

Perimenopausal Symptoms and Their Correlation with Ayurvedic Concepts: A Narrative Review

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Abstract: *Perimenopause is a transitional phase in a woman's reproductive life characterized by progressive ovarian aging, hormonal fluctuations, and multisystem clinical manifestations. Women commonly experience menstrual irregularities, vasomotor symptoms, psychological disturbances, sleep disorders, and musculoskeletal complaints during this period. Although modern medicine primarily attributes these changes to fluctuating estrogen and gonadotropin levels, hormonal explanations alone do not adequately account for the marked inter-individual variability in symptom severity and duration. Ayurveda, with its holistic and life-course-oriented approach, offers a broader conceptual framework to understand perimenopause. Classical Ayurvedic texts do not explicitly describe perimenopause as a separate disease entity; however, concepts such as Jara (aging), Kala parinama (time-dependent transformation), and Rajonivritti (cessation of menstruation) provide valuable insights. The phase preceding Rajonivritti can be correlated with Rajonivritti-purva avastha, characterized by Vata predominance, Dhatu kshaya, and reduced adaptive capacity. This narrative review aims to critically analyze perimenopausal symptoms and correlate them with Ayurvedic principles while integrating contemporary biomedical understanding, thereby highlighting the relevance of Ayurveda in integrative women's midlife health care.*

Keywords: Perimenopause; Rajonivritti; Ayurveda; Jara; Dosha; Dhatu Kshaya; Women's Health

I. INTRODUCTION

Perimenopause represents a critical physiological transition preceding menopause and extending until the final menstrual period. It is marked by gradual depletion of ovarian follicles, irregular ovulatory cycles, and fluctuating levels of estrogen and progesterone, leading to diverse clinical manifestations^{1,2}. Commonly reported symptoms include menstrual irregularity, hot flashes, night sweats, mood swings, anxiety, sleep disturbances, fatigue, and joint pain³. Epidemiological studies suggest that the perimenopausal period may last several years and significantly affect quality of life.

From a biomedical perspective, perimenopausal symptoms are largely attributed to neuroendocrine instability resulting from declining ovarian reserve and altered hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian axis function⁴. However, symptom expression varies widely among women with similar hormonal profiles, indicating that endocrine changes alone are insufficient to explain the complexity of this transition. Psychosocial factors, lifestyle, and individual susceptibility also play important roles.

Ayurveda conceptualizes health and disease through an integrative understanding of body (Sharira), mind (Manas), and time (Kala). Aging (Jara) is described as an inevitable, progressive process affecting all bodily tissues and functions⁵. Rajonivritti, the natural cessation of menstruation, is considered a physiological event (Swabhavika parinama) rather than a pathological condition⁶. Importantly, Ayurveda recognizes gradual transitions preceding major biological milestones. The phase preceding Rajonivritti—conceptually



correlated with perimenopause—can be understood as Rajonivritti-purva avastha, during which functional imbalance becomes clinically evident.

Aim and Objectives Aim

To review perimenopausal symptoms and correlate them with Ayurvedic concepts described in classical literature.

Objectives

1. To describe perimenopause from a modern medical perspective.
2. To analyze Ayurvedic concepts related to aging and reproductive cessation.
3. To correlate perimenopausal symptoms with Dosha and Dhatu involvement.
4. To explore the clinical relevance of Ayurvedic understanding in midlife women.

Materials and Methods

A narrative review was conducted using classical Ayurvedic texts including Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya. Contemporary literature was sourced from standard gynecology textbooks, WHO reports, and peer-reviewed journals. Relevant material was critically analyzed and conceptually synthesized without statistical meta-analysis.

Ayurvedic Perspective of Perimenopausal Transition Rajonivritti and Aging (Jara)

Ayurvedic classics describe Rajonivritti as a natural consequence of aging governed by Kala⁶. With advancing age, progressive Dhatu kshaya occurs, leading to decline in reproductive tissue (Artava) and cessation of menstruation. This process is physiological and distinct from pathological amenorrhea.

Role of Dosha Dynamics

Aging is dominated by Vata Dosha due to its qualities of dryness, lightness, and degeneration⁷. During the perimenopausal phase, aggravated Vata—particularly Apana and Vyana Vata—results in menstrual irregularity, anxiety, palpitations, and sleep disturbances. Pitta involvement explains vasomotor symptoms such as hot flushes, irritability, and excessive sweating, while Kapha kshaya contributes to fatigue, dryness, and reduced tissue stability.

Dhatu Kshaya

Sequential depletion of Dhatus is a hallmark of aging. Rasa and Rakta dhatu kshaya manifest as dryness and vasomotor instability, while Asthi and Majja dhatu kshaya lead to joint pain, weakness, anxiety, and cognitive changes^{8,9}. This explains the multisystem involvement seen in perimenopause.

Psychological Aspects (Manasika Bhavas)

Ayurveda recognizes a close association between Vata and Manas. Declining Satva bala during aging increases susceptibility to anxiety, mood swings, and emotional instability, correlating with neuropsychological symptoms reported during perimenopause¹⁰.

Correlation of Perimenopausal Symptoms with Ayurvedic Concepts

Modern Clinical Feature

Hot flushes, night sweats
Menstrual irregularity
Anxiety, insomnia
Joint pain, stiffness
Fatigue, dryness

Ayurvedic Correlation

Pitta vriddhi with *Vata* association
Apana Vata vaigunya
Vata vriddhi, Manovaha srotodushti
Asthi dhatu kshaya
Kapha kshaya and *Rasa dhatu kshaya*



Discussion

The biomedical model explains perimenopause predominantly through endocrine mechanisms; however, it does not fully address the psychosomatic and constitutional variability observed among women. The Ayurvedic concept of Rajonivritti-purva avastha provides a holistic framework by integrating aging, Dosha predominance, and tissue depletion. Ayurveda emphasizes individualized assessment based on Prakriti, Dosha bala, and Dhatu status, aligning with contemporary concepts of personalized medicine. Viewing perimenopause as a natural transitional phase rather than a disease encourages preventive and promotive strategies aimed at maintaining balance and adaptive capacity.

Clinical Implications

Understanding perimenopause through Ayurvedic principles enables early recognition of functional imbalance and supports lifestyle modification, dietary regulation, and psychosocial support. Such an integrative approach complements modern preventive strategies and enhances overall well-being during midlife without replacing evidence-based medical care.

II. CONCLUSION

Perimenopause is a complex physiological transition involving endocrine, psychological, and systemic changes. Ayurvedic concepts of Jara, Dosha dynamics, and Dhatu kshaya provide a comprehensive understanding of symptom heterogeneity. Correlating perimenopause with Rajonivritti-purva avastha highlights the relevance of Ayurveda in integrative women's health care and opens avenues for interdisciplinary research.

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