

MENOPAUSAL SYNDROME

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ABSTRACT

Natural menopause is an age related decline in endocrine function of ovaries due to exhaustion of follicle pool. A woman enters in perimenopausal age around 45-47 years. Natural menopause occurs at or after 40. The life expectancy in women has increased to around 78 years on average. Therefore the post-menopausal population today forms a large section, which requires medical care for their various symptoms. In this article concept of Rajonivrutti (Menopausal syndrome) and ayurvedic therapies (Rasayana and Nasya) which are useful are described.

Key words: Rajonivrutti, ayurvedic, therapies.

INTRODUCTION

AYURVEDIC VIEW

Rajonivrutti is not described separately as a pathological condition or severe health problem in Ayurvedic classics. The ancient acharyas termed it as a normal physiology.

Etymology

The term 'Rajonivrutti' is made up of two different words viz. "Rajah" and "Nivrutti".

Rajah

According to Sanskrit language the root word for "Rajah" is given as 'raj' which means to give colour to the substance.

The word Rajah is used synonymously for various substances (Amarkosha) like,

- Artava or stripushpa (Menstrual blood)
- Raja Guna (A type of Manas dosha)
- Parag (Pollen grains of flower)
- Renu (Minute dust particles)
- Synonym of a plant named Parpata etc.

Here, in the context of this subject, the meaning of Rajah like artava and stripushpa i.e. menstrual blood is taken into consideration.

Nivritti

Hemchandra have coined the synonyms of the word nivritti like Apravritti, Uparama, Virati, Vyparati, Uparati etc. Meaning of these all words can be summarised as below.

- Accomplishment, Fulfillment
- Completion, End
- Discontinuance of the influence of one rule over another
- Resulting
- Ceasing, desisting, abstaining from
- Inactivity

Here, in the present context, the meaning of Nivritti is understood as end or ceasing.

Thus, the whole term Rajonivritti means end of Artava Pravritti or cessation of menstruation.

Rajonivritti kala

Rajonivrittikala is mentioned by almost all acharyas without any controversy, few direct reference regarding the age of menopause i.e. Rajonivritti Acharya Sushruta said that menarch occur at the age of 12 yrs & due to the effect of aging menopause occur at the of 50 yrs.(su.sha.3/9) Vagbhata & Bhavamishra mentioned the same age for Menarch & Menopause.

Nidana of rajonivritti

As it is already mentioned that Rajonivritti is not described in the classics as a separate disease there is no information available regarding its Nidana, Purvarupa, Rupa, Samprapti etc. So, to understand this condition as a disease, certain Basic principles have to be considered here. Concentrating on the probable Nidanas (etiological factors) regarding the condition Rajonivritti, few factors can be squeezed out. Some of these factors are mentioned

by Acharyas in the context of "Rajah utpatti hetus", too. These factors can be considered as Rajah nivritti hetus also. Besides this, some very specific factors also can be considered as the causative factors for Rajonivritti which all are enlisted below.

1. Kala(12-50yr)
2. Swabhava
3. Vayu(Apan and Vyan)
4. Karma / environment
5. Dhatukshaya etc. Rajastrav is menstruation.

Types of rajonivritti

Ayurvedic science has divided all diseases into 4 major types.

Agantu, Sharira, Manas and Swabhavika. (Su. Su. 1/24).

Concentrating on 'Swabhavika' type; it is described that this type includes all those conditions, which are naturally occurring. Acharya Sushruta has mentioned a group of naturally occurring diseases under the heading of swabhavabala pravritta includes Kshudha (Hunger); Pipasa (Thirst), Nidra (Sleep), Jara (Aging) and Mrityu (Death) (Su. Su.1/24), (Su. Su. 28/8).

Although these disease are naturally occurring diseases, but sometimes they are being acquired also, which is described as "Doshaja".

So, they are further divided into two types viz. Kalakrita and Akalakrita.(Su. Su. 24/8).

In the some manner, Rajonivritti too is a naturally occurring condition in everywoman as that of Jaravastha etc. Swabhavika Vyadhies. So Rajonivritti also can be divided into two types.

- 1) Kalaja Rajonivritti
- 2) Akalaja Rajonivritti

1) Kalaja Rajonivritti

If Rojonivritti occurs at its probable age (i.e. around 50 years of age) it is called as Kalaja Ronivriti.

According to Acharya Sushruta (Su. Su. 28/8), the timely Rajonivritti (i.e. natural diseases like aging) occurs only when the protective measurements of healthcare being practiced. This condition is Yapyas by Rasayana etc.

2) Akalaja Rajonivritti

If Rajonivritti occurs before or after its probable age (i.e. around 50years) it is termed as Akalaja Rajonivritti. Akalaja Rajonivritti take place due to absence of the protective measurements of health care. In this type of Rajonivritti, symptoms are very acute and medical attention should be given to avoid its hazardous effects.

According to Acharya Dalhana, they should be treated on the basis of nature of illness (Roga) surfaced due to pathology of Rajonivritti and on the basis of dosha involved in it. (Dalhana on Su. Su. 24/7). This Akalaja Rajonivritti is more likely treatable than Kalaja Rajonivritti.

This magnitude of Kalaja and Akalaja Rajonivritti bound to vary from person to person on the basis of Prakriti as noted by Acharya Charaka himself in Vimana Sthana. Therefore, ultimately the responsibility of deciding Kalaja or Akalaja Rajonivritti is should be considered upon physician's experience.

Probable samprapti of rajonivritti

As the pathogenesis of rajonivritti is not elaborately described in as such Ayurvedic text, few points should be taken into consideration (including nidanas which are already described previously) in this regard.

First of all classics have quoted the age around 50 years as the probable age for rajonivritti. This age limit is dominated by "Vata dosha" and obviously it easily is getting vitiated during this time. (B.P.Pu. 2/193)

This dominant vatadosha will have effect all over the female body including all anatomical as well as physiological factors by virtue of its characters i.e. "laghuta" and "rukshata".

At the age about 50 years, the decline process starts in female body due to jaravastha as a natural process.

So, considering these all points, the probable samprapti can be drawn under two main headings. (i) Kalaja samprapti and (ii) Akalaja samprapti.

Kalaja samprapti:-

Raja is also described as upadhatu of Rasadhatu.

“ Rasat stanya tato raktam” (Charak chi 15/17)¹

Raja being defined as an upadhatu, there is another term Aartavam, which is needed to be properly defined. Bhavaprakash has equated Aartavam to Shukram dhatu in female.

‘Aartavam api shukravat’ Bhavaprakash 29/221).²

It is responsible for conception strength & complexion of women. Aartavam relates to ovarian function of gamete production & hormone secretion. With aging out of three doshas vayu increase significantly & these occur a considerable decline in pitta & kapha.

This also occurs in decline in all the seven dhatus starting from Rasa & also of Oaja Kalaja samprapti is for naturally occurring rajonivritti like jaravastha and can be constructed on the basis of swabhavika vyadhi. Considering, Kala, Vayu, Swabhava and Jaravastha as Biological Stimulants, which are common for both Jara and Rajonivritti. These factors will generalised dhatukshaya and vice versa to generalised vatavridhi and kaphakshaya. Both these conditions together, will produce particular Rasa-Raktadhatukshaya. So, this main nourishing Rasadhatu will be decreased both qualitatively and quantitatively and ultimately resulting in its upadhatu Artavakshaya. Due to this factor along with generalized vatavridhi (increased laghu, rksha, khara guna) and kaphakshaya (decreased gura, snigdha, drava guna); rukshata and shosha of artavavaha srotas take place and all these things will lead to artavanash and manifest as rajonivritti.

Akalaja samprapti

For akalaja samprapti, few etiological factors are responsible which can be grouped under two broad headings i.e. Karma or Environment and Abhigata. Under this samprapti, etiological factors like karma or environment will lead to dhatukshaya awastha and again the same samprapti follows which has already been described in kalaja samprapti and ultimately lead to artavanasha and manifest as rajonivritti. Moreover, another etiological factor i.e. Abhigata will directly lead to viddhata of artavavaha srotas resulting into artavanasha and ultimately manifests as rajonivritti.

MODERN VIEW-^{3,4}

Menopause is defined as permanent cessation of ovarian function resulting in permanent amenorrhoea. It takes 12 months of amenorrhoea to confirm that menopause is not set in.

Menopause is generally occur between age of 40-45 yrs of average is 47 yrs. Climacteric is phase of weaning ovarian activity & may begin 2-3 yrs of menopause & continue for 2-5 yrs of after it. During the phase there occurs decline in ovarian activity. In starting ovulation fails, therefore no corpus luteum & hence no progesterone is secreted by the ovary. Therefore menopause is often preceded by anovulatory & irregular menstrual cycle. After some time graafian follicle formation also stops, estrogen activity & finally atrophy of endometrium

leads to amenorrhoea. As the result of fall in estrogen level , there is rebound increase of FSH& LH by ant pituitary gland.

LAKSHANA / CLINICAL FEATURES

There is no specific description regarding clinical features of Rajonivritti as Ayurveda consider rajonivrotti as natural change in body. With aging out of three doshas vayu increase significantly & these occur a considerable decline in pitta & kapha. There also occur in decline in all the seven dhatues starting from Rasa & also of Ojas.

But we can consider symptoms of menopausal syndrome under jaravyadhi. Therefore lakshan of Dhatukshaya & vatpitta dominance are mainly seen along with some manasik lakshana.

Ayurvedic constitution and *dosha* in menopause

There are many paths in Ayurvedic healing to the relief of menopausal symptoms. Among these, the *tridosha* system generally serves as a central guiding principle. In the Ayurvedic view of the human body, each of us is born with a fundamental constitution, or *prakriti*, that remains with us throughout life. Acting upon the constitution are three bioenergetic influences, or *doshas*: *vata*, *pitta*, and *kapha*. Though one dosha will always preside within the constitution, a state of health is characterized by dynamic balance between all three within the system.

These three doshas are sometimes described as the appearances or manifestations of natural forces at work in the body. Each dosha is defined or represented by two of the five natural elements: space, air, fire, water and earth.

In contemporary Ayurvedic medicine, a treatment course is always individualized, and will generally be based on individual dosha imbalances (*Ayurvedic vikriti*) rather than treatment of specific symptoms. Yet if you have an excess of one dosha during menopause, the resulting imbalance in your body tends to produce a certain “type” of menopausal symptoms characteristic for that dosha’s predominance over the others. Recognizing which dosha dominates your system in menopause will help identify which treatments best match your constitution and are most likely to ease your symptoms.

During a **vata**-dominated menopause, you will likely be experiencing any of the following symptoms:

- Nervousness

- Anxiety
- Insomnia
- Mild hot flashes
- Depression
- Poor skin tone
- Constipation
- Vaginal dryness.

Women whose menopause is dominated by *pitta* may generally experience any or all of the following symptoms:-

- Angry outbursts
- Irritability
- Short temper
- Hot flashes and night sweats
- Urinary tract infections (UTI's)
- Skin rashes

Women whose menopause is dominated by **kapha**-

Its natural elements, water and earth, can manifest as a “heavy menopause,” where you’re feeling tired a lot, have difficulty concentrating or just can’t seem to shake that “heavy feeling.” Other symptoms may include:

- Weight gain
- Sleepiness
- Sluggishness
- Fungal infections
- Slow digestion
- Fluid retention

Manasika lakshanas

After considering the clinically observed features of rajonivritti through Ayurvedic point of view, Psychological symptoms also commonly observed due to vitiation of Manovaha srotas. So these symptoms can be grouped under the heading of manasika lakshanas as follows-

- Krodha
- Shoka
- Bhaya
- Dwesha

- Smriti hras
- Utsaha hani
- Dairya Hani
- Shirah Shula
- Vishada
- Chinta
- Medhahras
- Alpa Harsha and Priti
- Parakrama hani

MODERN VIEW-^{3,4}

Menopausal symptoms are of two types-

Immediate & late

Immediate- these symptoms relate to vasomotor, psychological, sexual & urogenital symptoms.

1. Vasomotor symptoms

Hot flushes, night sweats palpitations & headache are the most distressing symptoms of menopause. These are more severe after surgical menopause. These are attributed to pitta & vata doshas.

2. Psychological symptoms

Many females are affected with anxiety, depression, decrease in libido & dementia. Ayurveda hypothesizes their occurrence due to the imbalance of vata.

3. Urogenital symptoms

Urinary incontinence (stress & urge) vaginal dryness & prolapsed of uterus are very important. Ayurveda described shushka yoni (dry vagina with atrophy of urogenital tract) & Maha yoni (uterovaginal prolapse)

4. Long term effect of menopause

Skeletal system & cardiovascular system are adversely affected.

5. Skeletal system

Osteoporosis occurs rapidly after menopause in women. It is responsible for the greater incidence of fracture of spine, proximal femur, distal radius. Bone forming units are responsible for skeletal growth, repair, & replacement. They are under the influence of variety of regulatory factors i.e. parathormone, calcitonin, vit D, growth factor, gonoidal steroids

calcium & phosphate etc.ERT(oestrogen replacement therapy) therefore only partially helps the re-mineralization of bones & prevention of fractures.

According to ayurveda osteoporosis can be explained on the basis of excess vata formation in pakvashaya& asthi dhatu. Therefore we give agnivardhan ,deepan,pachan drugs.

6) Cardiovascular disease-

The decline of ojas (ashta bindu- para ojas) & avalambak kapha due to excess of vata is the cause of cardiovascular disease.

MANAGEMENT OF MENOPAUSAL SYNDROME^{-3,4.}

1) Counselling-

It is very important to maintain her physical & mental status. She should be educated about proper diet. Diet should include at least 1.2 gms of Ca, vit A, C, E, D(400mg) + weight bearing exercises are also necessary.

2) HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy)-

Only oestrogen replacement therapy is not sufficient to overcome this problem. Because many other hormones eg. DHEA & melatonin & various systems are affected in menopause. Moreover menopause is the natural process of transition to a new phase of life for a woman.

Therapy needed in woman who are-

- Symptomatic for 3-6 months.
- High risk for CVD (Cardiovascular Disease), osteoporosis, Alzheimer's disease.
- After surgical oophorectomy, premature menopause.
- Who demand prophylactic HRT
- Oestrogens should be given in smallest effective dose for a short possible period of 3-6 months.
- Short term oestrogen therapy is beneficial in delaying osteoporosis & reducing the risk of cardiovascular diseases in post menopausal woman.

Risks of HRT-

- Adverse cardiovascular status.
- Malignancy & thromboembolic disease.
- Endometrial cancer if E2 is taken alone.
- Breast cancer is due to progestogens if HRT is taken over 5 years.

A study published in Lancet by Tungstal et al in 1998 clearly published that these are no beneficial effects occurred by HRT on cardiovascular disease. Moreover these are reports suggesting the increased incidence of malignancy & thromboembolic disease.

HRT can be at best be used for a short term to overcome some of the troublesome symptoms like hot flushes. Again not all the patients are benefited with ERT because of genetic characterization of E2 receptor. This finding supports the concept of individualization of therapy in Ayurveda based on individual constitution i.e. prakriti.

BASIS OF AYURVEDIC THERAPY IN MENOPAUSE

Sushruta contributed ageing & diseases as the cause for the menopause. According to jara rog chikitsasutra Rasayana is the only way to combat symptoms associated with jara. By definition

Rasayana is- “Labhopayo hi shastanam Rasadinam Rasayanam |”
(C.S.Ci 1/1/7-8)

Rasayana Therapy-

Literarily the term Rasayana refers to the means of obtaining the optimum nourishment to the Rasadi Dhatus. Thus, the Rasayana is a specialized type of treatment influencing the Dhatus, Agnis and Strotas of the body leading to an overall improvement in the formation and maintenance of the living tissues and helps in the prevention of ageing, improving of resistance against diseases, bodily strength and process of improving mental faculties. Daily consumption of ghee, milk which increase kapha can delay the onset of menopause.

“ Ghritaksheeradi nityasu muditasu kaphatmasu|
Aartavam tishthati chiram viparitasvato- anyatha||”
(Ashtang Samgraha, Sharir 1/69)

Rasayanas are of 3 types

1) Aachar Rasayana-

It is basically related to lifestyle management. According to Ayurved Sadvritta & Swasthavritta, by following Dinacharya, Ratricharya & Ritucharya along with taking measures to relieve stress- strain aging process can be delayed & symptoms associated with menopause can be minimized.

Muscular exercise is most important to maintain the strength & mineralization of the bones. Strength of the bone depends essentially on the integrity of collagen matrix. In terms of

reduction of kapha this is decline in collagen matrix resulting in osteoporosis.

Sedentary lifestyle enhance the osteoporosis. Surya-namaskara, exercise, yoga + pranayama can be proved very beneficial effect by relieving stress. They also improves muscle tone & hence improves urinary troubles.

2) Aahara Rasayans (food as drug)

In Menopause related to dhatukshaya that means ojas-kshaya. Dietary articles consisting of black grams, milk, ghee & meat soups.

Ghee has a special role in improving sukradhatu. Ghee is now considered to be a good source of omega-3 fatty acids. Til (sesame) & its oil are very good in promotion of raja. For rajapravartan use Gud (jaggery) + black til. Black til are good source of zinc & contains antioxidant property. Vegetarian diet helps mineralization of bone. A balanced vegetarian diet is the most important aspect of the preventive management of menopause. Chickpeas, Bengal grams & black grams are good source of phytoestrogens.

Phytoestrogens plays vital role in oestrogenic therapy. If oestrogen levels are high as in fibroadenosis, then phytoestrogens compete with oestrogen receptors as they have weak oestrogenic activity, thus producing beneficial antiestrogenic effect on body. They also increase level of sex hormone binding globin (SHBG) which gives protection against breast cancer & coronary heart diseases.

3) Dravya rasayana-(Drug therapy)

Actions of Rasayana Drug-

- ☐ Prevents senile degeneration
- ☐ Stimulate metabolism
- ☐ Promote body resistance and immunity
- ☐ Improves memory and intelligence
- ☐ Increase vitality
- ☐ Freedom from disease
- ☐ Restore health and increase long life

In ayurveda for menopausal syndrome we used drugs which are vatapitashamak, rasayana, hrudya, ojovardhaka, vatanulomak, deepaniya, balya And brimhana are the drug of choice.

Many of the rasayana herbs are capable of strengthening the immune system i.e. *Tinospora Cordifolia*, *Piper longum*, *Withania Somnifera*, *Aspergus Racemosus*, *Sida Cordifolia* etc. Some of them described below.

Sr.no	Name of drug	Rasa	Guna	Virya	Vipaka	Doshaghnat a & Prabhava	Karma
1)	Haritaki (<i>Terminalia chebula</i>)	Pancharasa, Lavanvarjita, Kasayapradhan	Laghu, Ruksha	Ushan	Madhura	Tridoshaghna ,Rasayana	Prajasthapana
2)	Amalaki (<i>Embelica officinalis</i>)	Pancharasa, Lavanvarjita, Amlapradhana	Ruksha, Laghu	Shita	Madhura	Tridoshaghna ,Rasayana	Vayasthapana
3)	Guduchi (<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i>)	Tikta ,Kashaya, Katu	Guru, Snigdha	Ushan	Madhura	Tridoshaghna ,Rasayana	Vayasthapana
4)	Mandukaparna (<i>Centella asiatica</i>)	Tikta ,Kashaya	Laghu	Shita	Madhura	Tridoshaghna	Prajasthapana Vayasthapana Medhya
5)	Jatamansi (<i>Nordostachys</i>)	Tikta Katu	Laghu, Ruksha ,Sukshama, Vishada, Sara, Tikshana	Shita	Katu	Tridoshaghna , Bhutaghna	Balya Medhya Vedanasthapan Kantiprada
6)	Shuddha Guggula (<i>Comiphora Mukula</i>)	Tikta Kashaya Madhura	Laghu, Snigdha,	Shita	Katu	Tridoshaghna	Sangyasthapana
7)	Praval Bhasma(<i>Corallium Rubrum</i>)	Nirasa	Laghu	Shita	Madhura	Tridoshaghna Bhutaghna	Vayasthapana, Sukrala
8)	Ashwagandha (<i>Withania somnifera</i>)	Tikta Katu Madhur A	Laghu Snigdha	Ushan	Madhura	Kaphavatghna	Balya Rasayana Vedanasthapan Vrishya Brihana

9)	Yastimadhu(<i>Glucyrrhiza Glabra</i>)	Madhura Tikta	Guru Snigdha Sheeta	Sheeta	Madhura	Vata Shamak	Pitta	Kanthya, Rasayan, Jivaniya, Varnya Sandhaniya, Kandughna, Dahaprashamana, Angamarda Prashamana, Shonita Sthapana, Mutravirajaniya, Shnehopaga, Vamanopaga, Asthapanopaga Chardinigrahana
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Termanalia Arjuna is the best cardio protective and cardiac tonic. it is hrudya, varnya, pramehagna. it has also high bio-available calcium to prevent osteoporosis. In menopause there is decline in immunity. Hence Rasayana therapy has a great role to play.

ROLE OF NASYA WITH MEDHYA DRUG GHRUT IN MENOPAUSE-

The disease Menopausal Syndrome is predominantly Manasika-Sharirika Vikara (Psychosomatic disease). Also, this age group is predominated by Vata dosha which is the "Niyanta" and "Praneta" of Man.

Shirah is considered as a 'Pradhana Indriya' and sthana of 'Buddhi', 'Prana' and 'Man'.

The use of nasya during senescence is said to check its virulence and thus reducing the rate of aging. (Cha. Su. 5/62).

Nasya Karma is an easy therapeutic pathway into Intracranial Structures and can affect brain functions. By various research works, nasya therapy is very well proved in Psychosomatic disorders. Adding to this, the olfactory nerve only, which is having the direct connection with limbic system and thereby with the higher mental functions, through which nasya may play its role in the emotional and psychological parlance.

Moreover, by using the nasya therapy, one can bypass the long metabolism root of oral drugs. So, considering the above points, the probable mode of action of nasya with Medhya drug Ghrita like Jatamansi (*Nordostachys*) Mandukaparna (*Centella asiatica*) Amalaki (*Embelica officinalis*) Yastimadhu (*Glucyrrhiza Glabra*) etc understood in following way.

The drug Medhya Ghrita, having Rasayan, Blaya, Medhya, Indriya Tarpaka etc. properties, when administered through nasal route, it reaches the Shirah (which is a pradhana indriya) by

various siras, and acts mainly on Tarpaka Kapha, Prava Vayu and Manovaha Srotas, and gives benefits like Mental ability, Will power, Intellect, Strength, Immunity, Longevity, Vitality, Luster & Tint, Youthfulness, Vigor-competence etc., which will be helpful to extinguish the symptoms of Rajonivritti mainly in psychological background.

CONCLUSION

- Only few scattered references are available in ancient literature on Rajonivritti.
- All the Acharyas have mentioned fifty years as the age of Rajonivritti. The logic behind the age of Rajodarshana and Rajonivritti is that Raja is byproduct of Rasadhatu which function better in Tarunavastha and its function reduces in Paudhavastha.
- Rajonivritti is a physiological process but when it causes discomfort either to mind or body it attains Vyadhisvarupa and becomes a disease status which requires medical interference.
- Both the term Rajonivritti and Menopause literally convey same meaning.
- Menopause is a significant landmark in female. It marks the closure of menstrual life.
- Climacteric syndrome is the result of the gradual failure of the ovaries to produce oestrogen and progesterone as a consequence of which the pituitary gland becomes more active (positive feedback) and produces FSH and LH in greater quantity resulting into different vasomotor and psychological symptoms.
- As it is known that Rajonivritti occurs due to aging process suggesting aggravation of Vatadosha and diminution of Kaphadosha and vitiated Vata also expel out the Pitta from its origin called Ashyapakarsha.
- The progression of aging with Dhatukshaya again add to the increase in the Vatadosha.
- The symptoms occurring in menopausal syndrome like; sleep disturbance, irritability, hot flushes, etc. can be co-relate with Vata Pittaja Lakshana.
- As Rajonivritti deals with Jaravastha, Rasayana therapy is the line of treatment and for prevention of longer term effects of depletion of Dhatus.
- The disease Menopausal Syndrome is predominantly Manasika-Sharirika Vikara(Psychosomatic disease) so Nasya with Medhya drug Ghrita show better results in Hot flushes, Sensation of pins prick,Headache, Irritability, Mood swings and Depression.
- Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) is one and only alternative for this health hazard by which one can get spectacular achievement in combating the disease, but it has a wider range of secondary health complications like vaginal bleeding, breast cancer,endometrical

cancer, gallbladder diseases etc. On the other hand, this therapy is not much effective in the psychological manifestations of this stage. Therefore, Ayurvedic treatment like Rasayana And Nasya potent, cost effective ,increasing longevity.

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