by an imbalance of doshas, which are the fundamental energies governing the body. When the doshas, namely Vata, Pitta and Kapha, are imbalanced, it can lead to emotional disturbances and anxiety. Menopause is linked with the Vata dosha-dominated phase of life. Therefore, symptoms in the menopausal phase, like Insomnia, Anxiety, Urinary symptoms and osteoporotic changes occur. Vitiated Vata dosha also disturbs the other Sharir as well as Manas doshas (raja and tama doshas), leading to various psychological disturbances.

Before determining the appropriate ayurvedic treatment approach, it is crucial to identify the dosha and dhatu imbalance associated with menopausal anxiety. Vata imbalance may result in restlessness and fear due to prana and udaan vayu psychological symptoms, like sleep disturbances, mood swings, anxiety, and depression. Pitta imbalance can manifest as irritability

and anger, while kapha imbalance can lead to feelings of sadness and lethargy. As menopause occurs in later stages of life, it is also referred to as menopause. Menopausal anxiety can significantly impact a woman's life, but with the holistic approach of Ayurveda and yoga, it can be effectively prevented and managed. By addressing dosha imbalances, adopting lifestyle modifications, practising stress reduction techniques, and incorporating ayurveda medicines, women can find relief from anxiety and embrace this transformative phase with grace and vitality.

Need for the study

Menopausal anxiety affects a significant number of women, often disrupting their daily lives and overall quality of life. While conventional treatments are available, many individuals seek alternative and holistic approaches that align with their personal beliefs and values. Ayurveda, an ancient Indian system of medicine, offers a comprehensive perspective on anxiety and provides natural remedies to address the underlying causes.

By conducting this study on the Ayurveda perspective of menopausal anxiety and its prevention and management through Ayurveda and yoga, one can gain valuable insights into effective, sustainable, and personalised approaches to support women during this transitional

phase. This study aims to bridge the gap between traditional Ayurvedic wisdom and modern scientific understanding, promoting integrative healthcare practices for the well-being of women experiencing menopausal anxiety.

Through a thorough exploration of Ayurvedic principles, dosha imbalances, lifestyle modifications, dietary recommendations, herbal remedies, stress reduction techniques, and the integration of yoga and mindfulness practices, this research paper will provide a comprehensive guide for women seeking natural and holistic ways to alleviate menopausal anxiety symptoms.

1. Literature Study for Menopausal Anxiety

● Ayurveda view

According to Acharya Charaka, the body elements become disassociated with causative factors; however, the disassociation is always there in the course of nature. This phenomenon is described as swabhava. Thus, the phenomenon of ageing is explained, reproductive capability is bound to cease naturally, which is termed as rajo nivrutti. In the classical textbook of Ayurveda, Acharya Sushruta described the 4 stages of Madhyama avastha in Vaya vibhajan. Out of which menopause comes in the 4th stage, i.e. Parihani stage, which starts at the age of 40 years and ends at 70 years, where the gradual degenerative changes of the body (Dhatu Kshaya) occur. Menopause may come under the heading Rajonivrutti or Jarapakva avastha of the body. Acharya Sushruta mentioned that 50 years is the age of menopause (Rajonivrutti) 3. According to Acharya Vagbhata, the age of menopause is 50 years as well.4 It is mentioned that annarasa (Ahara rasa) is responsible for the rasadi dhatu pusti by its prenanakarma, but when the jara stage reaches annarasa is not so favourable to do dhatu pusti because in jaravastha vata dosha is predominant. Because of vata vriddhi, the ruksha and laghu guna acts on snigdha and guru guna of rasa dhatu, and it is unable to nourish cells; consequently, the cells become shoshita and stop working, and hence rajonivrutti takes place.

● Samprapti ghataka of Rajonivrutti

Dosha - Vata - Apana, Vyana.

Pitta - Pachaka

Kapha - Kledaka

Dushya - Rasa, Rakta, Mansa, Meda, Asthi, Majja and Artava.

Agni - Jatharagni Mandya, Dhatwagni vishama.

Srotas - Rasavaha srotas

Artavavaha srotas

Udbhava sthana - Rasa Rakta vaha srotas

Vyakta sthana - Artava vaha srotas.

● Samprati of Rajonivrutti

Physiological Process of Rajo Nivrutti

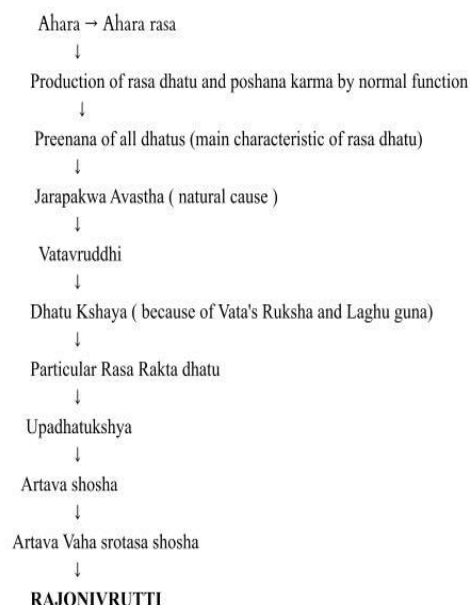


Fig. no. 1: Physiological Process of Rajo nivrutti.

● Types of Rajonivrutti

There are two types of rajo nivrutti

- ❖ **Kalaja rajo nivrutti (prakrita rajo nivrutti)** - menopause, which occurs naturally. It is yasya, i.e. by treatment with rasayana, that it can be maintained.
- ❖ **Akalaja rajo nivrutti (aprakrita rajo nivrutti)** - premature and delayed menopause.

In the postmenopausal stage, there is predominance of Vata dosha & menopausal.

Symptoms are due to Vata vriddhi and Dhatu Kshaya. Menopause is a transition phase in which the Pitta stage is converted into the Vata stage. Symptoms like hot flushes, excessive sweating, and irritability are due to Pitta doshas. There is a considerable decrease in kapha dosha, which is also responsible for rajo nivrutti. In Ayurveda, various psychological conditions (Manas bhavas) are explained, like shoka (grief), bhaya (fear), chinta (greed) and krodha (anger), etc. can be considered to play an important role in the precipitation of disease. Many such manas bhavas affect menopausal women, and because of that, different psychological disturbances occur. Rajonivrutti is a consequence of jaraavastha, and during this phase, vata is dominant. As we saw earlier, there is a relationship between Vata and Manas. It can be clearly seen that all disturbances during Rajonivrutti happened due to the initiation of vata during this phase.

Disturbance in given physiology of Vata	Disturbances observed in Rajonivritti phase
Niyanta Praneta Cha Manas Sarvendriyarthanam Abhivodha Sarvendriyanam Udhyojaka Harsha Utsaha Yoni Sameerane Agni	Psychological disturbances like anxiety, Irritability, Depression, Mood Swings, etc. Digestive troubles like Aruchi, Hrilasa, Ajeerna, etc
Sarva Sarira Dhatu Vyuhkar Sandhankar Sharirasya Kshepta Bahirmalanam	Circulatory disturbances resulting in cardiovascular problems like palpitations, and vasomotor complaints like hot flashes.
Prakriti Shabda Sparshayoh Pravartak	Menopausal arthropathies Disturbances related to waste products like stool, urine, sweat, menses, For example, constipation, dysuria, excessive sweating, etc.
Cheshtanam Ucchaavachanam Pravartako Vacha	Sensory motor problems Difficulty in initiating activities, fatigue, weakness, etc. Swarabhanga

Fig. no. 2: Relation between disturbances observed in Vata dosha and Rajonivritti Phase.

2. Modern View

According to modern science, menopause is the permanent cessation of menstruation caused by ovarian failure and occurs at an average age of 52 years, with a range of 42 to 58 years.

Menopause is defined retrospectively as the time of the final menstrual period followed by 12 months of amenorrhea. Postmenopause refers to the period following the final menstrual period.

Menopause is associated with changes in the hypothalamic and pituitary hormones that regulate the menstrual cycle. Menopause is an indication of primary ovarian failure.

At the ovarian level, ovarian follicles are depleted because of programmed cell death. The ovary can no longer respond to the pituitary's follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) and luteinizing hormone (LH), and ovarian estrogen production decreases. Rising FSH levels, reduced ovarian antral follicle count, and declining levels of inhibin-B and AMH(anti-mullerian hormone) accompany menstrual cycle changes. Going through menopause, the ovaries stop releasing eggs and make little to no estrogen. Hormone levels tend to fluctuate a lot during the 10 or so years before your period stops, otherwise known as perimenopause. In general, psychological symptoms like anxiety, depression and forgetfulness occur in perimenopause. And we think it's these hormonal shifts that cause anxiety more than the actual decline in estrogen. Vasomotor symptoms, or hot flashes and night sweats, can also affect your mood in direct and indirect ways. When your body warms up suddenly, your heart might speed up as you start to sweat. Some people get dizzy or have chest pain. May also have a surge of adrenaline, a hormone designed to make you a little anxious in a stressful situation. Hot flashes can also wake you up at night. So not only are you having hormonal shifts that

might affect your mood, sleep-deprived. And you might have a harder time managing stress, being tired all the time. The increased frequency of anxiety, headache, insomnia, irritability, dysphasia and depression. They also suffer from dementia, mood swings and inability to concentrate. Oestrogen increases opioid (neurotransmitter) activity in the brain and is known to be important for memory.

If you add all these physical and emotional changes together, that makes it anxious.

DISCUSSION

The literature study on the Ayurveda perspective of menopausal anxiety and its prevention and management through Ayurveda and yoga provides valuable insights into holistic approaches for addressing menopausal anxiety. By examining relevant scholarly articles and research, we have gained a comprehensive understanding of the Ayurvedic view on menopausal anxiety, dosha imbalances, preventive strategies, management approaches, and the role of yoga as a complementary therapy.

The Ayurvedic perspective highlights the importance of restoring dosha balance to alleviate menopausal anxiety. According to Ayurveda, imbalances in Vata, Pitta, and Kapha doshas can contribute to emotional disturbances and anxiety during menopause. By identifying the specific dosha imbalance, personalised treatments can be recommended to address the underlying causes.

According to dosha predominance, the symptoms of rajonivritti are as follows.

Vata pradhana lakshanas are adhmana, vibandha, sira shula, hrid spandhanadhikya, sandhi vedana, hastapada supti, karna ksveda, bhrama, anidra, katishula. Pitta pradhana lakshanas are swedana kriya. Kapha pradhana lakshanas are aruchi, medo vrudhi.

As it is a degeneration process, seven dhatus can also be affected, and the associated symptoms of menopause according to dhatu kshaya.

Rasa dhatu kshaya causes Irritability, Generalised Weakness, Rakta dhatu kshaya causes dryness of skin and cessation of menses, Mamsa dhatu kshaya causes loss of tone and elasticity of skin, Meda dhatu kshaya causes dryness of skin, weakness, cachexia, Asthi dhatu kshaya causes arthritis, osteoporosis. Majja dhatu kshaya causes mood swings, depression, and Shukra dhatu kshaya causes dyspareunia, loss of libido.

Lifestyle modifications, dietary recommendations, herbal remedies, stress reduction techniques, and the integration of yoga and mindfulness practices provide a comprehensive approach to managing menopausal anxiety through Ayurveda and yoga. These strategies offer natural, personalised, and sustainable alternatives for women seeking holistic solutions during this transformative phase of life. Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) proved to be an effective treatment to overcome anxiety caused by menopausal disorder, based on group counselling and intervention methods to rapidly open patients' inner channels and help them to carry out cognitive reconstruction. This method also reduces adverse emotions and improves social functions.

In addition to Ayurveda therapies and yoga, adopting certain lifestyle modifications can greatly contribute to emotional well-being during menopause. These modifications include maintaining a regular sleep pattern, reducing exposure to stressors, engaging in enjoyable activities, and cultivating a positive mindset.

By synthesising the findings from various scholarly sources, this literature study underscores the significance of Ayurveda and yoga in supporting women's mental and emotional well-being during menopause. The integrated approach of Ayurveda, with its emphasis on dosha balance, preventive measures, personalised treatments, and the use of natural remedies, provides a valuable framework for managing menopausal anxiety effectively.

Ayurveda emphasises the role of a nourishing diet in managing anxiety. Including foods that balance the doshas, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and healthy fats, can promote emotional stability and alleviate anxiety symptoms. It is also important to avoid excessive caffeine, spicy foods, and processed sugars. Stress reduction techniques play a vital role in managing menopausal anxiety. Ayurveda suggests satvavajaya chikitsa that incorporates practices like deep breathing exercises, which promote mindfulness to promote emotional balance.

The use of herbs, such as Ashwagandha, Brahmi, Shatavari, and Jatamansi, helps stabilise emotions and promote relaxation. Ayurvedic therapies like Abhyanga, Shirodhara, and Swedana provide relaxation and restore

dosha balance. The properties in these drugs help to decrease anxiety as the inhibitory presynaptic action of GABA (Gamma-aminobutyric acid) and sedative activities in the limbic system.

Engaging in regular physical activity and exercise is crucial for overall well-being during menopause. Exercise releases endorphins, which are natural mood boosters, and helps reduce anxiety. Activities like walking, swimming, and yoga are particularly beneficial.

Adequate sleep is essential for managing menopausal anxiety. Establishing a soothing bedtime routine, creating a comfortable sleep environment, and practising relaxation techniques before sleep can promote restful sleep and minimise anxiety symptoms.

Seeking social support and maintaining emotional connections with loved ones are vital during menopause. Sharing experiences, concerns, and emotions with trusted individuals can provide a sense of belonging, reduce anxiety, and foster emotional well-being.

CONCLUSION

The Ayurveda perspective of menopausal anxiety and its prevention and management through Ayurveda and yoga offer valuable insights and holistic approaches for women experiencing this transitional phase. Ayurveda recognises menopause as a natural and transformative process, where imbalances in the doshas can contribute to emotional disturbances and anxiety. By restoring dosha balance, adopting preventive strategies, and incorporating Ayurvedic therapies, herbal remedies, and lifestyle modifications, women can effectively manage menopausal anxiety symptoms and promote overall well-being.

The Ayurvedic approach emphasises the importance of a balanced daily routine, stress reduction techniques, exercise, and a nourishing diet to maintain emotional well-being during menopause. Yoga, as a complementary therapy, plays a significant role in reducing stress, balancing hormones, and enhancing emotional stability. The use of herbs, such as Ashwagandha, Brahmi, Shatavari, and Jatamansi, helps stabilise emotions and promote relaxation. Ayurvedic therapies like Abhyanga, Shirodhara, and Swedana provide relaxation and restore dosha balance.

By synthesising the findings from various scholarly sources, this literature study emphasises the significance of incorporating Ayurvedic principles and practices into the management of menopausal anxiety. It highlights the holistic nature of Ayurveda, which takes into account the physical, mental, and emotional aspects of women's health during menopause.

It is important to note that individual experiences may vary, and it is advisable to consult with Ayurvedic practitioners or healthcare professionals for personalised

guidance and treatment. The integration of Ayurvedic wisdom with modern scientific understanding provides comprehensive and personalised approaches to managing menopausal anxiety.

In conclusion, the Ayurveda perspective of menopausal anxiety and its prevention and management through Ayurveda and yoga offer a holistic and natural approach for women seeking to navigate menopause with grace, resilience, and optimal well-being.

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