



ASSESSMENT OF MENOPAUSAL PROBLEMS AMONG URBAN MENOPAUSAL WOMEN: A CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY

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Abstract

Menopause is a part of every woman's life. It is a transition from reproductive to non-reproductive stage. Many women experience menopausal symptoms during menopausal transition and postmenopausal years. A study was conducted on 50 menopausal women belonging to urban community from Chandigarh to determine the age at menopause and prevalence of menopausal problems. Information was collected through predesigned and pretested questionnaire cum interview schedule. Menopausal symptoms were assessed by menopause rating scale (MRS) which included vasomotor, psychosomatic, psychological, urinary complaints and others. Anthropometric measurements were also taken to assess the nutritional status. In the present study, the mean age at menopause was 48.0 years \pm 3.44. The present study revealed that physical exhaustion (96%) was the most common menopausal symptom experienced by the respondents. Psychological symptoms like depressive mood (92%), irritability (86%) and anxiety (80%) were also prevalent among majority of the respondents. Three-fourth of the respondents experienced hot flushes (76%) and joint and muscular discomfort (72%). More than half of the respondents experienced heart discomfort (56%) and bladder problems (52%). About 44 per cent were having sexual problems while 32 per cent complained of vaginal dryness. So as the menopausal symptoms were quite common, there is a need to educate and generate awareness among menopausal women about the menopause phase and its associated symptoms.

Key words: Menopause, Hormones, Postmenopausal, Menopausal Symptoms, Menopausal Age, Prevalence.

Introduction

Menopause is one of the major transitional periods in the life of every woman. Menopause can be defined as the permanent cessation of menstruation which is retrospectively determined following twelve months of amenorrhea during mid-life period resulting from reduced ovarian hormone secretion that occurs naturally or induced by surgery, chemotherapy, or radiation.

Generally natural menopause occurs in between the ages of 45-55 for women. The mean age at natural menopause is 51 years in industrialized nations, while it is 48 years in poor and non-industrialized nations . (Taher *et al.*, 2013)

During menopause the production of hormones estrogen and progesterone slows down in the body. The deficiency of these hormones elicits various somatic, vasomotor, sexual and psychological symptoms that impair overall quality of life of women. Under current demographic trends, menopausal and postmenopausal health has emerged as an important health concern in India owing to improved economic conditions, rapid lifestyle changes and increased longevity. Therefore, the present study was conducted with the aim to study the menopausal age and prevalence of the menopausal problems.

Materials and Methods

Sample selection – Purposive sampling technique was employed to select 50 menopausal women in the age group of 45-60 from different urban areas of Chandigarh.

Inclusion criteria

All women who reported 12 continuous months of amenorrhea without any surgical procedure were categorized as naturally menopausal.

Exclusion criteria

- a) Women with chronic heart disease
- b) Women on HRT (hormonal replacement therapy)
- c) Women who had surgical menopause

Data collection

General information: Predesigned and pretested questionnaire cum interview schedule was used to collect the data regarding socio demographic information such as age, marital status, religion, education, occupational status, etc.

Anthropometric measurements: Anthropometric measurements such as weight, height, waist circumference, hip circumference were also taken and then body mass index (WHO, 2004) and waist hip ratio (WHO, 2008) were calculated.

Menopausal symptoms: Menopause rating scale (MRS) was used as a basis for assessing the menopausal symptoms (Heinernann *et al.*, 2003).

Statistical analysis: Data collected was organized, compiled and analyzed in terms of mean and percentage.

Results and Discussion

A total of 50 menopausal women were enrolled in the study. The socio demographic profile of the subjects is shown in table 1. Majority (48%) were in the age group of 51-55 years and around one third (28%) were in the age group of 45-50 years. Most of the women were Hindu by religion (76%) and rest were Sikh (24%). More than half of the subjects (64%) were postgraduates followed by graduates (24%) and higher secondary (12%). More than three fourth of the subjects were working (88%) while only (12%) were housewives. Majority (92%) of the women were married. Most of the subjects (88%) were living in nuclear family and more than one half of the subjects (56%) were having an annual family income of 5-10 lakhs.

Table 2 reveals the percentage distribution of the women according to their age at menopause. It is evident that 24 per cent of the women had experienced menopause by 45 years of age with mean age of 43.4 years whereas 54 per cent experienced menopause between 46-50 years with mean age of 48.8 years. Only 22% of the women had attained menopause between the age of 51-55 years with mean age of 51.8 years (Fig 1).

The mean menopausal age reported in the present study was 48.0 years \pm 3.47. The exact age at which menopause occurs varies from population to population. Studies conducted by Borker *et al.* (2013), Garg R *et al.* (2015) and Joseph *et al.* (2014) reported mean age of menopause of 48.2, 48.2 and 48.4 years respectively which are quite similar to the results of the present study. However, studies done by Mahajan *et al.* (2012) and Singh and Pradhan (2014) observed lower mean menopausal age than the present study i.e. 44.54 and 46.24 years respectively. In the present study, 72% were early postmenopausal whereas 28% were late postmenopausal.

Table 1: Sociodemographic characteristics of the subjects

<i>Sociodemographic characteristics</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Age of women (in years)		
45-50	14	28
51-55	24	48
56-60	12	24
Religion		
Hindu	38	76
Sikh	12	24
Education		
Higher Secondary	6	12
Graduate	12	24
Postgraduate	32	64
Occupation		
Working Women	44	88
Housewife	6	12
Marital Status		
Married	46	92
Widow	4	8
Type of family		
Nuclear	44	88
Joint	6	12

Table 2: Menopausal age of the subjects

<i>Age group (in years)</i>	<i>Mean age (years)</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
40-45	43.4	12	24
46-50	48.8	27	54
51-55	51.8	11	22
	48	50	100
Early menopausal		36	72
Late menopausal		14	28

Table 3 shows that all the respondents were aware about menopause and menopausal symptoms. Majority of them i.e. 78% had a positive attitude while 22% had a negative attitude towards menopause. 74% of the subjects did not take treatment for menopausal symptoms.

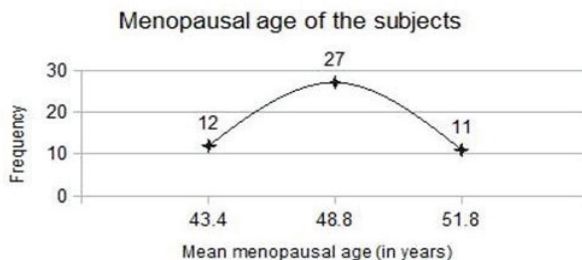


Fig. 1: Menopausal age of the subjects

Table 3: Awareness, attitude and treatment regarding menopausal symptoms among the subjects

	Frequency	Percentage
Awareness about menopause		
Aware	50	100
Not aware	0	0
Attitude towards menopause		
Positive	39	78
Negative	11	22
Treatment		
Taking	13	26
Not taking	37	74

Table 4 depicts the body mass index (BMI) and waist hip ratio (WHR) of the respondents. The data revealed that more than half of the subjects were overweight (56%) and around one fifth of the subjects (20%) belonged to normal BMI and grade I obesity each. Only 4% were having grade II obesity. When the subjects were classified according to waist hip ratio (WHR) it was found that all the subjects were obese (100%).

Table 5 shows data on the prevalence of menopausal symptoms. In the present study, it was found that physical and mental exhaustion (96%) was the most common symptom experienced by the subjects. Sharma *et al.* (2007) and Alaknanda *et al.* (2015) reported lower prevalence of physical exhaustion i.e. 72.9% and 55.5% which is lower than results of the present study.

The psychological problems among the subjects revealed that majority of the women were suffering from depressive mood (92%), irritability (86%) and anxiety (80%). Ganitha *et al.* (2017) and Cyriac *et al.* (2016)

Table 4: Body mass index and waist ratio of the subjects

<i>Body mass index *</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Underweight (<18.5)	0	0
Normal (18.5- 24.9)	10	20
Overweight (>25)	28	56
Pre obese (25.0- 29.9)	0	0
Obese grade I (30.0 - 34.9)	10	20
Obese grade II (35.0 – 39.9)	2	4
Obese grade III (> 40.0)	0	0
Waist hip ratio**		
Normal (< .80)	0	0
Obese (> .80)	50	100

**Body mass index - WHO (2004), ** Waist hip ratio - WHO (2008)*

found the prevalence of irritability as 42.2% and 66.7% respectively, which is quite lower in comparison to the present study. The occurrence of sleep problems in the present study was 36% which is nearly similar

Table 5: Prevalence of menopausal symptoms among the subjects

<i>Menopausal symptoms</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Vasomotor		
Hot flushes	38	76
Psychological		
Depression	46	92
Anxiety	40	80
Psychosomatic		
Sleep problems	18	36
Joint pain	36	72
Irritability	43	86
Physical exhaustion	48	96
Urogenital		
Bladder problems	26	52
Vaginal dryness	16	32
Sexual dysfunction	22	44
Cardio discomfort		
Heart discomfort	28	56
Multiple responses*		

to the finding of a study on menopausal symptoms conducted by Dutta *et al.* (2012) which was 41%. As far as physical symptoms were concerned majority of the respondents experienced hot flushes (76%), joint and muscular discomfort (72%). Goyal S *et al.* (2012) found that depressive mood (86.6%) was the most common symptom followed by hot flushes (80%) which is almost comparable to the findings of the present study i.e. 92% and 76% respectively. On the other hand, a study by Bansal *et al.* (2013) reported comparatively lower prevalence of hot flushes i.e. 59.3%.

More than half of the respondents experienced heart discomfort (56%), bladder problems (52%), sexual problems (44%) and vaginal dryness (32%). A population based study conducted by Satpathy M (2016) suggested that joint pains (72.34%) and vaginal dryness (34%) was prevalent among the postmenopausal women which corresponds with the findings of the present study i.e. 72% and 32% respectively.

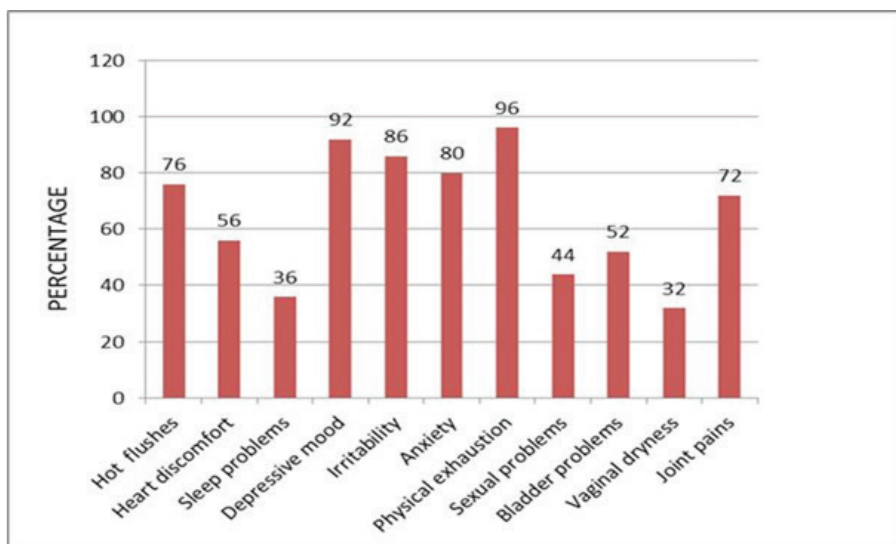


Fig. 2: Prevalence of menopausal symptoms of menopausal symptoms among the subjects

Conclusion

In the present study, there was a high prevalence of menopausal symptoms among the subjects. Most common symptoms reported by the women were physical and mental exhaustion, depressive mood, irritability and joint and muscular discomfort. As there has been increase in life expectancy and population of the menopausal women, public

health programs must make an effort to generate awareness among women regarding the menopause process and its associated symptoms.

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Received on 8.2.2019 and accepted on 10.4.2019