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## POSTMENOPAUSAL HEALTH – ROLE OF SNEHAPAN AND BASTICHIKITSA IN VIEW OF ANATOMICOPHYSIOLOGICAL ASPECT

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### Abstract:

The postmenopausal phase marks a significant transition in a woman's life, characterized by the cessation of ovarian hormonal activity and the dominance of *Vata* dosha according to Ayurvedic principles. Anatomically and physiologically, this stage is accompanied by Estrogen withdrawal leading to systemic changes including osteoporosis, vaginal atrophy, neuro-degenerative disturbances, and cardiovascular risks. Ayurveda offers a holistic approach to managing these changes through *Snehapan* (internal oleation) and *Basti Chikitsa* (medicated enemas), particularly focusing on pacifying aggravated *Vata dosha*. *Snehapan*, administered with medicated ghee or oils, plays a crucial role in internal lubrication, nervous system nourishment, hormonal modulation, and preparation for detoxification procedures. Due to the lipophilic nature of ghee and its ability to cross the blood-brain barrier, it is particularly effective in managing neuropsychiatric symptoms like anxiety, insomnia, and memory decline. *Basti Chikitsa* is considered as the prime treatment for *Vata* disorders, directly impacts the colon-an organ closely related to *Vata*'s seat-and regulates systemic functions through enteric and neurohormonal pathways. Medicated decoction (*Niruha Basti*) and oil enemas (*Anuvasana Basti*) help restore reproductive and musculoskeletal health, improve gut microbiota, and support emotional balance. When interpreted through anatomicophysiological lens, these therapies align with the modern understanding of lipid-based drug delivery systems, gut-brain axis, and hormonal regulation via the enteric nervous system. Thus, *Snehapan* and *Basti Chikitsa* provide a personalized, sustainable, and evidence-informed approach to managing postmenopausal health.

**Keywords:** Menopause, *Basti*, *Snehapan*, Lipid brain Barrier, Gut-brain axis

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**INTRODUCTION:**

The postmenopausal phase marks a significant transition in a woman's life, characterized by the permanent cessation of menstruation due to ovarian senescence and it occurs at the age of 45-55 year. This physiological change is often accompanied by various systemic alterations, including hormonal imbalance, decreased bone density, urogenital atrophy, and psychological disturbances. *Rajonivritti* as a diseased condition is not described separately in the classical texts of Ayurveda. According to Acharya Sushruta and various other references too, 50 years is mentioned as the age of *Rajonivritti*<sup>4</sup>. *Rajonivritti janya lakshana* is a group of symptoms are similar to the postmenopausal syndrome. India has a large population, which has already crossed the 1 billion marks with 71 million people over 60 years of age and the number of menopausal women about 43 million. Projected figures in 2026 have estimated the population in India will be 1.4 billion, people over 60 years 173 million, and the menopausal population 103 million. Average age of menopause is 47.5 years in Indian women with an average life expectancy of 71 years<sup>2</sup>. From an Ayurvedic perspective, menopause signifies a natural shift towards vata predominance, leading to symptoms such as dryness, anxiety, insomnia, and joint disorders, which correlate with classical vata vikara. In this context, *Snehpan* (internal oleation) and *Basti Chikitsa* (therapeutic enema) hold significant therapeutic value. These modalities, rooted in the principles of Ayurvedic anatomy and physiology, aim to pacify aggravated vata, nourish the dhatus (tissues), and restore systemic balance. *Snehapana* supports lubrication of internal channels and replenishment of ojas, while *Basti*—regarded as the prime treatment for vata—works at the level of the colon, influencing the entire body through its

regulatory effect on vata dosha. Understanding their relevance in postmenopausal health through the lens of Ayurvedic and modern anatomicophysiological principles offers a promising integrative approach for managing this transitional phase effectively.

**AIM:**

To Study the Role of *Snehapan* and *Bastichikitsakitsa* in Post menopause (*Rajonivritti*) In View of Anatomico-Physiological Aspect

**OBJECTIVES-**

- 1) To Study the *Rajonivritti* (Postmenopausal syndrome) According to Ayurved and Modern science
- 2) To Study the *Snehpan* and *Basti chikitsa* in view of Anatomico-physiological aspect
- 3) To Evaluate the role of *Snehpan* and *Basti chikitsa* according to Ayurved and modern in view of Anatomy and physiology

**MATERIAL AND METHOD:**

Data collected from Classical literature – Ayurvedic Samhita and their commentaries  
Modern textbooks – Google scholar, pubmed and another database

**Ayurvedic aspect of *Rajonivritti***

*Rajonivritti* is not described separately as a pathological condition or severe health problem in Ayurvedic classics. The ancient acharyas termed it as a normal physiology. Human life span is grossly divided into 3 stages in literature, namely *Balyavastha*, *Madhyamavastha* and *Vrudhvastha* which are dominated by *Kapha*, *Pitta*, *Vata* respectively. *Acharya Sushruta* also classified *Madhyamavastha* in 4 groups - *Vrudhi*, *Yuwa*, *Dhatu Sampurnata*, *Kshaya*. In all contexts of Ayurvedic literature the age for *Rajonivritti* is stated around 50 years. *Rajonivritti* is phase where women pass from



*Madhyamavastha* to *Vrudhavastha*. *Sushruta Acharya* has explained that there is *Shareera-Shaithilya* (weakening of tissues) in *Vrudha-Avastha*. This stage of life is dominated by *Vatadosha*, this affects the female body. The dominant Vata Dosha specially with *Laghu* and *Ruksha Guna* results in reduction in *Dravata* of *Rasa Dhatu*. This further leads to *Dhatukshya* starting from *Rasa Dhatu*, further respective *Updhatu Kshaya* takes place. Thus, leading to *Artava Nasha* (amenorrhea). The vitiated Vata Dosha also disturbs the other *Sharira* as well as *Manas Dosha* (*Raja* and *Tama Dosha*) leading to various

psychological disturbances. Thus, according to Ayurveda, we can make a correlation between the different menopausal symptoms seen in the body.

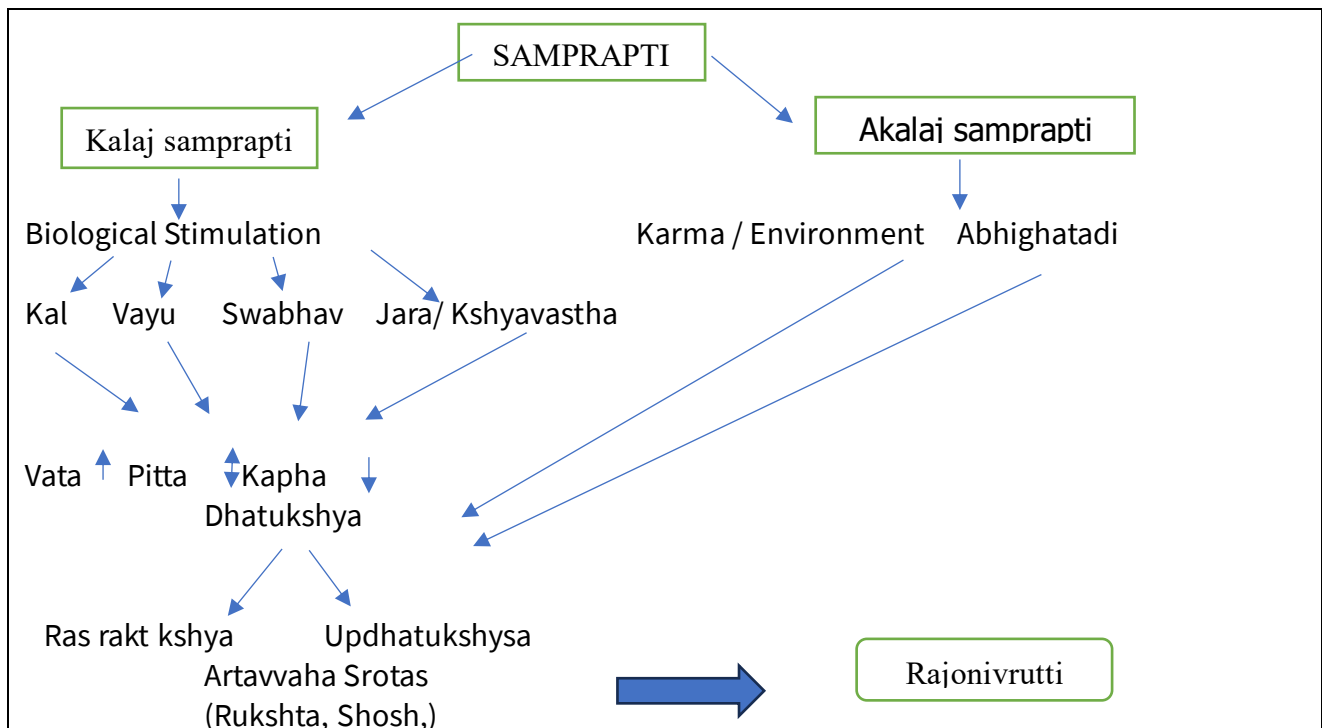
### **Rajonivritti kala (Age of Menopause)**

According to *Sushruta* and various other references too, 50 years is mentioned as the age of *Rajonivritti*, when the body is fully in grip of senility. *Acharya Arundatta* opines that the age mentioned above is a probable age and not a fixed one. There may be some variations in this regard.

### **Lakshnas of Rajonivritti**

Doshaja lakshanas	<i>Vataj-SandhiVedana, Anidra/Alpanidra, BalaKshaya, Bhrama, Katishula</i>
	<i>Piitaj-Yonidaha, Mutradaha, Trisha Daha Swedadhikyata</i>
	<i>Kaphaj -Angamarda, Bhrama, Raukshaya</i>
Manasika lakshanas	<i>Krodha, Shoka, Bhaya, ShirahShula, Chinta, Dwesha,</i>

### **Samprapti of Rajonivutti**



### Signs and Symptoms of Menopause

#### Physical Changes

Although in 50% of women, the effect of Menopause is temporarily delayed by a trickle of estrogen from the adrenal gland, the female body including genitalia reacts to waning ovarian function by atrophy, inactivity and retrogression.

In Ovary: The ovaries shrink in size.

In Fallopian tubes: The fallopian tubes show feature of atrophy.

In Uterus: The uterus gradually gets smaller in size.

In Cervix: The cervix becomes smaller in size.

In Vagina: The vagina becomes narrower and smaller

due to gradual loss of elasticity <sup>5</sup>

#### Vasomotor Symptoms-Hot flashes, Palpitation, Night

Sexual Urogenital Symptoms- Vaginal dryness burning itching, loss of libidos sweat etc

#### Chronic Disease- Osteoporosis, cardiovascular diseases

#### Psychological sign and Symptoms in Menopause

1. Anxiety
2. Depression
3. Tension
4. Headache
5. Irritability
6. Nervousness
7. Feeling unhappy
8. Fatigue
9. Excitability
10. Crying
11. Palpitations
12. Loss of interest in most things
13. Difficulty in concentrating
14. Insomnia <sup>6</sup>

### MANAGEMENT

After analysing the *Samprapti* and *Lakshanas*, we may conclude that *Vata-Pittahara Chikitsa*, along with *Snehpan* and *Basti chikitsa*, can effectively manage

menopausal symptoms. Early intervention helps balance aggravating factors, reducing the severity or even preventing symptoms.

### Ayurvedic review of Snehpan

स्वेदसंशोध्यमद्यस्त्रीव्यायामासक्तचिन्तकाः। वृद्धबालाबलकृशा रुक्षाः  
क्षीणास्त्रेतसः॥५॥वातार्तस्यन्दतिमिरदारुणप्रतिबोधिः।

स्नेह्याःअ.ह.सु16/5<sup>3</sup>

In *Ashtang Hridya*, *Snehpan* is indicated in Those who are habituated in taking more wine, excessive sexual contacts with women and doing heavy exercises. Persons thinking too much. Aged persons, children, debilitated persons, Emaciated and dry, Who are having depleted of blood and reproductive tissues, Persons suffering from neurological disorders and eye diseases

The person who resorts to oleation therapy frequently, will have the increased power of digestion, the clean gastro- intestinal tract, well established body tissues, strength, color and complexion, well functioned sense organs, delayed aging and thus lives one hundred years healthy and happily.

### Modern Aspect

- Lipids and Blood brain barrier

#### 1. Absorption & Distribution

Water-soluble drugs mainly remain in extracellular fluids and do not cross into cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) or cell interiors.

Lipid-soluble drugs penetrate both extracellular and intracellular spaces—including cells, mitochondria, microsomes, and nuclei—because cell membranes are lipid-rich.

#### 2. Blood-Brain Barrier (BBB)

The BBB's lipophilic (fat-loving) nature allows lipid-soluble drugs to cross more easily. *Sneha's* lipid-rich formulation therefore can potentially bypass the BBB.

### 3.Action on enteric nervous system

90% of Serotonin, 50% dopamine and 30 other neurotransmitters are produced and co regulated by Intestines in the enteric nervous system. Cholesterol and lipid components are critical for neurotransmitter synthesis. Sneha contains essential lipids and cholesterol, supporting serotonin regulation and overall neurotransmission.

### 4.Central Nervous System (CNS) Effects

Unsaturated fatty acids in Sneha potentially act within brain tissue and neural pathways. Sneha may also exhibit CNS antidepressant action by modulating afferent synaptic transmission, and increasing serotonin levels in brain regions like the hypothalamus and hippocampus.

For the bodily doshas, the supreme (parama) medicines in proper sequence are *Basti*, *Virechana*, *Vamana* — and then *taila*, *ghṛita*, *madhu*. These correspond to therapies for the three doshas: *Basti* (Enema) for *Vata*, *Virechana* (purgation) for *pitta*. *Vamana* (therapeutic emesis) for *kapha* and *taila* (oil), *ghṛita* (ghee), *Madhu* (honey) are prescribed respectively to pacify the psychological or mental doshas (*rajas* and *tamas*), through wisdom, steadiness, and inner knowledge. *Dhi*, *Dhairya*, *Atmadi-Vijnana* are the supreme mental-dosha remedies. *Basti* is the supreme treatment, to treat vitiated *Vata* Dosha and thus considered as *Ardhachikitsa*. *Sneha Basti* or *Matra Basti* is also an excellent alternative for the treatment of menopausal symptoms because it can be used at any time without causing any complications. It also aids in the regulation of the vitiated *Vata Dosha* that is prevalent during menopause.

### Gut- Brain axis:

The gut-brain axis, refers to the bidirectional communication pathway between the

gastrointestinal tract and the central nervous system (brain).<sup>8</sup> This complex interplay

involves the nervous system, endocrine system, and immune system, and it is significantly influenced by Estrogen levels and the gut microbiome.

### Hormonal Changes:

During menopause, Estrogen levels decline, which can disrupt the gut microbiome's balance (dysbiosis) and affect mood, sleep, and cognitive function through the gut-brain axis.

Gut Microbiome Shifts Estrogen helps maintain a healthy microbiome. Its decline can lead to changes in gut bacteria that affect inflammation, metabolism, and neurotransmitter production (e.g., serotonin).

### Estrobolome Role:

The Estrobolome (gut bacteria that metabolize Estrogen) becomes less active with hormonal decline, influencing estrogen recycling and contributing to symptoms.

### DISCUSSION:

Menopause marks the transition to *Vata* dominance in life and Depletion of *Shukra dhatu* and *Ojas*.

### Role of Snehapana (Oleation Therapy):

#### Physiological Aspect:

*Snehapana* involves internal administration of medicated ghee/oils, improving unctuousness in the body. Counters dryness (*Roukshya*) caused by increased *Vata*. Enhances *Agni* (digestive/metabolic fire) and nourishes *Dhatu*s, especially *Asthi* (bone) and *Majja* (marrow). Sneha acts through *Mrudu Vyayi*, *Snigddha*, *Sara Gunas*.

#### Anatomical Relevance:

Supports mucosal membranes (vaginal and gastrointestinal). Helps preserve joint

cartilage and synovial fluid. It crosses the blood brain barrier and promotes neurological stability, benefiting the brain and nerves affected by Estrogen withdrawal.

### Role of Basti Chikitsa (Medicated Enema): Physiological Aspects:

*Basti* is the prime treatment for *Vata* disorders. It helps to regulate the *Apana Vayu*, which governs pelvic and reproductive functions. *Basti* rejuvenates colon health, improves absorption, and enhances nervous system balance. Changes in Estrogen during menopause affect the gut microbiome, which in turn influences brain function and mental health through the gut-brain axis, highlighting the importance of gut health in managing menopausal symptoms.

### Anatomical Relevance:

*Basti dravya* acts on the colon (a *Vata* seat), from which *Vata* spreads to the rest of the body and it has indirectly impact on pelvic organs including uterus, bladder, and Vaginal canal. *Basti chikitsa* Strengthens lower back and hips, commonly affected during menopause.

### CONCLUSION:

Hormonal Replacement therapy is used for the treatment of postmenopausal Symptoms has positive association with higher risk of Breast cancer, Osteoporosis, Cardiovascular diseases, Psychological diseases. *Snehpan* and *Basti* are two cornerstone therapies in ayurveda - significant in managing Postmenopausal health specifically psychological symptoms. From an anatomical and physiological standpoint *Snehapana* and *Basti Chikitsa* together address the systemic dryness, neurological instability, joint degeneration, and hormonal imbalance seen in postmenopausal women. These therapies help to restore lubrication in tissues. Balance *Vata dosha*, the dominant force behind postmenopausal

symptoms. Promote rejuvenation (*Rasayana* effect) of tissues like bone, nerve, and reproductive systems. Offer a holistic and preventive approach without hormonal side effects. Hence, integrating *Ayurvedic* therapies like *Snehapana* and *Basti* with lifestyle management can be a safe and effective strategy for postmenopausal health, especially in women seeking natural and individualized care.

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