

# A Study on the Knowledge and Awareness about Menopause among Middle Aged Women from Western Odisha

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**Abstract:** ***Introduction:** Menopause is a universal phenomenon, experienced by middle aged women which affect their quality of life. Due to hormonal imbalance women may experience psychological as well as physiological changes that affect their overall health status. Menopausal health got its importance in Indian scenario due to growing population of menopausal women. There is lack of knowledge and awareness regarding menopause and its problems among menopausal women. It needs to improve proper knowledge about menopause which may help them to cope with it in a better manner and there by leads to a good quality of life. **Objective:** This cross-sectional study aimed at evaluating the various demographic parameters like mean age at menarche, marriage, menopause etc among women and the level of knowledge and awareness regarding menopause among the selected study samples. **Materials and methods:** The present study is a community based, cross sectional study carried out in the urban area of Jharsuguda district, Odisha. The study was carried out from October 2014 to December 2014. The study population comprised of the women in the age group 40 to 60 years of that area. One hundred women were included in the study. A pretested interview schedule was used in the study. Data were presented as percentages. **Results:** The mean age at menopause was 43.94 years. Most frequent menopausal symptoms were joint pain and weight gain found to be very high followed by vasomotor and psychological symptom. The sexual domains were less frequently complained compared to physical and psychological domains. The awareness level found to be lower than 50% regarding the consequences of menopause that's why most of the women were negatively affected by menopause. **Conclusion:** As life expectancy of women increases, it should be needed to make them aware about various menopausal symptoms and its effect on overall health status. Efforts are needed to improve their knowledge through education which will enable them to manage it in a proper way and help them to seek timely treatment for the same and improve quality of life during and after menopause.*

**Keywords:** Menopause, knowledge and awareness, treatment seeking behaviour, management

## 1. Introduction

Now a day's women's health has been a global concern and the focus shifted towards menopausal women due to increase life expectancy and their population.[1,2] The population of elderly people is increasing every year and it would be increase to about 12% of the total population by the year 2025. It is estimated that approximately half of the population will be women. According to IMS there are about 65 million Indian women over the age of 45 years. Due to the increase in the life expectancy women will be spend one-third of their life in post reproductive stage of menopause. [3]

Today menopause got its importance in the recent trends of life style and health care services. So proper knowledge and awareness regarding it, is very necessary, especially for women. Women's awareness regarding menopause is based on different factors like age, the number of births, social, economical, cultural, educational status, and geographical factors.[4] Most of women attain menopausal periods without having adequate knowledge about its consequences.[5] In some studies it is found that women who have better information about menopause, consequences of the phenomenon are less.[6] So who have adequate knowledge and information of symptoms and complications of menopause are able to cope with it in a better mannered and taken appropriate treatment. As menopause is a natural phenomenon, every woman will face menopause but awareness regarding its problems faced during menopause needs to be addressed. If a woman may

not be aware of what's happening to her during this periods and it leads a stressful postmenopausal period. That's why awareness of the signs and symptoms of menopausal periods is so important. By having proper knowledge some of the stress that accompanied it can be minimized. Proper treatment can be taken to reduce the severity of some of the symptoms faced by the drastic hormonal changes in female body. Women need to understand the details about the physical changes occur in their body throughout their life span. Also need to improve menopausal women's overall health and well-being.[7] In 1995, about 450 doctors form the Indian Menopause Society (IMS). IMS is a platform that seeks to educate women about this crucial stage in their lives. The year 2011 of Indian menopause society is dedicated to menopausal women who had been suffering in silence; the theme is "HELPING HER BREEZE THROUGH MENOPAUSE" IMS organize a National Awareness Programme – "Fit at 40, Strong at 60" in 30 Indian cities. Apart from the efforts of national level, most IMS-affiliated doctors have a local team (comprising a voluntary medical counselor, a nutritionist and two volunteers) at their clinics to counsel menopausal women about their health, osteoporosis and nutrition. Easy exercises that develop strength, flexibility and balance.[3]

## 2. Materials and Methods

The present study is a community based, cross sectional study carried out in the urban area of Jharsuguda district, Odisha. The study was carried out from October 2014 to December 2014. The study population comprised of

the women in the age group 40 to 60 years of that area. One hundred women were included in the study. The study was done by interview technique using pre-tested and pre-designed questionnaire. Data was collected on socio demographic information, awareness, management and other variables of menopause. All the pre-menopause, perimenopause and post menopause women with natural and surgical menopause were included in the study. Locked houses or the women who did not give the consent were not included in the study. The data was collected, compiled and analysed using statistical packages.

### 3. Result

The study population comprised 100 women from urban areas of Jharsuguda district. Out of total women enrolled in the study, 97% were married, while only 3% were single or widow or divorced. About 92% women were literate and 9% of women had induced menopause i.e. they had undergone hysterectomy, while 38% of women had history of natural menopause [Table 1].

In my study, the mean age at menarche, marriage and menopause were found to be (13.95yr), (20.85yr) & (43.94) years respectively [Table 2]. As shown in Table 3, the prevalence of symptoms like joint pain and weight gain found to be (65%) & (69%) was very high, which was followed by backache (59%), hot flushes(56%), forgetfulness (53%), irritability (48%), headache(43%) and (32%) suffered from vaginal dryness and itching while (39%) had urinary urgency.

**Table 1: Demographic characteristics of study participants**

Variable	No	%
<b>Age</b>		
40-45	39	39
45-50	36	36
50-55	17	17
55-60	8	8
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	97	97
Single/Widow/Divorcee	03	03
<b>Educational Status</b>		
Literates	92	92
Illiterates	8	8
<b>Occupation</b>		
Working women	17	17
Housewife	83	83
<b>Type of Family</b>		
Nuclear	89	89
Joint	11	11
<b>Menopause</b>		
Natural	38	38
Surgical	9	9

**Table 2: Demographic parameters of study participants**

Variables	Mean (SD)
Mean age at menarche	13.95 (1.32)
Mean age at marriage	20.58 (3.7)
Mean age at menopause	43.94( 5.03)

**Table 3: Frequency of symptoms**

Symptoms	No	%
Hot flushes and night sweat	56	56
Urinary inconsistency	39	39
Backache	59	59
Joint pain	65	65
Headache	43	43
Forgetfulness	53	53
Irritability	48	48
Depressed mood	42	42
Vaginal dryness	32	32
Weight gain	69	69

Out of the study population almost all women had knew that menopause is a part of women's health but family awareness mainly the husband's awareness found to be (56%).The general knowledge about menopause was found among the women but there was lack of knowledge regarding body physiology. Only 38% women were took treatment for menopausal symptoms. Some women took calcium or some Ayurvedic, Homeopathy treatment or home remedy to treat menopausal symptoms. Majority of females took treatment without doctors' advice. In the present study women had the opinion that all these problems are very common due to age factor and had not taken these symptoms very seriously and some were not aware that treatment is available. About one-third of them just took some pain killers when they felt problems. Out of the study subjects about 50% women were aware of it and had the correct knowledge about it while other had low level of knowledge and awareness regarding menopause. [Table4]

**Table 4: Knowledge and Awareness of the study population**

Variable	No	%
Awareness about menopause	100	100
Husband awareness		
Yes	56	56
No	44	44
What is the meaning of menopause?		
No cycle	89	89
Irregular cycle	11	11
Cause of menopause?		
Normal body process	66	66
Hormonal imbalance	34	34
Knowledge about hormones		
Yes	11	11
No	89	89
Is menopause harmful		
Yes	61	61
No	39	39
Treatment taken against menopause		
Yes	38	38
No	62	62
Type of treatment taken		
Doctor's medicine	18	18
Other treatment	20	20

### 4. Discussion

In this present study it is observed that there is lack of awareness among the study subjects about menopause and its related problems. The menopausal age in Indian women varies from 40.3 to 44.8 years and in developed countries range is from 48-51 years. The mean menopausal age in the

present study is 43.94 years. This was almost similar to the study done in Chandigarh (44.1 yrs). [8,9] Another study in African women also showed the mean menopausal age to be 49.5 yrs.[10] which is higher than my study. There is variation in the age of attainment of menopause may be due to regional, community, genetic, environmental and nutritional factors also play an important role. Menopause is an important phase in women's life span. The most prevalent symptoms experienced by the women were joint pain (65%), hot flushes and night sweats were observed (56%) in menopausal women followed by psychological problems like forgetfulness (53%), irritability (43%) and depression (42%). Some women complained of bladder problems (39%) and vaginal dryness (32%), while a minority woman had sexual problems. In studies by Sarkar et al 2014[11] prevalence of hot flushes found to be more where as studies done by , Bansal et al 2010[12],Yahya and Rehan in 2002[13] prevalence of hot flushes and night sweats were (47.3%),(32%) respectively which were lower than this study. The psychological symptoms like depression and irritability in the present study was corresponds with Sarkar et al 2014.[11] Most of the symptoms at menopause were related with decreased hormonal level. More than 60% of respondent considered menopause to be harmful because of the physical and psychological impact on health. Whereas it was welcomed by 39% of women because of getting freedom from menstruation. Kaur found a high proportion (94%) of rural women happily accepted menopause.[9] Some of the past studies shows that majority of women have only knowledge about menopause but are not aware of its complications and therapy that's why treatment seeking behaviour also found to be very lower. These findings were similar in the present study also.

## 5. Conclusion

In the present study it is found that the correct knowledge regarding the symptoms, complications and prevention methods of menopause was lower than 50%. So it is needed to conduct an educational and counselling program to empowering women in this direction. Mass media, doctors, health care provider should create awareness regarding the risk factors associated with menopause which may enable them to recognise the problems and make proper decision for medical intervention. Hence they improve their quality of life. Based on the findings of my study the following recommendations are hereby made.

That:

- 1) Women and their husbands should be educated and counselled about the changes that occurred during menopause. They can thus be a moral and mutual support to each other.
- 2) Other family members, relatives and friends can provide support during this crucial stage of menopause.
- 3) Regular general check-up like blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol is very much essential.
- 4) Lifestyle and dietary modification should be recommended.
  - Regular exercise
  - Avoid tranquillizers and alcohol.
  - Engage in a creative works and stay connected with family and friends.
  - Get enough calcium

- Increase iron and fibre intake.
- Eat fruits and vegetables.
- Reduce foods high in fat and use sugar and salt in moderation.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Maintain a healthy weight.

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