

MENOPAUSAL SYMPTOMS OF WOMEN IN INDIA: REVIEW ARTICLE

Dr. Priyanka Sharma*

ABSTRACT

Background: Menopause is an inevitable reproductive phase during mid life when various physical and mental changes may impair the quality of life of women. All the women who live beyond the age of 45 to 50 years, experience a period of transition from reproductive to non reproductive stage of life.

Objective: Review of literature related to the identification of the menopausal symptoms and women's quality of life outcomes in order to provide various coping strategies to improve their mid-life transition.

Methodology: A total 10 studies were identified. The systematic electronic searched for articles published without a time limit included online libraries, Google Scholar, Medscape articles discussing the study on menopausal symptoms and effect on quality of life.

Results: The results of studies reveal that the presence of the menopausal symptoms significantly reduce the quality of life and with more severity worsens the quality of life.

Conclusion: The review can help in providing clearer understanding of women's experiences at menopause. It is necessary to critically introspect health needs of postmenopausal women and specific components can be incorporated in the national health programme. It is suggested that establishment of menopausal clinic within the current primary healthcare system can centralize attention to menopausal women and their needs.

KEYWORDS: Menopause, Women, Google Scholar, Postmenopausal.

Introduction

Women play an important role in replenishing the earth but her reproductive capacity is not permanent, it ceases one day which is coined as Menopause. (Sharadha R. 2009) The term 'Menopause' means that Meno (month) and pause (to end). Thus, the literal definition is the end of cycle of monthly menstrual bleeding (Wylie 2005). Change is the very essence of life. The two most important physiological changes which occur in the women's life are commencement of menstruation at the puberty where her reproductive life starts and other is cessation of menstruation where her reproductive life is over (Barbara 1982).

The menopause is a time of women's life when reproductive capacity ceases. Ovaries stop functioning and production of steroid and peptide hormone falls. A variety of physiological changes takes place in the body, some of these are the result of cessation of ovarian function and related menopause events while others are a function of ageing process. (WHO 1996) During menopause often experience some symptoms which may affect their daily activities. Recent years, studies have shown that menopausal symptoms may affect health related quality of life (Nisar et al 2009). In the general population the proportion of the menopausal women has significantly increased due to increase life expectancy. The population projection survey in India reveals that the number of women aged 45 years and above is expected to reach 401 million in 2026 and 96 million at present. These huge number of women are expected to spend nearly 30 years in a post reproductive period of life. (Population projection of India and states 2006)

* Associate Professor in Home Science, Government College Laxmangarh, Alwar, Rajasthan, India.

Menopausal period is positively correlated with non communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, osteoporosis, breast cancer (Pallikadavathetal 2016). The menopausal women experience complex psychosocial problems- depression, mood swings, sleep disorder, loss of social/professional roles and poor ego integrity. Poor compliance to recommended lifestyle modification and limited knowledge could impede a better overall health related quality of life (Aaron etal 2002). The presence and severity of symptoms vary tremendously from women to women and can last from months to years during this transitional period. Menopausal symptoms have significant impact on quality of life of menopausal women at different status of menopause (Kawatkar etal 2015).

Objective

Review of literature related to the identification of the menopausal symptoms and women quality of life outcomes in order to provide various coping strategies to improve their midlife transition.

Methodology

Systematic electronic search for articles published without a time limit included online libraries of Ovid PubMed, Google, Medline with Full Text, UK Essays and Medscape articles. A literature review of abstracts and articles discussing the study aim on menopausal symptoms, included the keywords as 'menopause', 'menopausal symptoms', 'midlife transition' and 'quality of life outcomes'. The search was conducted in accordance with the systematic review guidelines of the literature. The analysis focused on identifying important results related to menopausal symptoms and their impact on women's quality of life.

Results

Majority of the studies conducted in different parts of India and one study from Sri Lanka were selected for review. Self reported menopausal symptoms questionnaire has been used. Details of quantitative studies are shown in table.

Author and Year	Methods	Main Findings
Barkha Devi etal 2018	The study was conducted among 120 rural and urban post menopausal women who were in the age of 45 and above in East Sikkim. Menopause specific quality of life questionnaire was used to assess the quality of life based experience of symptoms through interview technique.	Rural women were having unpaired quality of life as compared to urban women during post menopausal period. In this study quality of life refers to the way a women overcomes significant one of four domains of menopausal symptoms, as experienced over the last month like vasomotor, psychosocial, physical and sexual as assessed by menopause specific quality of life questionnaire.
Mahajan N etal 2012	A community based cross sectional study was done on 100 menopausal women from general community by Himachal Pradesh in Shimla. A structured questionnaire was given to menopausal women.	Main symptoms associated with menopause were reported as fatigue 62%, hot flashes 56%, cold sweats 52% and back ache 51% other ailments associated with menopause were arthritis 25% hypertension 23% and diabetes 6%
Rathnayake etal 2019	A cross-sectional study was conducted with a randomly selected sample of premenopausal (184) and post menopausal (166) community dwelling healthy women aged 30-60 years in Sri Lanka. Menopausal symptoms were evaluated using the menopause rating scale under three subscales psychological symptoms, somatovegetative symptoms and urogenital symptoms.	Prevalence and severity of menopausal symptoms and impaired quality of life in postmenopausal women, compared to premenopausal women. Menopausal symptoms mostly contributed to the poorer quality of life in both pre and postmenopausal women.

Bansaletal 2013	Rural middle aged women (180)of Punjab were selected by proportionate sampling technique.Menopausal problems were categorized into 5 groups i.e. Vasomotor, psychosomatic and psychological symptoms .	In this study symptoms which were reported hair loss ,increase in facial hair,urinary tract infection,urinaryincontinence,headache and dizziness.
Agarwaletal 2018	Using modified MRS questionnaire,150 menopausal women(North central India) aged40-60 years were interview to document of different symptoms commonly associated with menopause.	The most prevalent symptoms reported were joint and muscular discomfort (70.6%),physical and mental exhaustion (61.3%) and sleeping problems (59.35).
Nagar S etal2005	A sample of 30 married women in the age group of 39-52 years from middle socioeconomic group (Gujarat, India).Questionnaire and interview method was used.	Women reported problems like backache, uneasiness, fatigue, increased headache, hotflushes and sleep disturbances during the menopausal period.

Discussion

Menopause is a physiological process, which takes place universally in all women who reach midlife. During the transition to menopause,women may experience hot flashes, joint pain, weight gain, vasomotor, urogenital, psychosomatic and psychological symptoms, as well as sexual dysfunction. According to WHO, natural menopause takes place between the ages 45 and 55 years for the women worldwide (WHO, 1996). Mean age at menopause in Indian women is less in comparison to women from developed countries. Genetic and environmental and nutritional factors may also play a role. (Batt RV et al 2007) Although hot flashes, joint pain, vasomotor, urogenital are the commonest symptom reported by many other Indian studies as well as in western countries. The results of these 10 studies reveal that the average age of menopause in India is 47.5 years, with an average life expectancy of 71 years. Therefore, Indian women are likely to spend almost 23.5 years in menopause. About 35-40% women between 40 and 65 years have been diagnosed to suffer from osteopenia and 8-30% suffer from osteoporosis. All women over 65 years have been found to suffer from osteopenia or osteoporosis (Indian Menopause Society, 2007).

Conclusion

Health care provider's need to consider individual women's differences ,needs and beliefs, when developing the treatment plans for menopausal women. From a public health perspective, there is considerable opportunity to improve postmenopausal women's quality of life by increasing health education about postmenopausal symptoms and its treatment by taking steps for life style modifications. Mild exercise should be encouraged and the avoidance of a sedentary lifestyle or living in isolation should be discouraged. This will help in coping with the challenges of this period. There is a need to address the women group separately especially the disadvantaged rural subgroup, as there hasn't been a specific health program for those women yet

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