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RESEARCH ARTICLE

MENOPAUSAL SYMPTOMS AND THEIR MANAGEMENT THROUGH KALPAS DESCRIBED IN AYURVEDIC SAMHITAS: A NARRATIVE REVIEW

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Abstract

Menopause is a natural physiological milestone in a woman's life, marking the end of reproductive capacity due to cessation of ovarian function. The decline in estrogen levels during this transition is associated with a variety of vasomotor, psychological, musculoskeletal, and urogenital symptoms that may significantly impair quality of life. Although Ayurveda does not describe menopause as a separate disease entity, the concept of Rajonivritti closely resembles the menopausal transition and is explained as a natural consequence of Jaravastha (aging), Dhatukshaya (tissue depletion), and predominance of Vata Dosha. Classical Ayurvedic literature contains numerous Kalpas and Rasayana formulations that support healthy aging and alleviate symptoms associated with menopausal changes. The present review explores eleven commonly encountered menopausal symptoms, their Ayurvedic interpretation, and the potential role of classical Ayurvedic Kalpas in their management. The review highlights the relevance of Ayurvedic principles in promoting physical, psychological, and emotional well-being during menopause.

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Introduction:-

Menopause is a universal biological phenomenon characterized by the permanent cessation of menstruation resulting from the loss of ovarian follicular activity. According to modern medicine, natural menopause is diagnosed retrospectively after twelve consecutive months of amenorrhea and commonly occurs between 45 and 55 years of age.[1] With increasing life expectancy, women today spend nearly one-third of their lives in the postmenopausal period, making the maintenance of health during this stage an important public health concern. The menopausal transition is frequently accompanied by a broad spectrum of symptoms including hot flashes, night sweats, sleep

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disturbances, mood swings, anxiety, depression, fatigue, memory impairment, vaginal dryness, joint pain, and osteoporosis. These symptoms can negatively affect social functioning, productivity, family relationships, and overall quality of life.[2] Ayurveda views menopause not as a disease but as a natural transition occurring due to the influence of Kala (time) and aging. The cessation of menstruation is referred to as Rajonivritti, which occurs as a consequence of progressive depletion of bodily tissues and predominance of Vata Dosha. Classical Ayurvedic scholars emphasized the importance of Rasayana Chikitsa, appropriate diet, lifestyle modifications, and rejuvenative formulations to ensure healthy aging and preservation of vitality.[3] Numerous Ayurvedic Kalpas described in Samhitas possess Balya, Brimhana, Rasayana, and Medhya properties that can help women adapt to physiological changes associated with menopause. This review attempts to consolidate classical references and explore their potential role in managing menopausal symptoms.

Materials and Methods:-

This narrative review was conducted through a comprehensive study of classical Ayurvedic texts including Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya, Kashyapa Samhita, Bhavaprakasha, and other authoritative Ayurvedic compendia. Information regarding Rajonivritti, aging, Rasayana Chikitsa, and Kalpas useful in women's health was systematically collected. Relevant modern literature on menopause and menopausal symptomatology was reviewed from standard gynecology textbooks and peer-reviewed scientific publications. The collected data were critically analyzed and organized under symptom-specific Ayurvedic interpretations and corresponding classical formulations.

Ayurvedic Understanding of Rajonivritti:-

Ayurvedic classics describe aging as a gradual process involving depletion of body tissues, reduction in vitality, and increasing dominance of Vata Dosha. Acharya Sushruta states that menstruation generally ceases around the age of fifty years, which closely corresponds to the modern understanding of menopause.[4]

The pathogenesis of menopausal symptoms can be understood through the following sequence:-

Jaravastha → Dhatukshaya → Vata Prakopa → Functional Disturbances → Menopausal Symptoms

Important Ayurvedic factors involved include:-

- Predominance of Vata Dosha
- Depletion of Rasa and Rakta Dhatu
- Progressive Asthi and Majja Dhatu Kshaya
- Decline of Ojas
- Alteration in mental equilibrium

Consequently, women may experience physical weakness, emotional instability, dryness, sleep disturbances, and degenerative changes.

Rajonivritti: An Ayurvedic Perspective on Menopausal Transition:-

Although the term menopause is not explicitly described in classical Ayurvedic texts, the concept of Rajonivritti closely corresponds to the cessation of menstruation occurring during the later stages of life. Ayurveda considers Rajonivritti a natural physiological event rather than a disease condition. It is regarded as a consequence of Kala (time), Svabhava (natural process), and Jaravastha (aging). Acharya Sushruta specifically mentions that menstruation ceases around the age of fifty years, which corresponds remarkably with the modern age of menopause. The menopausal transition is characterized by progressive Dhatukshaya, particularly involving Rasa, Rakta, Asthi, and Majja Dhatus. With advancing age, Vata Dosha naturally becomes predominant, resulting in dryness, degeneration, instability, and depletion of body tissues. Simultaneously, reduction in Ojas and Bala contributes to physical weakness, emotional disturbances, sleep disorders, and musculoskeletal complaints commonly observed in menopausal women.

From an Ayurvedic standpoint, the pathogenesis of menopausal symptoms can be understood as a sequential process beginning with Jaravastha, leading to Dhatukshaya, Vata Prakopa, and eventual manifestation of physical and psychological symptoms. Therefore, management should not focus solely on symptom relief but should aim at restoring Dosha equilibrium, nourishing depleted tissues, promoting mental stability, and supporting healthy aging through Rasayana, Brimhana, Balya, and Medhya interventions.

Eleven Common Menopausal Symptoms and Their Ayurvedic Interpretation:-

Hot Flashes:-

Hot flashes are the hallmark symptom of menopause and are characterized by sudden sensations of heat, facial flushing, and excessive sweating. Ayurveda correlates these manifestations with aggravated Pitta associated with unstable Vata. Rejuvenative and cooling formulations help reduce symptom intensity.[5] 2. Night Sweats Night sweats frequently disturb sleep and contribute to fatigue. They may be interpreted as manifestations of Pitta aggravation along with tissue depletion. Cooling and nourishing therapies are beneficial.

Sleep Disturbances:-

Insomnia is highly prevalent during menopause. Vata aggravation affects the mind and nervous system, leading to difficulty initiating or maintaining sleep. Medhya Rasayana and Vata-pacifying measures are particularly useful.[6]

Mood Swings:-

Fluctuating emotions, irritability, and frustration are commonly reported. Ayurveda attributes these symptoms to disturbances of Vata and Raja Guna affecting mental stability. [7]

Depression:-

Persistent sadness, emotional withdrawal, and reduced enthusiasm may result from Ojas depletion and mental imbalance. Rasayana therapy aims to restore emotional resilience and psychological well-being. [8]

Anxiety:-

Anxiety is predominantly a Vata disorder. Restlessness, excessive worrying, and nervousness become more pronounced during menopausal transition due to physiological and hormonal changes. [9]

Fatigue:-

Chronic fatigue and lack of energy often reflect depletion of Rasa Dhatu and diminished vitality. Brimhana and Balya therapies support restoration of strength. [10]

Memory Problems:-

Many women report forgetfulness and reduced concentration. Ayurveda associates these symptoms with Majja Dhatu depletion and impaired mental functioning.

Vaginal Dryness:-

Reduced estrogen levels lead to vaginal dryness, discomfort, and dyspareunia. Ayurveda interprets this as a manifestation of Vata predominance and Rasa Dhatu Kshaya. [11]

Joint Pain:-

Joint stiffness and musculoskeletal discomfort are common complaints during menopause. Vata aggravation combined with Asthi Dhatu depletion contributes significantly to these symptoms. [12]

Osteoporosis:-

Postmenopausal bone loss is a major health concern. Ayurveda recognizes a close relationship between Vata Dosha and Asthi Dhatu; therefore, Asthi Kshaya becomes increasingly evident during aging. [13]

Classical Ayurvedic Kalpas Useful in Menopause:-

Shatavari Kalpa [14]:-

Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*) is considered one of the most important herbs for women's health. Classical texts describe it as Rasayana, Balya, and Vayasthapana. It nourishes Rasa Dhatu, supports reproductive tissues, and helps alleviate hot flashes, vaginal dryness, fatigue, and emotional instability.

Ashwagandha Kalpa [15]:-

Ashwagandha is renowned for its adaptogenic and rejuvenative properties. It promotes strength, improves sleep quality, reduces anxiety, and combats fatigue. Its Vata-pacifying action makes it particularly valuable during menopause.

Amalaki Rasayana [16]:-

Amalaki is considered one of the best anti-aging remedies described in Ayurveda. Rich in antioxidant potential, it promotes tissue nourishment, improves immunity, and supports healthy aging. It may be useful in vasomotor symptoms and general weakness

Brahma Rasayana [17]:-

Brahma Rasayana is a classical formulation indicated for enhancement of memory, intellect, and mental stability. It is beneficial in women experiencing forgetfulness, mood disturbances, and emotional stress.

Kalyanaka Ghrita [18]:-

Kalyanaka Ghrita described in Charaka Chikitsa Sthana is a renowned Medhya and Rasayana formulation indicated in disorders affecting cognition, emotional stability, and mental health. Owing to its ability to promote memory, intellect, and psychological resilience, it may be beneficial in menopausal women experiencing mood swings, anxiety, irritability, and cognitive decline.

Mahakalyanaka Ghrita [19]:-

Mahakalyanaka Ghrita is an expanded form of Kalyanaka Ghrita possessing potent Medhya, Rasayana, and Balya properties. It may be useful in women suffering from persistent psychological symptoms, emotional instability, and memory impairment during menopause.

Mahapanchagavya Ghrita [20]:-

Mahapanchagavya Ghrita is described for disorders involving disturbances of mental functions. Its Medhya and Tridosha-balancing actions may support psychological well-being and emotional stability during menopausal transition.

Brahmi Ghrita [21]:-

Brahmi Ghrita is one of the most widely utilized Medhya formulations in Ayurveda. It enhances memory, concentration, and mental clarity while reducing stress and anxiety. These properties make it particularly relevant for menopausal women experiencing forgetfulness, poor concentration, and emotional disturbances.

Kashmaryadi Ghrita [22]:-

Kashmaryadi Ghrita described in Charaka Chikitsa Sthana 30 possesses Vata-Pittahara and Yonidoshahara properties. Its nourishing and unctuous nature may help alleviate vaginal dryness, discomfort, and dyspareunia commonly encountered during menopause.

Chyavanaprasha Avaleha [23]:-

Chyavanaprasha is one of the most celebrated Rasayana formulations. It promotes vitality, immunity, and longevity. Regular use may improve energy levels and overall quality of life during menopause.

Guduchi Kalpa (Guduchyadi Kwatha) [24]:-

Guduchi possesses Rasayana, immunomodulatory, and adaptogenic properties. It helps combat fatigue, enhances resistance to stress, and supports healthy aging.

Vidarikanda Kalpa (Vidaryadi Kwatha) [25]:-

Vidarikanda acts as a nourishing and strengthening formulation. It replenishes depleted tissues and supports physical endurance in menopausal women.

Bala Kalpa (Baladi Ghrita) [26]:-

Bala is traditionally employed for improving strength and reducing Vata-related disorders. It is useful in musculoskeletal symptoms and generalized weakness.

Musali Kalpa [27]:-

Musali Kalpa is described as a potent Brimhana, Balya, and Vrishya preparation. It nourishes depleted tissues, improves strength, and supports physical endurance. The formulation may be particularly useful in menopausal women experiencing chronic fatigue, reduced stamina, and generalized weakness resulting from progressive tissue depletion.

Kharjuradi Kalpa [28]:-

Kharjuradi Kalpa possesses nourishing and rejuvenative properties. Its Madhura Rasa and Brimhana action help replenish depleted Rasa Dhatu and improve overall vitality. The formulation may be beneficial in women experiencing fatigue, dryness, and reduced energy levels during menopause.

Drakshadi Kalpa [29]:-

Drakshadi Kalpa is recognized for its cooling, nourishing, and Pittashamaka properties. It may help alleviate

vasomotor symptoms such as hot flushes, excessive sweating, irritability, and burning sensations. Its antioxidant and restorative actions contribute to overall well-being during the menopausal transition.

Vidarikanda Kalpa [30]:-

Vidarikanda Kalpa acts as a Rasayana and Brimhana formulation. It nourishes Rasa and Mamsa Dhatus, improves strength, and supports healthy aging. Its tissue-building properties make it particularly useful in managing fatigue, dryness, and age-related degeneration.

Shatavari Kalpa [31]:-

Yogaratanakara describes Shatavari Kalpa as a nourishing formulation with Rasayana and Vata-Pittahara properties. It supports reproductive health, alleviates dryness, promotes tissue nourishment, and may help manage vasomotor and psychological symptoms associated with menopause.

Ashwagandha Kalpa [32]:-

Ashwagandha Kalpa is extensively used as a Balya and Rasayana formulation. It improves physical strength, promotes restful sleep, reduces anxiety, and supports adaptation to physiological stress. Its Vatahara action makes it especially beneficial during Rajonivritti.

Rasnadi Ksheerapaka [33]:-

Rasnadi Ksheerapaka combines the nourishing properties of milk with Vatahara herbs. It is especially useful in Vata-dominant menopausal manifestations such as vaginal dryness, musculoskeletal discomfort, and generalized tissue depletion.

Table 1: Menopausal Symptoms and Corresponding Ayurvedic Kalpas

Menopausal Symptoms	Ayurvedic Interpretation	Useful kalpas / Formulations
Hot Flushes	Pitta-Vata aggravation, Daha	Shatavari Kalpa, Drakshadi Kalpa, Amalaki Rasayana, Dhanyakadi Hima, Ushirasava
Night Sweats	Pitta predominance, Dhatu Kshaya	Shatavari Kalpa, Kalpa, Dhanyakadi Hima, Ushirasava
Insomnia	Vata aggravation, Manovaha Srotas Dushti	Ashwagandha Kalpa, Brahma Rasayana, Kalyanaka Ghrita, Mahakalyanaka Ghrita, Brahmi Ghrita
Mood Swings	Vata-Rajasa imbalance	Brahma Rasayana, Guduchi Kalpa, Shatavari Kalpa, Kalyanaka Ghrita, Mahakalyanaka Ghrita, Brahmi Ghrita
Depression	Ojas Kshaya, Manasika Daurbalya	Brahma Rasayana, Chyavanaprasha Avaleha, Ashwagandha Kalpa, Kalyanaka Ghrita, Mahakalyanaka Ghrita, Mahapanchagavya Ghrita
Anxiety	Vata predominance	Ashwagandha Kalpa, Brahma Rasayana, Kalyanaka Ghrita, Brahmi Ghrita, Mahapanchagavya Ghrita
Fatigue	Rasa Dhatu Kshaya, Bala Hani	Musali Kalpa, Vidarikanda Kalpa, Kharjuradi Kalpa, Chyavanaprasha Avaleha,

		Kushmandavaleha, Dashamula dyarishta
Memory Problems	Majja Dhatu Kshaya, Smriti Bhramsha	Brahma Rasayana, Guduchi Kalpa, Brahmi Ghrita, Kalyanaka Ghrita, Ad Mahakalyanaka Ghrita, Yogaraja Guggulu
Urinary Complaints (Frequency, Urgency, Dysuria)	Mutravaha Srotodushti, Vata aggravation	Gokshuradi Guggul, Kumaryasava, Devadarvyarishta
Vaginal Dryness & Dyspareunia	Vata predominance, Rasa Kshaya	Shatavari Kalpa, Ksheerapaka Preparations, Kashmaryadi Ghrita, Rasnadi Ksheerapaka
Joint Pain & Stiffness	Asthi Kshaya, Vata aggravation	Bala Kalpa, Ashwagandha Kalpa, Vidarikanda Kalpa, Yogaraja Guggulu, Dashamuladyarishta, Rasnadi Ksheerapaka
Osteoporosis	Asthi Dhaju Kshaya, Vata predominance	Ashwagandha Kalpa, Amalaki Rasayana, Vidarikanda Kalpa, Kushmandavaleha, Dashamuladyarishta
Burning Sensation (Body/Vaginal)	Pitta aggravation, Raktadushti	Dhanyakadi Hima, Ushirasava, Drakshadi Kalpa
General Menopausal Debility	Dhatukshaya, Jaravastha	Chyavanaprasha Avaleha, Musali Kalpa, Kharjuradi Kalpa, Amalaki Rasayana, Kushmandavaleha, Vidarikanda Kalpa, Dashamuladyarishta

Discussion :-

Menopause represents a complex physiological transition characterized by endocrine, metabolic, psychological, musculoskeletal, and genitourinary changes that significantly affect a woman's quality of life. Although hormone replacement therapy remains a conventional therapeutic option, concerns regarding its long-term safety have led to increasing interest in complementary and traditional healthcare approaches. Ayurveda interprets menopause as Rajonivritti, a natural age-related phenomenon resulting from Jaravastha, Dhatukshaya, and progressive predominance of Vata Dosha. The depletion of Rasa, Rakta, Asthi, and Majja Dhatus contributes to the manifestation of vasomotor symptoms, emotional instability, sleep disturbances, cognitive decline, vaginal dryness, joint disorders, and osteoporosis. Consequently, menopausal symptoms are viewed as expressions of systemic imbalance rather than isolated clinical conditions.

A unique aspect of Ayurvedic management is its emphasis on Rasayana Chikitsa, which aims to promote healthy aging, preserve tissue integrity, enhance immunity, and maintain physical and psychological well-being. Classical formulations such as Amalaki Rasayana, Brahma Rasayana, and Chyavanaprasha support vitality and longevity, while Shatavari Kalpa, Ashwagandha Kalpa, Musali Kalpa, Vidarikanda Kalpa, and Kharjuradi Kalpa provide nourishment, strength, and adaptation to age-related physiological changes. The inclusion of Medhya Rasayana formulations further broadens the therapeutic scope of menopause management. Kalyanaka Ghrita, Mahakalyanaka Ghrita, Mahapanchagavya Ghrita, and Brahmi Ghrita are particularly relevant in addressing mood swings, anxiety, depression, insomnia, and memory impairment, which commonly accompany menopausal transition. Similarly, Kashmaryadi Ghrita and Rasnadi Ksheerapaka may be useful in managing vaginal dryness, dyspareunia, and Vata-dominant tissue depletion. Formulations described in Sharangadhara Samhita offer practical therapeutic options for symptom-specific management.

Dhanyakadi Hima and Ushirasava may alleviate hot flushes and burning sensations, Gokshuradi Guggulu, Kumaryasava, and Devadarvyarishta may support urinary health, while Yogaraja Guggulu and Dashamuladyarishta

may help manage joint pain, stiffness, and degenerative musculoskeletal complaints. Kushmandavaleha serves as a valuable Brimhana and Balya formulation for combating fatigue and general debility. Thus, Ayurvedic management of menopause extends beyond symptomatic relief and focuses on restoring Dosha equilibrium, nourishing depleted Dhatus, enhancing mental resilience, and promoting healthy aging. The collective application of Rasayana, Medhya, Brimhana, and Vata-Pittahara therapies provides a holistic and individualized approach to menopausal care.

Conclusion:-

Menopause is a natural physiological transition associated with diverse physical, psychological, and degenerative changes that can substantially affect quality of life. Ayurveda explains this stage through the concepts of Rajonivritti, Dhatukshaya, and Vata predominance, emphasizing restoration of systemic balance rather than symptomatic suppression. Classical formulations described in Charaka Samhita, Yogaratnakara, and Sharangadhara Samhita offer a comprehensive therapeutic framework for menopausal care. Rasayana preparations such as Amalaki Rasayana, Brahma Rasayana, and Chyavanaprasha support healthy aging, while Shatavari Kalpa, Ashwagandha Kalpa, Musali Kalpa, and Vidarikanda Kalpa address tissue depletion and physical weakness. Medhya formulations including Kalyanaka Ghrita, Mahakalyanaka Ghrita, and Brahmi Ghrita may benefit psychological and cognitive symptoms, whereas symptom-specific formulations such as Dhanyakadi Hima, Ushirasava, Gokshuradi Guggulu, and Yogaraja Guggulu provide targeted support for vasomotor, urinary, and musculoskeletal complaints. The integration of Rasayana, Medhya, Brimhana, and Vata-Pittahara therapies highlights Ayurveda's holistic approach to menopausal health. Further clinical studies are warranted to validate these classical formulations and strengthen their role in evidence-based integrative menopause management.

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