

PERIMENOPAUSAL SYNDROME AND HOMOEOPATHY

General Considerations

The term "menopause" denotes the final cessation of menstruation, either as a normal part of aging or as the result of surgical removal of both ovaries. In a broader sense, as the term is commonly used, it denotes a 1- to 3-year period during which a woman adjusts to a diminishing and then absent menstrual flow and the physiologic changes that may be associated - hot flushes, night sweats, and vaginal dryness.

The average age at menopause in Indian societies today is 49 years. Premature menopause is defined as ovarian failure and menstrual cessation before age 40; this often has a genetic or autoimmune basis. Surgical menopause due to bilateral oophorectomy is common and can cause more severe symptoms owing to the sudden rapid drop in sex hormone levels.

There is no objective evidence that cessation of ovarian function is associated with severe emotional disturbance or personality changes. However, mood changes toward depression and anxiety can occur at this time. Furthermore, the time of menopause often coincides with other major life changes, such as departure of children from the home, a midlife identity crisis, or divorce. These events, coupled with a sense of the loss of youth, may exacerbate the symptoms of menopause and cause psychologic distress.

Clinical Findings

A. Symptoms and Signs

1. Cessation of menstruation

Menstrual cycles generally become irregular as menopause approaches. Anovular cycles occur more often, with irregular cycle length and occasional Menorrhagia. Menstrual flow usually diminishes in amount owing to decreased estrogen secretion, resulting in less abundant endometrial growth. Finally, cycles become longer, with missed periods or episodes of spotting only. When no bleeding has occurred for 1 year, the menopausal transition can be said to have occurred.

2. Hot flushes

Hot flushes (feelings of intense heat over the trunk and face, with flushing of the skin and sweating) occur in 80% of women as a result of the decrease in ovarian hormones. Hot flushes can begin before the cessation of menses. An increase in pulsatile release of gonadotrophin-releasing hormone from the hypothalamus is believed to trigger the hot flushes by affecting the adjacent temperature-regulating area of the brain. Hot flushes are more severe in women who undergo surgical menopause. Flushing is more pronounced late in the day, during hot weather, after ingestion of hot foods or drinks, or during periods of tension. Occurring at night, they often cause sweating and insomnia and result in fatigue on the following day.

3. Vaginal atrophy

With decreased estrogen secretion, thinning of the vaginal mucosa and decreased vaginal lubrication occur and may lead to dyspareunia.

4. Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis may occur as a late sequelae of menopause.

B. Laboratory Findings

Serum FSH and LH levels are elevated.

Let us examine few cases

Case 1:

I had an obese lady who was 54 years old, she was menopausal for the last 6 years, she had a past history of huge uterine fibroid with adenomyosis in the uterus and she underwent hysterectomy along with oophorectomy. Since then she had put on lot of weight and she started complaining of itching all over the body, this itching used to get worse in hot weather, hot temperature, in summer and in a hot room. Sometimes accompanying to this itching there were small eruptions; these eruptions were shown to skin specialist and were diagnosed as actinic prurigo.

She also complained of excessive heat in the body ever since the menopause started. She was quite nervous and anxious by temperament. She could not give me any other particular symptoms regarding her mind or physical generals. Her daughter who accompanied the interview persistently said that she makes a mountain out of a mole and she is an extremely nervous person.

I put prurigo, ailments from removal of the ovary, ailments from menopause, heat flushes and nervous personality; I put all these symptoms together and prescribed her the remedy Ovininum 30 C, only one dose, to see the effect of the remedy.

I gave her placebo for the next one month to observe the effect. After a month she comes and tells me that her nervousness is much better, she is more relaxed, the daughter also confirmed that her mother is now calm and cool, the itching all over the body has reduced by 40% and the flushing has also disappeared by 60%. I continued placebo for the next one month with the same improvement. Since the improvement was not going further I repeated a dose of Ovininum 30 C and within a span of six months I could cure prurigo completely with the hot flushes from the patient.

Ovininum is not a new medicine in my practice, the first information of this remedy came to me when I was reading Boericke's Materia Medica and Choudhuri's Study on Materia Medica, this is a sarcode, it is prepared from the ovary of either sheep or cow. The most important clinical indication of this remedy in my practice is ailments from removal of the ovaries, or ailments from hysterectomy, ailments from oophorectomy and ailments from menopause and sufferings that follow the menopause especially the skin condition. If you find prurigo in acne postmenopausal, then Ovininum is an excellent remedy and a drug of choice.

Ovininum is also useful for tumors of the ovaries. Patient is generally a hot patient, they are extremely nervous and they have strong aversion to meat.

Case 2:

This is the case of a lady who was 49 years old and she complained to me of irregular menses, menses are delayed or they come too frequently, they can come every two weeks also and they can be even delayed for up to 3-4 months. But whenever the menses came, it is usually painful and with the menses she gets eruptions like acne or pimples on the face.

The menses are usually bright red and clotted but she has observed that menses are always accompanied by some skin irritation or eruptions. Sometimes the bleeding is so profuse that she needs to take some hormones to stop the menses. Her ultrasonography shows myoma in the uterus and gynecological examination shows cervical erosion.

She also complained to me about the chronic cough that she suffered from especially when she is exposed to cold air. The cough is accompanied by excessive irritation in the throat.

She also complained of rheumatic pain in the shoulders especially the right shoulder. She was a hot patient suffering from hypertension but she never bothered to take proper allopathic drugs for her hypertension, she was taking lot of ayurvedic preparations for her hypertension.

She had a strong desire for cold water and spicy and pungent food. She mentioned to me that these days suddenly she has become lazier and has very little desire to work. She preferred to remain more in the house and she did not like to socialize much. She got excited very easily and felt helpless on trivial issues. She was extremely sensitive to noise.

I repertorized her case and I came to prescribe her *Sanguinaria canadensis* 30 C, I gave her four doses in a week and I asked her to see me after two months. After two months she said she had one cycle which was not at all painful and which had average bleeding. She was a little more active, her hypertension which used to be in the range of 160/95 with the help of ayurvedic medicine, now with homoeopathy and without ayurvedic medicine her blood pressure for the very first time came to 156/94.

I continued *Sanguinaria canadensis* 30 C for next three months. At the end of five months she had two more cycles which were again painless and again with normal flow of blood, this was a very good sign because her menses started getting regularized and she became more and more active, more and more social, for the very first time she told her husband that she wants to go for a vacation, she wants to enjoy a holiday with the family.

Later, I continued the treatment for two more months because I wanted the cough to settle down, slowly her tendency to cough with exposure to cold air got much better. After six months I was informed that she never menstruated and she has entered the menopausal age very peacefully without any discomfort.

I sent her to a gynecologist for examination and ultrasonography, to my surprise I found that the fibroid she had in the uterus in the past, which was mentioned in the case history, had now completely disappeared.

Sanguinaria canadensis is a very useful remedy that comes from Papaveraceae family. I have used this remedy in acute as well as in chronic conditions. It is pre-eminently a remedy producing a great disturbance in the vasomotor system or the

vascular system, in fact it is one of the most important hemorrhagic remedy. The highest amount of anxiety that you see in Arsenic album, you can see in Sanguinaria canadensis.

Another very important situation you will see is utter helplessness, the person is completely helpless, and this situation sometimes occurs when they feel that they cannot move, they are completely paralyzed. They are usually day-dreamers especially in the mornings, they can sit on the chair with their eyes wide open and they keep on dreaming and chasing objects in the dream.

Sanguinaria canadensis patients are extremely sensitive to sounds and noises; the sense of smell is extremely acute. Many patients that I have treated with Sanguinaria canadensis complained of unwanted breathlessness, they gasp for the breath they feel that the lungs in their chest are so heavy that they cannot breathe. They have a strong desire for spicy and pungent things and they are always aggravated by sweets.