

A Cross Sectional Study on the Prevalence and Severity of Menopausal Symptoms in Post Menopausal Women

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Abstract: *This study aims to investigate the prevalence and severity of menopausal symptoms in postmenopausal women. The study was conducted at Government Dharmapuri Medical College Hospital, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, A community based cross sectional study was conducted with a sample size of 200 postmenopausal women. Data were collected using a pretested semi structured questionnaire. The results showed a high prevalence of menopausal symptoms, with the most common being joint and muscular problems. However, most symptoms were mild and often not reported. The study concludes that better awareness and medical support can improve the quality of life during menopause.*

Keywords: Menopause, Prevalence, Menopausal rating scale, Health related quality of life HRQoL scale, Postmenopausal women, Cross - sectional study, Menopausal symptoms

1. Introduction

Complete cessation of menstruation for twelve months or more as a result of complete loss of ovarian follicular activity is defined as Menopause.¹ Menopause is a normal physiological event in the women's life.² But sometimes some women may experience severe symptoms of menopause that they hamper day to day activity of a woman. These symptoms are mainly because of depletion of estrogen levels as the women approaches menopausal stage and even these symptoms can be experienced in perimenopausal phase.³ The estimated mean age of menopause is 46 years in India according to Indian menopause society (IMS), and is much lower than that of the western counterpart which is 51 years. Numerous symptoms, including as hot flushes warmth feelings that extend from the trunk to the face and nocturnal sweats, are brought on by the loss of ovarian function. In addition, numerous disorders like osteoporosis, ischemic heart disease, and kidney disease become more likely to develop once menopause begins. The current circumstance has improved access to health services, which has increased life expectancy. As a result, women are more likely to spend a substantial portion of their lives in the menopause period.⁴ Menopausal symptoms may be manageable for some women, but they may be very uncomfortable for others. For those persons, the severity of the symptoms will reduce their overall quality of life. Indian women may underreport their symptoms due to social factors.⁵ Age, sociodemographic factors, education, and occupational status are some of the variables that affect the severity of menopausal symptoms within a given population.

The Menopause Rating Scale (MRS), a health - related quality of life (HRQoL) scale, was created in the early 1990s

as a response to the lack of standardised scales to assess the severity of ageing symptoms and their effects on HRQoL. It is internationally accepted to assess symptoms/complaints of aging women under different conditions, to evaluate the severity of symptoms over time and to Measure symptom changes pre and post therapy. The menopause rating scale (MRS) is composed of 11 items and is divided into three sub scales: Somatic - hot flushes, heart discomfort/palpitation, sleeping problems and muscle and joint problems. Psychological - depressive mood, irritability, anxiety and physical and mental exhaustion. Urogenital - sexual problems, bladder problems and dryness of the vagina. Each of the 11 symptoms included in the scale can be given a score of 0 (no discomfort) or up to 4 (severe symptoms) depending on the degree of discomfort felt by women who complete the scale.

Aim: The purpose of this study is to investigate the prevalence and severity of menopausal symptoms in post menopausal women, using the menopausal rating scale and to understand the impact of these symptoms according to the menopause rating scale in menopausal women on their quality of life.

2. Methodology

Study Place: Department of OBG, Government Dharmapuri Medical College.

Study Method:

The study employed a community based cross sectional design, with a sample size of 200 postmenopausal women. Data were collected using a pretested semistructured questionnaire, capturing sociodemographic status,

menopausal data, and postmenopausal symptoms. Women who underwent surgical menopause, were extremely unwell, or had received hormone replacement treatment within the previous six months were excluded. The collected data were then statistically analyzed.

Inclusion Criteria: All postmenopausal women who attend OPD and all postmenopausal women who accompany the inpatients of OG department.

Exclusion Criteria: Women who underwent surgical menopause. Extremely unwell woman, or who had received hormone replacement treatment within the previous six months

3. Results

Age of Menopause: The range of menopausal age was found to be 46 to 50 years (Table 1). 53% of patients attained menopause between 46 to 50 years, 28% attained at the age of 51 to 55 years. None of the patients had beyond 55 years as the age of menopause.

Table 1: Age of Menopause

Age	No of Patients	%
40 - 45	38	19
46 - 50	96	53
51 - 55	56	28

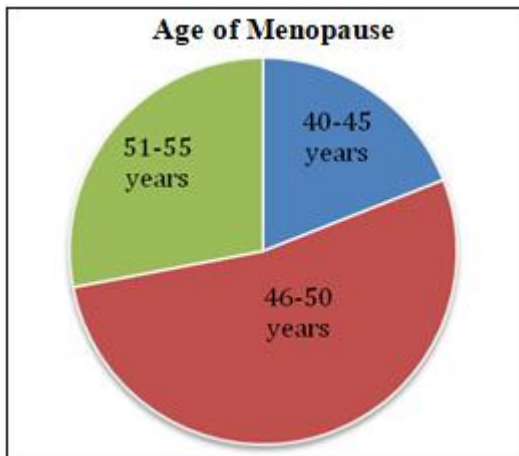


Figure 1: Age of Menopause

Prevalence of menopausal symptoms

The most common menopausal symptom experienced by 40% of women is joint and muscular problems followed by the physical and mental exhaustion (Table 2), which is experienced by 38 % of women. It indicates high prevalence of menopausal symptoms. Only 3 % of the women experienced depressive mood which accounts to be the least prevalent symptom. Among the postmenopausal women, 60% had any one somatic symptom, 35% had any one psychiatric symptom, 32% had any one sexual symptom.

Table 2: Prevalence of Menopausal Symptoms

Symptom	Percentage (%)
Hot Flashes	35
Heart Discomfort	20
Sleep Problems	30
Joint And Muscular Problems	40
Irritable	25
Anxiety	28
Exhaustion	38
Depressive Mood	3
Bladder Problems	12
Sexual Problems	23
Dryness f Vagina	17

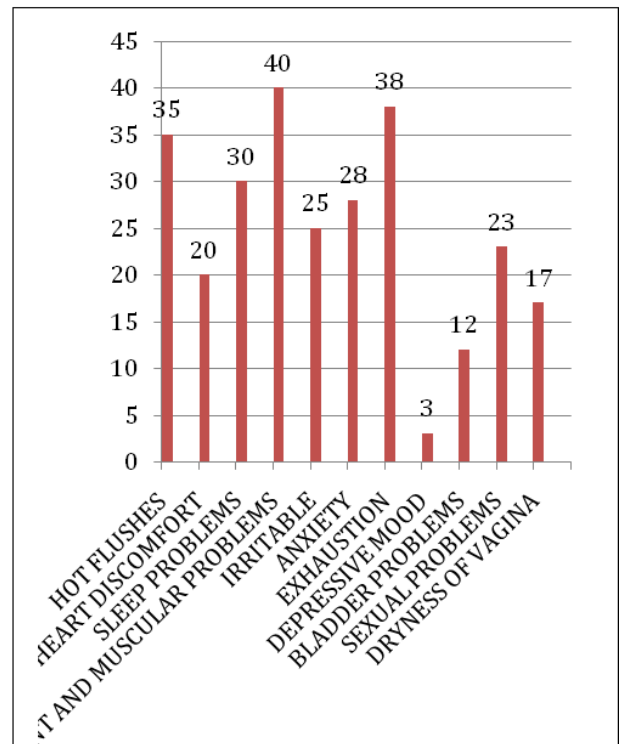


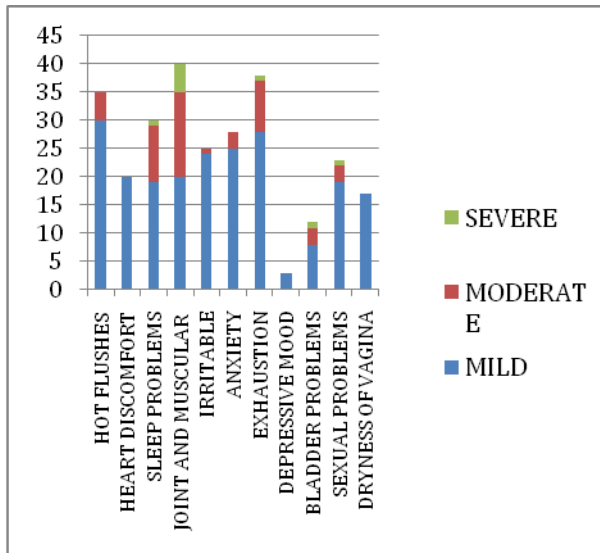
Figure 2: Prevalence of Menopausal Symptoms

Severity of Menopausal Symptoms:

Although the prevalence of menopausal symptoms was high among the menopausal women, the severity however found to be mild in most of the cases. Only 9 % of the study population experienced severe menopausal symptoms. The severity was mild in majority of women, which the women tolerate and doesn't seek medical help.

Table 3: Severity of Menopausal Symptoms

Symptom	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Total %
Hot Flashes	30	5	0	35
Heart Discomfort	20	0	0	20
Sleep Problems	19	10	1	30
Joint and Muscular	20	15	5	40
Irritable	24	1	0	25
Anxiety	25	3	0	28
Exhaustion	28	9	1	38
Depressive Mood	3	0	0	3
Bladder Problems	8	3	1	12
Sexual Problems	19	3	1	23
Dryness of Vagina	17	0	0	17



4. Discussion

Ageing is an inevitable phenomenon and with it are associated certain conditions which affect quality of life. Menopause is one such reality of life. According to Manal F. Moustafa who conducted survey in Egypt a positive correlation exists between menopausal symptoms & quality of life He observed that menopause causes a decrease in quality of life.⁷ The menopausal rating scale has been widely accepted worldwide as a health - related quality of life (HRQoL) scale to evaluate the severity of menopausal symptoms. The menopausal rating scale questionnaire has been validated and used in many languages after translation. The prevalence rate of menopausal symptoms was 89.3%, according to a study done in New Delhi by Singh et al.⁶ The mean age at menopause in our study was found to be 49 years, whereas the mean age if menopause is 51.3 years in the study done by Sushmitha V et al.⁸ In various other studies done in India, the mean age of menopause fell between 49.4 to 51.1 years.

The most prevalent menopausal symptom in our study is joint and muscular problems which is experienced by 40% of women in our study population. This correlates with the study done by Sushmitha V et al. In a study by Cheng et al, Hafiz et al & Rahman et al also found joint and muscular pain as the predominant and prevalent symptom.^{9,10,11}

The second most prevalent symptom is mental and physical exhaustion which account to 38 %. In a study done by Pal et al, the prevalence of physical and mental exhaustion was found to be much higher (86%).¹²

In our study, vaginal dryness was not so prevalent and seen in only 17% of study population. Study done by Avani et al.¹³ stated that the urogenital problems like sexual problems and dryness of vagina were found to be less prevalent and if present then the symptoms were mild.

5. Conclusion

Menopause is a biopsychological phenomenon and a natural aging process that signals a decline in body function affecting the womens well being. The study concludes that

menopausal symptoms are highly prevalent among postmenopausal women, with the most common being joint and muscular problem. However most symptoms are mild and often unreported. Better awareness and medical support can significantly improve the quality of life during menopause.

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